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# Annual Lesson Commentary

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1939

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Joe Barnett

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## A FOREWORD

If this, the eighteenth volume of the Annual Lesson Commentary, falls below the high standard set by previous volumes, the reader will graciously attribute its defects to the weakness of its author. He knows that the work is not perfect, but it is hoped that the sincere student will find the comments and suggestions helpful.

Topics for investigation and discussion may be profitably used in midweek prayer meetings and in teachers' meetings. This will help to stir up interest in the lessons, and will give the teachers a better background for their work. No scripture references are given with these topics, for every Bible student should do some research work for his own improvement.

Let the student pray, as did David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

R. L. WHITESIDE.

# LESSONS FOR 1939

## FIRST QUARTER—Life and Work of Peter

I. January	1.—Peter Called to Serve	John 1: 40-42; Luke 5: 1-11
II. "	3.—Peter Commended and Rebuked	Matt. 16: 13-25
III. "	15.—Peter Sees Christ's Glory	Matt. 17: 1-9, 14-18
IV. "	22.—Peter Denies His Lord	Luke 22: 31-34, 54-62
V. "	29.—Peter Declares His Love	John 21: 11-19
VI. February	5.—Peter Preaches at Pentecost	Acts 2: 12-18, 36-41
VII. "	12.—Peter Heals a Lame Man	Acts 3: 1-10; 4: 8-12
VIII. "	19.—Beverage Alcohol and Its Social Perils	Amos 6: 1-6; 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12; 4: 1-5
IX. "	26.—Peter in Samaria	Acts 8: 14-25
X. March	5.—Peter Preaches to Gentiles	Acts 10: 30-48
XI. "	12.—Peter Delivered from Prison	Acts 12: 5-17
XII. "	19.—Peter Exhorts to Christian Living	1 Pet. 3: 8-18
XIII. "	26.—Peter Interprets Christ's Sufferings and Death	1 Pet. 1: 17-23; 2: 20-25

## SECOND QUARTER—Life and Letters of Paul

I. April	2.—Saul Becomes a New Man	Acts 9: 1-12, 17-19
II. "	9.—Paul Preaches the Risen Christ	Acts 13: 16, 23-31, 38, 39; 1 Cor. 15: 19-22
III. "	16.—Paul Establishes Churches	Acts 14: 1-7, 19-23
IV. "	23.—Paul Wins Recognition for Gentile Christians	Acts 15: 23-29; Gal. 2: 1, 2, 9, 10
V. "	30.—Paul Crosses into Europe	Acts 15: 36; 16: 4-15
VI. May	7.—Paul Works a Hard Field	Acts 18: 1, 4-11; 1 Cor. 2: 1-5
VII. "	14.—Paul Evangelizes a Province	Acts 19: 1, 8-10; 20: 17-21; Eph. 2: 19-22
VIII. "	21.—Beverage Alcohol and the Home	Jer. 35: 5-10; Eph. 5: 15-21; 6: 1-4
IX. "	28.—Paul Thinks in World Terms	Rom. 1: 1-17
X. June	4.—Paul Pleads His Own Case	Acts 21: 40 to 22: 4; 24: 14-16; 26: 19-23
XI. "	11.—Paul Solves Church Problems	1 Cor. 1: 1-3, 10, 11; 4: 14-21; 1 Thess. 5: 12-15
XII. "	18.—Paul Writes Personal Letters	2 Tim. 1: 1-6; Phil. 1-7, 21, 22
XIII. "	25.—Paul Reviews His Life	Phil. 1: 12-14, 21-24; 3: 12-14; 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8

## THIRD QUARTER—Lessons from Israel's Leaders—Solomon to Isaiah

I. July	2.—Solomon: A Ruler Who Began Well	1 Kings 3: 5-15
II. "	9.—Jeroboam: A Man with a Great Opportunity	1 Kings 11: 26-31, 37-40
III. "	16.—Rehoboam: A Man Who Made a Foolish Choice	1 Kings 12: 1-5, 12-17, 20
IV. "	23.—Asa: A Life of Trust	2 Chron. 14: 2-12
V. "	30.—Jehoshaphat: A Life of Obedience	2 Chron. 17: 1-6, 9-12
VI. August	6.—Elijah: A Life of Courage	1 Kings 18: 30-39
VII. "	13.—Elisha: A Life of Helpfulness	2 Kings 5: 1-10, 14
VIII. "	20.—Beverage Alcohol and the Community	Joel 1: 5-7; Dan. 5: 1-5, 17, 25-28
IX. "	27.—Uzziah: A King Who Forgot God	2 Chron. 26: 3-5, 16-21
X. September	3.—Isaiah: A Life Dedicated to God	Isa. 6: 1-13
XI. "	10.—Hezekiah: A King Who Remembered God	2 Chron. 30: 13-22
XII. "	17.—Micah: A Messenger of Social Justice	Mic. 3: 1-12; 6: 6-8
XIII. "	24.—Isaiah: Foretelling the Birth of the Messianic King	Isa. 7: 14; 9: 1-7; 11: 1-5

## FOURTH QUARTER—The Kingdom of Heaven: Studies in Matthew

I. October	1.—The Infancy of Jesus	Matt. 2: 13-23
II. "	8.—The Forerunner of the King	Matt. 3: 1-17
III. "	15.—The Temptation of Jesus	Matt. 4: 1-11
IV. "	22.—The Citizens of the Kingdom	Matt. 5: 1-16
V. "	29.—Beverage Alcohol and Social Progress	Mic. 2: 9-11; Luke 21: 29-31, 34-36; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11
VI. November	5.—Righteousness in the Kingdom	Matt. 5: 17-20, 38-45; 6: 1-4
VII. "	12.—Putting God's Kingdom First	Matt. 6: 19-34
VIII. "	19.—Warnings and Promises	Matt. 7: 1-14
IX. "	26.—The Works of the Messiah	Matt. 8: 14-27
X. December	3.—Spreading the Good News	Matt. 10: 24-39
XI. "	10.—Reactions to the Good News	Matt. 11: 16-30
XII. "	17.—Parables of the Kingdom	Matt. 13: 3-8, 31-33, 44-46
XIII. "	24.—The Child and the Kingdom	Matt. 1: 18-25; 18: 1-6; 19: 13-15
XIV. "	31.—Friends and Foes of the Kingdom	Matt. 13: 54 to 14: 4; 15: 29-31



# BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Arranged and Compiled by H. LEO BOLES

## A

- Aaron (bright or shining), Ex. 4: 14. Brother of Moses and first high priest.  
 Ab, Abba (father), Gal. 4: 6. Name given to God.  
 Abednego (servant of Nego), Dan. 1: 7. One of Daniel's companions.  
 Abel (breath, vanity), Gen. 4: 1. Second son of Adam.  
 Abiathar (father of abundance), 1 Sam. 23: 9. High priest and fourth in descent from Eli.  
 Abigail (father is joy), 1 Sam. 25: 14. Wife of Nabal; became David's wife.  
 Abimelech (Melech is father), Gen. 26: 1. King of Gerar in the time of Isaac.  
 Abishai (my father is Jesse), 1 Sam. 26: 6-9. The eldest of the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister, and brother of Joab.  
 Abner (father is light), 1 Sam. 14: 50. King Solomon's captain.  
 Abraham, Abram (father of a multitude, exalted father), Gen. 12: 1. Founder of the Hebrews and father of the faithful.  
 Absalom (father is peace), 2 Sam. 15: 1. Third son of David.  
 Achaia (trouble), Acts 18: 12. A Roman province which included Greece.  
 Achan (trouble), Josh. 7: 19-26. Stole golden wedge, etc. Stoned by Joshua.  
 Adam (ruddy, one made or produced), Gen. 3: 15. Name of the first man.  
 Adonijah (my Lord is Jehovah), 2 Sam. 3: 4. Fourth son of David.  
 Agabus, Acts 11: 27. A Christian prophet who came from Jerusalem.  
 Agag, 1 Sam. 15: 8. Title of the king of Amalek.  
 Agrippa, Acts 12: 20. One of the Herods.  
 Ahab (father's brother), 1 Kings 18: 19. Son of Omri, seventh king of Israel; very wicked.  
 Ahimelech (brother of Melech), 1 Sam. 22: 11. High priest of Nob; gave David the showbread to eat.  
 Ai (heap), John 7: 2. City lying east of Bethel, destroyed by Joshua.  
 Alexander, Mark 15: 21. Son of Simon, the Cyrenian.  
 Alexandria (from Alexander), Acts 18: 24. Capital of Egypt.  
 Alpha (first letter of Greek alphabet), Rev. 1: 8. It means the beginning.  
 Altar, Gen. 8: 20. Place for worship and sacrifice.  
 Ambassador (messenger or agent), 2 Cor. 5: 20. A person commissioned.  
 Amen (true), Isa. 65: 16. Close of prayer.  
 Amos (burden), Amos 1: 1. Minor prophet.  
 Amphipolis (a city surrounded by the sea), Acts 17: 1. A city of Macedonia, through which Paul and Silas passed on their way from Philippi to Thessalonica.  
 Amram (an exalted people), Ex. 6: 18. Father of Moses.  
 Ananias (Jehovah hath been gracious), Acts 5: 1. Husband of Sapphira, smitten dead.  
 Anathema (cursed), Gal. 1: 9. A word used by Paul to show condemnation.  
 Anise (dill), Matt. 23: 23. A small garden plant.  
 Anna (grace), Luke 2: 36. A prophetess at Jerusalem.  
 Annas (humble), Acts 4: 6. The son of Seth; was appointed high priest A.D. 7.  
 Antichrist (opposed to Christ), 1 John 2: 18. Only John uses this word as applied to the enemies of Christianity.  
 Antioch (from Antiochus), Acts 11: 20. City in Syria, also in Pisidia.  
 Apollonia (belonging to Apollo), Acts 17: 1. A city in Macedonia.  
 Apostle (one sent forth), Matt. 10: 2-4; 2 Cor. 8: 23. The official name of the twelve disciples sent out by Jesus.  
 Apphia (fruitful), Phile. 2. A Christian woman addressed jointly with Philemon.  
 Aquila (an eagle), Acts 18: 2. A Jew whom Paul found at Corinth, husband of Priscilla.  
 Archelaus (prince of the people), Matt. 2: 22. Son of Herod the Great.  
 Archippus (master of the horse), Col. 4: 17. A Christian teacher in Colosse.  
 Areopagus (Mars Hill), Acts 17: 22. The rocky heights in Athens, opposite the western end of the Acropolis.  
 Arimathea (height), Matt. 27: 57. A city of Judea.  
 Aristarchus (the best ruler), Acts 20: 4. A companion of Paul on his third missionary journey.  
 Asa (physician, healer), 2 Chron. 14: 3. Third king of Judea; reigned forty years.  
 Ashpenaz (horse-nose), Dan. 1: 3. Master of eunuchs.  
 Asia ( ), Acts 19: 26. Continent, also Roman Province.  
 Athens (city of Athena), Acts 17: 21. The capital of Attica, and the chief city of Grecian learning.  
 Augustus (venerable), Luke 2: 1. The first Roman emperor.  
 Azotus (Ashdod, a stronghold), Acts 8: 40. City nearly midway between Gaza and Joppa.

## B

- Baal** (owner or lord), Num. 22: 41. The male god of the Phenician and Canaanitish nations.
- Babel** (confusion), Gen. 10: 10; 11: 1-9. Tower built on the Plain of Shinar.
- Babylon** (from Babel), Jer. 24: 5. The land of the Chaldeans.
- Balaam** (from Baal), Num. 23: 19. A prophet of Midian who tried to curse Israel.
- Barabbas** (son of Abba), John 18: 40. The robber who was released at the trial of Jesus.
- Balak** (making waste), Num. 22: 24. King of Moabites.
- Baptist, the** (the baptizer), Matt. 3: 1. The same as John the Baptist.
- Barak** (lightning), Judges 4: 1-24. Defeats Sisera's army.
- Barbarian** (any one not a Greek), Rom. 1: 14. Applied to those who were not of the Greek nation.
- Bar-Jesus** (son of Jesus), Acts 13: 6. A false prophet.
- Barnabas** (son of consolation or exhortation), Acts 4: 36. An early disciple of Christ and traveling companion of Paul.
- Barsabbas** (son of Sabas or rest), Acts 1: 23. Voted on as an apostle to take Judas' place.
- Bath-sheba** (daughter of the oath), 2 Sam. 11: 3. Wife of Uriah; became David's wife.
- Beelzebub** (Lord of the House), Matt. 12: 24. Title of heathen god.
- Belial** (worthlessness), 2 Cor. 6: 15. An expression for lawlessness.
- Belshazzar** (may Bel protect the king), Dan. 5: 2. The last king of Babylon.
- Benjamin** (son of the right hand), Gen. 35: 16. The youngest son of Jacob.
- Berea** (well watered), Acts 17: 10. A city of Macedonia.
- Bernice** (bringing victory), Acts 25: 13. The eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.
- Bethany** (house of dates), Mark 11: 1. A village situated near the Mount of Olives.
- Bethel** (the house of God), Gen. 12: 8; 28: 11-19. City about twelve miles north of Jerusalem.
- Bethesda** (house of mercy), John 5: 2. Market place near Jerusalem.
- Bethlehem** (house of bread), 1 Sam. 17: 12. City of David, birthplace of Christ.
- Bethphage** (house of figs), Luke 19: 29. Place on the Mount of Olives, on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem.
- Bethsaida** (house of fish), John 12: 21. The home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip.
- Bildad** (Bel hath loved, or, son of contention), Job 2: 11. The second of Job's three friends.
- Bilhah** (timid, bashful), Gen. 29: 29. Concubine of Jacob, and mother of Dan and Naphtali.
- Blasphemy** (speak against), Matt. 12: 32. Speaking evil against God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.
- Blastus** (sprout), Acts 12: 20. The chamberlain of Herod Agrippa I.
- Boanerges** (sons of thunder), Mark 3: 17. Name given to the two sons of Zebedee.

## C

- Caesar** (Latin name), John 19: 12. In the New Testament, always the Roman emperor.
- Caiaaphas** (depression), Matt. 26: 3. High priest of the Jews.
- Cain** (possession), Gen. 4: 1. Oldest son of Adam; killed his brother Abel.
- Caleb** (capable), Num. 13: 6. One of the faithful spies.
- Cana** (place of reeds), John 2: 1. Place of Christ's first miracle.
- Canaan** (low, flat), Gen. 10: 6. Fourth son of Ham; name applied to Palestine.
- Candace** (name of dynasty), Acts 8: 27. Not the name of an individual, but of a dynasty of Ethiopian queens.
- Capernaum** (village of Nahum), Matt. 4: 13. Village located on the western shore of Galilee.
- Carpus** (wrist), 2 Tim. 4: 13. A Christian at Troas.
- Cesarea** (Kaisareia Caesar), Acts 8: 40. City on coast of Palestine.
- Cesarea Philippi** (from Caesar and Philip), Matt. 16: 13. City twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee.
- Chemosh** (subduer), Num. 21: 29. A god of the Moabites.
- Chinnereth** (flute, harp), Josh. 19: 35. Another name for the Sea of Galilee.
- Chorazin**, Matt. 11: 21. One of the cities in which Jesus did many mighty works.
- Christ** (anointed), 1 Tim. 1: 2. The same as Messiah.
- Chuzas** (the seer), Luke 8: 3. The house steward of Herod Antipas.
- Cilicia** (the land of Celiz), Acts 9: 30. A province in the southeast of Asia Minor.



- Circumcision** (cut around), Lev. 12: 3. A Jewish custom.
- Claudius** (lame), Acts 18: 2. Fourth Roman emperor; reigned from A.D. 41 to 54.
- Cleopas** (from Cleopatra), John 19: 25. One of the two disciples to whom Jesus talked on the way to Emmaus.
- Corban**, Matt. 15: 5. An offering to God.
- Colosse**, Col. 1: 2. A city of Phrygia in Asia Minor.
- Corinth**, Acts 18: 1-18. City of Greece, about forty miles west of Athens.
- Cornelius** (of a horn), Acts 10: 1. A Roman centurion of the Italian cohorts stationed in Caesarea.
- Crescens** (growing), 2 Tim. 4: 10. An assistant of Paul, said to have been one of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ.
- Crispus** (curled), Acts 18: 8. Ruler of Jewish synagogues at Corinth.
- Cummin**, Matt. 23: 23. Small plant with an aromatic flavor.
- Cyprus**, Acts 4: 36. An island in the Mediterranean Sea, about a hundred and forty miles long and sixty miles wide.
- Cyrene**, Acts 2: 10. The principal city of that part of Northern Africa which was anciently called Cyrenaica.
- Cyrus** (the son), 2 Chron. 36: 22. The founder of the Persian Empire.

## D

- Damascus**, Acts 9: 11. One of the most ancient cities in the world, located in Syria.
- Daniel** (God is my judge), Dan. 1: 3. The fourth of "the greater prophets."
- Darius** (lord), Dan. 6: 1. The name of several kings of Media and Persia.
- David** (well beloved), 1 Sam. 16: 1. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel.
- Deborah** (a bee), Gen. 35: 8; Judges 4: 5. Name of Rebekah's nurse; also a prophetess.
- Decapolis** (ten cities), Matt. 4: 25. A district east of the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee.
- Delilah** (languishing), Judges 16: 4-18. Delivered Samson to the Philistines.
- Demetrius** (belonging to Demeter), Acts 19: 24. A maker of silver shrines at Ephesus.
- Demas** (governor of the people), Col. 4: 14. Companion of Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome.
- Demoniac**, Matt. 12: 22. One possessing a demon.
- Denarius** (containing ten), Matt. 18: 28. A Roman silver coin, worth about sixteen cents.
- Derbe** (juniper), Acts 14: 20. City not far from Iconium.
- Deuteronomy** (the giving of the law the second time). Fifth book of the Bible.
- Diana** (Latin name), Acts 19: 24. The Ephesian goddess.
- Diotrephes** (nourished by Jove), 3 John 9. Nothing known of him.
- Dispersion** (scattered), James 1: 1. Applied to the Jews who lived out of Palestine.
- Dorcas** (gazelle), Acts 9: 36. A disciple raised from the dead by Peter at Joppa.
- Doubter**. One without faith.

## E

- Easter** (passover), Acts 12: 4. Translated "Passover" in the Revised Version.
- Ebal** (stone), Deut. 11: 26-29. Mountain.
- Eden** (pleasure), Gen. 2: 8-14. The first residence of man.
- Edom** (red), Gen. 32: 3. Name given to Esau and his country.
- Egypt** (land of the Copts), Ex. 1: 14. Place where Israel was held in bondage.
- Egyptian** (native of Egypt), Acts 21: 38. An inhabitant of Egypt.
- Elder** (old man), Gen. 24: 2. Name applied to rulers of the city and officers of the church.
- Elijah** (Jehovah is my God), 1 Kings 17: 1. Prophet in the days of Ahab.
- Elisabeth** (God is an oath), Luke 1: 36. Wife of Zacharias and mother of John the Baptist.
- Elisha** (God is my salvation), 1 Kings 19: 16. Prophet who succeeded Elijah.
- Elymas** (a wise man), Acts 13: 6. A sorcerer who opposed Paul.
- Endor** (fountain of Dor), 1 Sam. 28: 7. Home of the witch with whom Saul communed.
- Enoch** (dedicated), Gen. 4: 17. Walked with God and was translated.
- Epaphras** (lovely), Col. 1: 7. A fellow laborer and prisoner with Paul.
- Ephesus** (permission), Acts 19: 29. The capital of the Roman province of Asia.
- Ephraim** (double fruitfulness), Gen. 41: 50. Younger son of Joseph.
- Epicureans** (from Epicurus), Acts 17: 18. Those who believed in getting the greatest pleasure out of life.
- Erastus** (beloved), Acts 19: 22. One of Paul's attendants at Ephesus.



- Esau** (hairy), Gen. 25: 25. Twin brother of Jacob.  
**Esther** (a star), Esth. 7: 3. Jewish wife of King Ahasuerus.  
**Etam** (lair of wild beasts), Judges 15: 8. Place visited by Samson.  
**Ethiopia** (burnt faces), Acts 8: 27. The country south of Egypt.  
**Eunuch** (bed keeper), Acts 8: 34. A man deprived of his virility.  
**Euodia** (fragrance), Phil. 4: 2. Christian woman at Philippi.  
**Euraquillo**, Acts 27: 14. Compounded from two words meaning east and north.  
**Eutychus** (fortunate), Acts 20: 9. A youth of Troas who went to sleep and fell out the window. Paul restored him to life.  
**Eye** (life), Gen. 2: 21. Name given to the first woman.  
**Exodus** (a going out). Name given to the second book of the Bible.  
**Exorcist** (casting out), Matt. 12: 27. One who pretended to cast out evil spirits.  
**Ezekiel** (God is strong or God doth strengthen), Ezek. 1: 3. The third of the major prophets.  
**Ezra** (help), Neh. 12: 1. Wrote the book which bears his name.

## F

- Felix** (happy), Acts 24: 26. A Roman officer who held Paul in prison.  
**Festus** (festival), Acts 24: 27. Roman officer who succeeded Felix.  
**First-born**, Ex. 13: 12. First male born into the family, who inherited the name and property of the father.  
**First Fruits**, Ex. 22: 29. First ripe fruit given to Jehovah.  
**Frankincense**, Ex. 30: 34-36. A sacrificial fumigation.

## G

- Gabbatha** (a platform), John 19: 13. Place where the judgment seat of Pilate was.  
**Gabriel** (man of God), Luke 1: 19. The angel that appeared to Elisabeth and Mary.  
**Gadarenes** (Gerasenes), Mark 5: 1. Place where Jesus healed two demoniacs.  
**Gaius** (Latin name), Acts 19: 29. A Macedonian who accompanied Paul in his travels.  
**Galatia** (land of the Gauls), Acts 18: 23. The central district of Asia Minor.  
**Galilean** (an inhabitant of Galilee), Acts 2: 7. The people of the northern part of Palestine or province of Galilee.  
**Galilee** (circuit), Luke 17: 11. The northern country of Palestine.  
**Gallio** (Latin name), Acts 18: 12. The Roman proconsul of Achaia when Paul was at Corinth.  
**Gamaliel** (recompense of God), Acts 5: 24. A noted teacher of the law in Jerusalem; Paul's teacher.  
**Gaza** (the fortified), Acts 8: 26. One of the cities of the Philistines.  
**Gennesaret** (garden of the princes), Matt. 14: 34. A name given to the fertile plains on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee.  
**Gentile** (nation), Acts 11: 18. Any one who was not of the Jewish race.  
**Gergesenes** (See Gadarenes).  
**Gethsemane** (an oil press), Matt. 26: 36. Garden near Jerusalem.  
**Gerizim** (cutter), Deut. 11: 26-29. Mountain in Ephraim.  
**Gibeath** (a hill), Josh. 15: 57. Located in Benjamin.  
**Gideon** (he that cuts down), Judges 6: 34. The fifth recorded judge.  
**Gilboa** (a bubbling spring), 1 Sam. 28: 4. Mountain where Saul was killed.  
**Golgotha** (skull), Matt. 27: 33. The Hebrew name of the spot where Christ was crucified.  
**Goliath** (an exile), 1 Sam. 17: 4. The famous giant whom David killed.  
**Gomorrah** (submersion), Gen. 14: 2-8. The city which was destroyed with fire from heaven.  
**Gospel** (good message), Rom. 1: 16. Good tidings of joy.  
**Greece, Greeks, Grecians**, Dan. 8: 21; Isa. 66: 19; Acts 20: 2. Names of the country and people who preceded the Roman Empire.

## H

- Hadad**, Gen. 25: 15. An early king of Edom.  
**Hades** (hell), Matt. 16: 18. Used in the revised version for "hell."  
**Hagar** (flight), Gen. 16: 1. An Egyptian handmaid of Sarah, concubine to Abraham and the mother of Ishmael.  
**Ham** (black), Gen. 14: 5. The name of one of the three sons of Noah.  
**Hannah** (grace), 1 Sam. 1: 2. One of the wives of Elkanah, and mother of Samuel.  
**Hazael** (whom God sees), 2 Kings 8: 7-15. A king of Damascus, anointed by Elisha.  
**Heber** (alliance), Gen. 46: 17. Grandson of Asher.  
**Hebrew** (from Eber, beyond, or on the other side), Gen. 14: 13. Posterity of Abraham.

- Hebron** (alliance), Josh. 15: 54. City about twenty miles south of Jerusalem.
- Hell** (Gehenna), Matt. 5: 22. Place of torment for the wicked.
- Hellenist** (Grecian), Acts 6: 1. Term applied to Greek-speaking Jews, or Grecian Jews.
- Herod** (hero like), Luke 3: 19. The Herod family were alien by race and Jewish in faith; Roman rulers over Palestine.
- Herodians** (from Herod), Matt. 22: 15. Party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family.
- Herodias** (from Herod), Matt. 14: 8-11. Granddaughter of Herod the Great.
- Hezekiah** (Jehovah strengtheneth), 2 Kings 18: 5. Thirteenth king of Judah and son of Ahaz.
- Hierapolis** (holy city), Col. 4: 13. A city of Phrygia.
- Hiram**, 2 Sam. 5: 11. The king of Tyre, who sent workmen and material to help build the temple.
- Hittites** (descendants of Heth), Josh. 9: 1. One of the Canaanitish tribes.
- Hophni**, 1 Sam. 2: 12. One of the wicked sons of Eli.
- Horeb** (desert), Ex. 3: 1. A mountain. (See Sinai.)
- Hosanna** (save, pray), Matt. 21: 9. The cry of the multitude on Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.
- Hosea** (salvation), 2 Kings 15: 30. One of the minor prophets.
- Hoshea** (salvation), Isa. 7: 16. Same as Hosea or Joshua.
- Hymeneus** (belonging to Hymen, the god of marriage), 1 Tim. 1: 20. He denied the true doctrine of the resurrection.

## I

- Ichabod** (inglorious), 1 Sam. 4: 21. The son of Phineas and grandson of Eli.
- Iconium**, Acts 14: 1. Paul visited this city with Barnabas on his first missionary tour. Located north of Antioch, in Pisidia.
- Illyrium**, Rom. 15: 9. District lying along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.
- Immanuel** (God with us), Matt. 1: 23. The name applied to Christ.
- Inn** (lodging place), Luke 2: 7. Similar to our rooming houses or hotels.
- Isaac** (laughter), Gen. 35: 27. The son of Sarah by Abraham.
- Isaiah** (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 1: 1. One of the major prophets of the Old Testament.
- Ishmael** (may God hear), Gen. 16: 15. Son of Abraham by Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid.
- Israel** (persevere with God, prince of God), Gen. 32: 23. Name given to Jacob and the nation which came from the twelve tribes.
- Issachar** (there is a reward), Gen. 30: 18. The ninth son of Jacob; one of the twelve tribes.
- Italy**, Acts 18: 2. A well-known country.

## J

- Jachin** (he doth establish), 1 Kings 7: 21. One of the two pillars which was set up in the porch of the temple.
- Jacob** (supplanter), Gen. 25: 26. Son of Isaac and Rebekah, twin brother of Esau.
- Jambres**, 2 Tim. 3: 8. One of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses.
- James** (the Greek form of "Jacob"), Matt. 10: 2. Son of Zebedee, brother of John, and one of the twelve apostles.
- Jannes**, 2 Tim. 3: 8. An Egyptian magician who joined Jambres in opposing Moses.
- Jason**, Acts 17: 5. Entertained Paul and Silas; attacked by Jewish mob.
- Jebusites** (from Jebus), Num. 13: 29. One of the Canaanitish tribes in Palestine.
- Jehoiada** (Jehovah knows), 2 Sam. 8: 18. High priest at one time.
- Jehoshaphat** (Jehovah hath judged), 1 Kings 15: 24. Fourth king of Judah, son of Asa.
- Jehovah** (I Am, the Eternal Living One), Lev. 24: 15. One of the names given to God.
- Jehu** (Jehovah is he), 2 Kings 9: 2. Founder of the fifth dynasty of the kings of Israel.
- Jephunneh** (it will be prepared), Num. 13: 6. Father of Caleb, a good spy.
- Jeremiah** (whom Jehovah appoints), Jer. 1: 1. One of the major prophets.
- Jericho** (place of fragrance), Josh. 13: 16. First city destroyed by Joshua; its walls were thrown by faith.
- Jeroboam** (whose people are many), 1 Kings 11: 28. The first king of the divided kingdom of Israel.
- Jerusalem** (the city of peace), 2 Chron. 25: 23. The religious and political capital of the Israelites.
- Jesse** (wealthy), Ruth 4: 18-22. The father of David, and son of Obed, and the son of Boaz, by the Moabitess, Ruth.



- Jesus** (Jehovah is salvation), Matt. 1: 21. One of the names given to Christ, the Messiah.
- Jew** (a man of Judah), Mark 7: 3. A name applied to the members of the kingdom of Judah after the separation of the ten tribes; later applied to all Israelites.
- Joab** (Jehovah is father), 2 Sam. 14: 1-20. Nephew of David and captain of his hosts.
- Job**, Job 1: 1. Probably one of the patriarchs.
- Joel** (Jehovah is God), 1 Sam. 8: 2. One of the minor prophets.
- Johanna** (grace or gift of God), Luke 3: 27. The name of a woman.
- John the Baptist** (Jehovah's gift), Matt. 3: 1. A forerunner of Christ.
- John** (from Johanan), Luke 1: 11. Name given to son of Zacharias, later called "John the Baptist."
- Jonah** (dove), 2 Kings 14: 25. The fifth of the minor prophets.
- Joppa** (beauty), Acts 11: 5. A town on the southwest coast of Palestine.
- Jordan** (the descender), Josh. 2: 7. The river which bounds the eastern border of Palestine.
- Joseph** (may he add), Gen. 37: 2. The elder of the two sons of Jacob by Rachel.
- Joshua** (Jehovah is salvation), Ex. 17: 9. Moses' minister and successor as leader of the children of Israel.
- Jot** (the English form of the Greek iota, the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet), Matt. 5: 18. It was formed like an English comma (,).
- Jubilee** (joyful shout), Lev. 25: 11. Every fiftieth year was called the year of Jubilee.
- Judah** (praised), Gen. 37: 26. The fourth son of Jacob by Leah.
- Judas Iscariot** (Judas of Kerioth), John 6: 71. The name of the betrayer of Jesus.
- Julius** (fr. Greek), Acts 27: 1. A Roman centurion.
- Jupiter** (a father that helps), Acts 14: 12. The national god of the Hellenic race.
- Justus** (just), Acts 18: 7. A Christian at Corinth with whom Paul lodged.

## K

- Kadesh, Kadesh-Barnea** (holy), Num. 13: 3. Place where Miriam died, and the farthest point reached in the wandering in the wilderness.
- Kidron, or Kedron** (turbid), Luke 22: 39. Name of brook or valley, southeast of Jerusalem.
- Kish** (a bow), 1 Chron. 23: 21. The father of Saul.
- Kohath** (assembly), Ex. 6: 16. One of the three sons of Levi.

## L

- Laban** (white), Gen. 24: 10. Father of Leah and Rachel; father-in-law of Jacob.
- Laodicea** (justice of the people), Col. 4: 16. A town in the Roman province of Asia.
- Laodiceans**, Col. 4: 16; Rev. 3: 14. The inhabitants of Laodicea.
- Lazarus** (whom God helps), John 11: 1. Brother of Martha and Mary; lived at Bethany; raised from the dead by Jesus.
- Leah** (weary), Gen. 29: 16. Daughter of Laban, first wife of Jacob.
- Lebanon** (white), Deut. 1: 7. Mountain range north of Palestine.
- Lehi** (jawbone), Judges 15: 9. A place in Judah.
- Levi** (joined), Gen. 29: 34. Name of the third son of Jacob by Leah.
- Levite** (joined), Luke 10: 32. One of the tribe of Levi.
- Leviticus**. Third book of the Bible.
- Libertines** (from liberty), Acts 6: 9. Applied to Jews who had been taken prisoners and then set free.
- Lois** (agreeable), 2 Tim. 1: 5. The grandmother of Timothy.
- Lord's Day** (first day of the week), Rev. 1: 10. Corresponds to our Sunday.
- Lot** (veil, or covering), Gen. 11: 27. The son of Haran and nephew of Abraham.
- Lucius**, Acts 13: 1. One of the teachers of Antioch.
- Luke** (light-giving), Acts 13: 1; Col. 4: 14. Traveled with Paul and wrote the book that bears his name.
- Lycania** (landing of Lycanon, or wolf land), Acts 14: 11. A province in Asia Minor.
- Lydia** (strife), Acts 16: 14. First European convert at Philippi.
- Lysias** (fr. Greek), Acts 23: 26. A Roman officer.
- Lystra**, Acts 16: 1. One of the cities visited by Paul on his first and second missionary tours; home of Timothy.

## M

- Macedonia** (extended land), 2 Cor. 8: 1. A province in Europe, north of Greece; Gospel first preached there by Paul.

- Magdalene** (inhabitant of Magadan), Matt. 27: 56. Mary Magdalene, present at crucifixion of Christ.
- Magi** (wise men), Matt. 2: 1-12. Those who visited the babe Jesus.
- Malachi** (my messenger), Author of the last book of the Old Testament.
- Malchus** (king, or kingdom), Matt. 26: 51. The name of the servant of the high priest whose right ear Peter cut off in the garden of Gethsemane.
- Mammon** (riches), Matt. 6: 24. Word used to personify wealth.
- Manaen** (comforter), Acts 13: 1. Foster brother of Herod and teacher and prophet in church at Antioch.
- Manasseh** (forgetting), Gen. 4: 51. The oldest son of Joseph.
- Manna** (What is this?), Ex. 16: 14-36. Food given the children of Israel in the wilderness.
- Manoah** (rest), Judges 13: 2. Father of Samson.
- Mark**, Acts 12: 12. One of the evangelists and writer of the book that bears his name.
- Marttha** (a lady), Luke 10:38. Sister of Lazarus and Mary.
- Mary** (a tear). A common name in the New Testament; mother of Jesus.
- Matthew** (gift of Jehovah), Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles and writer of the first book of the New Testament.
- Matthias** (gift of God), Acts 1: 26. The apostle elected to fill the place of the traitor, Judas.
- Melchizedek** (king of righteousness), Gen 14: 18-20. King and priest of God; type of Christ as priest.
- Melita** (premeditate), Acts 28: 1. An island in the Mediterranean Sea.
- Mercury** (herald of the gods), Acts 14: 12. The god of commerce and bargains.
- Mesach** (guest of a king), Dan. 1: 4. One of Daniel's friends in captivity.
- Mesopotamia** (between the rivers), Deut. 23: 4. Country between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- Messiah** (anointed), Matt. 20: 20. A prophetic name applied to Jesus.
- Methuselah** (man of the dart), Gen. 5: 25. The son of Enoch, and the oldest man recorded among the patriarchs.
- Midian** (strife), Gen. 25: 2. A son of Abraham by Keturah.
- Miletus**, Acts 20: 15. City on the coast, thirty-six miles to the south of Ephesus.
- Mint**, Luke 11: 42. An herb which the Jews used as their tithe.
- Mite**, Mark 12: 41-44. A coin current in Palestine in the time of Jesus, worth about one-fifth of a cent.
- Mizpah** (a watchtower), Josh. 18: 26. A city in Benjamin.
- Moab** (of his father), Deut. 2: 11. Son of Lot by his eldest daughter.
- Molech** (king), Jer. 49: 1. The god of the Ammonites.
- Moriah** (chosen by Jehovah), Gen. 22: 2. The mount where Abraham offered Isaac.
- Moses** (drawn), Ex. 2: 5. The leader of God's people.
- Myrrh**, Ex. 30: 23. One of the ingredients of the oil of holy ointment.
- Mysia** (land of beech trees), Acts 16: 7. Region about the frontier of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia.

## N

- Naaman** (pleasantness), 2 Kings 5: 18. Captain of the army of Syria; a leper, cleansed by Elisha.
- Nabal** (fool), 1 Sam. 25: 3. First husband of Abigail, one of David's wives.
- Naomi** (my delight), Ruth 1: 2. Wife of Elimelech and mother-in-law of Ruth.
- Naphtali** (wrestling), Gen. 30: 8. The fifth son of Jacob; son of Bilhah, one of Rachel's handmaids.
- Nathan** (a giver), 2 Sam. 7: 2. Name of the prophet who rebuked David.
- Nathaniel** (gift of God), John 1: 47. An early disciple of Jesus; some think the same as Bartholomew.
- Nazarene** (from Nazareth), Matt. 2: 23. A name sometimes given to Jesus.
- Nazareth** (the guarded one), Matt. 2: 23. A village in Galilee and home of Jesus.
- Nazarite** (one separated), Num. 6: 1-21. Person who takes a peculiar vow to be set apart from others for the service of God. Sometimes spelled "Nazirite."
- Neapolis** (new city), Acts 16: 11. First place Paul landed in Europe, about twelve miles from Philippi.
- Nebo** (prophet), Num. 32: 3. Mountain on the east side of the Jordan.
- Nebuchadnezzar** (may Nebo protect the crown), Jer. 46: 2-12. The most powerful of the Babylonian kings.
- Nehemiah** (consolation of the Lord), Ez. 2: 2. One of the leaders of the first exposit'on from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- New Testament** (new covenant). Name given to the Holy Scriptures after the advent of Christ.
- Nicodemus** (conqueror of the people), John 3: 1. A Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and teacher of Israel who visited Jesus at night.



**Nicolaitans** (followers of Nicholas), Rev. 2: 6. A sect whose deeds were severely condemned.

**Niger** (black), Acts 13: 1. One of the teachers and prophets in the church at Antioch.

**Nile** (blue, dark), Gen. 15: 8. The principal river of Egypt.

**Nimrod** (rebellion, or the valiant), Gen. 10: 8. A grandson of Ham.

**Nineveh** (abode of Ninus), Gen. 10: 11. The capital of the ancient kingdom of Assyria.

**Ninevites**, Luke 11: 30. The inhabitants of Nineveh, to whom Jonah preached.

**Numbers**. The fourth book of the Old Testament.

**Nymphas** (bridegroom), Col. 4: 15. A wealthy Christian in Laodicea.

## O

**Old Testament**. Name given to the Holy Scriptures before the advent of Christ.

**Olivet**, Mount of, 2 Sam. 15: 30; Acts 1: 12. Mount near Jerusalem.

**Omega**, Rev. 1: 8. Last letter of the Greek alphabet.

**Onesimus** (profitable, useful), Col. 4: 9. The name of the servant of Philemon.

**Ophir** (abundance), 1 Chron. 29: 4. A seaport from which Solomon obtained gold for the temple.

## P

**Padan-aram** (tableland of Aram), Gen. 28: 2. Name applied to country which bordered on the Euphrates to distinguish it from the mountainous district.

**Palestine** (land of strangers), Ex. 15: 14. One name for the land of Canaan.

**Palsy** (contracted from paralysis), Matt. 12: 10-13. A disease which caused the loss of the power of motion.

**Pamphylia** (of every tribe), Acts 13: 13. One of the provinces on the coast of Asia Minor.

**Paphos** (boiling or hot), Acts 13: 6. City on Island of Cyprus, which Paul and Barnabas visited on first missionary journey.

**Parable** (placed beside, a comparison), Matt. 24: 32. A form of teaching by comparison.

**Paradise** (orchard of pleasure, pleasure ground), 2 Cor. 12: 4. A term applied figuratively to the celestial dwelling of the righteous.

**Parthians** (from Parthia), Acts 2: 9. People who lived in Parthia.

**Passover** (commemorating the death angel's passing over the houses of Israel in Egypt), Ex. 12: 1-51. The first of the three great annual feasts of the Jews, held on the fourteenth day of the first month.

**Patmos**, Rev. 1: 9. Name of an island in the Aegean Sea, twenty miles south of Samos; place where John was banished.

**Patriarch** (father of a tribe), Acts 7: 8. Name given to the head of a family or tribe in Old Testament times.

**Paul** (small, little), Acts 23: 6. Name given to the apostle to the Gentiles.

**Peninnah** (coral, or pearl), 1 Sam. 1: 2. One of Elkanah's wives.

**Pentateuch** (five). Greek name given to the first five books of the Old Testament.

**Pentecost** (fiftieth), Acts 2: 1. Feast which came fifty days after the Passover.

**Perga** (fr. Greek), Acts 13: 13. A city in Pamphylia.

**Pergamos** (height, elevation), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Mysia, about three miles to the north of the River Caicus.

**Pergamum**, Rev. 1: 11. Same as Pergamos.

**Persia** (pure, splendid), Ezek. 38: 5. Name given to an ancient empire.

**Peter** (a rock or stone), John 1: 42. Name given to Simon, the brother of Andrew, one of the twelve apostles.

**Pharaoh**, Ex. 1: 8. Common title of the kings of Egypt.

**Pharisees**, Matt. 15: 7. A religious sect among the Jews. They believed in a resurrection of the dead.

**Philadelphia** (brotherly love), Rev. 3: 9. Town on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.

**Philemon** (loving), Col. 4: 9. Name of Christian to whom Paul addressed his epistle in behalf of Onesimus.

**Philetus** (beloved), 2 Tim. 2: 17. Associated with Hymeneus.

**Philip** (lover of horses), John 1: 44. One of the twelve apostles.

**Philistines** (immigrants), Jer. 47: 4. One of the tribes that inhabited Caphtor, or Crete.

**Phinehas** (mouth of brass), 1 Sam. 1: 3. Son of Eli.

**Phebe** (radiant), Rom. 16: 1. The name of a Christian woman.

**Phoenicia** (land of palm trees), 2 Sam. 5: 11. Country on east coast of Mediterranean Sea.

**Phrygia** (dry, barren), Acts 16: 6. Name of a province in Asia Minor.

**Pilate** (armed with a spear), Luke 13: 1. Judge of Roman court who permitted Christ to be crucified.

**Pisgah** (peak), Num. 21: 20. Highest point of Mount Nebo.



- Pontus** (the sea), Acts 2: 9. Province of Asia Minor.  
**Pretorium** (palace), Matt. 27: 27. Place where court was held.  
**Priest**, Gen. 14: 18. One who officiated at the altar.  
**Priscilla** (from Prisca, ancient), Acts 18: 26. Wife of Aquila.  
**Prophet** (one who speaks for another), Ex. 15: 20. God's mouthpiece to the people.  
**Proselyte** (a stranger, a newcomer), Matt. 23: 15. Name given by Jews to foreigners who accepted the Jewish religion.  
**Proverbs** (a comparison), Num. 21: 27. Books supposed to have been compiled by Solomon.  
**Publican** (Roman taxgatherer), Luke 3: 13. Name of one who gathered taxes for the Roman government.  
**Pyrrhus**, Acts 20: 4. The father of Sopater of Berea.

## Q

- Quartus** (fourth), Rom. 16: 23. A Christian of Corinth.  
**Quaternion**, Acts 12: 4. A guard of four soldiers.

## R

- Rabbi** (master), Matt. 23: 7. Title signifying "teacher."  
**Raca** (fool), Matt. 5: 22. A term of reproach.  
**Rachel** (ewe, or sheep), Gen. 29: 31. Younger daughter of Laban, and beloved wife of Jacob.  
**Rahab** (fierceness, pride), Isa. 51: 9. A name sometimes given to Egypt.  
**Rebekah** (tensurer), Gen. 22: 23. Sister of Laban, wife of Isaac.  
**Red Sea** (a seaweed resembling wool), Ex. 14: 2. Body of water crossed by Israelites.  
**Rehoboam** (enlarger of the people), 1 Kings 14: 21. Son of Solomon and first king of Judah.  
**Reign** (to rule), 2 Tim. 2: 12. To govern, to rule over.  
**Reuben** (behold a son), Gen. 29: 32. Jacob's eldest son.  
**Revelation**. Last book of the New Testament.  
**Rhoda** (rose), Acts 12: 13. The name of a maid who announced Peter's arrival.  
**Rome**, Rev. 17: 9. The name of a world empire.  
**Rue**, Luke 11: 42. A garden plant titiable in the time of the Savior.  
**Rufus** (red), Mark 15: 21. Name of an early Christian.  
**Ruth** (a female friend), Ruth 1: 4. The Moabitess who became the wife of Boaz.

## S

- Sabaoth** (armies), James 5: 4. Name applied to the Lord.  
**Sabbath** (a day of rest), Ex. 16: 22. The seventh day of the week.  
**Sabbath Day's Journey**, Acts 1: 12. About three-fourths of a mile.  
**Sabbatical Year**, Ex. 23: 10. Each seventh year.  
**Sadducees** (followers of Zadok), Matt. 3: 7. Religious sect opposed to the Pharisees.  
**Salamis** (salt), Acts 13: 5. City in the eastern part of the Island of Cyprus.  
**Samaria** (watch mountain), 1 Kings 16: 23. Name of a city thirty miles north of Jerusalem; also of the country surrounding it.  
**Samaritan** (watch mountain, Samaria), Luke 10: 33. An inhabitant of Samaria.  
**Samson** (like the sun), Judges 15: 20. One of the strongest men; one of the judges of Israel.  
**Samuel** (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3: 1-18. The last judge of Israel.  
**Sanhedrin** (a council chamber), Matt. 26: 57. The supreme court of the Jewish nation.  
**Sapphira** (bright color, beautiful), Acts 5: 1-11. Wife of Ananias.  
**Sarah** (princess), Gen. 20: 12. Wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac.  
**Sarai** (my princess), Gen. 11: 29. First name of Sarah.  
**Sardis** (red), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Asia Minor, and capital of Lydia.  
**Satan** (adversary), Matt. 16: 23. Name applied to the devil.  
**Saul** (desired), 2 Sam. 1: 23. Name of the first king of Israel; first name of the apostle Paul.  
**Seeva** (implement), Acts 19: 14. A Jew residing at Ephesus when Paul visited that city.  
**Scribes** (to write), 1 Kings 4: 3. Those who transcribed the law.  
**Scythian**, Col. 3: 11. Name applied to the people who lived north of the Black Sea.  
**Septuagint** (the seventy). The Greek Version of the Old Testament.  
**Sergius Paulus**, Acts 13: 7. Name of the proconsul of Cyprus.  
**Sheba** (an oath), 2 Sam. 20: 1-22. Name of queen who visited Solomon.  
**Shechem** (back or shoulders), Jno. 4: 5. A city of Samaria.  
**Shem** (name), Gen. 5: 32. The eldest son of Noah.  
**Shiloh** (place of rest), Judges 21: 19. A city of Ephraim.

- Shittim** (the acacias), Num. 25: 1. Name of country opposite Jericho; also species of wood.
- Silas** (woody), Acts 15: 22. Traveling companion of Paul; same as Silvanus.
- Siloam** (sent), John 9: 7. Name of pool in the days of Jesus.
- Simeon** (heard), Gen. 29: 32. Second son of Jacob; common name among the Jews.
- Simon** (hearing), Luke 4: 38. Another name for Peter.
- Sinai** (thorny), Ex. 19: 1. Mountain where the law was given.
- Smyrna** (myrrh), Rev. 2: 8-11. A city of Asia Minor, situated on Aegean Sea, forty miles north of Ephesus.
- Sodom** (burning), Mark 6: 11. Ancient city of Syria, destroyed by fire.
- Solomon** (peaceful), 2 Sam. 12: 24. David's son who succeeded him to the throne.
- Sopater** (savior of his father), Acts 20: 4. One of the companions of Paul.
- Stephen** (crown), Acts 6: 5. Name of one of the seven chosen at Jerusalem; the first Christian martyr.
- Susanna** (a lily). One of the women who ministered to Jesus.
- Sycamore** (mulberry), Amos 7: 14. A fruit tree in Palestine.
- Symeon** (Simon), Acts 13: 1. A teacher and prophet in the church at Antioch.
- Synagogue** (congregation), Matt. 13: 54. Place where the Jews met for worship.
- Syntychē** (with fate), Phil. 4: 2. Female member of the church at Philippi.
- Syria**, Judg. 10: 6. Name of country.
- Syrophœnician**, Mark 7: 26. A mixed race of people.

## T

- Tabernacle** (tent), Ex. 25: 9. Constructed by Moses as a place of worship.
- Tabitha** (gazelle), Matt. 9: 25; Mark 5: 41. Also called "Dorcas."
- Tares** (darnel), Matt. 13: 25. A weed similar to wheat in its early stages.
- Tarsus**, Acts 9: 11. Chief town of Cilicia, home of Paul.
- Taverns, the Three** (inn), Acts 28: 15. On the Appian road, where Paul lodged for a time.
- Temple**, 1 Kings 7: 15-22. House built by Solomon for worship.
- Ten Commandments**, Ex. 34: 28. The name given to the Decalogue.
- Tertullus** (fr. Greek), Acts 24: 1. A Roman orator.
- Tetrarch**, Matt. 14: 1. Name given to the governor of the fourth part of the country.
- Theophilus** (friend of God), Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1. Person to whom Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts of Apostles.
- Thessalonica**, Acts 17: 2. Town in Macedonia where Paul established a church; wrote two letters to the church.
- Thomas** (twin), Matt. 13: 55. One of the apostles.
- Thyatira**, Rev. 2: 20. A city on the borders of Mysia.
- Tiberias**, John 6: 1. Another name given to the Sea of Galilee.
- Timnah** (portion), Judges 14: 1. Concubine of Samson.
- Timothy** (worshipping God), Acts 16: 1. Paul's companion. Paul wrote two letters to him.
- Titus** (honorable), Gal. 2: 1. An early Christian to whom Paul wrote one letter.
- Transfiguration**, Matt. 17: 1-13. The event in the earthly life of Christ which marked his glorified state.
- Troas**, Acts 16: 8. A seaport of Asia Minor.
- Trogyllium**, Acts 20: 15. A town in Asia Minor.
- Trophimus** (nutritious), Acts 21: 27. Accompanied Paul to Jerusalem.
- Tychicus** (fateful), Acts 20: 4. Companion of Paul on some of his journeys.
- Tyrannus** (sovereign), Acts 19: 9. Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus.
- Tyre** (a rock), Matt. 15: 21. City on the east coast of the Mediterranean.

## U

- Ur** (light, or the moon city), Gen. 11: 28. The land of Abraham's nativity.
- Uriah** (light of Jehovah), 2 Sam. 23: 39. One of David's brave men.
- Uzzah** (strength), 2 Sam. 6: 6. Priest who touched the ark and died.

## V

- Version**. A translation.
- Vision**, Luke 2: 25, 26. A revelation.
- Vows**, Gen. 28: 18-22. A solemn promise made to God to perform or to abstain from performing a certain thing.
- Vulgate**, The. The Latin version of the Bible.

## W

- Watches of Night**, 1 Sam. 11: 11. The Jews divided the night into military watches instead of hours.



**Wave Offering**, Ex. 29: 34. An offering which accompanied the peace offerings.  
**Way**, Acts 19: 9. A term used for the Gospel or Plan of Salvation.

**Y**

**Year**, Gen. 1: 14. The highest division of time.

**Yoke** (subjection). 1 Kings 12: 4. An implement for working oxen; sign of authority.

**Z**

**Zacchaeus** (pure), Luke 19: 5. A tax collector, publican who lived near Jericho.

**Zachariah** (remembered by Jehovah), 2 Kings 10: 30. Fourteenth king of Israel.

**Zacharias** (Greek form of "Zachariah"), Luke 1: 5. Father of John the Baptist.

**Zadok** (just), 1 Chron. 24: 3. Name of priest in time of David.

**Zebah** and **Zalmunna** (deprived of protection), Judges 8: 5-21. Two kings of Midian.

**Zebedee** (my gift), Matt. 4: 21. Father of James and John.

**Zebulun** (a habitation), Gen. 30: 20. The tenth of the sons of Jacob.

**Zechariah**, Ex. 5: 1, 6. The eleventh in order of the twelve minor prophets.

**Zenas**, Tit. 3: 13. A believer who is described as "the lawyer."

**Zephaniah** (hidden by Jehovah), Zeph. 1: 1. The ninth in order of the twelve minor prophets.

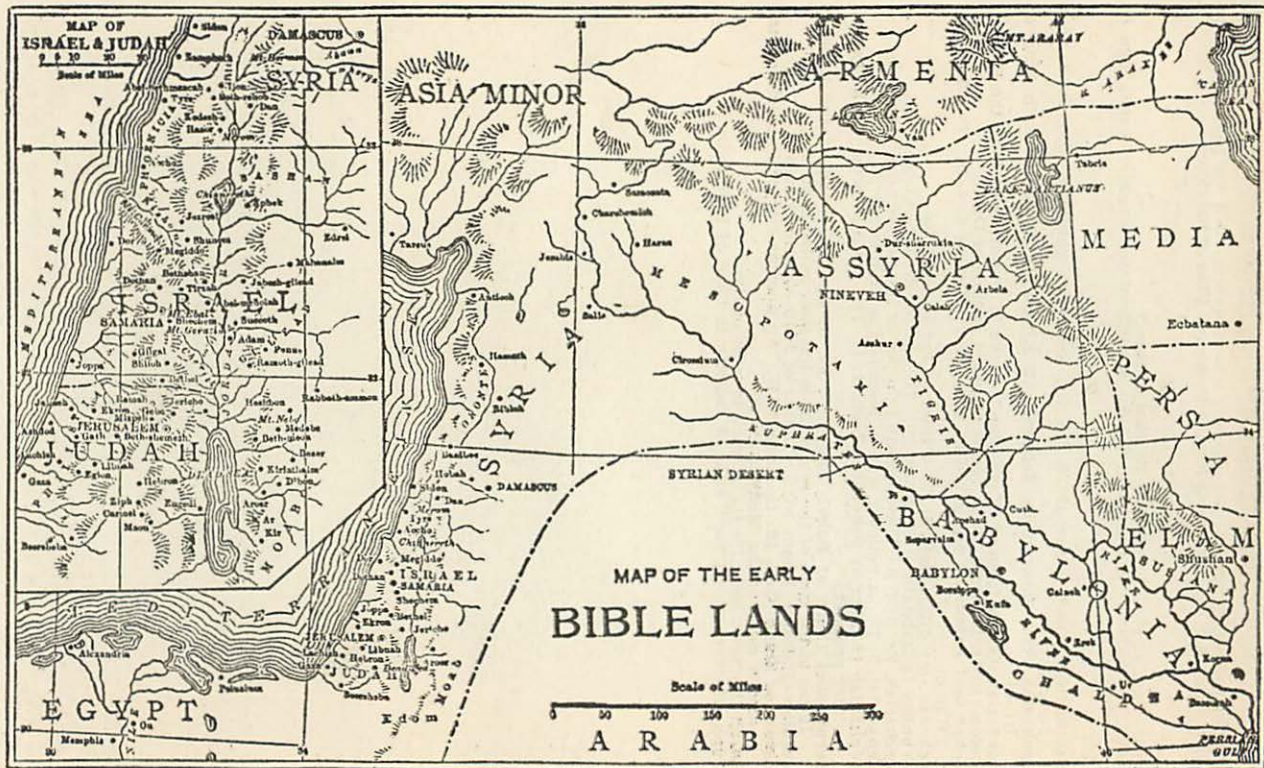
**Zerubbabel** (born at Babel, Babylon), Ez. 6: 18. The head of the tribe of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity.

**Zeruiah** (Balsam), 1 Sam. 26: 6. Mother of Joab, sister of David.

**Zidon**, or **Sidon**, Gen. 10: 15; Luke 6: 17. An ancient city of Phenicia on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.

**Zorah** (hornet), Josh. 19: 41. A town in tribe of Dan.

**Zuph** (honeycomb), 1 Sam. 9: 5. A country in tribe of Benjamin.





# FIRST QUARTER

## LIFE AND WORK OF PETER

AIM: To learn from the experiences, activities, and teachings of Peter how the spirit and ideals of Christ may find practical expression in our experience and life today.

Lesson I—January 1, 1939

### PETER CALLED TO SERVE

John 1: 40-42; Luke 5: 1-11

40 One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Si'môn Peter's brother.

41 He findeth first his own brother Si'môn, and saith unto him, We have found the Mēs-si'āh (which is, being interpreted, Christ).

42 He brought him unto Jē'sūs. Jē'sūs looked upon him, and said, Thou art Si'môn the son of John: thou shalt be called Cē'phās (which is by interpretation, Peter).

1 Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Ġēn-nēs'ā-rēt:

2 And he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the boats, which was Si'môn's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat.

4 And when he had left speaking, he said unto Si'môn, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Si'môn answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets.

6 And when they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking:

7 And they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

8 But Si'môn Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jē'sūs' knees, saying, Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so were also James and John, sons of Zēb'ē-dēe, who were partners with Si'môn. And Jē'sūs said unto Si'môn, Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." (Mark 1: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 6: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 26.	M.	Becoming Acquainted with Jesus (John 1: 35-42)
December 27.	T.	The Call of Peter (Luke 5: 1-11)
December 28.	W.	Willingness to Serve (Luke 5: 27-32)
December 29.	T.	The Need of Helpers (Matt. 9: 35-38)
December 30.	F.	Divine Partnership (John 15: 7-16)
December 31.	S.	Refusing to Serve (Matt. 19: 16-21)
January 1.	S.	Worthy of the Call (Eph. 4: 1-13)



## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Both Usher and Hales put the date of the first section of our lesson at A.D. 27. This is a little confusing to the average Bible reader, for they know that Jesus was about thirty years old when he was baptized, and that the events of the lesson occurred after his baptism. The confusion grows out of a mistaken calculation made by Dionysius Exiguus in the first half of the sixth century of the Christian era. Later scholars, with better facilities, decided that Jesus was born four years earlier than Dionysius had calculated. By that time, however, the world was so generally using the date as set by Dionysius that it was not thought worth while to change it. But had it been important for us to know the exact year in which Jesus was born, the Bible would have been more explicit as to the time of his birth. The incidents recorded in the second section of our lesson occurred, according to Usher, A.D. 27; according to Hales, A.D. 28. As the Bible deals very little in dates, it is not necessary that we disturb ourselves about them. The incidents recorded and the lessons taught are the main things. If we know these, we do well.

*Places.*—The incidents in the first part of our lesson must have occurred near the river Jordan, near the place where John was baptizing. The incidents of the second part of our lesson occurred at the Sea of Galilee, or, as Luke calls it, the Lake of Gennesaret. The Sea of Galilee, dear to the hearts of every Christian, "is only an expansion of the river Jordan, which enters it from the northeast, and makes its exit from the southwest. It is 680 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea; is eight miles wide and thirteen miles long, with an average depth of 150 feet. It is rather bell-shaped, with its widest part to the north. The water is fresh." The scene of our lesson must have been near Capernaum, which was near the north end of the Sea of Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus, Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, and the multitudes. We will learn more about the persons named as we proceed with our lesson.

*Lesson Links.*—John does not mention the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, but it must have been after these temptations that he returned to the place where John was baptizing. When Jesus returned John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." "Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." These two disciples lodged with Jesus that day. Before reading the next paragraph, the student should study the first section of our lesson. Many things occurred in the life of Jesus between the two sections of our lesson. Before leaving the regions of the river Jordan Jesus gathered about him two other disciples, Philip and Nathanael. He then went into Galilee, and attended a wedding feast with his disciples at Cana of Galilee. (John 2: 1-11.) It appears that he then visited Capernaum, and then went up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover. (John 2: 12-25.) Here he had the celebrated conversation with Nicodemus, after which he went out into the country of Judea, and engaged for a time in baptizing people. (John 3: 1-22.) He did

this baptizing through the agency of his disciples. (John 4: 1.) Even today the Lord baptizes through the agency of his servants. Hence, baptism is something the Lord does to us, and not what we ourselves do. After Jesus ceased baptizing in Judea, he started back to Galilee. On his journey through Samaria, he stopped two days in a city of Samaria, where many believed on him. (John 4: 4-43.) When he reached Nazareth, he preached in the synagogue, but his old neighbors became so enraged at him that they sought to kill him. From that city he passed through Cana, and went on down to Capernaum.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Andrew Brings His Brother Simon Peter to Jesus (John 1: 40-42)

As John habitually mentions the names of others, but not of himself, the other disciple mentioned must have been John. Andrew is mentioned by name. Andrew had heard John the Baptist bear witness concerning Jesus, and had also been associated with Jesus that day. He had seen and heard enough that day to convince him that Jesus was the long-looked-for Messiah. He would have his own brother Simon to share with him this happy knowledge and fellowship. "He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus." Andrew followed the natural order; his first thought was for his brother Simon, and thus became instrumental in bringing Simon to Christ. We know little of Andrew's activities as an apostle, but it is not likely that he ever did a greater work than he did in bringing Simon to Jesus. He brought one to Christ who later brought thousands of others to Jesus the Christ; and Peter still lives and blesses thousands in his writings. And this is a fact worth serious consideration. Peter was impulsive, but Jesus could see in him what others could not see, namely, a steadfastness of purpose that would not give up. "Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)." Cephas was the native word for rock; Peter, the Greek word for rock, or stone.

#### Jesus Teaches from a Boat (Luke 5: 1-3)

Before studying this part of the lesson the student should carefully read the second paragraph of Lesson Links. Jesus had made a tour through the cities of Galilee, and preached in their synagogues. He had created such interest that great multitudes followed him down to the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Luke calls the sea "the lake of Gennesaret." It must have been a great multitude that followed Jesus, for they pressed upon him. All wanted to be near him. None of them wanted to take, so to speak, a back seat. He was too crowded to do effective teaching. The near-by fishermen were busy washing their nets, but they were ready to drop their work any minute and do his bidding. Their empty boats were near by. One of these busy fishermen was Simon Peter. Jesus entered into Simon's boat, "and asked him to put out a little from the land." On a later occasion he adopted the same means of escape from the



pressure of the crowd. (Matt. 13: 2; Mark 4: 1.) Sitting in the boat a little way from the shore, with the people lined up along the sloping shore, he could be easily heard by all.

### **A Great Multitude of Fishes (Verses 4-7)**

When Jesus had finished speaking, he ordered Peter to row out into deep water, and let down his nets. That seemed to Peter to be a waste of time and effort. He and his partners had toiled all night and had caught nothing. He felt that it would be useless to make any further effort in that part of the lake at that time; but he would not let his judgment interfere with obedience to his Master. "At thy word I will let down the nets." The prompt obedience of Peter and those with him in the boat was rewarded with the inclosing in their nets of a great multitude of fishes, so much so that they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come to their assistance. Most likely Andrew was with Peter; the other partners were James and John.

### **Peter Confesses His Sinfulness (Verses 8-10a)**

When Peter saw the great draught of fishes, he felt so unworthy in the presence of one so great that he fell down before Jesus, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is well for people to feel their own littleness and unworthiness. There will be no effort to amend our ways unless we feel our imperfections; but let us not center our minds so much on our sinfulness and imperfections that we give up in despair, and say, What is the use of trying to do better? Rather let us relying on God say with Paul, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." (Phil 4: 13.)

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were partners in a fishing business. It seems that Zebedee, the father of James and John, was also a partner in that company. (Matt. 4: 21, 22.) They owned their own boats and fishing nets. This required a considerable outlay of money. They were not fishing for sport; fishing was their business—their means of livelihood. That business required determination, patience, and endurance—qualities that would be needed in their work as apostles. There is perseverance in men who can toil all night, and catch nothing, and then go on trying. They would meet similar conditions and have similar experiences in their preaching the gospel. This may give us some idea as to why Jesus selected so many fishermen to be apostles.

### **They Left All and Followed Him (Verses 10b, 11)**

"And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." What was true of Peter in this respect would be true of any others he chose to be apostles. Hence, Mark reports Jesus as saying to all these men, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." (Mark 1: 17.) But before they could be fishers of men, they must follow Jesus in his journeys, and come to know and to love him with an undying love. They must be taught and trained by him, and they must gain some experience to prepare them the better for their work. Even then they would need additional help, so that their teaching would bear the stamp of infallibility. Hence, Jesus later promised them the Holy Spirit, and

charged them not to begin their work as fishers of men till they were endued with power from on high. (See John 14: 16, 17, 26; 16: 7-13; Luke 24: 46-49; Acts 1: 4, 5, 8.) "And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him." But it is not to be supposed that they abandoned their property without any thought as to what was to become of it. Certainly James and John, and perhaps also Peter and Andrew, left their property with Zebedee. (Mark 1: 20.) Their frequent use of boats later indicates their continued ownership of them. Neither, in following Jesus, did they follow a stranger. They had been with him on numerous occasions, but had not hitherto been called on to become his constant companions.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

A child of God may be instrumental in bringing others to the Savior, and in this way save others. "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 16.)

These men had not been spoiled by the niceties of polite society—they had not been taught to sacrifice their convictions in order to be agreeable. Nor had they been trained to sacrifice the right for political advantages. They were unspoiled.

Every child of God should be a fisher of men—all should become teachers. "For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God." (Heb. 5: 12.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The apostles of Christ—their work.  
The character of Peter.  
How we may bring others to Christ.  
Following Christ.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text.

### Lesson Settings

Discuss the time, places, and persons.  
Give the facts in Lesson Links.

### John 1: 40-42

What two disciples heard John say,  
"Behold, the Lamb of God"?  
What did these two disciples do?  
What then did Andrew do?  
Why was this such a great deed?  
What additional name did Jesus give  
Simon?  
What does this name mean?

### Luke 5: 1-3

Give the activities of Jesus between  
the two sections of our lesson.  
How came such a multitude to be  
with Jesus?  
What were his disciples doing?

How did Jesus manage to speak to  
the crowd?

On what other occasion did he adopt  
this same means of escape from the  
pressure of the multitude?

### Verses 4-7

What then did Jesus order Peter to  
do?  
What reply did Peter make?  
Is there a lesson in that to us?  
What resulted from this obedience?  
Who were the partners?

### Verses 8-10a

What did Peter then say to the Lord?  
Why is a feeling of sinfulness need-  
ful?  
How may that feeling be carried too  
far?  
What is the remedy?  
Give the names of these business  
partners.



What shows that they had some capital?

What qualities were necessary in this business?

Why would these qualities be needed in their future work?

**Verses 10b, 11**

How did Jesus speak of their future occupation?

What was first necessary for them to do?

What additional help was promised, and why?

When they brought their boats to land, what did they do?

Would it have been right for them to so suddenly follow a stranger?

What became of their property?

Discuss the reflections.

**Lesson II—January 8, 1939**

**PETER COMMENDED AND REBUKED**

Matt. 16: 13-25

13 Now when Jē'sūs came into the parts of Cæs-ā-rē'a Phī-līp'pī, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?

14 And they said, Some say John the Bāp'tist; some, Ē-lī'jāh; and others, Jēr-ē-mī'ah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?

16 And Sīmōn Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jē'sūs answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Sīmōn Bār-Jō'nāh: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hā'dēs shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

21 From that time began Jē'sūs to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jē-ru'sā-lēm, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

22 And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

24 Then said Jē'sūs unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16: 16.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Col. 1: 9-18.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

January 2.	M.	Peter Recognizes His Lord (Matt. 16: 13-16)
January 3.	T.	Christ Commends Peter (Matt. 16: 17-20)
January 4.	W.	Peter Rebuked (Matt. 16: 21-25)
January 5.	T.	Winning the Approval of Jesus (Matt. 10: 34-42)
January 6.	F.	The Faith of the Centurion (Matt. 8: 5-13)
January 7.	S.	Intolerance Rebuked (Luke 9: 51-55)
January 8.	S.	The Preeminence of Christ (Col. 1: 9-18)

**LESSON SETTINGS**

**Time.**—A.D. 29 or 30.

**Place.**—Near Cesarea Philippi. "This was a city at the foot of Mount Hermon, which rises some seven or eight thousand feet above



it, and at the more eastern of the two principal sources of the Jordan. It was built on a limestone terrace, and was strongly fortified. It was a very ancient city, and had been known by the name of Panium; but it had been recently improved by Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis, and called by him *Cesarea Philippi*, in honor of himself and the reigning Caesar."—*McGarvey*.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples. How many disciples were in this company we do not know. It is too often taken for granted that only the twelve accompanied Jesus in his journeys; but the words of Peter show that others were with them "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us." (Acts 1: 21, 22.)

*Lesson Links.*—Between our last lesson and this Jesus did much teaching and performed many great miracles. This teaching and these miracles had gradually led the disciples into a deeper insight into his powers and person. During the same time the Pharisees had become more and more bitter in their enmity toward him, and they had become more aggressive in their opposition to him. We marvel at their blind hostility; for they were expecting the Messiah, and they knew that Jesus performed many miracles. Because Jesus did not come in the way they had mapped out for the Messiah to come, they rejected him. It is possible that those who are now engaged in forming and propagating definite plans for the Lord's second coming may be found, like the Pharisees, rejecting him because he did not come as they thought the scriptures foretold.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Opinions About Jesus (Verses 13, 14)

The hostility of the Pharisees was increasing daily; they were hounding every step of Jesus. In the midst of their heated opposition very little teaching could be done. Even the disciples would be so stirred up and so indignant that they could not think calmly on the teaching of Jesus. It is probable that these conditions prompted Jesus to take his disciples on this journey up into the regions of *Cesarea Philippi*, so as to gain some degree of quietness. "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" What the Pharisees said about him was well known; the question must therefore have related to the common man. Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but could not do so unless they had the right attitude toward him. Every one who had seen Jesus, or even heard of him, had formed some sort of opinion about him, or else had come to firmly believe in him as the Savior of men. Men could not be indifferent about him. His person and mission challenged the attention of men. It is even so now. Some thought that John the Baptist had arisen from the dead. Even Herod shared in this opinion. (Matt. 14: 2; Luke 9: 7.) Others thought some of the older prophets had risen from the dead. There is no proof in this, as some commentators claim, that the Jews believed in the transmigration of souls. The people had merely formed the opinion that one of the prophets had risen from the dead. And so far as these opinions went, one was as good as another. But it is singular, that, since they recognized him as a prophet, they did not believe what he said.

### The Voice of Faith (Verses 15, 16)

Jesus had selected his apostles for a great work. It would take more than opinion to fit them for that work. Besides, they were soon to pass through great trials and sorrow, and it would also require great faith to sustain them. Jesus had taught them and performed many wonderful works before them. If they had not now come to firmly believe in him, they had failed him. For their own good he would have them to openly declare themselves. "But who say ye that I am?" The question was put to all, and Peter answered for all: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He did not hesitate; he did not say, "Well, in the midst of so much opposition and variety of opinions, how are we unlearned men to know what to think?" They were able to weigh evidence, and to form conclusions, regardless of the enmity of the Pharisees or the opinions of the people. Christ is the Greek for the Hebrew Messiah. The Son of God expresses his divine nature, his deity. He is the Son of God in a sense in which no mere man is a son of God. The truth that Peter confessed is the central truth of all revelation, the foundation upon which rests the whole structure of Christianity. Eliminate that truth, and the Bible is an empty shell and Christianity a huge fabrication. Jesus, not Jesus and the church, is the Christ of Peter's confession.

### "I Will Build My Church . . . I Will Give unto Thee the Keys . . ." (Verses 17-20)

Peter had come into the possession of a truth that was a blessing to him here, and infinitely more so in the world to come. One must believe the truth that Peter confessed in order to be saved. Simon Bar-Jonah means Simon the son of Jonah. Flesh and blood had not revealed to Simon the great truth that he had confessed—God had revealed that to him. No intuition, no human reasoning, nor fleshly relationship, had revealed this to Peter. It is true that the Messiah had to be of the family of David, and that Jesus was of the family of David, but many others were of the family of David. Neither had God revealed it to Simon in some mysterious way. The miracles, wonders, and signs that Jesus did did not tell who he was—they merely showed that God was with him. Any fair-minded person knew that God was not with an impostor. Peter knew therefore that Jesus was what he claimed to be. He may also have heard God acknowledge him at his baptism. Jesus had not before this announced anything about a church; the time had now come to do so. "Upon this rock I will build my church." The use of the future tense shows that the church had not then been built. On what was it to be built? On Peter? The language does not so indicate. Jesus did not say to Peter, "On thee I will build my church." The church could not have existed without a foundation; but it would have been built had Peter never been born, or had he turned traitor like Judas. Peter is not the foundation of its existence. The church was not built on Jesus as a person; he was the builder. It was built upon the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. That is the foundation of the whole superstructure of Christianity; take that truth away, and there is no foundation for anything that per-



tains to Christianity. But Paul settles the matter in few words: "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3: 11.) Paul was here speaking of the foundation of the church of God, and did not mean that men could not lay other foundations for other structures, but meant that there was just this one foundation upon which a church of Christ could be built. Again, Peter was not the foundation, for he could not have the keys of the building and be its foundation too. The word keys is here used in a figurative sense, and means authority. There is no special significance in the fact that the word is plural. Peter did not use the one key to open one door for the Jews to enter and another door for the Gentiles to enter. They all entered in the same way. Jesus gave his own explanation as to what he meant by keys: "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This same authority was conferred upon all the apostles. (See John 20: 21-23.) Later Paul said, "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 11: 5; 12: 11.) Peter therefore had no preeminence over Paul. They could bind and loose by telling people what the will of God was. In and of themselves they had no power or authority. They were not even allowed to begin their work till they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The source of their authority was the Holy Spirit in them—they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. As they all had the same measure of the Holy Spirit, they all had the same authority. Concerning these matters read John 14: 16, 17, 26; 16: 7-14; Luke 24: 46-49; Acts 1: 4, 5, 8; 2: 1-4.

*Tell No Man.*—The apostles had not been announcing Jesus as the Christ; they had not been ready for that, nor had the time yet come for them to do so. Till they knew the nature of his kingdom, they were not ready to announce him as king. "Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ." With their imperfect ideas as to his Messiahship, they would stir up more antagonism on the part of the Pharisees by announcing him as the Messiah, and would likely stir up the Roman authorities. If they announced him as about to set up such a kingdom as the Jews expected, the Roman authorities would consider him guilty of treason. Hence, the disciples must hold their peace till they were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit.

### Jesus Speaks of His Coming Sufferings and Death (Verse 21)

"From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed." The Jewish high court was made up from these classes. Of them he would suffer many things besides his death. He must suffer the lies and slanders of his enemies, the betrayal of Judas, the agonies of Gethsemane, the cowardice of his apostles, and the taunts and cruelties connected with his trial. Previous to this Jesus had given obscure intimations of his coming death, but no one understood what he meant. Now he tells them plainly of his approaching death, and that it would be by the decree of the authorities in Jerusalem. "And the third day be raised up." In reporting this same statement Mark uses these

words: "And after three days rise again." In the Jewish method of counting time, "after three days" and "on the third day" meant the same. "After three days" meant after three days had come, not after three days had passed. (1 Kings 12: 5, 12.)

### **Peter's Rashness Rebuked (Verses 22, 23)**

"And Peter took him," evidently to one side, "and began to rebuke him." This was a rash thing for Peter to do, but he could not see why Jesus the Messiah and Son of God should allow himself to be put to death. Besides, how could he be the Messiah, if he were killed? Ignorance was at the bottom of his rashness, and his ignorance and rashness show that the apostles were not yet prepared to preach to others that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus rebuked Peter for his rashness, and he used no words to soften the rebuke. "Get thee behind me, Satan." Satan is from a Greek word that means adversary, and is applied to the devil because he is the great adversary of man. Peter put himself forward as an adversary against Jesus in his plans. It was a terrific rebuke. "Thou art a stumbling-block unto me." Jesus needed encouragement for what was before him, but Peter was putting himself in the way of his doing it. "For thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Peter had in mind a triumphant Messiah, but one who would lead them to victory over their enemies without the suffering of death. He still held the Jewish idea that the Messiah would be a great warrior at the head of a great world kingdom.

### **Following Jesus (Verses 24, 25)**

Not only must he pass through much self-denial, suffering, and then death, but the road of the disciples would be similar to his. "If any man would come after me." "Any man"—the way is open to all. It is, "Whosoever will." "Would come"—desires or purposes to come. There must be the earnest desire. "Let him deny himself." He must deny himself of ease and self-indulgence, and much more than that. He must give up his own way, his own will, that the Lord's will may reign supreme; and this is usually the most difficult point in self-denial, for we like to have our own way. "And take up his cross." It is said that the condemned criminal had to carry his cross to the place of execution, suffering the taunts and jeers of the people along the way. Oh, the shame of it! So the cross is not only a symbol of death, but of shame and reproach. The Christian must bear the reproaches heaped upon him. "And follow me." In suffering for us, Jesus left us an example. He is the master, the leader; we must follow where he leads. If we draw back in order to save our life here, we will lose eternal life in the world to come. We find eternal life by losing this life for the sake of Jesus.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

If, as some claim, it takes Jesus and the church to constitute the Christ, then the one who confesses Jesus as the Christ does not confess the truth, only in part.



What if the way of the cross does lead to death? No matter into what channel you cast your lot in life, the end of that channel is death. The Christian has hope even in death.

The greatness of the reward makes the suffering seem small. "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."

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The difference between opinion and faith.  
The establishment of the church.  
The apostles and the keys of the kingdom.  
Coming after Christ.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the **Golden Text** and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give what information you can about Caesarea Philippi.  
What evidence that others than the twelve accompanied Jesus?  
Tell about the attitude of the Pharisees toward Jesus.  
Why did they so oppose him?

#### Verses 13, 14

Discuss the various opinions of the people.

#### Verses 15, 16

Why was it important that the disciples have firm faith in Jesus?  
As illustrated in these questions and answers, what is the difference between faith and opinion?  
Discuss the meaning of Peter's confession.  
Why is the truth Peter confessed so important?

#### Verses 17-20

Repeat the answer Jesus made to Peter.  
How had the truth been revealed to Peter?  
What shows that the church had not then been established?

What is the foundation on which the church is built?  
Discuss the keys of the kingdom.  
Show that Peter had no more authority than the other apostles.  
What enabled them to speak with authority?  
Why did he charge them to tell no man that he was the Christ?

#### Verse 21

What did Jesus now begin to show his disciples?  
What would he suffer besides his death?  
What else would occur?  
Discuss the phrases "on the third day" and "after three days."

#### Verses 22, 23

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?  
What did Jesus say to him?  
In what sense was Peter Satan, or rather, an adversary?  
In what sense was Peter minding the things of men?

#### Verses 24, 25

Repeat what Jesus said about coming after him.  
Discuss each thing that must be done. Wherein do people mostly fail to deny self?  
How may we follow Christ?  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson III—January 15, 1939

## PETER SEES CHRIST'S GLORY

Matt. 17: 1-9, 14-18

- 1 And after six days Jē'sūs taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart:
- 2 And he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.
- 3 And behold, there appeared unto them Mō'sēs and Ē-lī'jāh talking with him.

4 And Peter answered, and said unto Jē'sūs, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mō'sēs, and one for Ē-lī'jah.

5 While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

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

7 And Jē'sūs came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jē'sūs only.

9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jē'sūs commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and suffereth grievously; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 And Jē'sūs answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jē'sūs rebuked him; and the demon went out of him: and the boy was cured from that hour.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father."* (John 1: 14.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Rev. 1: 12-18.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

January 9.	M.	On the Mount with Christ (Luke 9: 28-36)
January 10.	T.	Eyewitness of His Majesty (2 Pet. 1: 16-18)
January 11.	W.	The Father's Witness (John 8: 12-20)
January 12.	T.	The Vision of the Glorified (Rev. 1: 9-18)
January 13.	F.	Vision and Task (Luke 9: 33, 57-43)
January 14.	S.	The Power of Prayer (Matt. 14: 22-32)
January 15.	S.	The Prayer Perfect (Luke 11: 1-4)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—A.D. 29 or 30

**Place.**—Mount Hermon, near Cesarea Philippi. It was thought by some that the mount of transfiguration was Mount Tabor, but that notion has generally been abandoned. Jesus was in the regions of Cesarea Philippi, and Mount Hermon was near by. It is a high mountain whereas Mount Tabor is not a high mountain.

**Persons.**—Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John.

**Lesson Links.**—We have a very brief account of what occurred between our last lesson and this. The announcement of his coming, suffering, and death naturally had a depressing effect on the Lord's disciples. It may be that he made the following statement to relieve somewhat the feeling of depression: "Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." He would assure them that his death would not interfere with the coming of his kingdom, and that it would come during the lifetime of some who were standing there. The language clearly implies that some of those present would die before the coming of Christ in his kingdom. Jesus was indefinite as to the time he would come in his kingdom, but he could not have referred to some date yet in the future, for all those then present have long since died. Nor could



he have referred, as some claim, to the transfiguration, then only six days in the future. We have no record that any then present died during those six days. Besides, in his transfiguration he did not come in his kingdom. He did not come—he was already present; nor was there any sign of a kingdom. Not all the comings of the Lord refer to a real personal coming. When the Lord brings about some great event, it is said that he comes at such times. Besides, where Matthew has "see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," Mark has "see the kingdom of God come with power." Both phrases mean the same thing. The kingdom of God came with power on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. On that occasion he was exalted at God's right hand and made both Lord and Christ.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jesus Transfigured (Verses 1, 2)

"And after six days"—six days after the events of our last lesson. Luke says it was about eight days. Luke counted the day of the events of the last lesson and the day of the transfiguration; Matthew and Mark counted the six intervening days. There is therefore no lack of harmony between the writers. "Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John"—the same three whom he took with him into the room when he raised the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5: 35-43), and whom he later selected to be near him as he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 36, 37). Jesus was not showing mere favoritism in selecting these three on special occasions; he had his reasons for doing so. Perhaps these three were prepared for lessons and experiences for which the others were not prepared; and it might be that he could depend more fully on them to maintain the necessary secrecy till the proper time to divulge what they had seen and heard. And in every group of men there are some who are better fitted for leadership than are the others. After events showed these three to be such men. Jesus took these three up into a high mountain apart by themselves. On some tableland on the slopes of Mount Hermon they would have all the privacy necessary to the occasion. Jesus wanted no one to break in on the privacy of that occasion, nor any curious eyes to see the glory of the scene. It was not to be a public show. Luke tells us that they went up into this mountain to pray. It was evidently during the night that Jesus prayed and was transfigured, for Luke mentions their coming down from the mountain the next day. Jesus prayed much; and on special occasions he spent hours in prayer. The depression that came upon his disciples in consequence of his announcing his coming suffering and death must have been, humanly speaking, disappointing to Jesus; for he had taught them patiently and had done many mighty works before them, and had brought them up into this region away from the turmoil and confusion created by his enemies, that he might quietly so teach them as that they would be able fully to enter into his plans and purposes. They had confessed their faith in him, and yet had opposed his plans. It was disappointing. The shadow of the cross now growing darker would add to his feeling of depression and gloom. Along these lines he must have prayed, for the answer he received was such as to hearten him beyond words.

to express. And while he was praying, he was transfigured before them. The change that took place is described in different words by the three writers who mention the occurrence. Matthew's description: "... and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." Mark: "... and his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." Luke: "... the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling." This was a foreview of what Jesus would be in his glorified state. How awe-inspiring must have been the sight to these three witnesses as they beheld his glorified appearance. Men cannot remain composed and calm in the presence of such a heavenly demonstration. It has always been so. So awful was the scene on Mount Sinai that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12: 21.) Though John had been intimately associated with Jesus in his journeys and had seen his glorified appearance on the mount of transfiguration, yet when Jesus appeared to him on the isle of Patmos he was so overcome that he fell at the feet of Jesus as one dead.

### Moses and Elijah Appear (Verses 3, 4)

"And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him." Luke makes this fuller report: "And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Moses, the great lawgiver and leader of Israel, had long ago died, and was buried in a valley in the land of Moab. Elijah, the great prophet of Israel, had been carried to heaven without death. Now these two men stand with Jesus on the mount as the representatives of the law and the prophets. And in their talk with Jesus about his approaching death, they would not seek to turn him from his purpose as Peter had done, but would encourage him. Their appearance was real, not a mere apparition as some contend. Jesus was there in his own person. Certainly he did not carry on a conversation with imaginary persons. People of unbalanced minds do have hallucinations during which they talk to imaginary people, but no right thinking person will say that Jesus was suffering from such aberrations of the mind. And the scene was real to Peter, James, and John; for Luke says, "When they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." So real and glorious was it to Peter that he said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Tabernacles, or booths, such as the Hebrews made at the feast of tabernacles, were made of the boughs of trees. Peter would make three tabernacles, thus paying equal honor to Moses, Elijah, and the Lord. "For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid." (Mark.) In his confusion Peter knew not what to say, and so he should have said nothing. Neither Moses nor Elijah had need of tabernacles, for they had not come to make their abode on earth. Jesus had no need for a tabernacle in an isolated place on a lonely mountain. Having been encouraged and refreshed by his communion with these two great men, he was ready to return to the world of men in the valley, that he might with renewed courage take up his



work of ministering to the needs of ignorant and suffering humanity. That Peter wanted to pay equal honors to Moses, Elijah, and his Lord shows how far he fell short of a proper appreciation of his Lord and Master.

### **"My Beloved Son . . . Hear Ye Him" (Verses 5-9)**

While Peter was talking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. It appears that Moses and Elijah disappeared in this cloud; and as they disappeared, a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The appearance of Moses and Elijah on that mount was impressive; but their disappearance as the voice said, "Hear ye him," was even more so. This must have been especially impressive to Peter; for only a few days previous to this, instead of giving heed to what Jesus said, he had rebuked him for saying it. As Moses, the great lawgiver to Israel, and the reformer-prophet Elijah had both disappeared, and only Jesus remained to them, the voice, "Hear ye him," was strikingly significant to them, as it should be even to us this day. Jesus is now our king, our lawgiver, the head of the church; to him, and to him alone, we owe our allegiance. And we must give heed to what he says. When the disciples heard the voice, "they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." Perhaps their memory of their antagonism to what Jesus said six days before that added to their fear. It seems that professed Christians would now be afraid to try to evade, or to belittle, what Jesus has said. How careful we should be to cultivate a disposition to hear readily anything Jesus has said. But Jesus comforted his disciples by touching them, and saying, "Arise, and be not afraid." On the way down from the mountain, Jesus said, "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead." The word vision might apply to an imaginary thing, an apparition, or to what was actually seen. It applies to the latter here, for Mark reports Jesus as charging them "that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead." In after years Peter remembered the scene as very real. (2 Pet. 1: 17, 18.)

### **The Plea of a Grief-stricken Father" (Verses 14-16)**

Mark says, "And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great multitude about them, and scribes questioning with them . . . And he asked them, What question ye with them?" A certain father told the story. He had a son, an only son, an epileptic, possessed of a dumb spirit; "and wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out; and they were not able." (Mark.) This son had been thus afflicted from childhood. According to Mark the father said, "But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth." If the man had known who Jesus was he would never have said, "If thou canst do anything." Previous to this time Jesus had given his disciples power to cast out demons and to heal the

sick. (Matt. 10: 1-23.) But their faith had failed in this case. And no doubt the scribes were gloating over their failure. Their doing so would be in keeping with the spirit of intense party religion.

### Jesus Casts Out the Demon (Verses 17, 18)

"And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" It was a severe rebuke, but deserved. Their faith had reached the heights where they confessed him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; but when he announced that he would suffer many things in Jerusalem, and be killed, they, assuming to be wiser than he, rebuked him for such statement. It is true that Peter did the talking, but the statement of Jesus shows that all felt as did Peter. It was the nine who were left behind that had failed to cast out the demon. They had cast out demons, but their faith was too weak to cast this one out. "Bring him hither to me." With a word Jesus cast the demon out, "and the boy was cured from that hour."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The record of the transfiguration is a plain historic account by three credible witnesses. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all say that Moses and Elijah appeared on the scene, and talked with Jesus; and Luke gives the subject of that conversation. Materialists, blinded by a false theory, deny that Moses and Elijah were there in person. It does not look well for one to deny a plain historic statement.

The disciples had not realized that Jesus the Christ would supersede Moses. They, with other Jews, thought the Messiah would energize the Jewish nation, and make it a universal world empire. It does not seem that they realized the significance of the voice which said, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." Nor has the full meaning of that statement dawned on many professed Christians of today.

Jesus charged them to tell no man what they had seen till after his resurrection. To tell it might excite the jealousy of the other disciples, or it might sound so unreasonable as to discredit the word of the three. Even now it is best not to tell the unreasonable things you have seen; for many people, believing only what is common with their own experiences, will rate you as a spinner of yarns.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Does the spirit of man survive the death of the body?

The character of Moses.

The character of Elijah.

When did Jesus become king?

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

What announcement of a heartening nature did Jesus make to his disciples?

Discuss the meaning and implications of that verse.



## Verses 1, 2

How reconcile Matthew's and Mark's and Luke's statements as to time? On what other occasions did Jesus take these three disciples with him? Why did they go up into the mountain? What appears to have been the occasion for this season of prayer? What occurred? Describe the appearance of Jesus.

## Verses 3, 4

Who appeared, and what did they do? What was the subject of their conversation? Show that their appearance was no mere apparition. Tell about Peter's rash speech.

## Verses 5, 6

Tell about the voice from the cloud. Discuss the force of "Hear ye him." What effect did the scene have on the disciples? How did Jesus dispel their fear? What charge did Jesus give the three disciples?

## Verses 14-16

Give and discuss the contents of these verses.

## Verses 17, 18

What did Jesus say to the disciples? What may have decreased their faith? What did Jesus do about the epileptic? Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IV—January 22, 1939

## PETER DENIES HIS LORD

Luke 22: 31-34, 54-62

31 Si'môn, Si'môn, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat:

32 But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

54 And they seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them.

56 And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking stedfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him.

57 But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou also art one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And after the space of about one hour another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Gāl-i-læ'ân.

60 But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And he went out, and wept bitterly.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 51: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 16.	M.	The Evening of the Denial (Luke 22: 14-30)
January 17.	T.	Peter's Denial Foretold (Luke 22: 31-34)
January 18.	W.	Peter's Rashness (John 18: 1-11)
January 19.	T.	Peter Denies His Lord (Luke 22: 54-62)
January 20.	F.	Denying Our Lord Today (Luke 6: 46-49)
January 21.	S.	Christ Sympathizes with the Tempted (Heb. 4: 12-16)
January 22.	S.	"It Is the Lord" (John 21: 1-14)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31. Most Bible students understand that the events of this lesson occurred Thursday night and early Friday morning.

*Places.*—Apparently the conversation in the first section of our lesson occurred in Jerusalem, for it does not seem that they had yet left the city. The second section of the lesson occurred in Jerusalem in the house of the high priest.

*Persons.*—Jesus, Peter, the high priest, and various others. In the course of the night Jesus was carried before both Annas and Caiaphas. Annas, who had formerly been high priest, was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was then high priest.

*Lesson Links.*—During the week of the crucifixion events of great importance occurred one after another in rapid succession—the so-called triumphal entry, the cleansing of the temple, the increasing hostility of the Pharisees and the temple authorities, the plotting of the Sanhedrin, frequent efforts to entrap Jesus in his talk, the Lord's Supper established, the covenant of Judas Iscariot with the Jewish authorities, and then the arrest and the mock trial and the crucifixion of Jesus. On the night of his betrayal and arrest Jesus gathered his disciples about him in an upper room for his last Pass-over feast. Judas was there mulling in his greedy heart the black crime of the betrayal of his Lord. Before leaving the company to carry out his dark mission, he would find out what the movements of Jesus would be after the supper. At this feast the Lord's Supper was instituted. Before leaving the table where they reclined, Jesus said, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed." The time of this betrayal was left indefinite, and only he and Judas Iscariot knew of its near approach. The others could not know what some of their numbers might do in the distant future. "And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing." And then one of the strangest controversies for an hour like that occurred: "And there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be the greatest." Men have an unchristian craving to be considered great, not realizing that God's most faithful servant is God's greatest man.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Satan Requests the Privilege of Sifting the Disciples (Verses 31, 32)

Satan, the great adversary of man, asked to have the disciples that he might sift them as wheat. It is true that Jesus addressed Peter, but he did not say that Satan has asked to have thee, but you, the plural of the pronoun of the second person. He had secured Judas; now if he could destroy the faith of all of them, he would destroy the work Christ had done with them, and thereby prevent the plan of salvation from ever being propagated in the world. It was an ambitious scheme. To sift them as wheat was to try them so far as he could—test them to the limit of his ability. The words



of Jesus show that they, like Job, would be in the power of Satan for a time; and the words of Jesus show also that he knew Peter would be in special danger, but that he would recover more quickly than the others so as to be in position to assist them. "But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." Peter would be so overwhelmed with fear that he would deny his Lord, but his faith would not entirely fail him. The experience would make him realize more fully the frailties of human beings, and make him more anxious to help his brethren.

### **Peter's Denial Foretold (Verses 33, 34)**

"Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death." Peter made that assertion in all good faith and conscience. He felt sure of his ability to withstand any sort of pressure that could be brought to bear upon him; but he did not know what was coming, nor did he realize how frail a human being is. Any Christian should be well enough informed to know what he should do under any trying circumstances, but he should not be so rash as to vow that he would do as well as he knows. It is not good to have a great amount of confidence in self. A Christian should be strong in the Lord; but when it seemed to Peter that his Lord had failed, he was very weak. The statement of Jesus shows that he knew exactly what would occur, and the exact time at which it would occur. Matthew reports that Peter, even after Jesus made this statement, still persisted in affirming that he would not deny the Lord, even if he had to die for the Lord. "Likewise also said all the disciples." Let us not forget that the others were as sure of their steadfastness as was Peter, and that they were more ready to forsake the Lord than was he.

### **Jesus Seized and Led to the High Priest (Verse 54)**

Read verses 39-53. After the Passover was eaten and the Lord's Supper was instituted, Jesus went with his disciples out of the city of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, into the garden of Gethsemane; for Jesus oftentimes resorted there with his disciples. As the Jews began their month with the new moon, and the Passover feast was eaten on the night of the fifteenth day of the month, we can readily see that there was practically a full moon on the night of the Passover. Most likely the garden had trees in it, a sort of park, and at that time embraced more territory than it now does. The garden would be quiet this night when Jesus and his disciples entered it, for it must have been near the midnight hour, or even later. No one can know the agony of heart Jesus suffered that night. Here were his beloved disciples, who believed him to be the Messiah and who trusted him to triumph over all his foes. The distress and doubt through which they were soon to pass would weigh heavily upon his heart. The crushing weight of the world's sins were upon him. His own nation—his own people—would soon be clamoring for his blood. Their high court would soon harass, insult, and abuse him, and then decree his death. In that very hour his disciple, Judas Iscariot, was guiding a band who would soon

seize him. No wonder he prayed in great agony of soul, and sweat as it were great drops of blood. When the crowd came and were about to seize Jesus, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. Peter would have made good his avowed purpose to die rather than to deny his Lord had not Jesus said, "Put up the sword into the sheath." He had started in to fight, singlehanded, that whole band of heavily armed men. "And they seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house." John reports that they first led Jesus to Annas, who had been high priest and who was the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. Whether the incidents of this section of our lesson occurred in the court of Annas or that of Caiaphas, or whether some of them occurred in one court and the others in the other court, is a matter of no special importance to us; but the things that were said and done are important. In this lesson we are specially interested in what Peter said and did. When Jesus was seized and led away, all the disciples, excepting two, fled. Peter was one of these two; the other disciple is not named. Some think he was John. Peter followed afar off "to see the end." He did not want to give up his Master; yet he felt helpless, and was afraid. And no wonder. His beloved Lord, who had healed the sick, given sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, calmed the storm and the raging water, and raised the dead, had meekly surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies; and Peter knew what these enemies intended to do. He was perplexed, doubtful, defenseless, and afraid. It seemed to be the end of all his high hopes. When we ponder all the things that were perplexing Peter, we will not be so harsh in our judgment of his conduct; neither will we feel sure that we would have done better. The disciples who fled showed more cowardice than did Peter.

### **Peter's First Denial (Verses 55-57)**

The other disciple who followed Jesus was known to the high priest, "and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without." Peter wanted to see the end, but was afraid to show himself. The other disciple went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door, and brought in Peter. (See John's account.) Peter sat down by the fire to warm himself. The maid who admitted him, "looking stedfastly upon him, said, This man was also with him." At some previous time this maid had seen Peter with Jesus, and now, in the light of the fire, she recognized him, or thought she did. John reports her as asking Peter, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" It seems that she first said he was with Jesus, and then asked Peter to confirm her statement. No one questioned the other disciple, for his actions showed where he stood, and the high priest knew him. But not so with Peter; his position was doubtful—they did not know where to place him. His conduct had raised a question in their minds. Had he done like the other disciple, no one would have questioned him; and he would have escaped denying his Lord. Any one is safer from temptation, if people know where he stands.

### **Peter's Second and Third Denial (Verses 58-60)**

Twice more Peter denied that he was a disciple of Jesus; the second denial came a little while after the first, the third about one



hour later. The last test was the severest of all. One confidently affirmed that Peter was with Jesus. This charge was made on the grounds that Peter was a Galilean. The man knew that a Galilean would not be interested in that affair unless he were a friend of Jesus. Another based his question on grounds that would excite Peter's fears more than ever. "One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" (John 18: 26.) They were about to identify Peter as the man who used the sword. That began to develop a new source of fear for Peter, and would cause him to wonder what they might do to him for that attempt to kill a man. Again he made denial, and pretended that he did not know what the man was talking about. "And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew."

### **Peter Remembered, and Wept Bitterly (Verses 61, 62)**

"And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." Then Peter remembered what the Lord a few hours before this had said to him. It seems singular that he had not sooner thought of what the Lord had said. Three times he had denied the Lord before the cock crew, and yet the words of the Lord had not come into his mind. Not till the Lord turned and looked at him did he remember. But there is a good reason for Peter's not sooner remembering the Lord's words. The excitement through which he was passing and his absorption in the fate of his beloved Lord had a tendency to crowd everything else from his mind. Who of us would have done any better? When he remembered that he had done exactly what the Lord had told him that he would do, and how he had vowed that he would die rather than deny his Lord, he was filled with shame and remorse for what he had done; "and he went out, and wept bitterly."

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

It is not becoming in us to condemn Peter, for we have never passed through such experiences as he did. Perhaps a feeling on the part of the other disciples that they had been more cowardly than Peter kept them from condemning him.

Happy is the person whose conduct does not raise a question in the minds of others as to where he stands. Some people never have to answer the question, "Will you have a drink with me?" There is a reason. Some young people are never subjected to certain temptations to which others are frequently subjected, and there is a reason. When your conduct raises a question as to where you stand or as to what you might do, the devil will make you answer that question. Every person who raises a question mark in the minds of people has to defend himself or surrender.

Peter had a lot of courage and determination. He had gone into that court "to see the end." (Matt. 26: 58.) He had made up his mind to be near Jesus till they killed him. A less resolute man would have sneaked out of that crowd when they kept tormenting him with their questions and charges; but he was brave enough to stay, even though he was frightened into denying his Lord. Any coward can stand his ground so long as he is not scared; but it takes a brave man to stay with a thing when he is scared as was Peter.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Lord's Supper.  
Jesus in Gethsemane.  
The Sanhedrin.  
The trials of Jesus.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give the main events of the week of the crucifixion.

Tell about Judas Iscariot.  
About what did the disciples dispute?

## Verses 31, 32

Show that Satan desired to have, not Peter alone, but all the disciples.  
What was meant by sifting them as wheat?

What further did Jesus say to Peter?  
Discuss these words addressed to Peter.

## Verses 33, 34

Discuss the contents of these verses.

## Verse 54

Give the incidents leading up to the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane.  
Describe the scene in the garden.  
Why was Jesus in such agony of soul?

Tell the part Peter played.  
To whom did they lead Jesus?  
What did the disciples do?  
Why would the situation be so perplexing to Peter?

## Verses 55-57

Give the incidents connected with Peter's first denial.  
Why did they question him, and not the other disciple?

## Verses 58-60

Give the incidents of the second denial.  
Why was the third such a severe test?  
What occurred while he was making his third denial?

## Verses 61, 62

What caused Peter to remember the words of the Lord?  
What could have kept him from remembering sooner?  
What did he do?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson V—January 29, 1939

## PETER DECLARES HIS LOVE

John 21: 11-19

11 Si'môn Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

12 Jê'sûs saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jê'sûs cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jê'sûs was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had broken their fast, Jê'sûs saith to Si'môn Peter, Si'môn, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again a second time, Si'môn, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Si'môn, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jê'sûs saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.



GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."*  
(John 14: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 10: 34-42.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 23.	M.	Peter Finds Forgiveness (Luke 24: 28-35)
January 24.	T.	Peter Confesses His Love (John 21: 15-17)
January 25.	W.	The Renewed Commission (John 21: 17-19)
January 26.	T.	Peter Enjoins Devotion to Christ (1 Pet. 2: 11-21)
January 27.	F.	A Service of Love (Luke 7: 36-50)
January 28.	S.	The Greatest Thing in the World (1 Cor. 13)
January 29.	S.	Proving Our Love (John 15: 12-21)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31. The incidents of this lesson occurred some days after Jesus arose from the dead. It seems that Jesus and his disciples remained in and around Jerusalem for at least a week after his resurrection and before they went down into Galilee.

*Place.*—At the Sea of Tiberias, called also the Sea of Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus; also "there were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples." The sons of Zebedee were, of course, James and John; the names of the two other disciples are not given. It is possible that these two disciples were not apostles.

*Lesson Links.*—"The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to also whom he showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 1: 1-3.) "Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." (Mark 16: 9.) Then Jesus appeared to other women. (Matt. 28: 5-9.) And then he appeared to Cephas, or Peter. (1 Cor. 15: 5.) Then he appeared to two disciples on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. (Luke 24: 13-31.) He then appeared to ten apostles in Jerusalem, Thomas being absent. (John 20: 19-21.) All these appearances were on the day of his resurrection. Eight days later he appeared to the apostles, Thomas being present. (John 20: 26-29.) It appears that his next appearance was the one mentioned in our present lesson. Before Jesus was crucified he said to his disciples, "But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." (Matt. 26: 32.) When the women went to the tomb, the angel reminded them of this appointed meeting; and so also did Jesus. (Matt. 28: 7-10.) Of course there was a time and place appointed for this meeting, else no one would have known when nor where to go. It seems certain that the disciples tarried in or about Jerusalem for at least one week before they went down to Galilee. While they were waiting in Galilee for the appointed meeting, "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee." If people had looked into the matter, they never would have said that Peter and the others had given up hope, and returned to their old occupation of fishing; for

they would have known that Jesus had appeared to them a number of times before they took this fishing trip. It is likely that they needed to replenish their funds. They toiled all night till the break of day without catching anything. "But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." Jesus then directed them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, which they did; "and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." John immediately said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When they all reached the shore, they found that Jesus had already prepared something for them to eat. "Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Disciples Break Their Fast (Verses 11-13)

At the word of the Lord Peter returned to the boat, and brought the net to land, "full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three." When these disciples first saw Jesus on the shore, they were about a hundred yards from land. In the dim light of approaching day, they did not at first recognize him; but now, when all were on the shore with him, no one needed to ask him who he was—all knew who he was. It is well to notice points like this; for they show that the disciples could not have been mistaken as to whether they saw Jesus alive after his crucifixion. No stranger, even though his physical appearances were exactly like those of Jesus, could have engaged in such intimate association and conversation with them without their detecting that he was not their beloved Lord. These disciples must have been weary and hungry, for managing their boats and handling their nets all night long was a wearisome task. It required strong and resolute men to do it. Jesus was thoughtful and sympathetic; and so he said to them, "Come and break your fast." Now we would say, "Come to breakfast." As their host, Jesus distributed to them the bread and the fish which he had prepared. While this food was necessary, Jesus did not come to them at this time merely to feed them. His telling them where to cast their net to find fish may have been a means of reminding them that he always knew what he was talking about. More than once they had not believed that he did know. They were slow to believe that he knew all things.

### This His Third Appearance to His Disciples (Verse 14)

The language of this verse does not contradict the facts already stated about his appearances. The disciples here mentioned were his apostles. This is the third time that he had appeared to a group of his apostles. The other two times are mentioned in chapter twenty, verses nineteen to twenty-nine. There is no record of his appearing to any one during the week following the day of his resurrection. One might wonder why Jesus did not remain with them constantly during the forty days between his resurrection and his ascension, but would his doing so been best for them? He was soon to leave them, and would it not be well for them to become used to carrying on without his personal presence? His occasional visits to them would cause them to know, that though he was absent from them, he was not forgetting them.



**"Lovest Thou Me?" (Verses 15-17)**

"So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these." Three times Peter had denied his Lord, and three times now Jesus calls on him for an avowal of his love. It is not so clear as to what is meant by "these." Some are confident that Jesus meant, Do you love me more than you love these things, the fish and the fishing equipment? Do you love me more than you do your business affairs? It is certain that many professed Christians of today do that very thing. Others are equally confident that Jesus meant, Do you love me more than do these other disciples? That seems to be the more natural view of it; for Peter had affirmed that, even if all the others should stumble, he would not. He thought he was more devoted to the Lord than were the others; yet he had cravenly thrice denied that he knew the Lord. His experience had taught him that he was not so strong as he had thought he was, and the Savior's questions would hurt; and yet he knew that, in view of what he had done, the questions were not unjust to him. His experiences had also taught him a new respect for the Lord's knowledge. Hence, he said, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." But here is a curious fact: Jesus used one word for love and Peter used another. We have only the one word, love, whereas the New Testament uses two words. Jesus used the word "agapao"; Peter the word "phileo." It is unfortunate that the English language does not have two words with which to express the distinction which these two words express. Agapao is expressive of reverence and respect, or of a sense of duty or obligation. It can be exercised at will; it is subject to command, and the command can be obeyed. It is found in such passages as Matt. 5: 43; 19: 19; John 3: 16, and many similar passages. One loves God when he willingly obeys his commands (John 14: 15, 21), and he loves his neighbor, and even his enemy, when he wishes them well, treats them fairly, and helps them in their needs. But phileo is more personal, and grows out of kinship or association. It is therefore warmer and more intimate. We never get anywhere when we try to discover which is the stronger of the two words, for either one on occasion and in different persons may be stronger than the other. But the interesting point in this discussion is the difference between the two words, and not their relative strength. The love that Jesus inquired about in his first two questions was the love that Peter had been taught to exercise toward his neighbor, and even toward his enemy. No wonder the question probed Peter to the quick; he felt that Jesus was holding him too much at arm's length, when he knew that Jesus knew how warm was his devotion to him; and he expressed that feeling. Twice Jesus asked Peter the same question, and twice Peter affirmed his personal devotion to the Lord. Then Jesus adopted the same word Peter had used; as much as to say, "Now, Simon, do you have that warm personal devotion to me that you express. Remember what you said when I was being mocked and abused before the high priest." The continued questioning grieved Peter; he was deeply hurt. Then he answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." When Simon answered the first time, Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." At his second answer Jesus said, "Tend my sheep." To

tend the sheep was to feed them and see after them. Of course, what Peter was expected to do all the apostles were expected to do. They were made general shepherds over all the flock, over all the churches that should be. All Christians—all churches—are today as much under the apostles, and as dependent on them for spiritual food, as were the churches in the days of their personal ministry.

### **The Manner of Peter's Death Foretold (Verses 18, 19)**

Peter had stood the test; he had at last found himself, and knew where he stood. He would not deny the Lord any more. When the time came, as it would come, he would die rather than forsake his Lord, as he had previously affirmed that he would do. While he was young, he could gird himself, and go where he pleased. But it would be different when he grew to be old. Then another would gird him and lead him where he did not want to go. "Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God." Tradition has it that Peter was crucified with his head down, and that he had stated that he was not worthy to be crucified in the usual way as was his Lord. But tradition is not very reliable. Be that as it may, Peter had the assurance from his Lord's words that he would live to be an old man. This crucifixion was to happen to him when he was old. And we are sure that Peter believed what the Lord said. He therefore did not believe that the Lord would come again for many years, not even during his lifetime. Nor would he teach the people to expect the Lord to come at any time soon. All who heard what the Lord said knew that the Lord would not come the second time so long as Peter lived, and that he would live to be an old man. "And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." The verses that follow show that Jesus was taking Peter to one side; and yet there must have been a deeper meaning in the Lord's words than a mere invitation for Peter to follow him to one side. Peter was to follow him in life, and even in the manner of his death.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

It is singular how some expressions that are contrary to plainly stated facts gain currency. Over and over it has been said that when Jesus was crucified, Peter gave up hope, and said, "I go a fishing." And yet Peter had seen the Lord at least three times after his resurrection, and was then waiting to see him again.

Evidently the apostles had gone to Galilee to meet the Lord according to his appointment. Peter was too restless and energetic to remain in idleness; he would put in the time fishing. Perhaps the need of funds had something to do with this temporary return to his business. While Jesus was with them, others supplied their needs. (Luke 8: 1-3.) But likely all that stopped when Jesus was crucified. And if there was any money in the bag when Judas left them, he took it with him.

A Christian must love the Lord more than he loves his business, and more than he loves his friends or his own people; and he really should seek to love the Lord more than do those with whom he associates, so that he may be an example to them. Paul labored more abundantly than others, and exhorted them to imitate him. It was not a matter of pride with him, but of earnest devotion to the Lord.



## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The appearances of Jesus after he arose from the dead.  
 Why the apostles could not have been mistaken as to his identity.  
 The Holy Spirit promised to the apostles.  
 The Great Commission.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
 Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the first three verses of the book of Acts.  
 Give the appearances of Jesus up to the time of our lesson.  
 What appointment had Jesus made for a meeting?  
 When were they again reminded of this meeting?  
 How did Peter propose to pass the time while waiting for this appointment?  
 Tell about the appearance of Jesus on this occasion.

#### Verses 11-13

Discuss the contents of verses 11-13.

#### Verse 14

How do you reconcile verse 14 with the fact that Jesus had appeared several times to certain ones?

Can you see any reason why Jesus did not remain constantly with his disciples during the forty days?

#### Verses 15-17

Discuss Jesus' questions and Peter's answers.  
 After each answer what did Jesus tell Peter to do?  
 What then were and are the apostles for all churches?

#### Verses 18, 19

Repeat the Lord's statement in verse 18.  
 What assurance did Peter get out of that statement?  
 Why would not Peter teach the people to expect the Lord to come the second time during his lifetime?  
 What then did he tell Peter to do?  
 Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson VI—February 5, 1939

## PETER PREACHES AT PENTECOST

Acts 2: 12-18, 36-41

12 And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Jū-dæ'a, and all ye that dwell at Jē-ru'sā-lēm, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day;

16 But this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Jō'el:

17 And it shall be in the last days, saith God,  
 I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh;  
 And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
 And your young men shall see visions,  
 And your old men shall dream dreams;

18 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days  
 Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

36 Let all the house of Is'rā-ēl therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jē'sūs whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

38 And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jē'sūs Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts.” (Zech. 4: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 13: 26-33.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 30.	M.	Witnesses for Christ (Acts 1: 6-11)
January 31.	T.	The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-13)
February 1.	W.	Peter's Sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2: 14-18)
February 2.	T.	The Result of Peter's Preaching (Acts 2: 36-42)
February 3.	F.	Guided by the Spirit (Acts 11: 1-18)
February 4.	S.	Encouragement to Worship (Heb. 10: 19-25)
February 5.	S.	Blessings of the Sanctuary (Psalm 84: 1-12)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 30 or 31; the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. Pentecost was the second of the three annual feasts prescribed in the law of Moses. It was called the feast of weeks in the Old Testament. For an account of these feasts read Ex. 23: 14-17; 34: 18-24; Lev. 23: 4-36; Deut. 16: 1-17.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—The Holy Spirit, the apostles, and the multitude.

*Lesson Links.*—During the forty days between his resurrection and ascension Jesus appeared frequently to his apostles and others. It is very probable that some of these appearances were not recorded. During the times that he was with them he spoke the things concerning the kingdom of God. (Acts 1: 3.) That covered a wide range; it would include all that is embraced in the Great Commission. A proper consideration of these facts will show us that Jesus did not on a certain occasion announce the Great Commission, and then say no more about it. Since the carrying out of this commission was the lifework of the apostles, it seems certain that Jesus, in his various speeches to them, would enlarge on each item in the commission. The records of the commission would therefore be condensed reports of speeches made on different occasions. If this reasonable view of the matter is correct, then Matthew gives us a summary of the speech Jesus made at that meeting in Galilee. (Matt. 28: 16-20.) And it appears that Mark's and Luke's records are summaries of speeches made at different times in Jerusalem. (Mark 16: 14-20; Luke 24: 44-53.) They were to begin carrying out the provisions of the commission in the city of Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon them. “And, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” (Acts 1: 4, 5.) Not many days after his ascension, on the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were all in one place in the city of Jerusalem, they were suddenly baptized in the Holy Spirit, “and began to speak with other tongues,



as the Spirit gave them utterance." Many Jews had come to Jerusalem from far and near to attend the feast of Pentecost. These foreign Israelites had adopted the language of the people among whom they grew up. Several dialects and languages were represented in the crowd that gathered about the apostles, and each foreign Jew could hear some one talking in a tongue that he could understand.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Some Charged That the Apostles Were Drunk (Verses 12, 13)

The people were amazed at such a medley of voices. Some sought to find out what was the meaning of it all. "But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine." The attitude of these two groups of people is characteristic of people. When confronted with something that they do not understand, some people want to inquire into matters before they form any judgment. They are swift to hear and slow to speak. They do not talk rashly and thoughtlessly. They want to get at the facts. Others, like some of these on Pentecost, give expression to some impulse of the mind. They do not seek to find out the facts. They do not really form judgments, but give expression to the first whim of their shallow minds. They are mockers of that which they understand not, and not dependable in what they say.

### Peter Denies the Charge of Drunkenness (Verses 14, 15)

It is not a pleasant thing to be charged with drunkenness, and yet the apostles did not become angry and retort with ugly speech. When unjustly accused, it is well for us to remember the example the apostles set for us. Peter stood up with the eleven. This language of Luke shows that he regarded Matthias as an apostle; otherwise there would not have been but ten besides Peter. Peter's language shows that he was addressing the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea: "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem." This would leave the other groups to be addressed by the other apostles. As further proof that Peter addressed the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea, and not the foreign Jews, notice verse 22: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know." These miracles had not been done in the midst of the foreign Jews. Peter invited them to give ear to what he said, but let us remember that it was really the Holy Spirit using Peter's vocal organs—through Peter the Holy Spirit was seeking to influence the people. "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day." "That is, about nine o'clock in the morning, previously to which, the Jews scarcely ever ate or drank; for that hour was the hour of prayer. This custom appears to have been so common, that even the most intemperate among the Jews were not known to transgress it."

### Peter Explains the Matter (Verses 16-18)

Their prophet Joel had foretold the very thing they were witnessing that day; or, to speak more precisely, the Lord had spoken these things through the prophet Joel. The language guarantees the inspiration of the book of Joel. "In the last days." "Peter's expression denotes always in the New Testament the age of the Messiah, which the scriptures represent as the world's last great moral epoch." We are now living in that period which Peter here calls the last days, which will end at the resurrection and judgment. The language shows that inspiration would be the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It seems that all flesh refers to both Jews and Gentiles. All upon whom the Holy Spirit was poured out would prophesy; this shows that not all people, not even all Christians, were included in that promise. The reception of this promise was not to depend on age or social rank.

### Peter's Concluding Exhortation (Verse 36)

The real argumentative part of Peter's sermon begins with verse 22. The Jews in Judea and Jerusalem knew of many of the great miracles Jesus had wrought in their midst. Peter refers to these as proof that Jesus was a man approved of God, and that God did those miracles through Jesus. He then used the statements of the prophet David as further proof that Jesus was divine, and that God had even raised him from the dead. His third argument: "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." (Verse 32.) In the nature of the case they could not have been mistaken in their claims of having seen him alive after he was buried; neither would they have risked their lives in telling what they knew to be false. He then appeals to what the people were witnessing as further proof. The people had asked, "What meaneth this?" Peter tells them: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." (Verse 33.) Then he called upon his hearers to know assuredly that God had made the Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ. Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah. The Jews had been looking for the Messiah, but when he came they crucified him. On his throne he now sits, and there he will reign till he has put all enemies under his feet, as stated in verses 34 and 35.

### "What Shall We Do?" (Verse 37)

Peter's arguments were overwhelming; the truth pierced their hearts like a dagger. Notice the expression: "When they heard this." They were convinced, or convicted, by what they heard. And the Holy Spirit did it, not by any direct impact upon their hearts, but by his words. Peter had not spoken his own thoughts and ideas; the Holy Spirit had used his vocal organs to speak the mind of God. The Holy Spirit did all that was done on that occasion, and did it by his words—his arguments. The Holy Spirit convinced them that the Jesus whom they had crucified was the long-expected Messiah, and that they had committed a great sin in caus-



ing him to be crucified. If anybody could prove that the arguments they had heard were false, they could have done so; for they were acquainted with all the facts. Being fully convinced, in great agony of soul they said, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

### **Peter Tells Them What to Do (Verses 38-40)**

The Holy Spirit through Peter promptly answered: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Hackett, the great Baptist commentator, says, "In order to the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26: 28; Luke 3: 3) we connect naturally with both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other." Peter's answer shows that these people were asking what to do to get rid of their sins. Suppose they had asked the question in full, "What must we do for the remission of our sins," and Peter had merely said, "Repent and be baptized," would any one have doubted that that was what they had to do for the remission of their sins? The command is easy to understand, if we take it in its plain ordinary meaning; but to those who try to explain it away it is hard to understand. And let us remember that this is the first sermon that was preached under the Great Commission, and that the Great Commission said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The obedient were promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit as a gift; but this does not mean that all would receive the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit. "All that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." This, of course, referred to all among the Gentiles who would obey the gospel call; yet Peter did not then understand the import of what he was saying. It later required special miracles to convince him that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. (Acts 10.) "And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation." God had done much for the sinner; he had prepared a plan of salvation, without which no one could be saved. He had now revealed that plan, so that man might avail himself of its blessings. The next move was man's, and Peter exhorted them to make that move. In doing what they were commanded to do, they were not paying God for their salvation; they were merely appropriating the salvation which God had so richly provided for them. The fact that they were exhorted to save themselves shows that they could do something toward their salvation.

### **Three Thousand Added (Verse 41)**

"They then that received his word were baptized." The word of God is the seed of the kingdom, and those who receive it in good and honest hearts bear fruit. These people accepted the word spoken by Peter as authoritative; to them it was a heaven revealed law. They did not quibble, nor dispute, nor wonder if there were not some other way. God had spoken, and that was enough for them. They were baptized the same day—about three thousand were added to the number of the saved.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

The law of Moses ended at the cross of Christ; yet so far as the record shows that truth was not directly stated in this first sermon; but the people were told in no uncertain terms that Jesus had been exalted as their Lord and Messiah. From this they would learn that he was now their lawgiver.

The importance of the events of this day cannot be overrated. On this first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, he was first announced as the reigning Messiah. It was then that all acts of acceptable service to God began to be done in his name. (Luke 24: 46-49.) On this day repentance and remission of sins began to be preached in his name. On this day the church of the Lord Jesus began. Peter later refers to this day as the beginning. (Acts 11: 15.)

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that men might believe in him and be saved. That was grace, or favor. He revealed to man what to do to be saved. That also was grace, or favor. Signboards along the highway is a great favor to the traveling public. God's commands are God's signboards along the highway of life. If we view the matter rightly, we will see God's grace in every command he has given. God's grace and his commands cannot be separated.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The three annual feasts required in the law of Moses.

The preparation of the apostles for their work.

God's part in man's salvation.

Man's part in his own salvation.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

What was Pentecost?

How long was Jesus with his disciples after his resurrection?

What did he do in his meetings with his disciples?

Repeat the Great Commission as recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Where and when were they to begin operating under this commission?

Give the incidents of Pentecost leading up to Peter's sermon.

## Verses 12, 13

What did the people think of what they saw and heard?

What two classes of people seems to have made up that crowd?

## Verses 14, 15

To what part of the crowd did Peter speak?

What would the ninth hour have to do with their not being drunk?

## Verses 16-18

What explanation did Peter give of the matter?

What is meant by "the last days"?

To whom does "all flesh" refer?

## Verse 36

Give an outline of the arguments Peter used in his sermon.

Why was the testimony of the apostles reliable?

Jesus had been exalted to what?

How long was he to hold that exalted position?

## Verse 37

What was the effect of the sermon on the hearers?

Who was really doing the talking on that occasion?

How then did the Holy Spirit convict, or convince, them?

## Verses 38-40

What answer did the Holy Spirit give the inquirers?

Discuss the meaning of verse 38.

Show the harmony between verse 38 and the Great Commission.

Discuss the gift of the Holy Spirit.

To whom did the promise extend?

What had God done for the sinner?



What shows that the next move was  
the sinner's?  
Show how the commands of God are  
a manifestation of grace.

## Verse 41

Who were baptized, and how many?  
Why were they so readily baptized?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VII—February 12, 1939

## PETER HEALS A LAME MAN

Acts 3: 1-10; 4: 8-12

1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being the ninth hour.*

2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.

6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jē'sūs Christ of Nāz'ā-rēth, walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength.

8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders,

9 If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Is'rā-ēl, that in the name of Jē'sūs Christ of Nāz'ā-rēth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even in him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

11 He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner.

12 And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee."* (Acts 3: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 1-10.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 6.	M.	Healed in His Name (Acts 3: 1-10)
February 7.	T.	The Energy of Faith (Acts 3: 11-16)
February 8.	W.	The Way of Salvation (Acts 4: 8-12)
February 9.	T.	A Workman for the Lord (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
February 10.	F.	Sharing Our Material Blessings (2 Cor. 8: 1-5)
February 11.	S.	Kindly Consideration for Others (Matt. 12: 1-8)
February 12.	S.	Testimony of Jesus' Work (Matt. 11: 1-6)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Some time between Pentecost and the scattering of the church; that is, between A.D. 31 and A.D. 37. It must have been at least several months after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, for it is plain from the language in Acts 2: 42-47 that the church enjoyed a period of freedom from persecution. Persecution

began to develop immediately after the events of the first part of our present lesson.

*Place.*—The temple in the city of Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Peter, John, the lame man, a crowd of Jews, and the members of the Sanhedrin.

*Lesson Links.*—About three thousand were added to the saved on Pentecost. No doubt many of these were from various foreign countries, for many foreign Jews had come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Pentecost. It was necessary for these new converts to be taught the gospel of Christ. It would therefore be necessary for these foreign converts to remain for a time in Jerusalem. The whole group of disciples remained steadfastly in the apostles' teaching; that is, they continued to be taught by the apostles. Hence, the apostles conducted a great school; the gospel was evidently the only thing taught in that school. The church was a school, in which all members were steadfast learners, just as it should be today. They also continued in fellowship and in the breaking of bread and prayers. The fellowship was partnership; the breaking of bread was the Lord's Supper. And they prayed; they had no finespun theories then about the laws of nature to hinder them in their praying. Perhaps several things contributed to the fear that came upon every soul. The leaders thought they had ended this new movement when they crucified Christ; but the apostles were preaching his resurrection with great effect, they were working many great miracles, and the new converts were full of an unheard-of zeal. Besides, this new religion had filled its converts with unbelievable unselfishness. They were selling their goods to supply the needs of the unfortunate and of those foreign converts who must remain in Jerusalem without means of support till they learned the gospel sufficiently to be of use when they returned home. This was not communism as some suppose; but no man counted his possessions as his own so long as any one was in need. As the need arose, something was sold to meet that need. During a short period they were free from persecution, and had favor with all the people. "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved." The marginal reading has "were being saved." More exactly "those being saved."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Peter and John Go to the Temple (Verse 1)

Some have thought that Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer to engage in the temple worship. If so, it seems singular that they are the only two mentioned as going at this time. It seems the more probable that they went up at the hour of prayer because that furnished them a good opportunity to teach the people. The ninth hour would be three o'clock. Many people would be gathered about the temple at this hour.

### The Lame Beggar (Verses 2, 3)

In chapter 2, verse 43, we learn that "many wonders and signs were done through the apostles." We have no detailed account of these many wonders and signs. It seems that Luke mentions in detail the healing of this lame beggar because of its outstanding



character and because of the uproar that followed it. The apostles were preaching a new doctrine, setting forth a new religion, and claiming that they had been sent of God to preach that religion. The people were entitled to know whether their claims were true, or whether they were impostors. The apostles had to be able to show that God was with them, and that therefore their preaching was from God. The miracles they did were their credentials—signs that God was with them. For a miracle to be convincing to thoughtful people it must be of such a nature as to eliminate any possibility of fraud or deception. The healing of the lame man of our lesson is an example. He had been lame from birth. People knew him to be thus afflicted, for he had been carried daily to the temple to beg the worshipers for money. And this man was more than forty years old. (Acts 4: 22.) And the miracle was done openly in the presence of all who chanced to be passing by. There could be no mistake about it. As Peter and John were going up into the temple, the lame beggar was being carried to the door of the temple where he was placed daily that he might receive gifts from those who entered the temple to worship. It must be that he had no immediate relatives who could or who would supply his needs. It is pitiful for a helpless man to have no family or near relatives to care for him and has to depend on the gifts of those who pass by. Evidently the worshipers made it profitable for this lame beggar to be there, else he would not have been carried daily to this place, the Beautiful Gate of the temple. We do not now have any certain information as to which gate of the temple was called Beautiful. However, it must have been the main entrance to the court of the temple, else the lame man would not have selected it as his begging place. As Peter and John passed by, he asked them for money. It is not likely that he knew who they were, and expected nothing more than a small gift. It is fortunate that we now have the opportunity of making our wants known to one "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3: 20.) The lame man was about to receive a gift that was far above anything he could hope to receive.

### **The Lame Beggar Healed (Verses 4-8)**

When the lame beggar asked Peter and John for a gift, "Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us." This would center the attention of the lame man, and of all within hearing, on the apostles and what they would say, so that all might know the source of the healing power about to be put forth. Such a miracle in so public a place would give the apostles a great opportunity to preach the gospel effectively to all who saw the miracle, or saw the man after he was healed. But when Peter said to the lame man, "Look on us," he gave attention, expecting to receive some money. He had not the least idea as to what he was about to receive. The ability to work and make his own living would be much better for the beggar than to receive money. So Peter uttered to him the well-known words: "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." All the Jews knew that they had crucified Jesus of Nazareth; and Peter would have them know that it was the power

of this same Jesus of Nazareth that made this man whole. Peter was only the agent, or representative, of this Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The power to heal was put forth through him. No man can, of his own power, work a miracle. As Peter commanded the man to walk, he took him by the hand to encourage him to make the effort. He literally raised the man up; "and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength." It was an instantaneous and permanent healing. It seems that as Peter began to raise him up, he gained confidence, and leaped up, and stood, and then walked. A little reflection will show us that this was a double miracle. A man who never had walked would have to learn to walk, just as a child learns to walk, unless he was miraculously enabled to walk. So rejoiced was this man over the great gift that had been bestowed on him that he went with Peter and John into the temple, "walking, and leaping, and praising God." No wonder that he showed such joy and expressed such praise, for it was the first time he had ever been able to stand on his feet and walk.

### **The Effect of the Miracle on the People (Verses 9, 10)**

For a man to enter the temple, leaping and praising God, was bound to attract considerable attention. It would be unusual for a man more than forty years old to act in such a manner; and when they discovered that the man who was behaving in such a manner was the lame man who had sat daily at the Beautiful Gate of the temple begging alms, "they were filled with wonder and amazement, at that which had happened unto him." They were, therefore, in a good frame of mind to listen to an explanation as to what power had brought about such a wonderful healing. And the record shows that Peter did not fail to take advantage of the opportunity.

### **Peter Tells the Sanhedrin by What Power the Man Was Made Whole (4: 8-10)**

Immediately after healing the lame man and before leaving the temple, Peter preached the people a convincing sermon. He showed them that the man was healed by the power of the Prince of life, whom they killed, and whom God had raised from the dead. He called on them to repent, and turn again, that their sins might be blotted out. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead." They arrested Peter and John, and kept them under guard till the morrow. "But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." The court was assembled on the next day, and Peter and John was brought before it. "And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?" If they had asked this question with a sincere desire to know the truth that they might adjust their lives to it, it would have been well; but they were trying to find some grounds on which they could punish Peter and John. They did not know that the Holy Spirit would answer them through the mouth of Peter and John. Jesus had said, "But when they deliver



you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." (Matt. 10: 19, 20.) The Holy Spirit's reply through Peter really put the Sanhedrin on trial. If they were being examined for a good deed done to a helpless man, let it be known to you and to all Israel, that in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified and whom God raised from the dead, this man stands before you whole. It seems that the man was present as proof of what had been done. The power of Jesus of Nazareth had made him whole.

### **"And in None Other Is There Salvation" (Verses 11, 12)**

Only Jesus of Nazareth can save the world from all of its ills. The Jewish rulers were the builders; but, instead of accepting Jesus as the Messiah, they had rejected him—rejected him on whom all the plans of God for the world's redemption rested. He was the chief cornerstone, the sure foundation, the only source of salvation. The building which these self-conceited and self-righteous builders were erecting would topple down on their own heads, for it had no sure foundation. Their whole structure fell when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. Every student should weigh carefully these words: "For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." It is important therefore that we know how to come into that name. "And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19: 5.)

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

There is a lesson in the generosity of the early church at Jerusalem. They generously sold their possessions to meet an emergency. The selling was voluntary; the property was theirs, and they did not have to sell it. After it was sold, the money was theirs. If we imitate their example, we will make whatever sacrifice is necessary to keep the church alive in our community.

It is trying on a man's sense of self-respect when he is unable to work, and must depend on begging to supply his needs. Begging is especially destructive to the manhood of one who can work, but prefers to beg. The best thing that can be done for any one is to enable him to make his own living. Many people today are idle because they imagine they can do but one thing.

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Acts 2: 42.

The generosity of the Jerusalem brethren.

Compare Acts 2: 38 and 3: 19.

Christ our only hope.

### **QUESTIONS**

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### **Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.

How many were added on Pentecost?

From what points were some of these converts?

What did these new converts do?

What was the effect on the people?

Why did property owners sell their possessions?

## Verse 1

What may have moved Peter and John to go to the temple at the hour of prayer?

## Verses 2, 3

What was the purpose of miracles wrought by the apostles? Tell about the lame beggar, and what he expected?

## Verses 4-8

How did Peter attract the attention of the beggar, and of others? Why did he not heal him without the beggar or any one else knowing that he had anything to do with it?

Repeat the words of Peter.

Describe the effect on the lame man.

## Verses 9, 10

Describe the effect on the people.

## 4: 8-10

Give the incidents between the two sections of our lesson.

What complaint did the Sanhedrin have against Peter and John?

What did the court ask them?

Who guided Peter in his reply?

How did he manage to put the court in a bad light?

## Verses 11, 12

Discuss verses 11, 12.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—February 19, 1939

## BEVERAGE ALCOHOL AND ITS SOCIAL PERILS

Amos 6: 1-6; 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12; 4: 1-5

1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zi'ōn, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Sā-mā'rī-ā, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Is'rā-ēl come!

2 Pass ye unto Cāl'nēh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hā'māth the great; then go down to Gath of the Phī-lis'tines; are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?

3—Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your behavior seemly among the Gēn'tiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gēn'tiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibblings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries;

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

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." (Rom. 14: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 23: 29-35.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 13. M. . . . . Alcohol and Youth (Eccles. 11: 9-12: 1)

February 14. T. . . . . Selfish Indulgence (Amos 6: 1-6)

February 15. W. . . . . The Obligation to Ourselves (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12; 4: 1-5)



February 16.	T.	Alcohol and Poverty (Prov. 23: 30-32)
February 17.	F.	A Nation Weakened by Alcohol (Isa. 5: 8-13)
February 18.	S.	Personal Abstinence (Jer. 35: 1-10)
February 19.	S.	Christian Liberty (1 Cor. 8: 9-13)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Between 810 B.C. and 778 B.C. "The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake," (Amos 1: 1.) According to Usher this Jeroboam began to reign over Israel 825 B.C., and died 784 B.C. According to Hales, he began to reign 834 B.C., and died 793 B.C. Uzziah began to reign over Judah about 810 B.C. The period therefore in which both reigned at the same time was 810 B.C. and 793 B.C. or 784 B.C. It was during this period that Amos prophesied. According to Usher, First Peter was written A.D. 48; some others put the date as late as A.D. 67. The date of its composition is not important.

*Places.*—From the seventh chapter it seems that Amos did his prophesying at Bethel, but most likely he wrote his book after he returned to Tekoa. Peter wrote at Babylon (5: 3), but there has been much speculation as to whether Babylon in Assyria is meant, or whether Peter used the name in a figurative sense. The point is not important; the letter is the important thing.

*Persons.*—Amos, the people of Judah and of the kingdom of Israel, Peter, and "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Amos was of humble birth and was engaged in a humble calling, "a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore trees."

*Lesson Links.*—During the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, the Hebrew kingdom was divided into the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, or the Southern Kingdom and the Northern Kingdom. This division occurred about two hundred years before Amos prophesied. Jeroboam the son of Nebat was the first king of Israel. He was a shrewd politician. "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." That was the motive that moved Jeroboam in what he was about to do, but he must not let the people know that his move was selfish; he wanted them to think he was doing it for their good. So he made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan." (1 Kings 12: 26-29.) Thus the kingdom of Israel launched into a system of idolatry, from which it never recovered. Both kingdoms grew worse, though Judah had occasional periods of superficial reformations.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Woe to Zion and Samaria (Amos 6: 1, 2)

Zion here stands for Jerusalem, the capital city of the kingdom of Judah; Samaria was the capital city of the Northern Kingdom.

At this time Uzziah was king in Jerusalem. In the main he was a good king, and the kingdom enjoyed a period of great prosperity during his reign. For a time he was devoted to the service of Jehovah, and prospered; "but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense." (2 Chron. 26: 16-21.) For this sin he was smitten with leprosy. The people, as well as the king, became full of self-importance. They were at ease; that is, they felt secure. They were satisfied that no evil would befall them. The same was true of the people of Samaria. Jeroboam II king of Israel had, in the main, a prosperous reign, though he made no effort to bring about a reformation. The people of Samaria, the capital city, felt secure. When people feel secure and at ease, they cease to be vigilant, and then they are in danger. Christians sometimes reach that point. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5: 8.) But the leading men—"the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come"—were responsible for the lethargy that had settled down on Judah and Israel. To show them the insecurity of nations which felt too secure Amos invites them to consider certain once-powerful city kingdoms—Calneh on the Euphrates, Hamath the great on the Orontes, and Gath of the Philistines; these had been frequently conquered.

### Further Reasons for Their Coming Woes (Verses 3-6)

In their minds they put the evil day far away. They said, "The evil shall not overtake nor meet us." (9: 10.) Even as late as Jeremiah's day they said, "Neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine." (Jer. 5: 12.) They were saying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 8: 11.) And their optimism and indifference to their own moral corruption brought the evil day—the day of vengeance—nearer. They shut their eyes to their sins and the evils threatening them; and in their feeling of security they lived in luxury, feeding themselves from their flocks and herds. Idle songs and low-grade music go with such living. The serious things of life are forgotten, and realities are ignored. Why should they worry; they were having a good time; but they were forgetting that a man must reap what he sows. They were drinking their wine, and anointing themselves with oil. Wine drinking goes with such fleshly indulgences. It is even so now. And such people do not want any laws to interfere with their way of living; nor do they think well of any one who seeks to correct them. "They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." (Amos 5: 10.) And a woe is also pronounced on those "that invent for themselves instruments of music like David." Adam Clark, commenting on this clause, says that he believed "that David was not authorized by the Lord to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the divine worship of which we read." Among other things he said, "And I further believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian church, is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are sinful."



## **Abstain from Fleshly Lusts (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12)**

First Peter was addressed to the sojourners of the Dispersion. They were out of their own country. In an important sense, all the Christians in the world are sojourners and pilgrims. We are here only for a time, journeying to the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. To make our journey safely we must "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," for the flesh lusteth against the spirit. Such lusts hinder us in our journey to that better land. Besides, we are beset by enemies, who would be glad to find some evil in us. The world is not friendly to Christianity, and would like to find something they can criticize; but the upright life of Christians may stop some of the criticisms, and lead some to glorify God—may lead some to become Christians. The one who lives up to his profession as a Christian should demonstrate to a critical world the value of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 16.) But the cursing, drinking, carousing church member disgraces the cause he professes to love.

## **Live to the Will of God (1 Pet. 4: 1, 2)**

Christ suffered in the flesh; how much we will never in this world know. No unholy ambition to gain some selfish ends prompted Christ to suffer in the flesh; he suffered for others. "Arm ye yourselves also with the same mind"—the same unselfish mind. Much of our suffering is brought on ourselves by our unrighteous living. That sort of suffering counts for nothing in our behalf. As Christ suffered for others, so must we; yet so few of us suffer much for the cause of Christ and for the good of others. We must arm ourselves with the mind of Christ, that we should not live the rest of our time to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. The flesh lusts after ease and comfort and the luxuries of life, as well as after the more corrupt practices that allure the flesh. Living after the lusts of the flesh does not necessarily mean living a life of moral degradation; it does not necessarily mean living in luxury. A man lives after the flesh when his thoughts and energies are directed solely to the gaining of selfish ends. If a person is not serving God, he is living after the flesh; there are only two courses to follow.

## **Right Living Is Strange to the Ungodly (Verses 3-5)**

These Hebrew Christians to whom Peter wrote lived among the Gentiles, and had likely learned and practiced many of their vices; but now they had been converted to Christ, and should leave off such practices. If they had found any satisfaction in such things, they ought to realize that the time past of their lives was more than sufficient to have wrought the desires of the Gentiles. It is not a hint that it was ever right for them to indulge in such practices, but their own experiences should have taught them the injurious effects of such living. Then follows a list of the practices that were common among the Gentiles. The word translated lasciviousness has a number of allied meanings, such as unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lusciousness, wantonness, etc. It is a word expres-

sive of deep moral depravity. Lusts is a word that is used to express a craving for a variety of forbidden things—unrestrained desire. Winebibbings—excessive indulgence in wine drinking. Wine was their chief alcoholic drink. Now the toper is not satisfied with wine; he wants something stronger—brandy, gin, or whisky. No one can estimate the evils of strong drink. Revelings and carousings are parties in which there is drinking to drunkenness and boisterous conduct. One can well believe that such parties are numerous these days. Abominal idolatries—there were all sorts of immoral practices connected with the worship of idols. When a man is converted to Christ and quits his former evil habits, his old companions think it strange that he will not indulge with them any more. They delight so in such practices that they cannot understand why any man should quit. They speak evil of him. To them such a man is a fool, a hypocrite, a weakling. Some professed Christians have not sufficient strength of manhood to stand such scoffing and jeering, and soon fall back into their old habits; and the last state is worse than the first. But no matter who we are nor where we are, we “shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.” We cannot escape this judgment. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment.” (Heb. 9: 27.) It is necessary that we guard well our words; “for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” (Matt. 12: 37.) “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds.” (Matt. 16: 27.) “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.” (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.) Drunkenness destroys a person’s usefulness here, and destroys his soul in the world to come.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It is a pity that Christians can be indifferent and at ease when things are going wrong. Such an attitude never corrected an evil. They fail to realize that shutting their eyes to a possible disaster serves only to hasten the fatal day.

If a person drank alone, there would not be so much drunkenness. It is social drinking that causes so much drunkenness. It causes some to drink intoxicants, who otherwise would not drink. It takes a strong character to refuse to drink when everybody else in the crowd is drinking.

But such drinking is not the only degrading social sin. Fornication and adultery are growing evils. Frequent divorces and remarriages are also a growing evil. Such looseness is sapping the foundation of our homes. Church members are guilty to such an extent that the world scoffs at religion.

We do not like to suffer in the flesh, nor do we like to deny ourselves of what we want; yet any worth-while accomplishment grows out of self-denial. If we would gain an education, master any of the arts or professions, or succeed in business, we must deny ourselves of many fleshly pleasures; and if we would follow Christ, we must deny ourselves.



If you have a consuming desire to follow Christ, it is not so difficult to deny the flesh. There is an expulsive power in a great desire; a conquering force in a great love. It is a pity when one loves his bottle more than he loves decency, or his family, or the Lord, or his own soul.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of too much optimism.  
The need of recognizing present-day dangers.  
The evils of social drinking.  
The evils of drunkenness.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
At what period did Amos prophesy?  
Where did he do his prophesying?  
In what work was Amos engaged?  
Tell about the division of the Hebrew kingdom.  
Tell about Jeroboam, and how and why he planned to keep his people away from Jerusalem.

### Amos 6: 1, 2

Who were the kings of Judah and the Northern Kingdom when Amos prophesied?  
What did the king of Judah do?  
Discuss verses 1 and 2.  
When is a person liable to fall?

### Verses 3-6

Discuss verse 3.  
How were the people living?

What attitude do such people have toward those who rebuke them?  
What is said about instruments of music?  
Give the substance of Adam Clark's comment on this clause.

### 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12

To whom did Peter write?  
Discuss these verses.

### 1 Pet. 4: 1, 2

Why did Christ suffer in the flesh?  
What should we do?  
What is it to live after the lusts of the flesh?

### Verses 3-5

Discuss verses 3 and 4, giving attention to the terms used.  
Why do sinners speak evil of those who will not indulge with them?  
What is said about judgment?  
Give other passages on the judgment.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—February 26, 1939

## PETER IN SAMARIA

### Acts 8: 14-25

14 Now when the apostles that were at Jê-ru'să-lēm heard that Să-mă'ri-ă had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit:

16 For as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jê'sūs.

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 Now when Si'môn saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money.

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee.

23 For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

24 And Sîmôn answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Sâ-mâr'i-tâns.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55: 1.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Isa. 55: 1-7.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

February 20.	M.	The Gospel in Samaria (Acts 8: 14-16, 25)
February 21.	T.	Jesus and the Samaritans (John 4: 27-42)
February 22.	W.	Jesus Cleanses the Temple (John 2: 13-22)
February 23.	T.	The Limitations of Money (Acts 8: 18-24)
February 24.	F.	The Fulfillment of Vows (Eccles. 5: 1-7)
February 25.	S.	Religion Unfiled (James 1: 19-27)
February 26.	S.	Sincere Worship (Mal. 1: 6-14)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—About A.D. 37.

**Place.**—The city of Samaria. Samaria was the capital city of the Samaritans. The city of Samaria was built by Omri, the sixth king of Israel, about 925 or 920 B.C. From that time it became the capital city of the kingdom of Israel.

**Persons.**—Peter, John, disciples, and Simon the sorcerer. "But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great."

**Lesson Links.**—In the church at Jerusalem there were many Grecian Jews, that is, Jews who had grown up in foreign countries and had learned to speak the Greek language. They were not acquainted with the native tongue of the Hebrews. (Acts 6: 1-6.) Evidently the "daily ministration" had been in the hands of the local Hebrews, who, not understanding the Greek language, had neglected the Grecian widows. On complaint of the Grecian Jews seven Grecian Jews were appointed to see after the needs of these neglected Grecian widows. Of these seven Stephen and Philip soon developed into great preachers of the gospel. The Greek-speaking Jews had a synagogue. Stephen soon found himself engaged in heated controversies with members of this synagogue. "And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." This so enraged these men that they brought false charges against him before the Sanhedrin. His defense, recorded in the seventh chapter, was a scathing denunciation of the court and all his accusers. Because they could not meet his arguments, they killed him. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." These disciples had been so thoroughly taught that all could tell the good tidings wherever they went. All dis-



ciples should soon arrive at a point where they can tell others what to do to be saved. The enemies of Christ thought to destroy his church, but they only succeeded in scattering the gospel to the ends of the earth. And now Philip comes into prominence. He went down to the city of Samaria, and immediately began to proclaim Christ to them. He also did many signs before them. Simon had been amazing them with his sorceries. "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed; and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### **The Apostles Send Peter and John to Samaria (Verse 14)**

As the revelators of the will of Christ and the ambassadors of the kingdom of God, it was the duty of the apostles to see that the preaching and the affairs of the kingdom were carried on as they should be. When therefore they heard of the success of Philip's preaching at Samaria, they forthwith sent Peter and John to look into matters. In an important sense they had the care of all the churches planted. They were to teach the converts all things whatsoever the Lord had commanded. They were to supply the needs of all new churches.

### **The Holy Spirit Conferred on the Samaritans (Verses 15-17)**

Peter and John prayed for them, "that they might receive the Holy Spirit." This evidently had reference to the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit. The language shows that they received some gift, or gifts, that people do not receive when they become Christians, and that they received this power by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. The New Testament had not then been written—no part of it. As the apostles could not be everywhere, it was necessary that spiritual gifts be distributed to certain members in the churches. By referring to 1 Cor. 12: 1-11, 28, 29, the student will see that there were various spiritual gifts. The apostles, having been baptized in the Holy Spirit, had all these gifts. This baptism of the Holy Spirit came direct from heaven, as on the day of Pentecost; but spiritual gifts were conferred by the laying on of hands. It is a disputed point as to whether any but apostles could confer these gifts by the laying on of hands. It is not certain that only the apostles had this power; but it is certain that no one could impart a gift to another which he himself did not possess.

### **Simon Offers Money for the Power to Confer Spiritual Gifts (Verses 18, 19)**

There has been much discussion as to the genuineness of Simon's conversion. Because he so soon fell into a grievous sin, and was liable to perish for it, some have argued that he merely pretended to believe, and that he was therefore a hypocrite; but the record does not say, as some do, that he merely professed to believe. It is

the historian Luke that said, "And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Phillip." To doubt the genuineness of his faith is to cast a reflection on the veracity of Luke, for Luke plainly says, "Simon also himself believed." Luke tells us that the people believed and were baptized, and that Simon also believed and was baptized. Many other people have fallen into sin after having been baptized in all earnestness. It was more natural for Simon to fall into this particular sin than into any other. He had been used to displaying his powers, and amazing the people; now here was something real. If he had the power to impart such gifts to others, as Peter and John had done, he could do wonders. Any new convert is especially tempted along the lines of his old habits. It will be noticed that Simon did not offer money for some gift like the others had, but for the power to impart those gifts. It seems more than likely that he had one such gift as the others had; for had he been denied the lesser gifts, it does not seem that he would have had the courage to ask for the greater. Simon's offer to buy this power gave us the word *simony*, which means traffic in what is sacred; the crime of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment.

### **"Thy Silver Perish with Thee" (Verses 20, 21)**

"Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money." The only sin here charged against Simon was the sin of thinking that he could buy the gift of God with money. That was a grievous sin. God's gifts are not matters of commerce. They are for those who prove themselves worthy of them; at least, for those who have the right attitude of heart and mind toward God. Peter gave Simon to understand just why he could not have the power to impart to others these spiritual gifts. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God." And yet this example is sometimes referred to as proof that none but apostles could impart spiritual gifts. If Peter had said, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thou art not an apostle," his statement would have settled the matter; but Peter did not give that as the reason why Simon could not have the power to impart spiritual gifts. The sole reason he gave was that Simon's heart was not right before God. This seems to imply that if Simon's heart had been right before God, he might have been given the power he sought. It is a matter about which no one need to be dogmatic.

### **The Way to Obtain Forgiveness (Verses 22-24)**

When people who had never been Christians asked what to do, the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Peter said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) But Simon was a baptized believer, who had fallen into a grievous sin; what should he do? The answer in this case is just as plain as in the other: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." Repent and pray. If it be said that the erring child of God must confess his sins, let it be remembered



that a person really confesses a sin when he prays the Lord to forgive it. Simon's humbleness of spirit is shown in the request he made of Peter: "Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me." There was need for this repentance and prayer, for Simon was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. It will be noticed that Peter charged Simon with only one sin and commanded him to repent of only one sin. Now, if he had never been forgiven of his alien sins, if all the sins he had ever committed were still standing against him, of what advantage would it have been to him to repent of this one sin? He would have been condemned for his other sins, if they were still unforgiven, even if he did sincerely repent of this sin of thinking to purchase the gift of God with money. The speculation as to what Simon did afterwards is of no consequence in settling the matter as to whether he sincerely repented and was baptized in good faith; for many people have fallen into fatal sins after they became Christians. And had it not been pointed out that Simon committed this sin, the genuineness of his faith and obedience would never have been called in question by any one. But efforts to sustain dogmas lead people into strange interpretations.

### **Peter and John Return to Jerusalem (Verse 25)**

Peter and John had finished their work in Samaria. It is likely that they had accomplished more than the apostles who sent them had in mind for them to do. They had found Philip's work regular, and they had imparted spiritual gifts to at least some of the converted Samaritans. With these spiritual gifts the Samaritans could carry on the work without any outside help. As the apostles returned toward Jerusalem, they preached in many of the villages of the Samaritans. No account is given of the results of this work.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

The cause of Christ had prospered in Jerusalem. The apostles were preaching the word with great success. New converts were being taught and trained for usefulness in the kingdom of God. The fellowship was delightful. But all this could not last forever.

The Lord had ordained that the gospel should be preached in all the world. By his restraining providence persecution had been held in check, till a great host of disciples could be taught and trained for the work. Then persecution broke loose in great fury against the church; but the devil's effort to destroy the church served only to scatter it to the four winds of heaven.

This persecution started from arguments in a synagogue. These early Christians could not preach the gospel, and let other folks alone. The Jews had declared Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy in claiming to be the Son of God, and had crucified him. It was the great desire of these early Christians to convince these Jews that the Jesus whom they crucified was the reigning Messiah. They could not preach Christ, and let these unbelieving Jews alone. And because the Jews could not meet their arguments, they decided to kill them.

Stephen, full of zeal for the Lord, appears to have been a leader in these fiery arguments. He fell the first victim of their wrath; but before he fell he delivered a terrific indictment against them. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not." (Acts 7: 51-53.)

Notice these expressions: "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Hence, to preach the word, to preach Christ, and to preach good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, are different ways of expressing the same thing.

It is fortunate that we have the report of the visit of Peter and John to Samaria; otherwise we would not know so much about what an erring child of God should do that he might be forgiven of any sin into which he might fall. From the book of Acts we therefore learn how to become Christians, and how erring Christians may find forgiveness.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Discussing with those who oppose the truth.

Philip's work at Samaria.

Spiritual gifts.

How an erring child of God may be restored to favor.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give historic facts about Samaria.

Simon was a professional what?

Tell about the selection of the seven

in the church at Jerusalem.

What two became prominent?

How did Stephen stir the Jews up

against him?

What then happened to him?

What happened to the church?

Why were all these disciples able to

preach the word?

Tell about Philip's work at Samaria.

### Verse 14

Give information about the power and authority of the apostles.

### Verses 15-17

What did Peter and John impart to the Samaritan converts?

How was this done?

What is the difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the imparting of spiritual gifts?

### Verses 18, 19

What shows that Simon really believed?

What grievous sin did he commit?

Why would he so easily fall into that

sin?

What word do we have from Simon's

sin, and what does it mean?

### Verses 20, 21

Repeat what Peter said to Simon.

Why did Simon not have part in im-

parting spiritual gifts?

### Verses 22-24

What were people required to do to become Christians?

Why did not Peter give this same command to Simon?

What did Peter command Simon to do?

What request did Simon make?

What shows that Simon had been forgiven of his alien sins?

### Verse 25

After leaving Samaria, what did Peter and John do?

Discuss the reflections.



## Lesson X—March 5, 1939

## PETER PREACHES TO GENTILES

Acts 10: 30-48

30 And Cōr-nē'li-ūs said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel.

31 And saith, Cōr-nē'li-ūs, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Jōp'pā, and call unto thee Sī'mōn, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Sī'mōn a tanner, by the sea side.

33 Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

34 And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

36 The word which he sent unto the children of Is'rā-ēl, preaching good tidings of peace by Jē'sūs Christ (he is Lord of all)—

37 That saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Jū-dæ'ā, beginning from Gāl'il-ēe, after the baptism which John preached;

38 Even Jē'sūs of Nāz'ā-rēth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jē-ru'sā-lēm; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest.

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

42 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.

43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gēn'tiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jē'sūs Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." (Isa. 45: 22.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalm 98: 1-9.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

February 27.	M.	A Devout Centurion (Acts 10: 1-8)
February 28.	T.	Peter Preaches to Gentiles (Acts 10: 34-48)
March 1.	W.	A Blessing for the Gentiles (Gal. 3: 6-14)
March 2.	T.	The Giant of Prejudice (Luke 10: 30-37)
March 3.	F.	Life for All (Acts 11: 1-18)
March 4.	S.	Universal Brotherhood (Mic. 4: 1-4)
March 5.	S.	The Father of Us All (Isa. 45: 20-25)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—About A.D. 40. The date is not certain.

**Place.**—Cesarea, a seacoast city about seventy miles northwest from Jerusalem. It was built by Herod the Great, and was the

official residence of the Herodian kings and of the Roman governors of that province. Here, of course, there would be stationed a band of Roman soldiers.

*Persons.*—Peter, Cornelius, the friends and kinsmen of Cornelius, and six Jewish brethren. Cornelius was the commander of the band of soldiers stationed at Cesarea. Some have conjectured that he was the centurion who was present when Jesus was crucified.

*Lesson Links.*—At the time of our lesson the church was still young. The whole content of Christianity was not revealed all at once; revelation was gradual. That the law of Moses had been abolished in Christ was not as clearly set forth at the beginning as it was later. It was clearly revealed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that in him only was there salvation; but the Jewish converts were so wedded to all things Jewish, that they had to be gradually weaned away from their old religion. At the first these Jewish Christians regarded Christianity as a sort of extension of the Jews' religion. It had always been an established principle that Gentiles could come into covenant relationship with God by being circumcised. Although Jesus had commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to all nations, and Peter had said on Pentecost that the promise was to the Jews and to all that were afar off, they did not grasp the idea that the gospel should be preached to uncircumcised Gentiles. None had objected to the gospel's being preached to the Samaritans, for they practiced circumcision. So long as the law was in force it was an effective barrier between Jew and Gentile; it would have been impossible to bring Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles into fellowship in one congregation of worshipers. But it was God's design to bring both together into one body. "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, 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: 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." (Eph. 2: 14-18.) Even though Peter was an apostle, the decisive truth set forth in the foregoing quotation had not dawned upon him till it was made known to him in the incidents connected with the conversion of Cornelius. Some of the Jewish Christians never were reconciled to the acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles into full fellowship in the church.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Why Cornelius Sent for Peter (Verses 30-32)

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, "Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." This shows that Peter did not have the characteristics of a pope. Cornelius had called together his kinsmen and near friends to hear what Peter had to say. These Peter found gathered when he entered the house. To them he said, "Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come



unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean." All men were clean in the sense that Cornelius was. That meant that all men were fit to have gospel privileges. To see how God had showed this to Peter read verses 9-23. The cleansing of Cornelius meant no more than that the law which made a distinction between Jew and Gentile had been abolished. "I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me." Cornelius explained the matter. Four days ago he had been keeping the ninth hour of prayer. Cornelius had been weaned away from idolatry, and prayed now only to the one true God. He was in the habit of keeping the Jews' hours of prayer. His character was above reproach. Verses 37, 38 show that Cornelius knew something of Jesus of Nazareth, but he knew that there was yet more to be learned. Evidently he was praying for more light, for in answering his prayer God sent him the needed light. An angel had appeared to him while he was praying and told him that his prayer was heard, and for him to send to Joppa for Peter who would tell him words whereby he and his house would be saved. (Acts 11: 13, 14.) He must therefore have been praying that he might know what to do to be saved.

### A Unique Gathering (Verse 33)

It is not likely that there was ever another occasion like this. The audience had been assured by the angel that Peter would tell them exactly what they needed to know; they were assured that every word Peter spoke to them was the very word of God; to them he was the voice of God. He would deliver them a message direct from heaven. No congregation today can have that assurance. On the other hand, Peter was assured that all present had come together to accept everything he said. "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded of the Lord." It is not likely that any other preacher ever had an audience before him that assured him before he began to speak that they were present to do whatever he taught them to do. How different was his audience on Pentecost when none of his audience was friendly to him when he began to speak!

### "God Is No Respector of Persons" (Verses 34, 35)

The opening words of Peter's speech were, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." That had always been true; yet it seems that Peter had not so understood it till his vision on the housetop. However, at any time during the operation of the law of Moses, a Gentile could enter into the covenant by being circumcised; and any Jew forfeited his covenant relationship by refusing to keep the law. "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover of Jehovah, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land." (Ex. 12: 48.) Of the seed of Abraham it was said, "And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. 17: 14.) A man gains no favor with God simply because he is a Jew; neither

does any man suffer any disadvantage because he is not a Jew. "Or is God the God of Jews only? is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also." (Rom. 3: 29.) "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.)

### **What Peter's Hearers Knew of Jesus (Verses 36-38)**

The teaching and the mighty works of Jesus had not been done in a corner. His fame spread rapidly, extending early in his ministry at least as far as Tyre and Sidon. (Mark 3: 7, 8.) Peter's hearers knew much about the life, teaching, and miracles of Jesus of Nazareth—"how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." These men knew enough to whet their desire for more knowledge. Though Peter did not mention the crucifixion of Jesus as one of the things they knew; yet it is hardly possible that they were ignorant of that great event. Soldiers from Cesarea were present on that occasion. It is barely possible that Cornelius was the centurion who said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." (Mark 15: 39.)

### **"We Are Witnesses" (Verses 39-43)**

When Peter said, "We are witnesses," he did not include his hearers. They had only heard of the great works Jesus did, but others had been witnesses of what he did and taught—"witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree." They were witnesses also that God raised him up from the dead; of that they could not be mistaken, for they ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. These were chosen witnesses. They had been so intimately associated with him before his crucifixion and after his resurrection that they could not have been mistaken as to his identity. "And he charged us to preach unto the people." This charge can be found in Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 45-49. This gospel that Peter was preaching was the plan foretold by the prophets—"To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." Peter had come to tell them words whereby they should be saved, and that the plan of salvation which he was preaching was the plan that all the prophets had foretold.

### **The Holy Spirit Fell on All That Heard the Word (Verses 44-46)**

Six brethren had gone with Peter from Joppa. The circumstances show that he had taken them with him for witnesses that he was doing what God approved; for when he went to Jerusalem, where he knew his conduct would be called in question, he took the six Joppa brethren with him. (Acts 11: 1-18.) The six brethren must have gone with Peter to the house of Cornelius with some doubts as to the propriety of preaching to the Gentiles; for when the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard the word, as their speaking with tongues



showed, these brethren were amazed, "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." They knew they had received the Holy Spirit, because they spoke with tongues. This enables us to see the real purpose of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on these Gentiles. It required a miraculous vision to convince Peter that he should go and preach to them, and it required this miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit to convince these brethren that the Gentiles were accepted of God. It helped also to further convince Peter; for he said to the brethren at Jerusalem, "If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?" And Peter's reciting these things convinced the church at Jerusalem. "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." But such outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not common, for to find an event like it Peter had to go back to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning."

### **Cornelius, His Kinsmen, and Near Friends Baptized (Verses 47, 48)**

All doubts having been removed as to the propriety of extending gospel privileges to the Gentiles, Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. But he first really challenged any one to show any reason why these Gentiles should not be baptized. If the student will read Acts 11: 1-18, he will see that Peter had to defend himself for this visit among the Gentiles.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

God is no respecter of persons. He is the God of both Jews and Gentiles. He is not a tribal, or national, God as some seem to think. The future kingdom advocates misrepresent God in teaching that he has yet some special favors to confer upon the Jews, favors from which all Gentiles will be entirely excluded.

It has been argued that Christianity, or the scheme of human redemption revealed through the apostles, was not foretold by the prophets, but that the prophets foretold a world kingdom with Jesus on David's throne in Jerusalem. And yet Peter and the other apostles and inspired men frequently referred to prophecies in proof of what they taught. The truth is, Christianity as revealed through the apostles is the scheme of human redemption foretold by the prophets, and the New Testament abundantly so teaches.

When people have their minds firmly fixed along certain lines of thought, it is hard to change them into another way of thinking. There were some things that Jesus never did get into the minds of the apostles during his personal ministry; and it seems strange that they were so slow to learn that gospel privileges should go to the Gentiles. On this point they had to be convinced by a special revelation and miracles. Their slowness to see new truth should teach us to be patient in our efforts to lead people out of errors in which they have lived all their lives. Be persistent, but considerate, in teaching them.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

God makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles.  
 Why send for Peter?  
 How words save people.  
 The character of Cornelius.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
 Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
 Where was Caesarea, and what was its importance?  
 Who was Cornelius?  
 Show that the gospel was gradually revealed.  
 What ideas prevailed in the early church as to the Gentiles?  
 What had to be done before Jews and Gentiles could be brought together in one congregation of worshippers?  
 How was Peter convinced that he should preach to the Gentiles?

## Verses 30-32

What did Cornelius do when Peter came to his house?  
 What did Peter say and do?  
 What did Peter say that God had showed him?  
 In what sense were the Gentiles cleansed?  
 How had God showed this to Peter?  
 Describe the character of Cornelius.  
 For what was he evidently praying?  
 How was he directed to find the needed information?

## Verse 33

What assurance did Cornelius give Peter?  
 In what way was this a unique audience?  
 How did it differ from his audience at Pentecost?

## Verses 34, 35

Give the opening words of Peter's speech.  
 What shows that God had never been a respecter of persons?  
 Show that Jews have no advantage over Gentiles?

## Verses 36-38

Show that the fame of Jesus reached far beyond Galilee and Judea.  
 How much did Peter's hearers know about Jesus of Nazareth?

## Verses 39-43

Who were the witnesses to whom Peter referred?  
 Why were his hearers not witnesses?  
 Why could not the witnesses be mistaken?  
 What had he charged his witnesses to preach?  
 To what had all the prophets borne witness?

## Verses 44-46

Who had accompanied Peter?  
 Why did he bring these brethren?  
 What occurred as Peter spoke?  
 What effect did this have on the six brethren?  
 What showed to them that the Holy Spirit had fallen on these Gentiles?  
 What shows that Peter was further convinced by this outpouring of the Holy Spirit?  
 How do we know that such outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not common?

## Verses 47, 48

Discuss these verses.  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—March 12, 1939

## PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Acts 12: 5-17

5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.



8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision.

10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.

13 And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhō'da.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 34: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 6.	M.	Peter's Deliverance (Acts 12: 5-17)
March 7.	T.	The Delivering Angel (Dan. 6: 17-23)
March 8.	W.	God's Power to Save (Psalm 91)
March 9.	T.	Strength from God Through Prayer (James 5: 13-16)
March 10.	F.	Asking in His Name (John 14: 11-17)
March 11.	S.	Prayer as a Means of Service (Matt. 9: 35-38)
March 12.	S.	Prayer as Fellowship with God (Psalm 5: 1-7)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 43 or 44; the spring of the year—the time of the Passover.

*Place.*—Jerusalem. Herod's residence was at Cesarea, but he was in Jerusalem at this time.

*Persons.*—Peter, Herod, some soldiers, an angel, and a number of the disciples of Christ. The Herod of our lesson was the grandson of Herod the Great. Herod the Great was an Idumean, but had adopted the Jews' religion. He was a cruel, bloodthirsty tyrant. It is said that the Herod of our lesson was a strict observer of the law of Moses, and sought with success to gain the favor of the Jews. After the events of our lesson he went down to Cesarea. The fate that befell him is told in few words: "Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country. And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave

not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." (Verses 20-23.)

**Lesson Links.**—After the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9: 1-19), the church had peace for a time. "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." (Acts 9: 31.) But Herod now, desiring to gain more favor with the Jews, launched a persecution. His duty as a subordinate Roman ruler made it his duty to keep the Jews in subjection to Rome. Insurrection was more likely to arise during their annual feast when thousands were gathered at Jerusalem than at any other time. To prevent such possible uprisings it was necessary for Herod to be in Jerusalem with a force of Roman soldiers. This would be distasteful to the Jews; but Herod knew how to overcome that feeling. He knew that the majority of the Jews still hated the disciples of Jesus; he would please the Jews by murdering the leaders of the Christians. "Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church." It seems that he thought the church would die out, if he killed the leaders. He began by killing James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John. There was another apostle named James—James the son of Alphaeus. This latter was the James mentioned later in Acts. When Herod saw that he pleased the Jews greatly by killing James, he seized Peter. "And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people." A quaternion of soldiers was a group of four soldiers; four such groups made sixteen soldiers. But even a Herod with his prison and his soldiers was weak when he went against God, as our lesson plainly shows.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Peter in Prison (Verses 5, 6)

Being cast into prison was not a new experience to Peter. Twice before this he had been made a prisoner, and once he with the other apostles had been delivered from prison by an angel. (Acts 4: 1-3; 5: 17-23.) In each case he was cast into prison for preaching the gospel. And it is said that the prisons in those days were unspeakably foul. On this occasion Herod had Peter guarded by soldiers, as if he were some desperate criminal. And while he was in prison the church in Jerusalem was making earnest prayer for him. In those days they did not have a lot of theories that kept them from praying for what they earnestly desired. It was a distressing time for the church. James had been killed, and Peter was to be killed after the Passover. That was bad enough, and yet no one knew how many more lives would be sacrificed to the hatred of the Jews. Not only did Herod have Peter in prison and also guarded by soldiers, but he had him chained to two soldiers. The Roman method was, so we are told, to put the prisoner between two soldiers with his left hand chained to the right hand of one soldier and his right hand chained to the left hand of the other soldier. In this way they could lie on their backs and sleep. Yet that must have been very uncomfortable to the soldiers, as well as to the prisoner. So far as Peter knew, he had but a short time to live, yet he slept.



### **An Angel Delivered Peter (Verses 7-10)**

When the time had about arrived for Peter's execution, an angel appeared in the prison, "and a light shined in the cell." This light, of course, was miraculous. The angel struck Peter on the side, and roused him up, and said to him, "Rise up quickly." The chains fell from Peter's hands. It seems that the light and all the noise would have aroused the soldiers. It must have been that a deep sleep from God was upon them. The angel was master of the situation, and there was no confusion that accompanies haste. "Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals . . . cast thy garment about thee." Peter had laid aside his girdle and sandals, and also his outer garment, that he might rest better through the night. At the bidding of the angel, Peter followed him out of the cell. He was still in a dazed condition, thinking it was all a vision of being delivered from prison, and also from death. It was such a happy condition and so unexpected that Peter could not for a time realize that he was in reality being delivered from prison and from death. Whether or not the guards were asleep, we are not informed; but the angel and Peter passed the first and the second guard without being noticed. The Romans used the castle, or fortress, of Antonia as a prison. The iron gate appears to have been in the inclosing wall, through which the angel and Peter passed out into a street of the city. An unseen hand opened this massive gate as the angel and Peter approached it. The angel accompanied Peter through one street of Jerusalem and then departed. He had done what Peter could not do. He had rescued Peter from prison, and had led him far enough out of the way for him to be out of immediate danger, and then left him to his own resources. Peter had been helped in the things in which he could not help himself. "What is proper to God, he always does; what is proper to man, he requires him to perform." This is true in spiritual affairs as well as in material matters. It was not possible for man to make a plan of salvation from sin; God freely gave us such a plan as we needed. But since God so graciously gave us this plan, we can make use of it. We can believe in him and in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. We can repent of our sins, and reform our lives; and we can recognize the authority of Christ Jesus by being baptized in his name. We can also follow the example Jesus set before us.

### **Peter Came to Himself (Verse 11)**

It was a bewildering experience to Peter. Not till the angel left him, and he had had time to collect his wits, did he come to know that his deliverance was real and not a mere hallucination. "Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Peter knew what Herod had meant to do with him, and what all the Jews expected Herod to do. Now God had miraculously saved him from that death. Such an experience must have made Peter feel a new sense of obligation to God who had wrought so mightily in his favor, and that God yet had important work for him to do. We do not know why God allowed James to be killed, and yet miraculously delivered Peter from death,

save on the grounds that God had yet some special work for Peter to do—work that Peter was especially fitted to do.

### Peter Goes to the House of Mary (Verses 12-17)

Peter knew that the whole church would be anxious about him, for all knew that Herod had meant to do to him what he had done to James. It may be that they had in some way informed him that a group would be gathered at the home of Mary to pray for him. Peter must have been informed by the angel that the soldiers would not wake up before morning, else he would have been afraid that they wake up in the night and start searching for him. He could have been easily seen in the light of the full moon. As the Jewish months began with the new moon, and the Passover came at the middle of the month, it is easy to see that the Passover always came when the moon was full. And this was the time of the Passover. At the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, "many were gathered together and were praying." Peter would naturally want to relieve their anxiety, and through them to relieve the anxiety of others in Jerusalem. At the door he knocked for admission. Peter said something to Rhoda, the maid who answered his knocking, for it is said that she knew his voice. The sound of Peter's voice so filled her with joy that she forgot to open the gate, intent only on letting the others know that Peter had escaped from prison, and was then at the door. Under great emotional strain people do foolish things. The people inside would not believe her report. How could Peter be at the door, when all knew that he was in prison, securely bound and guarded? Under the strain and excitement Rhoda had gone crazy; that is what they thought. But when she insisted in all confidence that she was telling the truth they said, "It is his angel." It is said that the Jews thought every person had a guardian angel, and this group of disciples may have entertained that idea; or they may have thought he had already been murdered, and this was his spirit. But be that as it may, they could have easily settled the dispute as to whether it was Peter at the door, if they had not been too excited to think of opening the door to see who it was. However, at Peter's continued knocking they did finally open the door; "and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed." They had been praying for him, but they had not expected their prayers to be answered after that fashion. There was so much confusion when Peter entered the house, that he had to quiet them before he could tell them anything. The fact that he had escaped was more important in their thoughts just then than the manner of his escape; but when he had quieted them he "declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison." He knew that the deliverance had not come about in a natural way; he knew that the soldiers to whom he was chained had not joined with the guards to turn him loose. Such a move would have meant death to them. Innocent as they were, they were put to death any way. Peter knew that none but the Lord would or could have delivered him. "Tell these things unto James"—the other James, the James, who from that time on, so long as he lived, was the leading spirit in the church at Jerusalem. They were also to tell the other brethren. "And he departed, and went to another place."



Where he went, we know not, though the Roman Catholics would have us believe that he went to Rome, and established the church there. There is not the slightest evidence of this. If he had done so, it seems certain that Luke would have reported so important a matter.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

One of the strange things about people is, how they can be so blind and bitter toward that which is for their good. Ignorance—dense ignorance—is at the bottom of it. The Jews crucified Jesus because their prejudice would not allow them to know him. Herod was ignorant. No matter how much a man knows along some lines, he may be densely ignorant along other lines. Many scholarly men oppose Christianity because they are ignorant of what it really is.

We are not compelled these days to suffer the same kind of persecutions that the early Christians suffered; but some of our persecutions are as hard to bear. To be snubbed, jeered, scoffed at, and looked upon as undeveloped mentally, because one cannot go into every scheme well-meaning people invent, is more than some can bear. There are more moral cowards than physical cowards.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Herods.

How prejudice blinds people.

The cruelty of religious fanatics.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Of what race of people were the Herods?  
Who was the Herod of our lesson?  
What is said as to the religion of the Herod of our lesson?  
What fate finally befell him?  
What is said of the church after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus?  
Why was Herod in Jerusalem at the time of our lesson?  
Tell of the beheading of James?  
Which James was this?  
Why did he seize Peter, and what did he intend to do to him?  
How was Peter kept?

### Verses 5, 6

When and under what circumstances had Peter previously been in prison?  
While he was in prison this time, what did the church do?  
Why did Herod delay Peter's execution for a few days?

How did they go about making it sure that he would not escape?

### Verses 7-10

Describe in detail Peter's deliverance from prison?  
During the deliverance, what was Peter's feeling?  
What was God's part and what was Peter's part in this deliverance?  
What is God's part and what is man's part in salvation?

### Verse 11

Discuss verse 11.

### Verses 12-17

After Peter's deliverance, of whom did he first think?  
Why should he be so bold as to walk the streets on such an occasion?  
Show that it was the full of the moon at that time.  
Tell about his reception at the house of Mary.  
Show how strong emotions rob people of thinking.  
Discuss verse 17.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XII—March 19, 1939

## PETER EXHORTS TO CHRISTIAN LIVING

1 Pet. 3: 8-18

8 Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humbleminded:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For,

He that would love life,

And see good days,

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,

And his lips that they speak no guile:

11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good;

Let him seek peace, and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,

And his ears unto their supplication:

But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?

14 But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye; and fear not their fear, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living."* (1 Pet. 1: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Pet. 1: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 13.	M.	.....	Growth in Grace (Col. 1: 9-14)
March 14.	T.	.....	Living at One's Best (1 Pet. 3: 8-18)
March 15.	W.	.....	A More Abundant Life (Isa. 58: 6-11)
March 16.	T.	.....	Purity of Speech (Psalm 24: 1-6)
March 17.	F.	.....	The Fullness of Christ (Eph. 4: 1-7)
March 18.	S.	.....	Wrestling and Winning (Eph. 6: 10-19)
March 19.	S.	.....	The Perfect Pattern (1 Pet. 4: 1-5)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Different dates are assigned to the writing of this letter, ranging from A.D. 60 to A.D. 68.

*Place.*—Babylon. (1 Pet. 5: 13.) There has been a lot of controversy as to what Babylon is here mentioned. Some think it was ancient Babylon; others, that it was Babylon, near Memphis, in Egypt; others, that it was Rome. Bible dictionaries and commentaries will give the theories, and the grounds for them.

*Persons.*—"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." While it seems that Peter had certain ones in mind when he wrote this letter, his teaching and exhortation are applicable to all Christians.



*Lesson Links.*—"To afford consolation to the persecuted appears to have been the main object of this epistle. To this the moral instructions are subsidiary. The exhortations to a pure conscience, to rebut calumnies of the time by their innocence, to abstain from violent disputes, to pay respect to the existing authorities, to exercise increasing love and fidelity were exhortations all given with a view to alleviate their fate, or enable them to bear it. The repeated references to the example of Jesus in his death and sufferings are designed to strengthen them for the endurance of calamities. The exhortation to the slaves, too, has reference to the unhappy days, in which, for real or imaginary wrongs and hardships, they frequently became the accusers and betrayers of their masters. The following is a summary of the contents: "The salutation and introduction, in which the inhabitants of the five provinces who were purchased by the sufferings of Christ, are exhorted to prepare themselves for a reward higher than the enjoyments of this fleeting life (1: 1-13). They are, therefore, recommended to lay aside anything which could render them unworthy of Christ, the center of their hopes, their pattern and their Savior, and so to regulate their conduct to their superiors that none should be able to reproach them as evildoers. These precepts were to extend to slaves, to whom the meek and suffering Jesus should be an example. Women, too, were to render their submissive noiseless virtue as their chiefest ornament, and men should cherish and honor them. All should be full of sympathy and love, and mutual indulgence. Their innocence should be so marked as to shame the calumniator, and they should make preparation for the approaching catastrophe, when they should have an opportunity of imitating Jesus in their sufferings, hoping for them all to have no other reproach than that of being his disciples. The elders are enjoined to watch over their flocks, and the subordinate to pay them respect, and all should be on the watch, and lay aside their worldly cares. All these exhortations are enforced by the example of Christ, and by the punishment of the disobedient in the days of Noah . . ."—*Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary*.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A Happy Life Depends on Right Conduct (Verses 8-11)

Good days depend on right living. Confusion, strife, and bitterness cannot make a happy life. There are certain fundamentals that we must maintain, that is, we must stand for God's truth and obedience to him; but to cultivate a contentious spirit, to cultivate a disposition to disagree with others, cannot bring peace of mind, nor peace with God and our fellow Christians. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4: 1-3.) "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." (1 Cor. 1: 10.) Where such conditions prevail, it is easy for brethren to be "likeminded, compas-



sionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded." To be compassionate is to be sympathetic, to share with another, in so far as we can, his troubles and sorrows. A Christian cannot be indifferent to the sorrows and troubles of others. In this rough world we must cultivate a tender feeling toward others. Too many pride themselves on being "hard-boiled," thinking that such hardness of heart is an indication of strength of character; but it is not so. The effort to cultivate such a disposition is a confession of weakness, and an effort to overcome it in the wrong way. Love for others makes us tenderhearted toward them, and considerate of their feelings and desires. But it is a mistake to think that love for others makes us indulgent toward them in any wrong belief or evil practice. Love for others impels us to do what we can righteously to save them from harm, or from any hurtful notions or practices. If we really love a person we will sacrifice our timid feelings to keep him from being hurt. "Rendering evil for evil" is spite work. To do so is to get down on a level with the one who does evil to us and that injures one's own character. "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me." (Prov. 24: 29.) It is quite natural for us to say harsh things to those who revile us; but we should remember our Lord, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." (1 Pet. 2: 23.) "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous word stirreth up anger." (Prov. 15: 1.) Instead of treating harshly those who do us wrong, we should pray God's blessings upon them. If we would measure up to our calling, if we would inherit a blessing, we must live as Peter here outlines. "He that would love life, and see good days," must "refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips" from speaking guile: "and let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it."

### God's Favor Upon the Righteous (Verses 12-14)

Peter had shown that the cultivation of the virtues he had mentioned was better even for this life. Not only so, but he now declares that God looks with favor on the righteous, and that he hears their prayers. And what can be more encouraging to a man that is trying to live right? Of course we know that certain elements enter into acceptable prayer. God is pleased with the prayers of those who trust him; and he will grant their petitions, if they ask according to his will. Some of us have added an amendment to that by saying that God will hear us if we pray according to his will and according to the laws of nature. The only real, permanent harm that can come to a person is the ruining of his character. Who then can do us any real harm if we are zealous of good works? When Paul knew that he was about to be beheaded, and had just said that the time of his departure had come, he said, "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom." (2 Tim. 4: 18.) If a Christian is persecuted even unto death, there is no permanent harm in that. Christians cannot escape persecution so long as they live in a sinful world. "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.) "But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye." "Blessed are they that have been



persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." (Matt. 5: 10-12.) Hence, "Fear not their fear, neither be troubled." But it is hard for us to do what the Lord and his apostle here tell us to do; it is hard for us to rejoice when we are persecuted. Certainly no one rejoices because of the pain and unpleasantness of persecution; but we may, like the apostles, rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. (Acts 5: 40, 41.) And it would help us to bear persecutions if we would look to the reward. None of us are called on to suffer as did Paul; yet he could say, "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.)

### Giving a Reason Concerning Our Hope (Verse 15)

Hope has in it two elements, namely, desire and expectation. Where there is no desire there is no hope, though there may be expectation. A person may expect trouble, but does not desire it; hence he does not hope for it. Desire alone does not constitute hope; there must be some grounds on which you expect your desire to be realized, else there can be no real hope. All our hopes for the future are founded on Christ and his promises and our obedience to him. The glories of heaven create the desire, and the promises of Christ give the faithful Christian grounds for his expectation. This is hope; but even then, there would be no hope, if Jesus be not the Christ of God. The early Christians were surrounded by the heathen or unbelieving Jews; and these early Christians, in giving a reason concerning their hope, would have to give a reason for believing in Jesus as the Christ. But many of us now are surrounded by professed believers in Christ, who call in question many of the things we believe and practice. We are not called on to give a reason for rejecting all idols, as were some of the early Christians; but we are frequently called on to give a reason for rejecting the doctrines and practices of men, and we are frequently called on to give a reason for certain things we do. We should be able to meet the issue in a way that does credit to the things we believe and practice. It requires that you know the Bible sufficiently well to be able to show that you are believing and practicing the things taught in the Bible. But to offer that sort of reason to a heathen, or to a present-day infidel, does not meet the demands of the case; and as infidelity of one kind and another is making rapid gains in some parts of this country, it has become necessary that Christians be able to give evidence of the divine origin of Christianity. It is being claimed by some that Jesus was a good man and a great teacher, but was only a man. Christians must be able to meet that, and show that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. And we must do so with all confidence, yet with meekness and fear.

## Better Suffer for Well-Doing Than for Evil-Doing (Verses 16-18)

Conscience is not judgment. It is that feeling of approval when you do what your judgment says is right, and the feeling of disapproval when you do what you believe is wrong. Hence, to have a good conscience is to live according to what you believe is right. A Christian who knows the Bible has a good conscience when he follows its teaching. And by his good life he may put to shame those who would criticize his being a Christian. A good life is a mighty defense against criticism; the man who criticizes you is put to shame, because people will not believe what he says about you. A good life also has this advantage: "It is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." If a man suffer for evil-doing, he is merely reaping a just reward; if he should suffer for doing the will of God, God will take notice of it and reward him. Christ who did no sin suffered for sins—suffered for sins once for all, "the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It is fine to develop a well-balanced character. But it is hard to get people to be as tenderhearted, forbearing, and considerate of others, as they should be, without their becoming so soft that they are worthless. On the other hand, it is hard to get them to be as firm and uncompromising as they should be without their becoming so dogmatic that they are a nuisance.

There is a fight between the right and the wrong. The faithful Christian has only the word of God, backed up by a godly life, with which to fight. In many cases his enemy is not limited by any principle of right. Slander, falsehood, all sorts of schemes, and every kind of persecution may be used as his weapons. The Christian cannot resort to such things in his war against evil. "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." (2 Cor. 10: 3-5.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How the early Christians were persecuted.

How Christians are now persecuted.

The grounds for our hope.

How to contend for the faith without being of a contentious spirit.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give an outline of the contents of First Peter.



## Verses 8-11

How much should a Christian sacrifice to keep down strife and confusion?  
 Give some exhortations of Paul concerning unity and divisions.  
 What is it to be compassionate? To be tenderhearted?  
 What makes people tenderhearted and compassionate?  
 Give some scriptures on the wrong of returning evil for evil?

## Verses 12-14

What is the benefit of cultivating the virtues Peter mentions?  
 What is the greatest harm that can befall a person?  
 What can bring that harm to a person?  
 What physical evils are visited upon Christians?  
 Why should we rejoice when persecuted for righteousness' sake?  
 What helps us to bear persecution?

## Verse 15

Discuss hope.  
 On what are our hopes for the future founded?  
 On what point would the early Christians have to give a reason for their hope?  
 What is the difference between then and now?  
 What special need is there now that we should know the evidences of the divine origin of Christianity?

## Verses 16-18

What is conscience?  
 How have a good conscience?  
 How may a Christian put to shame those who criticize him?  
 Why is it better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing?  
 Why did Christ suffer?  
 Discuss the reflections?

## Lesson XIII—March 26, 1939

## PETER INTERPRETS CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AND DEATH

1 Pet. 1: 17-23; 2: 20-25

17 And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear:

18 Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers;

19 But with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, *even the blood of Christ*:

20 Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake.

21 Who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 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:

23 Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it*, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.” (1 Pet. 3: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 5: 14-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 20.	M.	Redeemed by Christ (1 Pet. 1: 17-23)
March 21.	T.	The Cost of Redemption (John 3: 14-18)
March 22.	W.	The Revelation Through Christ (Heb. 1: 1-4, 7-9)
March 23.	T.	The Burden Bearer (Isa. 53: 1-6)
March 24.	F.	The Suffering Christ (1 Pet. 2: 20-25)
March 25.	S.	Fellowship of His Suffering (Phil. 3: 7-14)
March 26.	S.	The Ever-present Christ (John 14: 18-23)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Different dates are given for the writing of First Peter, ranging from A.D. 60 to A.D. 68.

*Place.*—Babylon.

*Persons.*—Peter and “the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” There is an important sense in which all Christians are sojourners, for this world is not their home.

*Lesson Links.*—Had there never been any sin there would have been no need of a sacrifice for sin. It is not likely that we will ever in this life know all the reasons for the death of Christ, nor all of its meaning and results; but we may glean a few general ideas about it. The law of God had been violated. Justice demands punishment for every infraction of law. Any government will collapse if no notice be taken of law violations. The death of Christ did not cause God to love the world, for his love for the world prompted him to send Jesus into the world; but sin had brought upon sinners the condemnation of divine law, and justice demanded the infliction of the sentence of death. God’s moral government had to be sustained or wrecked. The sinner must die. But Jesus paid that penalty, and released all who will accept his sacrifice and become his. This made it possible for God to be just while justifying those who believe in Jesus the Christ. (Rom. 3: 21-26.) There is therefore a sense in which the death of Christ gained God’s favor for man. Jesus by his death made propitiation for us—made divine justice favorable to us. (Rom. 3: 25; Heb. 2: 17; 1 John 2: 2; 4: 10.) It is true that the death of Christ is a mighty force in drawing men to him; but it would not have been so powerful had his death served no useful purpose. When we know that he died to make it possible for us to be saved, made it possible for us to escape the penalty of death, our hearts turn to him in gratitude and love. This salvation through the sufferings of Christ had been foretold by the prophets. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53: 4-6.) Other prophets spoke



to the same import. But the prophets did not fully understand what God was speaking through them; so they searched "what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto." (1 Pet. 1: 10, 11.) It was revealed to them that they were not speaking of things that would then occur, but of the things that have now been announced by those who preached the gospel. (Verse 12.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Redeemed Through the Blood of Christ (Verses 17-19)

In the matter of offering salvation to a lost world, God is no respecter of persons. Whether people be white, red, yellow, or black, the blessings are open to all without distinctions. Jews and Gentiles alike have access by faith into the favor of God. Peter, when convinced that he should preach to the Gentiles, said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10: 34, 35.) And in judging people God regards not the person of any one, whether rich or poor, free or a slave, a Jew or a Gentile. "For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Col. 3: 25.) Without respect of persons God judgeth according to each man's works; this every one should realize. No one can bribe God, nor deceive him by false testimony, nor sway him by a group of influential men; and because he does judge without respect of persons, we should pass the time of our sojourn here in fear. We were not bought off from the sentence of death resting upon all sinners, with silver or gold; we were redeemed by the blood of Christ. "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) "Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men." (1 Cor. 7: 23.) In redemption the price paid is the ransom. Jesus gave himself a ransom for all. (1 Tim. 2: 6.) "For thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5: 9.) Jesus purchased us from the sentence of death by taking our place, and dying as a criminal. And we were redeemed from our vain manner of life handed down from our fathers. The Jews had the tradition of the elders which were handed down from generation to generation. On every hand there are religious errors handed down from generation to generation, so that they have become to many more sacred than Holy Writ. Let a man attack traditions, things father and mother believed or practiced, and many become indignant; but let another man attack the Lord's command to be baptized, and the same people nod their approval. Though Jesus died to redeem us from all error, many will not accept the redemption, but cleave to the errors handed down from their fathers, even when these errors run counter to the plain word of God. In so doing they fulfill the words of the Lord, who said, "And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition." (Matt. 15: 6.)

### Christ Was Manifested for Our Sake (Verses 20, 21)

The word *cosmos*, from which we have *world* in this passage, has such a variety of meanings that it is sometimes hard to determine its exact significance. It originally meant order, as in the expression, to sit in order; then, good order, good behavior; then, a set form or order, as of states, order, government; then, ornament, decoration, dress; then, the world or universe, and also the different members of the universe. Because of the connection in which it is used in this part of our lesson, it seems to refer to the Jewish economy, or government; for Peter immediately adds that Christ was manifested at the end of the times. This can refer to nothing else than the end of the times of the Jewish world or government. It was then that Christ was manifested in the flesh. The life that he lived in the flesh was for our sake, as well as was the death that he died. The works that he did while here, and also the good effects of his religion since he ascended, has led people, not only to believe in him, but to believe in God through him; for thoughtful people knew then, and they know now, that he could not have done such mighty works and manifested such wisdom, had there not been a power above the human, working in and through him.

### Souls Purified in Obedience to the Truth (Verses 22, 23)

Sometimes the word *soul* is applied to the whole person. (Acts 7: 14; 27: 37.) It also often refers to the inner man, the spirit. (Gen. 35: 18; Rev. 6: 9.) The student can find many other passages on each point. In our lesson the word *souls* is applied to the spirits of people. Peter's words make it clear that the inner man, the heart, or the soul is purified in obedience to the truth, the word of God. Concerning his preaching to the Gentiles Peter said, "And God . . . made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." Their hearts were not cleansed, or purified, by faith alone and before they repented; for no impenitent heart is pure. Faith here includes the whole process of becoming a Christian. To say that their hearts were purified, or cleansed, by faith, and to say that their souls were purified in obedience to the truth, is to say the same thing in different words. If our hearts have been purified in obedience to the truth, our love for the brethren will be unfeigned; it will not be a mere pretense, but a reality. A pure heart is not guilty of a hypocritical pretense. And the love of a pure heart is not selfish. "Love seeketh not her own, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly." Love stands the test; it never fails. The Christian, together with all the virtues belonging to him, has been begotten by the incorruptible seed, the seed that lives and abides forever. And Peter tells us what this word by which we are begotten is: "And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." All flesh—all material things—shall fade away, as do the flowers that bloom so beautifully today, but



fade away on the morrow; but the word of God, the gospel that was announced to the world by God's inspired men, shall never fade away. And because Paul had preached this ever-abiding word to the Corinthians, he could say to them, "Though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4: 15.) This settles the matter as to what influence makes Christians.

### **Christ Our Example in Suffering (2: 20, 21)**

The words of these two verses were addressed especially to slaves, as may be seen by reading verses 18 and 19. Tyrannical and harsh masters were likely to punish a slave even when the slave was not at fault at all. He might even punish him because he would not worship the heathen gods. There was no glory, no praise, in suffering, if the slave sinned. But it was acceptable to God, if the slave suffered patiently for doing well. And that is true whether the sufferer be a slave or a freeman, as will be seen by reading chapter 3, verse 17: "For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." If the punishment is merited, a person should take it calmly as his just due; but if the punishment is not merited, he should take it patiently, looking to God for the final adjustment of the matter. All, whether slave or freeman, are called to a life of suffering for the right. None of us will have to suffer as did our Lord. In his suffering he left us an example that we should walk in his steps, and that we should endure that suffering patiently as he did. Every one who comes to Christ must take up his cross, the emblem of suffering and death.

### **The Sinless One Bore the Sins of Sinners (Verses 22-25)**

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." On this point Isaiah prophesied, "And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." (Isa. 53: 9.) "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5: 21.) "And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin." (1 John 3: 5.) On different occasions, and especially when they held him as prisoner, they reviled him in the most insulting way that depraved minds could think up, but he reviled not again. Even now people will revile our good manner of life, calling the most pious and godly hypocrites. (1 Pet. 3: 16.) But we must not render reviling for reviling. (1 Pet. 3: 9.) In this matter Paul is also a good example for us. He said, "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat." (1 Cor. 4: 12, 13.) "When he suffered, he threatened not." To have done so would have sounded like resentment for personal injuries. Like him we

should, when persecuted, leave the matter with the Lord, who will judge righteously. Jesus, though sinless, became as a sinner that he might bear our sins, and release us from the guilt and the penalty of sin, so that we, having been freed from sin, might live unto God. In this way we were healed by his stripes. And though the whole world had gone astray, many have accepted the redemption through Christ, and have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. Jesus himself is that Shepherd and Bishop.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

It is impossible for faith without repentance to purify the heart; for an impure heart cannot be made pure short of repentance. It is not true, therefore, that faith purifies the heart and then repentance purifies the life.

"For ye were going astray like sheep." The idea expressed in the original Greek is not that they were going astray, but that they were astray. When a living thing is astray, it is lost; at least, it is not in its proper place, not where it belongs. Sin is not the proper element for people; they do not rightly belong there; it is not their natural habitat. Righteousness is man's natural habitat; that is where God originally placed him. When he wanders off into sin, he is on foreign soil.

Christ is the good Shepherd of the sheep. Peter speaks of him as the chief Shepherd. That implies undershepherds. He has appointed that elders in the church should be these undershepherds. As such they are commanded to "tend the flock of God." To tend the flock requires that they look after them, as well as to feed them.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Isa. 53: 1-3.

Isa. 53: 4-6.

Isa. 53: 7-9.

Isa. 53: 10-12.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

In what sense are all Christians sojourners?

Why was there need of sacrifice?

In what way did the death of Christ render the sinner's condition favorable?

What had Isaiah foretold about the sufferings of Christ?

For whose benefit was to be the things about which they prophesied?

### Verses 17-19

Show from the scriptures that God is no respecter of persons.

In what way will God judge men?

Quote passages showing that we were bought with the blood of Christ.

Discuss the expression, "Vain manner of life handed down from the fathers."

Why are traditions so hurtful?

### Verses 20, 21

Discuss these verses.



**Verses 22, 23**

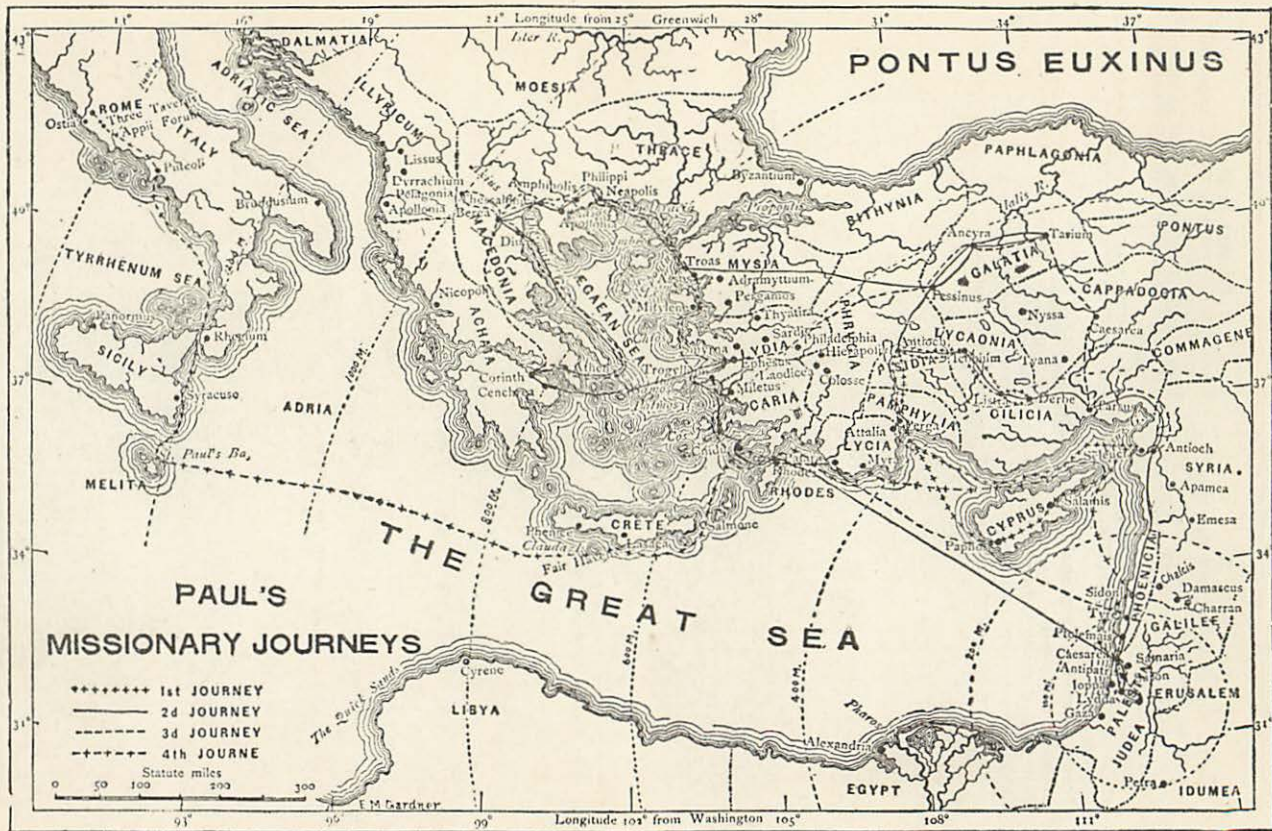
Discuss the meaning and the application of the word soul.  
How is the soul purified?  
Why cannot faith alone purify the heart?  
How should Christians love one another?  
How are we begotten again?  
What is this seed?  
How was it made known?  
What is said of its abiding?

**Chapter 2: 20, 21**

To whom were these words especially addressed?  
How should freemen as well as slaves conduct themselves under persecution?  
Who is our example, and how did he bear up under persecution?

**Verses 22-25**

What is said of the sinlessness of Christ?  
Discuss verses 22-25.  
Discuss the reflections.





## SECOND QUARTER

## LIFE AND LETTERS OF PAUL

AIM: To discover from Paul's experiences, activities, and teachings how we may interpret and apply the gospel of Christ to our needs and the needs of our world.

## Lesson I—April 2, 1939

## SAUL BECOMES A NEW MAN

Acts 9: 1-12, 17-19

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.

2 And asked of him letters to Dă-măs'cūs unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jē-ru'sā-lēm.

3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Dă-măs'-cūs: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven:

4 And he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jē'sūs whom thou persecutest:

6 But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Dă-măs'cūs.

9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Dă-măs'cūs, named An-ā-ni'ās; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, An-ā-ni'ās. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Jū'dās for one named Saul, a man of Tār'sūs: for behold, he prayeth;

12 And he hath seen a man named An-ā-ni'ās coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

17 And An-ā-ni'ās departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jē'sūs, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized;

19 And he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Dă-măs'cūs.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." (2 Cor. 5: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 8: 1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 27. M.	Saul's Training (Acts 26: 1-5)
March 28. T.	Saul the Persecutor (Acts 26: 9-11)
March 29. W.	Saul's Conversion (Acts 9: 1-9)
March 30. T.	Saul and Ananias (Acts 9: 10-19)

March 31.	F.	Saul and Barnabas (Acts 9: 20-30)
April 1.	S.	The New Birth (John 3: 1-11)
April 2.	S.	A New Man in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 11-19)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Various dates are assigned, ranging from A.D. 33 to 37, or even later.

*Places.*—Jerusalem, the highway near Damascus, and Damascus. Saul was in Jerusalem when he secured from the high priest the letters of authority to go to Damascus.

*Persons.*—Saul, the high priest, the Lord, and Ananias. Certain men accompanied Saul on his journey to Damascus, but they played no important role in the conversion of Saul. In later years Paul said of himself, "If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." (Phil. 3: 4-6.)

*Lesson Links.*—Saul of Tarsus first comes into notice in connection with the stoning of Stephen. "And they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." (Acts 7: 58.) "And Saul was consenting unto his death." (Acts 8: 1.) On that day a furious and bloody persecution was launched against the church, and Saul became the leader. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison." (Acts 8: 1-3.) Concerning this rage against the church Paul later said, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." (Acts 26: 9-11.) Paul not only held tenaciously to the Jews' religion, but he belonged to their strictest sect, the Pharisees. The Pharisees believed in angels and spirits and the resurrection of the dead; hence, he was not a materialist. On these points he remained a Pharisee even after his conversion. (Acts 23: 6-8.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Saul's Commission from the High Priest (Verses 1, 2)

A year or more must have intervened between the beginning of Paul's persecuting the church and the incidents of the present lesson; for the activities that he himself described must have required that much time. "Breathing threatening and slaughter"—this expression is indicative of the greatest possible rage against the disciples



of the Lord. His rage was so great that he did not spare even the women. How many he caused to be put to death before they could escape from Jerusalem we know not. But he was not contented with the destruction and havoc he wrought there, but he persecuted them even unto foreign cities. It thus appears that the Roman government gave the Jewish authorities power over the Jews no matter where they went. In going to foreign cities he had to have authority from the high priest in Jerusalem. Having secured this authority, he started on his journey to Damascus, "that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." Paul tells us that he was to bring the disciples to Jerusalem to be punished. (Acts 22: 5.) It seems that no one else manifested such determined zeal in persecuting Christians; his name struck terror to the hearts of the disciples of our Lord.

Damascus, probably the oldest city in the world, was once the capital city of Syria. It is about one hundred and forty miles from Jerusalem. It must have had a large Jewish population in Saul's day, for he obtained letters of authority to the synagogues of that city.

### Jesus Appears to Saul on the Way (Verses 3-7)

In a speech to the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 22: 1-16), and also in a speech before King Agrippa (Acts 26: 1-18), Paul gives an account of this journey and of his conversion to Christ. It will richly repay the student to study all these accounts together, for some things are mentioned in each account that are not so fully mentioned in the others.

As Saul drew nigh unto Damascus, "suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven." It was about noon (Acts 22: 6), and the light was "above the brightness of the sun" (Acts 26: 13). It is an intense light—a blinding light—that shines above the brightness of the noonday sun. We can scarcely imagine such a light. When Saul saw that light he fell to the earth. Saul saw the Lord, and of course knew that he was a heavenly being; but at the time he knew not who it was. And he still did not know who it was when he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The judgment scene described in Matt. 25: 31-46 shows that whatever we do to a disciple of the Lord we do to him. Saul had nothing against the disciples personally, for they had never done him any harm; but he was against them because of what they taught. He was trying to destroy from the earth the idea that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and he was persecuting those who preached that doctrine. But he did not see how he was persecuting a heavenly being, and so he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" He knew that he was addressing a heavenly being, but had no idea as to who it was, and so he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And so it is said he had to depend on hearing just as all do, and it was true in his case that faith came by hearing the word of God. Now, having believed that Jesus was the Christ, he was ready to yield himself into his service; and without hesitation he said, "What shall I do, Lord?" The command came—"Rise, and enter into the city, and it

shall be told thee what thou must do." Notice the words, "what thou must do." There are some things that a sinner must do—"must do."

"And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man"; yet Paul says, "And they that were with me beheld the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake with me." To hear is sometimes used in the sense of to understand, and it is sometimes used in the sense of to give heed. And it sometimes happens that a person hears another's voice, but does hear his words. On one occasion when God spoke to Jesus the people thought it had thundered. (John 12: 28, 29.) The people heard, and yet they did not hear; that is, they heard the sound of the voice, but did not hear what was said. And so with the men that were with Saul.

### **Saul Is Led into Damascus (Verses 8, 9)**

When Saul arose he was blind—he saw nothing. The men that were with him led him by the hand into Damascus. Concerning this he himself said, "And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus." One thing stands out plainly in this matter; namely, the Lord did not tell Saul on the highway what to do to be saved, but sent him into Damascus to find out; and Saul had to depend on the men that were with him to lead him into Damascus, men who, like himself, were unsaved. Saul was blind physically—in a spiritual sense those who led him were as blind as he was. We may not know why he was made blind physically, and they were not; it may be that the Lord shut him up in himself, so to speak, so that he could meditate on his sins without being distracted by what he saw. And the Lord gave him three days to think things over; he had been so bitter against the Lord's cause that he needed time for readjustment. So intense were his emotions during these three days that he neither ate nor drank.

### **The Lord Sends Ananias to Saul (Verses 10-12)**

In Damascus there was a man named Ananias, one of the disciples whom Saul had come to carry in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. To this man the Lord appeared, saying, "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight." Even with assurance from the Lord Ananias was afraid to go. Ananias knew of Saul's rage against the church, and was afraid; and it seems that his fear of Saul was about to prove to be greater than his confidence in the Lord. But after further assurance from the Lord, Ananias went as directed.

### **Saul Receives His Sight and Is Baptized (Verses 17-19)**

Jesus could have told Saul what to do when he appeared to him on the way to Damascus, but he had committed that work into the hands of his servants. He laid that duty upon them when he gave



them the Great Commission. From the time they began to operate under that commission on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, no one was ever told by Jesus in person what to do to be saved. In this case he arranged to have Ananias tell Saul what to do.

Ananias came to Saul, and said to him, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." It seems that miraculous power had been conferred upon Ananias, and possibly the power to impart spiritual gifts by the laying on of his hands. Immediately Saul received his sight. It is certain that the man Saul had never before felt so helpless as he had felt during these three sightless days of waiting. The proud Saul had to be led by his inferiors into the city where he had to wait helplessly three days for one whom he had considered worthy of death to come and restore his sight, and tell him what he must do; but that experience was what he needed. Paul reports other things that Ananias said to him. "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." (Acts 22: 14, 15.) A similar statement is made in Acts 26: 16-18. He could not be a witness without seeing the Lord; and even then his testimony would amount to nothing, unless he obeyed the Lord. Ananias was sent to him, not only to tell him what he would be and what he would suffer, but also to tell him what he must do. On this point Ananias said to Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22: 16.) This is but another way of stating what Jesus said in the Great Commission: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

God is no respecter of persons; what one must do, all must do. The plan of salvation is the same to all, and that plan is set forth plainly in the Great Commission and in the second chapter of Acts. People get confused over the fact that the circumstances and incidents connected with various conversions differ. In connection with Saul's conversion he saw the Lord. If that were an essential part of conversion, then the Lord would have to appear in person in every genuine case of conversion; yet many years after Saul's conversion he said he was the last to whom the Lord appeared. (1 Cor. 15: 8.) Many thousands had been converted during this period, and not one of them had seen the Lord.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Paul had to give up much in becoming a Christian—all of his former friends and associates, his high standing in the Jewish nation, and seemingly, his property. (Phil. 3: 2-9.) We must sacrifice anything that stands in the way of our following the light of truth, for the wrong way will not lead us to the right place.

Saul was faithful to what he believed to be God's will, even when he was so furiously persecuting the church. This trait commended him to God, and made of him a great apostle. Before and after his conversion he did what he believed to be right. For that reason

he could say in later life to the persecuting Jews, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23: 1.)

Too often we are confused as to what conscience is. It is often represented as the moral judgment. That cannot be, for when Paul's judgment was terribly wrong, his conscience was good. Besides, one person can exercise his moral judgment on the actions of another person, but his conscience is not involved at all, unless he in some way feels responsible for what the other fellow does. Conscience is that feeling of oughtness—a checking and driving force behind the moral judgment. It gives you pain if you do what your moral judgment pronounces wrong, and it gives a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction when you do what your moral judgment says is right.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Saul the persecutor.  
The penitent Saul.  
What Saul had to do.  
Paul the apostle.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Where does Saul of Tarsus first come into notice?  
What is said of his persecution of Christians?  
What did he later say of his rage against the church?  
To what sect of the Jews did he belong?  
Name some of their characteristics.

### Verses 1, 2

What is said of Saul?  
What expression shows his rage against the church?  
What authority did he ask, and why?  
Give some facts about Damascus.

### Verses 3-7

Where else are accounts of Saul's conversion found?  
Describe what occurred on the way to Damascus.  
How did Saul's faith come?  
What was he told to do?

How may a person hear, and yet not hear?

### Verses 8, 9

How did blind Saul reach the city?  
Why did not the Lord himself tell Saul what to do?  
What purpose did his blindness serve?

### Verses 10-12

Tell about the Lord's appearance to Ananias.

### Verses 17-19

What did Ananias say to Saul?  
What was Saul's condition during the three days of waiting?  
What about his experience was calculated to make him feel humble?  
What did Paul later say that Ananias said to him?  
What is necessary to be a witness?  
What did Ananias tell Saul to do?  
What is there about all conversions that must be the same?  
Wherein do different conversions differ?  
What shows that it is not necessary for the Lord to appear in person in conversions?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—April 9, 1939

## PAUL PREACHES THE RISEN CHRIST

Acts 13: 16, 23-31, 38, 39; 1 Cor. 15: 19-22

16 And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said,  
Men of Is'rā-ēl, and ye that fear God, hearken.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Is'rā-ēl a Saviour, Jē'sūs;



24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Is'ra-él.

25 And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there cometh one after me the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose.

26 Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth.

27 For they that dwell in Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.

28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet asked they of Pilâte that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Gal'i-lêe to Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, who are now his witnesses unto the people.

32 Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins:

33 And by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Mô'sês.

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.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."* (1 Cor. 15: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 6: 1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 3.	M.	Christ Is Risen (Matt. 28: 1-8)
April 4.	T.	Paul at Antioch (Acts 13: 23-31)
April 5.	W.	The Message to Corinth (1 Cor. 15: 1-11)
April 6.	T.	The Message to Philippi (Phil. 3: 7-14)
April 7.	F.	Paul at Athens (Acts 17: 16-18)
April 8.	S.	The Power of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 12-20)
April 9.	S.	New Life in Christ (Rom. 6: 1-11)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 48, and about A.D. 58 for First Corinthians.

*Places.*—Antioch of Pisidia. This was mainly a heathen city, but there were a sufficient number of Jews there to have a synagogue. First Corinthians was written at Ephesus.

*Persons.*—Paul, the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia, and the church of God at Corinth. The church at Corinth in Greece was planted by Paul some years after he preached at Antioch of Pisidia.

*Lesson Links.*—Soon after Paul was baptized at Damascus he went away into Arabia. What his purpose was in going into Arabia and what he did while there we can only conjecture. One thing we know—many a new convert to Christ would find it easier to live the Christian life, if he would get away from his old associates in sin. Perhaps this fact moved Paul to go into Arabia where he was unknown. Besides, his old associates in persecution would be boiling in their rage against him. There were other advantages to be gained by getting away from the scenes of his

former activities. From Arabia he returned to Damascus, and then went up to Jerusalem. According to Paul's own testimony this journey into Arabia and the return visit to Damascus covered a period of three years. (Gal. 1: 15-18.) It must have been during this second visit to Damascus that a plot was formed to kill Paul; "but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket." (Acts 9: 23-25.) He then went up to see Peter, after which he went into Syria and then to Tarsus in Cilicia. (Gal. 1: 18-21.) In the meantime a large congregation had grown up at Antioch in Syria. (Acts 11: 19-21.) "And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch." (Acts 11: 22.) Barnabas found the work there so promising that he went to Tarsus to secure the help of Paul, whom he knew to be a zealous worker. (Acts 11: 25, 26.) "And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Barnabas and Paul were sent by the Antioch church to Jerusalem to the elders with assistance for the famine-stricken brethren in Judea. Soon after the return to Barnabas and Paul from Jerusalem, with John Mark, kinsman to Barnabas, accompanying them, the Antioch church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, sent them out on a preaching tour. From Antioch they made their way to Cyprus, and thence into what is now known as Asia Minor. "But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Introductory Part of Paul's Speech in the Synagogue (Verse 16)

Paul recognized in his audience two classes of hearers. "Men of Israel" were the Jews of his audience. It was understood that they feared and worshiped God. But in all these foreign cities where there were enough Jews to erect a synagogue, some of the heathen of the community would be influenced to forsake idolatry, and attend the synagogue worship. These were the ones in Paul's audience, whom he designated as "ye that fear God." Cornelius was described as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house." (Acts 10: 2.) In the synagogue at Iconium Paul and Barnabas "so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed." (Acts 14: 1.) When Paul spoke in the synagogue at Thessalonica a great multitude of Greeks believed. At Corinth Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18: 4.) These facts show that in these foreign cities where there were synagogues of the Jews, a great number of the Gentiles had given up heathenism and believed in the one God, and attended on the synagogue worship. Hence, even in preaching to the Gentiles Paul found it best to begin preaching in the syna-



gogues where he went, for there he would not only find Jews to preach to, but also Gentiles who already believed in one God, and who knew something of the scriptures. The student should read carefully verses 17-22. In these verses Paul seeks to gain a favorable hearing and also to lead naturally up to his subject by recounting the high points in Jewish history. In the course of time the people of Israel had asked for a king, "and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish." Saul was not pleasing to God, and was removed. Then David was made king.

### **Jesus Christ of the Seed of David (Verse 23)**

Through Nathan the prophet Jehovah said to David, "When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." (2 Sam. 7: 12.) The genealogies given by Matthew and Luke show that Jesus came of the seed of David. Paul declares that he was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. (Rom. 1: 3.) All who were familiar with the scriptures knew that the Messiah would be of the seed of David. To satisfy the Jews, that fact had to be established. The records, which the Jews carefully kept, would show the truth or the falsity of the claim. As the unbelievers bitterly fought the claim that Jesus was the Messiah, we can rest assured that they would have shown that he did not come of the seed of David, had the claims of these early preachers not been true, but none of the enemies attempted to show from the records that the claim was false. Hence, Paul could affirm confidently, "Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Savior, Jesus."

### **The Testimony of John the Baptist (Verses 24, 25)**

The phrase "before his coming" does not mean that John the Baptist preached before Jesus came into the world. The marginal reading has, Greek, "before the face of his entering in." John preached before Jesus entered on his personal ministry, his public ministry. John preached the baptism of repentance, that is, the baptism connected with repentance, or the baptism to which repentance led. In short, he baptized those who repented. John came, who "preached the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins." (Mark 1: 4.) John's preaching created so much interest, and even excitement, that the authorities in Jerusalem took notice of it, and sent men to inquire of John whether he were the Christ. He told them emphatically that he was not the Christ, but was merely a voice crying in the wilderness, and calling on the people to make ready for the coming of the Lord. (John 1: 19-23.) And when Jesus did appear on the scene John bore witness concerning him, and pointed him out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

### **Jesus Crucified Through Ignorance (Verses 26-28)**

"To us is the word of this salvation sent." Here Paul applies to himself and to those present, and of course, to all others in this age, the promises of salvation through the seed of David, through

the Lamb of God whom John pointed out. Through long centuries the prophets had been foretelling the coming of one through whom salvation would be offered to the whole world, and the promise of the coming of this long-looked-for Messiah had now been fulfilled. But when the Messiah came, the Jews through ignorance killed him. Paul says they did it because they knew him not nor the voices of the prophets. These Jews knew the prophets—certainly the authorities who had Jesus killed knew them; yet they did not know them. They knew what the prophets said, but their prejudice blinded them so that they did not understand them—did not know what they meant. They knew that Jesus did many mighty miracles, but they hated him so that they would not really know him. They had their minds made up as to what the Messiah would be and should be; and because Jesus did not fulfill their ignorant notions, they killed him. Their ignorance was due to the condition of their own hearts, and not to any lack of evidence. They tried every way to find some grounds on which they could have him crucified. They stand condemned before earth and heaven because they knew they forced his crucifixion against all rules of justice and right. Because the authorities had it done, it was a national crime, a national murder. The Jewish nation murdered the Son of God, and later suffered the penalty of death for his crime. Pilate, though guilty, was only a tool of the Jewish rulers. But without knowing it, they were all fulfilling what the prophets had foretold concerning him, not only in putting him to death, but in all else they did to him, including his burial.

### **“But God Raised Him from the Dead” (Verses 29-31)**

That Jesus was raised from the dead is proved by the testimony of competent witnesses who saw him frequently during a period of forty days after he arose from the dead. These witnesses could not have been mistaken, many of them died for giving that testimony. Some of them were still living when Paul was making this speech, “who are now his witnesses unto the people.” They knew him well before he was crucified, and they saw him after he arose; they even saw the prints of the nails, and the sword wound in his side. Not only were there then living witnesses of his resurrection, but there were living enemies who were present when he was crucified. If anybody on earth could have proved that these living witnesses were giving false testimony, these enemies could have done so; besides, no one ever desired to do so more than they did. Even this man Paul, one of the most intellectual men among the Jews, and a bitter enemy of Christ, was now preaching what he once had so bitterly opposed. That one fact should have caused every thoughtful Jew to stop and think. Why would a man of Paul’s possibilities and intellectual powers suffer the loss of all earthly things for that against which he had so bitterly fought? Why the change? But the majority of the Jews were still so full of prejudice and hatred of Christ, that they would not let common sense be exercised.



## Remission of Sins Proclaimed Through Jesus Christ (Verses 38, 39)

In the intervening verses Paul refers to the promise made to the fathers—the promise to bless the world through their seed. These fathers were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Gen. 12: 1-3; 22: 15-18; 26: 1-6; 28: 13, 14.) Then he shows that the promise made to David was also fulfilled in Jesus. These statements of certain truths concerning Jesus prepared the way for his announcement, "that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins; and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things." The law of Moses condemned the sinner, but did not justify him. Law justifies only the one who keeps it. But the plan of salvation through Christ is different. In it provisions are made for sinners to obtain the remission of their sins. When a man's sins are forgiven, or blotted out, he is for the time being as free from sin as if he had never sinned. A man who is free from sin—free from guilt—is a just man; such a man is justified. Were it not for this plan of salvation, all responsible people would be eternally lost, for all have sinned.

## Death by Adam; Life Through Christ (1 Cor. 15: 19-22)

It seems that the Greeks believed in some sort of existence after death, but they did not believe in any resurrection. Some in the church at Corinth had that idea. In refuting that idea Paul shows that Christ rose from the dead, and was then seen by many witnesses. If Jesus did not rise, then all who claimed that he did rise were false witnesses. And even more: "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." In that case there would be no hope of an eternal life, and none could look beyond this life for any blessings. That would make Christianity a dreary life. "If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable." If there were to be no resurrection, then these early Christians especially had brought upon themselves a lot of suffering and persecution for no good. But Christ had been raised as the first fruits from the dead, which insured that other fruits would follow. Physical death came by Adam. As a result, no matter what we think or do, we shall die; and we shall be raised, no matter what we think or do. But what we lost unconditionally on our part, we shall gain back unconditionally on our part. The death and the life spoken of in verses 21 and 22 are not spiritual, but physical.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

It is not to the credit of Christians that they observe a day that came to us from the heathen through the Roman Catholic Church. The name Easter is adapted from the goddess Eastre. Every Sunday in the year is the Lord's resurrection day; that day should be observed, but the church should observe no day that is set apart by human authority. "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." (Gal. 4: 10.) Christians should not put

themselves in the group of whom Paul was afraid. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Matt. 15: 9.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The promise made to the fathers.

How the Jewish nation became a murderer.

How sinners may be justified.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Give the location of Antioch of Pisidia and Corinth.

Trace the movements of Saul from his conversion to his connection with the church at Antioch in Syria.

How came Paul to be in Antioch of Pisidia?

Trace the route he had traveled.

### Verse 16

Give a summary of the introductory part of Paul's speech.

Who composed his audience?

What advantage was there in preaching first in the synagogues?

### Verse 23

What had Jehovah said to David through Nathan the prophet?

How could it be shown that Jesus was of the seed of David?

### Verses 24, 25

In what sense was John's preaching before the coming of Christ?

What did John preach?

What is meant by the baptism of repentance?

What shows the widespread interest in John's preaching?

How did he bear witness of Christ?

### Verses 26-28

What was the word of salvation Paul mentioned?

Why did the Jews kill Jesus?

In what sense were they ignorant of what the prophets said?

Why were they so ignorant?

Why was the killing of Jesus a national crime?

What was the penalty for murder, and did the nation suffer that penalty?

### Verses 29-31

Show that the resurrection of Jesus was proved by competent witnesses.

What showed their sincerity?

Why was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus strong proof of the resurrection of Jesus?

### Verses 38, 39

Give the substance of the intervening verses.

Discuss verses 38 and 39.

### 1 Cor. 15: 19-22

What theory did some advocate in the church at Corinth?

How did the resurrection of Christ refute that notion?

If Christ had not been raised, then what?

What did we lose in Adam that we regained in Christ, that is, unconditionally?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson III—April 16, 1939

## PAUL ESTABLISHES CHURCHES

Acts 14: 1-7, 19-23

1 And it came to pass in ĭ-cō'nī-ūm that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Grēeks believed.

2 But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gēn'tiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.



5 And when there was made an onset both of the Gēn'tiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them shamefully and to stone them,

6 They became aware of it, and fled into the cities of Lȳc-ā-ō'nī-ā, Lȳs'trā and Dēr'bē, and the region round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

19 But there came Jews thither from An'ti-ōch and Ī-cō'nī-ūm: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Bār'nā-bās to Dēr'bē.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lȳs'trā, and to Ī-cō'nī-ūm, and to An'ti-ōch,

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"As a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon."* (1 Cor. 3: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 3: 6-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 10.	M.....	The Church in Iconium (Acts 14: 1-7)
April 11.	T.....	The Church in Lystra (Acts 14: 8-18)
April 12.	W.....	A Busy Missionary (Acts 14: 19-28)
April 13.	T.....	A Wise Masterbuilder (1 Cor. 3: 10-15)
April 14.	F.....	Missionary Vision (Isa. 55: 1-5)
April 15.	S.....	Jonah's Missionary Work (Jonah 3: 1-10)
April 16.	S.....	Missionary Triumph (Psalm 72: 7-17)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 48.

*Places.*—Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These were a group of cities of some importance in what is now known as Asia Minor.

*Persons.*—Paul and Barnabas, and the people of the cities mentioned.

*Lesson Links.*—In our last lesson we studied a part of a speech Paul made in the synagogue in Pisidia. At the close of his speech, when the synagogue had broken up, "many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God." Paul and Barnabas were asked to speak to them again the next sabbath. Great interest had been aroused; "and the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God." Such a demonstration of the great interest the people had in what Paul and Barnabas were teaching filled the Jews with jealousy, and they "contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed." This was done in the public meeting. "And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us." Paul then quoted Isa. 49: 6 as proof that the Lord had so commanded. When the Lord appeared to Saul on the way to Damascus, he said, "But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared

unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26: 16-18.) But what the Jews could not then understand, and what some people now will not understand, is that God through the prophets had commanded that the gospel be preached to the Gentiles without any sort of dependence on the Jews. It is strange that some Gentiles are even now more influenced by this ancient prejudice of the Jews than they are by the plain words of the prophets and the apostles. It seems to have enraged these Jews more than ever for Paul to prove by the prophet Isaiah that God had commanded that the gospel be preached to the Gentiles. "But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium." All of which showed how unworthy of eternal life they were.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A Great Multitude at Iconium Believed (Verse 1)

It was a short journey from Antioch to Iconium. Both places are easily located on the map. At Iconium, as at Antioch, there was a synagogue of the Jews. The word synagogue originally meant a congregation, a gathering of people; but later the name was also applied to the house in which they met. Some authority said that it was applied exclusively to the house in the New Testament, but not so. In chapter 13, verse 43, it applies to the congregation of worshippers—"when the synagogue was broken up," that is, when the congregation dispersed. In Iconium Paul and Barnabas "entered together into the synagogue of the Jews," that is, they entered into the house. In the Great Commission Jesus commanded the apostles to make disciples of all the nations—to preach the gospel to every creature. Luke reports him as saying that it was written in the prophets that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. The object of this preaching was to lead men and women to become believers in Christ. The language of the New Testament leaves no doubt as to the need of this preaching, and the results of preaching the gospel is plainly stated. At Iconium Paul and Barnabas "so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed." Without this preaching they could not have believed, for they knew nothing of Christ Jesus in whom they should believe. "How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10: 14.) This has reference to the preaching of the inspired men who originally announced, or proclaimed, the gospel. God sent them to make the gospel known. Without these preachers who made known the gospel no one would ever have heard the gospel, and therefore no



one would ever have believed. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Hence, the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, and that alone, made believers at Iconium. The miracles they performed showed the people that their preaching was from God, and made them more ready to believe it.

### **The Disobedient Jews Stir Up Trouble (Verses 2, 3)**

If the straight gospel is preached by a man with a mighty conviction of its truthfulness, it stirs men to action. They will either accept it or fight against it. Many accepted it at Iconium, but the disobedient Jews busied themselves to create all possible prejudice in the minds of the people against Paul and Barnabas—"made them evil affected against the brethren." These disobedient Jews could not meet the arguments of Paul and Barnabas, but they could make a canvass among the Gentiles, and, with falsehoods and insinuations, poison the minds of the people against them. Now, as then, when a person or a group begins a systematic canvass among the people against a man or a group of men, no good motive prompts the move, and no righteous purpose is being served. Such canvassers are moved by a base motive, and their stock-in-trade is falsehood and slander. It is a pity that good men in churches now have to suffer the canvassing of false brethren. But for a long time the opposition at Iconium did not become so fierce as to keep Paul and Barnabas from openly speaking the word. "Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord." Though these Jews were religious, Paul and Barnabas sought no compromise with them, nor did they soften their preaching so as to lessen opposition. They were faithful in delivering the word of God, "who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands." Miracle-working power was not inherent in man, but was of God, and could be exercised only as God willed. Such miracles—miracles wrought by inspired men—were signs of God's presence with the man. The miracle confirmed the word spoken; it was God's seal of approval. By these miracles God "bare witness unto the word of his grace."

### **To Save Themselves Paul and Barnabas Leave Iconium (Verses 4-7)**

The disobedient Jews did not succeed in poisoning the minds of all the people against the preaching of Paul and Barnabas; "but the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles." But enough bitterness had been created against Paul and Barnabas that the opposition was preparing to mob them. In some way Paul and Barnabas learned that this mob was intending "to treat them shamefully and to stone them," and they fled the city, and went to the cities of Lystra and Derbe, and the regions round about. It does not seem that there were any synagogues in these cities. It will be noticed that in verse 4 Barnabas is also referred to as an apostle. Now, an apostle is one sent away. If the reader will consult the marginal reading in the American Standard Version at 2 Cor. 8: 23 he will notice that

the Greek for "messengers of the churches" is "apostles of the churches." They were apostles of the churches because the churches had sent them. In that sense both Paul and Barnabas were apostles of the church at Antioch. Whether Barnabas was an apostle in any other sense we know not; but Paul was also an apostle of the Lord, as he himself frequently states in his letters. As an apostle of the Lord Paul ranked as high as any other apostle. "For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 11: 5.) "For in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 12: 11.)

### Paul Stoned at Lystra (Verse 19)

The intervening verses (8-18) really compose a part of our lesson, though we do not have them in our printed text. At Lystra Paul healed a man who never had walked. This so excited the heathen multitude that they shouted, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them." But the speed with which they shifted shows the fickleness of an ignorant multitude. It seems that there was no synagogue, and therefore no disobedient Jews at Lystra to turn the tide of public opinion against Paul and Barnabas; but there were some determined enemies among the Jews at Antioch and Iconium. These followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra; "and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead." They dragged him out as they would drag the carcass of a dead animal.

### Paul Recovers and Continues His Work (Verses 20-23)

Whether Paul's natural forces reasserted themselves, or whether God gave strength directly to him, we are not informed. The fact is, he arose, and went into the city. On the next day he and Barnabas went to Derbe. It seems that he would not have been able to do this had not God directly gave him health and strength. Their work in Derbe is recorded in few words—they preached the gospel and made many disciples. It would seem to us that it took much courage for them to go back through the cities where they had been ill-treated so recently, and yet they did so, "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith,



and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." To confirm the souls of the disciples was to strengthen them in the faith, and give them proper guidance in Christian living. It is almost certain that they imparted spiritual gifts to some in each church, for they had no written New Testament to consult. Spiritual gifts in their midst would be a constant reminder to them of the truth of their new-found religion. As they returned over the territory where they had so recently planted churches, they appointed elders in every church. Elders were needed to take the oversight of the churches, and churches today have not outgrown that need.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Not all miracles were signs. All things were created by a series of great miracles, but these miracles were not signs. God was not confirming any new revelation, nor was there any one there to see them. A sign was a miracle by the agency of a man as a sign that God was with him—a sign that the man was speaking the word of God. By signs God confirmed the man's preaching. Signs have ceased for the simple reason that there are now no new revelations to be confirmed. But have all miracles ceased? What is a miracle? Think of the resurrection that is yet to be and then read 2 Pet. 3: 10-13. But these mighty miracles that are yet to be will not be for signs to any one, nor will they be performed by or through men. Signs have ceased.

A church of God is a group of saved people associated together in the name of Christ to carry on the worship and service of God as he directs. Every group of people who work together must have some person or persons to direct its activities, else there can be no order nor system in what is done, nor can a body of people do anything effectively without such direction. The same truth holds good in a church. God's plan is that there shall be elders in every church whose duty it is to direct the affairs of the church. These men must have certain qualifications, or they cannot succeed. A man who has no ability to rule cannot rule in the church or anywhere else. A man who has not a good character cannot be an example to others. A man who knows nothing about the Bible cannot teach others.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How people are made believers.  
What we must believe.  
Elders in every church.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
What occurred after the sermon, a part of which we studied last Sunday?  
What did the Jews do the next Sabbath?  
What did Paul say to them?

What proof did he give that the Lord had commanded them to preach to Gentiles?

Repeat what the Lord said to Paul on the way to Damascus.  
What did the Jews at Antioch finally do?

#### Verse 1

What was the original meaning of synagogue?  
What was commanded in the Great Commission?

Repeat verse 1.

Show the need of preaching the word.  
What part did miracles play in making believers?

Verses 2, 3

What does strong gospel preaching cause men to do?

What was the effect at Iconium?

What are the tactics of men who make a canvass to injure the influence of others?

Even though slandered, what did Paul and Barnabas continue to do?

Why did they finally leave Iconium?

In what sense might Barnabas have been an apostle?

How did Paul rank as an apostle?

Verse 19

Give a summary of the intervening verses.

In what way was trouble stirred up at Iconium?

What was the result?

Verses 20-23

Give an outline of these verses.

What is meant by "confirming the souls of the disciples"?

Besides confirming the disciples, what else did they do?

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson IV—April 23, 1939

PAUL WINS RECOGNITION FOR GENTILE CHRISTIANS

Acts 15: 23-29; Gal. 2: 1, 2, 9, 10

23 And they wrote *thus* by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gēn'tiles in An'ti-ōch and Sŷr'i-ā and Ći-l'i-ci-ā, 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 Bār'nā-bās and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jē'sūs Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Jū'dās and Sī'lās, 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.

1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jē-ru'sā-lēm with Bār'nā-bās, taking Ti'tūs also with me.

2 And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gēn'tiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.

9 And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cē'phās and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Bār'nā-bās the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gēn'tiles, and they unto the circumcision;

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"A man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ." (Gal. 2: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gal. 2: 15-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 17.	M.	The Widening Horizon (Acts 10: 9-16)
April 18.	T.	Peter's Conviction (Acts 15: 6-11)
April 19.	W.	Paul Turns to the Gentiles (Acts 13: 44-49)
April 20.	T.	The Decision of the Council (Acts 15: 13-21)



April 21. F.	.....	The Word to Galatia (Gal. 2: 1-10)
April 22. S.	.....	The Way of Life (Gal. 2: 11-21)
April 23. S.	.....	The Gospel for All (Rev. 22: 16, 17)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 50; A.D. 55 or 56 when the letter to the Galatians was written.

*Places.*—Antioch and Jerusalem. The Antioch of this lesson was the most important city in Syria. It was situated on the Orontes River about sixteen and one-half miles from the Mediterranean Sea, and about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. It was the residence of the Roman governors of the province of the same name. In Paul's time it was the third city of the Roman empire; it had about two hundred thousand inhabitants.

*Persons.*—Paul, Barnabas, certain Judaizing teachers, the church at Antioch, the apostles, and the elders and the church at Jerusalem.

*Lesson Links.*—After the incidents of our last lesson, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch of Syria, "from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." (Acts 14: 26, 27.) "And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." The Jews in the churches in foreign cities were not so wedded to the forms and ceremonies of the law as were the Jewish Christians in Judea and Jerusalem. Antioch had no trouble about such matters until these men came down from Jerusalem claiming to represent the apostles, especially James, in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas knew that these Judaizing teachers were wrong, but these Judaizers did not recognize Paul's apostleship. In their estimation what he said was merely his opinion and not an inspired utterance. Paul and Barnabas did not go up to Jerusalem to learn the truth about the question, for they knew; but as their opponents did not recognize them as inspired, to settle the matter, it became necessary to appeal to the apostles whom these disturbers recognized. Doubtless these disturbers had claimed to represent the sentiments of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. That matter had to be settled by inspiration, and by the words of those whom these disturbers recognized as inspired, or there would be no peace in any church of the Gentiles. Paul says he went up by revelation—it was revealed to him that he should go. (Gal. 2: 2.) In every way the settlement of this question was directed by divine wisdom. Would God direct Paul to go up to Jerusalem to see what human wisdom and counsel could devise as a means of settling the vexing question? If it was to be settled by having a church to pass on it, the place to do so was at Antioch, where the trouble arose. One church cannot tell another church what to do. At Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas first gave the church an account of their work among the Gentiles. Then they had a private meeting with the apostles and

elders. (Acts 15: 6; Gal. 2: 2.) These inspired men, of course, had no trouble in reaching an agreement, for they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Even though they agreed, it was necessary to the peace and harmony of the church, that all the brethren be fully satisfied as to what the will of the Lord was. They evidently agreed on a plan of procedure. Then before the whole church Peter showed that God had approved the reception of Gentiles, as such, into the church. Paul and Barnabas then showed that God had approved their work among the Gentiles by wonders and signs. James then summed the matter up, and also showed that the reception of the Gentiles was according to prophecy. It was proper for James to announce the final judgment, for he had not been mixed up in preaching to the Gentiles as had Peter and Paul. Said he, "Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them . . ." Thus the church was brought to an understanding of the matter and was satisfied. The apostles did not take a vote of the church to see what ought to be done! Let us not discredit the inspiration of the apostles by arguing that such was done.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### "To Whom We Gave No Commandment" (Verses 23, 24)

"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 Barabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren." It was necessary that prominent men in the church at Jerusalem accompany Paul and Barnabas; otherwise the Judaizers at Antioch might say that Paul and Barnabas did not correctly represent what was done at Jerusalem, and might even deny the authenticity of the letter. The brethren at Jerusalem had committed to writing what should be done about the Gentile converts, so that no one then and no one in the future could call in question exactly what was done. Evidently James wrote the decrees; for he uses the term "greeting," as he did in his letter, a term used by no other New Testament writer in beginning a composition. The letter is written as the decision of the apostles and elders, and was addressed, not alone to the brethren at Antioch, but to Gentile Christians in all the churches in Syria and Cilicia. Of course, it would apply to Gentile Christians everywhere and in all ages. "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words." These Judaizers had not gone to Antioch to preach the gospel of Christ, but the law of Moses; they had not gone out to convert sinners, but to pervert and trouble Christians. Paul called them false brethren. (Gal. 2: 4.) They claimed to represent the sentiment of the apostles at Jerusalem, but James said they had given them no such commandment. They were professed Christians, but they were more Jewish than Christian. They apparently regarded Christianity as a mere sect of the Jews' religion.



## The Men Sent with Paul and Barnabas Named (Verses 25-27)

It is easy for men who are in the wrong to become prejudiced against those who contend against them. These Judaizing teachers at Antioch would not feel so well toward Paul and Barnabas, who had "had no small dissension and questioning with them." They were likely yet to call in question anything Paul and Barnabas said. To obviate further dissension it was necessary that some prominent men of the church in Jerusalem be chosen, and sent with Paul and Barnabas; and that these men be named in the letter. If this precaution was not taken, the Judaizers at Antioch might say that Paul and Silas had themselves selected men who they knew agreed with them. Those who have had anything to do with factions in the church know that factious people will resort to all kinds of schemes to contravene the right and to carry their point. No one knew that better than the inspired James, and he later said, "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3: 16.) After giving full indorsement to "our beloved Barnabas and Paul," he adds, "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth." These four men—Barnabas, Paul, Judas, and Silas—could give the brethren at Antioch all the particulars of the meeting at Jerusalem, as well as the conclusions to which they came. As the Judaizers at Antioch had refused to give heed to what Paul and Barnabas had said, it is more than likely that they allowed Judas and Silas to do all the talking, or the principal part of it, when they arrived at Antioch.

## Things from Which Gentiles Must Abstain (Verses 28, 29)

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." The "us" were the apostles and elders whose names the letter bore. (Verse 23.) The Holy Spirit guided in the matter, and brought all to one accord. It is true that James mentions the Holy Spirit and "us," but surely no one will think that he was putting the apostles and elders as equal with the Holy Spirit in deciding the matter. It seemed good to them that certain things should be required of the Gentiles because the Holy Spirit had so directed. Gentiles were to abstain from things sacrificed to idols—they were to do nothing that would seem to favor idol worship. "And from blood." That requirement was much older than the law of Moses. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (Gen. 9: 4.) This requirement was incorporated in the law of Moses. "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. For the life of the flesh is in the blood . . . 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." Any game beast or bird taken in the hunt had to be bled. (Lev. 17: 10-14.) They were to eat nothing that had been strangled, for a strangled animal or bird retained its blood. Many a person in killing a chicken merely wring its neck enough to break it, and

yet not so much as break the skin. It might as well be strangled, for it has no chance to bleed. That is a plain violation of this letter to the Gentiles, and of the ancient law to Noah. And they were to abstain from fornication. From ancient writers we learn that immorality was common among the heathen. And there is no question but that it is a growing evil today. Rome's fall was due to the rottenness of its morals more than to any other one cause. These Gentile Christians were warned against all these things that were so common among the heathen. "From which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you." When this letter was read to the church at Antioch, "they rejoiced for the consolation." They felt relieved in the hope that the trouble was settled.

### **"I Went Up by Revelation" (Gal. 1: 1, 2)**

It had been fourteen years since Paul made the visit to Jerusalem which he mentioned in the latter part of chapter 1. He went up by revelation—God had revealed to him that he should go. The Judaizers at Antioch would not accept Paul's word. They went to those whom these Judaizers claimed they represented. Paul first laid the matter before those who were of repute, "lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain." If the churches that he had established among the Gentiles were to be harassed and torn up by this question of circumcision, or if they were to be bound to the law of Moses as a mere sect of the Jews, then his labor among them was in vain. The decrees of the apostles and elders should have settled matters, but some Judaizers kept up their contention, disturbing things wherever Paul went. The churches of Galatia were greatly disturbed, and that disturbance called forth this letter. These disturbers claimed that Paul was no apostle of Christ, and that all he knew he learned from others. To give his word the proper weight then and for all time, he first establishes his apostleship, beginning his argument in chapter 1, verse 11. He did not receive the gospel from man. When called, he began immediately to preach the gospel without consulting any of the apostles. He was able to do this because it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach to the Gentiles. He had contended with these Judaizers, whom he calls false brethren, both at Antioch and at Jerusalem, "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." He affirms that the apostles at Jerusalem imparted nothing to him. On the contrary, they saw that God had intrusted him with the gospel of the uncircumcision; that is, they saw that God had chosen and empowered him as the apostle to the Gentiles. The miracles that God had wrought through him as he preached to the Gentiles was sufficient proof.

### **The Apostles at Jerusalem Vindicated His Claims (Verses 9, 10)**

When the apostles at Jerusalem saw that God was with Paul in his work among the Gentiles, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that they should go unto the Gentiles. "Only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do."



## SOME REFLECTIONS

The action of some of the extreme Judaizers shows that a plain revelation will not settle matters with some professed Christians.

The matters recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts furnish no support for conferences, general assemblies, nor conventions; neither does the chapter give the least grounds for settling matters by a vote of the church. The trouble which was settled at Jerusalem arose in the church at Antioch. Does that give one church the right to decree what shall be done in a church three hundred miles away? Besides, the decrees at Jerusalem became binding on all Gentile churches. Hence, if the action taken at Jerusalem was the action of the church, then one church can make decrees that are binding on all other churches. The truth is, the church at Jerusalem took no action except to hear what the apostles said and then to submit.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Judaizing troublemakers.  
How the trouble at Antioch was settled.  
God is no respecter of persons.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give some description of the Antioch of our lesson.  
What did Paul and Silas do when they returned from their missionary trip?  
What trouble arose at Antioch?  
Why were some Jewish Christians in Jerusalem such sticklers for the law?  
Why did Paul and Barnabas contend with them?  
Why was it necessary to refer the matter to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem?  
Was the matter to be settled by human wisdom?  
Give an outline of the proceedings at Jerusalem.  
Was the matter submitted to a vote of the church?

#### Verses 23, 24

What measures did the apostles and elders take to inform the Antioch church?  
Why send some of their own number with Paul and Barnabas?

In addition to sending men, what did they do?

To whom did that letter apply?  
Who apparently wrote the letter?  
What denial did he make?

#### Verses 25-27

What was done so as to prevent any false charges being made against Paul and Barnabas?  
Give some evils of the party spirit.

#### Verses 28, 29

What shows plainly that the decision made at Jerusalem was inspired?  
What was required of the Gentiles?  
Give the Bible teaching on eating blood.

#### Gal. 1: 1, 2

In what way would Paul's labors been in vain?  
Why was it necessary that Paul prove that he was an apostle?  
Give the course of his argument.

#### Verses 9, 10

How did the apostles in Jerusalem show that they regarded him as an apostle?  
What did they ask him to do?  
Discuss the reflections.

Lesson V—April 30, 1939

## PAUL CROSSES INTO EUROPE

Acts 15: 36; 16: 4-15

36 And after some days Paul said unto Bār'nā-bās, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare.

4 And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jē-ru'sā-lēm.

5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 And they went through the region of Phryg'i-ā and Gā-lā'ti-ā, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in A'si-ā;

7 And when they were come over against Mý'si-ā, they assayed to go into Bī-thýn'i-ā; and the Spirit of Jē'sūs suffered them not;

8 And passing by Mý'si-ā, they came down to Trō'ās.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Māc-ē-dō'nī-ā standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Māc-ē-dō'nī-ā, and help us.

10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Māc-ē-dō'nī-ā, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Trō'ās, we made a straight course to Sām'ō-thrāce, and the day following to Nē-āp'ō-lis;

12 And from thence to Phī-lip'pi, which is a city of Māc-ē-dō'nī-ā, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together.

14 And a certain woman named Lýd'i-ā, a seller of purple, of the city of Thý-ā-tí-rā, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“When he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia.” (Acts 16: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 3: 3-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 24. M.	“Come . . . and Help Us” (Acts 16: 6-10)
April 25. T.	The Conversion of Lydia” (Acts 16: 11-15)
April 26. W.	Casting Out the Evil Spirit (Acts 16: 16-18)
April 27. T.	Paul in Prison (Acts 16: 19-25)
April 28. F.	The Jailer Saved (Acts 16: 26-34)
April 29. S.	The Gospel in Berea (Acts 17: 10-12)
April 30. S.	The Gospel for Every Land (Psalm 67: 1-7)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 50. It seems that, after returning from Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch long enough to quiet matters after the disturbance created by the Judaizing teachers.

*Places.*—Troas and Philippi.

*Persons.*—Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Lydia, and her household.

*Lesson Links.*—Judas and Silas, men of prominence in the church at Jerusalem, were selected to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, so that they might be able to explain fully how the question of circumcision was settled at Jerusalem. “So they, when they were



dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And when they had read it they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them." "But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also." And so it was that there were many teachers and preachers in the church at Antioch. Of course the disturbance raised by the Judaizers had hindered progress for a time; but since that was settled, they could press on with confidence. Nothing can so hinder the progress of a church as can sin and strife within it.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Paul's Proposition to Barnabas (Verse 36)

In writing to the Corinthian brethren, Paul once recounted the trials, privations, and persecutions he had endured, and then added, "Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." (2 Cor. 11: 23-28.) While he had anxiety for all the churches, he would feel especially concerned about the welfare of the churches where he had labored. From his letters it seems that the Judaizing teachers made trouble in nearly all of the churches. Now, since things had quieted down at Antioch, he thought of the churches he and Barnabas had planted on their former preaching tour; so he said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare." Besides a natural desire to see these brethren, he would also want to leave with each church a copy of the letter written by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, to guard them against further disturbance about the matter of circumcision. But now a disturbance arose between him and Barnabas. It was not about any point of teaching; they merely differed in judgment. Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them; and that was natural, for Mark was cousin to Barnabas. (Col. 4: 10.) "But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." Whatever Mark's reason was for turning back on their former journey, it was not satisfactory to Paul. Some have conjectured that Mark turned back because of the dangers that confronted them. But as Paul and Barnabas could not agree on the matter, "Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord." From this it seems that the church sympathized with Paul in his determination not to take Mark. Paul's course led through Syria and Cilicia, and on to their former field of labor. At Lystra he found a young disciple of promise named Timothy; "him would Paul have to go forth with him." He circumcised Timothy because Timothy was of Jewish blood.

### "The Churches Were Strengthened in the Faith" (Verses 4, 5)

"And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem." Here again we see that these

decrees were not ordained of the church at Jerusalem, but the apostles and elders. As Judaizers that were determined to have their way, no matter what the apostles and elders at Jerusalem said, were likely to visit any and all churches, it was necessary that all churches have a copy of the decrees. The document might not stop the mouths of the agitators, but it would make their work of disturbing the churches less effective; it also gave the churches renewed strength and hope. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily." For people to be added to the churches daily would in itself be a source of strength and encouragement to these infant churches.

### **Paul and Silas Providentially Led to Troas (Verses 6-8)**

Only a part of what we now know as Asia Minor was then called Asia. Ephesus was the capital city of what was then known as Asia. As that was the most important city of the province, it was doubtless to this city that Paul wanted to go when he desired to preach in Asia, but was forbidden to do so by the Holy Spirit. It is possible that they preached some in Galatia and Phrygia on this journey, for later on we learn of churches in these districts. After Paul was forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia, he attempted to go into Bithynia; "and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." The fields were not ripe unto harvest in these districts—later they might be, but not then. The Lord knew where their labors would be effective, and was hastening them on to that point. Jesus had said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5: 6.) That promise is definite, and Jesus stands pledged to its fulfillment. In Europe there were those who were hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and the Lord through Paul and his company would fulfill that pledge. "And passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas." Troas was on the east coast of the Aegean Sea. They could go no farther without taking ship. Paul and his company could not help wondering if that was the field of labor to which the Lord had been guiding them. If so, they had not long to wait to learn otherwise.

### **Paul's Vision at Troas (Verses 9, 10)**

"A vision appeared to Paul in the night." That was not a mere hallucination; to Paul it was as real as anything else in life. He was God's preacher, and God was leading him into a waiting harvest. "There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." This man must have been standing with outstretched hands in an attitude of pleading. Not only that, but he was asking for help. Macedonia was in Europe, on the other side of the sea from Troas. To answer this call Paul and his company would have to go by ship to the European shore. "Straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia." They immediately got busy seeking passage to Europe. Here is the first time Luke uses the pronoun "we," which shows that he joined Paul's company at Troas. After this it is easy to determine when Luke was a part of the company by the pronouns he uses. "Concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto



them." Paul had been led through various cities and districts without being allowed to tarry, and he had not known why; and now he had seen this vision, and heard the call. Putting all these things together they concluded that God was calling on them to preach the gospel to the people of Macedonia. For Paul, a call to such service meant prompt action.

### Paul and His Company Go to Philippi (Verses 11, 12)

At this time Silas, Timothy, and Luke were with Paul. They found a ship soon to depart across the sea. God was managing things so as to hasten them on their way. "Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace." That they were able to sail in a straight course, and also to reach Samothrace in one day, shows that the winds were favorable. God was managing the winds; yet to the sailors the favorable winds were just a fortunate happen-so. God can control the operations of nature in such a way that no one sees his hand in the matter; to most people it is merely the operations of the laws of nature, forgetting that no law is self-operative. Samothrace is an island, on which is a mountain of about five thousand feet elevation. It therefore made a good "signpost" for these ancient sailors. "And the day following to Neapolis." Neapolis was a seaport city, but they did not tarry at Neapolis. In some way God led them on to Philippi, a distance of about ten miles. Philippi was so named from its founder, King Philip, of Macedonia. Luke describes it as "the first of the district, a Roman colony." "The early colonies which Rome sent out were allowed to retain all their rights of citizenship, being permitted even to come to Rome at any time to vote, and help make the laws."—*Morey's Outlines of Ancient History*. Here Paul and his company tarried certain days; that is, they waited certain days before they began to do any preaching. They were taking time to size things up and to find a suitable place to begin their preaching—"making a survey." Evidently they found out that some people were in the habit of holding religious services outside the city by the river—the Gangas. "And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side." Had there been a synagogue in that city, they would have attended its services. This shows that there were not enough Jews in that city to build and maintain a synagogue. It seems that there were only a few women in Philippi that worshiped God; no men worshipers are mentioned. They found the place that they supposed to be the place of prayer; and when the women worshipers gathered at that place, Paul preached to them. It is not certain that any were present except Lydia and her household.

### Lydia and Her Household Baptized (Verses 13-15)

Lydia was a merchant, a seller of purple. She might have been a dealer in the purple dye, or of fine fabrics dyed with purple. The purple dye was obtained in small quantities from various kinds of shellfish found in various parts of the Mediterranean Sea. This slow and tedious method of obtaining it made it very costly, and the goods dyed with it were so costly that only the people of wealth could buy them. And to be a dealer in such materials required consider-

able capital. Lydia must therefore have been a woman of considerable wealth. Her home city was Thyatira, in Asia north of Ephesus. "One that worshipped God." She would not have been thus described, had she been a Jewess—that a Jewess worshiped God would have been taken for granted. She was therefore a woman who had been converted from heathenism to the Jews' religion. She was now hearing of a better way, and was giving honest attention to the preaching. "Whose heart the Lord opened." It is pure assumption to say that the Lord opened her heart by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. God so loved the world, that now we may have complete forgiveness of sins, peace that passes understanding, and a living hope of the glories of heaven. All this, and more did Lydia hear; and like a rosebud opens to the dew and warmth of the rising sun, so was Lydia's heart opened by the mercy and love of God. Hence, the Lord opened her heart by the gospel which she heard. If a person's heart stays closed against the gospel it is because he refuses to see and hear, lest he should understand with the heart. (Matt. 13: 15.) Paul was sent to preach to the people, "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." (Acts 26: 17, 18.) Lydia listened to the story of God's redeeming love, and that story opened her heart "to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." The word from which we have "give heed" does not mean to hear, or to listen to, but to devote one's self to. Lydia heard the preaching, her heart was opened to it, and she obeyed it. "And when she was baptized, and her household." This shows how she gave heed to, or devoted herself to, the preaching of Paul. Though she was not a European, she was the first convert Paul made in Europe. Her household followed her example. This case furnishes no support to the dogma of infant sprinkling. There is no evidence that Lydia had any children; or, if she had, that any of them were infants. There is no indication that she was a married woman, but there are indications that she was not a married woman. Notice the delicate way in which she invited Paul and his company to abide in her house. Her household were evidently her women helpers. "She besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." Notice that she said, "My house." If she had been a married woman, it would have been the husband's place to invite these men to abide in his house. All these things show that she had no husband—at least, none with her—and that she was the head of the family.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The Judaizing Christians, whom Paul calls false brethren, tried every possible way to make Christianity a sect of the Jews' religion; and had not Paul made the fight he did make, they would have succeeded, unless God had raised up another to make the fight. We can be sure it gave Paul a good deal of satisfaction to be able to distribute among the church the decrees of the apostles and elders.

That God opened Lydia's heart does not prove that Paul's preaching did not do it. That God does a thing does not eliminate human agency. God saves men, but he does it through preaching (1 Cor. 1: 21), and that required human agency. Jesus baptized people, but he did it through the agency of his disciples. (John 4: 1, 2.)



## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Matt. 5: 6, and its application.  
Human agency in saving men.  
The conversion of Lydia.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give an account of Paul's return from Jerusalem, and the reading of the decrees at Antioch.  
What effect did the decrees have on the church, and its prosperity?

## Verse 36

What did Paul say pressed upon him daily?  
What proposition did he make to Barnabas?  
What caused a rift between them?  
What direction did Paul go, and who went with him?

## Verses 4, 5

Why would Paul be careful to distribute the decree of the apostles and elders of Jerusalem?  
What resulted where these decrees were left with churches?  
Where did Paul find Timothy, and what is said of him?

## Verses 6-8

Tell of Paul's journey to Troas.  
Quote Matt. 5: 6, and discuss its application.  
Where was Troas?

## Verses 9, 10

What experience did Paul have in the night?  
To what conclusion did they come?  
Who joined Paul and his company at Troas?

## Verses 11, 12

Who now composed Paul's company?  
Give account of their journey.  
What purpose did Samothrace serve?  
Where was Neapolis?  
How far was it to Philippi?  
What is said of Philippi?  
What shows the scarcity of Jews in Philippi?  
Who was there that worshiped God?  
Where did Paul and his company meet some women who worshiped God?

## Verses 13-15

Who was Lydia, and from what city was she?  
Give facts about the purple dye.  
What shows that Lydia was a woman of means?  
How did the Lord open her heart?  
What did she and her household do?  
Show that this case does not support infant sprinkling.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VI—May 7, 1939

## PAUL WORKS A HARD FIELD

Acts 18: 1, 4-11; 1 Cor. 2: 1-5

1 After these things he departed from Ath'ens, and came to Cōr'inth.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Grēks.

5 But when Sī'lās and Tīm'ō-thē came down from Māc-ē-dō'nī-ā, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jēs'us was the Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gēn'tiles.

7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Tī'tūs Jūs'tūs, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crīs'pūs, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Cō-rin'thi-āns hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

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 anything among you, save Jē'sūs 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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."* (Phil. 4: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 1: 18-31.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 1.	M.	Preaching in Athens (Acts 17: 22-31)
May 2.	T.	A Ministry in Corinth (Acts 18: 4-11)
May 3.	W.	Paul's Message (1 Cor. 2: 1-5)
May 4.	T.	Paul's Resources (Phil. 4: 10-14)
May 5.	F.	Enduring Hardness (2 Tim. 2: 1-13)
May 6.	S.	Strength in the Lord (Psalm 27: 1-6)
May 7.	S.	Hope in the Lord (Psalm 25: 1-10)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About A.D. 52. Hales puts the date at A.D. 49.

*Place.*—Corinth, "an ancient and celebrated city of Greece, on the Isthmus of Corinth, and about forty miles west of Athens. In consequence of its geographical position it formed the most direct communication between the Ionian and Aegean seas." Its position made it a commercial city of great importance. And here was the temple of Venus, with its one thousand women who had dedicated their bodies in immoral practices in honor of Venus. The money paid these women by men little better than animals, together with its commerce, brought great wealth to Corinth. The city was notoriously immoral; yet the people paid great attention to art, to philosophy, to the niceties of language, and to oratory.

*Persons.*—Paul, Timothy, Silas, and the people of Corinth, among whom was Titus, Justus, and Crispus.

*Lesson Links.*—Our last lesson left Paul and his company at Philippi, where he succeeded in planting one of the best churches of those times. By noticing Luke's change of pronouns from "we" to "they," you will see that he remained at Philippi. His stay among them would help them greatly in developing into a worth-while church. Paul, Silas, and Timothy went down to Thessalonica, and then to Berea. At both places many converts were made, but such hostile demonstrations were made at both places by the enemies of the gospel that Paul moved on, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea. Some brethren, perhaps for protection, went with Paul as far as Athens. Paul sent word back by these brethren for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed. At Athens he preached in the synagogue and in the market place, his last sermon there being his celebrated sermon on the hill of Mars.



## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### From Athens to Corinth (Verse 1)

How long Paul remained at Athens we have no means of knowing. He remained long enough for Timothy, and perhaps Silas, to come there from Macedonia, and to remain alone there for a while after he sent Timothy back to Macedonia. (1 Thess. 3: 1-3.) He did not make many converts at Athens. The church at Athens is not known to New Testament history, which indicates that Christianity never made much progress there. Athens was too much wedded to their different schools of philosophy and their many gods to give attention to any other philosophy of life. His experience at Athens probably made him doubtful of results at Corinth, for he went to Corinth with fear and trembling. (1 Cor. 2: 3.) He went to Corinth alone.

### His Preaching—Silas and Timothy Arrive (Verses 4, 5)

At Corinth he partly made his expenses by making tents. His partners in this business were Aquila and his wife Priscilla. (Verses 2, 3.) He had no false pride nor snobbish dignity; with him, as with his master, honest work was honorable. Later he said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." (Acts 20: 34.) Yet he did receive some help from the churches. (2 Cor. 11: 8, 9; Phil. 4: 15, 16.) At Corinth, as at every other place where there was a sufficient number of Jews to build a synagogue, Paul preached first in the synagogue. Here also, as at other Gentile cities which had synagogues, numbers of Gentiles had been led out of the worshiping of idols and attended the synagogue worship. These Gentile attendants believed in the one God and accepted the Jewish scriptures as the inspired writings of men of God. Hence, in these things Paul occupied common ground with the worshipers, both Jews and Gentiles. He could therefore in his preaching use the scriptures which they recognized as authoritative, and by them prove Jesus to be the Christ. There had first to be a period of seed-sowing. Paul had been left alone at Athens (1 Thess. 3: 1), and of course was alone at Corinth till Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia. During this time he had to baptize his converts with his own hands. The few that he did baptize with his own hands (1 Cor. 1: 14-16) shows that progress at first was slow. Stephanas and his household, who were of the number baptized by Paul, were the first converts. (1 Cor. 16: 15.) Although Paul was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel, yet he considered baptism so important that he would not put off the baptism of his converts until Silas and Timothy arrived to do it for him. After they came, he did no more of the baptizing. As an apostle he was sent to announce, or to reveal, the gospel—to do that which the others of his company could not do, but they could do the baptizing. Instead of belittling baptism Paul's language shows the importance he attached to that command. And it seems that the coming of Silas and Timothy encouraged Paul, for he was then "constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." As neither the Jews nor the Greeks believed in Jesus as the Christ,

the burden of his preaching was to convince them of that great truth. When they really believed that, they would readily do what Jesus commanded.

### Paul Turns to the Gentiles (Verses 6, 7)

The majority of the Jews in Corinth were opposed to Paul's teaching, and soon began to organize their forces against him. The word from which we have opposed was a military term; its primary meaning was to range in battle against another. Therefore on a certain Sabbath when Paul went to the synagogue he met organized opposition. They blasphemed, or, as the marginal reading has it, they railed. The excitable nature of the Jews, with their hatred of the gospel, would make that a disorderly meeting, and yet it was all planned and organized—organized disorder! They did not intend for Paul to have a hearing. When Paul saw that there was no use to make any further effort in that synagogue, he shook out his raiment as an indication that he was ridding himself of the very dust of that synagogue, and said, "Your blood be upon your own heads." He had done what he could to save them; if they were now determined to go on in their fight against God, they would be responsible for their own ruin. If people shut their eyes against the truth and just will not believe, there is no power that will make them believe. In rejecting Jesus as the Christ they had settled their own doom—had passed the sentence of death upon themselves. Paul had done what he could, and felt no guilt in saying to them, "I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." This leaving the Jews entirely to themselves applied only to his work in Corinth, for after this he spoke for the space of three months in the synagogue at Ephesus. (Acts 19: 8.) From the synagogue at Corinth Paul moved his preaching place to the house of Titus Justus. This man is described as one that worshiped God, which shows that he was a Gentile who had been led out of his heathen religion to the worship of God. That description would not have been used had he been a Jew. Paul's preaching in a house that joined right up against the synagogue must have been very annoying to the Jews.

### The Results of Paul's Work at Corinth (Verses 8-11)

The results stated in verse 8 are not simply the results of his work after he went to the house of Titus Justus, for Crispus was evidently baptized before Silas and Timothy came to him from Macedonia. For Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, to be baptized would likely enrage the Jews more than any other thing, for they would feel that a prominent man as he should certainly not be a traitor to his nation. "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." They heard and believed. They could not believe without evidence, and Paul had showed them that Jesus was the Christ. When they believed that, they were baptized. Under the preaching of God's inspired men those who believed were baptized without delay. Delay is usually the result of indifference to the commands of God, and preachers are greatly to blame for delay. They have not made prompt obedience seem sufficiently important. The uproar of the Jews was bound to be somewhat depressing to Paul. To



encourage him the Lord said to him by a vision, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city." The Lord's words shows that the Jews had threatened to do Paul bodily harm. So long as the Lord had work for him to do in that city no man could keep Paul from doing it. On that he had the Lord's assurance. The many people the Lord had in that city were the Lord's in prospect; he knew the hearts of the people, and knew that many of them would yet become obedient. And so Paul continued there a year and six months, but this was not so long as he later remained at Ephesus. (Acts 20: 31.) Both cities were great centers, and a strong church in each city would come into contact with many people. They would be radiating centers for the spread of the gospel. Perhaps this prompted Paul to stay as long as he did in each city.

### **The Subject and the Manner of Paul's Preaching (1 Cor. 2: 1-3)**

The Greeks were much devoted to art, language, and oratory. Formerly some of them had been great philosophers, and some of less fame lived in Paul's day; but the different schools of thought had tried to exceed each other in fine language and abstruse reasoning till there was not so much in what they said. Naturally, if a man came into their midst with some new philosophy of life, as did Paul, they would expect him to try to excel in their methods and manners. If he did not, the "highbrows" would give him scant, if any, attention. But Paul deliberately avoided their style; he "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God." Paul wanted to impress people with what he was preaching, and not with his style of preaching. He wanted them to think of what he said instead of how he said it. It would be well if all speakers and writers would imitate his example. Nor did Paul go to Corinth with the air of a conquering hero. "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." Yet he was determined to preach Christ and him crucified. In doing so he would preach him as our Savior, prophet, priest, and king, and all things he did and commanded.

### **Why Paul Preached as He Did (Verses 4, 5)**

Paul's preaching was supported by miracles—in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That was proof that God was with him, and should have caused people to be anxious to hear what he said. He did not use the Greek method of oratory; he did not want to attract attention to a flight of beautiful words. Whether they considered him an orator or not was of no concern to him. He was preaching Christ as their Savior and leader; he was only a servant. He did not want people to put their trust in him, but in the Lord. He did not want their faith to stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Beautiful language may attract attention, and a strong personality may attract a strong following; but a congregation gathered by such means is not a church of God, for the people in it are not following Christ, but man. There is just one thing

that will save men, and that is the gospel of Christ. The professed gospel preacher that relies on the tricks of oratory or a winning personality to move people has mised his calling; he merely imagines he is preaching the gospel and winning people to Christ.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

There is wisdom in establishing churches in all commercial, political, and educational centers; for there is an opportunity for such churches to come into contact with so many people from so many parts of the country. Follow Paul's travels and preaching, and see how he sought to plant churches in such cities.

Not often do preachers succeed today in impressing people with the importance of rendering immediate obedience, as did the inspired preachers. When God's inspired preachers made believers, baptism followed as soon as possible—the same day, the same hour of the night. Very few realize that unnecessary delay is rebellion against God. No one should indulge in any unnecessary delay in completing his obedience.

The preacher may not be to blame, but too often it happens that people are converted to the preacher rather than to God. That is plainly seen when people will take no interest in attending the worship or hearing preaching, unless their preacher is doing the preaching. They worshiped the preacher, "the creature," rather than God, and likely did not realize they were doing so. The preacher who succeeds in making such converts has done them an irreparable injury, for he has got them into such a frame of mind that no one can reach them with the gospel.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The city of Corinth.  
Paul's manner of preaching in Corinth.  
1 Cor. 1: 21.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give all the facts you can about Corinth.  
Where was Paul in our last lesson?  
Give his movements from Philippi to Corinth.

### Verse 1

What evidence that Silas and Timothy came to Paul at Athens, and went from there back to Macedonia?

### Verses 4, 5

With whom did Paul form a partnership at Corinth, and in what business?  
What evidence that he worked at other places?  
What church sent help to Paul?

Where did Paul begin preaching at Corinth, and to whom?  
Why was it better to begin preaching to the synagogue attendants?  
What evidence that Paul made slow progress for a time?  
Why did Paul baptize the few he did baptize?  
Why did he not continue to do the baptizing?  
What was the burden of his preaching?

### Verses 6, 7

Why did Paul quit preaching in the synagogue?  
In leaving the synagogue, what did he say?  
Why was their blood to be upon their own heads?  
After leaving the synagogue, where did Paul preach?



## Verses 8-11

Give the results of Paul's preaching at Corinth, as stated in verse 8. What evidence that believers then did not delay baptism? What does delay indicate? What did the Lord say to Paul in a vision? How long did he remain in Corinth?

## 1 Cor. 2: 1-3

Name some characteristics of the Greeks. What did Paul say about his manner of preaching? Repeat verse 3.

## Verses 4, 5

Discuss these verses. What sort of preaching do many try to do? Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VII—May 14, 1939

## PAUL EVANGELIZES A PROVINCE

Acts 19: 1, 8-10; 20: 17-21; Eph. 2: 19-22

1 And it came to pass, that, while Ā-pōl'ōs was at Cōr'inth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ēph'ē-sūs, and found certain disciples.

8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tŷ-rān'nūs.

10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Ā'si-ā heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Grēeks.

17 And from Mī-lē'tūs he sent to Ēph'ē-sūs, and called to him the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Ā'si-ā, after what manner I was with you all the time.

19 Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews;

20 How I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to Jews and to Grēeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jē'sūs Christ.

19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jē'sūs himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

22 In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 2: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 8.	M.	Evangelizing Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-7)
May 9.	T.	Paul Teaches All Classes (Acts 19: 8-12)
May 10.	W.	Paul's Farewell to Ephesus (Acts 20: 17-25)
May 11.	T.	The Church in Ephesus (Eph. 2: 19-22)
May 12.	F.	The Head of the Church (Col. 1: 9-20)
May 13.	S.	The Temple of God (1 Cor. 3: 16-23)
May 14.	S.	The Glory of Zion (Psalm 87: 1-7)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—It seems that Paul's stay in Ephesus began in the spring of A.D. 54 and continued to the early part of A.D. 57. His speech to the elders of the Ephesian church was made about A.D. 58. The letter to the Ephesians was written about A.D. 61 or 62.

*Places.*—Ephesus, Miletus (the place where he made his address to the elders of the church at Ephesus), and Rome (the point from which he sent the Ephesian letter). But everything in our lesson has to do with the progress of the gospel in and around Ephesus. Ephesus was the Roman capital of the province of Asia, the most illustrious and important city in that section of the country. Here was the great temple of Diana, or Artemis, one of the really great buildings of the world. Here also was the greatest theater the Greeks ever built, having a capacity for 25,000 or 30,000 people. The city's prominence made it a great radiating center for the gospel. This would cause Paul to strive to establish a great church there.

*Persons.*—Paul and the people of Ephesus. There were many Jews in Ephesus, but the great body of the people were Greeks.

*Lesson Links.*—When Paul left Corinth only Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned as accompanying him. He must therefore have left Silas and Timothy at Corinth. (Acts 18: 18.) However, Silas and Timothy came to him at Ephesus, for we find that he sent them from Ephesus to Macedonia. (Acts 19: 22.) On his way from Corinth Paul stopped off for a visit at Ephesus, where he left Priscilla and Aquila. (Acts 18: 19-21.) After Paul had continued his journey Priscilla and Aquila heard the eloquent Apollos speak. As he knew only the baptism of John, they took him, probably to their place of lodging, and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly. It is worthy of note that nothing is said about baptizing him. He, of course, had been baptized unto John's baptism. From Ephesus Paul sailed to Cesarea, went up to Jerusalem and saluted the church, and then went down to Ephesus. (Acts 18: 22.) While it is not stated in so many words that Paul went up to Jerusalem, it does say that he went up and saluted the church, and then went down to Antioch. Now, if he had saluted the church at Cesarea, and then gone on to Antioch, it could not have been said that he went down to Antioch, for Antioch is on a little higher level than Cesarea, being farther from the seashore. In going from Jerusalem to Antioch he would literally go down to Antioch. The Bible is very exact in its use of descriptive terms. "And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples." It appears that his object in visiting the church on this journey was to teach and to reassure the disciples so as to get them more firmly established in the faith.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Paul Returns to Ephesus (Acts 19: 1)

After Apollos learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, he decided to go over to Corinth; and "the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace; for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures



that Jesus was the Christ." "While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples" there. These disciples were not disciples of Christ, as will be seen by reading verses 2-7. By questioning them Paul found that they had been baptized unto John's baptism, and knew nothing of the plan of salvation through Christ which had been revealed by the Holy Spirit. It seems almost certain that these men had been baptized unto John's baptism after it ceased to be of force, for we can hardly think that all the people baptized by John had to be baptized again. If so, what purpose did that baptism serve? But speculation on that point can be of no practical benefit, for there are no persons living now who were baptized unto John's baptism.

### **Paul Preaches in the Synagogue at Ephesus (Verse 8)**

Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue for the space of three months. It would seem that these Jews were not so fiery and rash as the Jews had been in other places. Our word dialogue is the anglicized form of the Greek word here translated reasoning—Paul dialogued with them. He held conversations with them, or he and they alternated in making speeches. It was what we would now call a discussion or a debate. The subject of the discussion was "the things concerning the kingdom of God." His idea and their notion as to the kingdom were quite different, or there would have been no occasion for debate. They were looking for a world kingdom, with the Messiah on the throne in Jerusalem. Here was ground for discussion, and some yet argue for that sort of kingdom, as did the Jews of Paul's day.

### **Paul Leaves the Synagogue and Teaches in the School of Tyrannus (Verses 9, 10)**

After so long their reasoning together ceased. Some became hardened and spoke evil of the Way. The gospel stirs people either to obedience or to open antagonism; the right kind of heart responds to its appeal, the disobedient heart becomes harder and more antagonistic. If the person whose heart is set on disobedience cannot meet the arguments of the advocate of the gospel, he can still use slanderous words about his opponent and he can say evil things about his teaching. This was the course some of the synagogue attendants took toward Paul and his teaching. As long as they were content to argue matters with him, he was content to meet them and reason with them; but when they left off argument because they could not meet his arguments, and resorted to speaking evil of the Way, he was through with them. There was no hope of doing people any good in such a turmoil as that; to preach to them was to cast pearls before swine. "He departed from them, and separated the disciples." The controversy, and the consequent separation, would serve one good purpose; it would show the disciples that Judaism and Christianity were two separate systems of religion, and that Christianity was not just another sect of the Jews' religion. Whether Tyrannus gave him room or he rented room for his place of teaching we are not informed. As nothing is said about rent, it

would seem that Tyrannus furnished his room without charge. In that school he reasoned daily. If any of the Jews were at all friendly to his teaching, they would come to hear him. "And this continued for the space of two years," so that in reality Paul became one of the lecturers in that school. "So that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." The province of Asia did not then include all of what is now known as Asia Minor. The language does not necessarily mean that Paul in person went out all over the province and preached. The language really shows that he did not, for he reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus. He had to confine himself close to Ephesus during the time this continued. But he had a number of helpers, some of whom are mentioned. There were Priscilla and Aquila, Gaius and Aristarchus, and Silas and Timothy. As an apostle of the Lord Paul was directing the labors of these helpers; and there might have been many more helpers. These helpers would not be idle during the two years Paul lectured in the school of Tyrannus; and there was a sufficient number of them, with Paul to direct them, to preach all over the province of Asia. It must have been in this way that all Asia heard the word of the Lord.

### **Paul's Farewell Speech to the Elders of Ephesus (Acts 20: 17-21)**

After Paul left Ephesus he made a tour of the churches in Macedonia and Greece, and then returned through Macedonia to Troas, where he spent a few days. On this journey he was gathering up the collections made by the churches for the poor saints in Judea, mention of which is made in Rom. 15: 25-28; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians. He was now on his way to Jerusalem to deliver these contributions. A short stop was made at Miletus. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church." This is the first mention we have of the elders of the church at Ephesus. He wanted to give them a final warning as to their duties and responsibilities. In discharging their duties they would need all the goodness, wisdom, and courage that was possible for a person to have. They would have to keep a close watch on themselves, that they might be able to take heed to the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. As a preliminary to his exhortations and admonitions Paul first reminds them of his work among them. His manner of life among them was known to all—"serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews." Paul was not arrogant, but meek and lowly. He was uncompromising in preaching the gospel, yet tenderhearted. The perversity of men and their lost condition melted him to tears. The blind rage of his own nation against his Lord and Christ was a special weight upon his heart. Yet in spite of all that people did to him, his life was such a perfect pattern of what a Christian should be that he could say, "I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me." (1 Cor. 4: 16.) And the great love he had for his fellow man, and for the Lord, caused him to tell the people everything that was profitable to them. He would have gladly respected and spared the feelings of the people if he could have done so with no danger to



himself or them. He loved them too much to spare their feelings to their hurt. "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable." It is not an easy task to preach the straight truth when you feel almost sure that it will hurt the feelings of those you love, and perhaps turn them against you. Paul had that same difficulty, but he shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God. Because he spared neither his feelings nor theirs he could say, "Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." Paul taught publicly and from house to house to both Jews and Gentiles. As the people had sinned against God, they were to repent of those sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, they were now to take him as their Savior and king. Certainly they could not repent toward God unless they believed that God is.

### Gentiles Have Equal Favors with Jews (Eph. 2: 19-22)

Verses 19 to 22 are a conclusion from what had been said. While the law of Moses was in force it stood as a wall between Jews and Gentiles. Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles could not be brought together into one church so long as the law was in force. God made peace between the two by breaking down this middle wall of partition; the law was abolished so that he might make out of Jews and Gentiles one new church, "so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Hence, the gospel was preached to both Jews and Gentiles alike. No distinctions were made; for through Christ both have access in one Spirit unto the Father. So then the Gentile believer is no more a stranger—no longer a foreigner, but a fellow citizen in the kingdom of God with the believing Jew. The household of God, that is, the family of God, is composed of believers from among both the Jews and the Gentiles. They are built upon the one foundation, and that is the truth that Jesus is the Christ. (1 Cor. 3: 11.) That is the foundation of the apostles and prophets—the foundation on which they were built. And each part of this building fitly framed together grows into a holy temple of the Lord. The Gentiles were also builded into this building for a habitation of God through the Spirit. National or racial distinction have no place in this holy temple of God.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

One of the strange things is the attitude some people have toward honest labor. If a man now gained his living by making tents with his hands, as Paul did, many people would think it entirely below their dignity to associate with him or his family. Yet the idle rich, who do nothing worth while and who live off the wealth accumulated by others, are not nearly so important and worth while as the washerwoman or the ditch digger. In truth, they fill no useful place in the world.

Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it; and he should

so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the truth nor the people. We frequently fool ourselves; we think we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others, when it is our own feelings that prompt us. "Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Paul's labors in Ephesus.

Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus.

When the law of Moses was taken out of the way.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give facts about Ephesus.  
Who accompanied Paul to Ephesus?  
Outline Paul's movements till he reached Ephesus again.

### Acts 19: 1

Tell about Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos.  
Tell about the disciples Paul found at Ephesus, and what Paul did for them.

### Verse 8

What was Paul's method of teaching at Ephesus?  
What was the subject of their discussion?  
What ideas did the Jews have of the kingdom?

### Verses 10, 11

What caused Paul to leave the synagogue?

Why did the Jews become so boisterous?

Where did Paul then preach, and with what results?

How did all Asia hear the word?

### Acts 20: 17-21

Where and why did Paul make a tour after he left Ephesus?

Why would Paul want to speak to the elders of the church at Ephesus?

How did he begin his speech?

Why could Paul ask Christians to imitate him?

From what did he say he did not shrink?

Why would he be so determined to declare the whole counsel of God?

### Eph. 2: 19-22

Give Paul's reasoning that led to the conclusion stated in these verses.

While the law stood, why could not both Jew and Gentile be in one church?

Discuss verses 19-22.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—May 21, 1939

## BEVERAGE ALCOHOL AND THE HOME

Jer. 35: 5-10; Eph. 5: 15-21; 6: 1-4

5 And I set before the sons of the house of the Rē'chāb-ites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

6 But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jōn'ā-dāb the son of Rē'chāb, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever:

7 Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land wherein ye sojourn.

8 And we have obeyed the voice of Jōn'ā-dāb the son of Rē'chāb, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters;

9 Nor to build houses for us to dwell in; neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:



10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jôn'â-dâb our father commanded us.

15 Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jê'sûs Christ to God, even the Father;

21 Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

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

2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise),

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee."* (Lev. 10: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 3: 5-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 15.	M.	Home Influence (Jer. 35: 5-10)
May 16.	T.	The Influence of Example (Eph. 5: 15-21)
May 17.	W.	Parents and Children (Eph. 6: 1-4)
May 18.	T.	Law of the Priesthood (Lev. 10: 8-11)
May 19.	F.	The Mosaic Covenant (Deut. 29: 1-9)
May 20.	S.	A Temperate Youth (Dan. 1: 8-15)
May 21.	S.	The Godly Home (Psalm 128: 1-6)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Jeremiah began to prophesy about 624 B.C. and continued till about 588 B.C. The letter to the Ephesians was written about A.D. 61.

*Places.*—Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem. Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians while he was a prisoner in Rome.

*Persons.*—Jeremiah, the Rechabites, Paul, and the Ephesian brethren.

*Lesson Links.*—In Jeremiah's day the Jews had become very corrupt, and the nation was on the verge of destruction when he began to prophesy, and was destroyed before his death. He tried every way to reform the people, and thereby to save the nation from destruction. He taught them, warned them, exhorted them, and persuaded them. He used illustrations, comparisons, and object lessons. He used the Rechabites as an object lesson. The Rechabites were a peculiar sect, or order, founded by Jonadab, the son of Rechab, about three hundred years before Jeremiah's day. They had adhered faithfully to the plan of life laid out for them by Jonadab, the father of the order, or sect. The Jews had not adhered to the principles laid down for them by Jehovah their founder. Jeremiah, at the command of Jehovah, used their faithfulness to the commands of their founder to rebuke the Jews for their unfaithfulness.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****The Rechabites' Faithfulness to Their Principles (Jer. 35: 5-10)**

The lesson is not complete unless the entire chapter is read. Jehovah said to Jeremiah, "Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink." Jeremiah went as the Lord directed, and "brought them into the house of Jehovah, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan." "And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine." Of course, neither Jehovah nor Jeremiah expected them to drink wine. It will be noticed that Jeremiah did not say that God had commanded them to do so. They might have gone back on their principles, if they had really believed that Jehovah commanded them to drink the wine which was set before them. Notice carefully the wording of their reply to Jeremiah: "We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever: neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land wherein ye sojourn." They evidently were to live in the country and attend to flocks and herds. They were to do no farming. "And we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us"—they had drunk no wine, they had sowed no seed, they had owned no vineyards. No group of people could be found who had been truer to the principles of their order.

To see the lesson to the Jews that was drawn from their fidelity to their principles, read verses 12-17. "Then came the word of Jehovah unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Go, and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith Jehovah. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; and unto this day they drink none, for they obey their father's commandment." They had just been tested on the wine drinking. "Forasmuch as the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father which he commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto me; therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered." It was a severe rebuke to the Jews for their lack of fidelity to Jehovah. The Rechabites had been faithful to the commands of their founder who was a mere man, but Israel had not been true to their founder who was the God of hosts. And it is a strong rebuke to the indifferent and wayward Christians of today.

**Exhortation to Right Conduct (Eph. 5: 15-17)**

If Christians were as careful to conform their lives to the commands of the founder of our faith as the Rechabites were to the commands of the founder of their order, or sect, the church of the



own children to imitate. Any child resents such talk. He feels that his parents have "let him down." Teach the child the word of God; teach him to honor and respect you. If that is not done, he likely will never have much respect for anything or anybody.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

The drunkard has always been a pest, and some are dangerous to other people. But now, no matter how good humored a drunkard may be, he is a potential murderer when driving a car. The man who drinks before starting out in his car, or while driving a car, is about as guilty as the man who starts out with a gun with murder in his heart.

A Christian is one who died, was buried, and raised up to a new life. Once a sinner started to Damascus with slaughter in his heart; but he died and was buried, and a new saint was raised up. Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." A persecuting sinner died; a gospel preacher was raised up.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Lesson of the Rechabites.

The singing that obeys God.

Evil results of drinking intoxicants.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

What was the condition of the Jews in Jeremiah's day?

Why did he suffer so much to reform them?

Give some account of his manner of teaching.

### Jer. 35: 5-10

What did Jeremiah do at the command of Jehovah?

What did he offer the Rechabites?

What was their reply?

Should we use this incident to prove that the use of wine is wrong?

What lesson was Jeremiah seeking to teach the Jews?

### Eph. 5: 15-17

What is the meaning of Paul's admonition in verse 15?

What is meant by "redeeming the time"?

How do we redeem or buy anything?

What contrast is made in verse 17? Why is it a person's duty to study the Bible?

### Verses 18-21

Give all the reasons you can as to why drunkenness is an evil?

Why is a drunkard especially dangerous now?

What are we to be filled with?

Give some other quotations on this point.

Compare Eph. 5: 18, 19 with Col. 3: 16.

Does it seem reasonable that the Ephesians would be required to use instruments of music and the Colossians not?

Discuss verses 20, 21.

### Eph. 6: 1-4

What is the duty of children to parents?

What does one of the Ten Commandments say?

What makes that requirement still binding?

Discuss the duty of parents to children.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—May 28, 1939

## PAUL THINKS IN WORLD TERMS

Rom. 1: 1-17

1 Paul, a servant of Jē'sūs Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 Which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures,

3 Concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,

4 Who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jē'sūs Christ our Lord,

5 Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake;

6 Among whom are ye also, called to be Jē'sūs Christ's;

7 To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jē'sūs Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jē'sūs Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 That is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

13 And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gēn'tiles.

14 I am debtor both to Grēeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Grēek.

17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."* (Rom. 1: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 15: 1-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 22.	M.	A Debtor to All (Rom. 1: 14-17)
May 23.	T.	The Need of All (Rom. 3: 21-30)
May 24.	W.	Peace Through Grace (Rom. 5: 1-11)
May 25.	T.	Salvation Through Faith (Rom. 10: 11-15)
May 26.	F.	Grace for the Gentiles (Isa. 11: 9-12)
May 27.	S.	The Invitation to All Men (Matt. 11: 28-30)
May 28.	S.	Our Mission to the World (Matt. 28: 16-20)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Different authorities place the date of the letter to the Romans at A.D. 57, 58, and 59.

*Place.*—The letter to the Romans was written at Corinth.

*Persons.*—Paul, and the brethren at Rome.

*Lesson Links.*—It is not known when the church was planted at Rome. It must have been in existence for a considerable time when Paul wrote to them, for at that time their reputation was widespread. Besides, for a period of time Paul had often purposed to come to them, but had been hindered from doing so. There were



quite a number in that church whom Paul had known in other places. (Rom. 16: 3-16.) These most likely were Jews who had been driven out of Rome by Claudius, and who, since the death of Claudius, had returned to Rome. (Acts 18: 1, 2.) Some of these may have been Christians when they were driven out of Rome, and some baptized by Paul in the various places where they had fled. Paul had not baptized all of them, for some of them became Christians before he did. (16: 7.)

The purpose of the letter can best be gathered from its contents. He shows that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and that it is the only remedy for lost man. He shows that neither Gentile reasoning nor the law of Moses could save men. In turning away from God and depending on their own reason, the Gentiles had plunged deeper and deeper into moral corruption (1: 1-32), and that the Jews with their law were no better (3: 9), but were all under sin. Only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as outlined in the gospel, could men be saved.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Paul Identifies Himself and the Gospel He Preached (Verses 1, 2)

As the custom was in those days, Paul places his name at the beginning of the letter, instead of at the close. First he thinks of himself as a servant (marginal reading: Greek, bondservant) of Jesus Christ. If in times past people congratulated themselves on their being servants to the king or emperor, much more should one feel honored in being a servant of the King of kings and Lord of lords. "Called to be an apostle." If you will notice, you will see that the translators supplied "to be." It is better left off—"a called apostle." The Judaizing teachers claimed that he was not a called apostle, as were the others, but that he had assumed to be an apostle, or, at most, had been appointed by men. So we see why he should emphasize the fact that he was a called apostle, and that he had been "separated unto the gospel of God." He had been called and set apart to preach the gospel. "Which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures." The gospel which Paul preached had been foretold by the prophets. This affirmation was in direct conflict with what the Judaizers claimed. Their contention was that the Gentiles could be saved only as they became subject to the law of Moses, and that the prophets so foretold. Their claim was, like some of present-day imitators, that Gentiles could be saved only through the Jews and in subjection to the Jews. Now Paul was preaching that the Gentiles could and should be saved independent of the Jews' religion, and he here affirms that the prophets had so foretold. He therefore joins issue with both the ancient and the modern Judaizers.

#### Paul Received His Apostleship Through Jesus Christ (Verses 3-7)

This gospel which Paul preached was concerning Jesus Christ—he is the center and the foundation of it. It was not a mere extension of the Jews' religion, as some thought; but it was separate and

distinct from the Jews' religion, and yet foretold by the prophets of the Jews. This Jesus who is the center and foundation of this gospel was of the seed of David as to his flesh; but he was also declared to be the Son of God with power, or in a powerful way, by his resurrection from the dead. If he did not arise from the dead, his claims were false; but his resurrection was attested by competent witnesses. And again Paul answers his critics by affirming the divine origin of his apostleship. He affirms that he received his apostleship through Jesus Christ our Lord. He did not receive this apostleship in order that he might lead Gentiles to become Jews by being circumcised and keeping the law of Moses; but he was made an apostle in order to the obedience of faith among all nations. He was to lead men of all nations to obey the Lord through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without any regard to the law of Moses. "Among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's." From some statements made in this letter it seems that the greater part of the church at Rome were Gentile converts. The people to whom he was writing were beloved of God, the called saints. They were saints that had been called—not simply called to be saints. The "to be" is supplied by the translators. Then Paul prays that the grace and peace of God and of the Lord Jesus may be theirs.

### **Paul Prays That It Be God's Will for Him to Visit Them (Verses 8-12)**

Rome was the capital city of the Roman Empire. A strong church there would come into the notice of people from all parts of the empire. Its fame therefore would spread farther than would that of a church in an out-of-the-way place. That gives us some idea as to why Paul was so anxious to be of service there, for a church in Rome was in position to come into contact with more people than would a church off in some far corner of the empire. Paul served God in the spirit in the gospel of his Son; that is, he was sincere in his service, and he rendered his service according to the gospel of Christ. In his preaching he was in earnest, and he preached only the gospel of Christ. And he calls God to witness the truthfulness of his assertion that he always made mention of them in his prayers, and that he prayed that he might, after so long a time, be prospered by the will of God to come unto them. He desired to come to them that he might impart to them some spiritual gift. Had Paul here used the plural, spiritual gifts, we would have felt more sure that he referred to those miraculous manifestations of the Spirit, as he did in 1 Cor. 12: 1-11. But why "spiritual gift," if he referred to these? At least some in that church could prophesy. (12: 6.) Paul wanted to impart this spiritual gift, whatever it was, to the end that they might be established. So far as we know, spiritual gifts added no moral qualities directly to any one. Such gifts might give them more confidence and courage in that the reception of such gifts would give them assurance that God was with them. And, of course, their increased assurance that God was with them would be a source of comfort to Paul. In imparting such gifts Paul would be a comfort to them, and their increased courage and confidence would be a comfort to him.



### Paul Felt Indebted to All Men (Verses 13-15)

We can understand why Paul was so anxious to preach in Rome, but we do not know what had so often hindered his going. For many years he had had a longing to preach in Rome, but "was hindered these many times." (15: 22, 23.) We have already learned that God was selecting Paul's fields of labor, and God was not yet ready for him to go to Rome. Paul was planning to spend some time in Rome, and then go on into Spain. (15: 24.) He did finally go to Rome as a prisoner, but that was not of his planning. "I am debtor." The sinners of the world had never done such things to Paul as would make him feel indebted to them; but God had redeemed him from sin, and had made him an heir of God. He could not repay God, and that made him feel that he was indebted to pass these same blessings on to others. But Paul was not under any obligation that we are not under. We have been saved as was he; we cannot pay God any more than he could. We are therefore in debt to others to preach the gospel to them to the full extent of our ability. Not only are we responsible up to the extent of the ability we have, but up to the ability we might have, if we tried to make ourselves useful. This principle is embodied in Paul's charge to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 16.) The indifference of Christians to their duty as to saving others, and as to their responsibility in preparing themselves so as to be useful, is astonishing. Paul felt so keenly his obligations that he said, "So, as much as in me is"—to the full extent of my ability—"I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome." Because a person cannot do as much as another, let him not think he is thereby free from responsibility—he can do as much as in him is. The Lord requires that and no more.

### The Gospel Is God's Power to Save (Verses 16, 17)

Paul was ready to preach the gospel in Rome to the extent of his ability, for he was not ashamed of the gospel; and he was not ashamed of the gospel, for it was God's power to save. And then in verse 17 he tells why the gospel is God's power to save. Notice the use of the word *for* in verses 15-17. Each *for* introduces a reason for the former statement. Paul was not ashamed to preach the gospel in Imperial Rome. He was not ashamed to preach it, *for* in doing so he was doing the greatest possible service to his fellow man. There were many things that Paul would have been ashamed to do. Any man should be ashamed to follow any sort of business or profession that is hurtful, or even worthless, to his fellow man. In preaching the gospel Paul was doing his part in supplying humanity's greatest need. When God created man, he used his creative power; but when he saves a man, he uses his saving power, and not the power by which he created man. If a man is saved at all, the Lord will save him. If the Lord saves a man he saves him by his saving power; and that power is the gospel. There is no other power by which men can be saved. Men have drawn on human wisdom for every conceivable scheme to save men from corruption and lawlessness, and every human scheme has failed. It

is time that we made an earnest effort to apply the gospel to the needs of man; it is God's remedy for sin.

Paul's reason for asserting that the gospel is God's power for saving men is given in verse 17. MacKnight gives the following clear translation of the verse: "For the righteousness of God by faith is revealed in it, in order to faith: as it is written, But the just by faith shall live." This does not refer to God's own personal righteousness, but the righteousness that comes from God, the righteousness that God confers on those who believe; that is, God's plan for making men righteous is revealed in the gospel. The gospel is God's revealed plan for making men righteous by faith. As all men are unrighteous, and an unrighteous man cannot go to heaven, there must be some plan powerful enough to make men righteous, or all men will be lost. The gospel is that plan. The voluntary actions of sane men are prompted by a motive, or motives. The gospel has in it motives as high as the glories of heaven and as deep as the terrors of hell, to move men to quit sin. There are directions in it telling men how to quit sin, and there is a remedy in it for the cleansing from sin. When a man's sins are forgiven—when he is cleansed from all guilt of sin, he is then in the sight of God as free from sin as if he had never sinned—he is righteous. He has been made righteous by God's plan of righteousness revealed in the gospel. "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6: 17, 18.)

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Paul preached a gospel that was separate and distinct from Judaism. He himself said that the law was nailed to the cross. We have a new and living way. That is the gospel which Paul said was witnessed by the law and the prophets—a gospel for all regardless of racial or social distinctions, in no wise dependent on national Israel, restored or otherwise.

If we could fully realize Paul's understanding of the utterly lost and helpless condition of men, and his estimate of the power of God to lift them out of that pit of sin, we would more fully understand his continued zeal and sacrifices in preaching the gospel—how he was ready to spend and be spent for the glorious gospel of Christ. He loved men, and he loved the gospel because of its power to save men.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The church at Rome.

Paul's debt and ours.

God's power to save.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What evidence that the church at Rome had been in existence some time when Paul wrote Romans?

How was it possible for Paul to know so many in that church?

What appears to have been the general purpose of the letter to the Romans?

#### Verses 1, 2

How did Paul sign this letter?

Why would he refer to himself as a called apostle?



What did he say about the gospel to which he had been sent to preach? What idea did some Jewish Christians hold?

What similar idea is being propagated today?

#### Verses 3-7

What was the gospel which Paul preached?

This gospel was concerning whom? How was Jesus the son of David, and how declared to be the Son of God? How and why was Paul made an apostle?

#### Verses 8-12

Why would a strong church in Rome be so useful?

How does one serve God in the spirit and in the gospel?

What did Paul desire to impart to them, and why?

#### Verses 13-15

What did Paul say about his desire to preach in Rome?

In what sense was he a debtor to all? What about our debt?

To what extent is a person responsible?

To what extent was Paul ready to discharge his debt?

#### Verses 16, 17

Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel?

What principle should guide a person in selecting his life work?

What power does God use in saving men?

Why is the gospel the power of God to save men?

Give full discussion of verse 17.

Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson X—June 4, 1939

## PAUL PLEADS HIS OWN CASE

Acts 21: 40 to 22: 4; 24: 14-16; 26: 19-23

40 And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

1 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

2 And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith,

3 I am a Jew, born in Tār'sūs of Cī-lī'ci-ā, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gā-mā'li-ēl, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day:

4 And I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets;

15 Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.

16 Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always.

19 Wherefore, O king Ā-grīp'pā, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But declared both to them of Dā-mās'eūs first, and at Jē-ru'sā-lēm, and throughout all the country of Jū-dæ'a, and also to the Gēn'tiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.

21 For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Mō'sēs did say should come.

23 How that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gēn'tiles.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23: 1.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Rom. 8: 31-39.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 29.	M.	Paul's Message to the Jews (Acts 22: 1-10)
May 30.	T.	Paul Before the Council (Acts 23: 6-11)
May 31.	W.	Paul's Plea to Felix (Acts 24: 24-27)
June 1.	T.	Paul's Defense Before Festus (Acts 25: 7-11)
June 2.	F.	Paul's Appeal to Agrippa (Acts 26: 19-23)
June 3.	S.	Paul Exonerated (Acts 26: 27-32)
June 4.	S.	The Waiting Crown (2 Tim. 4: 6-8)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Paul was seized by the Jews in Jerusalem and taken before Felix, A.D. 58 or 59. Two years later he stood before Agrippa.

*Places.*—Jerusalem and Cesarea. Paul was taken from Jerusalem to Cesarea because the official residence of the governor of the province was at Cesarea.

*Persons.*—Paul, the Jews, Governor Felix, and King Agrippa. Felix was the governor when Paul was brought to Cesarea, but was succeeded by Festus while Paul was yet at Cesarea. Agrippa was a grandson of Herod the Great, and had nearly as much territory over which to rule as did Herod the Great. Of course, he ruled under the Emperor of Rome.

*Lesson Links.*—After Paul's three years' stay at Ephesus, he started on a tour of the churches to gather up the contributions the churches had made for the poor saints in Judea. (Acts 20: 1, 2; 1 Cor. 16: 1-5; 2 Cor. 8: 16-23.) On this journey Paul spent three months at Corinth. (Acts 20: 3.) While at Corinth he wrote the letter to the Romans. In that letter he said, "But now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem." (15: 25, 26.) He knew then that the Jews, including the false Judaizing brethren, were determined to kill him; and so he said to the Romans, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judea, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints." (15: 30, 31.) As he was about to sail from Corinth he learned that "a plot was laid against him by the Jews." These Jews evidently learned that he was to sail from Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, and were lying in wait for him along the way. Paul learned of this, and avoided them by going by land up through Macedonia, and then sailing over to Troas. From Troas he sailed for Jerusalem, but stopped at Miletus long enough to call the elders of Ephesus to him and make a speech to them. In this speech he said, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me." (Acts 20: 22, 23.) When Paul reached Jerusalem, he allowed himself to be persuaded into taking a vow and paying for the sacrifices of four others who had also taken a vow. Instead of quieting the Jews, as had been hoped, the incident gave the Jews an opportunity to seize him on a false charge; and they would have beaten him to death had not the Roman soldiers rescued him from the frenzied and bloodthirsty mob.



**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Paul Addresses a Frenzied Mob (Acts 21: 40 to 22: 4)**

We are not told the nature of Paul's vow, but the things said about it indicates that it was the Nazirite vow. (See Num. 6: 1-20.) Paul was to pay all the expenses for himself and four others, and that was not a small matter. It seems that Paul's only motive in doing so was to bring about a better feeling among the Jews toward him and his work of preaching; that is, a better feeling on the part of the Jews that believed. But his compromise failed to gain favor with his enemies. "And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place." There was no truth in their charges, but they stirred up a howling mob, which was about to beat Paul to death; and would have done so had not Paul been rescued by the Roman soldiers. As he was being led up the stairs to the castle, he obtained the consent of the chief captain to speak to that crowd of would-be assassins.

*Paul's Defense.*—By reading his speech the student will see that his defense was more of a defense of what he was preaching than of himself. He first tells who he was. He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but had been educated in Jerusalem under the tutorage of their great Gamaliel. Of course, in that school he learned the law of Moses, and also the tradition of the elders. The Jews really put more stress on the tradition of the elders than they did on the written law. "Being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day." He had said in his letter to the Galatians, "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." (Gal. 1: 14.) Paul was zealous in whatever he did. He was as zealous as a Christian as he had been as a persecutor of the church. His rage against the church was so intense that he did all he could to destroy every vestige of it. "I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." So long as Paul lived, he could not get away from the thought of what he had done to the church. Perhaps the remembrance of his own rage made him more lenient toward those who persecuted him. Few men could have calmly made a speech of the sort Paul made to the very people from the hands of whom he had just escaped being beaten to death. The Sanhedrin knew of his former rage against the church and so did many of the other Jews. It is strange to us that his change made no favorable impression on them. It seems that men of their intelligence would have realized that it required indisputable evidence to change such a man as Paul. Their rage at his change was so great that they would not consider any reasons for his change. Both rage and prejudice are blind and unreasoning. Our emotions do not reason.

**Paul's Defense Before Felix (24: 14-16)**

The mob did not allow Paul to finish his speech, but interrupted him by saying, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is



not fit that he should live." They continued their yelling, threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air. It has been said that nothing else was ever so wild and frenzied as a Jewish mob. After Paul was secure in the castle, "the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul." And the Jewish high court agreed to be a party to their murderous plotting. When this became known to the chief captain, he sent Paul by night under heavy guard to Cesarea, and committed him to the care of Felix the governor. "And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and with an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul." Tertullus would now be called a prosecuting attorney. He flattered the governor, and made false charges against Paul. When Tertullus had finished, the governor gave Paul the privilege of speaking for himself. The verses of this section of our lesson are a part of that speech. Paul denied all charges, and stated emphatically that his accusers could not prove any of their charges. And yet he confessed one thing, "that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers." The Jews, including many of the Jewish Christians, regarded Christianity as a new sect that had sprung up among them, just as the Pharisees and Sadducees were sects of the Jews. But Paul did not share their conception of the religion of Christ; for he knew that Christianity was not a sect of the Jews' religion, but separate and distinct from the national religion of the Jews, yet witnessed by the law and the prophets. But he shared a common hope with the Jews that there would be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. Daniel had foretold such a resurrection. (Dan. 12: 2.) Such a resurrection is plainly set forth in the teaching of Christ and in the writings of his inspired men. In serving God in the Way which the Jews called a sect, Paul was exercising himself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men. He had always done what he thought was his duty toward God and men.

### **Paul's Defense Before Agrippa (Acts 26: 19-23)**

For two years Felix kept Paul in prison, during which time he often communed with him, hoping that Paul would pay money to be released. At the end of two years Felix was succeeded by Festus. Three days after Festus took over the office of governor at Cesarea he went up to Jerusalem. The Jews lost no time in making their charges against Paul. Festus invited those of authority who could do so to go with him to Cesarea and there accuse Paul, which they did. In this hearing Paul exercised his rights as a Roman citizen and appealed his case to Caesar. About this time Agrippa came to Cesarea to visit the newly-appointed governor. When King Agrippa learned about Paul, and that Festus had learned that he had a prisoner on his hands against whom he had no real charges, he desired to hear Paul. The verses of this section of our lesson are a part of the speech Paul made before King Agrippa. Before Agrippa Paul denied all the charges which the Jews had made against him, and told how he himself had once been a bitter persecutor of the church. He related what he had seen on his way to Damascus, and how the Lord had appointed him to be a minister



and a witness, and to be a special apostle to the Gentiles. "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Paul's promptness in beginning immediately to preach that which he had recently so bitterly persecuted should have had great weight with Agrippa, and also with all others. He immediately became as fearless and determined in preaching Christ as he had formerly been in persecuting him. He had caused others to suffer for Christ; now he had become the sufferer. He had preached Christ in Damascus, in Jerusalem, throughout all Judea, and also extensively to the Gentiles, "that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance." Compare this "repent and turn" with Acts 3: 19 and 2: 38. "For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me." The Jews pretended that they had other complaints against Paul; but the only thing that infuriated them against Paul was the fact that he had entirely given up the idea that national Israel was God's special nation, and had gone to preaching that the gospel of Christ was the final and only plan of God for the world's redemption. That made the Jews furious. But God had stood by Paul; and yet in preaching this gospel of salvation independent of the Jews, he was "saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come." They therefore had foretold the coming of this gospel which Paul was preaching, a gospel of salvation for the Gentiles on an equal footing with the Jews. "How that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." The same gospel was to be preached alike to both the people of Israel and to the Gentiles.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

A person may think he is right, and yet be fearfully wrong, as Paul's example clearly shows.

The conscience is not the moral judgment, for Paul lived in all good conscience while his moral judgment was as wrong as it could well be.

The blind rage of the Jews against Christ and his disciples is one of the marvels of the ages. Their murderous hatred of Christ and his disciples shows how cruel religious fanaticism becomes, and how blind religious fanatics are.

The example of the Jews shows clearly that party zeal will make liars and slanderers out of people who think they serve God. These Jewish leaders made charges against both Christ and Paul that they knew to be false, so full of the party spirit were they. "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3: 16.)

Paul preached the religion of Christ as a plan of salvation separate and distinct from the Jews' religion. "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction." (Rom. 3: 21, 22.) Hence, now the salvation of the world in nowise depends on national Israel.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The difference between conscience and moral judgment.  
 Paul's vow and its consequences.  
 Paul's defense before the mob and before Agrippa.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
 Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
 Who was Agrippa?  
 Why did Paul make a tour through the churches after leaving Ephesus?  
 What did he say to the Romans about his journey to Jerusalem?  
 Give account of his journey after he left Corinth.

## Acts 21: 40 to 22: 4

Tell about the vow, and Paul's part in it.  
 Tell about his being seized by the Jews and rescued by the soldiers.  
 Tell about his speech to the mob.  
 Tell about Paul's activities against the church.

## Acts 24: 14-16

What broke up Paul's speech to the mob?  
 How came Paul to be sent to Cesarea by night under guard?

Who was then the governor?  
 Tell about the group who went down to prosecute Paul.  
 What did Paul say in reply, and to what did he confess?  
 In what sense did the Jews think Christianity was a sect?  
 What common hope did Paul share with the Jews?

## Acts 26: 19-23

How long was Paul kept in prison at Cesarea?  
 Who succeeded Felix?  
 How came Paul to speak before King Agrippa?  
 Give what Paul related of his own experiences.  
 What was his attitude toward the heavenly vision?  
 What was the real complaint the Jews had against Paul?  
 What did he say as to what he preached?  
 What had the prophets foretold as to the Gentiles?  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—June 11, 1939

## PAUL SOLVES CHURCH PROBLEMS

1 Cor. 1: 1-3, 10, 11; 4: 14-21; 1 Thess. 5: 12-15

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jē'sūs Christ through the will of God, and Sōs'thē-nēs our brother.

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

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jē'sūs Christ.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jē'sūs 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 Chlō'ē, that there are contentions among you.

14 I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

15 For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jē'sūs I begat you through the gospel.

16 I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Tīm'ō-thē, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

19 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.



20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.  
 21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

12 But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

14 And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all.

15 See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." (Phil. 1: 27.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Eph. 4: 1-16.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

June 5.	M.	Unity (1 Cor. 1: 10-17)
June 6.	T.	Godliness (1 Cor. 4: 14-21)
June 7.	W.	Fidelity (Gal. 1: 1-7)
June 8.	T.	Obedience (Gal. 3: 20-28)
June 9.	F.	Love (1 Thess. 4: 9-12)
June 10.	S.	Hope (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
June 11.	S.	Watchfulness (1 Thess. 5: 4-11)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—The first letter to the Thessalonians was written about A.D. 52 or 53. It was written during Paul's first visit to Corinth. The first letter to the Corinthians was written toward the close of Paul's three years' stay in Ephesus, about A.D. 57.

**Places.**—First Corinthians was written at Ephesus. (1 Cor. 16: 8.) First Thessalonians was written at Corinth. Paul was at Corinth when Silas and Timothy came to him from Macedonia, and Paul wrote the letter just after they arrived. (Compare Acts 18: 5 and 1 Thess. 3: 6.)

**Persons.**—Paul and the brethren at Corinth and at Thessalonica. He had established the churches at both places; this gave him leave to speak to them more plainly, perhaps, than he would have felt at liberty to speak to strangers. They were his children in the gospel. (1 Cor. 4: 15.)

**Lesson Links.**—The church at Thessalonica and the church at Corinth were both established during Paul's first tour into Europe. He preached first at Philippi, and then at Thessalonica. From Thessalonica he went to Berea, thence to Athens, and on to Corinth. He remained at Corinth a year and six months; and while there, he wrote First Thessalonians. The church at Thessalonica was a young church when Paul wrote them; yet it had developed into an active church, as is shown by what Paul said to them: "Ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth." (1: 7, 8.) Paul's own experience at Thessalonica showed him that the church there would have much persecution. He therefore became so anxious about them, lest some of them be tempted to give up, that he sent Timothy from Athens back to encourage them. When Timothy came back to him at Corinth, and

made a favorable report concerning them, Paul was comforted. (1 Thess. 3: 1-10.) After leaving Corinth Paul made a brief visit to Ephesus. From Ephesus he went over to Jerusalem, and then down to Antioch. "And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples." (See Acts 18: 18-23.) Then he came to Ephesus where he remained about three years. It was perhaps toward the close of his stay there when unfavorable reports came to him about conditions at Corinth. The church at Corinth also wrote him a letter of inquiry about some matters. (1 Cor. 7: 1.) The reports and the letter showed him that a really bad state of affairs existed in the church at Corinth. False teachers had gone to Corinth, and were leading the church into many errors and corrupt practices. To destroy the effect of Paul's preaching, these false teachers claimed that he was no apostle. To offset their teaching Paul had to defend his authority as an apostle. In vindicating his claims he also sought to correct the errors into which they had been led.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Paul to the Church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 1-3)

Again we have "called to be an apostle." The "to be" is supplied by the translators, as they show us by putting the words in italics. The idea is correctly expressed by leaving out to be. "Paul, called apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." Paul's enemies, the false brethren who were disturbing the brethren at Corinth, claimed that he was not an apostle of Jesus Christ—that Christ had never called him to that office as he did the other apostles. But Paul asserts that he was a called apostle of Jesus Christ, and that this call came through the will of God. He was not therefore inferior to the other apostles. The letter was addressed to the church of God at Corinth. There is solemnity and dignity about that descriptive title—church of God. And yet that church lacked much of being what it should have been. And he speaks of the members as saints. The word saint is from a word which the Greeks used of things or persons that had been devoted to their gods. Hence, people who are devoted to the service of God are saints; they are sanctified. Primarily the word relates to a change of relationships, rather than to a change of nature. It does not mean that the person has become sinless, or that the carnal nature has been taken out of him. Paul said to these same saints, "Ye are yet carnal." (3: 3.) And the things they were indulging in shows that they were not sinless. Primarily this letter was addressed to the church at Corinth, but it was meant also for "all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place." That includes all churches that have ever existed. Perhaps he speaks of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ here preparatory to the rebuke he was to give them for calling upon themselves the names of certain men. "Their Lord and ours." Since all have the same Lord, there should not be any parties among them. The third verse is a short prayer that God's grace and peace be with them.



## Paul Rebukes Them for Their Divided Condition (Verses 10, 11)

Again Paul brings forward the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Was there not a purpose in his so doing? "Now I beseech you, brethren"—I beg you, I earnestly entreat you—"through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." The conditions at Corinth prompted this exhortation. It requires an effort on the part of all concerned to bring about such oneness of speech, but such speech goes a long way toward keeping down any tendency to divide. Talk, a lot of selfish talk, causes most of the divisions in the churches. It would help greatly if we talked more to the Lord and to one another, and less about one another. By talking people make mountains out of molehills; that is especially true if some one with a selfish interest begins to canvass the members. He stirs up discontent where there had been none. It seems that such talk had caused trouble in the church at Corinth. Some of the household of Chloe had told Paul about the contentions that had arisen among them at Corinth. It is likely that this Chloe was a member of the church at Ephesus, and not at Corinth. If some members from Corinth had brought the report to Paul, it is not likely that he would have called any names. To do so would likely make things unpleasant for them in the church there. If members from Ephesus had been in Corinth, and had been there long enough to become acquainted with the church, and returned to Ephesus with the report, it would not be the cause of any friction between members at Corinth. Paul mentions certain names around which factions were forming. These names were used to keep from calling the names of the local men who were leaders in these factions. "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes." (4: 6.) Evidently these false teachers were developing certain schools of thought after the manner of the Grecian philosophers. When a man, or men, succeeds in gaining a personal following in a church, trouble is near.

## "Be Ye Imitators of Me" (1 Cor. 4: 14-16)

Paul had just referred to the sufferings and persecutions through which the apostles had to pass, and to their behavior under such treatment. He did not do this to shame them—not to make it appear to these brethren that he blamed them for this suffering; but by such example he hoped to admonish them—to stir them up to a keener sense of their duty and to a higher regard for the apostles, and for himself in particular. He had planted the church at Corinth; they knew nothing of Christ till he preached to them. He was the father of that church—he had begotten them through the gospel. They might have many instructors, but the fact remained that he was their father in the gospel. And this verse shows how people are begotten to this new life in Christ. Peter presents the same truth: "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: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which

liveth and abideth." (1 Pet. 1: 22, 23.) Because Paul was their father in the gospel, he could well say to them, "I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me." To them he was an example of what a Christian should be. Every Christian should strive to be an example to young Christians.

### **Paul Tells Them of an Intended Visit (Verses 17-21)**

It seems that when the reports came to him at Ephesus, he could not then well go to them, and so sent Timothy, intending himself to come later. Timothy and Erastus were to go first into Macedonia, but apparently Timothy was then to go on down to Corinth. At the writing of this letter, Paul was not sure as to whether Timothy had yet reached them. (16: 10.) When Timothy reached them, he would teach them more about Paul and the things he taught. Some of these false teachers had become puffed up over the opposition they had created against Paul, and apparently were boasting that he would not come and face their charges that he was not an apostle. But he gives them to understand that he would come, and adds this significant statement: "And I will know, not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power." This is a reminder of what Paul might do to these false teachers. The kingdom is not in word only, but in power also; that is, the king has power, and the king had delegated miraculous power to Paul his representative. Then Paul raises some significant questions. In these questions he informs them that they themselves could settle the matter as to whether he came to them in a spirit of love and gentleness, or with a rod. The rod is an instrument of punishment, and his question signifies that he would inflict punishment on those who were doing so much harm in the church unless amends were made. By inflicting some sort of miraculous punishment on them, he would be giving them a proof of his apostleship. (2 Cor. 13: 1-3.) It will be remembered that Paul did inflict physical punishment on one man that he might save another. (Acts 13: 6-12.) Peter brought the penalty of death on a man and his wife. (Acts 5: 1-11.)

### **Paul Exhorts the Thessalonians to Live Orderly (1 Thess. 5: 12-15)**

Paul and his helpers planted the church at Thessalonica in the face of bitter opposition. He writes to them as a father. This was a young church when Paul wrote this letter, and yet there were some then in that church who labored among them, and who were over them. Such men were teaching and directing them; they were therefore the overseers or elders. Paul exhorts the church to know these men, that is, to approve and support them in their difficult task. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account." (Heb. 13: 17.) The members must esteem them highly for their work's sake, and this implies that the elders must so conduct themselves as to be worthy of esteem. The church is not exhorted to be at peace with the world, but it is imperative that the members be at peace among themselves. That requires



an effort; we must give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit. (Eph. 4: 30.) To keep this unity we must avoid those who cause divisions. (Rom. 16: 17, 18.) "Admonish the disorderly." Evidently some would not amend their ways, for in the next letter, Paul commands them to withdraw from such. (3: 6.) "Encourage the fainthearted." Such were about to give up; they needed encouragement. We are to be longsuffering toward even those who do not treat us just as we think they should. Christians must not be vindictive; they must not retaliate; they must not render evil for evil. If you do evil for evil, you put yourself on a plane with the one who has done you evil. Do good to all men; be peaceable and helpful.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Division in the churches today is one of the major hindrances to the progress of Christianity. Ambitious men, selfish men, scheming men, carnal men—these are creating confusion and division in churches in all sections. The Lord is being murdered again—this time in his own house, and by his professed friends. We plead for unity, and practice division. Some profess to love God and his church, while putting themselves in the class which the Lord hates. (Prov. 6: 16-19.) All professed Christians, including elders and preachers, preach that men must obey God, while refusing to obey what God says in Rom. 16: 17, 18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." Is it not just as bad to disobey this command as to disobey any other command?

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The evils of factions and strife.  
How to maintain unity of the Spirit.  
What to do with dividers of churches.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Give what information you can about the time and place of writing First Corinthians, also First Thessalonians.

Give some information about the establishing of the church at Thessalonica, also at Corinth.

What shows that the church at Thessalonica had developed rapidly?

Trace Paul's movements from Corinth to Ephesus.

Why was it necessary for Paul so often to show that he was an apostle?

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

What did Paul say of himself?

To whom was this letter addressed?

What is the meaning of the word saint?

To whom else was this letter written?

#### Verses 10, 11

What does Paul beseech them to do?

How may we keep down divisions?

Who had informed Paul of conditions in the church at Corinth?

What seems to have been the nature of the divisions at Corinth?

#### 1 Cor. 4: 14-16

Why had Paul referred to the sufferings of the apostles?

Quote verse 15.

In what sense was Paul their father?

What does Peter say about the word of God as seed?  
Quote verse 16.

## Verses 17-21

Whom had Paul sent ahead of him to Corinth?  
What had some of the false teachers been puffed up about?  
What did he tell them he would do?

How could they determine the nature of his visit?  
What did he mean by his coming to them with a rod?

## 1 Thess. 5: 12-15

Comment on verse 12, and also the other verse.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XII—June 18, 1939

## PAUL WRITES PERSONAL LETTERS

2 Tim. 1: 1-6; Phile. 1-7, 21, 22

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jē'sūs through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jē'sūs,

2 To Tīm'ō-thy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jē'sūs our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day

4 Longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lō'is, and thy mother Eū-nī'cē; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.

6 For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jē'sūs, and Tīm'ō-thy our brother, to Phīlēmon our beloved and fellow-worker,

2 And to Ap'phī-ā our sister, and to Ār-chīp'pūs our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jē'sūs Christ.

4 I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers,

5 Hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jē'sūs, and toward all the saints;

6 That the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ.

7 For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

21 Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2: 15.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—1 Tim. 4: 6-16.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

June 12.	M.	A Letter of Instruction (1 Tim. 1: 1-4)
June 13.	T.	A Word of Exhortation (1 Tim. 6: 11-16)
June 14.	W.	A Message of Encouragement (2 Tim. 1: 3-14)
June 15.	F.	Fatherly Counsel (Tit. 1: 1-6)
June 16.	F.	An Epistle of Love (Phile. 1-7, 21, 22)
June 17.	S.	A Warning (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)
June 18.	S.	A Worthy Goal (2 Tim. 2: 11-15)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—The letter to Philemon was written about A.D. 62. Usher puts the date of Second Timothy at A.D. 61; others put it as late as



A.D. 68. The dates differ because some suppose that Paul was released from his first imprisonment and wrote Second Timothy after he was put in prison again. There is a fairly good foundation for this supposition.

*Place.*—Rome; both letters were written from Rome.

*Persons.*—Paul, Timothy, Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus. There is also much in the letter to Philemon concerning Onesimus, Philemon's slave.

*Lesson Links.*—Before leaving Corinth for Jerusalem with the contributions of the churches for the poor in Judea, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans. In that letter he spoke of his long-cherished desire, and his many thwarted plans, to preach the gospel in Rome. Now he planned to make this long-deferred visit after he had fulfilled his mission of mercy for the poor saints in Judea. He did finally reach Rome, but not, as he had hoped, a free man. However, on the journey he was protected by the guards from the plottings of the Jews, and he traveled at the expense of the Roman government. In Rome he enjoyed full liberty to preach the gospel to all with whom he came in contact, and the government had to feed him while he thus preached. Being constantly guarded by soldiers, and perhaps constantly chained to two, he had the opportunity to preach to many soldiers, for his guards would be changed at appropriate intervals. He was allowed to hire a house and to preach to all who came to him with no danger from the plottings of the Jews. Paul saw that his imprisonment was a help to his preaching. "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest." (Phil. 1: 12, 13.) While he was a prisoner, Onesimus, a slave of Paul's friend Philemon, ran away from his master, and came to Rome. For some reason he came to Paul's place of preaching, and became a Christian. This led to Paul's writing to Philemon. It has been argued by many scholars that Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome, and made a wide tour of the churches, and was imprisoned again. There are strong indications that this is true, for there are things mentioned in his letters to Timothy and Titus that cannot be made to fit in with his movements before his first imprisonment. And as further indications that the supposition is true, his letter to Philemon, which was written during his first imprisonment at Rome, shows that he expected soon to be released. (Phile. 22.) In his second letter to Timothy, which is supposed to have been written during his second imprisonment, he was fully convinced that he would soon be put to death. (2 Tim. 4: 6.) When Paul wrote this letter he had already had one hearing before the authorities. "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account." (2 Tim. 4: 16.) He calls this his first hearing in view of the second that was to come. The bitterness displayed by the authorities frightened his fellow workers so much that they were afraid to appear with him in court—no man took his part.



**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Paul's Signature and Salutation (2 Tim. 1: 1, 2)**

As in other letters, so in this, Paul, according to the custom of the times, places his signature at the beginning. He identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. This is another way of saying that he was a called apostle—that he had not merely assumed to be an apostle. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ because it was God's will that he should be. The phrase, "according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus," is not very clear, for we know of no promise that he should be an apostle. We can see, however, how he was made an apostle on account of the promise of life to the Gentiles; that is, he was made an apostle in order to bring the promise of life to them. Some translators have "on account of" instead of "according to." And that fits in with his call to the apostleship, as stated in Rom. 1: 1-5, wherein he states that he was made an apostle unto the obedience of faith among all nations. He was made an apostle in order to lead men to obey the faith, and thus to have the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus. And this purpose of his call is definitely stated in what Jesus said to him on the way to Damascus; that is, that he was sending him to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26: 5-18.) Paul calls Timothy his beloved child. Timothy was his son in the gospel; also Paul had been as a father to Timothy since Timothy had been with him. For either reason it was appropriate for Paul to call him his son, and that he should so warmly call upon him the blessings of God's grace, mercy, and peace.

**Paul Longed to See Timothy (Verses 3, 4)**

Even while Paul was persecuting the church he thought he was carrying out the will of God. For the time being he felt satisfied with what he was doing. His judgment was as wrong as could be, but he had a pure conscience, a good conscience. Conscience is not moral judgment; it is the prod behind the moral judgment. It is that feeling of pain that comes when you know that you have not done what your moral judgment told you that you should do, or the feeling of pleasure when you do what your moral judgment tells you is right. Your judgment guides you; your conscience prods you or soothes you. In its field it is infallible, unless it has been seared as with a hot iron. Paul was thankful for his unceasing prayers for Timothy. "Longing to see thee." In his first imprisonment the Roman Government had nothing special against Paul, and they therefore allowed him to preach the gospel to all who came to him. Apparently he was now in prison for preaching; that being the case, they would not allow him to preach. His brethren, including all his former fellow workers, had forsaken him. To a man who had such fine feelings as did Paul, this would be an almost unbearable condition, for he loved his brethren, and he loved to be active and to preach the gospel. It is no wonder that he longed to see one whom he loved as he loved Timothy. We cannot imagine the fullness of



the joy that a visit from Timothy would bring to the forsaken Paul. And yet all the while he gained comfort from the fact that the Lord was with him.

### **Timothy's Early Training and His Gift (Verses 5, 6)**

Paul had plenty of time for reflection. Naturally Timothy would come into his mind, and he thought of the unfeigned faith of Timothy. He knew Timothy was no pretender—that his faith was genuine. And it would give him comfort to think of what he had done to make Timothy what he was. John expressed it thus: "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John 4.) Timothy's father was a Greek, but his mother was a Jewess. (Acts 16: 1.) He had known the holy scriptures from a babe. (2 Tim. 3: 15.) He had been taught what we now know as the Old Testament, for it is not likely that any of the New Testament had been written when Timothy was a babe. The Old Testament was able to make him wise unto salvation by leading him to believe in Christ. Of course, Timothy's mother Eunice and grandmother Lois had taught him in his childhood. He had been taught the right things. His mother was faithful, and so was his grandmother. Because Timothy was a faithful and reliable preacher of the gospel, Paul desired that he stir up the gift that was in him by the laying on of Paul's hands. It seems evident that this gift was some spiritual gift, though we are not told what that gift was. But it seems that such gifts would fade away from a man if he did not use them. The same is true of our natural abilities. And by the proper exercise of our powers for good we may increase our powers. Even our ability to judge right and wrong grows by exercise—"who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." (Heb. 5: 14.)

### **Paul Writes to Philemon (Phile. 1-7, 21, 22)**

This letter was written during the imprisonment at Rome, which Luke mentions in Acts. Timothy joins Paul in this letter. Both were well acquainted with Philemon and his family; the letter is addressed primarily to Philemon, but Apphia and Archippus are included. These were likely the wife and the son of Philemon. Included also was the church in Philemon's house. As brethren then met wherever they could, it seems that a church met in Philemon's house.

*Philemon's Faithfulness* (Verses 4-7).—Paul included many churches and individuals in his prayers. The letter shows that Paul had a warm feeling for Philemon. Word had come to him of Philemon's continued love and faith toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints. Philemon must have been a man of property, for he was a slave owner, and had also refreshed the hearts of the saints with his benefactions. In such manifestations of love Paul had much joy; and he informs Philemon that he mentioned him in his prayers, "that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ." Paul thus prayed that the people, knowing of the good deeds of this servant of Christ, might be led to have a high regard for Christ and

his church. Jesus had said, "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 16.) Jesus planted his church in the world, and challenged the world to judge it by its fruits. Philemon, as an individual member of that church, was bearing good fruit. At the judgment Jesus will say to him, "I was hungry, and ye fed me; naked, and ye clothed me."

*Paul Pleads for Onesimus* (Verse 21).—Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had run away, and gone to Rome; he had visited Paul, and Paul made a Christian of him. He had decided to return home to his master. It was a delicate matter for Paul to deal with. If Philemon had other slaves, he would be almost compelled, for the sake of discipline, to punish Onesimus. Paul pleads for Onesimus. "I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus." Paul proposed to pay for any loss that Philemon might have sustained by the absence of Onesimus. And verse 21 is a strong hint that Philemon should set this child of God free; for he and Onesimus were now brethren in the family of God. Paul was hoping that this brotherly tie would cause Philemon to set Onesimus free.

*Paul Hopes for Freedom*.—Paul had been a prisoner two years at Caesarea and at least two years at Rome; four years of punishment of a man who had been doing what he could to benefit his fellow man, and had violated no law. That is an example of Roman justice! But now he hopes to be set free at an early date. With that prospect in view, he asked that Philemon prepare him a lodging; "for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you." Paul believed that God would answer prayer. People today are too materialistic to believe much in prayer. They do not see how God can answer prayer without working miracles. And yet they answer one another's request, and even animals and birds answer the cries of their young for food. They work no miracles; it is plain that some people think God is more helpless in the face of the laws he made than we are, or than are the animals and birds! That shows how little is our faith.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

Timothy was Paul's devoted helper. It is not likely that two men ever loved each other more than did Paul and Timothy.

Paul said to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth"; and yet Timothy must have been at least thirty-five years old. It seems that, after a man passed his childhood, he was either a youth or an old man.

No inspired man directly defended the right of one man to own another; yet they did try to upset the world by demanding a complete and sudden revolution in social and political affairs. They depended on the gospel to gradually bring about needed reformations. A Christian would gradually develop a distaste for owning



and driving his fellow man. Paul's tender appeal to Philemon for Onesimus would make Philemon feel the inconsistency of a Christian's owning a brother in Christ.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Paul's preaching and writing while a prisoner.  
The letter to Philemon.  
Slavery in the Old Testament and the New.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What had been Paul's desires and plans regarding Rome?  
In what way was his desire realized?  
How did things work out for the furtherance of the gospel?  
What seems to show that Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome?

#### 2 Tim. 1: 1, 2

What did Paul say about how he came to be an apostle?  
For what purpose was he made an apostle?  
In what sense was Timothy Paul's child?

#### Verses 3, 4

What is conscience?  
How can a man in the wrong have a good conscience?  
Why would Paul long to see Timothy?  
Why would imprisonment be especially disagreeable to Paul?

#### Verses 5, 6

What caused Paul to be so interested in Timothy?  
What is said of Timothy's parents?  
What was so commendable in his mother and grandmother?  
What did Paul say about the gift that was in Timothy?  
Why stir it up?

#### Phile. 1-7, 21, 22

When was the letter to Philemon written?  
Whom did Paul include in the letter?  
What did he say of Philemon's faithfulness?  
What had Philemon done for the saints?  
How can good works help spread the gospel?  
What did Jesus say along this line?  
Who was Onesimus, and how came Paul to be so interested in him?  
What was he pleading for Philemon to do?  
Discuss verse 22.  
Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson XIII—June 25, 1939

## PAUL REVIEWS HIS LIFE

Phil. 1: 12-14, 21-24; 3: 12-14; 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8

12 Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prae-tō-ri-ān guard, and to all the rest;

14 And that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if to live in the flesh,—if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not.

23 But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better:

24 Yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.

12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jē'sūs.

13 Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before.

14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jē'sūs.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."* (2 Tim. 4: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 4: 4-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 19. M.	Paul's Self-Sacrifice (2 Cor. 11: 21-31)
June 20. T.	Humble (2 Cor. 12: 1-10)
June 21. W.	Devoted (Phil. 1: 18-24)
June 22. T.	Ambitious (Phil. 3: 7-16)
June 23. F.	Contented (Phil. 4: 8-13)
June 24. S.	Consecrated (Rom. 12: 1-3)
June 25. S.	Assurance (Rom. 8: 28-39)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The letter to the Philippians was written about A.D. 62. Second Timothy may have been written as early as A.D. 61, or as late as A.D. 68. The date depends on whether there was a second imprisonment at Rome.

*Place.*—Rome.

*Persons.*—Paul, the brethren at Philippi, and Timothy.

*Lesson Links.*—Philippi was the first place at which Paul preached in Europe, and the first converts there were Lydia and her household. (Acts 16: 11-40.) There must have been many converts that are not mentioned by Luke, for Paul went on down to Thessalonica, and the church sent once and again to his necessities. (Phil. 4: 15.) The brethren there must have come as near to being just what Christians should be, as is humanly possible, for Paul found no real fault with them. The growth and development of that church may have been due largely to the work of Luke, for it is almost certain that he remained there after Paul left for other fields of labor. It seems, too, that the Judaizing teachers had not disturbed the church with their false teaching. Such churches as that at Philippi were too scarce then, and have been ever since.



## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

**Paul Sees Good Results from His Imprisonment (Phil. 1: 12-14)**

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee"; or, according to the marginal reading, "the residue of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalm 76: 10.) Pharaoh was allowed to oppose God's plans for Israel far enough to make it manifest to the world that God could triumph over the most determined of mighty kings. The wrath of man drove the Christians out of Jerusalem. Instead of harming the progress of the gospel, that persecution sent disciples all over the land preaching the gospel and planting churches. Of course, it looked like a dark day to the disciples as they fled the city, but it resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. But the wrath of man was not turned loose in violence till the disciples were taught the gospel and thoroughly established in the faith. God's hand was in it. To all who loved Paul and glorified in his great work, his imprisonment would seem to be a calamity, and that the cause of Christ would greatly suffer from his being shut off from going about preaching the gospel. And likely that was the way Paul felt till he saw how things had turned out; then he could say, "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel." The Roman authorities had no complaint at that time against Paul's preaching; they were not holding him in prison because he preached the gospel. When a mob of Jews was about to beat him to death in Jerusalem, the Roman soldiers rescued him, and to save him from death at their hands the centurion sent him under guard to Cesarea to govern Felix. Felix kept him a prisoner two years, hoping that Paul would pay money for his freedom. When Festus became governor, and wanted Paul to go up to Jerusalem to be judged before him there, Paul appealed to Caesar; for he knew the Jews would kill him, if he was taken up there. The case puzzled Festus, for he had on hand a prisoner who had appealed to Caesar; he had to send a prisoner to Caesar with no charges against him. All the officers with whom Paul came into contact were friendly to him. In his own hired house at Rome he had full freedom to preach to all who came to him. Because his guards were often changed, he had an opportunity to preach to many soldiers, and to many citizens, and others, who for any reason came to him—"so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest." As there were no printed periodicals then, and news was spread mostly by word of mouth, and news came slowly from other sections, we can well imagine that any unusual local matter created much talk. Paul was an unusual man, and his imprisonment was unusual. Any one who came into contact with him was bound to recognize that he had powers not possessed by others, and he was a prisoner

against whom no charges had been lodged. The interest stirred up concerning him gave him a hearing that he could not otherwise have obtained. And the mild treatment he was receiving caused others to be more bold in preaching the gospel.

### **"To Live Is Christ, to Die Is Gain" (Verses 21-24)**

Read the intervening verses. While some preached the gospel through good will, there were enemies of Paul who thought their preaching Christ would stir up more opposition, which would center on Paul because he was an apostle. They laid aside for the time being their demands that Gentile Christians be circumcised, and put in their time preaching Christ. It would seem to the Jews that Paul had converted them, and that would stir up more ill-feelings toward Paul. Partisans in religion, as were these Judaizers, will resort to any kind of an imaginable scheme. But Paul rejoiced that they were preaching Christ, free from Judaizing, even if their motive was to injure him. Paul had made up his mind not to be put to shame, but to glorify Christ in his body, whether it be by a life of service to God or by dying for Christ. To live was, with him, to serve Christ—to spread the gospel of Christ and to enlarge his kingdom, and by so doing to bring honor to his name. On the other hand, to die was to escape the many persecutions and hardships he had endured and was enduring, such as he enumerates in 2 Cor. 11: 24-28: "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." To die was to escape these and to be with Christ—to Paul, a glorious prospect. If, on the other hand, to continue yet longer in the flesh brought gain to the cause of Christ—brought fruit from his work, then if God were to grant him the privilege of making his own choice, he would not know whether to choose death that he might be with Christ, or to choose life that he might bear more fruit. "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake." To go was better for him; to remain was better for them.

*Paul No Materialist.*—With Paul, to depart from this life was to be with Christ, and this he desired. If to die was to cease to be—to pass into nothingness till the resurrection, then to die would not hasten his being with Christ. Neither would a man of Paul's fine sensibilities desire to depart into nothingness; he would prefer to



live a life of usefulness so long as he could. In no sense could a sensible, righteous man think that ceasing to be was far better than to live and serve the Lord. Paul was sure that when he departed this life, he would be with the Lord.

### "One Thing I Do" (Phil. 3: 12-14)

The verses printed in this section of our lesson will not mean so much to the student unless he reads the first eleven verses of the chapter. Paul warns the brethren against a possible invasion of the Judaizing teachers, who depended on fleshly descent and fleshly circumcision. Paul had no confidence in the flesh, that is, in the fact that a person belonged to the Jewish race. There was no advantage in being a Jew. He had all the advantages of that relationship, if there had been any advantages in being a Jew. But all the things he counted gain as a Jew, he now counted them as but refuse—worthless matter. He counted all these things as nothing, that he might gain Christ; he had quit trying to be righteous according to the law, but to be righteous by faith in Christ. As the Greeks were said to be perfect when they had made a flawless race and had gained the prize, so Paul was striving for that sort of perfection. He had not yet finished the race, and so could not claim that he was already perfect. To obtain the prize for which he was running was to be perfect. He had not yet obtained that prize; but he was pressing on, as runners do in a race, that he might lay hold of the prize, and thus to fulfill the purpose Christ had in view in laying hold on him. He had done much that Christ has in view in calling him, but the ultimate goal of the Christian had not yet been reached. Hence, Paul said, "But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul had one purpose, and everything he did looked to that end. To run the race that he might gain the prize was the one object of all his endeavors. In the phrase, "forgetting the things which are behind," Paul did not mean that the things that were behind had actually passed out of his memory; for in that case he would not have known what he had given up. He dismissed these things as not worthy of any further consideration; the prize before him was what counted. Paul forgot—dismissed from consideration—the sacrifices he had made, the trials he had suffered, the persecutions he had endured, because they were not worthy to be compared with the prize for which he was now striving. "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.) Compared with the glorious prize for which Paul was pressing on in the race, his sufferings were considered insignificant. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4: 17.)

## Paul Fought the Good Fight—He Kept the Faith (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8)

A Christian is a soldier, and a soldier's business is to fight. There was never a better soldier on any field of battle than Paul. He was moved by a great purpose, and was guided by the truth of the gospel. He waged war on all sin and error, and his weapons were such as God furnished him. "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." (2 Cor. 10: 3-5.) The knowledge of God is the gospel, and Paul fought everything that did not harmonize with that. He made no compromise with error; instead of excusing the teachers of error, he fought them. Now he changes the figure to the race course—"I have finished the course." His race was run—he was soon to suffer death. He had been true to the gospel—"I have kept the faith." He was soon to depart and be with Christ. He had done all he would be allowed to do; the next thing before him was the prize—"henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." But a crown of righteousness awaits all who have loved his appearing. And these crowns will be awarded by the Lord, the righteous judge, and they will be imperishable crowns of glory.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

We are shortsighted. Things that seem at the time to be calamities often turn out to be blessings.

"To live is Christ." Christ lives in the Christian. We may not understand how it is done nor comprehend all that it means, but it is true. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2: 20.)

"To die is gain." How hard it is for us to realize that this is true! We are inclined to feel that death is a leap into the dark, and it is hard for us to feel that it is better to depart and be with Christ. Perhaps that feeling is due partly to the fear that we will not be with Christ after we depart.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The planting of the church at Philippi.

What Paul gave up to follow Christ.

The Grecian races.



## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give account of the planting of the church at Philippi.  
What shows their rapid growth and development?

## Phil. 1: 12-14

Give examples of how God overrules the plans of the wicked to promote his own purposes.  
How did Paul's imprisonment work to the furtherance of the gospel?  
What was strange about Paul's imprisonment?  
What opportunities did Paul have to preach while a prisoner in Rome?

## Verses 21, 22

What did Paul say as to how some preached Christ?  
How did he say Christ would be glorified in his body?  
Why did he think it would be better for him to die?  
Name some of the things Paul had suffered?  
In what way was Paul in a strait betwixt two things?

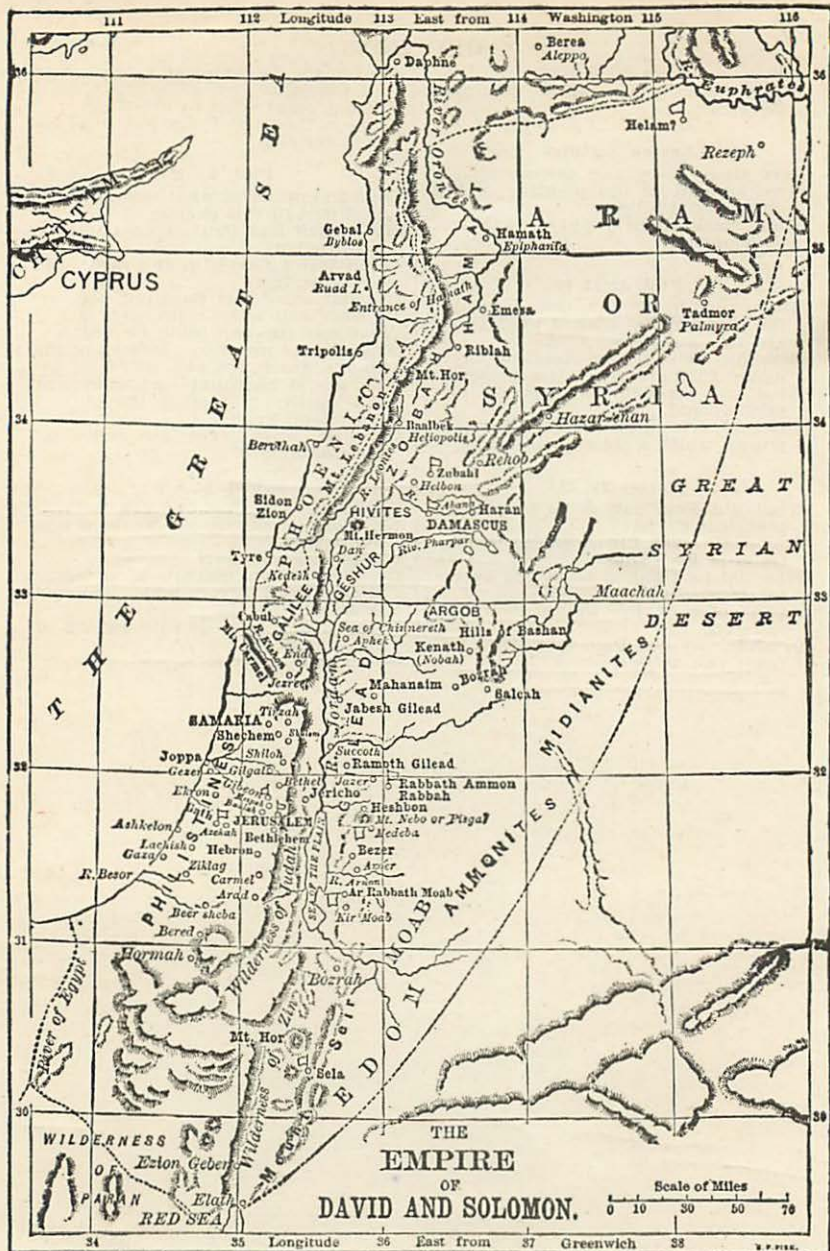
To remain meant what to the cause of Christ?  
To die meant what to him?  
What in this shows that Paul was not a materialist?

## Phil. 3: 12-14

Give an outline of what is said in the first part of this chapter.  
How much had Paul given up to be a Christian?  
When was a Greek in the races said to be perfect?  
In what sense was Paul not perfect?  
To what end was he pressing on?  
What was the one thing he did?  
What did he mean by "forgetting the things which are behind"?  
Why would he count such things as not worthy of further thought?  
Quote Rom. 8: 18.  
In what sense were his sufferings light afflictions?

## 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8

Why is a Christian called a soldier?  
What did he say of our weapons and our war?  
What must we fight?  
Give your own opinion of compromising with error, and endorsing those who do.  
Discuss the verses of this section of our lesson.  
Discuss the reflections.





## THIRD QUARTER

LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S LEADERS—SOLOMON TO  
ISAIAH

AIM: To discover how we may be more effective Christians through a consideration of certain characteristics of some of Israel's kings and prophets and of the situations in which they succeeded or failed in God's sight.

Lesson 1—July 2, 1939

## SOLOMON: A RULER WHO BEGAN WELL

1 Kings 3: 5-15

5 In ǧib'ē-ōn Jē-hō'vāh appeared to Sōl'ō-mōn in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Sōl'ō-mōn said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O Jē-hō'vāh my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Sōl'ō-mōn had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Sōl'ō-mōn awoke; and, behold, it was a dream; and he came to Jē-ru-sā-lēm, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jē-hō'vāh, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart . . . that I may discern between good and evil." (1 Kings 3: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 3: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 26.	M.	Counsel of a Good Father (1 Kings 2: 1-4)
June 27.	T.	Prayer for an Understanding Heart (1 Kings 3: 5-9)
June 28.	W.	Getting More Than Asked (1 Kings 3: 10-15)
June 29.	T.	Exceeding in Riches and Wisdom (2 Chron. 9: 22-28)
June 30.	F.	Finding Wisdom (Prov. 3: 13-18)
July 1.	S.	Vanity of Worldliness (Eccles. 1: 12-18)
July 2.	S.	"The Wisdom That Is from Above" (James 3: 13-18)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Calmet, 1009 B.C.; according to Usher, 1013 B.C.; according to Hales, 1028 B.C.

*Places.*—Gihon and Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jehovah and Solomon. Solomon was David's son by Bathsheba. Before Solomon was born God said to David, concerning Solomon, "He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever." (1 Chron. 22: 10.)

*Lesson Links.*—When David was nearing death, then too old and feeble to see after the affairs of his kingdom, Adonijah, another son of David, "exalted himself, saying, I will be king." He gathered about him some men of power and importance, and started in to be king. The prophet Nathan knew that it was not according to the will of God, nor according to David's former plans, so he induced Bathsheba to go to David, and remind him that he himself had told her that Solomon her son was to be king. She told him that, without his knowledge, Adonijah was then reigning. Before she finished talking to David, Nathan came in and told David what Adonijah was doing, and asked David if he had put Adonijah forward as king. David was aroused to the seriousness of the situation and ordered that Solomon be anointed king. Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, David's chief men of war, and a host of people were to go to Gihon, anoint Solomon king, and follow him back into Jerusalem. They returned to Jerusalem with a great noise, and Solomon sat upon the throne. The demonstration so demoralized Adonijah's supporters that they fled, and his pretended reign came to an end. An account of these things is recorded in the first chapter of First Kings. "And Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father." (1 Kings 2: 12.) But David's throne was Jehovah's throne. "Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father." (1 Chron. 29: 23.) It was also called Solomon's throne. (1 Kings 1: 37, 47; 2: 19.) At different times both the throne and the kingdom were said to belong to the one who occupied the throne. Jehovah had once been their only king, but they had rejected him as their king, and called for one of their own number to be their king. (1 Sam. 8: 4-9; 12: 12, 13.) They later confessed their sin, but held on to their king. Hence, God's people set up a kingdom of their own, and set a man on Jehovah's throne. It is true that Jehovah allowed them to have their king, but the plan was not his, nor was the kingdom they set up his kingdom. He allowed them to have a kingdom very much as he allowed them through Moses to give easy divorcement. (Matt. 19: 7, 8.) "I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath." (Hos. 13: 11.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Jehovah Appears to Solomon in a Dream" (Verse 5)

It was the custom of the heathen people to have places for worship on hills or mountains—"high places." Because of this tendency and because the children of Israel would find that to be the common practice in Canaan, Jehovah, while they were still in their wilderness journeys, commanded them not to worship at these high places



when they settled in Canaan, but that they should worship at the place where he chose to record his name. (Deut. 12: 8-13.) Yet they did the very thing Jehovah commanded them not to do; and it seems that Hezekiah was the first king to make any serious effort to stop the unlawful practice. Of Solomon it is read, "And Solomon loved Jehovah, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar." (Verses 3, 4.) In the night Jehovah appeared to him in a dream; "and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." That implied that God would grant him whatever he asked. It was much like handing a man a signed check, and telling him to fill it out for whatever he wanted. Jehovah was testing Solomon—inasmuch as you are king, what do you most want? That is a test question, for a person's character is revealed by what he under normal conditions desires most. This question, of course, did not have reference to the necessities of life.

### **Solomon Praises Jehovah and Confesses His Need of Understanding (Verses 6, 7)**

Verse 6 expresses a fine sentiment in fine language. David's early life had been full of trials and dangers, but God had preserved him through it all, and that without any physical injury to David. David had loved and revered Jehovah; and even when he grievously sinned, he repented in great humility. He blamed no one for his sins; he did not try to justify himself. He freely confessed his sins, and prayed Jehovah for forgiveness. He was a man after God's own heart; and God's lovingkindness was freely extended to him. And Solomon praised Jehovah for it; but he recognized that Jehovah showed David lovingkindness, only as David walked before Jehovah "in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart." And as God is no respecter of persons, his lovingkindness will be shown to all who walk before him as they should. And Solomon was modest enough to say that he had been exalted to the throne of Israel because of God's lovingkindness to David, and not for any worth of his own. "And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in." He was likely comparing his own ability and inexperience with that of his great father David. He felt that he was as unskilled and helpless as was a child in its efforts to learn to walk. He did not know how to govern a great kingdom. It was a becoming sentiment well expressed.

### **Solomon's Request (Verses 8, 9)**

On Solomon was placed the responsibility of ruling a great nation—the nation whom God had chosen. The fact that he was to rule God's nation perhaps added to his feeling of littleness. A king who cared not for God, but was ruling a group of people who had banded themselves together solely for their own political reasons, would not feel as Solomon did in undertaking to rule a people whom God had chosen and cared for all the years of their existence. "Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I

may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?" As to his personal duties as a servant of God, he could learn that in the law which God had given the nation; but he knew that matters of state would be continually coming up—matters that he would have to decide. He would need to know what was good for the people so that he might put it into practice, and what would be hurtful so that he might avoid it. He therefore prayed for an understanding heart—a heart that would enable him to look into matters and see what would be the best course to pursue.

### **Jehovah Pleased with Solomon's Request (Verses 10, 11)**

Solomon's speech pleased Jehovah—pleased him that Solomon had asked for ability that he might know how to govern the nation of Israel. Any normal person wants a long life, but Solomon had not asked for that. Neither had he asked for riches; and that is about what most people would ask for, for they will shorten their lives in a mad scramble for riches. It is surprising how many people there are who put so much stress on the idea of being rich. With some professed Christians the possession of wealth is their main ambition; yet Paul says, "They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.) Neither did Solomon ask that his enemies be destroyed—a thing that would have been very natural in those days of wars and bloodshed. He asked for the thing that pleased Jehovah—"understanding to discern justice."

### **Solomon's Request Granted and More (Verses 12-15)**

Because there was nothing selfish in Solomon's request, and his request had in view the good of the nation, Jehovah said, "I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." It was a promise that he should be the wisest of rulers, but was not that promise conditional? And he would give Solomon honor and riches, "so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days." The history of Solomon shows how abundantly that promise was fulfilled. And if Solomon was obedient he would have a long life.

*Solomon's Greatness and Wisdom.*—"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men . . . And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom." (1 Kings 4: 29-34.) He became so wealthy that he made silver and gold to be in Jerusalem as stones. (2 Chron. 1: 15.) He extended the kingdom farther than it had ever been before. (1 Kings 4: 20-24.) Solomon gathered about him so many helpers and servants that it was an enormous task to feed them. (1 Kings 4: 26-28.) He gave much



attention to public works, and the reservoirs of his great water system remain to this day. He began, and continued for a time, in great glory; but the glory of his kingdom was built up at the expense of the people, and they later cried for relief. (1 Kings 12: 4.) He disobeyed God in marrying numbers of foreign women, who led him into all sorts of idolatry. (Kings 11: 1-8.) But our present lesson leaves him in Jerusalem after he had returned from Gibeon where he had his dream.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Wisdom is not knowledge. Our knowledge is our accumulation of facts and truths; wisdom is foresight and skill in the use of knowledge, or whatever means we have, to accomplish our purposes. The sinner is a fool because he will not use his ability and the means at hand to save himself.

No king ever ascended a throne under more favorable conditions than did Solomon. The people were contented and happy. The nation was at peace. God granted him superior wisdom. And yet he failed miserably, and brought the nation to the verge of ruin. Apparently the great fame he gained early turned his head; his heathen wives, which he married in folly and disobedience, turned his heart from Jehovah to the basest sort of idolatry; and in his great ambition to make a glorious kingdom he lost sight of the rights and the welfare of the people, and burdened them to the point of revolt.

It was an unselfish thing for Solomon to pray for wisdom that he might know how to govern the people in justice. Later he became selfish, and used his kingly powers to gratify his selfish ambitions and fleshly lusts. Like many others, he thought gratifying the flesh brought happiness. He tried every avenue of indulgence. He even had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy." (Eccles. 2: 10.) In the long run selfishness does not bring happiness. Selfishness on the part of one or both has brought unhappiness and misery to many a husband and wife. The most selfish child in the family is the least happy. Selfishness finally sours a person, and makes him dissatisfied with everything and everybody. Solomon expressed what selfishness does to people when he said, "So I hated life." (Eccles. 2: 17.) His works in the end gave him no satisfaction. "And I hated all my labor wherein I labored under the sun." And thus Solomon reached the end of his selfish indulgences a soured old man.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Solomon's prayer.

The great works of Solomon.

The sins of Solomon.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Who was Solomon?

What had Jehovah said concerning Solomon?

Who tried to be king instead of Solomon?

What measures were taken to prevent this?

Did Solomon sit on Jehovah's throne,  
or was it only David's?

## Verse 5

What did Jehovah prohibit as to  
places of worship?  
Why were they likely to do this, and  
what did they do?  
Where did Solomon go to worship?  
What did Jehovah tell him in a  
dream?

## Verses 6, 7

In what way and why had God  
showed loving-kindness to David?  
Was he a respecter of persons?  
What did Solomon say about himself?

## Verses 8, 9

Why would Solomon feel his inability  
any more than any other king?  
For what did he ask, and why did he  
ask it?

## Verses 10, 11

What did Jehovah say about Solo-  
mon's request?  
What would people be most likely to  
ask for?  
What is the danger of striving for  
riches?

## Verses 12-15

What did Jehovah say he would give  
to Solomon?  
What did Jehovah say of Solomon's  
future greatness?  
Discuss the greatness of Solomon?  
What proved to be his ruin?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—July 9, 1939

## JEROBOAM: A MAN WITH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

1 Kings 11: 26-31, 37-40

26 And Jēr-ō-bō'ām the son of Nē'bāt, an Ē'phrā-īm-ite of Zēr'ē-dāh, a servant of Sōl'ō-mōn, whose mother's name was Zē-ru'āh, a widow, he also lifted up his hand against the king.

27 And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king: Sōl'ō-mōn built Mīl'lō, and repaired the breach of the city of David his father.

28 And the man Jēr-ō-bō'ām was a mighty man of valor; and Sōl'ō-mōn saw the young man that he was industrious, and he gave him charge over all the labor of the house of Joseph.

29 And it came to pass at that time, when Jēr-ō-bō'ām went out of Jē-ru'-sā-lēm, that the prophet Ā-hī'jāh the Shī'lō-nite found him in the way; now Ā-hī'jāh had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field.

30 And Ā-hī'jāh laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces.

31 And he said to Jēr-ō-bō'ām, Take thee ten pieces; for thus saith Jē-hō-vāh, the God of Is'rā-ēl, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Sōl'ō-mōn, and will give ten tribes to thee.

37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Is'rā-ēl.

38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and will build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Is'rā-ēl unto thee.

39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

40 Sōl'ō-mōn sought therefore to kill Jēr-ō-bō'ām; but Jēr-ō-bō'ām arose, and fled into Ē'gypt, unto Shī'shāk king of Ē'gypt, and was in Ē'gypt until the death of Sōl'ō-mōn.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths."* (Prov. 3: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 4: 1-9.



## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 3. M.	Opportunity Withdrawn (1 Kings 11: 9-13)
July 4. T.	Opportunity Transferred (1 Kings 11: 26-31)
July 5. W.	Opportunity Limited (1 Kings 11: 37-40)
July 6. T.	Opportunity Neglected (Matt. 25: 24-30)
July 7. F.	Opportunity Despised (Luke 14: 16-21)
July 8. S.	Opportunity Appreciated (Luke 19: 1-10)
July 9. S.	"Redeeming the Time" (Eph. 5: 15-21)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—No exact figures can be given as to the time of this lesson. It is not known how late it was in the reign of Solomon when Jeroboam fled into Egypt, but it was evidently toward the close of his reign. It must therefore have been between 993 B.C. and 974 B.C.

*Places.*—Jerusalem, near Jerusalem, and some place in Egypt.

*Persons.*—Solomon, Jeroboam, and the prophet Ahijah. The prophet was of Shiloh, a city of Ephraim. In our present lesson he foretells the elevation of Jeroboam to be king over ten tribes of the divided kingdom. In his old age he prophesied of the utter downfall of the family of Jeroboam, because of Jeroboam's sins. Because Jeroboam had done evil above all that had been before him, Jehovah said through Ahijah, "I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man-child, him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel and will utterly sweep away the house of Jeroboam, as a man sweepeth away dung, till it be all gone." (See 1 Kings 14: 1-16.)

*Lesson Links.*—Solomon's kingdom was about to fall to pieces. His reign began under the most favorable conditions, and with great promise. It increased with power and fame for a number of years; but he gradually fell into practices, both social and governmental, that practically wrecked both himself and the kingdom. His traders brought so many horses out of Egypt that he bought them by wholesale, "each drove at a price." He gathered so much gold that "it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 10: 21); "and the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones" (1 Kings 10: 27); "and he had seven hundred wives" (1 Kings 11: 3). In all these things he was going contrary to God's will, and knew that he was doing so. While the children of Israel were yet in their wilderness journeyings, Jehovah, knowing that they would some day demand a king, said, "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses; forasmuch as Jehovah hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold." (Deut. 17: 16, 17.) God prohibited their marrying heathens, lest they be led to worship their idols; and yet Solomon married many foreign wives, "of the nations concerning which Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love." (Verses 1, 2.) But it was not these idolatries and marriages that made the people restless, for they practiced idolatry themselves; but the cost of the government—

their taxes and the services they were called on to do—made their lives miserable. To get an idea of the cost read 1 Kings 4: 7, 22, 26, 27.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jeroboam—His Ability and Popularity (Verses 26-28)

Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, a strong and somewhat arrogant tribe. As Jeroboam is spoken of, or identified, as the son of Nebat, this Nebat must have been a man of prominence in his tribe. However, at the time Jeroboam came into prominence his father was dead, for it is said that his mother was Zeruah, a widow. Jeroboam is further referred to as a servant of Solomon. "He also lifted up his hand against the king." Among the numerous public works that Solomon was having done, he "built Millo, and repaired the breach of the city of David his father." Millo was evidently a part of the system of fortifications for the city. The city of David, sometimes called Zion, was that part of Jerusalem which the Jebusites continued to hold till the days of David. Because David conquered that part of the city it was called the city of David. In repairing this part of the city defenses, Solomon put Jeroboam in charge of the work, because he was an able and industrious young man. It must have been during this time that he lifted up his hand against Solomon. Being a man of ability and closely associated with all the workers, he could easily win them over to his way of thinking; but it is not likely that he did any more at this time than to do the work as he pleased instead of following the plans of Solomon. At least the language shows that there was some sort of a rupture at this time between him and Solomon. If he persisted in following his own plans instead of Solomon's, that would cause Solomon to determine to kill him. It will be noticed that Solomon gave him charge over all the labor of the house of Joseph—that would be the workers from Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim had always felt that too much authority was lodged in the tribe of Judah. It was therefore an easy matter for Jeroboam, being of the tribe of Ephraim himself, to stir up the Ephraimites against Solomon and in his own favor.

### Jeroboam to Reign Over Ten Tribes (Verses 29-31)

At this time Jeroboam went out of the city. It must have been that he was quitting his job, and fleeing from Solomon, for there is no direct evidence that Solomon knew what Ahijah said to Jeroboam. (Verse 40.) On the way Ahijah met Jeroboam. It was no accident that Ahijah met him. The Lord was directing Ahijah, though there is not the least indication that Jeroboam knew what was before him. "Now Ahijah had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field." The people in that country and in those times were much given to teaching by object lessons. When Jehovah would teach how the divided kingdom would again be united, he had Ezekiel to take two sticks, one for each part of the divided kingdom, and join them together. (Ezk. 37: 15-23.) The student can find other instances in which teaching was done by object lessons. Ahijah adopted that method; he took his new garment, and tore it into a dozen pieces, and he gave Jeroboam



ten of the pieces, and said to him, "For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." Hence, the garment represented the whole, undivided kingdom; when the garment was torn the twelve pieces represented the two tribes; and the ten pieces given to Jeroboam represented the ten tribes over which he was to rule as king. Jeroboam's kingdom was called the kingdom of Israel, but sometimes referred to as Ephraim, because Ephraim was the dominant tribe in that kingdom. The two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were called the kingdom of Judah, for Judah was the dominant tribe. In fact, the tribe of Benjamin was so small that the two tribes are here called one tribe.

### God's Promise to Jeroboam Conditional (Verses 37, 38)

Solomon had proved himself unworthy, but for David's sake the kingdom would not be divided while Solomon lived. By following his wives into their idolatry Solomon had led the people of Israel into the worship of idols: "because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon; and they have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and mine ordinances, as did David his father." But Jehovah would retain a small kingdom for Solomon's son, with Jerusalem as the capital city, that the royal line of David might continue. But Jeroboam was to have the ten tribes over which to rule. But if his family was to be established as the royal family of the kingdom of the ten tribes, he must obey the voice of Jehovah. That is very emphatically stated in verse 38. Notice how many ways the Lord expresses the fact that Jeroboam must be obedient: "And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken to all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and will build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee."

*Jeroboam Failed.*—But Jeroboam paid little, if any, attention to what Jehovah said through his prophet. He did not believe Jehovah—did not believe that obedience would bring security to him. As soon as he was established in his kingdom, he said in his heart, "Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." That Jehovah had promised security to him and his family on the condition of faithful obedience did not mean much to Jeroboam. He thought the only safe course was to disobey God, and follow his own wisdom. So he made two calves, after the manner of worship which he had learned during his sojourn in Egypt. He did not tell Israel why he was doing it, but put an excuse before them that would be more effective. "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." He set up one calf in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And he changed other of



Jehovah's arrangements. (1 Kings 12: 25-33.) "And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth." (13: 34.) And it later became the painful duty of the aged prophet Ahijah to tell Jeroboam's wife in plain words that her sick son would die, and that the whole house of Jeroboam would be swept away, "as a man sweepeth away dung, till it all be gone." (14: 1-20.) Jeroboam and his family had become worthless.

### Jeroboam Fled to Egypt (Verses 39, 40)

The Lord would afflict the seed of David, but not forever. This does not mean that the seed of David would suffer any bodily injuries or sicknesses, for that is not what Ahijah had been talking about. The affliction was to come as he had described—ten tribes was to be torn from their kingdom and given to another. Their kingdom would be greatly restricted. But even this restriction would not continue forever. That restriction ended when Jesus was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords; he is now the exalted Messiah of the royal family of David. (Acts 2: 29-33; Rom. 1: 1-4.) And his reign is not restricted to any, or all, of the tribes of Israel. We are not told as to how Solomon learned of Jeroboam's plans to have the ten tribes of Israel. It is not likely that either Jeroboam or Ahijah told him of what Ahijah had said to Jeroboam. It must be that Jeroboam was laying plans while he had charge of the Ephraimite laborers in the repair work in Jerusalem. There was enough discontent for an ambitious fellow like Jeroboam to get it into his head that he could lead a revolt, and gain the whole kingdom. If Solomon got an intimation that Jeroboam had such plans in mind, he would certainly seek to kill him. Solomon could not be ignorant of the growing discontent among the people, and would therefore be watching through spies for any indication of an organized revolt. Knowing that Solomon was seeking him that he might put him to death, Jeroboam fled into Egypt, "unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Of Jehovah Daniel says, "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." (2: 21.) To Nebuchadnezzar Jehovah said, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee: and thou shalt be driven from men . . . until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." (Dan. 4: 31, 32. See also verses 17 and 25.) We may not see his hand in the matter, for his ways are past tracing out.

So long as the nation of Israel served Jehovah in sincerity, no outside power could destroy them nor do them any serious harm. Peace and plenty was their lot so long as they were obedient. "And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand." (Lev. 26: 3-8.) But because of their disobedience that nation was frequently overrun by their enemies, and finally carried into captivity, and later destroyed as to any sort of government. Their disasters came because of their own corruptions. And these principles hold good as to the



church. The thing that ruins churches is the corruption or strife within. The enemy on the outside can do little harm, but the church may destroy itself, and many a church has done so.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Jehovah's promises to Jeroboam.  
How men show a lack of faith in God.  
Jeroboam's sins.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Who was Ahijah?  
In his old age what did Ahijah prophesy concerning Jeroboam?  
Name some of the forbidden things which Solomon did.  
What made the people restless and discontented?

### Verses 26-28

Who was Jeroboam, and what task had Solomon assigned him?  
Who were the men under him?  
What part of Jerusalem was called the city of David, and why?  
Why did Jeroboam's position give him a chance to work up opposition to Solomon?

### Verses 29-1

Where did Jeroboam meet Ahijah?  
Tell what took place at this meeting.

### Verses 37, 38

Why was not the kingdom divided while Solomon lived?  
What gods had Solomon led the people to worship?  
Why was not the royal family of Solomon set aside entirely?  
On what condition might Jeroboam's family be a permanent royal family?  
Give the things wherein Jeroboam failed.  
What became of the family of Jeroboam?

### Verses 39, 40

In what way would Jehovah afflict the seed of David?  
When did this afflicting of the seed come to an end?  
Tell of Jeroboam's flight into Egypt.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson III—July 16, 1939

## REHOBAM: A MAN WHO MADE A FOOLISH CHOICE

1 Kings 12: 1-5, 12-17, 20

1 And Rē-hō-bō'ām went to Shē'chēm: for all Is'rā-ēl were come to Shē'chēm to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jēr-ō-bō'ām the son of Nē'bāt heard of it (for he was yet in E'gypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Sōl'ō-mōn, and Jēr-ō-bō'ām dwelt in E'gypt,

3 And they sent and called him), that Jēr-ō-bō'ām and all the assembly of Is'rā-ēl came, and spake unto Rē-hō-bō'ām, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

12 So Jēr-ō-bō'ām and all the people came to Rē-hō-bō'ām the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day.\*

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him,

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jē-hō'vāh, that he might establish his word, which Jē-hō'vāh spake by A-hī'jah the Shī'lō-nīte to Jēr-ō-bō'ām the son of Nē'bāt.

16 And when all Is'ra-él saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jēs'sē: to your tents, O Is'ra-él: now see to thine own house, David. So Is'ra-él departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Is'ra-él that dwelt in the cities of Jū'dāh, Rē-hō-bō'am reigned over them.

20 And it came to pass, when all Is'ra-él heard that Jēr-ō-bō'am was returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Is'ra-él: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Jū'dāh only.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"A man's pride shall bring him low."* (Prov. 29: 23.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 2: 1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 10. M.	Delaying to Do Right (1 Kings 12: 1-5)
July 11. T.	Listening to Bad Counsel (1 Kings 12: 6-11)
July 12. W.	Making a Foolish Choice (1 Kings 12: 12-15)
July 13. T.	Disaster from Wrong Decision (1 Kings 12: 16-20)
July 14. F.	A Good Choice (Ruth 1: 15-18)
July 15. S.	A Bad Choice (Luke 18: 18-23)
July 16. S.	"Wisdom Is the Principal Thing" (Prov. 4: 5-9)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Usher, 975 B.C.; according to Hales, 990 B.C.

*Place.*—Shechem, a city of Ephraim, an important city in the history of the children of Israel. It was situated in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, and was about thirty-four miles north of Jerusalem. It was assigned to the Levites, and was one of the appointed cities of refuge. (Josh. 20: 7; 20: 21.) After the kingdom was divided Jeroboam for a while made Shechem his capital city. (1 Kings 12: 25.)

*Persons.*—Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and the people of Israel.

*Lesson Links.*—There had been three kings over Israel before the events of this lesson—Saul, David, and Solomon. The people had demanded a king; and in doing so they had rejected Jehovah as their king. But he told Samuel to anoint them a king, but to tell them what burdens he would bring upon them. "And Samuel told all the words of Jehovah unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you;



and Jehovah will not answer you in the day." (1 Sam. 8: 10-18.) But the people said, "Nay; but we will have a king over us." And now they were reaping what Jehovah said would come. All the things the king required of them was in addition to what the law of Moses demanded. By the time the kingdom was well under way, they had to give not less than one-third of their income, besides the personal service they had to render the king. It has been said that their religion and their government required half of their income. And Solomon's government was unusually burdensome. It seems that governments usually grow more centralized and expensive as they grow older, and it seems that Solomon had filled the measure of what Jehovah said their king would be and do. People will usually stand quite a lot of burdens heaped on them by their governments, but there is a breaking point.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Rehoboam Goes to Shechem to Be Made King (Verses 1-3a)

It seems a little strange that Rehoboam should go to Shechem, thirty-four miles away from Jerusalem, to be anointed king. There must have been something that he hoped to accomplish by being anointed at Shechem instead of at Jerusalem. What happened shows that there was great unrest among the people. Rehoboam could not have been ignorant of this state of affairs. It is likely that the greatest unrest was among the Ephraimites. Jeroboam had been over them in the work at Jerusalem, and in the present crisis they had sent to Egypt for him. With what he knew of the future, it is certain that he had done nothing to quiet the unrest; and he would be their leader in whatever demands they made or in whatever they did. From all the circumstances it seems that Rehoboam thought his being anointed king in their midst would help to bring about better feelings. A little flattery goes a long way with some people. He meant it for a stroke of good politics. All Israel was there; Jeroboam was there, looking out for any opportunity to advance his own plans and interests. Jehovah had not told Jeroboam the exact time when the kingdom would be divided. He would therefore let no opportunity pass to bring matters to an issue. The feelings of the people were such that not much of an excuse would be needed to start things. As matters turned out they had the very best of excuses. In going to Shechem Rehoboam had done the very thing that made it easiest for the people to revolt, for the revolting people were on their own grounds. Whatever servants Rehoboam had brought along could do nothing to put down a revolt. It seems that the opportunity to revolt was made to order.

#### The People Make Their Demands (Verses 3b-5)

Some one had to do the talking for the people in making known their demands, and that would be their leader Jeroboam. They had a real grievance: "Thy father made our yoke grievous." People have to give their service or pay their money for all public improvements, and other extravagances of the government. Solomon had made many public improvements, and he was about as extravagant as a powerful king could well be. The people were

not in a mind to stand any more. And he had required service of the people and had collected taxes. "Make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." That was not a petition, or request, but a demand; and it was unmistakably implied that if Rehoboam did not comply with their reasonable demand, they would not further serve him. These people did not feel helpless—they did not come in a frame of mind to beg for favors; they felt that they were in a position to demand that their king yield to their request. They had made up their minds not to bear such burdens any longer; if Rehoboam would not give them relief, they would relieve themselves by starting up a kingdom of their own. They could not object to the immediate reply Rehoboam made: "Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed." They were willing to give him time to think matters over and to formulate his plans. Likely they had their minds already made up, and would not have accepted any proposition he might make.

### Rehoboam Answers the People (Verses 12-15)

In studying this lesson the student should read the parallel passage—2 Chron. 10: 1-19. By comparing Rehoboam's statement as recorded in both statements with the statement that they came again on the third day, as the king bade them, you will find that "three days," "after three days," and "the third day" mean the same in the Bible. After three days meant on the third day, that is, after three days had come. This helps in figuring out the meaning of the different statements as to the time Jesus was in the tomb. "And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him." During the three days "king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?" These men were men of experience. They had "stood before Solomon"; they had learned how to deal with people, and they had been in position to see how things were working out. They knew that the people were in earnest, and in no humor to stand for any rough talk. "And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." But that sort of advice did not suit Rehoboam; he did not intend to be a servant to the people; he intended to make them serve him. Solomon had treated the people as slaves, and Rehoboam aimed to do the same; but he did not have the wisdom to manage them skillfully as did Solomon. Rehoboam turned from the counsel of the old men—they were soft, and out of date, and did not believe in an aggressive policy! So he spoke to the people after the counsel of the young men that had grown up with him, men who had no experience in dealing with such problems. They gave him the sort of advice that he wanted, and he answered the people accordingly: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." He would show them who was master and who



were servants. The rights of the people were nothing to him; in fact, in his estimation they had no rights. His attitude toward the people is much like that of some church leaders, both among elders and preachers. Of course Jeroboam had his plans already made, and nothing that Rehoboam said would have healed the breach; but this move on his part to present matters to Rehoboam would make it easier for him to gain a great following. Rehoboam played into his hands—Rehoboam had roughly rebuffed the people, and they would not stand for that sort of treatment. "So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about by Jehovah." In some way Jehovah was overruling in the matter, so that things would happen as he had spoken through Ahijah the prophet. To work out his own plans for the coming of Christ through the family of David, it was necessary that the royal family of David be continued; and so Rehoboam was allowed to live and reign in Jerusalem.

### Rehoboam Loses Ten Tribes to Jeroboam (Verses 16, 17, 20)

Rehoboam was a tyrant; Jeroboam turned out to be a self-seeking politician. Two such men cannot long work together in anything. The tyranny of Rehoboam gave Jeroboam the opportunity he was looking for. "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse." They speak here as if David in person was the one against whom they were rebelling. Rehoboam was a descendant of David and occupied the same throne. Hence, they speak of him as if he were David. In a similar way the prophets referred to the one who would later sit on the throne, as David. (Ezek. 37: 24; Hos. 3: 5.) Having been refused any relief from their burdens, but threatened with increased burdens, the people raised the cry of rebellion: "To your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." Here again they speak as if they were rebelling against David in person. Keeping this in mind may help you to understand the prophecies just referred to. During the centuries that had elapsed since the land was allotted to the tribes, some people from the tribes would take up their abode in other tribes. Some people from the ten tribes were living in the cities of Judah; these remained with Rehoboam. About seventy years later, under the reign of the good king, Asa, many out of the ten tribes returned to the king of Judah. "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him." (2 Chron. 15: 9.) But the breach was not healed; there continued to be the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, till their carrying away into captivity.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The Hebrew kingdom never would have been divided, if all had adhered strictly to the law of God. People do not divide when all are determined to do right. When churches divide, there is unrighteousness somewhere.

When people want to fuss and divide, any sort of an excuse will answer their purpose. Nothing is so little but that people can raise a fuss about it, if they want to do so; and no trouble is so great but that they can settle it, if they want to do so.

God's promises to nations, as well as to individuals, are conditional. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel came to an end because they turned aside from following Jehovah. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if they do that which is evil in my sight, that they obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." (Jer. 18: 7-10.) The verses preceding and the verses following the verses quoted show clearly that the Lord was speaking with direct reference to the kingdom of Judah. So Jehovah said to Judah, "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings." (Verse 11.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The kingdom began in rebellion against Jehovah.

God warns them of its burdens.

The folly of Rehoboam.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give facts about Shechem.

Who were the first three kings over the Hebrews?

Give some facts about the origin of this kingdom.

What did Jehovah tell the people their king would do?

### Verses 1-3a

What apparently prompted Rehoboam to go to Shechem to be anointed king?

Who was the leader of the opposition?

What advantage did his going to Shechem give the opposition?

### Verses 3b-5

What complaint did the people make to Rehoboam?

What demands did they make?

What did their promise to serve him imply?

What did Rehoboam request them to do?

### Verses 12-15

What helpful lesson do we get from this as to the Hebrew method of reckoning time?

How did the king answer the people?

Whom had Rehoboam first counseled with, and what was their advice?

What advice had the young men given?

Whose advice did Rehoboam follow?

What lesson do we get out of this?

### Verses 16, 17, 20

What did the people then say?

What was their cry of rebellion?

Who of the ten tribes remained with Rehoboam?

In later times what did many of them do?

Discuss the reflections.



## Lesson IV—July 23, 1939

## ASA: A LIFE OF TRUST

2 Chron. 14: 2-12

2 And Ā'sā did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jē-hō'vāh his God:

3 For he took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and brake down the pillars, and hewed down the Ā-shē'rīm.

4 And commanded Jū'dāh to seek Jē-hō'vāh, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.

5 Also he took away out of all the cities of Jū'dāh the high places and the sun-images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.

6 And he built fortified cities in Jū'dāh; for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Jē-hō'vāh had given him rest.

7 For he said unto Jū'dāh, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars; the land is yet before us, because we have sought Jē-hō'vāh our God; we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.

8 And Ā'sā had an army that bare bucklers and spears, out of Jū'dāh three hundred thousand; and out of Bēn'jā-mīn, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valor.

9 And there came out against them Zē'rāh the Ē-thī-ō'pī-ān with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and he came unto Mā-rē'shāh.

10 Then Ā'sā went out to meet him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zēph'ā-thāh at Mā-rē'shāh.

11 And Ā'sā cried unto Jē-hō'vāh his God, and said, Jē-hō'vāh, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Jē-hō'vāh our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude. O Jē-hō'vāh, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.

12 So Jē-hō'vāh smote the Ē-thī-ō'pī-āns before Ā'sā, and before Jū'dāh; and the Ē-thī-ō'pī-āns fled.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee.” (2 Chron. 14: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 27: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 17. M.	A Life of Trust (2 Chron. 14: 2-7)
July 18. T.	Relying on God in Peril (2 Chron. 14: 8-12)
July 19. W.	A Misplaced Trust (2 Chron. 16: 7-9)
July 20. T.	Trusting Christ for Salvation (John 9: 35-38)
July 21. F.	A Father's Trust (Mark 9: 20-27)
July 22. S.	Trusting Christ for Victory (1 John 5: 1-5)
July 23. S.	God Our Refuge (Psalm 62: 5-8)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Hales, Asa began to reign 970 B.C.; according to Usher, 955 B.C. He reigned forty-one years.

*Places.*—Jerusalem, the valley of Zephathah near Mareshah; and on the way to Gerar.

*Persons.*—Asa, his people, Zerah the Ethiopian, and his army.

*Lesson Links.*—When the kingdom was divided the priests and the Levites that were in Israel resorted unto Rehoboam. “And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers.” This strengthened the kingdom of Judah for three years; “for they walked three years in the

way of David and Solomon." (2 Chron. 11: 13-17.) It seems that Rehoboam made no effort to keep the people true to Jehovah, for they soon became corrupt, and sinned "above all that their fathers had done. For they also built them high places, and pillars, and Asherim, on every high hill, and under every green tree; and there were also Sodomites in the land; they did according to all the abominations of the nations which Jehovah drove out before the children of Israel." (1 Kings 14: 22-24.) Rehoboam reigned seventeen years, and his son Abijam, or Abijah, reigned three years. (1 Kings 14: 21; 15: 1, 2.) Though Abijam's heart was not perfect toward Jehovah, it seems from the speech he made to Jeroboam on the eve of a great battle that there was some good in him. (2 Chron. 13: 2-12.) Asa, Abijam's son, reigned in his stead. He began to reign two years before the death of Jeroboam, and continued to reign till the beginning of the reign of Ahab over Israel. Between the reigns of Jeroboam and Ahab, Israel had five kings—Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Asa's Character and Zeal for Jehovah (Verses 2-5)

The student should read 1 Kings 15: 9-24; and also the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of Second Corinthians. No just conception of Asa and his work can be had without reading these chapters. In 1 Kings 15: 3 it is said that Maacah was Abijam's mother, and in verse 10 it is said that she was Asa's mother. She was therefore Asa's grandmother, and he was said to be her son in somewhat the same sense that he was called the son of David in verse 11. Asa must have been a mere youth when he began to reign, for his reign continued for a period of forty-one years. 1 Kings 15: 13 speaks of Maacah as "queen," or "queen mother." That implies that she exercised some authority while Asa was young; but Asa, perhaps when he reached manhood, removed her from being queen, "because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah; and Asa cut down her image, and burnt it at the brook Kidron." (1 Kings 15: 13; 2 Chron. 15: 16.) The Asherah was an image, or symbol, of something else, and was perhaps the image of the Phoenician goddess Ashtoreth, the worship of which was carried on by immoral practices. As Asa had zeal for Jehovah, he could not tolerate such worship nor the person who promoted it, even though that person be his mother or grandmother. He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. With his parentage and surroundings, it is singular that Asa had such clear conceptions of his duty, and was so set against idolatry and so full of zeal for Jehovah. Beginning in the reign of Solomon the nation had become more and more saturated with idolatry and corruption. Asa was not moulded by his environment; a weaker person would have drifted along with the current, and would never have tried to find out whether it was right. There is no indication that either Rehoboam or Abijam had done anything to correct the evils. The people and his own immediate family were against him, unless his mother, not the queen mother Maacah, was a pious woman. However that may be, Asa early learned the sinfulness of idolatry,



and started in with determination to put it down. He destroyed the foreign altars, the high places, the pillars, the Asherim, "and commanded Judah to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment." This shows that he was acquainted with the law of Moses, and that it, not the prevailing customs, was his guide. With him God's law was supreme, and everything contrary to it must go, even if it required him to renounce his own grandmother! In his zeal he had every form of idolatry removed from the cities of Judah.

### **Asa Builds Fortified Cities in Judah (Verses 6, 7)**

Since Abijah so thoroughly defeated Jeroboam (chapter 13), the kingdom of Israel had given the kingdom of Judah no trouble. "The land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Jehovah had given him rest." As the land was at peace, Asa had time to prepare his defenses against enemies which sooner or later would be sure to come against him. His policy was, so it seems, "In time of peace, prepare for war." If a government ever makes much preparation for war, either defensive or offensive, it will have to do so in times of peace. As deplorable as war is, it is almost certain that there will be wars as long as there are human governments. When wars were not so expensive as now, a nation might make war on another nation for gain, but the losses now are much greater than any and all gains. No nation, except those ruled by fools, will now start a war of conquest. Such wars have always been wicked; now they are stupid. Asa said, "The land is yet before us, because we have sought Jehovah our God; we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side." To Israel Jehovah had said, "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give your rains in their seasons, and the land shall yield its increases, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit . . . And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land." (Lev. 26: 3-6.) Always when the people of Israel obeyed the Lord, they had peace, and prospered. In some way the Lord held a restraining hand over the nations round about them. The duty of the people was clearly stated; how the Lord restrained the nations round about them was none of their business, nor did they worry themselves trying to find out. There is a lesson in it to us: Quit trying to figure out how God will comply with any promise he makes. Rather, let us say with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" (Rom. 11: 33.) But when the Lord did allow a nation to come against them in battle, he gave the faithful Israelites overwhelming victories.

### **Two Mighty Armies (Verses 8, 9)**

For that day Asa had a fairly equipped army, but lacking in chariots and horsemen. He had an army of five hundred and eighty thousand men, an enormous army to be raised in two tribes. "All these were mighty men of valor." But there came out against him

Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of one million men with three hundred war chariots. A war chariot in those days was a powerful weapon of war. So far as numbers and equipment was concerned the army of Zerah far exceeded the army of Asa. From a human standpoint there was no chance for Asa and his army to succeed. If the Ethiopia from which Zerah came was the Ethiopia that lay south of Egypt, Zerah at this time must have dominated Egypt, for he had to come through Egypt. It seems that he also had the territory south of Judah under his control.

### Asa Prays Fervently for Jehovah's Help (Verses 10, 11)

The battle lines were formed in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. Mareshah was an old city, and was one of the cities that fell to Judah, when the land of Canaan was allotted to the tribes of Israel. (Josh. 15: 42-44.) It was about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem, and was one of the cities fortified by Jeroboam after the kingdom divided. (2 Chron. 11: 55, 56.) And now in the valley of Zephathah, near Mareshah, a great battle was about to begin. Asa realized that so far as human strength was concerned the odds were against him and his army. The chariots of war, which the enemy had, were a formidable weapon of war—the most effective weapon then in use. The chariots were boxed up in front and on each side and had blades extending from the spindle on each side. Zerah had three hundred of these; Asa had none. In neither men nor equipment was Asa's army equal to that of the enemy. He must rely on Jehovah, for without his help he would certainly fail. He neither overestimated his own strength nor underestimated the strength of the enemy. He could not overestimate the strength of Jehovah. If Jehovah would be with him, the enemy could not prevail; and so he prayed, "Jehovah, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength." In the presence of such a vast army Asa felt pitifully weak; and there was real distress, and yet great faith, in his plea for help. "Help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude." Of course Asa realized that he and his army must do their part—must put forth their best effort; they must prove themselves worthy of Jehovah's help. He prayed for help; he did not pray for the Lord to destroy the enemy while he and his men merely looked on. There is a lot of faith expressed in that simple plea: "Help us." And there is seen distrust in self and wholesouled trust in Jehovah in the statement, "for we rely on thee." David sang, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will make mention of the name of Jehovah our God." (Psalm 20: 7.) Isaiah gave this warning: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah." (Isa. 31: 1.) Asa and his army relied on none of these things, but on Jehovah. "O Jehovah, thou art our God; let no man prevail against thee." Since Asa and his army were relying wholly on Jehovah, he felt that a defeat of his army would be, or at least, seem to be, a defeat to Jehovah.



**Examples.**—This statement is made concerning the outcome of the great battle between the forces of Judah under King Abijah and the forces of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam: "Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon Jehovah, the God of their fathers." (2 Chron. 13: 18.) In proposing to his armor-bearer that they go over and fight the enormous Philistine army, Jonathan said, "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." (1 Sam. 14: 6.)

### Results of the Battle (Verse 12)

The issue of the battle is stated in few words: "So Jehovah smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled." It was more than a victory; it was a complete rout. Asa and his army followed them in close pursuit, drove them out of Judah, followed them as far as Gerar, destroyed the cities round about, utterly destroyed Zerah's army; "and they carried away very much booty," "and carried away sheep in abundance, and camels, and returned to Jerusalem."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Are all people subject to their environs in the development of their character? Yes, and no. Environment makes some people what they are; others, like Asa, get busy, and make their environment.

Instead of being afraid of our enemies, let us trust in Jehovah. Why worry overmuch about the evils that we cannot possibly remedy? "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness." (Psalm 37: 1.)

Make use of these Old Testament examples. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4.) "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." (1 Cor. 10: 11.)

Notice the prayer of Asa; notice other prayers in the Bible. With the exception of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple and the prayer of Jesus on the night of his betrayal, all are very short. Notice the manner in which they addressed Jehovah; no endearing terms are used, but terms expressive of reverence for the power and majesty of God. Such expressions as "Our dear heavenly Father" are not found in the Bible. Such expressions should have no place in our prayers today. Christians need to know how to pray, and a study of the prayers of the Bible will help us to pray as we ought.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How Asa triumphed over his environs.

Asa's reforms.

Asa's triumph over Zerah.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Who besides the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained with Rehoboam when the kingdom divided?  
What was the condition of Judah morally and religiously when Asa began to reign?  
What kings reigned in Israel while Asa reigned over Judah?

## Verses 2-5

Who was Maacah?  
What abominable thing had she done?  
What did Asa do about it?  
What were some of his other reformatory measures?  
What did he command Judah to do?

## Verses 6, 7

What is said of his public works?  
What brings about wars?  
What had Jehovah promised Israel as to their peace?

## Verses 8, 9

Who came up against Asa?  
Give the strength of the two armies.

## Verses 10, 11

Where did they draw up in line of battle?  
Where is Mareshah?  
How did Asa feel about the coming battle?  
Why were chariots then such formidable weapons of war?  
Upon whom did Asa rely?  
Discuss in detail his prayer?  
In what did David and Isaiah say some trusted?  
Give examples of others who trusted in Jehovah.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson V—July 30, 1939

## JEHOSHAPHAT: A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE

2 Chron. 17: 1-6, 9-12

1 And Jê-hôsh'â-phât his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Is'râ-êl.

2 And he placed forces in all the fortified cities of Jû'dâh, and set garrisons in the land of Jû'dâh, and in the cities of Ê'phrâ-îm, which Â'sâ his father had taken.

3 And Jê-hô'vâh was with Jê-hôsh'â-phât, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto the Bâ'al-îm,

4 But sought to the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Is'râ-êl.

5 Therefore Jê-hô'vâh established the kingdom in his hand; and all Jû'dâh brought to Jê-hôsh'â-phât tribute; and he had riches and honor in abundance.

6 And his heart was lifted up in the ways of Jê-hô'vâh; and furthermore he took away the high places and the A-shê'rîm out of Jû'dâh.

9 And they taught in Jû'dâh, having the book of the law of Jê-hô'vâh with them; and they went about throughout all the cities of Jû'dâh, and taught among the people.

10 And the fear of Jê-hô'vâh fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Jû'dâh, so that they made no war against Jê-hôsh'â-phât.

11 And some of the Phî-lî's'tînes brought Jê-hôsh'â-phât presents, and silver for tribute; the A-râ'bî-âns also brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he-goats.

12 And Jê-hôsh'â-phât waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Jû'dâh castles and cities of store.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness."  
(Matt. 6: 33.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 21-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 24. M. . . . . Seeking God's Ways (2 Chron. 17: 1-6)  
July 25. T. . . . . Magnifying God's Word (2 Chron. 17: 9-12)  
July 26. W. . . . . The Wisdom of Obedience (Deut. 4: 1-6)



July 27.	T.	Failure Through Disobedience (1 Sam. 15: 22-26)
July 28.	F.	Obedience in Love (John 15: 9-14)
July 29.	S.	Keeping the Great Commandments (Mark 12: 28-33)
July 30.	S.	"Obedient unto Death" (Phil. 2: 5-11)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—According to Usher, Jehoshaphat began his reign 914 B.C.; according to Hales, 929 B.C. He reigned twenty-five years.

*Place.*—Jerusalem and the territories of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

*Persons.*—Jehoshaphat, the people of his kingdom, and some of the Philistines and Arabians. The Philistines were an ancient race of people occupying the territory along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, west and southwest of the territory of Judah. In fact, the territory originally allotted to the tribe of Judah included a part of the territory of the Philistines. They had given the children of Israel much trouble from the days of Joshua on to the time of this lesson. The Arabians occupied the territory to the east and south of Palestine.

*Lesson Links.*—As Asa was returning from his great victory over the Ethiopians, the prophet Azariah met him, and said to him, "Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded." (15: 1-7.) The words of the prophet gave Asa courage to go on with his work of ridding the country of all forms of idolatry. "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him." (Verse 9.) But in the latter years of his reign Asa made a great blunder. Most likely it was because so many of his people were going over to Asa king of Judah, that Baasha king of Israel made warlike moves against Asa. Instead of relying on Jehovah as formerly, Asa hired Benhadad king of Syria to help him war against Baasha. For this he was rebuked by the prophet Hanani, who reminded him that when he trusted in Jehovah, Jehovah delivered the Ethiopians into his hands; "for the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars." And then Asa did another foolish, and this time a wicked, thing, for he put Hanani in prison for telling him a message from Jehovah. "And in the thirty and ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet; his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to Jehovah, but to the physicians."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jehoshaphat Prepares Defenses (Verses 1, 2)

Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa, and was thirty-five years old when he began to reign. (Chron. 20: 31.) He began to prepare for the wars which Hanani had told Asa must come. He was expecting war to be made on him by the king of Israel, "and strengthened himself against Israel." He placed soldiers in the fortified cities of Judah, and also placed forces in strategic positions in the land of Judah and also in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa had taken from the king of Israel. If a nation must have war, if it means to drive back an invading enemy, it must prepare itself to do so. War is so destructive to life, property, and happiness, it is strange that human beings have not sense enough to settle their troubles in some other way. It does not seem that Jehoshaphat had any intention of making war on another nation, but merely to prepare for defense against an invading enemy.

### Jehovah Was with Jehoshaphat (Verses 3, 4)

Throughout the entire history of the children of Israel this principle never failed: "Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." (15: 2.) Their greatest peace and prosperity came to them during the periods of their most faithful obedience to Jehovah. It is amazing how few of them ever learned this important lesson. Jehoshaphat started off well. He could not very well keep from knowing the few mistakes his father had made. It is a foolish person who does not profit by the experiences of others. It seems that the writer meant to sum up the whole course of Jehoshaphat's reign in verses 3 and 4. "Jehovah was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto the Baalim, but sought to the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." At this time the notorious Ahab was king of Israel, as corrupt as he and his wife knew how to be. But that foolish idea that royalty must marry royalty led Jehoshaphat into trouble—"he joined affinity with Ahab"; that is, his son Jehoram married Ahab's daughter. (2 Chron. 21: 6.) This bad move led Jehoshaphat into another serious blunder, as will be seen by reading the eighteenth chapter. But in the main Jehoshaphat was one of the best and greatest kings of Judah.

### Jehoshaphat Prospers (Verses 5, 6)

Because of Jehoshaphat's faithfulness in keeping the commandments of Jehovah, and doing what he could to destroy all forms of idolatry from his kingdom, "Jehovah established the kingdom in his hand." The people were prosperous and paid their taxes promptly. Twice it is said of Jehoshaphat that he had riches and honor in abundance. (17: 5; 18: 1.) In verse 6 we have an unusual expression: "And his heart was lifted up in the ways of Jehovah." In other places where it is said that a man's heart was lifted up, it meant that his heart was lifted up in pride or in rebellion against Jehovah; but here it means that his heart was lifted up in the way



Jehovah would have him go—he was determined to do the will of Jehovah. He did not go about it in a half-hearted way; he sought the ways of Jehovah with all his heart. (22: 9.) And he sought earnestly to enlighten the people in the ways of Jehovah.

### **Jehoshaphat's Educational Program (Verse 9)**

Ignorance is a good foundation for the worship of idols. People are surrounded with so many forces that they cannot explain, but they do know that these forces are above and beyond man. If they have no idea of the one true God, they invent to themselves gods to whom they can attribute these forces. This reverence for a higher power needs enlightenment, or it will find expression in superstition and idolatry. Superstition and idolatry are the expressions of ignorant reverence. Jehoshaphat went about the matter of curing his people of idolatry in the right way. Read verses 7 and 8. He selected and sent certain men to teach in the cities of Judah. "In these verses we find a remarkable account of the itinerant ministry established by Jehoshaphat; and in this work he employed three classes of men: 1, the princes; 2, the levites; 3, the priests. We may presume that the princes instructed the people in the nature of the civil law and the constitution of the kingdom; the Levites instructed them in everything that appertained to the temple service and ritual law; and the priests instructed them in the nature and design of the religion they professed. Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to God, to the king, and to each other. They became, therefore, as one man; and against a people thus united, on such principles, no enemy could be successful."—*Adam Clark*. These teachers had for their textbook the book of the law of God, and they carried that book with them as they went about throughout all the cities of Judah. That sort of teaching would do more to put down idolatry and all forms of crime than all other forces combined. Our own beloved country has tried every other way to put down crime; it is time the word of God was given a fair trial. If men and women are brought up to revere God and his word, they will make law-abiding citizens, because they know that God demands obedience to the laws of the land. But to be effective, the Bible must be taught as the word of God, and not merely as folklore or good literature; it must be taught by men and women who really believe that in it God speaks to us.

### **"Jehoshaphat Waxed Great Exceedingly" (Verses 10-12)**

As the morals and the religion of the people improved, the nation became stronger. The nations round about saw this, and were afraid to make war against them. In every way their turning to Jehovah in a wholehearted way, and their learning more and more of his will, worked to their good. They were surrounded by warlike nations, and yet no one made war against them; and it seems that they had no disposition to make war on others. Some of the cities of the Philistines brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and the Arabians brought to him many animals. If he had conquered these people, and exacted tribute of them, we have no account of it. It is more

likely that they, seeing Jehoshaphat's kingdom had become so powerful, had brought these things as tribute to retain his good will. But even though the nations were at peace with him, Jehoshaphat did not neglect his defenses. He built castles in Judah. The productiveness of the land was so great, together with the tribute brought by other peoples, that he built cities of store. Not since the kingdom divided had the land been so prosperous. And there is danger in great prosperity. "Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly"; he also "had riches and honor in abundance." As he had become too powerful for Israel to make war against him, there were other ways to get him into trouble.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Idolatry is a form of superstition; and superstition is ignorant reverence, or reverence without reason. Reverence without reason may express itself in the worship of idols or in a sort of slavery to all sorts of signs and omens. To develop the reason so that reverence will be directed toward Jehovah and his word instead of toward idols or signs and omens is the task of those who teach the law of God.

With all of Jehoshaphat's devotion to Jehovah he did a strange thing. "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and he joined affinity with Ahab." That is, Jehoshaphat's son married Ahab's daughter. (21: 5, 6.) The son of the best king Judah ever had married the daughter of about the worst king Israel ever had! But this marriage established such a strong family tie between these two kings that Jehoshaphat went down to visit Ahab, and was royally entertained. (Read 1 Kings 22: 1-16; 2 Chron. 18.) At the time of this visit Ahab was having trouble with the king of Syria. The Syrians had taken Ramoth-gilead from the king of Israel, and Ahab was preparing to retake it by force; so he said to Jehoshaphat, "Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" And then Jehoshaphat said a strange thing: "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war." That was an unholy alliance—Jehoshaphat, a true servant of Jehovah, joining up with wicked Ahab, who was thoroughly committed to the worship of idols, and avowing that they two were as one! And here is another strange thing: after Jehoshaphat agreed to go with Ahab, he then wanted to inquire as to the will of God! Why did he not inquire of the prophet before he agreed to go? Ahab had prophets in plenty—four hundred of them. They all said, "Go up; for God will deliver it into the hand of the king." These prophets told Ahab what they knew he wanted to hear. Jehoshaphat knew they were false prophets, and so he asked if there were not a prophet of Jehovah of whom they might inquire. Then Ahab said a thing that is characteristic of all who have their hearts fully set on evil: "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Jehovah: but I hate him; for he never prophesieth good concerning me, but always evil." Micaiah was called, and the messenger that called him begged that he speak good, as did the other prophets! But being a prophet of Jehovah, he spoke as Jehovah directed. He told them that their armies would be scattered, and that Ahab would not return to his land in peace. The results of the battle were as



*doan 20*  
*John*  
*asah*  
*lah*  
*me*  
*the 20*  
*son of*  
 Micaiah had said. And as Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem, the prophet Jehu met him and said to him, "Shouldst thou help the wicked, and love them that hate Jehovah? for this thing wrath is upon thee from before Jehovah." Jehoshaphat had joined hands with an enemy of God in a war that did not concern him.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Jehoshaphat's public works.  
 Jehoshaphat's educational program.  
 The evils of unholy alliances.

*1 Kg. 14:3*  
*Reheboom*  
*Asa*  
*Jehoshaphat*  
*41*

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
 Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
 Who were the Philistines and the Arabians?  
 What did the prophet say to Asa as Asa returned from his great victory?  
 What did the prophet say had been the condition of Israel for a long time?  
 What encouragement did he give Asa?  
 What blunder did Asa later commit?  
 Concerning this, what did the prophet say?

### Verses 1, 2

Who was Jehoshaphat?  
 What were some of the first things Jehoshaphat did?  
 Why would he prepare for war in time of peace?

For what sort of war was he preparing?

### Verses 3, 4

What principle never failed in the history of Israel?  
 Discuss verses 3 and 4.  
 What mistake did Jehoshaphat make?

### Verses 5, 6

Let the class discuss these verses.

### Verse 9

What important move did Jehoshaphat make to improve the people? What classes of men were selected? How did they go about their work? What was their textbook?  
 How would a wholesome regard for God and the Bible help a nation?

### Verses 10-12

Why would the nations round about fear the kingdom of Judah?  
 How did they show their fear?  
 Discuss the reflections.

*1 - God has himself said to Asa 'and I will send rain upon the earth'*

Lesson VI—August 6, 1939

## ELIJAH: A LIFE OF COURAGE

1 Kings 18: 30-39

30 And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jê-hô'vâh that was thrown down.

31 And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of Jê-hô'vâh came, saying, Is'râ-êl shall be thy name.

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jê-hô'vâh; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, O Jê-hô'vâh, the God of Abraham, of I'sâac, and of Is'râ-êl, let it be known this day that thou art

God in Is'rā-ēl, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Jē-hō-vāh, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jē-hō-vāh, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of Jē-hō-vāh fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jē-hō-vāh, he is God; Jē-hō-vāh, he is God.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Jehovah is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." (Prov. 15: 29.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Eph. 6: 10-20.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

July 31.	M.	Elijah Before Ahab (1 Kings 17: 1-5)
August 1.	T.	Courage to Challenge Evil (1 Kings 18: 17-21)
August 2.	W.	Repairing the Altar (1 Kings 18: 30-35)
August 3.	T.	Calling on God (1 Kings 18: 36-39)
August 4.	F.	Condemning Crime (1 Kings 21: 17-20)
August 5.	S.	Crown of a Courageous Life (2 Kings 2: 9-11)
August 6.	S.	A Song of Courage (Psalm 27: 1-5)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—According to Hales, 908 B.C.; according to Usher, 906 B.C.  
**Place.**—Mount Carmel.

**Persons.**—Elijah, false prophets, and the people of Israel. Ahab also occupied a prominent place in the events of the lesson, for the demonstration was made to convince him, as well as the people, that Jehovah was God.

**Lesson Links.**—Elijah was one of the greatest of Old Testament characters. He was remarkable for the suddenness of his movements and appearances. His first appearance is characteristic: "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (1 Kings 17: 1.) It is not likely that Ahab took Elijah's words very seriously till the drouth began to be serious. This drouth continued three years and six months. (Luke 4: 25; James 5: 17.) Of course Ahab blamed Elijah for the famine. At the command of Jehovah Elijah fled to the brook Cherith, where he remained till the brook dried up, being fed by the ravens. "And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee." (17: 8.) Things did not look encouraging when he arrived at the widow's house, for he found her gathering fuel to cook the last food she had in her house. He asked her to bring him some water to drink, and also a morsel of bread. Her answer was pitiful: "As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." It is therefore seen that the famine reached beyond the borders of Israel. "And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and thy son. For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar



of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth." While Elijah remained there the widow's son fell sick; "and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him." Elijah raised him up and restored him to his mother. The continued drouth so diminished the water in Samaria that it was difficult for Ahab to find water for his stock. About this time Jehovah commanded Elijah to go and show himself to Ahab. Ahab and Obadiah his chief steward were out searching for watering places and pasturage for their stock. If the reader does not study all of the eighteenth chapter, he will not get much out of the printed text of our lesson. He should notice how Ahab was brought into the presence of Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, he said, "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?" It is strange that a person in the wrong attributes all the evil effects of his own conduct to the person who seeks to correct him. But Ahab had brought on all the trouble by following the Baalim, instead of following Jehovah. Elijah proposed a plan by which to settle the controversy as to who was God. The prophets of Baal and the prophets of the Asherah, eight hundred and fifty in all, were to be brought together. The false prophets were to prepare one bullock, and put it on the wood on an altar; Elijah would do likewise with another bullock. "And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." To this all agreed. No one was to put fire to his wood. The false prophets prepared their sacrifice, "and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered." And here is one instance wherein a man of God "made fun of other people's religion." "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened." Their antics were evidently very amusing to Elijah. He wanted to make their performance seem ridiculous even to them. That is the only way to cure some people of their folly. These false prophets kept up their performance "until the time of the offering of the evening oblation; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Elijah Prepares His Sacrifice (Verses 30-32)

Elijah invited the people to come near unto him. He wanted them to be in position to watch everything he did, so that none could accuse him of playing any tricks on them. A man who is in the right does not need to do anything under cover. Had he left any excuse for them to accuse him of trickery, the effects of the miracle would have been lost. He wanted them to see plainly that Jehovah's hand was in the matter. He repaired the altar; with twelve stones, each stone representing a tribe of Israel, he built the altar. It was not built in the name of any heathen god, but in the name of Jehovah. And he made a trench around the altar. The assurance with which he went about his work must have been impressive to the people. Elijah himself must have been a picturesque personality.



## Other Preparations for a Complete Demonstration (Verses 33-35)

Having built the altar, Elijah put the wood on the altar, "and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood." According to the test proposed by Elijah, neither the false prophets nor he were to apply fire to the wood. To prove to the people beyond all possible doubt, Elijah had them to pour water on his offering and the wood. He had them to do this three times, so that water flowed round about and filled the trench. As Elijah stood away from the altar himself and had them to pour the water, the people could see that he had not applied any fire. They could see that if he had secretly deposited any fire with the wood as he laid it on the altar, the water they poured on would have extinguished it.

## Elijah Prays to Jehovah (Verses 36, 37)

The prophets of Baal had put in the day praying to their god. "And they leaped about the altar which was made." Their antics were somewhat like those of some of our present-day religionists, who seem to think that physical action and contortion are necessary to attract the attention of Jehovah. These things are sometimes done to the utter exhaustion of those who engage in such wild practices. But Baal's prophets went further than the wildest of physical contortionists do today. They cried aloud as some do today, but they went further: "And cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them." Note what a contrast when Elijah prayed. Notice the reverential tone of Elijah's prayer; he used no endearing terms. "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel." The prevailing idea in those days was that each nation or race had its god or gods. Elijah was praying in the presence of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; he wanted these people to know that he was praying to the God of their fathers, and not to any of the gods of other nations. "Let it be known this day that thou art God," the living God who answered prayer. "And that I am thy servant." Jehovah could prove his power by a miracle, and by that miracle prove that he was with Elijah and that Elijah was his servant. "And that I have done all these things at thy word." Elijah had not of his own will and power caused it not to rain. Ahab had accused him of being the cause of all the trouble they were having, the famine and all its results. Elijah wanted Ahab and all the people to know that he was only acting as the spokesman of Jehovah in announcing the approaching drouth, as he had done when he first met Ahab. He was only the mouthpiece of God in announcing the famine. His only motive in this demonstration was to bring these sons of Abraham back to the God of Abraham. To that end he prayed earnestly. "Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." For the last clause Leeser, a Jewish translator, has: "And thou wilt then have turned their heart back again." These prayers of the men of God are worthy of close study. In this prayer Elijah prayed for one thing, for at that moment he was interested only in that one thing. At the dedication of the temple Solomon prayed for



a number of things, for that was a great state occasion; but the prayers recorded in the Bible are brief and to the point. Those whose prayers are recorded in the Bible did not pray at any given time for everything they could think of. It would be well for us to study carefully the prayers of the Bible; such a study would improve both the tone and the contents of the prayers of today.

### **Jehovah Answered Elijah's Prayer (Verse 38)**

Elijah had proposed this test: "And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." To this they had agreed. They had called on Baal with no results. Now Elijah had prayed to Jehovah—what would be the result. Of course, Elijah had no doubts as to the result; but it must have been a tense moment with the people. One can hardly think that the people wanted Elijah's prayer to be answered, for an answer to his prayer would prove that they were all very wrong. When people have so thoroughly committed themselves to a form of religion, they do not like to be forced to acknowledge that they have been wrong. "Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood"; and the strangest thing about it was, that the fire consumed also the stones of the altar, "and the dust, and licked up the water." Nothing was left. The demonstration was more complete than Elijah had proposed. It is impossible for us to imagine the full effect of that miracle on these superstitious people; they could not doubt that a God greater than Baal was present.

### **The People Were Convinced (Verse 39)**

In the presence of such a demonstration of divine power, the people fell on their faces, either through fear or as an act of worship. "And they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God." For the time being the people were under Elijah's influence. So he commanded them to seize all the prophets of Baal, which they did. "And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there." The law required that all such prophets be put to death. (Deut. 13: 1-15.) And then a great rain came, but none of these things seemed to make any impression on Ahab. When he told Jezebel what Elijah had done, she was filled with fury, and sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." At this saying Elijah fled before she could lay hold on him.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

After Jeroboam, each king of Israel seemed to be worse than the one before him. And what a contrast there was between the prophet Elijah and King Ahab!

Ahab was the son of King Omri. "Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and dealt wickedly above all that were before him." (1 Kings 16: 25.) Hence, Ahab had bad training. "And Ahab the son of Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah above all that were before him." (16: 30.)

Ahab married "Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him." (16: 31.) Jezebel was the stronger and the more wicked of the two. (21: 25.) She was the real ruler. It was with these two wicked and powerful rulers that Elijah so often came into contact. It required deep convictions and great courage for him to rebuke them as he did.

There was a peculiar combination of qualities in Elijah's character. He was impulsive, and yet steadfast in his purposes. He had great faith, and yet sometimes became gloomy and despondent. After killing the prophets of Baal he fled into the wilderness beyond Beer-sheba and "requested for himself that he might die." At Horeb, when Jehovah said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" he answered, "I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword . . . and they seek my life, to take it away." But the Lord informed him that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Ahab and Jezebel.  
Elijah.  
Ahab's last battle.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Tell about Elijah's first appearance before Ahab.  
What do Jesus and James say about the length of the famine?  
Where did Elijah first hide from Ahab?  
Tell about his visit to Zarephath.  
Tell about Elijah's return and meeting with Ahab.  
Why did Ahab accuse Elijah of troubling Israel?  
What reply did Elijah make?  
What proposition did Elijah make, and why?  
Describe the actions of the prophets of Baal.  
What did Elijah say to them?

### Verses 30-32

Discuss verses 30-32.

### Verses 33-35

Tell how Elijah prepared to make his offering.  
Why pour the water on the wood and the sacrifice?

### Verses 36, 37

Show the difference between the actions of Elijah and of the prophets of Baal.  
How did Elijah address Jehovah?  
Discuss each statement in his prayer.  
How do the prayers of the Bible differ from many prayers of this day?

### Verse 38

Tell how Jehovah answered Elijah's prayer.  
How complete was the burning?

### Verse 39

Discuss verse 39.  
What was done with the prophets of Baal?  
How was word carried to Jezebel, and what did she say?  
Discuss the reflections.



## Lesson VII—August 13, 1939

## ELISHA: A LIFE OF HELPFULNESS

2 Kings 5: 1-10, 14

1 Now Nā'ā-mān, captain of the host of the king of Sŷr'ī-ā, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jē-hō'vāh had given victory unto Sŷr'ī-ā; he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

2 And the Sŷr'ī-āns had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Is'rā-ēl a little maiden; and she waited on Nā'ā-mān's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Sā-mā'ri-ā! then would he recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Is'rā-ēl.

5 And the king of Sŷr'ī-ā said, Go now, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is'rā-ēl. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Is'rā-ēl, saying, And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Nā'ā-mān my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Is'rā-ēl had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? but consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when Ē-lī'shā the man of God heard that the king of Is'rā-ēl had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Is'rā-ēl.

9 So Nā'ā-mān came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Ē-lī'shā.

10 And Ē-lī'shā sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Be ye kind one to another." (Eph. 4: 32.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 3: 14-20.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 7.	M.	Helpfulness in Poverty (2 Kings 4: 1-7)
August 8.	T.	Helpfulness in Sorrow (2 Kings 4: 32-37)
August 9.	W.	Helpfulness in Hunger (2 Kings 4: 42-44)
August 10.	T.	Helpfulness in Sickness (2 Kings 5: 1-7)
August 11.	F.	Helpfulness in Recovery (2 Kings 5: 8-14)
August 12.	S.	Helpfulness in Peril (2 Kings 6: 15-19)
August 13.	S.	Doing Good (Gal. 6: 1-10)

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—About 894 B.C.

Places.—Syria, Samaria, and the river Jordan.

Persons.—Elisha, his servant, Naaman, the captive maid, and the kings of Syria and Israel.

Lesson Links.—Elisha was Elijah's successor as prophet to Israel. He comes into prominence in the latter part of Elijah's career. When Elijah, having fled to Horeb, was lamenting the moral and religious condition of the kingdom of Israel, Jehovah said to him, "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of

Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room . . . So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed over unto him, and cast his mantle upon him . . . Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him." (1 Kings 19: 15-21.) The next mention we have of Elisha is in connection with one of the most interesting pieces of history to be found. (2 Kings 2.) Elijah was to be taken up from the earth, and Elisha was determined to stay with him till his departure, for it had been made known to Elisha that Elijah was to be taken up from him. On that day they went through Bethel and Jericho, and on across the river Jordan. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven . . . And he saw him no more . . . He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him." As he returned the sons of the prophets at Jericho said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." That Elisha was as bold and fearless as Elijah may be seen by reading 2 Kings 3: 9-14. But it does not seem that Elisha came in contact with the king so often as did Elijah; and yet it seems that he was a man of great energy and activity. The fourth chapter is full of incidents in connection with the activity of this man of God.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Introducing to Us Naaman (Verse 1)

Naaman was commander of the armies of the king of Syria. Damascus was the chief city of Syria, and apparently next in importance was Hamath. During the reigns of David and Solomon Syria was in subjection to them; but it seems that she freed herself after the kingdom was divided under Rehoboam, and gave the kingdom of Israel much trouble. Naaman was highly honored as a great commander by the king of Syria, "because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria." That is a peculiar expression. So far as we know the Syrians did not in any way recognize Jehovah as God. But Jehovah used even heathen nations as instruments of punishment for his own people when they drifted into idolatry, as may be seen by reading such passages as 2 Kings 24: 2, 3; Isa. 10: 5-15; Jer. 27. The victory referred to is likely the victory of Syria over Israel in the battle in which Ahab was killed. But the satisfaction that Naaman would have had from his exalted position was marred by the loathsome disease of leprosy. Besides the physical suffering that it caused, this terrible disease unfitted him to enjoy the association of others.

### The Unselfishness of a Little Captive Maiden (Verses 2, 3)

"And the Syrians had gone out in bands." These bands were raiding parties, not regular armies; and the people they captured were made slaves. One little maiden that was brought away captive out of the land of Israel gained special mention. She became a servant to Naaman's wife. While the kingdom of Israel as a whole had gone



into the rankest of idolatry, some of the people remained true to Jehovah. Evidently the parents of this little maiden were true worshippers of Jehovah, and had given their daughter proper training. She had been ruthlessly snatched from her home, and perhaps her parents had been killed. Old people would not be desirable for slaves. Under the circumstances, we might suppose that she would have been resentful and sullen, but she was not. Perhaps she was thankful that she had found herself so happily surrounded. Be that as it may, she had an interest in the welfare of her afflicted master, and wished that he might be cured. Though in a heathen land and in the home of idolaters, she still retained her faith in Jehovah and his prophet Elisha. "And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy." It must have required courage for her to say that, for she was exalting her religion and her God above the gods of the Syrians, and she was only a young slave girl. Had not the case of her master been so desperate, her suggestion might have been regarded as an impertinence.

### **The King Becomes Interested (Verses 4, 5)**

In some way what the maiden had said reached the ears of the king of Syria. It is remarkable what weight the words of this slave girl had—by a few words she started in motion the machinery of government to carry out her wish. "And the king of Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel." According to government courtesies it was proper for the king of Syria to take the matter up with the king of Israel, and through him reach the prophet; but either he did not understand what the maiden had said or else he worded his letter in a bunglesome way as will be seen. The king of Syria was no beggar; he was willing to pay well for the healing of his favorite officer. The great amount of wealth the king sent to pay for the cure of Naaman shows better than anything else the high esteem in which the king held Naaman.

### **The Letter Enrages and Distresses the King of Israel (Verses 6, 7)**

The two kings concerned in this transaction were Jehoram king of Israel, and Ben-hadad king of Syria. There had never been much peace between the two kingdoms. Apparently they had gone to war on almost any sort of pretext. And now Ben-hadad had written a letter to Jehoram, saying, "And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." It is amazing how this matter had got mixed up. The maiden had mentioned the prophet as the one who could recover Naaman of his leprosy, and now Ben-hadad had sent Naaman to King Jehoram with a letter asking him to cure Naaman. Jehoram knew that it was not in the power of man to cure the leprosy. He was so stirred by such an unreasonable request that he rent his clothes, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" In his estimation it was as easy to kill and to make alive as it was to cure the leprosy—only God could do either. "But con-

sider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." His idea was that Ben-hadad was asking him to do a thing that no man could do, and then he would bring war against him because he would not do what he was asked to do. This shows that kings of that time understood that wars might grow out of any kind of an unreasonable excuse.

### Elisha Hears of the Matter (Verse 8)

Elisha was called a man of God; that title was applied only to prophets, or teachers. When he learned of Naaman's visit to the king and the king's perplexity over the matter, he sent word for Naaman to come to him, "and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." This was equivalent to saying that a prophet could perform miracles, or that God would perform miracles through a prophet. In fact, the ability to perform miracles was proof that he was a prophet of God. Even so, he could perform miracles only as God enabled him to do so.

### Naaman Came in Pomp and Splendor (Verses 9, 10)

Naaman came to Elisha with his train of attendants equipped with horses and chariots. It was a brilliant entourage. In his position he expected people to pay him great respect and to bow before him. He had been used to that sort of thing. But to Elisha he was just a sick man at his door begging for release from a loathsome disease. Naaman was proud, and expected his high office to gain for him respectful recognition. His equipage showed how he expected people to regard him. He needed a lesson in humility, and Elisha gave him that lesson. He did not so much as go to the door to see him, but sent a messenger to him to tell him to do a thing that would further humiliate him—"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." That was a simple demand, not at all calculated to feed Naaman's vanity. It is not likely that he had received such inconsiderate treatment since he was exalted to be the commander-in-chief of the armies of Syria. And yet here was a man with no official position in the government of Israel, ordering him to do what seemed to him a very foolish thing, and he had sent his servant to tell him! He went away boiling hot. He had expected Elisha to come out to him, and respectfully stand in his presence. "Behold, I thought." And that was the trouble; Naaman had made up his mind how the thing should be done, and it was not done that way. It made him angry; and he would have returned to his home a leper, had it not been for one of his servants. That servant had not been trained to think in terms of dignity as had Naaman; and yet he knew Naaman's weakness. "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" The servant knew he would have done a great thing, and so did Naaman. Well, then, why not do the little thing he commanded? Why stand back on ceremony, if doing a little thing will bring the relief you crave? People are much like Naaman. If salvation could be bought like buying a ticket to a city in another state, many people would be striving to get the price of the ticket; but the little things one is called on to do for remission of sins does not appeal to the pride of man.



## Naaman Obeys and Is Healed (Verse 14)

The words of the servant sobered Naaman. Like the prodigal son, he came to himself, and laid aside his pride and his own notions as to what should have been done. "Then he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan." The Septuagint, a translation into the Greek made by a group of learned Alexandrian Jews more than two hundred years before Christ, says that he baptized himself seven times. Compare that with our English translations—baptized, dipped. Isaac Leeser, a learned Jew, made a translation into English. He puts it thus: "Then went he down, and dived seven times in the Jordan." This should give us a clear idea as to the meaning of the Greek word for baptize. And when Naaman had baptized himself, or dipped himself, or dived, the required seven times, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Not till he had done what the prophet said was he cured. The blessing came at the end of the required obedience. And now Naaman could see more clearly the significance of it all. So he returned to the prophet Elisha and said, "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." He now knew that God had healed him, and that to have dipped himself in the rivers of Damascus would have availed him nothing.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

Neither ostentation nor pomp of power gains any favors from Jehovah. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2.) "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (James 4: 6; 1 Pet. 5: 5.)

If a man would receive blessings from Jehovah, he must deny himself. He must give up his own ways and his own notions as to how things should be done. Naaman was in a rage because the prophet did not do as Naaman had thought he would do. Many people today become angry when brought face to face with some Bible teaching that is contrary to what they had thought.

The king of Syria and Naaman were willing to make a great sacrifice for Naaman's healing, and Naaman brought great wealth for that purpose. They had not learned the truth of what Samuel told Saul: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Sam. 15: 22.) Even our eternal salvation depends on our obedience: "And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 9.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Elisha.

God used wicked nations to punish his people.

Naaman and his healing.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

What order did Jehovah give Elijah at Horeb?

Tell about his meeting with Elisha.

Give some account of the activities of Elisha up to the time of this lesson.

### Verse 1

Tell about Naaman and his affliction. Tell how God sometimes used wicked nations to serve his purposes.

## Verses 2, 3

What is meant by going out in bands?  
 What was the general religious condition of the kingdom of Israel?  
 Tell about the little maiden.  
 What evidence that she did not worship idols?  
 What shows her unselfishness?

## Verses 4, 5

What was the effect of the maiden's few words?  
 For what purpose did Naaman take so much wealth?

## Verses 6, 7

What was the nature of the letter Naaman took with him?  
 What effect did it have on Jehoram?  
 Why did he think Ben-hadad was seeking a quarrel with him?

## Verse 8

What did Elisha say?  
 How would he show Naaman that there was a prophet in Israel?

## Verses 9, 10

How did Naaman seek to show his importance?  
 What was he to Elisha?  
 How did Elisha show his indifference to Naaman's assumed greatness?  
 What did he command Naaman to do?  
 What did Naaman say?  
 Why would he be so enraged?  
 Who brought him to his senses, and how?

## Verse 14

What was the result of Naaman's obedience?  
 What did he say to Elisha?  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—August 20, 1939

## BEVERAGE ALCOHOL AND THE COMMUNITY

Joel 1: 5-7; Dan. 5: 1-5, 17, 25-28

5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and wail, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the jaw-teeth of a lioness.

7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

1 Bēl-shāz'zār the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

2 Bēl-shāz'zār, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which Nēb-ū-chād-nēz'zār his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jē-ru'sā-lēm; that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, might drink therefrom.

3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jē-ru'sā-lēm; and the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, drank from them.

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

5 In the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

17 Then Dān'īēl answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

25 And this is the writing that was inscribed: MĒ'NĒ, MĒ'NĒ, TĒ'KĒL, Ū-PHAR'SIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MĒ'NĒ; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end.

27 TĒ'KĒL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PĒ'RĒS; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Mēdes and Pēr'si-āns.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink."  
 (Hab. 2: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 28: 1-6.



## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 14.	M.	Wine Amid Waste (Joel 1: 5-7)
August 15.	T.	Intemperance in Wartime (Dan. 5: 1-5)
August 16.	W.	Disaster Follows Drunkenness (Dan. 5: 25-30)
August 17.	T.	Strength in Abstinence (Dan. 1: 16-20)
August 18.	F.	Incapacitated by Indulgence (Prov. 31: 1-5)
August 19.	S.	Degeneration Through Drink (Isa. 5: 11-13)
August 20.	S.	"Watch and Be Sober" (1 Thess. 5: 6-11)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—The time of Joel's prophecy is uncertain. Some chronologists represent him as prophesying during the reign of Uzziah; that is, between 810 B.C. and 795 B.C.; others, as late as the reign of Josiah; that is, between 637 B.C. and 606 B.C. Belshazzar's feast was about 553 B.C.

*Places.*—It seems that Joel prophesied in Jerusalem. The feast of Belshazzar was held in Babylon.

*Persons.*—Joel, the people of the kingdom of Judah, Daniel, Belshazzar, and his lords.

*Lesson Links.*—Joel was a prophet in the kingdom of Judah. It seems that he prophesied during the time of one of the worst famines that ever afflicted the land. Pests—the palmer-worm, the locusts, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar—had destroyed their vegetation. (1: 1-4.) "The field is laid waste, the land mourneth; for the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. Be confounded, O ye husbandmen, wail, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; for the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is withered, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field are withered: for joy is withered away from the sons of men." (Verses 10-12.) "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate . . . Yea, the beasts of the field pant unto thee; for the water brooks are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." (Verses 18-20.) Jehovah had forewarned them that their sins would bring such calamities upon them. (Lev. 26: 14-33; Deut. 28: 15-35.) It is strange that they were so slow to see that their own conduct was the cause of their troubles. The sins of the nation caused them to be overrun by their enemies and carried into captivity. Some good people were carried away with the bad. Daniel was one of the captives carried away to Babylon when Jehoiakim was king of Judah. (2 Kings 24: 1; 2 Chron. 36: 5-7; Dan. 1: 1-4.) Because of Daniel's wisdom and integrity he became an important servant in the affairs of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." (Prov. 22: 29.) Daniel's first rise to prominence grew out of telling Nebuchadnezzar his dream and interpreting it. (2: 14-48.) But Nebuchadnezzar passed off the stage of action. For a long time historians knew nothing of Belshazzar excepting what is said of him in the book of Daniel; and the critics, assuming that they knew all that was to be known about the matter, argued that Belshazzar was a myth, and that the book of Daniel was not reliable in his historic statements. But the pick and shovel have exploded many of the

finest theories of the critics, and so they did in this case. Rawlinson first discovered Belshazzar's name on a monument in Babylon in 1854. Since that time other facts concerning him have come to light till he is now regarded as a real historic character, and the book of Daniel stands vindicated. Belshazzar's father Nabonidus was king when Cyrus began his war against Babylon, and Belshazzar was the crown prince. It appears that Nabonidus was captured at Borsippa, leaving Belshazzar in command of the remaining forces, and also at the head of the government. The second section of our lesson shows how his short and inglorious reign ended in Babylon.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A Great Famine in Judah (Joel 1: 5-7)

The people in Joel's days had not before witnessed such a famine, nor had their fathers before them seen such. They had had a pest of palmer-worms, followed in succession by the locusts, the canker-worm, and the caterpillars. The language of verse six is figurative. The nation that had come upon the land was the great army of insect pests; they were so destructive that they were represented as having teeth of lions. They had laid waste the vineyards, and ate the bark from the fig-trees. The branches of the trees were made white by having all the bark peeled from them. No grapes were produced, and therefore no wine could be made. It was a time of weeping for the drunkard, for he could get no wine to drink. That was effective prohibition by way of insect pests. All fruits of the vineyard and field had failed. For a further description of the destruction these pests visited upon the land that once flowed with milk and honey, read the second chapter of Joel, verses 1-11. But a better day awaited them, if they would turn to Jehovah with all their heart, "and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning." (2: 12-14.)

### Belshazzar Makes a Great Feast (Dan. 5: 1)

Belshazzar may have made this feast on some state occasion, but the fact that they praised their gods in this feast makes it more probable that it was held in honor of their gods. But no matter what was the occasion for the feast, it was turned into a drunken revelry. He had gathered to this feast a thousand of his lords. He had but lately been placed at the head of the kingdom. Naturally he would want to get on the best of terms with all who were in high positions in his kingdom. "And drank wine before the thousand." At the time of our lesson a powerful enemy, the Medes and the Persians, were seeking the downfall of Babylon, and were even then at the very gates of the city; but Belshazzar, feeling secure within the great walls of that great city, was engaged in hilarity and drunkenness. It appears that no effort had been made to see what the enemy was doing. Wine flowed freely, and some say that the whole city was given over to revelry on that fatal night. But even strong defense is of little value without watchfulness, and Belshazzar was not watching—he was drinking and carousing.



### **They Desecrate Jehovah's Holy Vessels (Verses 2-4)**

Early in his reign Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, and King Jehoiakim became his servant. He then rebelled, and was conquered again. Jehoiachin became king, and was subdued by Nebuchadnezzar. Much of the riches of Jerusalem and many of the vessels of the temple were carried to Babylon. Zedekiah was made king and he also rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and was conquered. This time Jerusalem and the temple was stripped. (2 Kings 24.) The vessels of the temple had been kept in Babylon till the days of Belshazzar. Having no reverence for Jehovah and no regard for the sanctity of the things which had been dedicated to his worship, "Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and the silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, might drink therefrom." In his drunken revelry he would even dare to defy Jehovah. The vessels of the temple were brought, and they drank wine from them. "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Certainly no one would expect them to praise Jehovah while they engaged in such debauchery and profanation of holy things. Such conduct would not prompt people to praise Jehovah. The calling for these vessels of the temple that they might drink wine out of them in this drunken spree shows a deliberate intention to insult Jehovah. In verse 2 Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of as Belshazzar's father; but it was not an uncommon thing for the grandfather to be called the father.

### **Miraculous Writing on the Wall (Verse 5)**

In the midst of their drunken revelry a most astounding thing occurred. Over against the candlestick, where the light would be strong enough for the king to see what was happening, the fingers of a man's hand appeared in plain sight of the king, and began to write on the plaster of the wall. Belshazzar was not so drunk, but what he saw frightened him beyond measure. "Then the king's countenance was changed in him, and his thoughts troubled him; and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." He made promise to the wise men to make the one who could interpret the writing the third ruler in the kingdom; but none of them could interpret the writing. He and his lords were greatly perplexed. At this stage of the proceedings, the queen, having heard of the disturbance, came into the banquet hall. She was evidently not the wife of Belshazzar, for his wives were mentioned as being present at the feast. She was probably his mother, and would therefore know of the part Daniel played in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. She boldly announced to the king: "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him . . . Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

### Daniel Called Before Belshazzar (Verse 17)

When Daniel was brought in before the king, the king told Daniel that the wise men, the enchanters, had been unable to interpret the writing on the wall, but that he had heard that Daniel was able to give interpretations and dissolve doubts. He then promised to do in Daniel's case what he had promised to do to any of the wise men who could interpret the writing. "Then Daniel answered and said before the king." Daniel did not hesitate, nor cringe, before the king. Before interpreting the writing he proceeded to teach the king a lesson. "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another." Keep your gifts, and promote another. Daniel wanted no gifts nor promotions from such a dissolute prince; but he had accepted gifts and rewards from the great Nebuchadnezzar. It is easy for us to think that the aged Daniel pitied this weak prince upon whom circumstances had placed responsibilities greater than he could bear. "Nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." Daniel's reliance upon Jehovah in all such matters made him both confident and bold; his voice was not the voice of a coward, nor of one who doubts. He reminded Belshazzar that "the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar . . . the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty"; but when Nebuchadnezzar became proud, God deposed him from his throne, and he was driven from the sons of men, "until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will." And herein is a principle set forth by inspiration that few people recognize.

### Daniel Interprets the Writing (Verses 25-28)

Though Belshazzar had known what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, yet instead of humbling himself he had lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven. "And they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." For this reason the writing had been done on the wall. "And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." The first word was repeated for emphasis. Numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided. "MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end." Babylon had been a powerful kingdom, the glory of kingdoms; but it was now about to fall of its own corruption, as so many other kingdoms have since fallen. The number of its days had come to an end; the king had become too corrupt to be tolerated. "TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting." A man must be full of egotism and self-righteousness who does not feel that this judgment, in some measure, applies to himself. The man who honestly examines himself will discover defects; he will find that morally and spiritually he is underweight. "PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." For some time the Medes and Persians had been making war on the Babylonian kingdom; they had now reached the city



itself. Belshazzar's conduct in such a crisis showed him to be utterly unfit to be king. The Lord would take his kingdom, and give it to the Medes and Persians. "In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain."

## SOME REFLECTIONS

If it is right for one man to get drunk at any time, it is right for everybody to get drunk at the same time. Now let your imagination try to picture how things would be if everybody in these United States were to be on a big drunk at the same time!

Had Belshazzar been sober and watchful that fateful night, he might have saved his kingdom and his life; but he sold his kingdom and his own life for one night of drunken revelry.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Babylon—the city and the kingdom.

Daniel.

The fall of Babylon.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

Who was Joel?

What was the condition of his people when he prophesied?

What had destroyed every growing thing?

What had brought these calamities upon them?

How came Daniel to be in Babylon?

What first brought Daniel into prominence?

What had the critics once contended as to Belshazzar?

Give some facts about Belshazzar.

### Joel 1: 5-7

What is said of the severity of the famine?

How destructive were the pests?

Why did the drunkards and wine drinkers weep?

How might they improve their condition?

### Dan. 1: 1

Describe Belshazzar's feast.

What danger then threatened the city?

### Verses 2-4

Give some account of the actions of

Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem.

How did Belshazzar defy Jehovah?

### Verse 5

What astounding thing occurred?

What effect did this have on Belshazzar?

How did he seek to find the meaning of the writing?

How came he to call for Daniel?

### Verse 17

What did Daniel say to the king?

Who rules in the kingdom of men?

### Verses 25-28

What accusation did Daniel make against Belshazzar?

What was the writing on the wall?

Give Daniel's interpretation of each word of the writing.

What happened to Belshazzar that night?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—August 27, 1939

## UZZIAH: A KING WHO FORGOT GOD

2 Chron. 26: 3-5, 16-21

3 Sixteen years old was Ūz-zī'āh when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and two years in Jē-ru'sā-lēm: and his mother's name was Jēch-i-lī'āh, of Jē-ru'sā-lēm.

4 And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jē-hō'vāh, according to all that his father Am-ā-zī'āh had done.

5 And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zēch-ā-rī'āh, who had understanding in the vision of God: and as long as he sought Jē-hō'vāh, God made him to prosper.

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jē-hō'vāh his God; for he went into the temple of Jē-hō'vāh to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And Az-ā-rī'āh the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jē-hō'vāh, that were valiant men:

18 And they withstood Ūz-zī'āh the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Ūz-zī'āh, to burn incense unto Jē-hō'vāh, but to the priests the sons of Aār'ōn, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jē-hō'vāh God.

19 Then Ūz-zī'āh was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jē-hō'vāh, beside the altar of incense.

20 And Az-ā-rī'āh the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because Jē-hō'vāh had smitten him.

21 And Ūz-zī'āh the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jē-hō'vāh: and Jō'thām his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18: 14.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalm 112: 1-7.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

August 21.	M.	Seeking God and Prospering (2 Chron. 26: 3-5)
August 22.	T.	Forgetting God and Failing (2 Chron. 26: 16-21)
August 23.	W.	"Lest Thou Forget" (Deut. 6: 10-15)
August 24.	T.	Folly of Forgetting God (Luke 12: 16-20)
August 25.	F.	The Hearer Who Forgets (James 1: 22-25)
August 26.	S.	The Worker Who Remembers (Neh. 4: 14, 15)
August 27.	S.	"Forget Not All His Benefits" (Psalm 103: 1-5)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—Uzziah began to reign 810 or 809 B.C. and reigned fifty-two years. With the single exception of the reign of Manasseh, Uzziah's reign was the longest of any of the kings of Judah. (2 Chron. 33: 1.)

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Uzziah, his mother Jechiliah, Zechariah, the chief priest Azariah, and eighty other priests. Uzziah was also called Azariah.

**Lesson Links.**—Uzziah was the son of Amaziah, who reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. Amaziah started out well. "And he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, but not with



a perfect heart." He did fairly well till he conquered the Edomites and became fascinated with their gods. "Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them. Wherefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, who said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which have not delivered their own people out of thy hand?" That rebuke should have had a sobering effect on Amaziah; but when a man sets his heart on going wrong, a righteous rebuke serves only to stir up his anger. "He that correcteth a scoffer getteth to himself reviling; and he that reproveth a wicked man getteth himself a blot." (Prov. 9: 7.) And so Amaziah said to the prophet, "Have we made thee of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten?" Instead of giving heed to the prophet's rebuke, he threatened the Lord's prophet. After this he did another foolish thing—he made war on Joash king of Israel, when Joash did not want war. Amaziah was defeated with great loss. "Now from the time that Amaziah did turn away from following Jehovah they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there." "And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah."

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Young King Uzziah Prospers (Verses 3-5)

Uzziah was very young, only sixteen, when he began to reign. A mere lad, as was Uzziah, would need wise and experienced counsel in such a responsible position. In fact, a boy of sixteen needs counsel in any position of responsibility. Jehoiada the priest had given counsel to the young king Joash. "And Joash did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada the priest." (2 Chron. 24: 1, 2.) Zechariah was the son of Jehoiada. (24: 20.) Zechariah became the counselor of the young king Uzziah. "And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God." During these days in which he had the wise counsel of Zechariah, Uzziah did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. Nothing is known of this prophet-priest excepting what is told here and in chapter 24, verse 20. During these days of wise guidance Jehovah was with Uzziah and made him to prosper in all his ways. God gave him victory over the Philistines and the Arabians; the Ammonites also paid him tribute. "And his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong." He greatly improved the defenses of Jerusalem. He also loved farming, and had much cattle. He had a great army well equipped with instruments of war. "And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong."

### Uzziah Becomes Proud and Arrogant (Verse 16)

"When he was strong, his heart was lifted up." He became proud and his pride made him arrogant. He could not stand great success and prosperity. Few men can gain worldly success and prominence

and remain humble and obedient to Jehovah. In his prophetic poem Moses said, "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek; then he forsook God who made him." (Deut. 32: 15.) Through Jeremiah Jehovah said, "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear." (Jer. 22: 21.) "A man's pride shall bring him low; but he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor." (Prov. 29: 23.) "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16: 18.) Uzziah had been a great king, but he overreached himself. In his feeling of importance he thought he should be allowed to do anything he pleased to do, even to setting aside the Lord's plan of worship: "He trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense." He should have remembered the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who claimed the right to perform acts of worship that belonged exclusively to the priests. (Num. 16: 1-35; 26: 9, 10.) He should also have remembered that King Saul also made a similar blunder. (1 Sam. 13: 5-15.) But at the moment he felt too important to be warned by the fate of others.

### Uzziah Rebuked by Azariah the Chief Priest (Verses 17, 18)

Only the family of Aaron out of the tribe of Levi were selected to be priests. (Ex. 28: 40-43; 40: 12-15.) It was their duty, and theirs alone, to burn the incense and to attend to all the sacrifices and offerings made by the people. So far as we know Jehovah did not, in announcing the law, say to others, "Thou shalt not perform the office of priest." It was sufficient that he said who should be priests. Yet Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did not seem to think so; for they called together two hundred and fifty leading men, and said to Moses and Aaron, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of Jehovah." To settle the matter in a way that the whole assembly of Israel could not fail to understand, Moses proposed a test. The record of all of this will be found in Num. 16: 1-35. Aaron and his sons and all the objectors were to take censers and put incense in them and fire. Because Korah, Dathan, and Abiram would not join in the test, the earth opened up and swallowed them. Fire from the Lord devoured the other objectors. At the command of Jehovah Eleazar took the censers of those who had been burned, "and they beat them out for a covering for the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, to the end that no stranger, that is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to burn incense before Jehovah." Uzziah was a powerful king, but he had no more right to burn incense in the temple than the most obscure or poorest man in his kingdom. It was the duty of the priests to see that matters about the temple were conducted according to the law of Jehovah. Uzziah was going beyond his rights; a priest could do what he as king could not do. So when he presumed to enter the temple to burn incense, that is, to officiate as a priest, Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men." This required courage of a high order, for kings in those days had a habit of putting to death any man or men who



sought to hinder their doing whatever they wanted to do. They spoke in no uncertain terms to the king. "They withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God." A king was no more above the law of God than the humblest citizen. The priest might enter the sanctuary and burn incense, but no one else. God would not honor Uzziah for attempting to do so, no matter what were his motives. God neither honors nor excuses those who trespass against the holy commandments; and Uzziah should have known this. But a feeling of self-importance keeps many a man from knowing things that he should know. Perhaps he knew the law of the Lord in the matter, but felt that a man of his importance could disregard God's law with impunity. Too many people even now feel that God's book of law is merely a book of advice instead of a law to regulate one's conduct; that is a fatal error.

### Uzziah's Punishment (Verses 19, 20)

"Then Uzziah was wroth." "A scoffer loveth not to be reproved." (Prov. 15: 12.) "The ear that hearkeneth to the reproof of life shall abide among the wise. He that refuseth correction despiseth his own soul: but he that hearkeneth to reproof getteth understanding." (Prov. 15: 31, 32.) One of the strange things about human beings is their tendency to become angry with those who in good faith seek to correct their faults. The Jews persecuted Jesus and finally crucified him because he rebuked them for their sins and false teaching. And see how the Jews stoned Stephen because they could not prove that they were right and he was wrong. In becoming wroth with the priests Uzziah was not unlike others. Being king he perhaps felt the sting of the rebuke more than would a person in a more lowly station in life. And that is another peculiar thing about human nature. It is likely that Uzziah would have dealt severely with the priests had not the Lord interfered in a way that he could not mistake. "While he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense." That was an alarming thing to the priests, but much more so to Uzziah. It was convincing proof even to the king that he was entirely out of place. Azariah and the priests lost no time in thrusting him out of the temple. "Yea, himself hastened also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him." This shows that Uzziah himself realized that the leprosy came on him as a punishment for his trespass. Concerning the things that befell the Israelites for their disobedience, Paul said, "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." (1 Cor. 10: 11, 12.) If there had been no danger of our falling into condemnation there would have been no need that these examples be written for our admonition.

### Uzziah Dwelt Alone (Verse 21)

The law was plain as to what the leper should do. "And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be." (Lev. 13: 45, 46.) And though Uzziah unlawfully entered the temple and sought to violate the law governing the worship at the temple, he had to bow to the authority of the law concerning the leper. "And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah." In this isolation he had plenty of time to brood over his folly in assuming the functions and offices of priest. "And Jotham his son was over the king's house." In 2 Kings 15: 5 it is said, "And Jotham the king's son was over the household, judging the people of the land." This shows that he was in reality the acting king during the remaining days of his father. At his father's death he became the king.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

When a man gains sufficient wealth to be able to buy any material comfort or luxury that money can buy, he sometimes develops such a feeling of independence that he does not rely on the Lord as he should; and that is ruinous to his future happiness, as well as his present usefulness.

It takes a strong character not to be puffed up by great success and power. It is hard for such a person to realize that God is no respecter of persons. If he does not watch himself, he will be claiming privileges that he knows are not lawful for the common people. If one of Uzziah's subjects had done what he did, he would likely have had him put to death.

That the people under the law might see how God regarded sin, punishment was visited upon the sinner in a miraculous way, or else the punishment was required to be promptly visited upon the sinner by due process of law. Prompt punishment is a deterrent to sin. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccles. 8: 11.)

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The dangers of riches and worldly honor.

Uzziah's sin.

Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 11.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
How long did Uzziah reign?  
Who reigned longer?  
Who reigned just before Uzziah?

What is said of Uzziah's father?  
Why did a prophet rebuke Amaziah?  
What happened to Amaziah?

#### Verses 3-5

How old was Uzziah when he began to reign?  
What priest had been Joash's counselor?



Who was the priest Zechariah?  
 What was his relation to Uzziah?  
 Give some of the works of Uzziah.  
 What is said of his fame?

## Verse 16

What effect did success have on Uzziah?  
 Show what pride does for people.  
 What did Uzziah's pride lead him to do?  
 Why was his conduct wrong?  
 Give some similar incidences.

## Verses 17, 18

Who were selected to be priests?  
 What duty belonged exclusively to the priests?  
 Give an account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.  
 What happened to them and to those who sought to burn incense?

What memorial was made, and why?  
 Who interfered with Uzziah's efforts to officiate as priest?  
 What did they say to him?

## Verses 19, 20

How did Uzziah receive the rebuke of the priests?  
 What does Solomon say about hearkening to reproof?  
 Discuss this trait of human beings.  
 What happened to Uzziah?  
 What lesson may we get from what befell the Israelites?

## Verse 21

What was the law concerning the leper?  
 What was done about Uzziah?  
 Who reigned in his stead?  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson X—September 3, 1939

## ISAIAH: A LIFE DEDICATED TO GOD

Isa. 6: 1-13

1 In the year that king Ūz-zī'āh died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.

2 Above him stood the sēr'ā-phim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jê-hō'vāh of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

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

6 Then flew one of the sēr'ā-phim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

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

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

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

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

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

12 And Jê-hō'vāh have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land.

13 And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up; as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof. (HOLY SEED)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Here am I; send me." (Isa. 6: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 47: 1-9.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 28.	M.	Seeing the Lord's Glory (Isa. 6: 1-5)
August 29.	T.	Hearing the Lord's Call (Isa. 6: 6-8)
August 30.	W.	Seeking the Lord's Message (Isa. 6: 9-13)
August 31.	T.	Receiving the Lord's Commission (Ex. 3: 9-12)
September 1.	F.	Obedying the Lord's Command (Acts 26: 19-23)
September 2.	S.	Following the Lord's Guidance (Mark 2: 13, 14)
September 3.	S.	Yearning to Worship the Lord (Psalm 122)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—757 B.C. Chronologists differ little as to the year in which Uzziah died, and therefore as to the year in which the incidents of this lesson occurred.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Jehovah, the seraphim, and Isaiah. Seraphim is the Hebrew plural for seraph; seraphs is the English plural.

*Lesson Links.*—"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (Isa. 1: 1.) From what is said in the text for today's lesson it seems that Isaiah began to prophesy near the close of the reign of Uzziah. He lived and prophesied at a time in which the conditions were such as to bring out the best that was in man, or else the worst; for those were stirring times, in which the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil were in active combat. A man in whom the currents of life ran strong could not be indifferent to the issues involved. The most of the nation had become very corrupt. Neither the law of God nor their own experiences had taught them that Jehovah was the source of all good things, and that they prospered when they served him and suffered all sorts of losses and reverses when they forsook him. In that respect they were more senseless than dumb brutes. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1: 3.) Isaiah's further description of them shows how fearfully corrupt and wicked the people of the kingdom of Judah had become. "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil. Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire." (Chapter 1: 4-7.) Jehovah would not respect their pretended worship. And yet there was a remedy for all their ills. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." But they had practiced evil so long and so persistently that right seemed to them to be wrong and wrong seemed to be right. (5: 18-22.) Because they had rejected the law of Jehovah and despised his word, he would bring nations against them from afar, nations that were fierce and thoroughly equipped for war. Only a remnant were true to Jehovah.



## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Isaiah Sees the Lord (Verses 1, 2)

In our last lesson we studied some of the incidents in Uzziah's reign. Sometime during the year in which Uzziah died Isaiah saw this vision. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." "In this vision the ideas are taken in general from royal majesty, as displayed by the monarchs of the east: for the prophet could not represent the ineffable presence of God by any other than sensible and earthly images. The particular scenery of it is taken from the temple. God is represented as sitting on his throne above the ark, in the most holy place, where the glory appeared above the cherubim, surrounded by his attendant ministers. This is called by God himself 'the place of his throne, and the place of the soles of his feet.' (Ezek. 43: 7.) 'A glorious throne exalted of old, is the place of our sanctuary,' saith the prophet Jeremiah (chapter 17: 12) . . . The veil, separating the most holy place from the holy or outermost part of the temple, is here supposed to be taken away; for the prophet, to whom the whole is exhibited, is manifestly placed by the altar of burnt-offering, at the entrance of the temple (compare Ezek. 43: 5, 6), which was filled with the train of the robe, the spreading and overflowing of the divine glory. The Lord upon the throne, according to St. John (chapter 12: 41) was Christ; and the vision related to his future kingdom, when the veil of separation was to be removed, and the whole earth was to be filled with the glory of God, revealed to all mankind."—Clark. For purposes of comparison verse 2 as translated by Leeser, a learned Jew, is here given: "Seraphim were standing around him, each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two did he fly." The seraphim were evidently a special order or class of angels, the special attendants of the Lord. We are told that the name seraph signifies fire, or burning. Here we find them praising the Lord, and one of them acting as a swift messenger for him. Beyond this and the description of their appearance we know nothing; for the word is not found in the Bible excepting in this verse and in verse 6. With two wings each covered his face, as if he were not worthy to look upon the Lord; with two wings he covered his feet, or the lower part of his body, showing becoming modesty and regard for him before whom he stood; and with two wings did he fly, swiftly executing the Lord's will.

### Isaiah Greatly Affected by the Scene (Verses 3-5)

"One cried unto another." This seems to mean that they shouted the praises of the Lord in concert. Perhaps they were divided into two groups, the two groups facing each other, one group crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts"; and the other responding, "The whole earth is full of his glory." It was an impressive scene, and would be especially impressive to one so reverential and pious as was Isaiah. It was meant to so impress him that he would the more willingly respond to the call to service. So powerful was the voice that it shook the foundations of the temple. "And the house was filled with smoke." Smoke signified God's wrath which he

would pour out on his wicked and rebellious people. This would impress Isaiah with the necessity of doing everything possible to avert the threatened doom of the people. "Then I said, Woe is me! for I am undone." Isaiah, as do all thoughtful people, knew that he was not perfect, and must have thought that the vision was a warning to him; for he immediately adds what seems to be a reason for his thinking that he was undone—"because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." At the moment he claimed no superiority over the people among whom he lived and whom he had just described as being so corrupt, so unworthy did he feel in the presence of the Lord and the holy angels. These seraphim had sung the praises of the Lord, but he now felt that his lips were too unclean for such praises as they were able to pronounce. The fact is, no really great soul feels very much its own superiority. Boasting of one's superiority of wisdom and goodness is plain evidence of the littleness of one's soul. Isaiah was too great to boast.

### 3 - A Seraphim Gives Isaiah Comfort (Verses 6, 7)

The live coal with which the seraphim touched Isaiah's mouth had been taken from the altar, the altar of burnt-offerings. The law was that fire should never be allowed to go out on this altar. "Fire shall be kept burning upon the altar continually; it shall not go out." (Lev. 6: 13.) The mission of these seraphim was to go on errands of service as well as to praise the Lord. When the seraphim touched the mouth of Isaiah with the live coal, he said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." Fire is a sure purifier; Isaiah had confessed that he was a man of unclean lips. Of course, the live coal did not actually remove any moral impurities from Isaiah, but it was God's way of signifying to him that his humility and penitence had been rewarded with forgiveness. Isaiah could now consider himself fit for service to the Lord. A man who is defiled with sin cannot very well lead others out of sin. Every Christian who would go on any mission of service to God needs to know that thorough cleansing comes before acceptable service. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (Psalm 51: 12, 13.) If a man would teach others he must first take heed to himself, and then to his teaching. (1 Tim. 4: 16.)

### 4 "Here Am I; Send Me" (Verse 8)

"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" A great work was needed to be done; who would do it? "Then I said, Here am I; send me." Isaiah did not even wait to inquire into the nature of the work to be done; it was enough for him to know that it was a work the Lord wanted some one to do. That spirit is commendable. Every servant of the Lord, if he is in reality a servant of the Lord, stands ready to do whatever the Lord wants him to do. Sometimes a needed work is not a pleasant work, and one may make enemies in doing that work; but a true Christian will not hesitate on that account.



Isaiah was not only willing, but eager, to do God's bidding, and even asked that the Lord send him. God's will should always be our will. No matter how unpleasant the task to be done, the Christian should be able sincerely to say, "Here am I; send me."

### Big Results Not Promised (Verses 9, 10)

In quoting this prophecy the Savior gives its meaning in the following words: "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them." This is the best commentary on the verses in Isaiah. The people would not understand Isaiah's teaching, for their hearts had become gross. They would not want to understand, for they did not want to be converted from their way of living. That prophecy fits all people of all ages who take more delight in sin than in righteousness. The language shows plainly that a person must hear and understand before he turns from sin, and that he must turn from sin in order to be healed.

### Their Sins Would Result in Their Destruction as a Nation (Verses 11-13)

"Then said I, Lord, how long?" How long would such stubbornness and rebellion prevail among the people? "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste"—until, in fact, the Lord had them carried away into captivity—"removed them far away." The nation was fast becoming too corrupt to be of any further use to the Lord. And when the nation should be carried into captivity, if a tenth were left in the land, that tenth would also be eaten up. With all these warnings the people would not hear. To one who looked for big results from his work, what the Lord said about the people would be very discouraging. But so far as the record shows Isaiah did not falter. There were some who were true to the Lord, but we know not how many Isaiah influenced to turn to the Lord. "The holy seed is the stock thereof." Even among those who were carried into captivity a remnant remained true to Jehovah.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Though "the Lord is high and lifted up"; yet, in and through the divine Savior, he is seated on a "throne of grace," and "the way into the holiest is now laid open."—*Scott*.

If by faith we could see the Lord as he is and could realize our own weakness and dependence upon him, all the praise and adulation that men could heap upon us would seem empty and vain. To know that our Lord looked upon us with favor would be sufficient.

To know the Lord and to realize our dependence upon him makes us willing, even anxious, to do whatever he wants us to do. There is something fearfully wrong with the heart of one who inquires

concerning any duty. Will it pay? Is it pleasant work? Will I be thrown with the right sort of people? Will it enhance my reputation? Is the work below my dignity? The true servant of the Lord, like Isaiah, says, "Here am I; send me." Like his Lord he can say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4: 34.) "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40: 8.)

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The prophet Isaiah.

The people to whom he prophesied.

Isaiah's prophecies concerning a Savior.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give the facts stated in Isa. 1: 1.

What comparison did Isaiah make to show the foolishness of the people of the kingdom of Judah?

What did he say of the corruption of the people?

What was the remedy for their ills? What would be the result of their corruption?

### Verses 1, 2

Describe what Isaiah saw.

What is the significance of the way the seraphim used their wings?

### Verses 3-5

How were the seraphim engaged? Describe the effect of their voice.

What effect did all this have on Isaiah?

What sort of people usually boast?

### Verses 6, 7

Tell about the angel and the live coal. What did the law require as to the fire on the altar?

What did the angel say to Isaiah?

Show that thorough cleansing should come before service.

### Verse 8

What voice did Isaiah hear?

What answer did he make?

Show the need of willing service.

### Verses 9, 10

Discuss verses 9, 10.

Give the things that come before turning.

Why would the people not understand?

### Verses 11-13

What question did Isaiah ask, and what did he mean?

What answer did he get?

Could Isaiah look for big results from his work?

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—September 10, 1939

## HEZEKIAH: A KING WHO REMEMBERED GOD

2 Chron. 30: 13-22

13 And there assembled at Jê-ru'sâ-lêm much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly.

14 And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jê-ru'sâ-lêm, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kid'rôn.

15 Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Lē'vites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought burnt-offerings into the house of Jê-hō'vâh.

16 And they stood in their place after their order, according to the law of Mō'sēs the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood which they received of the hand of the Lē'vites.

17 For there were many in the assembly that had not sanctified themselves: therefore the Lē'vites had the charge of killing the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto Jê-hō'vâh.



18 For a multitude of the people, even many of Ē'phrā-īm and Mā-nās'sēh, Is'sā-čār and Zēb'ū-lūn, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it is written. For Hēz-ē-kī'āh had prayed for them, saying, The good Jē-hō'vāh pardon every one.

19 That setteth his heart to seek God, Jē-hō'vāh, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

20 And Jē-hō'vāh hearkened to Hēz-ē-kī'āh, and healed the people.

21 And the children of Is'rā-ēl that were present at Jē-ru'sā-lēm kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness; and the Lē'vites and the priests praised Jē-hō'vāh day by day, singing with loud instruments unto Jē-hō'vāh.

22 And Hēz-ē-kī'āh spake comfortably unto all the Lē'vites that had good understanding in the service of Jē-hō'vāh. So they did eat throughout the feast for the seven days, offering sacrifices of peace-offerings, and making confession to Jē-hō'vāh, the God of their fathers.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Turn us again, O God; and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." (Psalm 80: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 118: 24-29.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 4.	M.....	A Ruler Who Remembered God (2 Kings 18: 1-6)
September 5.	T.....	A Call to Remember God (2 Chron. 30: 6-9)
September 6.	W.....	Remembering God (2 Chron. 30: 13-22)
September 7.	T.....	Joy in Remembering God (2 Chron. 30: 25-27)
September 8.	F.....	Time to Remember God (Eccles. 12: 1-7)
September 9.	S.....	Remembering the Lord (1 Cor. 11: 23-26)
September 10.	S.....	"I Will Never Forget" (Psalm 119: 89-96)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—About 725 B.C. It was near the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah.

*Place.*—Jerusalem. After Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, it became the permanent place for all sacrifices to be offered and all the yearly feasts to be held; for the Lord had said, "But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come; and thither shall ye bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes." (Deut. 12: 5-7.)

*Persons.*—Hezekiah the king of Judah, the people of Judah, and many from the tribes of Asher, Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun.

*Lesson Links.*—Hezekiah was the twelfth king of Judah, and in many respects the greatest. To properly evaluate any man and his work, we must know the times in which he lived and the conditions under which he labored. If it is possible to do so, the student should read chapters 16-20 of Second Kings, chapters 28, 29, and 30 of Second Chronicles, and also chapters 36, 37, 38, and 39 of Isaiah. Hezekiah came to the throne while yet a young man, being only twenty-five years old. His father Ahaz had been as corrupt as a man could well be. He had even sacrificed some of his own children in the fire in the valley of Hinnom. Apparently the people were as corrupt as was Ahaz. It is surprising that a great and good king could come out of such conditions. But the picture of the times is not complete unless we take note of the fact that the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah lived and prophesied during those days, as we learn from the first verse of the prophecy of each of these prophets. Their heroic efforts would keep some of the people

from plunging into the corruption of the times. Hezekiah must have come under their influence. Isaiah, it seems, was his adviser and friend. It is greatly to the credit of Hezekiah that he followed the teachings of the prophets instead of the example set by his father. But instead of following the example of his father, he immediately went to work to undo the mischief his father had done. He put the priests to work, cleaning out the rubbish and filth that had accumulated in the temple. He exhorted the priests and the Levites to sanctify themselves and the house of Jehovah. "For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of Jehovah, and turned their backs . . . Wherefore the wrath of Jehovah was upon Judah and Jerusalem." Hezekiah was preparing to observe the feast of the Passover on a big scale. He sent runners through the ten tribes, the kingdom of Israel, with letters, inviting all who would to come to the feast. The Assyrians had already greatly weakened the kingdom of Israel by invading the northern part of their territory and carrying some off as captives. Hezekiah's move shows that he thought they might now be persuaded to return to the worship of Jehovah. It was their only salvation. "Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were; but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve Jehovah your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you." Some laughed the messengers to scorn, but many were persuaded to attend the feast.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The People Assemble for the Feast (Verse 13)

The origin of the Passover is told in Ex. 12. Beginning with the Passover feast they were to eat unleavened bread seven days. Hence the feast is sometimes referred to as the feast of unleavened bread. It seems that when Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah no one was paying any attention to the temple worship nor to the feasts of the Lord, but he immediately started in to restore the worship of Jehovah. There was so much to be done that he was unable to have the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread in the first month as the law directed. The king and the people had taken counsel to keep the feast in the second month. It is most likely that Isaiah gave this counsel. The law provided that under certain conditions, the Passover might be eaten the second month. (Num. 9.) By putting the feast off till the second month everything was ready, and the delay enabled a very great assembly to gather in Jerusalem. No such assembly had been in Jerusalem in many a day.

### Every Vestige of Idolatry Destroyed (Verse 14)

The filth and rubbish had been cleaned out of the temple, and it had thus been made fit for use in the required worship; but there remained some remnants of things used in the worship of idols. It was good for the people who had had part in such worship to have also a part in destroying the things used in that worship. It would



tend to give them a feeling that they were putting such things out of their lives. So "they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron." It appears that this was done by the people instead of the priests.

### **The Passover Killed—Offerings Made (Verses 15, 16)**

The lamb for the Passover was to be without blemish, a male a year old; it was to be taken from the sheep or from the goats. They were also to put away all leaven from their midst, and eat unleavened bread seven days. Some of the original regulations were evidently meant to be temporary. In its first observance they were to eat it in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand; for they had to march immediately after the meal. Jesus and his disciples did not so observe it. In Hezekiah's Passover the priests and the Levites had not first sanctified themselves. It is said that they were ashamed and sanctified themselves. The Levites were the ministers or helpers of the priests. They had to sanctify themselves before either of them could perform the required services in making the offerings. The law required that the fire on the altar of burnt offerings be not allowed to go out. (Lev. 6: 12, 13.) But it is not likely that that command had been obeyed during the corrupt period preceding the reign of Hezekiah, and it possibly had been allowed to go out during other periods of corruption. The burnt offerings which the priests brought into the house of Jehovah were not the Passover lambs. The law of the burnt offerings is given in the first chapter of Leviticus and in chapter 6: 8-13. Concerning the burnt offering and the man who made it the law was: "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before Jehovah." Then the priests sprinkled the blood round about upon the altar that was at the door of the tent of meeting. The animal was then skinned, cut into pieces, and then burned on the altar of burnt offerings. There were many other offerings which were not called burnt offerings. From what is said in our lesson we gather that the priests stood at the proper places, and the Levites brought the blood to them. The Levites were assistants to the priests.

### **Levites Kill the Passovers for Those Not Sanctified (Verse 17)**

The Passover was an old institution, but it was new to many of those who were gathered on this occasion; for it had been a long time since the Passover had been properly kept. Even the plain gospel, though revealed centuries ago, would be new to most of the people living today. Many of the people, knowing nothing of the requirements of the Passover, had failed to sanctify themselves for the feast, that is, they had failed to bathe themselves. Because many on this occasion had failed to sanctify themselves "the Levites had the charge of killing the pasovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto Jehovah."

### Hezekiah Prays for Those Not Cleansed (Verses 18-20)

After the kingdom was divided the people of the ten tribes, with few exceptions, immediately turned from Jehovah to the worship of idols. Now attending this feast are many people from five of these tribes—from Asher, Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun. These had never had any opportunity to know much about Jehovah and his law. And the people of Judah had so long ago forsaken the Lord that most of them were ignorant of what the law required. But the coming of all these people to Jerusalem to attend the feast and their zeal in destroying the things that had been devoted to the worship of idols showed their sincerity of purpose, even though they were ignorant of the requirements of the law. Because of their ignorance, they "did eat the passover otherwise than it is written." Hezekiah prayed for them; and the brevity and pointedness of that prayer is worthy of note: "The good Jehovah pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." Hezekiah recognized that the people were not keeping the law perfectly on account of ignorance, but he prayed for them to be pardoned on the ground of their sincerity of heart. There is significance in Hezekiah's addressing God as "the good Jehovah." Absolute justice would condemn; goodness would look in mercy upon them. "And Jehovah hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people." Hezekiah had one thing in view when he prayed, and for that one thing he prayed; and God heard his prayer. There is neither reason nor scripture for these long prayers in which everything that can be thought of is prayed for.

### The Feast Kept with Gladness (Verse 21)

They kept the feast of unleavened bread the required seven days. It was a time of gladness and rejoicing. It looked like the reuniting of a people that had long been divided, and much of the time at war. So delightful was the worship and the fellowship that they decided to prolong the feast for seven more days. (Verses 23-27.) For this feast Hezekiah and the princes gave to the assembly for offerings two thousand bullocks and seventeen thousand sheep. During these days the people had to eat; hence, it is almost certain that most of these animals were offered as peace offerings, which were eaten by those who offered them. (Lev. 7: 11-18; 22: 29, 30.) To these people who had not for a long time worshiped Jehovah, this was a joyful season of feasting and good fellowship. "And the Levites and the priests praised Jehovah day by day, singing with loud instruments unto Jehovah." The student will notice that the word singing is printed in the Bible in italics, showing that the translators supplied the word. It therefore does not belong in this place. Leeser's translation leaves it out. Instruments of music were added to the services during the reign of David. They are not mentioned in connection with the worship in the New Testament.



## Hezekiah Comforts the People (Verse 22)

To most of the people such a feast was a new experience. They had given up their idolatry and destroyed the images in Jerusalem, to which they had been formerly devoted. Many of them would feel that something had gone out of their lives. They needed encouragement, as many now do who have given up some form of religion to which they had formerly been devoted. And Hezekiah was more thoughtful than many Christians are today. The Levites had had a hard task during the feast. Much service had fallen to their lot. They especially would need encouragement. The king spoke comfortably to them. This verse shows that much of the sacrifices were peace offerings. They made confessions, or gave thanks, to Jehovah, the God of their fathers. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

A strong man makes his environment; most people let their environment make them. Nothing else should be so precious to us as the right.

In his efforts to bring about such a radical reformation, Hezekiah could not hope to escape criticism even among his own people. Many in the kingdom of Israel treated his invitation and exhortation with contempt—they laughed him to scorn.

It is no small thing for people to give up a religion to which they and their fathers have been thoroughly devoted; but if people had not given up the religion of their fathers, they would not have attended the great feast to which Hezekiah called them. And if people had not given up their religion and the religion of their fathers, there would never have been any Christians in the world. And yet if a person finds that his religion is wrong, to be honest with himself and with God, he must give it up. Hezekiah had to turn from his father's religion, and so did all Jews and heathen who became Christians. It is folly not to give up that which is wrong.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The feast of the Passover.

The folly of not turning from a false religion.

Hezekiah's good reign.

### QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

What had the Lord said about the place for their feasts and sacrifices?

Who was king before Hezekiah?

What is said of his character and reign?

What did Hezekiah immediately seek to do?

Give account of his activities up to the time of our lesson?

#### Verse 13

Where do we learn about the origin of the Passover?

What feast was held in connection with it?

When was the Passover observed?

Why did not Hezekiah and the people keep the feast at the appointed time?

How could they be justified in having the feast in the second month?

## Verse 14

Who had cleaned out the temple?  
What part did the people have in removing things devoted to idolatry?  
Why was this good for them?

## Verses 15, 16

What was the animal for the Passover?  
What original requirement was not meant to be permanent?  
What was the difference between priests and Levites, and their functions?

## Verse 17

Discuss verse 17.

## Verses 18-20

From what tribes were some of the people who came to the feast?  
Why did they eat the Passover otherwise than was written?  
For what did Hezekiah pray?  
How does that public prayer correspond with many public prayers of today?

## Verse 21

How long did they continue this feast, and how were they fed?

## Verse 22

Discuss verse 22.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XII—September 17, 1939

## MICAH: A MESSENGER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Mic. 3: 1-12; 6: 6-8

1 And I said, Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Is'ra-él: is it not for you to know justice?

2 Ye who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;

3 Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

4 Then shall they cry unto Jê-hô'vâh, but he will not answer them; yea, he will hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings.

5 Thus saith Jê-hô'vâh concerning the prophets that make my people to err; that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and whose putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him:

6 Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them.

7 And the seers shall be put to shame, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.

8 But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jê-hô'vâh, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Is'ra-él his sin.

9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Is'ra-él, that abhor justice, and pervert all equity.

10 They build up Zi'ôn with blood, and Jê-ru'sâ-lêm with iniquity.

11 The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jê-hô'vâh, and say, Is not Jê-hô'vâh in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us.

12 Therefore shall Zi'ôn for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jê-ru'sâ-lêm shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

6 Wherewith shall I come before Jê-hô'vâh, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?

7 Will Jê-hô'vâh be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8 He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jê-hô'vâh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?

GOLDEN TEXT.—"What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 50: 1-8, 14, 15.



## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 11.	M.....	Social Justice Spurned by Rulers (Mic. 3: 1-4)
September 12.	T.....	Social Justice Slurred by Prophets (Mic. 3: 5-8)
September 13.	W.....	Social Justice Slighted by the People (Mic. 3: 9-12)
September 14.	T.....	God's Requirements (Mic. 6: 6-8)
September 15.	F.....	Aspects of Justice (Ex. 23: 2-7)
September 16.	S.....	Administration of Justice (2 Chron. 19: 5-10)
September 17.	S.....	Trust God and Do Good (Psalm 37: 1-6)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Between 757 B.C. and 696 B.C. Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. (1: 1.) Jotham began to reign about 757 B.C. and Hezekiah died about 696 B.C. But Micah may not have begun to prophesy till toward the close of the reign of Jotham, or about 745 B.C., and may have ceased before the death of Hezekiah. However, the third chapter was spoken by Micah during the reign of Hezekiah, as will be seen by comparing verse 12 with Jer. 26: 16-19.

*Place.*—Micah was a native of Moresheth, but apparently the most of his prophesying was done in Jerusalem. What is said in Jer. 26: 16-19 makes it certain that the third chapter was delivered in Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Micah and the people of the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, which is also called Samaria.

*Lesson Links.*—In studying the prophets the student will avoid some confusion if he will notice that the books of the prophets are not placed in our Bible in their chronological order. For examples: Jonah was perhaps the first prophet that recorded his prophecies, and Jeremiah lived at a much later date than did Micah. Jotham, in whose reign Micah began to prophesy, was a fairly good king, as was also Jotham's father Uzziah; but the wicked Ahaz more than undid all the good that Uzziah and Jotham had done. Uzziah and Jotham could abolish idolatry, but they could not force people to be sincere and honest. A king's decree cannot make people unselfish and honest at heart. All genuine reformations must come from within, from the heart of man. And yet a king could do much toward changing the thoughts and purposes of the hearts of his subjects. They had practiced evil so much that it was an easy matter for Ahaz to lead them into more evil. The nation was exceedingly corrupt when Hezekiah became king. He did much good, but no man could fully change the current of corruption that was running so strong in that nation. Isaiah, as well as the other prophets of that time, paint a dark picture of the corruption of the people of that day. Micah says, "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." (2: 1, 2.) But the day of reckoning for Samaria was drawing near, and for Judah it was not far off.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Rulers Rule Without Justice (Verses 1-3)

"As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people." (Prov. 28: 15.) "When a wicked man beareth rule, the people sigh." (Prov. 29: 2.) It is the business of rulers to know justice, and to rule righteously; yet the rulers of Israel and Judah hated the good and loved the evil. With such rulers no nation can prosper, nor long endure. These rulers cared not for the good of the people, but used their office for their own gain. The figure of sheep and shepherds is continued from the last chapter. These evil shepherds were not content with shearing the sheep; they skinned them!—not literally, but by dishonesty beat them out of what belonged to them. "Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron." They went the limit in getting all out of the people they could get—no care for the people, no justice, only greed and rapine. This, of course, was not said of Hezekiah, but of the rulers under Ahaz, some of whom Hezekiah must have inherited from Ahaz his father.

### Jehovah Will Not Hear the Cry of Such Rulers (Verse 4)

It is strange that people will live in rebellion against God, cheat and defraud their fellow men, oppress them as these rulers did, and yet think God will hear them when they pray. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.) "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry, but shall not be heard." (Prov. 21: 13.) Let us not destroy the force of these passages by seeking to make them apply exclusively to alien sinners—they apply to sinners among God's people. Of these oppressive rulers Micah says, "Then shall they cry unto Jehovah, but he will not answer them; yea, he will hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings." "For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy." (James 2: 13.) No matter if a person is in covenant relation with God, he need not think that he can live in sin and be heard when he prays. Being a ruler of the people gives such a man no special favors with the Lord.

### The False Prophets Condemned (Verses 5-7)

In all religious matters the priests were the rulers, and that gave them great power in the nation. If the priests were righteous, God's prophets aided the priests in that they taught the people to serve God. If the priests were corrupt, false prophets aided them in their corrupt practices. "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." (Jer. 5: 30, 31.) They cried, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (Jer. 6: 14.) There were false prophets in Micah's day. They made the people to err by teaching them things that were not right. They



"bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace." While they were assisting the rulers in robbing the people, they were calling on the people not to raise a disturbance. The rulers were oppressing the people, and the false prophets were exhorting the people to be at peace. They wanted no one to raise an objection—a sort of "don't knock, boost" proposition. "And whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him." They had no regard for the person they could not use for their own benefit. There are professed Christians who will abuse the person they cannot use. Their only interest in others is the use they can make of them. Because these false prophets were of that type, there was darkness ahead for them—their sun would go down. "The day shall be black over them." And when nothing turned out as they prophesied, they would be put to shame, and be confounded; they would cover their lips, for they would have no excuse to offer for the failure of their prophecies.

### Micah a True Prophet (Verse 8)

Micah knew that he was a true prophet—"full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah." He was inspired to speak for God; God's prophet was one who spoke for God—or, one through whom God spoke. He was guided by divine judgment and sustained by divine might, so that he could fearlessly "declares unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." He was not moved to act by any mercenary motives; he could be satisfied with nothing less than speaking the word of God as it came to him. Jeremiah expressed the sentiment of every true prophet and preacher: "And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain." (20: 9.) To the Jewish high court the apostles said, "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5: 29.) "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1: 10.) In declaring to the people their transgressions and sins, Micah was not pleasing them. Many people much prefer to be flattered rather than to be told of their faults and sins.

### False Hopes of Security (Verses 9-11)

In these verses the prophet speaks of all the leaders of the people, and makes out a strong case against them. The judges gave the decision in favor of the one who would reward them; there was no justice in such judgments. The priests teach for hire. They would teach whatever they were paid to teach—sold their services to the highest bidder. Their duties as teachers of the law were lost sight of, or lightly considered. The prophets would pretend to get a favorable revelation from God for any one who would pay them. One wonders at such depravity on the part of the leaders of a nation. Any nation with such leaders must fall. And yet they would lean upon Jehovah, confident that no evil would befall them. Because they were a chosen people they felt that Jehovah was with them,

no matter how corrupt they were. They were the chosen people, wore the right name, and had the law; even so, their corruption would lead to their ruin.

### **The Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold (Verse 12)**

"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field." "Therefore"—because of the corruption just mentioned. The destruction of Jerusalem would be so complete that the portion of the city known as Zion, or the city of David, would become a field—would be plowed. Years later Jehovah said through the prophet Jeremiah, "And I will make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling-place of jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant." (Jer. 9: 11.) The city of Jerusalem is sometimes called Zion, and it may be so in this verse. When Nebuchadnezzar made his final war on the Jews, he tore down the wall around the city, burned the magnificent temple which Solomon had built at such immense cost, burned all the principles houses, and carried away all the vessels of the temple and much other wealth. (2 Kings 25: 8-10; 2 Chron. 36: 17-19.) Jeremiah mentions more in detail the things that were carried away to Babylon. (Jer. 52: 17-23.) The nation had become unfit for any further existence till they had been humiliated and cured of idolatry by a long siege of captivity in a strange land.

### **The People Raise Questions (6: 6, 7)**

Were they sincere in these questions? People sometimes ask questions as to what to do as if they meant to ask, What is the use? The tone of the questions in these verses does not have the ring of sincerity. Some of them involve absurdities, and some, impossibilities, "Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah?" What can I bring to him that will be satisfactory? Burnt offerings? Well, we have been making these offerings right along, and yet he has just said (verse 3) that he has a controversy with us. What more can we do to please him? "Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams?" That question sounds as if the questioner meant it as a peevish reflection on Jehovah. "Ten thousands of rivers of oil?" That question is too absurd to be sincere. And the next is even worse: "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" If he would not be satisfied with these, then what is the use of trying? No one could be sincere in asking if the Lord would require such absurdities. The spirit of such questions is expressed in the short question, What's the use?

### **Jehovah's Reply (Verse 8)**

The Lord had made no unreasonable and absurd requirements; he had already told them what was good, namely, to love Jehovah their God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances. (Deut. 30: 15, 16.) If they did not know what the Lord required, it was their fault; the knowledge was available. Jehovah required of them to do justly. They must deal fairly with their neighbor, not dishonestly. The rulers had



not done this. Figuratively they had skinned the people and had eaten their flesh. They had not loved kindness—had made no pretense of being kind. "And to walk humbly with thy God." They had not recognized that the destiny of every man is in the Lord's hands, but had felt sufficient within themselves to order their own ways. Rebelling against Jehovah and defrauding their fellows, they could not make any sacrifices that would please Jehovah. Because of their sins and their insincerity Jehovah said, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and your meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts." (Amos 5: 21, 22.)

## SOME REFLECTIONS

Here is one lesson that Israel never did learn, nor has the world yet learned it: "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10: 23.)

No man has a right to take from another that which is justly his. It is right to pay just taxes, but even a government may turn robber by excessive taxation. Buying and selling is all right when each party is benefited by the transaction, but no man has a right to take advantage of another's needs or his ignorance in trading and selling. Unjust dealing is wrong, no matter what the occasion is.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

What Jehovah requires of us.  
The prophecy of Micah.  
What the nation needed.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give the period in which Micah prophesied.  
How is a reformation of character effected?  
What can rulers do in bringing about reformations?  
What was the moral and religious condition of the people in Micah's day?

### Verses 1-3

What is said of the condition of people under wicked rulers?  
What is said of the rulers of Israel and Judah?  
Give Micah's description of their greed.

### Verse 4

Why would these rulers not be heard when they prayed?

Quote passages that show that God does not hear such sinners.

### Verses 5-7

What gave the priests power in the nation?  
What does Jeremiah say about the priests and false prophets?  
Why would these false prophets cry peace?  
What was their attitude toward those who did not pay them?  
What would happen to these greedy prophets?

### Verse 8

Discuss what Micah says of himself.

### Verses 9-11

Of whom does the prophet speak in these verses?  
What charge is made against these characters?

What does Jeremiah say of himself when he became discouraged and thought he might as well quit? Give scripture showing whom we should please.

## Verse 12

Give scriptures foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem. How completely did Nebuchadnezzar destroy Jerusalem?

## 6: 6, 7

Discuss the questions raised in verses 6 and 7. Do these questions seem to be sincere?

## Verse 8

What had the Lord taught them? Discuss what the Lord required. Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIII—September 24, 1939

## ISAIAH: FORETELLING THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIANIC KING

Isa. 7: 1-14; 9: 1-7; 11: 1-5

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Im-mān'û-ēl.

1 But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zēb'ū-lūn and the land of Nāph'-tā-lī; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Gāl'i-lēe of the nations.

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

3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Mid'i-ān.

5 For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire.

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

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jē-hō'vāh of hosts will perform this.

1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jēs'sē, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of Jē-hō'vāh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jē-hō'vāh.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Jē-hō'vāh; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears;

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

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

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9: 6.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Luke 1: 46-55.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

September 18.	M.	Light in the Darkness (Isa. 9: 1-7)
September 19.	T.	A Friend of the Oppressed (Isa. 11: 1-5)
September 20.	W.	The Righteous King (Psalm 72: 1-7)
September 21.	T.	A Refuge from the Storm (Isa. 25: 1-5)
September 22.	F.	A Leader Undiscouraged (Isa. 42: 1-4)
September 23.	S.	God Giveth Power and Strength (Isa. 40: 27-31)
September 24.	S.	Zion's Happy Future (Isa. 35: 5-10)



## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—It is impossible to determine the exact time the prophecies of our lesson were uttered, though the period in which Isaiah prophesied is told by Isaiah himself. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (1: 1.) Uzziah began to reign about 810 B.C. and reigned fifty-two years; and Hezekiah died about 696 B.C. Isaiah must therefore have begun to prophesy in the latter part of the reign of Uzziah. He probably did not commit his prophecies to writing till toward the close of his life. The prophecies of 7: 14; 9: 1-7 were delivered during the reign of Ahaz. - 12 K.

*Place.*—Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—Isaiah and the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

*Lesson Links.*—Jehovah promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that in their seed all the nations, or families, of the earth should be blessed. (Gen. 12: 1-3; 22: 18; 26: 4; 28: 15.) It is not likely that they had any clear ideas as to the meaning of this promise; but Paul tells us how this promise was fulfilled. "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." (Gal. 3: 16.) And Moses prophesied: "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken . . . I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18: 15-19.) There are also some prophecies in the Psalms that refer to this coming deliverer; but Isaiah speaks more often and more fully of him than does any other prophet.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## The Deliverer to Be Born of a Virgin (Verse 14)

Ahaz had declined to ask a sign of Jehovah; but Jehovah proposed to give a sign anyway. This sign would not be for Ahaz, but for the people of later days. This sign would be such an occurrence as had never before happened: "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." And this son, thus miraculously conceived, was to be called Immanuel; that is, God with us. When the time came for this great event to occur an angel announced to a virgin named Mary, of the village of Nazareth: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1: 35.) To Joseph, the man to whom Mary was betrothed, an angel of the Lord said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Then Matthew adds, "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring

forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." (Matt. 1: 18-23.) And so the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. And to deny the prophecy of Isaiah and the records of Matthew and Luke is to deny the inspiration of God's holy writers, and also one of the fundamentals of the gospel of Christ.

### **The Great Light Foretold (9: 1, 2)**

The first sentence of verse 1 really belongs to the previous chapter, as a reading of it in connection with the last verses of chapter 8 will show. Naphtali and Zebulun were in Galilee. They had suffered from a raid made by Tiglath-pileser king of Syria. (2 Kings 15: 29.) As a result of this raid they were greatly weakened—brought into contempt. But in the latter times—in the days of Christ—that land would be made glorious by the ministry of Christ himself. Matthew leaves no doubt as to the fulfillment of this prophecy, and his version of this prophecy is its best interpretation. "Leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region and the shadow of death, to them did light spring up." (Matt. 4: 13-16.) The light referred to was the teaching and the life of Jesus; much of his teaching was done in Galilee. It is likely that Isaiah uses the term Galilee of the nations, or Gentiles, because it had but recently been conquered by the Gentiles, the Assyrians.

### **Israel's Deliverance (Verses 3-5)**

The great things here mentioned that would come to Israel seems plainly to refer to the blessings that would come to spiritual Israel, the true Israel of God. The connection seems to demand this. In prophecy future events are frequently referred to as if present, or even past. The sixth verse illustrates this characteristic of prophecy, for it refers to Christ as if he had already come. And his coming is there assigned as a reason for the blessings mentioned in verses 3 to 5. But these verses could refer to both fleshly Israel and to spiritual Israel, in the sense that what happened to fleshly Israel was a type of what would happen to spiritual Israel. Because the nation had been multiplied and their joy increased, they rejoice before God. To rejoice before God was to recognize God as the source of that which had brought them joy. In those days the things left on the battlefield by the vanquished army was considered by the victors as fuel for fire.

### **"Unto Us a Son Is Given" (Verse 6)**

The titles applied to this child that is born can apply to Jesus, and to no other child that was ever born. "Unto us a son is given." Notice that this Son is given to us. Notice what the angel said to the shepherds on the night in which Jesus was born: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to



all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2: 10, 11.) "Born to us"—"born to you." He was not born to the angels, but to us. His mission was not to angels, but to us. He came for the benefit of man—all men; he is God's gift to men. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.) "And the government shall be upon his shoulders." Where there is government there must be people to be governed. The people whom this Son would call out of sin would be the people over whom he ruled; he would be the head of the government. Jesus is head over all things to the church. (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) And this Son would wear various names, and these names would grow out of the offices he would fill. Some of these names Isaiah mentions; other names are given elsewhere, especially in the New Testament. He would be called Wonderful, or according to the marginal reading, Wonderful Counselor. In the majesty of his person he would be wonderful; and he would be wonderful in his conception, his life, his teaching, his miracles, his death and resurrection, and in what he is in his relations to man. "Mighty God." In his nature he was God as well as man. "The Word was God." In such expressions his essential deity is set forth. Jesus was more than man. "Everlasting Father." Marginal reading, Father of eternity. Or as some have it, Father of the age, supposing that the expression refers to the present age and his relation to it. "Prince of Peace." The author of peace. He made peace possible between Jew and Gentile by taking the law out of the way. (Eph. 2: 14-18.) This text shows also that peace is made between God and man by reconciling man to God. Yet he is a mighty warrior against everything that hinders his purpose.

### Upon the Throne of David (Verse 7)

His government and peace would increase without end. The throne over Israel was Jehovah's throne, and they were his kingdom; but in asking a king that they might be like other nations they rejected Jehovah as their king. (1 Sam. 8: 4-7.) In the forbearance of God he allowed them to have a king, and he made Saul their first king. The kingdom was taken from his family, and a new dynasty was established in David and his descendants. Thus what had been the kingdom of God was now transferred to David and his sons in succession. It was spoken of as the kingdom of the one who at any given time occupied the throne. (Deut. 17: 18, 20; 2 Chron. 21: 3; 33: 13.) But by way of preeminence the throne is frequently referred to as David's throne, for he was the head of that dynasty; but it was Jehovah's throne that David occupied. "Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah instead of David his father." (1 Chron. 29: 23.) "And Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father." (1 Kings 2: 12.) Solomon did not sit on two thrones. Throne is a symbol of kingly authority. That authority—that throne—was given to Jesus when he ascended to the Father. Peter's speech in Acts 2 proves this. After showing that Jesus was raised to fulfill the promise of God to David that of the fruit of his loins one should sit on his throne, Peter immediately adds by way of conclusion,

"Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted." Exalted to what? If not to the throne of David, then his conclusion does not fit, or follow, his argument. And yet this throne is, as it was in the days of David, God's throne. (Rev. 3: 21.) And because Jesus occupies it, it is his throne, just as it was called David's throne because he occupied it.

### Distinguishing Traits of the Deliverer (11: 1-5)

Jesse's family as represented in the royal family of his son David would be fallen very low; it would be like the decaying stump of a tree that had been cut down, but out of it a shoot would spring up. The royal family was very low at the time of the birth of Jesus. But the Spirit of Jehovah would rest upon him, giving him, as a man, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah. Even the enemies of Jesus recognized his great wisdom and miraculous powers. He delighted in the fear of Jehovah—delighted in giving him reverence and homage. He would not judge by reports, nor by the way things appear to be. Reports are frequently false, "and things are not always what they seem." The poor and the meek, such people as rulers find it easy to oppress, he would judge righteously and equitably. He would have both the desire and the wisdom to enable him to judge fairly and justly, traits which many rulers and judges lack. "The rod of his mouth" and "the breath of his lips" refer to the same thing, namely, his word. Every sinner converted to Christ is an enemy slain; he dies, and is buried. (Rom. 6: 1-11.) And this death is brought about by the word, the gospel of Christ. This is the weapon with which our king fights. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. And in all his operations and actions righteousness and faithfulness would be about him as a girdle. In the man Christ Jesus we find the perfect man; he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Many of the prophecies concerning the Christ are so plain and their fulfillment in Jesus as the Christ so exact that it seems strange that any thoughtful person can doubt that God's hand was in the prophecies and their fulfillment.

In studying the government of God on this earth it is important that we notice some plain and undeniable facts and truths. The nation of Israel was God's kingdom at the first. (Ex. 19: 5, 6.) He was their king. When they asked for a king God said to Samuel, "They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam. 8: 7.) Later, in Samuel's farewell address to them, he said, "Ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us, when Jehovah your God was your king." (1 Sam. 12: 12.) He also told them that their wickedness was great in asking for a king. (Verse 17.) So this kingdom with a human king was conceived and brought forth in rebellion and rejection of God as their king. Jehovah tolerated them in their experiment—tolerated their having a man on his throne; but the arrangement was not according to his plan, and the kingdom thus set up was not his kingdom.



## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Isa. 53.

Israel's sin in demanding a king.

Jesus on David's throne.

## QUESTIONS

Where is our lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give the promise made to Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob.

To what did the seed refer?

Give what Moses said about the prophet to be raised up.

## Verse 14

Discuss this verse.

What evidence do we have that it was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus?

## Isa. 9: 1, 2

What had weakened Naphtali and Zebulun?

What encouraging thing did Isaiah say to them?

Give evidence as to when and how this was fulfilled.

## Verses 3, 5

Discuss these verses.

## Verse 6

Repeat verse 6.

Unto whom was the Son given?

Give the meaning of this statement: "The government shall be upon his shoulders."

Discuss the names this son would be called.

## Verse 7

What is said of his government and peace?

Who was the rightful and first king of Israel?

How was the kingdom changed?

Who became their first human king?

Why did the throne over Israel come to be called David's throne?

Show that the throne of David and the throne of Jehovah is the same.

Show that Jesus now occupies that throne.

## Verses 1-5

Discuss verse 1.

Discuss the characteristics of the person here called a shoot from the stem of Jesse.

How would he judge?

What is "the rod of his mouth" and "the breath of his lips"?

In what sense would he slay his enemies?

How are sinners converted?

Discuss verse 5.

Discuss the reflections.





## FOURTH QUARTER

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: STUDIES IN MATTHEW

## (First Half of a Six Months' Course)

AIM: To learn from a study of the Gospel of Matthew the teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven, and to ascertain the significance of those teachings for the life of today, both in personal character and in social relationships.

## Lesson I—October 1, 1939

## THE INFANCY OF JESUS

Matt. 2: 13-23

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into E'gypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Hēr'ōd will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into E'gypt;

15 And was there until the death of Hēr'ōd: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of E'gypt did I call my son.

16 Then Hēr'ōd, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bēth'lē-hēm, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jēr-ē-mi'āh the prophet, saying,

18 A voice was heard in Rā'māh,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rā'chēl weeping for her children;

And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 But when Hēr'ōd was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in E'gypt, saying,

20 Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Is'rā-ēl: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Is'rā-ēl.

22 But when he heard that Ār-chē-lā'ūs was reigning over Jū-dæ'ā in the room of his father Hēr'ōd, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Gāl'i-lēe,

23 And came and dwelt in a city called Nāz'ā-rēth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nāz-ā-rēne'.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us." (Matt. 1: 23.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 9: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 25.	M.....	The Infant King (Matt. 2: 1-12)
September 26.	T.....	The Flight into Egypt (Matt. 2: 13-18)
September 27.	W.....	The Return to Nazareth (Matt. 2: 19-23)
September 28.	T.....	The King of Peace (Isa. 11: 1-9)
September 29.	F.....	How the King was Received (John 1: 11-18)
September 30.	S.....	Blessings Promised with the King (Jer. 31: 15-20)
October 1.	S.....	The Reign of the King (Isa. 9: 1-7)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—4 B.C. For a discussion of the time, see first lesson of this year.

*Places.*—Bethlehem, Egypt, Jerusalem, and Nazareth.

*Persons.*—Joseph, Mary, the child Jesus, the Magi, Herod, and the children of Bethlehem.

*Lesson Links.*—Matthew wrote, as did also Mark, Luke, and John, to set forth the truth that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah. The prophet Isaiah said, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7: 14.) Matthew shows that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. (1: 18-23.) Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth. "Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled . . . And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child." While they were in Bethlehem the child Jesus was born. Magi from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east and are come to worship him." In some way the meaning of that star must have been revealed to them. Their report troubled the cruel Herod and his supporters. Herod inquired of the chief priests and the scribes as to where the Christ should be born, and they referred him to Mic. 5: 2, which said he would be born in Bethlehem. Then Herod, after inquiring of the Magi when the star appeared, told them to find the young child, and then bring him word. He was plotting the death of the child, though pretending that he wanted to go and worship him. The Magi followed the star, which they should have continued to do instead of stopping to inquire of Herod. The star stood over the house where Jesus was. This shows that it was a miraculous star. Had it been one of the regular stars in the heavens it would have seemed to be as much over Jerusalem as over Bethlehem, and certainly as much over one house in Bethlehem as over another. But it led them to the exact house. They worshiped the young child and presented gifts. "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." It is likely that they left in the night so that no one in Bethlehem knew what house they had visited. Of course, Joseph and Mary had found a house in which to live. Apparently they had aimed to make Bethlehem their home. (Verse 22.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## Joseph and Mary Flee with the Child to Egypt (Verses 13-15)

Matthew passes over some events that Luke mentions, events which must have occurred before the Magi appeared. Jesus was circumcised the eighth day as the law required. (Luke 2: 21.) After a son was born the law required that he be circumcised the eighth



day. The mother was then to continue in her purifying for a period of thirty-three days, after which she was to take an offering to the door of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 12: 1-8.) Joseph and Mary did this at the appointed time. (Luke 2: 21-24.) It is almost certain that they did this before they fled into Egypt, and therefore before the visit of the Magi. It seems plain that immediately after the Magi departed, they were warned by an angel to take the child and flee into Egypt. This was to save the child from the hands of Herod. It seems that after Herod learned of the birth of the Christ, especially after the wise men, or Magi, were warned not to report to Herod, everything was done with the greatest of speed and secrecy. The Magi must have departed in the night. When they departed the Lord warned Joseph to take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and to remain there till the Lord should tell him to return: "for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Joseph lost no time. "He arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt." This would certainly be well along into the night, so that no one would know of their departure, nor would they afterwards know where they had gone. No one would be able to give Herod any information as to where they had gone. But what a night for Joseph and Mary! They had been greatly elated by the unexpected visit of the Magi and by their gifts and homage to the child Jesus. Then unexpectedly they were sent away in the night to go into Egypt for how long they knew not. Being extremely poor, as they were, as the sacrifice they offered showed, it is likely that they had to use some of the gold the Magi had presented to the child Jesus. In the use Matthew makes of a statement made by Hosea concerning the bringing of Israel out of Egypt, he makes the bringing of Israel out of Egypt a type of the bringing of Jesus out of Egypt. (Hos. 11: 1.)

### **Herod Slays the Male Children of Bethlehem (Verses 16-18)**

A man of Herod's disposition and habits would not be peaceable when he found that any one had disregarded his orders. The Magi had done so, and he was enraged. Then he committed two great sins. First, he knew what the prophets had said about the birth of the Messiah, but he determined to see to it that God did not carry out his plans. He would out-do God! He would have God's Messiah killed in infancy! Hence, in fighting against God he committed the cruel crime of having all the babes in Bethlehem killed. But that was no strange act for Herod, who had killed so many of his own family—his uncle Joseph, his wife Mariamme, her brother, and three of his own sons. Many others were put to death at his orders. Yet he made many public improvements, and built the great temple. Though he was the father of fourteen children, it is said that not a relative of his was left at the end of a hundred years. His public works, including the temple, were destroyed; only a memory of Herod remained. The prophecy Matthew quotes as having been fulfilled in the slaying of these babes is Jer. 31: 15. It appears that when Nebuchadnezzar was fighting against the kingdom of Judah, his commander Nebuzaradan collected his captives at Ramah. (Jer. 40: 1-6.) It is likely that all the children and other helpless people



were killed so that they would not be a burden in the long march back to Babylon. Hence, the weeping in Ramah; that also would be true in Bethlehem.

### **Joseph and Mary Return from Egypt with the Child Jesus (Verses 19-21)**

It is not known how long Joseph and Mary remained in Egypt with the young child. It is thought that Herod died of his miserable disease soon after the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem. "But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life." From this it seems that he could return to any part of the land that suited him. From the language of the angel it seems that more than one were interested in putting the young child to death. Perhaps Antipater, Herod's son, who was as cruel as Herod, and who was to succeed to the throne, was as anxious to have the child put to death as was Herod. But because of Antipater's plotting to gain the throne Herod had him put to death only a short time before his own death. And so it was that those who sought the young child's life were dead. So Joseph meant to bring the young child and his mother into the land of Israel, perhaps intending to make Bethlehem his home, for the language of the next verses seems to prove that he had not planned to return to Nazareth. It was quite natural that they should desire to make their home in Bethlehem, but it was not to be so. The Lord was guiding the movements of these people, no matter what might have been their plans as to where they would live.

### **Joseph Goes to Nazareth with Mary and the Young Child (Verses 22, 23)**

It seems that he heard, before reaching Judea, that Archelaus, Herod's son, was on the throne; he was then afraid to go into Judea. When Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided between his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip. Archelaus had rule over the Jews, and is said to have been the worst of Herod's sons; so tyrannical was he that the emperor of Rome banished him. It is well that Joseph was afraid to make his home in Judea, to be at the mercy of one who had no mercy. He was warned of God in a dream, and so made his way back to his old home town, Nazareth, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene." "The words, 'He shall be called a Nazarene,' here said to have been spoken by the prophets, are not found in any of the extant prophetic writings. It should be said that Matthew's expression concerning them is peculiar. He does not say, as is usual with him, 'spoken by the prophet,' but 'spoken by the prophets.' This expression may mean either that the prophets generally had used this language, or that they had said what is equivalent to this. The latter is doubtless the real meaning. Many of the prophets had predicted the lowly life of the Savior, and this is proverbially expressed when he is called a Nazarene. Such was the reputation of Nazareth that even the



guileless Nathaniel, when told that the Christ had been found, and that he was of Nazareth of Galilee, exclaimed, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' (John 1: 45, 46.) Matthew says not that he shall be a Nazarene, but that he shall be called a Nazarene. It was the circumstance of his residence in Nazareth that led to his being called a Nazarene when he was really a Bethlehemite. It afterward furnished his enemies with an approbrious epithet, and all this is summed up in the words into which Matthew condenses the prophetic utterances."—*McGarvey*. Jesus was a Nazarene in the sense that he was of Nazareth; hence, he is frequently spoken of as Jesus of Nazareth, and once so designates himself.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

It would be well for every student to read carefully what Josephus says about the character and deeds of the Herods, especially what he says about Herod the Great, that monster of cruelty.

When we read of the character and the deeds of such monsters of cruelty, we are astonished that men made in the image of God can become so cruel and heartless.

In reading the Bible accounts of persons and of great events it is worth while to notice how simple and brief the language is. No extravagant statements are made, and no high-sounding adjectives are used. It would be an improvement if speakers and writers followed the same plan.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The Herods.

Prophecies concerning the Christ.

Dreams in which revelations were made.

Bethlehem.

Nazareth.

## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Discuss the error in computing the year of the birth of Jesus.

What prophecy does Matthew quote as to the mother of Jesus?

Why were Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem?

Locate Bethlehem on the map.

Describe the visit of the wise men, or Magi, in Jerusalem.

Tell about their visit to Bethlehem and their departure.

### Verses 13-15

What events does Matthew pass over that Luke mentions?

What shows that Joseph and Mary were very poor? (Compare Lev. 12: 8 and Luke 2: 22-24.)

When and why did Joseph take the child and its mother to Egypt?

Why would things be done so secretly?

How long were they to remain in Egypt?

What caused them to return from Egypt?

### Verses 16-18

What two great sins did Herod commit in the matter?

Why should he think that he could out-do God?

Why was destroying the babes in keeping with Herod's character?

What became of the Herodian family and his works?

Discuss the prophecy Matthew quotes in connection with the slaying of the babes of Bethlehem.

## Verses 19-21

What caused Joseph to return from Egypt?  
 Why would it be said that they are dead that sought the child's life?  
 Who besides Herod the Great might have been interested in putting the child Jesus to death?

## Verses 22, 23

Why was Joseph afraid to return to Bethlehem of Judea?  
 When Herod died what disposition was made of his kingdom?  
 What was the character of Archelaus?  
 Discuss verses 22, 23.  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson II—October 8, 1939

## THE FORERUNNER OF THE KING

Matt. 3: 1-17

- 1 And in those days cometh John the Băp'tist, preaching in the wilderness of Jū-dă'e'a, saying,
- 2 Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- 3 For this is he that was spoken of through ĭ-să'iah the prophet, saying,  
     The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
     Make ye ready the way of the Lord,  
     Make his paths straight.
- 4 Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey.
- 5 Then went out unto him Jē-ru'sā-lēm, and all Jū-dă'e'a, and all the region round about the Jordan;
- 6 And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 7 But when he saw many of the Phăr'i-sēes and Săd'dū-cēes coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
- 8 Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance:
- 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
- 10 And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
- 11 I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire:
- 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.
- 13 Then cometh Jē'sūs from Găl'ī-lēe to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.
- 14 But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?
- 15 But Jē'sūs answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.
- 16 And Jē'sūs, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him;
- 17 And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matt. 3: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mal. 3: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 2.	M.	The King's Messenger (Mal. 3: 1-6)
October 3.	T.	The Forerunner's Office (Mark 1: 1-18)
October 4.	W.	Heralding the King (Matt. 3: 1-6)
October 5.	F.	Making Ready for the King (Matt. 3: 7-12)
October 6.	F.	John Baptizes the King (Matt. 3: 13-17)
October 7.	S.	The Witness of John (John 1: 19-28)
October 8.	S.	The Power of the Gospel (Rom. 1: 8-17)



## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably parts of A.D. 26 and 27.

*Place.*—The river Jordan in the wilderness of Judea. It must have been at or near the ford of the Jordan east of Jericho.

*Persons.*—Jesus, John the Baptist, and the people.

*Lesson Links.*—John's parents—Zacharias and Elisabeth—were both of the family of Aaron. "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child." (Luke 1: 5-7.) They had prayed for a son. While Zacharias was attending to his duty as a priest, an angel appeared to him and said, "Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." (Luke 1: 13.) When he was circumcised both Elisabeth and Zacharias said that his name was John. After he entered upon his ministry he came to be known as John the Baptist, or John the Baptizer, because the term "baptist" means one who baptizes. Excepting what is said of the incidents of his birth and circumcision, only this brief statement is made concerning John's life before he began preaching: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing to Israel." (Luke 1: 80.) Growing to manhood in the deserts, or wilderness, unhampered by the customs and traditions of polite society, or the hypocrisies of the religious leaders and teachers of that day, he developed that sturdiness and independence of character so manifest in his preaching. If he had any worldly ambitions, they were completely overshadowed by his greater desire to fulfill his God-appointed mission. He realized without resentment that he must decrease while Jesus the Christ increased. He felt no dependence upon the religious leaders nor upon kings. He was bold enough to rebuke Herod at the cost of his life. (Matt. 14: 1-12.) Jesus paid a fine tribute to him by declaring, under the figure of a reed and the wind, that John was not swayed by the fancies and fads of the day. (Matt. 11: 2-19.)

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## | John the Harbinger of Christ (Verses 1-4)

34  
5. It would seem to the people of these days that John selected a peculiar location for his preaching—the wilderness of Judea. He did not go to the people, but depended on the people's coming to him. It is evident that the writers give us only a bare outline of what he preached. "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He was announcing the near approach of the kingdom, and was warning the people to prepare for its coming by repenting and being baptized. He was preparing the way for the coming of the Lord. Matthew quotes Isa. 40: 3 as fulfilled in the ministry of John; Luke quotes a little more of that prophecy than does Matthew. And this is the way his paths were to be made straight: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways smooth." The proud and haughty shall be brought low; the lowly and faint-hearted shall be lifted up; the dishonest, the crook, shall be made straight; the rough and rude shall be made kind and gentle.

Such characters would then be fit for the kingdom that was near. Like the ancient prophets, John wore rough clothing, and gathered his food in the region where he labored.

### Multitudes Baptized by John (Verses 5, 6)

The language of verse 5 does not mean that every one in the regions named went to John and were baptized. Later we find Jesus and his disciples baptizing more people than John. But it does mean that all the regions named were represented in those baptized by John. The prophets of old had foretold the coming of the Messiah, and people generally were expecting him about that time. When John began to attract attention with his preaching, especially with his announcement that the kingdom was at hand, the people began to reason whether he were the Christ. (Luke 3: 15.) It is no wonder that his preaching created great interest, so much interest that the authorities sent men to find out from John himself whether he were the Christ. (John 1: 19-23.) There is therefore no doubt but that his preaching the near approach of the kingdom was the main incentive that led the people to be baptized. The motive he held before them to induce them to repent was the near approach of the kingdom. They also confessed their sins. Their part was to repent, confess their sins, and be baptized; God's part was to give them the kingdom. Many of them did their part; to say that God did not give them the kingdom is to say that he did not fulfill his promise. Yet Peter says that God is not slack concerning his promises. (2 Pet. 3: 9.) It is no light matter to charge God with failing to make good on his promise to these people who obeyed him in good faith.

### John Denounces the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Verses 7-9)

The Pharisees were a sect of the Jews that sprang up some time after the return of the Jews from captivity. We are told that the word Pharisee comes from a Hebrew word that means separate. They gained that title from their strictness in keeping from coming into contact with things that would render them ceremonially unclean, but they had come to be a self-righteous sect. The Sadducees were materialists. Both sects had so degenerated that there was little piety in them and also little regard for their fellow men. When some of them came to John to be baptized he did not flatter them for coming, nor did he use soft words in reminding them of their sins and need of a thorough repentance. "Ye offspring of vipers." Ye brood of snakes. Language of condemnation could not be much severer. Whether John baptized them has been a matter of dispute. Some have argued that he did not baptize them, for it is said that the Pharisees rejected John's baptism. (Luke 7: 30.) But that would have been said, if the most of them had been guilty just as it was said that the Jews killed Jesus when many of them had no part in it. John's demand that they live so as to show that they had repented rather indicates that he baptized them. John's demand that they bring forth fruit worthy of repentance was not a demand for them to tell an experience, or to show in some way that they



had repented, else he would not baptize them. The only way they could show that they had repented was to live a reformed life. If the language to the Pharisees and Sadducees shows that he did not baptize them, the same language used to the multitudes shows that he did not baptize them. (Luke 3: 7-9.) That process of reasoning would prove that John did not baptize any one! Their being children of Abraham after the flesh would avail them nothing, for God could raise of the stones children unto Abraham. This refers to spiritual children of Abraham, for no power could make a stone into a blood descendant of Abraham.

### Warnings and Promises (Verses 10-12)

Citizenship and blessings in this new kingdom that was near would depend on individual conduct. To be a descendant of Abraham would count for nothing. The fate of the wicked would be like the fate of a worthless tree. While John could baptize only in water, the coming Messiah would baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire. Then John speaks of the wicked as chaff, which is to be burned up; the righteous as wheat, which is gathered into the garner. Fire is mentioned in these three verses. In verses 10 and 12 it certainly refers to the fire of punishment as all agree. The laws of language require that we so understand it in verse 11. John spoke to a mixed audience; some of them would be baptized in the Holy Spirit, some would be baptized in the fire of torment. When Jesus referred to this in speaking to his tested disciples, he referred to this statement of John, but left off the baptism in fire. (Acts 1: 4, 5.) Only the wicked are baptized in fire.

### The Baptism of Jesus (Verses 13-17)

Most likely Jesus made the long journey on foot from Nazareth to the place of John's baptism. Jesus did not regard baptism as a nonessential. He did not come confessing his sins as did the others, for he had no sins to confess. He was not baptized for the remission of sins, nor because of the remission of sins; but it was the Father's will, and he came to do that will. While John did not yet know that Jesus was the Christ, he knew him to be a good man. As he was baptizing men for the remission of their sins, he saw no need for Jesus to be baptized. John himself says, "I knew him not"; but God had told him how he would know when he baptized the promised Messiah. (John 1: 33, 34.) Being cousins, John and Jesus must have met often at the various feasts in Jerusalem which all law-abiding Jews attended, but nothing had occurred to cause John to know him as the Son of God, the promised Messiah. A person does not really know another till he knows what he is. The occurrences at the baptism of Jesus enabled John to know who and what Jesus was. Knowing the superior life of Jesus John thought that Jesus should baptize him rather than that he should baptize Jesus. This shows that John was not baptizing people because they were righteous. "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus would not fail to do one thing that was right. If a person fails to be baptized, he fails in that particular to do right. A person assumes an awful respon-

sibility when he fails to do one thing that God commands. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water." According to the marginal reading in Mark, Jesus was baptized into the Jordan; then Mark adds, "And straightway coming up out of the water." These circumstances would not attend sprinkling or pouring. Even were sprinkling, pouring, and immersion equally valid, it is certain that Jesus did not receive all three. An earnest person should want to do exactly what Jesus did. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus was one of the means by which John knew him to be the Messiah. "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 34.) In addition to this, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God would not have been well pleased with him, had he, like the lawyers and Pharisees, rejected the will of God. (Luke 7: 29, 30.) No one can be well-pleasing to God while rejecting his counsel. Jesus commands us to be baptized, and he is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him. (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) No other occurrence on earth was attended with such demonstrations as was the baptism of Jesus. John, the greatest of men, was the administrator, Jesus was the subject baptized, the Holy Spirit gave his sanction and endorsement by descending upon Jesus, and the Father gave voice to his approval by speaking from heaven. The greatest man and the three persons of the Godhead took part in that act. Has there ever been another scene like it? And yet some people belittle baptism! How can religious people be so impious?

### SOME REFLECTIONS

To be of any value repentance must be followed by a reformation of life.

A study of the work and the character of John the Baptist should make us more courageous and faithful.

Jesus set us an example of obedience as well as of suffering. No one who believes in Jesus as the Christ would think that he would have neglected any command of his Father. Can a conscientious person be at all satisfied unless he follows the example of Jesus?

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- The setting up of the kingdom.
- The ministry of John the Baptist.
- The character of John the Baptist.
- The baptism of Jesus.

### QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

- Give time, place, and persons.
- Who were John's parents, and what is said of their character?
- How was Zacharias informed that a son should be born to him?
- What is said of this son's early life?
- Give some points about his character.

#### Verses 1-4

- Where did John first preach and baptize?
- What was the theme of his preaching?
- Discuss the prophecy about John, which Matthew, Mark, and Luke quote.
- Give the force of the expression, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."



## Verses 5, 6

To what extent did people come to John's baptism?  
 What special point in his preaching would arouse most interest?  
 Who did the people think John might be?  
 What were the people required to do?  
 What was God's part in the matter?  
 Some people did their part; did they get what was promised?

## Verses 7-9

Who were the Pharisees and the Sadducees?  
 What did John say to them?  
 What did he demand of them?  
 How can a person show that he has repented?

## Verses 10-12

What figures of speech does John use, and what do they mean?

Discuss what he says about baptism in verse 11.

## Verses 13-17

Where was the home of Jesus?  
 About how far does the map show this to be from the Jordan east of Jericho?  
 What relation were John and Jesus? In what sense did John not know Jesus?  
 Why did John hesitate to baptize Jesus?  
 What reply did Jesus make?  
 By what sign would John know when he baptized the Messiah?  
 Tell what occurred at the baptism of Jesus.  
 What circumstances show that he was immersed?  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson III—October 15, 1939

## THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matt. 4: 1-11

1 Then was Jē'sūs led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

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

3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

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

5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:  
 and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jē'sūs said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

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

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

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

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

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"For we have . . . one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4: 15.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Heb. 2: 11-18.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

October 9.	M.	The Temptation (Matt. 4: 1-11)
October 10.	T.	Jesus Sympathizes with the Tempted (Heb. 4: 12-16)
October 11.	W.	Jesus Intercedes for the Tempted (Luke 22: 31-38)
October 12.	T.	The Meaning of Temptation (James 1: 12-18)
October 13.	F.	Temptation Permitted (1 Pet. 1: 3-12)
October 14.	S.	Help for the Tempted (Heb. 2: 11-18)
October 15.	S.	Praise for Deliverance (Psalm 124)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 27.

*Paces.*—A wilderness of Judea, the exact location of which is not known, and the temple in Jerusalem.

*Persons.*—The Spirit, Jesus, the devil, and angels.

*Lesson Links.*—Temptation is the act of tempting or of being tempted. In studying this lesson it is well therefore to consider some of the meanings and uses of the word tempt. To tempt a person does not always mean to stir up in him an inclination or a desire to do a thing, nor even that an effort is made to do so. Some of the older meanings of tempt were to prove, test, try. Webster gives also these definitions: To endeavor to persuade; incite. To lead, or endeavor to lead, into evil. To provoke, as anger, or a person to anger; to act presumptuously toward; as, to tempt God. In various ways God tested, or proved, his people to see whether they were really obedient to him. The devil always tempts people in the sense that he seeks to lead them to do evil. In that sense God tempts no one. When the devil presents inducements to get a person to do wrong the person is said to be tempted, even though the devil's offer may not have affected the person at all. No one ever tempts Jehovah in the sense that he seeks to induce him to do evil; but the Israelites frequently tempted him in the sense that they were presumptuous toward him, and also in that they demanded unreasonable signs of his presence with them. They thus tempted him to anger. We frequently speak of being tempted to do a thing, whether good or bad, when we are inclined to do it; and so we get the idea that a person is not tempted unless he feels an inclination to do a thing. In what sense was Jesus tempted? His temptation is sometimes compared with the temptation of Eve in the garden. In her temptation there was an appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. In this respect the temptation of the Savior was much like hers; but here the likeness stops. She lent a willing ear to what the devil said; Jesus met every attempt of the devil with an indignant rebuff. And there is no proof that he at any time had the least inclination to do the thing the devil suggested. Can any one believe that the devil stirred up any evil desires in the Savior's heart? Is not a desire to do an evil thing wrong in itself? (See Matt. 5: 27.) Can any one believe that Jesus was contaminated by evil thoughts or desires? It is true that he was tempted in all points like as we are, but that does not necessarily mean that he felt as we do when tempted, that he had the same impulse to do wrong that we sometimes feel. Offer a bottle of whisky to a toper and to one who never drinks; the same temptation is presented to both, but certainly it does not affect them the same. Here is one comforting thing about our temptations: "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." (1 Cor. 10: 13.) If we do not take advantage of the way of escape, the fault is ours.



## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jesus Fasts Forty Days and Forty Nights (Verses 1, 2)

It is not necessary to suppose that Jesus was never tempted before his baptism. He had lived a normal life, and of course had much the same trials that others had. Neither should we conclude that he was not tempted after the experience of this lesson, for he himself said on the night of his betrayal, "But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations." (Luke 22: 28.) None of these disciples were with him during the temptations of our lesson. These temptations are frequently referred to as the temptation of Jesus, and are so denominated in the heading of this lesson, but they were really three distinct temptations. It appears that these temptations came immediately after his baptism. With characteristic force of expression Mark says, "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness." Jesus was not seeking temptation; he was led—driven—into the wilderness to be tempted. Before entering into his ministry he must be put to the severest test. Jesus had come into the world—into Satan's territory—to wrest from him his control of men. At the very beginning there must be a test of strength, the enemy of man against the friend of man, with our destiny in the balance. On the part of God these temptations was to prove by the severest test that Jesus was a worthy Savior, a worthy antagonist of the devil. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights. Moses and Elijah had done the same thing. (Ex. 34: 28; 1 Kings 19: 8.) Men have fasted even longer. "He afterward hungered." McGarvey says that the fact that he did not hunger during the forty days shows that his appetite was miraculously suspended. But that conclusion is hardly necessary. One fact seems generally to be overlooked: Luke says he was tempted during the forty days. We know nothing of the nature of the temptations of the forty days. It is a well-known fact that people can be under such great emotional strain that no sense of hunger is felt. It seems therefore that the language rather shows what a great emotional strain Jesus was under during the forty days. Perhaps the devil then eased up for a time so that he might try Jesus from another angle. When the strain was over, the pangs of hunger would be all but overwhelming, and yet Jesus had with him nothing to eat. Hunger and thirst are said to be the strongest passions that take possession of human beings.

### The First Temptation (Verses 3, 4)

While Jesus is so intensely hungry the devil strikes. "And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." This language shows that for a time the devil had not been in the presence of the Savior. There is an insinuating "if" in his suggestion, an "if" that implies possible grounds for doubt. It was a challenge for Jesus to prove his claims, thus proving that the voice at his baptism spoke the truth. Jesus did not propose to follow the suggestion of the devil even in making bread to supply his need for food. Neither was he interested in proving anything to the devil. Had he demonstrated to the devil that he was the Son of God, what good would it have



done? There was no one else there to witness the proof, and the devil would not have been benefited by his proving himself to be the Son of God. Besides, the devil knew without proof that he was the Son of God. Even the evil spirits in men knew who Jesus was. "It is written" meant more to Jesus than supplying his need at the suggestion of the devil, or than proving anything to his great enemy. A wicked person may give good advice so as to get us in the habit of doing what he suggests. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." (Psalm 1: 1.) "The counsel of the wicked is far from me." (Prov. 4: 16.) Instead of following the counsel of the devil, Jesus relied on the counsel inspired men had written. There is more to life than eating food; food for the body is not enough; we must live by every word of God. It is true that the physical man must have food in order to live, but the spiritual man needs food no less than does the physical man. Too many professed Christians live as do the animals, with their whole efforts directed toward supplying their physical needs and desires; we therefore have too many weak Christians. The devil did not fool Jesus, but he has fooled many Christians at this point.

### **The Second Temptation (Verses 5-7)**

The second temptation, as mentioned by Matthew, took place in the holy city, the city of Jerusalem. The devil took him to Jerusalem. He allowed the devil to arrange these temptations in his own way and where he chose. This would make the victory of Jesus all the more striking. Here again is that insinuating "if," and a challenge for Jesus to prove himself to be the Son of God; but if a person is not going to make a proper use of a truth or a fact, there is no use of proving it to him. Jesus intended to prove only one thing to the devil, and that was, that the devil could not lead him astray. And here the devil shows that he can quote scripture, too; but he had no good design in quoting it, and he was perverting it from its intended use to his own purposes. God never promised to protect any one in a vain effort to show off. If God had commanded Jesus to jump off that pinnacle of the temple, promising that the angels would bear him up, he could have well done so, confidently relying upon God's promise. But no one can follow the devil's suggestions, and have any right to claim any of God's promises in doing so. If you would rely on God's promises, follow him instead of listening to the devil. But Jesus met the devil's suggestion and his wrong use of a passage of scripture with the correct application of another passage. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." To seek to put God to the test under conditions concerning which he had given no commandment or promise is decidedly wrong. And yet even today many religious people leave undone things that God has commanded and do things that he has not commanded, and expect him to fulfill to them the promises he has made to those who do his will. If Jesus had done what the devil suggested, he would have done what these people are doing.

### **The Third Temptation (Verses 8-11)**

We are not informed as to where this mountain was. On this exceeding high mountain the devil presented to the Savior's view all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. That was a



glittering scene to behold. For such prospects men in all ages past—the Nebuchadnezzars, the Cyruses, the Alexanders, the Caesars, the Napoleons—have waded through floods of human blood; but to gain these kingdoms along the line Jesus had set before him, he must wade, so to speak, through his own blood. Was there an easier way, a shorter route? Yes; so the devil said just fall down and worship me, and all shall be thine. Luke's report is a little fuller: "To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine." In some way the devil's claim must have been true—they were not his by right, but by conquest. Jesus did not dispute the devil's claim. If the devil's claim had no truth in it, Jesus knew it. If the claim was entirely false, how could the devil's offer have been regarded as a temptation? Jesus met this temptation again with "It is written." If Christians now would follow the example of Jesus, how different would many temptations turn out; but, alas! so many Christians are not sufficiently acquainted with the scriptures to know what is written. Now, the devil realizing the superiority of Jesus, acknowledged his own defeat by leaving him. Heaven was interested in that conflict, for now angels come to Jesus and minister to him.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

It is useless to prove a true proposition to those whose heads are set in another direction.

Before following any advice it is better to find out the character of him who gives the advice and what possible interest he may have in our following his advice.

It has been said that it is useless to quote the Bible to one who disbelieves it. But Jesus quoted it to the devil. There is power in an appropriate passage of scripture that even a disbeliever cannot evade.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

Our physical and spiritual needs.

The power of the word.

How the world and its glories tempt us.

How men tempt, or try, God.

A study of 1 Cor. 10: 13.

### QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.

What is temptation?

In what sense does God tempt men?

How did the Israelites tempt God?

In what sense was Jesus tempted?

#### Note to Teacher and Student

The rest of the lesson can be handled better by discussing each temptation.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IV—October 22, 1939

## THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 5: 1-16

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house.

16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."* (Matt. 5: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 16.	M.....	Citizens of the Kingdom (Matt. 5: 1-12)
October 17.	T.....	Influential Citizens (Matt. 5: 13-16)
October 18.	W.....	Godly Citizens (Psalm 1: 1-6)
October 19.	T.....	Charitable Citizens (Psalm 41: 1-13)
October 20.	F.....	Righteous Citizens (Psalm 112: 1-10)
October 21.	S.....	Security in the Kingdom (Psalm 34: 1-10)
October 22.	S.....	The King of Glory (Psalm 24: 1-10)

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—Probably A.D. 28.

Place.—A mountain, probably a hill near Capernaum.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

Lesson Links.—It was not the purpose of either Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John to record everything Jesus said and did. Between his temptation and the Sermon on the Mount Jesus did many things which Matthew passes over. It seems that immediately after his temptation he returned to the place where John was baptizing, and there gathered a few disciples. He then attended a marriage at Cana of Galilee, made a short visit to Capernaum, attended the Passover at Jerusalem, cleansed the temple, conversed with Nicodemus, through his disciples baptized many in Judea, conversed with the woman of Samaria on his way to Nazareth, was rejected at Nazareth, and then went down to Capernaum. (See John 1: 29



to the end of fourth chapter; also Mark 1: 14-39; Luke 4: 14-44.) Matt. 4: 18-25 shows that he did much preaching and performed many miracles in Galilee before he preached the Sermon on the Mount. "And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan." It seems certain that no other speech ever delivered has so influenced man as has this Sermon on the Mount. Its contents, so superior to any production of man, prove the deity of its author. Its teaching is out of harmony with any school of philosophy or of religion of that day; hence, their brightest lights could not have produced it. It is not eclectic, that is, its contents are not a collection of the best thoughts of that and previous ages. Its teaching is distinct, revolutionary, challenging every school of religious thought of the times, both Jewish and heathen. It is not a product of the times, but of deity. It is a pity that some are now contending that the Sermon on the Mount was intended to be the law, or constitution, of the material government which they contend Jesus meant to establish; but since Jesus did not then establish that government the sermon now applies to us only in its principles. That is an easy way, but not a safe way, to avoid its requirements.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Arranging for the Sermon (Verses 1, 2)

The last verse of the fourth chapter shows something of the vastness of the throng that had gathered about Jesus. No house would hold the crowds. The narrow streets of that day furnished no suitable place to preach to such a throng of people. A suitable place on a near-by hill or mountain was in his mind; to that place the people followed him. The first verse says that his disciples came to him. From this statement some have concluded that only the disciples heard the sermon, but that is a mistake, as will be seen by reading the verse following the close of the speech. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitude were astonished at his teaching." In making this speech, Jesus employed none of the tricks of the ordinary speaker—he sat while he spoke.

### The Beatitudes (Verses 3-11)

The arrangement of these beatitudes is not haphazard—they come in what might be termed their natural order, and begin with the first principles of acceptable obedience to God. The teaching set forth in these beatitudes is unlike anything originated by man. The word "blessed" signifies a state of felicity; it is happiness in the highest sense, a happiness distinct from the possession of material things or the lack of them. It is a happiness that grows out of a consciousness of having been lifted up above the strife for earthly things to a communion and union with God. It is not meant that either of the conditions stated separate from the others brings one into this state of blessedness, but the sum total of all of them. The careful reader will notice that each characteristic is mentioned in its regular order; and, too, that they are not characteristics that the world has been in the habit of prizing highly.



*The Poor in Spirit.*—"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To be poor in spirit is to recognize our destitution of those qualities and blessings that the spirit needs, and that in and of ourselves we cannot supply those needs. Such realize their sinfulness, their consequent condemnation, and their dependence upon God for escape. Such characters, and only such, will come to God, where the blessings and happiness they seek may be found. If this poverty of spirit existed with no way to escape it, there would certainly be no blessedness connected with it. Its blessedness consists in the fact that it leads one to seek God and the release he can give. The poor in spirit realizes his poverty of resources, and that it is not in man to direct his steps, and that he must depend upon God for guidance. Such characters make up the citizenship of the kingdom of heaven. The proud, the haughty, the self-sufficient, are not in that kingdom; they do not enjoy the blessedness of those who compose that kingdom.

*They That Mourn.*—The poor in spirit will mourn; it could not be otherwise. They realize that they are sinners, and condemned with no ability within themselves to remedy matters. Is there blessedness in such a condition? Certainly not, but it is a necessary condition before one will come where the blessedness may be enjoyed. "For they shall be comforted." There is no comfort in mourning—no comfort in such a condition of mind and heart; but there is comfort promised to those who so mourn their condition that they will come to God to escape it.

*The Meek.*—"Blessed are the meek." Meekness is gentleness, submissiveness; not submissiveness to evil, or to false teaching, or to unwholesome conditions, but to God. When God speaks the meek run not away as a wild thing, but as a gentle thing submit to God's leading. Mourning over his poverty of spirit—his lost condition, and the fact that he cannot make a way of escape for himself, he gladly accepts God's way of escape, and lets God lead him out of sin. He feels himself utterly crushed, broken, dependent. "Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit." (Psalm 34: 18.) "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2.) "For they shall inherit the earth." The arrogant and the aggressive have sought to possess the earth by unrighteous schemes and the conquest of war and bloodshed, but have always failed. History furnishes striking examples of such, but where are they now? Were they happy because they had title to what they gained? Having title to a thing is not really to possess it; in fact, it may really possess us. In a higher sense we really possess only that which we use and enjoy. The meek now really possess the earth in a sense that the selfish and the arrogant cannot comprehend. Perhaps there is also an allusion to the new earth of which Peter speaks. (2 Pet. 3: 13.)

*The Hungry and Thirsty.*—"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Hunger and thirst—extreme hunger and thirst—are the most compelling and urgent passions that take possession of a human being; in their intensity food and drink are the sole objects of desire. For the time being nothing else counts. The characters mentioned in the preceding verses will long for righteousness more than for anything else. Jesus does not mean that there



is any happiness in the pangs of hunger and thirst, but that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will attain to that for which they hunger and thirst. "For they shall be filled." This promise is as positive as any found in the Bible, and as certain of fulfilment as any found in the Bible.

*The Merciful.*—Those who have a high sense of right may not be as merciful toward the weak and erring as they should. Perhaps this characteristic is thrown in here as a sort of balance against the preceding verse. If we would obtain mercy we must be merciful. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." And he shall be judged without mercy that hath showed no mercy.

*The Pure in Heart.*—Perhaps no one is absolutely pure in heart, but we must strive to that end. "They shall see God." Shall see him in his true nature. When Jesus was here the wicked did not see him as did the disciples. The pure in heart can now see God in a sense in which the corrupt cannot see him. Later they shall see him face to face.

*The Peacemaker.*—Peacemakers are so few; but there are many war makers, strife makers, and quarrel makers. God hates the one who sows discord among brethren, but blesses the one who makes peace. It is so easy to bring strife; so hard then to bring peace.

*The Persecuted.*—"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.) The promise is to those who suffer for the sake of righteousness, for the sake of Jesus—suffer for being a Christian and for standing for the right. If he suffers for error, or for his own sins and shortcomings, he is promised no blessing. If sinners try to destroy one's influence because he is a Christian, if they try to destroy him by slander—by falsehood—his are the blessings. He can even rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. "If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (1 Pet. 4: 16.) "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

### Salt of the Earth—Light of the World (Verses 13-16)

Salt has both flavor and saving quality. Christians, putting forth the power of Christ through their lives and teaching, contribute much toward saving the world. Once the world and then cities and nations were destroyed for the lack of righteous people in them. Would the Lord now have any further use for the world if all people were bad? "If the salt have lost its savor," its flavor, it is worthless. Not then being refined as it is now, salt had a lot of other minerals mixed with it. These minerals would not absorb in the meat—it lost its saltiness, and was worthless. The illustration shows that a Christian may lose his saltiness—may lose his Christianity, and become fit for nothing but to be cast away. Hence, once saved, but now lost. The illustration shows the possibility of apostasy. Christians are the light of the world, because they uphold the word of God which gives the light. Churches are candlesticks, and a candlestick sustains that which gives the light. Also, Christians are the light of the world, in that they reflect the light of Christ. He is the source of all spiritual light; but as the

moon reflects the light of the sun, so we reflect the light of the sun of righteousness. And like the moon, the world sometimes comes between us and the sources of light, and we go into an eclipse! To do any good a reflector must be kept clean, and also in its right place. When members of the church become soiled and are found where they should not be, they reflect no light. All a Christian has to do to give light is to keep himself clean and where he should be. In so doing he lets his light shine.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The condition of heart and mind as stated in verses 3-6 are the real first principles of the gospel—they come first.

In religion people are too easy to satisfy; they do not hunger and thirst for the right way, and rely too much on self.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The beatitudes.

#### QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Give an outline of the activities of Jesus between his temptations and the present lesson.

What evidence that the Sermon on the Mount did not originate with a mere man?

#### Verses 1, 2

From what parts had the multitude come?

What evidence that the multitudes heard the sermon?

#### The Beatitudes

Perhaps the best way is to discuss each beatitude in their order. Discuss the reflections.

### Lesson V—October 29, 1939

### BEVERAGE ALCOHOL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Mic. 2: 9-11; Luke 21: 29-31, 34-36; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11

9 The women of my people ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their young children ye take away my glory for ever.

10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your resting-place; because of uncleanness that destroyeth, even with a grievous destruction.

11 If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

29 And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees: 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now nigh.

31 Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.

34 But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare:

35 For so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.



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 Jē'sūs Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Cor. 6: 9.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Gal. 5: 16-24.

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS.**—

October 23.	M.	Alcohol Leads to Destruction (Mic. 2: 6-11)
October 24.	T.	The Dangers of Drunkenness (Luke 21: 29-36)
October 25.	W.	Alcohol Defeats a King (Dan. 5: 1-7)
October 26.	T.	Alcohol Disgraces Social Leaders (Isa. 28: 1-8)
October 27.	F.	The Spirit Against the Flesh (Gal. 5: 16-24)
October 28.	S.	The Armor of Defense (Eph. 6: 10-18)
October 29.	S.	Overcoming Through Christ (1 Cor. 6: 1-11)

## LESSON SETTINGS

**Time.**—Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, or between the years 757 B.C. and 696 B.C. It is likely that he did not reduce his prophecies to writing till toward the closing years of his life. For Luke 21: 29-31, 34-36, according to Hales, A.D. 31. First Corinthians was written about A.D. 56.

**Places.**—Apparently Micah prophesied in Jerusalem; the words from Luke were spoken on Mount Olivet; Paul wrote First Corinthians at Ephesus.

**Persons.**—Micah and the people of Samaria and of Judah, Jesus and his disciples, Paul and the brethren at Corinth.

**Lesson Links.**—The first verse of Micah: "The word of Jehovah that came to Micah the Morastite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem." Jotham was a fairly good king, Ahaz was as wicked as his ability enabled him to be, Hezekiah was a good king. The people had become so corrupt that any reformation that a king made was mostly superficial. The kingdom of Israel, here called Samaria, had never had a reformation since its beginning under Jeroboam. Samaria had become so corrupt that their end was near. "Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field . . . and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will uncover the foundations thereof." "For her wounds are incurable; for it is come even unto Judah; it reacheth unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem." Hence, the sins and corruption of the people of the kingdom of Israel had become a source of corruption to the people of the kingdom of Judah. Micah lived to see fulfilled his prophecies concerning the complete overthrow of the people of Samaria. (2 Kings 18: 9-12.) When people reach the point where their corruption is incurable, they are then fit only for destruction. Samaria had reached that stage; Judah was fast reaching it.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****In Their Corruption the People Prefer False Prophets  
(Mic. 2: 9-11)**

"But of late my people is risen up as an enemy." (Verse 8.) God's people had become his enemy, and they were enemies of one another. They lay awake on their beds at night to devise wickedness; "when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand." With them might was right. "And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." (Verses 1, 2.) In their greed they cast women out of their pleasant homes. It is a little doubtful as to whether the tenth verse is a call for good people to get out of such corrupt surroundings, or whether it is a statement that the whole nation would go out of their land. In such corrupt surroundings there was no rest for either the good or the wicked; the wicked were too busy harassing the good for either to have any rest. There could be no real satisfaction in such a life to any one. Isaiah, who prophesied during the same period, paints a dark picture of the corruption of the people. (Isa. 1: 1-8.) "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." There is some doubt as to the real import of verse 11. Does it mean that in the face of impending disaster, the lying prophets were prophesying plenty? That would please the people, and they would want such a man as their prophet. The prophet who prophesied, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace, pleased them. The people wanted flattery and deceit. About this time Isaiah said, "For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." (Isa. 30: 9, 10.) They would rather hear pleasant lies than unpleasant truths. If Micah meant that these lying prophets told the people to drink wine and strong drink, that would please a corrupt people equally well. The preacher who preaches to the people what they want is always popular. The true prophets did not do that; neither did they hold out to the people any false hopes. They were neither optimists nor pessimists—they saw things as they were.

**The Fig Tree Illustration (Luke 21: 29-31)**

These verses, and the others from Luke, cannot be understood unless we have some idea as to what led up to them. Read Matt. 24: 1-44; Mark 13: 1-33; Luke 21: 5-36. Jesus foretold the utter destruction of the temple. The disciples wanted to know when that would be. Matthew, Mark, and Luke report the questions they asked. Matthew: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" For "the end of the world" the marginal reading has "the consummation of the age." Mark: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" Luke: "Teacher, when therefore shall these things



be? and what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass?" As each writer made a correct report as to the contents of the questions, we must not put a construction on one that does the others injustice. No matter what view is adopted, there are difficulties; yet it does not seem possible that the disciples were inquiring about his second coming as is generally supposed. At that time the disciples did not even believe he was going away. When he was put to death all their hopes were gone. How then could they have been inquiring about his second coming? The destruction of the temple, and therefore of Jerusalem, was the matter about which they inquired. They expected Jesus to be a mighty king on the throne in Jerusalem, and they knew he would have to destroy his enemies in Jerusalem before he could reign there. They must have wanted to know when he would come and destroy the temple, and what would be the sign when that was to be accomplished. He gave them signs by which they would know when Jerusalem was about to be destroyed. As the budding of the fig tree, and all trees, showed the near approach of summer, "even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh." The kingdom of God, the reign of God, would be manifest in what was done. Matthew and Mark says that by these signs they would know that he is near. He would come in judgment on Jerusalem, just as it was said that he came to Babylon in its destruction. (Isa. 13: 5.) How long before Jerusalem would be destroyed? Jesus himself did not then claim to know the exact time, but he did give them to understand that all the things he foretold would occur before that generation passed away. (Verse 32.) The word generation here has its ordinary meaning; for Jesus would not be so absurd as to say that all these things will happen to the Jewish nation, and the Jewish nation will continue till all the things that are to happen to it have happened!

### **"Take Heed to Yourselves"—"Watch" (Verses 34-36)**

They would escape the tribulations that were to come upon the doomed city, if they would give careful attention to their conduct. The city would be destroyed and everything pertaining to the Jewish economy would be wiped out, because of the corruption of the people. To see the fearful wickedness and corruption that prevailed among the Jews read Matt. 23: 13-39. It does not seem possible that a severer speech was ever delivered than is contained in that chapter. The disciples were to take heed that they be not contaminated with the prevailing sins, lest their hearts be overcharged—wholly given over to fleshly matters. "Surfeiting"—excesses in eating and drinking. True temperance is moderation in the things that are good for us, and total abstinence from hurtful things; for temperance is self-control, and a person does not control himself when he eats too much or drinks that which is hurtful. "Drunkness." One of the mysteries is that sensible people will become intoxicated. If there were any fun or satisfaction in it, they are frequently too drunk to know it. And yet drunkenness has always been a common thing—a degrading sin. Why some civilized people think intoxicants are a necessity in social gatherings is hard to understand. Many other social sins originate from social drinking. Another common

evil is for the heart to be overcharged with the cares of this life. Business and social affairs, though necessary, are frequently allowed to crowd out of our lives all consideration of our spiritual needs. The cares of this life may become so great as to choke out the word, even after one has become a Christian. (Luke 8: 14.) The disciples were to take heed lest that day—the day of Jerusalem's adversity—come on them as a snare. Jesus had given them signs by which to know when that time drew near, and warned them to flee from the city when they saw these signs. They were to watch and make supplication. Take heed to themselves, watch for the signs, and pray that their flight be not in the winter nor on a Sabbath day.

### **"Be Not Deceived" (1 Cor. 6: 9-11)**

Corinth was in Greece, yet it was not entirely a Greek city, for many Romans and Jews lived there. It was rich and exceeding corrupt. The gospel was first preached there by Paul as told in Acts 18: 1-18. It seems that the church was not immediately lifted entirely out of the follies and corruption of the times. Drinking and social corruption were common. The church was richly endowed with spiritual gifts; and yet problems came up that they did not know how to solve. They wrote Paul a letter about conditions. Some of the members were going to law against others. Paul makes this charge against them: "Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." (Verse 8.) This led Paul to say, "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The man who cheats and defrauds has no part in the blessings of the kingdom. And then he mentions a number of sins that will keep one from enjoying any of the blessings of the kingdom of God. Immoral practices—practices that grow out of unbridled lust—debars one from the kingdom; and these were common practices in Corinth. Others were criminals through greed—the covetous, thieves, extortioners. Where people have no regard for God, they are not likely to have the regard for the good of their fellows that they should. He also mentions drunkards and revilers. The drunkard feels his own shortcomings, and is likely to try to make up for it by using ugly language about those who do not drink. "And such were some of you." This implies that they no longer practiced such things as he had mentioned. This shows what the power of the gospel can do in a corrupt city, in transforming the lives of such people. They were now washed—cleansed of these defilements, and sanctified—devoted to the service of God. Having been cleansed from the guilt of sin, they stood justified.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

There are frequent references to the coming of the Lord when the second coming of Christ in person is not meant. See such passages as Rev. 2: 5, 16, 25; 3: 2, 11.

The Lord brought great calamities upon Samaria and Jerusalem, but he used other nations in doing so. (Isa. 10: 5-12; 13: 5.)

The drunkard has always been an enemy to himself, his family, and others, and more so now than ever before. The automobile has



made him more of a menace than ever. A driver's license should never be issued to a man or a woman who becomes intoxicated. To do so is a crime.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How the Lord uses one nation to punish others.  
How wickedness and immorality destroy nations.  
The expense of drinking intoxicants.  
The crime of drunkenness.

## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
During whose reigns did Micah prophesy?  
What was the condition of Samaria and Judah?

### Mic. 2: 9-11

Who had become God's enemy?  
What is said of their crimes of greed?  
What sort of prophets did they want?  
What did they ask of their prophets?

### Luke 21: 29-31

What led up to the words of these verses?

Could the disciples have had the second coming of Christ in mind?  
Give reasons for your answer.  
What is the significance of the fig tree parable?  
How soon would the things foretold occur?

### Verses 34-36

Why were the disciples to give heed to themselves?  
What was the moral and religious condition of the Jews at this time?  
Against what sins did Jesus warn the disciples?

### 1 Cor. 6: 9-11

What was the moral condition of Corinth?  
Discuss these verses.  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VI—November 5, 1939

## RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE KINGDOM

Matt. 5: 17-20, 38-45; 6: 1-4

17 Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

38 Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy:

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you;

45 That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

1 Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them; else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5: 48.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 6: 9-15.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 30.	M.	Righteousness in the Kingdom (Matt. 5: 17-20)
October 31.	T.	The Rule of Love (Matt. 5: 38-45)
November 1.	W.	Right Living Before God (Matt. 6: 1-8)
November 2.	T.	Loving Our Enemies (Luke 6: 27-38)
November 3.	F.	Christian Duties Required (Rom. 12: 9-21)
November 4.	S.	Sharing with Strangers (Luke 10: 30-37)
November 5.	S.	The Universal Prayer (Matt. 6: 9-15)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 28.

*Place.*—A mountain, probably a hill near Capernaum.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

*Lesson Links.*—This lesson is a further study of the Sermon on the Mount, and comes immediately after the lesson of October 22. In this sermon Jesus does not directly assert his authority to teach lessons never before taught, and yet he spoke with authority. The scribes were careful to teach only what they found in the law and in the tradition of the elders. In no case would they teach contrary to the tradition of the elders, for they held that to be above the law. But Jesus taught in such a way as to impress the people that he spoke with authority. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” (7: 28, 29.) In his teaching and practice Jesus showed respect for the requirements of law, but showed utter disregard for the tradition of the elders.

### COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

#### Not to Destroy, but to Fulfill (Verses 17, 18)

The contrast is between destroying and fulfilling. Instead of destroying the law, he would fulfill it. Not the part considered by the Jews as the least important would pass away, till all the requirements and purposes of the law were accomplished. It would then cease by its own limitations. It was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. When a schoolmaster accomplishes his work, the student passes out from under him. So with the law—in that respect it



accomplishes its purpose. The law had its types and shadows—Jesus fulfilled them. McGarvey says, "Jesus also fulfilled the law in the sense of maintaining sinless obedience to it; but this is not the fulfillment to which the text refers." But is that not necessarily included in the fulfillment? The animal for atonement had to be without blemish; Jesus had to be without blemish—had to be sinless—to fulfill that type. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies that related to him and his work; yet some of them are now in the process of fulfillment.

### **Obedience Required (Verses 19, 20)**

The commandments of the law were to be obeyed. When God gives commands, he means for them to be obeyed. Human beings have a tendency to pass judgment on God's commands, and to pronounce some commands of less importance than others. In these latter days, they have gone even farther and pronounced some commands nonessential! But the scribes and Pharisees had graded God's commands, and pronounced some as less than others. In this sermon Jesus teaches a lesson based on their own rating. The commands that they considered least must not be broken, nor must they teach others to break any command. They must be faithful in obeying and teaching every command. Jesus thus exalts faithful obedience. No approved servant of God ever habitually disregarded any command of God nor taught others that it was safe to do so. To live right one must obey the commands of God, and must urge others to do so. The scribes and Pharisees were very particular about keeping the outward forms of the law, and that they should have done. They even tithed the products of their gardens, which also was proper and right; but they neglected "the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." They were unjust in their dealings, unmerciful to those who did not live up to their unjust demands, and their religion was a form without faith. "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!" (Matt. 23: 23, 24.) But the scribes and Pharisees put themselves forward as models of righteousness, and the people generally so regarded them. Yet Jesus taught the people that their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, or else they should in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. And this latter statement of Jesus shows that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is conditional.

### **Jesus Prohibits Retaliation (Verses 38, 39)**

The law here referred to is found in Ex. 21: 22-24; Deut. 19: 15-21. This did not mean that the Israelite was allowed then and there to take personal vengeance on the person who had injured him; the penalty was to be assessed by the judges. The injured party could prosecute the one who injured him, but even so, it does not seem that the injured party was required to prosecute the offender. But Jesus would not have his disciples to return evil for evil. It was this sort of evil that he commanded them not to resist. Certainly he did not mean for his followers never under any circumstances to resist evil; for we are required to fight, and it certainly is evil

that we are to fight, and to fight is to resist. Paul said, "I have fought the good fight." Christians are soldiers, and they are required to put on the protective armor, and then to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. But we are not to engage in personal combats with those who do us wrong. If we retaliate, we put ourselves in the class of the one who does us wrong.

### **Be More Generous Than Is Demanded (Verses 40-42)**

A suit at law is an expensive thing to both parties. Aside from the right and the wrong in the matter, the course recommended by the Lord is usually better from a financial standpoint. As you are to give the man more than his suit gains, it is plainly implied that you are not even to fight his suit. By not being at the expense of fighting the suit, you gain by paying even more than is demanded. Again, few men can engage in a lawsuit without lowering their standard. Nor can a righteous man resort to the tricks and schemes that the unrighteous use in suits; and because he cannot do so, and cannot resort to false testimony, he is likely to lose. To go into a suit with ungodly schemers is not generally wise. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile." "The custom alluded to is said to have originated with Cyrus, king of Persia, and it empowered a government courier to impress both men and horses to help him forward."—*McGarvey*. Now, the Jews so hated the Roman government that it would be especially unpleasant to a Jew for a Roman officer to require his services. Their duty therefore in this respect needed to be impressed upon them. It is supposed that the man who asks for a gift or a loan is in need. Those who have anything cannot turn a deaf ear to those who are in need. But our duty here does not go beyond our ability, for a person can neither give nor lend that which he has not. But let us not deceive ourselves into thinking we cannot, when we can; for we cannot deceive God.

### **"Love Your Enemies" (Verses 43-45)**

The law required the Israelite to love his neighbor. (Lev. 19: 18.) It did not in so many words demand that he hate his enemy, but the Jew concluded from the general teaching of the law that he was to hate his enemy. By neighbor they meant a fellow Jew; all others they regarded as enemies. No man can feel toward an enemy as he feels toward a friend, a companion, or his children; and the word that is here translated love does not require that; but it does require us to be fair and generous toward our enemies, and to be helpful to them in their needs. And we can pray for those who persecute us. Stephen prayed that the Lord would not charge his persecutors with the sin of his murder. If we love and help only those who love and help us we do no better than sinners. Be a friend to man, not merely to those who treat you right.

### **Against Being Righteous for Show (6: 1)**

"Do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them." This requirement is of broad application, covering all that we do in the service of God. Many of the things we do must be done where



others see us, but we are to do nothing to be seen of men; we are to render no service nor engage in any worship to gain the applause of men. To do service to God or man for the purpose of being honored by man is base and degrading.

### Against Advertising Your Charitable Deeds (Verses 2-4)

Alms is defined to be anything given gratuitously to relieve the poor. It is easy to make a display of our helping the poor, for that is one thing people generally approve; but we are not to seek to attract attention to our generous giving. To enforce this point Jesus uses a peculiar expression: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." However, we are not to be so afraid that our left hand will know what our right hand does that we will not let our right hand do anything! The man who deals with the public has a strong temptation to give so as to be seen of men. As his prosperity depends on the good will of the people, he is tempted to give in such way as to turn public sentiment in his favor. If he gives way to this common weakness, he can manage his giving in such way as to make it very profitable advertising. Of course, the poor will receive some benefit from such giving, but Jesus shows plainly that such giving receives no reward from the Lord. Such a person may pretend to be giving as a servant of the Lord, but he is really giving to serve his own ends and purposes. Jesus calls such a giver a hypocrite. He is giving to gain the glory of men, and that is the only reward he gets. He gets what he seeks—that, and nothing more. Nor can such a man be a real and true believer in the Lord. "How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not." (John 5: 44.) Such a character may be a great pretender, but his condition of heart makes it impossible for him to be a true believer. Just here the temptation comes to the preacher with peculiar force. But the preacher who seeks popularity is not a true believer, not a real Christian; for he belongs to that class of hypocrites who do things to be seen of men, to have the glory of men; and like other hypocrites he has no reward in heaven.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Christianity is God's character factory in which he fits and prepares men and women for dwelling with him and his holy angels in the world to come.

Obedience must be learned. The will seeks independence of action regardless of results. It must be intelligently trained to submit to authority, to be regulated by law. If we do not learn obedience in this life, we would not fit into the society of heaven; for God's will is supreme in heaven.

When some people help the poor, they do it in such a way as to humiliate the poor, and to make any self-respecting poor person wish in his heart that he could afford to refuse their gifts. Giving to the needy in such way as to help them in spirit as well as in body is a fine art. Seek to develop it.

The next few verses of the sixth chapter is a continuation of the admonition against doing things to be seen of men. It does seem

that when people pray they would not be thinking of the impression they were making on the people; yet there is danger that they do so, else Jesus would not have warned against praying to be seen of men. High sounding phrases and adjectives in prayers are for no other purpose than to make an impression on those who hear. Do not be a hypocrite when you pray.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

How Jesus fulfilled the law.

When the law was taken out of the way.

The need of obedience.

How to make almsgiving a blessing to giver and receiver.

## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

By what standard did the scribes teach?

Why were the people astonished at the teaching of Jesus?

### Verses 17, 18

What contrast does Jesus draw?

What did Jesus say about his attitude toward the law?

What was one of the purposes of the law?

How did Jesus fulfill the law?

### Verses 19, 20

What is the purpose of the commands?

What did Jesus say about those who disobey and those who obey the law?

What was wrong with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? What does he say about our righteousness?

### Verses 38, 39

What was the law concerning personal injuries?

What does Jesus require?

Discuss verses 38, 39.

### Verses 43-45

What does Jesus require that we do about our enemies?

### 6: 1

Give a discussion of verse 1.

### Verses 2-4

What temptation do people meet in giving alms?

Discuss the proper spirit of almsgiving.

Discuss the reflections.

Lesson VII—November 12, 1939

## PUTTING GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST

Matt. 6: 19-34

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

22 The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?

26 Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?



27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?

28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 Yet I say unto you, that even Sôl'ô-môn in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 For after all these things do the Gën'tiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness.” (Matt. 6: 33.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 5: 1-11.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 6.	M.	True Treasure (Matt. 6: 19-25)
November 7.	T.	God's Kingdom First (Matt. 6: 26-34)
November 8.	W.	Solomon's Wise Choice (1 Kings 3: 4-12)
November 9.	T.	The Danger of Riches (Mark 10: 23-31)
November 10.	F.	Service in the Kingdom (Luke 5: 1-11)
November 11.	S.	Contentment Is Great Gain (1 Tim. 6: 6-11)
November 12.	S.	God's Care for Us (Psalm 40: 1-8)

### LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 28.

*Place.*—A mountain in Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

*Lesson Links.*—In the latter part of our last lesson Jesus was warning the people against doing their righteousness to be seen of men. He continues that warning through verse 18. In verses 5-15 he gives instructions concerning secret, or individual, prayers. In Jerusalem, where everybody was religious, a person might make an impression on the people by stopping in a public place to engage in his own individual prayers. To pray to be seen of men is hypocrisy. In secret, or personal, prayers, the person should go into his room, and shut the door, so that none could see him. If he deliberately arranges so that someone may discover him in his devotions, he is a hypocrite. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray. He did not give them a set form of words to be used, but said, “After this manner therefore pray ye.” So far as we know, no one in the days of the apostles ever used those exact words in prayer, nor did Jesus intend that they should do so. Certainly, after the kingdom was established no one should pray, “Thy kingdom come.” They were not to make a display of their fasting. If a person wanted to fast, that was his business; but if he did fast, he should not put on a long face about it. When a man becomes so low in his religion, that by his conduct he virtually shouts to the people, “Look at me; see how religious I am,” he is not a servant of God—he is a base hypocrite, no matter what his pretensions may be.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Lay Up Treasures in Heaven (Verses 19-21)**

Jesus does not prohibit thrift and prosperity; neither does he encourage extravagant spending of our gains. We are commanded to work. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." (Eph. 4: 28.) "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." (2 Thess. 3: 10.) But Jesus does prohibit the hoarding up of wealth for selfish purposes. Such hoarding is beset with dangers. There are the schemers, the kidnapers, and the thieves, and those who murder for money. Business reverses may sweep it all away. But worst of all, the desire to be rich leads people into many temptations and snares of the devil, which drown men's souls in perdition. (1 Tim. 6: 9.) "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Nothing is here said as to how this is done, but that is not hard for any one to figure out. It is done by a godly life and the generous use of our means to help the needy and to promote worthy causes. If we do not lay up treasures in heaven, we will be poor indeed when in death we leave behind us all the treasures we have.

**"No Man Can Serve Two Masters" (Verses 22-24)**

The body receives its light through the eye. In a figurative sense, the heart, the mind, has eyes. "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened." (Eph. 1: 18.) Frequently when a thing is explained, a person says, "I see." Paul was sent to open the eyes of the people. (Acts 26: 16-18.) He was to lead them to see the truth. An eye that is single does not see double. Some men try to lay up treasures on earth and in heaven; they are men of double vision, their eye is not single. The person with an evil eye is not necessarily one who looks for evil things; he is one who has defective vision. He does not see things as they are, and therefore does not see the truth. He is trying to look to laying up treasures on earth and in heaven. At least, the connection leads to that view. If a man has the wrong view of things, the wrong philosophy of life, he may think that he is really enlightened; but what he thinks is light is dense darkness. He thinks he can lay up treasures on earth and in heaven, too; but in trying to do so, he is trying to serve two masters, and that cannot be done. Hate frequently means to love less. It has that meaning here, for no one would voluntarily seek to serve a master toward whom he had bitter feelings. Treasures on earth and treasures in heaven are here regarded as two masters. The man who tries to serve both will certainly come to love one more than the other. Earthly riches are so deceptive and engage so much of one's time that they will finally absorb all his affections and energies. "Be not deceived."

**Be Not Anxious About Food and Clothing (Verses 25-32)**

Jesus here goes against man's philosophy of life. All the planning and energies of most people are directed toward the gaining of material things. Something to eat and drink, and something to



wear, are matters of continued anxiety with most of the people. Well, we must have these things; but why be anxious about them? He then gives his first reason as to why people should not be anxious about these necessary things—the life is more than food, and the body than raiment. Life has higher aims and possibilities than food, and the body has greater uses than to be a dummy on which to hang fine clothing. The Lord gives other reasons as to why we should not be anxious about these necessary things.

*The Second Reason* (Verse 26).—The birds are not given to worry about laying up food. They live the life God appointed them to live, and are content. They do not labor, as men do; and yet not many living things are busier than are birds. They are busy in the life God assigned them. If men lived as strictly within the life God has appointed for them they would be content and happy. God feeds the birds in his own appointed way. People are of much more value than birds; if we stuck as closely to our God-appointed life as do the birds, God would see that we have food and clothing.

*The Third Reason* (Verse 27).—Anxiety accomplishes nothing. For the measure of his life, the marginal reading has his stature. Scholars are divided as to which it should be; but it makes little difference which it is, for anxiety can add nothing to one's height nor to the length of one's life. Anxiety may shorten one's life, but it certainly does not lengthen it. Neither can anxiety bring the things that sustain life. It is therefore useless to be anxious about what we shall eat or what we shall wear. As it adds nothing to our well-being, why be anxious? It certainly does cheat us out of satisfaction and rest.

*The Fourth Reason* (Verses 28-30).—In these verses Jesus does not mention the matter of food, but of raiment. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." How do they grow? There are mysteries in all vegetable growth, and yet there are some things about vegetable growth that are plain enough. The lily grows in perfect harmony with the laws governing it. It has no will of its own; it does not rebel at the laws governing it; it tries no new schemes; it has no anxiety; and yet it grows and blooms into such a thing of beauty "that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Suppose a Christian lived as perfectly in harmony with the laws of his growth and development as does the lily, the Christian character would be a most beautiful thing to behold. Grass is here used to include all herbage, even the lily. If God so clothes the lily, which so soon dies, and is burned in the oven, "shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" But we must not forget one thing, and that is, that the lily's life span is lived out in perfect harmony with God's law, the law of nature. "The grass, or rather the herbage, is spoken of as being cast into the oven, because it was used by the Jews to heat their bake ovens. The country about Jerusalem had long ago been stripped of its timber."—McGarvey.

*The Fifth Reason* (Verses 31, 32).—The Gentiles, having no heavenly Father in whom to trust and to whom to look for blessings, and knowing nothing of a higher spiritual life, can have no higher aspirations than to provide for themselves food and drink and clothing. If our whole efforts are directed toward providing these things,

then we are no better than were these heathen Gentiles. Our heavenly Father knows what we need; and if we are not idle, we will be fed and clothed; and we know that we should have higher aspirations and live better lives than do the heathen. But we sometimes imagine that we need things that we do not really need. But we neglect our spiritual needs while striving after imaginary material needs.

### **Seek First His Kingdom and His Righteousness (Verse 33)**

"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness." The wording of this command shows that we should seek the necessary things of life, but that we must make the kingdom of God and his righteousness the main object of all our endeavors. In all of our plans these must come first. We must seek to enter that kingdom, and then to make ourselves into useful and faithful citizens. And we must seek God's righteousness. We cannot seek our own personal righteousness, for every one's personal righteousness is a thing that belongs exclusively to him; but there is a righteousness that God bestows on those who obey him. It is a righteousness to which we attain by obedience to the gospel. When a person attains to the forgiveness of his sins, there is then nothing against him. For the time being he is as free from sin and its guilt as if he never had sinned. He is righteous. That righteousness we must seek, and we must seek it in God's appointed way. There is no other way to find it. And the Lord's language here shows that entrance into his kingdom and obtaining his righteousness are conditional; we must seek them. This must be first and uppermost in everything we do. In doing this we will work to make an honest living and to be able to help the needy and worthy causes, for God requires us to do so. In doing so, the things we need will be added.

### **Be Not Anxious for the Morrow (Verse 34)**

Each day has its own problems, worries, and evils. If we add the anxieties of tomorrow to the worries of today, each day has the worries of two days. Why thus heap up our worries? The things we fear for tomorrow may not come; and if they do, worrying about them today will not help. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." There are two kinds of evils—moral and physical. Each day has its physical evils, such as sickness, accidents, calamities; it is not helpful to borrow the evils of tomorrow.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

If a man's heart is centered on earthly treasures, and they are lost, as they frequently are, he has nothing left on which to draw for comfort. Many such have become mentally unbalanced, and many have gone the suicide route.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." When we serve riches, they become our god. Any property we have should be a servant instead of a master. Property is a relentless and degrading master, but it can be made a useful servant.

To make the kingdom of God and his righteousness the object of



all our activities is to lay up treasures in heaven. What we lay up here is not really ours, for it belongs to God, and will fall into the hands of those who follow us. The treasures we lay up in heaven will be ours for ever and ever.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The dangers of seeking riches.

How to lay up treasures in heaven.

The evils of worry and anxiety.

How to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness.

## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

Discuss what Jesus says about praying.

What does he say about fasting?

### Verses 19, 20

What evidence have you that God requires us to work?

What does Jesus prohibit in these verses?

What does he say we should do?

### Verses 22-24

What does Jesus say about the eye, and what does he mean?

When is the light in us darkness?

What does he say about serving two masters?

### Verses 25-32

What charge does Jesus give about being anxious?

Give each of his reasons as to why we should not be anxious about food and clothing, and discuss each reason.

### Verse 33

What should be our first consideration?

What does this imply as to seeking the necessary things of life?

What is God's righteousness?

How do sinners become righteous?

### Verse 34

Discuss the contents of this verse. Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson VIII—November 19, 1939

## WARNINGS AND PROMISES

Matt. 7: 1-14

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone;

10 Or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 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.  
 14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” (Luke 6: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 7: 24-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 13.	M.	Warnings and Promises (Matt. 7: 1-6)
November 14.	T.	Living by the Golden Rule (Matt. 7: 7-14)
November 15.	W.	Warnings Against Covetousness (Luke 12: 13-21)
November 16.	T.	The Promise of Grace (2 Cor. 12: 1-10)
November 17.	F.	God Keeps His Promises (Heb. 10: 19-25)
November 18.	S.	Wise and Unwise Builders (Matt. 7: 24-27)
November 19.	S.	The Righteous and the Wicked (Psalm 1: 1-6)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 28.

*Place.*—A mountain in Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

*Lesson Links.*—We continue the study of the Sermon on the Mount. This lesson comes immediately after our last lesson. Concerning this sermon on the mount McGarvey has this to say: “No doubt Matthew’s chief object in reporting this sermon was to put on record the lessons which it teaches; but his closing remark in which he states its effect on the people (28, 29) shows that he had not lost sight of the line of argument which pervades the other parts of his narrative. Having in previous sections exhibited Jesus as the actual Son of God, he here represents him as speaking with authority suited to his divine nature. If he was the Son of God, he could not speak with less authority; and if he was not, it was the extreme of madness and wickedness for him to speak as he did. The latter conclusion is inconsistent with the entire course of his life, and we are forced to the only alternative that he was conscious of being the actual Son of the living God.” The tone of the sermon and its calm assurance of authority to speak stamp the sermon as the product of deity.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### “Judge Not” (Verses 1, 2)

The command here does not prohibit our deciding about the right or wrong of things; nor does it prohibit our forming our conclusions about the conduct of others. Johnson gives some sensible comments: “The term ‘judge’ is used in more than one sense, but Christ’s meaning is plain. (1) He does not prohibit the civil judgment of the courts upon evildoers, for this is approved throughout the Bible. (2) He does not prohibit the judgment of the church, through its officers, upon those who walk disorderly, for both he and the apostles have enjoined this. (3) He does not forbid those private judgments that we are compelled to form of wrongdoers, for he himself tells us that we are to judge man by their fruits. (See verses 15-20.) What he designs to prohibit is rash, uncharita-



ble judgments, a fault-finding spirit, a disposition to condemn without examination of charges." "All judging from surmise, or from insufficient premises, or from ill-will is prohibited."—*McGarvey*. Harsh and unreasonable judgments are certainly forbidden. Even our just decisions about people should be tempered with mercy. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." "For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment." (James 2: 13.) There is no hope for us in the great day of accounts if God does not judge with mercy. To be judged with mercy then, we must judge with mercy now. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

### The Harsh Judge Worse Than His Victim (Verses 3-5)

The mote, a little splinter, or such small objects as frequently get into people's eyes, is here used to represent small faults, mere trifles. The beam represents a much greater fault, a real wrong. It is singular that those who are guilty of great wrongs are so ready to criticize the faults of others. The sinner who makes no pretense at obeying God will readily criticize the shortcomings of members of the church. A member of the church who so loves money that he is a real idolater will criticize another who through poverty is slow to pay his small bills. A preacher will ruthlessly divide a church to have his way and then will severely condemn others for some much smaller sin. And sometimes it appears that people criticize others to divert attention from their own sins. Also, being conscious of their own guilt, and being ashamed of it and yet holding on to it, they condemn smaller wrongs in others. Jesus calls all such people hypocrites, for they are pretending to be better than they are. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." This cannot be construed to mean that we are to be absolutely perfect before we seek to correct other people, for no one is entirely free from faults; but we should not try to correct another when we are guilty of the same fault in a larger measure. We must first seek to get ourselves right. The elders of the church at Ephesus were to take heed to themselves first, and then to the flock. (Acts 20: 28.) Paul gave Timothy this charge: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching." (1 Tim. 4: 16.) If a man does not try to correct himself before seeking to correct others, he is a hypocrite. Besides, if he tries diligently and conscientiously to correct his own faults, he will not be so harsh in his judgments of others who are trying to overcome theirs.

### The Need of Wise Discrimination (Verse 6)

We are not to be harsh in our judgments, nor overcritical of others, but we must exercise some judgment concerning the nature of the people with whom we have to do. Hogs and dogs were considered unclean animals; and yet Jesus was not speaking of real dogs and hogs, but of people possessing some of the characteristics of these unclean animals. The holy things were the things used in sacrifice. Parts of these animals that were offered in sacrifice were eaten by people who were clean, and what was not eaten was burned. It



was not given to dogs, as are the scraps that are left from our meals in our homes. These scraps could be disposed of as the people saw fit. But to give holy things to dogs was to profane them. "We are here forbidden, then, to use any religious office, work, or ordinance in such a manner as to degrade or profane it."—*McGarvey*. Nor are we to cast our pearls before swine. Swine have no use for pearls. Do not try to feed hogs with pearls; they would only trample them under their feet, and might turn on the feeder. Excessive zeal sometimes leads a Christian to preach the gospel to people under circumstances that only infuriates them. To do so is to cast pearls before swine. And yet we cannot always tell, though we use all the wisdom we have. Besides, an audience is sometimes mixed; we must then preach for the sake of those who will give attention to what is said, even though some in the audience would like to tear us to pieces. The gospel is for those who are willing to hear; it infuriates those who are determined to continue in their chosen course. Jesus sometimes gave certain ones no direct answer to their questions because he knew they were not sincere in asking them. It is not wise to give information to a person who will not make proper use of it.

### Jesus Encourages Praying (Verses 7-11)

Ask, seek, knock—these are but different ways of encouraging the disciples to pray. We ask for what we want, we seek for that which we wish to find, and we knock at a door for admission. Perhaps these different expressions do not signify exactly the same thing. People in destitution ask others for favors and needed things. All of us stand constantly in need of God's favors and blessings; our needs are too numerous to mention, even if it were possible to enumerate them. But be our needs more than we can count, God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3: 20.) Hence, no matter what our needs may be, God is more than able and willing to meet them. But we are like children; we think we need many things, which would be really hurtful to us if we had them. However, there are many things we do really need. "Ask, and it shall be given you." We seek for that which we desire to find. A lost man seeks a way out. A sick man seeks to regain his health. A hungry person seeks food. An honorable man out of work seeks employment. In all these matters the person is doing more than just asking for something. We have to seek the truth, the way of life, or we will never know it. This requires effort on our part. Seeking is action directed toward the finding of something. Jesus has assured us that those who honestly seek the truth will find it. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." If a person hungers and thirsts for righteousness, he will seek to find the way of righteousness; and if he seeks, he will find. "Seek, and ye shall find." People knock at a door for admission. Of course, there is no literal door at which we knock for admission into the presence of God; and yet that is an impressive figure of speech—knocking at the door for admission into God's favors. Because of certain relationships God sustains to those who obey him, he is spoken of as Father. He is not a Father to us by virtue of creation—he is not a Father to everything he



created. In that relationship he is our creator. This talk about the universal Fatherhood of God is a wrong conception. If God did not have a care for his obedient children similar to the interest parents have for their children, he would not be called a father. Now, if children ask for a loaf, no father would give them a stone. If they ask for something they need, no father would mock them by giving them something useless or dangerous. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" But up against the plain statements of the Lord we put our theories about miracles and the laws of nature. The early Christians were not bothered about such theories. But there are certain elements in acceptable prayer. If we ask for forgiveness, we must forgive. We must put iniquity out of our hearts. (Psalm 66: 18.) Our prayers must be in faith (James 1: 6, 7), according to the will of God (1 John 5: 14), and in a spirit of unselfishness (James 4: 3).

### **The Golden Rule (Verse 12)**

Because of the high plane on which this verse puts our dealings with one another, it is called the Golden Rule. It is not enough that we refrain from doing evil to others; we must do good to them. Even the Golden Rule must be practiced in reason or it ceases to be a golden rule. Our relations with others must be guided by reason and common sense. If I should find myself wishing for some unreasonable thing that does not mean that I should do some unreasonable thing for everybody else. We want people to be kind and generous toward us, and to help us in our hours of need; we must do so to them.

### **The Narrow Gate and the Wide Gate (Verses 13, 14)**

Here we have two destinies mentioned—destruction and life. Each destiny is spoken of as if it were a walled city into which people enter through a gate. Few find the way to life because both the way and the gate to it are narrow. Do not think it strange that the gate to life is narrow, for truth on any point is narrow; error includes all the rest of space! Hence, the way to destruction is broad—as broad as all the sins and errors of the human family. "Enter ye in by the narrow gate"; that requires an effort, but the one who honestly seeks to enter that gate will do so.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

The habit of making hasty decisions about other folks and making unjust remarks about them is poisonous to one's character. What you think about the other fellow may not make much difference to him, but it makes a difference in your character.

One of the thoughtless things people say is, that God cannot answer prayer without working a miracle. All animal life answers the cry of their young, and they work no miracles. Parents frequently give their children what they ask for, and they work no miracles in doing so. It is strange that people will adopt a theory that makes God more helpless than we are, more helpless even than birds.

# TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The right and the wrong of judging others.  
 The right and the wrong way to correct others.  
 Prayer.  
 The Golden Rule.

## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.

### Verses 1, 2

Could a man, without losing his sense, keep from forming opinions about people?

What sort of judging does the Lord prohibit?

In what respects do people have to judge others?

Why must we judge with mercy?

### Verses 3-5

How does Jesus show the absurdity of the guilty man's correcting others?

Give some examples of this?

Why first take heed to ourselves?

### Verse 6

Could we obey verse 6 unless we form some judgment of people?

What is the teaching of this verse?

### Verses 7-11

Repeat verse 7.

Discuss the significance of ask, seek, knock.

Give some Bible teaching on prayer.

What is the significance of seek?

Can an honest seeker fail to find the truth?

Give some conditions of acceptable prayer.

### Verse 12

Discuss the meaning and application of verse 12.

### Verses 13, 14

Discuss verses 13, 14.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson IX—November 26, 1939

# THE WORKS OF THE MESSIAH

Matt. 8: 14-27

14 And when Jē'sūs was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever.

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

16 And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through I-sā'iah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

18 Now when Jē'sūs saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 And there came a scribe, and said unto him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jē'sūs saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

21 And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jē'sūs saith unto him, Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead.

23 And when he was entered into a boat, his disciples followed him.

24 And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the boat was covered with the waves; but he was asleep.

25 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Save, Lord; we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?



GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jesus of Nazareth . . . went about doing good."*  
(Acts 10: 38.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 61: 1-3.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 20.	M.	.....	A King Who Served (Matt. 8: 1-13)
November 21.	T.	.....	Ministering to Human Needs (Matt. 8: 14-27)
November 22.	W.	.....	Calming the Sea (Mark 4: 33-41)
November 23.	T.	.....	A Paralytic Healed (Matt. 9: 1-8)
November 24.	F.	.....	A Ruler's Daughter Cured (Matt. 9: 18-26)
November 25.	S.	.....	Thanksgiving for Deliverance (Psalm 116: 1-8)
November 26.	S.	.....	The King Anointed to Serve (Isa. 61: 1-3)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 29.

*Places.*—Capernaum, and a boat on the Sea of Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, a scribe, and many afflicted people.

*Lesson Links.*—Two striking miracles are recorded in the eighth chapter before we reach the printed text of our lesson. Jesus healed a man of his leprosy. (Verses 1-4.) In Capernaum "there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. . . . And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour." (Verses 5-13.) The centurion was a thoughtful man. He was used to authority, and the power of a word of authority. Though he was under authority himself, yet he had men under his authority. He did not have to come into personal contact with a man under him to get him to do what he wanted done; he gave a command, and it was done. So he reasoned that Jesus, who had authority over disease, could banish disease with a command without coming in personal contact with the diseased person. Jesus had not found such great faith as that among the Jews. It is generally conceded that Matthew made no attempt to arrange his matter in chronological order, but designed rather to group events and sayings according to subject matter. His design was to present proofs that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah. His proofs were therefore arranged in a logical order rather than in a chronological order. This accounts for the fact that the other writers mention many things that apparently occurred before the events of this lesson; things Matthew neither does not mention or mentions later on.

**COMMENTS ON THE LESSON****Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law (Verses 14, 15)**

After Jesus was rejected at Nazareth he made his home in Capernaum, perhaps in the home of Peter. When he returned from one preaching tour through the cities of Galilee, he came into Peter's house, and found Peter's mother-in-law sick of a fever. When it is remembered that no pope is allowed to be married, it is singular that they claim that Peter was the first pope. Jesus healed the sick woman, and she arose and ministered to them. This would include the preparing of something for them to eat, and rendering any other service they needed. It will be noticed that this was no gradual recovery of health and strength. She had her strength restored as well as her health; and it was all done instantly.

**Jesus Casts Out Demons and Performs Many Cures (Verses 16, 17)**

As this curing of Peter's wife's mother was on a Sabbath day, the strict Jews, those who kept the tradition of the elders, would not try to have any cures performed on that day. The tradition of the elders made it a crime to practice the art of healing on the Sabbath. They would look after the comfort of a thirsty animal by leading it to water on the Sabbath, but a human being had to suffer till the Sabbath was past. Their Sabbath ended at even. all that were sick." Demons were evil spirits that took possession with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick." Demons were evil spirits that took possession of people; that appears to have been the accepted idea among the Jews. With them demons were the departed spirits of wicked men. The Greeks had a different idea. It appears that they had two classes of demons—one, the offspring of the gods; the other, the spirits of dead men. With them demons were the middle beings between the gods and men. Hence, they attached no evil significance to the term. In fact, demons were really objects of worship. When Paul told the Athenians that he perceived that they were very much given to demon worship (so it is in the Greek Testament) they would take it as a compliment. But there is no evidence that Jesus and his apostles deviated from the Jewish idea of demons. How the spirits of wicked dead men took possession of people we know not. There is no proof that the person thus afflicted was in any way to blame for his affliction. The evidence is plain that these evil spirits possessed both superhuman knowledge and strength. There is one significant expression in verse 16 that seems to have been strangely overlooked—"and he cast out the spirits with a word." Surely the sinner now is not in as desperate a condition as were these demon-possessed people, and yet some people contend that the word will not correct the evil habits of people, and that therefore the sinner must have a direct operation of the Spirit to cure him of his sins! Jesus healed the demon-possessed with a word, and yet we are told that he cannot heal the sinner with a word! There is matter here for thought. On this occasion he also healed many sick people. He cast out the demons and healed the sick in fulfillment of the



prophecy of Isaiah. The prophecy quoted is found in Isa. 53: 4. Jesus came to save people from their sins, but to do so he must first convince them that he is the Messiah. Hence, the miracles were performed, not so much for the sake of the afflicted, but as signs that God was with him.

### **A Scribe Proposes to Follow Jesus (Verses 18-20)**

Jesus was human as well as divine, and became weary and in need of rest as do human beings. The crowds had been pressing upon him, and he needed to have some rest; hence, he gave commandment, evidently to his disciples, to depart to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He would, at least, get some rest from the crowd while he was in the boat. "And there came a scribe, and said unto him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Literally, "one scribe." This scribe was evidently a disciple. He wanted to be with Jesus in his journeys; he wanted to see more of his miracles, to hear more of his teachings, and to be in his company. The reply Jesus made to him was not a denial of his request, as some commentators have it; Jesus merely informed him that he had no material advantages to offer him, only homeless journeyings. Foxes had their dens, and birds had their lodgings places, but Jesus had no place of his own to lie down to sleep. Whether this scribe followed in the company of Jesus or not, we know not. Others besides the apostles did journey with him. (Acts 1: 21, 22.)

### **"Leave the Dead to Bury Their Own Dead" (Verses 21, 22)**

"Another disciple." This indicates that the scribe just mentioned was a disciple also. This disciple would also be in the immediate company of Jesus, but he wanted first to bury his father. It is not certain that his father was dead, but probably near death from age. Had the father been actually dead, the burial could have been quickly done. The reply of Jesus seems strange, if the father was already dead. He evidently uses the word dead in two senses. There must have been some in the family of this disciple who were dead to Jesus; let him take care of the burial of the father. "Follow me." The time was short; if a man was going to follow Jesus in his journeys, there was no time to lose. That seems to have been the reason for the demand Jesus made, for ordinarily it is the duty of the Christian to care for the aged and to bury the dead.

### **A Storm at Sea (Verses 23-27)**

It is said that the Sea of Galilee is noted for its squalls; they swoop down from the surrounding mountains without warning. On this occasion, when Jesus and his disciples had been on the sea long enough for Jesus to fall asleep, "there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves." It was an unusually severe storm, and the disciples were frightened, though many of them were fishers and used to these storms. But Jesus, being thoroughly exhausted from the labors of the day, and being able at once to dismiss from his mind the day's activities, had soon fallen into restful sleep. Not even the storm awoke him. The dis-

ciples, thoroughly frightened, awoke him, saying, "Save, Lord; we perish." Mark reports a little more of what they said: "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" That seems to have been a reproach to Jesus for sleeping; or they may have said it more in excitement than in a spirit of reproach. Jesus rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still." Luke reports: "And he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm." That was a double miracle. The winds did not gradually subside, nor did the waves gradually cease their violence, as waves always do after a disturbance. That the wind should suddenly cease was not quite so amazing—that might happen; but that the raging waters should suddenly become calm and smooth as a mirror was amazing indeed. It filled the disciples with wonder. Jesus also rebuked the disciples: "O ye of little faith." Much has been said about their lack of faith, but little effort has been made to locate the exact point wherein they showed their lack of faith. They believed that the Lord could save them, for they awoke him for that purpose, and then prayed, "Save, Lord." But what could have been a greater defect in their faith than for them to believe that he could save them, and yet doubted that he cared enough for them to do so. "Carest thou not that we perish?" That implies, "You could save us, if you cared enough to do so." In thus reproaching him, they showed a deep, ugly lack of trust and confidence in him, the very worst sort of a defect in their faith. Besides, had they recognized his deity, they would have known that where he was all things were well; but they still thought of him as a man—a most wonderful man. "And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

If people understood the purpose of miracles wrought through human agency, it would clear up some matters for them. A miracle wrought in connection with some one's preaching or teaching was a sign that God was with him, and that his message was from God. Hence, such miracles are called signs. Some miracles, such as the creation of all things and the resurrection of the dead at the last day cannot be called signs. When the need of signs passed away signs ceased. There will yet be miracles, but not signs.

In the eighth chapter of Matthew two degrees of faith are mentioned—great faith and little faith. James mentions other degrees—dead faith and perfect faith. Genuine faith has in it an element of confidence and trust. The one who puts his trust in God, and not in man, will do faithfully what God says. In this we may know who trusts God and who does not.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

- Miracles and signs.
- Demons.
- Degrees of faith.
- Examples of faith.



## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
Give at outline of Matt. 8: 1-13.  
Wherein was the centurion's faith great?

## Verses 14, 15

Tell about the healing of Peter's wife's mother.

## Verses 16, 17

On this occasion why did the people wait till evening to bring their sick to be healed?  
Give some discussion of demons.  
How did Jesus cast them out?  
What other miracles did he perform that evening?

## Verses 18-20

What command did Jesus give?  
Why would he want to get away from such a crowd?  
What did a scribe desire to do?  
What answer did Jesus make?

## Verses 21, 22

What request did another disciple make?  
What did Jesus say to him?

## Verses 23, 24

Tell about the storms on the Sea of Galilee.  
Tell about this storm.  
What two miracles did Jesus perform?  
Wherein was the faith of the disciples defective?  
What effect did the miracles have on them?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson X—December 3, 1939

## SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

Matt. 10: 24-39

- 24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord.  
25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Bê-êl'zê-bûb, how much more them of his household!  
26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.  
27 What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the house-tops.  
28 And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.  
29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father:  
30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.  
31 Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.  
32 Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.  
33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.  
34 Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.  
35 For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law:  
36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.  
37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.  
38 And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me.  
39 He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He that heareth, let him say, Come."* (Rev. 22: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 103: 1-5, 8-12.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 27.	M.	The King's Servants Commissioned (Mark 16: 14-20)
November 28.	T.	The King's Servants Encouraged (Matt. 10: 24-33)
November 29.	W.	The King's Servants Rewarded (Matt. 10: 34-42)
November 30.	T.	The Need of Servants (John 4: 34-38)
December 1.	F.	Sharing the Missionary Task (Isa. 42: 1-9)
December 2.	S.	The Gospel Proclaimed (Isa. 40: 1-8)
December 3.	S.	Praise for Jehovah's Mercies (Psalm 107: 1-9)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 29 or 30.

*Place.*—Probably some place in Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus and his disciples.

*Lesson Links.*—This lesson is meant to include the whole of the tenth chapter. Verse 1: "And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." Then the names of these twelve are given. Verses 5 and 6: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This is usually called the Limited Commission, because the apostles were limited in their operations to the Jews. And their preaching was limited as to subject matter. The burden of their preaching was to be: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Both Jesus and John the Baptist had preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. (Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17.) At hand meant near. Now the twelve are sent out to preach the same thing. Later, when Jesus sent out the seventy, he commanded them to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke 10: 9.) Jesus had preached, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." The time had come for the inauguration of that kingdom. That could not then have been preached if the kingdom is yet in the future. On this preaching journey the twelve were to depend on the people where they preached for their support. They were commanded to waste no time in a city that would not receive them. They were to be as sheep among wolves; they were not to fight back at those who persecuted them. They were to be as wise as serpents, in that serpents usually have sense enough to try to escape danger; and they were not to harm those who sought to injure them. And when they were delivered up before rulers, they were to take no thought what to say; "for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." In such cases the Holy Spirit would select the very words they were to use; or rather, the Holy Spirit would use their vocal organs to do the talking himself. The preaching of the gospel would make believers of some, and stir others to great enmity. Such divisions would come even between members of the same family. Great enmity would be stirred up against these preachers; but the time was too short for them to tarry in a city that would not receive them. "But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." This coming of the Lord must be his coming in his kingdom on the first Pentecost after his resurrection, for he was coming before they preached in all the cities of Israel. There are now no cities of Israel in which to preach.



## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### A Disciple Need Not Expect to Be Treated Better Than His Lord (Verses 24, 25)

"The disciple is not above his teacher." It does not seem that Jesus was emphasizing the fact that a disciple is not more prominent or of more importance than his teacher. That is not the point he was then presenting, but rather the matter of being persecuted. The disciple should not expect better treatment than his teacher, nor should the servant expect better treatment than his master. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household." Notice the relations here mentioned that exist between Jesus and his followers: The teacher and his disciples, or pupils; the master, or lord, and his servants; master of the house and the inmates. Jesus is teacher, Lord, and master of all in his house, the church. At some time his enemies had called him Beelzebub. They also said that he cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. (Matt. 12: 24.) There has been much dispute about the origin of the name Beelzebub, and as to the spelling of the name; but it is not profitable to discuss the matter here. However, the name seems to have been applied to an idol which the Jews detested, and that therefore they came to apply the name to Satan himself. Their calling Jesus Beelzebub shows what extreme hatred they had for him.

### Hidden Things Would Be Revealed (Verses 26, 27)

The righteous are sometimes temporarily put to a disadvantage, for the evil designs of people may be covered by a pretense of working for the good of the people; but such designs, however well covered they may be at the time, will ultimately come to light. In opposing and crucifying Jesus, the Jewish leaders made the people believe for a time that they were serving the best interest of the nation, but their designs afterwards came to be known in their true light. And so it was with those who put Christians to death. Jesus did not do all his teaching in public. Had he made all his claims known to the public, his enemies would have been roused to greater opposition. The disciples were charged not to tell people that he was the Christ. The full revelation of what he was, and what his plans for the salvation of the world were, had to wait till he, by his death, resurrection, and ascension, fully demonstrated that he was the Son of God, the long-expected Messiah. Then the disciples were to proclaim to the public all that he had taught them in secret.

### Fear Him Who Can Destroy Soul and Body in Hell (Verses 28-31)

In going out to preach the disciples would face bitter persecution—persecution even unto death. But their enemies could do no more than kill the body. In Luke's account we have: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." "Fear him who is

able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Hell here refers to the final abode of the wicked. The language shows that the man who kills another person's body does not kill his soul—the soul survives the death of the body. This is one reason why they should not fear man; for if they failed to preach through fear of man then a still worse fate awaited them. Besides, God cares for his own; if they are killed, they suffer no loss. If as small a bird as a sparrow falls to the ground, God knows it. A servant of God is of more value than many sparrows. His eyes are over the righteous. There is comfort in such teaching, especially so when men face death for being Christians.

### **"Shall Confess . . . Shall Deny" (Verses 32, 33)**

These verses do not refer directly to the confession made before baptism. Jesus was preparing his disciples to face persecution. Persecution must not cause them to deny Christ. If they did, he would treat them before the Father just as they had treated him before men. They would be condemned to death, but would be offered their life and liberty, if they would renounce Christ. That would be a severe test. Perhaps we are sometimes put to a severer test. No one likes to be laughed at, or mocked, or ostracised for being a Christian. Moral courage sometimes fails when physical courage would not. To be in a crowd of scoffers and have them turn loose on us a flood of sarcasm because of our religion is more than some can stand. Such an experience is embarrassing, but it would be infinitely worse to be denied by the Savior before the Father and the holy angels. If we confess him in every trial, he will confess us; if we deny him, and that means to renounce him, he will deny us.

### **"I Came Not to Send Peace, but a Sword" (Verses 34-36)**

There is a very important sense in which Jesus came to make peace. He came to reconcile man to God, thus making peace between man and God. He came to take the law of Moses out of the way so that there might be peace between Jew and Gentile—between all Jews and Gentiles who would accept him. (Eph. 2: 14-18.) There is peace between all who faithfully follow him. But the result of all this is war between right and wrong. Enemies of truth and right became his bitter enemies, and the enemies of all who advocate his cause. Jesus and his apostles fought evil because they loved man; they were arrayed against anything that was hurtful to human beings. Jesus would have all men to be saved, but some are against him. He speaks of the results of his mission to earth as if he came for the sole purpose of stirring up strife. He assumes responsibility for what grows out of his mission to earth—the war between the right and the wrong. "For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Usually a family will rally to the support of an accused member, but not often so when one member goes contrary to the accepted religion of the family. They are more apt to be bitter toward such a one than are his



friends and acquaintances. In changing his religion, they feel that he has renounced his family allegiance—disgraced the family. Hence, their bitterness.

### **Losing Life—Finding It (Verses 37-39)**

There is on the part of most people an aversion to going against the religion of father and mother. Jesus takes notice of that, and gives an emphatic warning. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." There come times when we must make a choice between the Lord and other persons and things that we love; he must come first. We must be willing to sacrifice even our physical lives if necessary. The cross was an instrument of death. To take up our cross means more than to go against our feelings and desires. The criminal, or condemned man, carried his cross to the place of execution. To take up one's cross means that the Christian marches to his death if need be. Let us not cheapen the idea of the cross by making cross-bearing mean no more than going contrary to our fleshly inclinations. In following Christ many of the early Christians were on their way to execution for the supposed crime of being Christians. Figuratively therefore they were carrying their cross to their own death—carrying that which would bring death to them. The word life is used in two senses in verse 39. If a man renounced Christ to save his physical life, he would lose eternal life; but if he gave up his physical life for the sake of Christ, he would find eternal life. This verse is virtually a repetition of the teaching of verses 32 and 33.

### **SOME REFLECTIONS**

Why should a Christian worry if some one called him a Campbellite, or any other disagreeable name? They called our Master Beelzebub and many other disagreeable things; we should not expect to escape such talk.

Man can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. The soul is therefore not killed when the body is killed. Materialists cannot give a sensible explanation of this fact.

Christians are soldiers; it is a soldier's business to fight. The church has never been blessed with a greater fighter than was Paul. If a man does not fight evil of all sorts, including false teaching, he does not love righteousness nor the gospel; he loves self and the ease he enjoys by being on good terms with evil men and false teachers.

### **TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION**

Suffering for Christ.

How the apostles fearlessly proclaimed the gospel.

What and how the Christians must fight.

The dangers of loving other persons and things more than Christ.

### **QUESTIONS**

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### **Lesson Settings**

Give time, place, and persons.

Give the names of the twelve apostles.

Tell about their first mission.

What was the burden of their preaching?

What would be the effect of their preaching?

Why were they not to waste time in some cities?

## Verses 24, 25

What was the point in saying that a disciple was not above his teacher? Name the relations here mentioned as between Jesus and his followers. Why should we not worry at offensive epithets?

## Verses 26, 27

Discuss the meaning and application of verses 26, 27.

## Verses 28-31

Whom shall we fear and whom not fear? Why should we fear God rather than man?

## Verses 32, 33

What is the meaning of confessing Christ?

What choice was offered a Christian before execution?

What now is a great temptation for some to deny that they are Christians?

What does Jesus say about our confessing or not confessing him?

## Verses 34-36

In what sense did Jesus come to make peace?

In what sense did he come to send a sword?

Why did Jesus and his apostles fight so constantly?

Discuss verses 35, 36.

## Verses 37-39

Discuss verses 37-39.

Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XI—December 10, 1939

## REACTIONS TO THE GOOD NEWS

Matt. 11: 16-30

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows

17 And say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified by her works.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

21 Woe unto thee, Chō-rā'zīn! woe unto thee, Bēth-sā'ī-dā! for if the mighty works had been done in Tŷre and Sī'dōn which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tŷre and Sī'dōn in the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Cā-pēr'nā-ūm, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hā'dēs; for if the mighty works had been done in Sōd'ōm which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sōd'ōm in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that season Jē'sūs answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes:

26 Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.

27 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 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.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"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.)



DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 7-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 4.	M.	.....	The Invitation of the King (Matt. 11: 25-30)
December 5.	T.	.....	The Offer of Mercy (Ezek. 33: 10-16)
December 6.	W.	.....	A Call to Repentance (Isa. 55: 1-13)
December 7.	T.	.....	Exhortation to Steadfastness (2 Pet. 3: 8-18)
December 8.	F.	.....	The Kingdom Refused (Matt. 11: 16-24)
December 9.	S.	.....	Believers Become Sons (John 1: 1-12)
December 10.	S.	.....	The King's Desire (John 17: 20-26)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—A.D. 28 or 29. It is generally understood that Matthew did not arrange his matter in chronological order. The harmonists of the gospels place the matter of this lesson before the events of last lesson.

*Place.*—Some point in Galilee.

*Persons.*—Jesus and the multitudes.

*Lesson Links.*—The fame of Jesus had spread through all the countries of the Jews and into regions beyond. His forerunner, John the Baptist, was languishing in prison at Machaerus east of the Dead Sea where Herod had imprisoned him. Whether John had become doubtful or whether he made the move to strengthen the faith of his disciples, the record does not say; but we are informed that he sent two of his disciples to Jesus with this question: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Jesus did not give a direct reply to the two disciples of John, but said to them, "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." (Verses 2-6.) That would be sufficient to convince a sincere man that Jesus was the one that was to come.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The People Contrary and Critical (Verses 16-19)

After John's disciples departed, Jesus gave the multitude an estimate of John's character and work. John was not swayed about by every temptation and popular fancy as a reed is swayed by the passing breezes. He was not soft and effeminate—not brought up in luxury, nor trained to be too polite to rebuke people for their sins. John was a prophet, "and much more than a prophet." He was a messenger sent to prepare the way for the Lord. There had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; and yet the least in the kingdom is greater than he. There are different ways to be great. A child is greater in a family than anybody outside can possibly be. The language shows that John was not in the kingdom. He could not have been in the kingdom, and yet less than the least in the kingdom. The kingdom of Christ existed then only in the sense that material was being prepared for it. All citizens in the kingdom would be, in their nearness to God and in their blessings, greater than John. Even in this preparatory stage of the kingdom it suffered from the violence of men; and some wanted to make Jesus

king by force. John was the Elijah of Old Testament prophecy, because he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Like Elijah he had denounced sin and called on the people to repent. Jesus had also been preaching for some time. John's life was severely simple. His food was locusts and wild honey. If he mingled with the people in their social gatherings, we have no account of it. His seems to have been a lonely life. By no stretch of speech could he have been called a "good mixer." Jesus did not live such a lonely life; each lived the life that was best suited to the work he was sent to do. Neither was he trying to be popular—not seeking to gain the applause of the people. As a means of rebuking the self-righteous and haughty Pharisees and encouraging the poor, down-trodden and religious outcasts, Jesus went amongst such people, attended their feasts, and visited in their homes. The people did not respond to either as they should have done. Jesus compares that generation with contrary children at play in the market place. The children are supposed to be divided into two groups, one group to follow the lead of the other. When one side imitated the noise of the pipe, the other group was supposed to dance to the music, but they would not. When the first group then set up a wail like mourners, the others were supposed to join in, but would not. The application: "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" The people would not be pleased. If people want to criticize—and that seems to be a luxury most people enjoy—they can always find something to criticize. Jesus did not attend feasts to gratify himself, but to do the people good. "And wisdom is justified by her children." John and Jesus were both children of wisdom. Wisdom was justified by both, for both of them followed the course of life that was best adapted to the work he had to do.

### **Jesus Uproids Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Verses 20-24)**

These were the cities wherein Jesus had done most of his mighty works. Though they had seen his numerous and mighty miracles and heard his teaching, they had not repented. Of course, some had repented, but the great majority of them had not. They were obstinate and set in their ways. The people of Chorazin and Bethsaida were worse than those of the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon. It would be very disagreeable to a Jew to be told that a city of Jews was worse than some Gentile cities, but truth is frequently disagreeable. Tyre and Sidon would fare better in the day of judgment than Chorazin and Bethsaida, for Tyre and Sidon had not had the opportunities to know what was right that Chorazin and Bethsaida had had. Capernaum felt itself to be a favored city—shall it be exalted to heaven? Perhaps some felt that it would be looked on with favor by Jehovah because Jesus Christ, his Son, had made his home there, but not so. But their failure to repent in the face of their greater opportunities would make their fate worse than that of Sodom. Responsibility is measured by opportunity, and judgment corresponds with opportunity. Capernaum had been specially favored, but had not repented; it would go down to Hades. For the



wicked to go down to Hades means that they go down to punishment. Where now are these cities? They utterly perished centuries ago.

### **Jesus Thanks the Father (Verses 25, 26)**

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum had miserably failed to grasp their opportunities. They must have been dominated by men who were too wise in their own eyes to listen to any but themselves. There is a note of sadness in the woes that Jesus pronounced upon them; and yet in the midst of his sad disappointment at their stubbornness he found cause for thanksgiving. He thanked the Father that the things he had taught in these cities were hidden from these who were so wise in their own conceits, and had been revealed unto babes. Nothing can be revealed to a person who is too conceited to learn. The world by its wisdom cannot know God. It is impossible even now for man to find out God through his scientific research and investigation. God does not discredit human learning in its legitimate field; he shows that human learning cannot find out God. That knowledge comes by revelation. Those who are too wise in their estimation to accept revelation cannot know God. To know God one must have a teachable spirit. The Pharisees who rejected everything that did not correspond with their set ideas rejected the teaching of Christ. "And didst reveal them unto babes." In this sense the wisest of scholars may be a babe, that is, he may humble himself and be willing to be taught. And Jesus thanked the Father that he had so arranged matters that the high and the low alike must be as babes to learn these things. With this revelation all are on a common level; no one is favored above another.

### **Only the Son Knows the Father (Verse 27)**

"All things have been delivered unto me of my Father," Jesus was the heir of all things, but he did not enter into the fullness of his powers till he was exalted at the Father's right hand. (Acts 2: 29-36.) "And no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Finite mind cannot grasp the infinite; one would have to be as wise as the Father and the Son to know them fully. We can know them only as they are revealed; the world by its wisdom cannot know them. The whole plan of human redemption is a matter of revelation.

### **The Great Invitation (Verses 28-30)**

No mere man could ever have conceived the idea of putting himself forward as the source of all spiritual blessings and of inviting men to come to him and share those blessings. The invitation bears the stamp of deity. The language also shows that we can come to him, and that we must come in order to share the offered blessings. "All ye that labor and are heavy laden." The invitation is to those who are laboring under the vexing cares, doubts, and problems of life, and upon whose conscience sin weighs as a heavy burden. They long for some relief. The giddy, the frivolous, and those who delight in sin are not invited, and would not come if they were invited.

The cares of life and sin are not the only things that weigh us down. We may be harassed with doubts almost to distraction and long to reach the point where we can say, "Now I know I am on the right road; now I can rest." From all these things Jesus promises to give us rest; rest from the burden of sin, rest from vexing cares, rest from harassing doubts—rest! "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." That seems like a strange way to give rest, for a yoke suggests work. But the yoke he gives us helps us to bear the necessary burdens of life; besides, the yoke is lighter than the load he asks us to lay down. If we learn of him life is easier; for he teaches us the true way to live. The one who learns from Christ how to live is free from many of the things that disturb and annoy others; and the reward Jesus puts before us make the burdens of life seem lighter by comparison. "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.) "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4: 17.) When the reward is so immeasurably greater than the task, we count the task light. As Jesus is meek and lowly he will not lay upon us heavy burdens as a haughty tryant would do. Many burdens come because we do not live as Jesus teaches us to live. "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." One reason some people find the effort to live the Christian life a burden, is they try to carry the world along with them. That makes an intolerable burden. "Ye shall find rest." Jesus gives us rest by showing us how to find it, and that is to learn from him how to live.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

No one can please everybody. Besides, if you try to please men, you are not the servant of Christ. (Gal. 1: 10.)

When God pronounces a woe upon a city or a nation, that city or nation will certainly begin a process of decay and dissolution, and cease to be.

In their rejection of Christ the Jews made a fatal blunder; and that rejection was due to the fact that they had speculated on the prophecies concerning the Messiah till they had fixed in their mind the nature of his coming and his kingdom; but Jesus did not follow the program they had mapped out, and for that reason they rejected him. It is wiser to let God unfold his own plans according to his own program, and then to fall in with his plans and purposes concerning us. If we do not, he will follow his own plans any way, and may crush us in doing it.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The character of John the Baptist.

The mission of John the Baptist.

The folly of trying to preach to please men.

The need of revelation.

The great invitation.



## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

## Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
What question did John send disciples to ask Jesus?  
How did Jesus answer?

## Verses 16-19

What did Jesus say about the character of John?  
Why was John sent?  
Show that John was not in the kingdom.  
What was John's manner of life?  
What did the people say of Jesus, and why?  
How did Jesus illustrate the attitude of the people?

## Verses 20-24

What cities did Jesus upbraid, and why?  
What did he say about them?

## Verses 25, 26

For what did Jesus thank his Father?  
In what way were these things hidden from the wise and prudent?  
To whom were they revealed?  
Why is revelation necessary?  
What does Jesus here mean by babes?

## Verse 27

Discuss verse 27.

## Verses 28-30

Repeat verses 28 to 30.  
What shows that people can come?  
Discuss each clause—tell how Jesus gives rest—rest from what?  
Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XII—December 17, 1939

## PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 13: 3-8, 31-33, 44-46

3 And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow;

4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them:

5 And others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them:

8 And others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

44 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls:

46 And having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live."* (Isa. 55: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 2: 1-8.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 11.	M.	The Kingdom a Treasure (Matt. 13: 44-46)
December 12.	T.	Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom (Matt. 13: 1-9)
December 13.	W.	How the Kingdom Grows (Matt. 13: 31-35)
December 14.	T.	Reaping in Joy (Psalm 126: 1-6)
December 15.	F.	Reaping What We Sow (Gal. 6: 1-10)
December 16.	S.	Fruits of Good Seed (Gal. 5: 22-26)
December 17.	S.	The Sure Harvest (Eccles. 11: 1-8)

## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—Probably A.D. 28 or 29.

*Place.*—The Sea of Galilee; Jesus sat in a boat, "and all the multitude stood on the beach."

*Persons.*—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

*Lesson Links.*—The twelfth chapter comes between our last lesson and this. It shows the growing hostility of the Pharisees. They complained to Jesus because his disciples, as they passed through a field, plucked some heads of grain, rubbed the grain out in their hands, and ate the grains. The law of Moses allowed that, but the Pharisees said it was not lawful to do so on the Sabbath. The disciples were violating only the tradition of the elders. The law prohibited reaping and threshing on the Sabbath, but in the eyes of the Pharisees plucking the ears of grain was reaping and rubbing out the grain was threshing! Then on the Sabbath Jesus healed a withered hand. That so enraged them that they took counsel how they might destroy him. When he cast out demons, they said that he did it by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Jesus showed them the folly of such a charge. In the thirteenth chapter a speech of parables is recorded. Verse 34 says, "Without a parable spake he nothing unto them." From this remark some have thoughtlessly concluded that Jesus always spoke in parables; whereas Matthew's remark applies only to that speech. In fact, it was such a departure from his usual method of teaching that the disciples asked him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Now, a parable is a species of allegory, a sort of extended simile. In the Savior's parables there is a recital of known material facts or truths for the purpose of illustrating spiritual things. It is an approach to the unknown through the known. The disciples were already familiar with the facts of his parables, but they were not acquainted with the nature of the coming kingdom. His parables were illustrations of various phases of his kingdom; in them he placed the unknown things of his kingdom by the side of well-known material things, and showed the likeness between the two. Care should be exercised in interpreting parables. There is danger that we try to carry the likeness further than Jesus intended. Of course, when Jesus explains a parable, as he did the parable of the sower, there is no room for any blunder. We must accept the points of likeness only so far as he points them out. Where he did not explain a parable, we must not make an interpretation of it that contradicts any plain passage of scripture; neither should we force a meaning into a figure of speech that will destroy the force of another figure relating to the same thing. Common sense and a general knowledge of the teaching of the Bible will usually save a person from making any serious blunders in the interpretation of parables and other figures of speech. Nothing will safeguard a person who is lacking in these qualifications.



## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

## The Parable of the Sower (Verses 3-8)

The parable of the sower is true to nature in every detail. As people lived in towns and cities, the farmer literally went forth to sow. Jesus did not recite the facts of the parable for the purpose of teaching his hearers anything about farming; they were acquainted with all the facts he stated. Before explaining the meaning of the parable, he told the disciples why he spoke in parables. To have taught the multitudes in plain language the lessons he taught in these parables would have stirred up more opposition from the Pharisees, for their ideas of the kingdom-to-be resembled nothing that was set forth in these parables. Their hearts were hardened against such teaching, so materialistic were they. As Jesus himself explained the parable in verses 18-23, it is best to consider the facts of the parable and the explanation as we proceed.

*The Seed.*—The seed in the parable represents the word of God. "The sower soweth the word." (Mark.) "The seed is the word of God." (Luke.) Just as the germ of vegetable life is in the seed, so is the germ of spiritual life in the word, the seed of the kingdom.

*The Sower.*—The sower in the parable represents the one who preaches the word. Primarily Jesus is the sower, but all who teach and preach the word are sowers.

*The Soil.*—The soil represents human hearts. Jesus makes this truth very clear in his explanation of the parable. There are various conditions of human hearts just as there are various conditions of soil.

*The Wayside Soil.*—Beaten paths ran along beside the grainfields. In broadcasting grain some would fall in these paths. The explanation: "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart." Luke's report says that the devil takes away the word out of the heart, that they may not believe and be saved." The devil knows that there is no chance then for them to believe. These wayside hearts have been so abused by allowing every sort of idea, notion, and whim to run over them, that no serious impression can be made upon them. Perhaps these are they who boast of having open minds. Some people have an open mind like an open road over which everything is allowed to pass and on which nothing stays!

*The Stony Ground.*—Shallow soil on an underlying rock will soon warm up and cause the seed to come up and grow till dry weather and the hot sun kills it. This condition of soil represents the emotional person, who, having heard the word, accepts it with joy; but lacking in stability of purpose, "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth." The soil is too shallow.

*The Thorny Ground.*—There was nothing wrong with this soil, excepting that it had not been properly cleared of thorns and weeds. These noxious growths represent the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of life, and the lust of other things. Other things, as well as evil passions, may choke out the word. Some people allow the cares of life to so weigh them down as to

crush out the word; the cares of life include all the problems of living, even moral and religious matters. Some people become so absorbed in affairs of the church that they forget that God has anything to do with it! To prevent all these things we need constantly to study the word and to meditate on divine things.

*The Good Ground.*—The good ground yielded fruit—thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. There are two main kinds of soil represented in the parable, namely, the nonproductive and the productive. Each kind has three grades, six in all. "And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it." Such a one bears fruit. To understand the word means more than just to know what it takes to make a Christian—to know this and to obey it puts the person where he can bear fruit. The stony and the thorny ground hearers did that—each produced plants in the kingdom, but neither bore fruit. To understand the word is to comprehend what it really means to be a Christian, to know our duties and responsibilities, together with the advantages and rewards of the Christian life. The one who is fully persuaded as to what Christianity is and what it means to him will live the Christian life and bear fruit. The trouble is so many professed Christians have such little conception as to what it is all about.

### **Parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven (Verses 31-33)**

In the parable of the mustard seed the thought of seed is continued, but somewhat varied. Here the kingdom itself is represented as growing up from a very small seed, the least seed the farmers in that country sowed in their fields. It seems to represent the small beginning of the kingdom; no other kingdom began in such a small way. From a worldly point of view it was insignificant, weak, helpless, with no sort of promise of success. But as for that matter, men of science cannot analyze a seed and find in it the possibilities of a great plant. Some of the tall field plants that we grow were unknown to the people of Palestine. The mustard became greater than any other herb of the field, so that birds lodged in its branches. The beginning of the kingdom, as here represented, was vastly different from what the Jews had figured out. The growth and expansion of the kingdom is set forth in the parable of the leaven. Leaven represents the active principle, the permeating power of the kingdom. Leaven spreads by contact, because it has in it a vital force. A church in a community should be the most vital force in the community.

### **The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price (Verses 44-46)**

The man who once owned the field and hid the treasure in it must have died without leaving any information as to his hidden treasure. If he still lived, he would know of that treasure. The man who owned the field was ignorant of it. A man chances to find the treasure, hides it again, and rushes off to buy the field; but to raise the money he had to sell what he had. The point of the parable is that the kingdom of heaven is so valuable that when a person has



once discovered it he will give up all his other possessions, if need be, to come into possession of this great treasure. The trouble is so few know the value of the kingdom. If the man had not known the value of what he found, he would have cared nothing for it. If a person sees no value in the kingdom, he has a poor sense of values.

The merchant was not looking for cheap stuff, but was seeking goodly pearls. He found one pearl of great price—worth as much as all the goods he had. He knew a choice article when he saw it. Forthwith he sold all his other goods and bought that pearl. The point is that when a person really finds the kingdom he will realize that it is so valuable that he will give up all things else for it. The merchant knew the value of that pearl, but so few people realize the value of the kingdom of heaven.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Here are some well-known facts of nature: (1) All life is the product of seed. (2) Seed must be planted in soil adapted to its growth. (3) All seed brings forth after its kind. (4) Seed sown unmixed will produce the same in any soil that is adapted to its growth, no matter who does the sowing. The parable of the sower warrants us in placing over against these facts of nature some corresponding facts in the spiritual kingdom: (1) All spiritual life is the product of seed, the word of God. (2) This seed must be planted in soil adapted to its growth, namely, good and honest hearts. (3) This seed, this word of God, produces true to its nature. It brings forth after its kind. If not, why not? (4) The word of God sown unmixed with human speculations and traditions will produce the same fruit the world over no matter who does the preaching. It will make Christians only, and only Christians. To say that it will not do so is to contradict the laws of nature and also the parable of the sower. If you want to make something else than Christians, you will have to sow something besides the word of God. People differ in religion because different seed have been sown in their hearts.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The seed of the kingdom.  
Different kinds of soil and hearts.  
What the word of God produces.  
Our poor sense of values.

### QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, place, and persons.  
Give some of the incidents recorded in the twelfth chapter.  
What is a parable?  
What care should be exercised in interpreting figures of speech?

#### Verses 3-8

Why did Jesus speak in parables?  
The teacher may let different students discuss each item in the parable of the sower.

#### Verses 31-33

Repeat the parable of the mustard seed.

How does it represent the small beginning of the kingdom?  
 What did the Jews expect respecting the kingdom?  
 How is the growth and expansion of the kingdom illustrated?  
 How does the working of heaven illustrate it?

## Verses 44-46

Give the parable of the hidden treasure.  
 How does it illustrate the value of the kingdom?  
 Repeat the parable of the merchant and the pearl.  
 Why do people not appreciate the kingdom of heaven?  
 Discuss the reflections.

## Lesson XIII—December 24, 1939

## THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM

Matt. 1: 18-25; 18: 1-6; 19: 13-15

18 Now the birth of Jē'sūs Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

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

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

21 And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jē'sūs; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Im-mān'ū-ēl;  
 which is, being interpreted, God with us.

24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife;

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name Jē'sūs.

1 In that hour came the disciples unto Jē'sūs, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them.

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me:

6 But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jē'sūs said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"A little child shall lead them." (Isa. 11: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 65: 17-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 18.	M.	The Birth of the King (Matt. 1: 18-25)
December 19.	T.	The Child in the Kingdom (Matt. 18: 1-6)
December 20.	W.	The King Blesses Children (Matt. 19: 13-15)
December 21.	T.	A Child Saved for a Kingdom (Ex. 2: 1-10)
December 22.	F.	A Child Dedicated to a Kingdom (1 Sam. 1: 21-28)
December 23.	S.	Children Praising the King (Matt. 21: 12-17)
December 24.	S.	The Holy King (Psalm 99: 1-9)



## LESSON SETTINGS

*Time.*—For Matt. 1: 18-25, A.D. 4; for Matt. 18: 1-6 and 19: 13-15, A.D. 29 or 30.

*Places.*—Nazareth, Capernaum, and Perea.

*Persons.*—An angel of the Lord, Joseph, Mary, Jesus, his disciples, and some little children.

*Lesson Links.*—Matthew, also called Levi, the writer of the book we are now studying, was the son of Alphaeus. (Mark 2: 14.) His home was in Capernaum, a city on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, where also lived Peter and Andrew, and where also Jesus made his home during the greater part of his public ministry. Matthew was a publican, a tax collector for the Roman government, a calling most ardently hated by the greater part of the Jews; especially were they severe in condemning one of their number who took up that business. He was at his place of business when Jesus called him. The promptness with which he answered the call indicates that he was already a disciple of the Lord, but had not then left all to be in the immediate company of Jesus in his journeys. "And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll; and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him." (Matt. 9: 9.) On that occasion Matthew prepared a great feast for Jesus and his own associates, but from the very modest way in which Matthew tells of the feast one could scarcely gather that Matthew had given the feast. But Luke tells us plainly that Matthew gave the feast. (Luke 5: 27-32.) A great company of publicans and religious outcasts were invited to this feast. One likes to believe that Matthew invited these associates to this feast that they might come into contact with this great Teacher. The contents of the book of Matthew show that he wrote it to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Mark, Luke, and John wrote with the same object in view. John expresses his design thus: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." (John 20: 30, 31.) They wrote that we might believe; we believe that we may have life in his name.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### The Birth of Jesus (Verses 18-25)

Matthew passes over much that is recorded by Luke. The student should read the first and second chapters of Luke. The angel Gabriel announced to Zacharias that his wife Elisabeth should bear a son. "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name



JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1: 26-33.) Mary then went to visit Elisabeth, her kinswoman, and remained with her about three months. When she returned to Nazareth the people discovered that she was with child. Matthew adds the explanatory phrase "of the Holy Spirit." That was a fact that the people could not then know anything about, only as Mary told them of her experience. It is not likely that the people believed what she said about the visit of the angel Gabriel and what he said. The Lord had honored her above all other women, and yet she was in dishonor with those who knew her. It appears that even Joseph doubted her story, for she must have in some way let him know what had occurred. He "was minded to put her away privily." It is said that a betrothal among the Jews was as binding as the marriage vows, and any infidelity on the part of either was regarded as if they were married. If Mary had been guilty of crime against Joseph, as he evidently thought she was, the law was that she might be stoned to death. (Deut. 22: 23, 24.) Or he might write her a bill of divorcement, and let her go, without bringing any charges against her before the authorities. (Deut. 24: 1.) That was the course that Joseph was minded to follow. He was not of a vindictive nature. He was evidently one of the best of men, else he would not have been intrusted with the care of the child Jesus. But it was a distressing situation to him. "When he thought on these things." It was a time for serious thinking. He evidently had Mary's story of what occurred; he knew her to be a good woman, really the best. And yet the whole thing was beyond wholehearted belief. It is possible that he wondered if it could be that she was the virgin mentioned by the prophet Isaiah. There was much about it to engage his thoughts by night and by day. At the height of his perplexity an angel appeared to him in a dream, and addressed him as "Joseph, thou son of David." This identifies him with the royal family. The royal family of David had been reduced to a low estate from a financial standpoint, as may be seen by comparing Lev. 12: 8 and Luke 2: 22, 23. The angel said, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." It had been a trying time for Mary. Scorned and avoided, as no doubt she was, by all who knew her, and forsaken by the man to whom she had given her heart and her very life, she had a load to bear. But she was sustained by the consciousness of her own innocence and the promises of the angel concerning her prospective son. However, the angel's revelation to Joseph settled the matter so far as he and Mary were concerned; it seems that the marriage was immediately consummated. And so the prophecy made by Isaiah to Ahaz was fulfilled. (Isa. 7: 14.) How it came to pass that the son was born in Bethlehem is told in Luke 2: 1-20. Combining the human nature and deity, he was Immanuel, God with us.



### Who Is Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? (18: 1-6)

The apostles were not supermen; they had ambitions as well as we. It is not so strange therefore that they desired to have high places in the kingdom of heaven, for they, in common with other Jews, had an entirely mistaken idea as to the nature of that kingdom. They thought of it as an earthly kingdom in which there would be places of honor to be distributed among certain favored ones. On more than one occasion they disputed about who should fill these places of honor. James and John once asked for such places. They still had the matter under discussion among themselves the very night in which Jesus was betrayed. "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus taught much by illustrations and object lessons. "He called to him a little child." It would seem to the disciples that he had ignored their question; he had not done so, but was preparing to answer it in a striking way. By his actions he seemed to say: You see this little child; it has no worldly ambitions, and craves no place of honor in the affairs of the world. All children are like that. "Except ye turn." This has no reference to their turning from sin to become his followers, but to their turning from such worldly ambitions as was manifest in their disputes and the question they had propounded. They must turn from such worldly ambitions, and become as little children, or they would never so much as enter the kingdom, to say nothing of their becoming greatest in that kingdom. Their ambitions would keep them out of the kingdom. To humble oneself as a little child is here used as the opposite of their desire to be great in the kingdom. The one who does this is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. A man full of selfish ambition cannot be great in the kingdom; he is, in fact, not in the kingdom. This teaching of Jesus concerning the greatest in the kingdom is so much out of harmony with the world's idea of greatness that it could not have originated with man. The expression, "one such little one," does not refer to the little child then in the midst, but to the one who humbles himself and becomes such as a little child, as the next verse shows. The remark, therefore, has no reference to receiving little children, but to receiving those who have become like little children in their freedom from such faults as worldly ambition. The little ones that believed on him were those who had turned from worldly ambitions. This wrangling about who should be greatest in the kingdom might fire in others a similar ambition; it might also discourage others to the point of quitting. To be guilty of such a crime against believers in Christ would bring a worse fate than drowning in the midst of the sea. How careful disciples should be not to cause others to stumble!

### Jesus and the Little Children (19: 13-15)

It was evidently the parents who brought these little children to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them, and pray. The object for which they brought them is clearly stated. In all ages the prayers of good men have been appreciated by those who believe in God. It is therefore no wonder that these parents sought the prayers of Jesus for their children. The pious Jew would seek the blessing of a father, a prophet, a great teacher, or any venerable

person. The disciples rebuked these parents for bringing these children at that time. Perhaps they did not want Jesus to be interrupted in his speech on divorce. But Jesus gave these objecting disciples a gentle rebuke when he said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me." No parents can now bring their children into the physical presence of Jesus, as these parents did; but they can bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. "The little children, the offspring of a happy wedlock, and a source of constant happiness to faithful husbands and wives, were brought into notice at the close of a conversation about divorce and about the supposed inconvenience of an indissoluble marriage bond. The pleasant incident served as a comment on the discussion and left a better impression in reference to married life."—McGarvey.

### SOME REFLECTIONS

The miracles that accompanied the birth of Jesus may have caused some doubters to believe what had been said about his miraculous conception. His life, his teaching, and his miracles convinced others that all that had been said of him was true. His resurrection, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the marvelous works of the apostles convinced thousands of others. No man can explain Jesus on any other grounds than those set forth in the Bible.

When people want to believe a thing they can find evidence where there is none. Certain parents brought their children to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them and pray. Some men think they find proof of infant sprinkling in this incident; and yet they cannot see proof that baptism is a condition of salvation in the plain statement of Jesus that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And the command of Peter (Acts 2: 38) has no weight with them.

### TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The law of marriage and divorce.

The evils of selfish ambition.

Characteristics of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

### QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?  
Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

#### Lesson Settings

Give time, places, and persons.  
In what business was Matthew engaged?  
Tell about his call and the feast he made.  
What purpose did Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have in view in writing their narratives?

#### Verses 18-25

Give some important facts mentioned by Luke only.  
Discuss in so far as is convenient the birth of Jesus.  
Tell of the revelation made to Joseph in a dream.

Is it likely that the people believed what he and Mary told?  
What prophecy was fulfilled?

#### 18: 1-6

What question did the disciples ask Jesus?  
Why did they have such thoughts about places of honor?  
Tell how Jesus taught them that they were entirely wrong?  
From what must they turn?  
What is it to receive such a one in his name?  
What is said about causing a believer to stumble?

#### 19: 13-15

Why were children brought to Jesus?  
Discuss the lesson of the incident.  
Discuss the reflections.



## Lesson XIV—December 31, 1939

## FRIENDS AND FOES OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 13: 54 to 14: 4; 15: 29-31

54 And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simeon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

1 At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus,

2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him.

3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

29 And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there.

30 And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.” (John 15: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 4.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 25. M.	..... An Unfriendly Community (Matt. 13: 54-58)
December 26. T.	..... An Unfriendly King (Matt. 14: 1-4)
December 27. W.	..... Friends of the Kingdom (Matt. 15: 29-31)
December 28. Th.	..... A Friendly Family (Luke 10: 38-42)
December 29. F.	..... Jesus Answers Unfriendly Critics (Mark 11: 27-33)
December 30. S.	..... Evidences of Friendliness (Matt. 10: 5-15)
December 31. S.	..... Friendship with the King (John 15: 5-14)

## LESSON SETTINGS

Time.—For Matt. 13: 54 to 14: 4, probably A.D. 28 or 29; for Matt. 15: 29-31, probably A.D. 29 or 30.

Places.—Nazareth, Decapolis, Perea.

Persons.—Jesus, the people of Nazareth, Herod, John the Baptist, the multitudes, and their afflicted folks.

Lesson Links.—Jesus did not tell the public that he was the long-expected Messiah; neither did he allow his disciples to do so. He did not establish his kingdom during his public ministry; neither did he announce publicly that he would ever establish a kingdom. He did announce that the kingdom was at hand; John had previously done the same thing. Neither had said who would be the king. As they expected their Messiah to appear in royal splendor, they would not think of Jesus as an aspirant to the throne. They opposed him on other grounds. The leaders did not like his teaching; his dis-

regard for their tradition and his healings on the Sabbath stirred up their enmity; and his denouncing them for their hypocrites infuriated them; and they did not like it because he taught without their authority and went among sinners to do so. For these reasons they became his bitter foes; but they were not conscious of being the foes of any kingdom excepting the Roman kingdom. They were, however, foes of the kingdom of Christ after it was established. While the works and teaching of Christ were stirring up all this hatred, he was gathering about him a group of devoted followers, who, in after years, gave up their lives for him and his kingdom. Jesus challenged the attention of men. They could not be indifferent toward him; they could not be neutral; they were either for him or against him. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. 12: 30.) It is even so now—there are devoted friends of Christ and his kingdom and there are bitter enemies. It will be so till he comes again.

## COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

### Jesus Revisits Nazareth (Verses 54-56)

"Coming into his own country." His own country was Nazareth; here he grew to manhood, and made his living by working at the carpenter's trade. After he was baptized of John in the Jordan he returned for a short stay in Galilee, and then spent some time preaching and baptizing in Judea. He then visited Nazareth, attended the synagogue worship on the Sabbath, read some scripture, and made a short speech. This speech so enraged his old neighbors that they sought to kill him, but he escaped out of their hands. He decides to give them another chance. By this time they had heard much about his miracles and his increasing fame. From Mark we learn that his disciples were with him on this visit. On this visit he was permitted again to teach in their synagogue. They were not so rash in their treatment of him on this visit as before. They were astonished at his teaching rather than being angered. They discussed him among themselves, but came to no definite conclusion. "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" They had come to recognize him as wise beyond their understanding, and they knew that he had done many mighty works. But how could these things be? "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" Such were the questions his former acquaintances and neighbors passed among themselves. But we should not be too hard on these people of Nazareth till we have, at least, advanced beyond them. They were human as we are. Jesus had grown up amongst them, had attended their synagogue, and had never gone off to school. He belonged to the poorer class, and had worked in their midst as a carpenter. They knew his whole family—just common folks. To them he was a puzzle, a riddle, a mystery—all in one; and they could not understand him. His training and education did not account for his powers. What then? His family—some hereditary powers? That could not be the explanation—they knew his people! We should note the fact that



he had brothers and sisters. These could not be merely kinsmen, for the way they are mentioned in connection with his mother shows that they were real brothers and sisters. Whether or not Jesus had brothers and sisters would be of no special interest to us were it not for the fact that the Roman Catholics have built up one of their main dogmas on the supposed perpetual virginity of Mary. Such a claim is as unscriptural as it is unnatural, as idolatrous as it is unreasonable. Evidence against the dogma is plain and incontrovertible. Because the people of Nazareth could not understand how Jesus came to be so powerful, they were offended in him; or, according to the marginal reading, "caused to stumble." They tried to account for him as a man—that is what caused them to stumble.

### **A Prophet Not Honored at Home (Verses 57, 58)**

"A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house." "And among his own kin" is found in Mark's report. His own house refers to his own family, "For even his brethren did not believe on him." (John 7: 5.) Jesus stated a deplorable fact. Jesus did not mean that it should be as stated, but the fact is due to humanity's limited vision. These people of Nazareth were too close to him to see him as he really was. We cannot see a great house or a great mountain, or anything great, if we get too close to it. It is a wise man who can see real greatness in those with whom he is closely associated. Nazareth was running true to form. Even now Christian preachers from a distance seem greater than those at home. There are rare exceptions.

*Hindered by Unbelief.*—"And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Mark adds "save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folks, and healed them." After having heard his wisdom and seen a few miraculous cures, they were still critical—still spurned and derided him. As his miracles were primarily intended to give him a favorable hearing by convincing the people that God was with him, there was no use in performing more in the presence of scoffers. Besides, they would not, in their state of unbelief, bring their sick people to him to be cured. Mark says, "And he marvelled because of their unbelief." Twice it is said that Jesus marvelled. In the other instance he marvelled at the faith of the centurion. (Luke 7: 9.) There he marveled at the greatness of faith; here, at the greatness of unbelief.

### **Herod and John the Baptist (14: 1-4)**

"Herod the Great left a will by which his kingdom was divided into four unequal parts. He gave Judea to his son Archelaus (2: 22); Galilee and the region beyond Jordan to his son Herod Antipas, the one here mentioned; Iturea and Trachonitis, districts north and northeast from Galilee, to his son Herod Philip; and Abilene, the extreme northern part, to Lysanias, of whom little is known. Each of these was called a tetrarch (ruler of a fourth), because he ruled over one of the four parts of the former kingdom."—McGarvey. Herod Antipas had married his brother Philip's wife, and yet he pretended to adhere to the law of Moses. He heard John preach. Now John had denounced the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and common sinners in no uncertain terms. The people had their prejudices then



as now, and no doubt wondered whether John had the courage to tell Herod of his sins, or would truckle to him. Had he failed to rebuke Herod the people would have regarded him as a timeserver, and would have lost respect for him. But he boldly rebuked Herod, knowing that it might be at the cost of his life. It appears that the woman in the case was more infuriated than was Herod. Mark says, "And Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him; and she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man and kept him safe." The results show that she finally accomplished her purpose. If the gory head of John the Baptist on a charger did not stir up in her any remorse, she was hardened till there was no good in her. But it must have weighed on the mind of Herod. He was superstitious. When he heard the report concerning Jesus he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him." It has been a long time since these things occurred, and yet in the final day of accounts, whether that day be yet far away or near, Herod and Herodias will meet John at the bar of justice. It is better to be beheaded than to be the ones who brought it about; and they will know it in the day of accounts.

### Jesus in Decapolis (15: 29-31)

Jesus had just been on a long journey up through the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Near Tyre, at the earnest solicitation of a woman, who was a Greek, a Syrophœnician by race, he cast an unclean spirit out of her little daughter. It does not seem that he entered Tyre, but he did pass through Sidon. "And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon into the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis." (Mark 7: 31.) Decapolis was a district of country lying mostly east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus visited this region on a former occasion, at which time he cast a legion of demons out of a fierce maniac. On that occasion the people asked him to leave their country. (Matt. 8: 28-34.) On this occasion he received a warm welcome, for the man out of whom he had cast the demons had proclaimed him throughout the country. "And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet." What a pitiful gesture! Here are people with loved ones for whom they could do nothing, and for whom they may have spent all their money; and now they hopefully bring them to Jesus, and they were not disappointed. "And he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel."

### SOME REFLECTIONS

To misunderstand a person usually means that we misunderstand his aims and purposes. We may know exactly what he is doing, but we fail to understand his motives. For this reason we often criticize when we should praise, and thereby cause many heartaches. Parents often misunderstand children, and children misunderstand parents, and such misunderstanding may cause wounds that are hard to



heal. To put all we have and are into an unselfish effort to do good, and then to be misunderstood, criticized, and persecuted by those nearest us and those we would help, produces indescribable sorrow in the hearts of unselfish souls.

Both enemies and friends misunderstood Jesus, and even his own brothers and mother. His enemies said he was a lawbreaker, a blasphemer, and possessed of a demon. His friends said he was mentally unbalanced—crazy—and his mother and brothers seemed to fear it was so. (Mark 3: 21, 31, 32.) But little men cannot understand great men. The finite cannot understand the infinite. A few years ago a gifted writer wrote a book about Jesus as "The Man Nobody Knows." There is more in the title to that book than even its author realized.

## TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the miracles of Jesus and inspired men.

Jesus and the people of Nazareth.

The evils of misunderstandings.

The evils of thoughtless criticisms.

## QUESTIONS

Where is the lesson found?

Repeat the Golden Text, and give reference.

### Lesson Settings

Give the time, places, and persons.

What ideas did the Jews have of the coming kingdom and Messiah?

On what grounds did the leaders of the Jews oppose Jesus?

When did they become foes of the kingdom?

How devoted were many of the followers of Christ?

### Verses 54-56

What occurred on a former visit Jesus made to Nazareth?

What questions did the people discuss among themselves on this visit?

Why did they think so strange of his wisdom and his powers?

What evidence that he had brothers and sisters?

### Verses 57, 58

What did Jesus say about a prophet's being honored?

What is the evidence of that same spirit today?

Why did Jesus not do many mighty works on this visit?

What was the purpose of miracles wrought in connection with preaching?

### 14: 1-4

Who was the Herod of our lesson?

Give account of the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist.

### 15: 29-31

Where was Decapolis?

Tell about a former visit Jesus made to this section.

Give account of this visit and the miracles he performed.

Discuss the reflections.

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