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GOSPEL ADVOCATE SERIES

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# Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1952

This commentary is based on the Uniform Bible Lessons for the churches of Christ.

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## P R E F A C E

This is the seventh ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY on Bible School Lessons for Teachers, and the thirty-first annual volume published by the Gospel Advocate Company for use in churches of Christ. The reception it has had among brethren is encouraging, and the good accomplished through it can be known only in eternity.

This volume deals with beginnings. The first and fourth quarters cover events in Genesis and Exodus, while the second and third quarters cover the life of Christ, the teaching and incidents which lead to the beginning of the church of Christ. It has been our effort to handle these subjects in such way as to point out the teaching and examples of Christ that we may encourage students to believe in Christ and follow him. The lessons in Genesis and Exodus have been presented in such way as to inspire faith in God as the creator of the universe and the One in whose provident care all of us live, and the One before whom all of us must one day stand in judgment.

The Golden Texts and many of the Introductions to the lessons have been written in such way to serve as suggestions, if not actual outlines, for sermons for those who have had little experience. Standard authors have been consulted, many of them quoted, and credit has been given where possible.

If this book helps teachers to prepare their lessons, or serves to lead some student to a better understanding of the Bible and a greater appreciation of the Lord and his church, the writer will feel repaid for all the work he has given it.

THE AUTHOR.

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# BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Compiled by Roy H. Lanier

## A

- Aa-ron (enlightened), Ex. 6: 20. Brother of Moses, and first high priest of the Levitical order.
- A-bel (breath, vanity), Gen. 4: 2. Second son of Adam, murdered by Cain, his brother.
- A-bib (sprouting), Ex. 13: 4. First month of the sacred, seventh of the civil, year of the Hebrew calendar; corresponding with our April.
- A-bra-ham (father of a multitude), Gen. 17: 5. Founder of the Hebrew people and father of the faithful.
- Adam (ruddy, one made or produced), Gen. 3: 17. The name of the first man and father of Cain, Abel, and Seth.
- A-haz (possessor), 2 Kings 16: 2. Eleventh king of Judah.
- Ai, Josh. 7: 2. An ancient city of the Canaanites captured by Joshua.
- Al-ex-an-der (defender of men), Mark 15: 21. Son of Simon of Cyrene.
- Al-phae-us (exchange), Mark 15: 40. 1. Father of Levi, or Matthew. Mark 2: 14. 2. Father of James the less. Mark 3: 18.
- Am-a-zi-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 14: 1. Ninth king of Judah.
- Am-o-rites, Num. 13: 29. An ancient Semitic people who went eastward into Shinar, and who inhabited the land of Canaan in the time of Joshua.
- A-mos (a burden), Amos 1. A native of Tekoa and one of the minor prophets.
- Am-ram (the people is exalted), Ex. 6: 20. Grandson of Levi and father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
- An-a-ni-as (Jehovah is gracious), Acts 5: 1. A member of the Jerusalem church who died for lying to God about the price of his property. 2. The disciple who baptized Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9: 18. 3. The high priest whom Paul called a whited wall. Acts 23: 2.
- An-drew, John 1: 40. Brother of Simon Peter and the one who brought Peter to Christ.
- An-na (grace or prayer), Luke 2: 36. A prophetess in Jerusalem at the time of the birth of Jesus.
- An-ti-pas, Herod, Luke 3: 1. Son of Herod the Great by Malthace and the one who killed John the Baptist. Matt. 14: 1.
- A-poc-ry-pha (hidden). The name applied to a body of writing closely resembling Biblical literature, but rejected by both the Jews and protestants as being uninspired. Eleven of the books were declared by the Council of Trent to be inspired, so they are accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.
- A-pol-los (belonging to Apollo), Acts 18: 24. An eloquent preacher who knew only the baptism of John until taught more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla.
- Ar-che-la-us (a chief), Matt. 2: 22. Son of Herod the Great by Malthace and ethnarch of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea.
- As-e-nath, Gen. 41: 45. Joseph's Egyptian wife and mother of Manasseh and Ephraim.
- Ash-er (happy), Gen. 35: 26. Eighth son of Jacob, and second by Zilpah.
- As-syr-i-a (plain, level), Hos. 12: 1. A powerful nation northeast of Palestine with Nineveh as its capital, which took the ten tribes of Israel into captivity.

## B

- Ba-bel (gate of God), Gen. 11: 9. A city in the plain of Shinar where the descendants of Noah proposed to build a tower to reach to heaven.
- Bab-y-lon (confusion), Micah 4: 10. Capital of ancient Chaldea, where the Jews spent seventy years in captivity.
- Bar-ab-bas (son of a father), Matt. 27: 16. A criminal who was released in preference to Jesus by the request of the people.
- Bar-na-bas (son of exhortation), Acts 4: 36. A friend and companion of Paul in mission work.
- Bar-thol-o-mew (son of Talmi), Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles and probably the same as Nathanael.
- Be-er-she-ba (well of the oath), Gen. 21: 14. One of the oldest towns in Canaan, and connected with the history of Abraham and Isaac.
- Ben-ja-min (son of the right hand), Gen. 35: 24. Twelfth son of Jacob and second by Rachel.
- Beth-a-ny (house of dates), Mark 14: 3. Home of Lazarus and his sisters about two miles east of Jerusalem.
- Beth-el (house of God), Gen. 13: 3. A town about twelve miles north of Jerusalem.
- Beth-le-hem (house of bread), Matt. 2: 5. The birthplace of Jesus about six miles south of Jerusalem.
- Beth-sa-i-da (house of fish), John 1: 44. Home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, in Galilee, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Bil-hah (bashfulness), Gen. 35: 25. Rachel's handmaid, who bore Dan and Naphtali.
- Bo-az (fleetness, strength), Ruth 3: 2. A man of Bethlehem who married Ruth.

## C

- Caes-a-rea Phi-lip-pi, Matt. 16: 13. One of the northernmost points of the travels of Jesus, and the place where Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
- Cain (to acquire), Gen. 4: 1. First son of Adam, and first murderer.
- Ca-naan (low, flat), Gen. 10: 6. Home of the Jews after deliverance from bondage.
- Ca-naan-ite, Gen. 12: 6. Inhabitants of Canaan when Abraham was promised the land.
- Ca-per-na-um (town of Nahum), Matt. 17: 24. A city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and center of activities of Jesus while in Galilee.

Chal-daea, Jer. 50: 10. Properly southern portion of Babylonia, but in the Bible the term includes all the country along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers 400 miles long and 100 miles wide.

Cho-ra-zin, Matt. 11: 21. A city near the north end of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus did many of his mighty works.

Cor-inth, 1 Cor. 1: 2. A city of Greece where Paul established the church.

Cush (dark-colored, or people brought together), Gen. 10: 6. 1. The eldest son of Ham. 2. The name of a country (Ethiopia) where the Cushites dwelt.

Cy-re-ne, Acts 11: 20. A principal city of North Africa, in Cyrenaica, the home of the man who carried the cross of Jesus.

Cy-rus (the sun), Dan. 1: 21. Founder of the Persian Empire.

## D

Da-mas-cus (activity, industry), Acts 9: 2. The city where Paul was baptized, 133 miles north of Jerusalem.

Dan (judge), Gen. 35: 25. Fifth son of Jacob and first by Bilhah. 2. Name of one of the tribes of Israel. 3. The name of a town in northern Palestine.

Da-vid (beloved), Matt. 1: 6. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel; and prominent ancestor of Jesus.

De-cap-o-lis (the ten cities), Mark 7: 31. A district east and south of the Sea of Galilee in which were located ten cities.

Di-nah (judgment), Gen. 34: 1. Jacob's daughter by Leah.

Dor-cas (gazelle), Acts 9: 36. A Christian woman of Joppa whom Peter raised from the dead.

Do-than (wells ?), Gen. 37: 17. An ancient town ten miles north of Samaria where Joseph found his brothers and their sheep.

## E

E-ber (beyond), Gen. 11: 14. A great-grandson of Shem and father of Peleg.

E-den, Garden in (pleasantness), Gen. 3: 23. The first home of man from which he was driven when he had sinned.

E-gypt, Ex. 12: 41. The northeastern part of Africa, and the country where the children of Israel were enslaved.

E-li (height), 1 Sam. 1: 9. High priest of the house of Ithamar in the time of Samuel.

E-li-e-zer (God is a helper), 1. Younger son of Moses. 2. Abraham's steward. 3. A priest. 1 Chron. 15: 24.

E-li-jah (Jehovah is my God), Mal. 4: 5. A prophet in the time of Ahab and who appeared on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus.

E-lis-a-beth (God is an oath), Luke 1: 5. Mother of John the Baptist.

E-li-sha (God is salvation), 2 Kings 5: 8. Successor to Elijah and the prophet who cured Naaman of the leprosy.

E-noch (dedicated), Gen. 5: 18. Father of

Methuselah and the man who walked with God.

Eph-e-sus, Acts 19: 1. Capital of Asia, where Paul established the church.

E-sau (hairy), Gen. 37: 1. Son of Isaac; father of the Edomites.

Es-ther (star), Esther 2: 7. A captive Jew-ess who became queen of Persia.

E-thi-o-pia, Acts 8: 27. A country in Africa, south of the Libyan desert.

Eu-phra-tes (bursting, sweet), Josh. 1: 4. Largest, longest, and most important river of western Asia.

Eu-ty-chus (fortunate), Acts 20: 9. A young man whom Paul raised from the dead.

Eve (life, or life-giving), Gen. 3: 20. The first woman, and wife of Adam, and mother of all living.

E-ze-ki-e-l (God will strengthen), Ezek. 1: 3. A priest, and the third of the major prophets.

Ez-ra (help), Ezra 7: 6. A priest and scribe who encouraged captives to return to Jerusalem, and who restored the law to its rightful place among the Jews.

## G

Ga-bri-el (man of God), Luke 1: 26. The angel who visited Mary.

Gad (fortune), Gen. 35: 26. Seventh son of Jacob, whose mother was Zilpah.

Gal-i-lee (circuit), Luke 4: 14. The northern division of Palestine west of Jordan.

Ga-ma-li-el (God the avenger), Acts 5: 34. A doctor of the law, and Paul's teacher.

Gen-tile (nations, foreigners). A Hebrew word including all men except Jews.

Gid-e-on (a hewer, brave warrior), Judges 6. A judge and warrior in Israel.

Gi-hon (a stream), Gen. 2: 13. 1. A spring near Jerusalem. 2. The second river watering the garden of Eden, and compassing the land of Cush.

Gil-e-ad (rugged), Gen. 37: 25. A mountainous country east of Jordan, which was occupied by Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, later called Peraea.

God-head, Acts 17: 29. Deity, divine essence; a term including Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Gol-go-tha (a skull), Matt. 27: 33. The Hebrew name of the place where Jesus was crucified.

Go-mor-rah (submersion), Matt. 10: 14. One of the cities of the plain destroyed by fire and brimstone in the days of Abraham.

Go-shen, Gen. 45: 10. The district of Egypt in which the Jews dwelt.

## H

Ha-gar (flight), Gen. 16: 1. Sarah's hand-maid; Abraham's concubine; Ishmael's mother.

**Ha-des** (not to be seen). Acts 2: 27. The common receptacle of disembodied spirits, where they await the resurrection of the body.

**Ham**, Gen. 5: 32. The youngest son of Noah.

**Hamm-u-ra-bi**. The name of a celebrated king and warrior, builder and lawgiver, who ruled over Babylon about 2,000 B.C., almost universally identified with the Am-ra-pher of Gen. 14: 1.

**Ha-ran** (scorched). 1. A place northeast of Canaan where Abraham stopped in his journey to Canaan until the death of Terah. 2. The son of Terah and brother of Abraham, Gen. 11: 27.

**Hav-i-lah** (circle, district), Gen. 2: 11. A land encircled by Pi-shon river which flowed out of Eden, a land of much gold.

**He-brew** (belonging to Eber), Jer. 34: 9. A name given Abraham and his descendants.

**He-bron** (union), Josh. 20: 7. A city of refuge west of the Jordan, and closely associated with Abraham and his sons.

**Her-mon**, Josh. 12: 5. A mountain in northeast Palestine, the limit of the conquest under Joshua; thought by many to be the mount of transfiguration.

**Her-od**. The name of an Idumaeen family given the rule over Palestine by the

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1. Herod the Great, Matt. 2: 3. The king who attempted to kill Jesus.

2. Herod Antipas, Matt. 14: 1. The king who beheaded John the Baptist.

3. Herod Archelaus, Matt. 2: 22. Son and successor of Herod the Great.

4. Herod Agrippa I, Acts 12: 1. The king who killed James and imprisoned Peter.

5. Herod Agrippa II, Acts 26: 1. The king before whom Paul made his defense.

6. Herod Philip, Mark 6: 17. The former husband of Herodias, and brother of Antipas.

**Her-o-di-ans**, Mark 3: 6. A party among the Jews who accepted and worked with the Herod family, and who combined with the Pharisees to destroy Jesus.

**Her-o-di-as**, Mark 6: 17. Wife of Herod Philip, taken unlawfully by Herod Antipas, and the woman who demanded the head of John the Baptist for her daughter.

**Her-od-o-tus**. A Greek historian; not a Biblical character.

**Hid-de-ke-l**, Gen. 2: 14. The third river of Eden, and another name for the Tigris.

**Hil-lel** (he hath praised). A great teacher among the Jews, born about 75 B.C.; a liberal interpreter of the law of Moses concerning divorce and remarriage.

**Hit-tites**, Josh. 1: 4. A nation of Canaan at the time of the Exodus; descendants of Heth.

**Hi-vites**, Josh. 9: 1. A peaceful race of people in Canaan at the time of the Exodus.

**Ho-bab** (beloved), Num. 10: 29. Son of Reuel, a Midianite.

**Ho-reb** (dry waste), Ex. 3: 1. Name of a mountainous district around Sinai.

**Ho-se-a** (God is help, salvation), Hos. 1: 1. The first of the Minor Prophets.

## I

**I-saac** laughter, Gen. 26: 1. Son of Abraham by Sarah.

**I-sa-iah** (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 5: 1. First of the Major Prophets.

**Ish-ma-el** (whom God hears), Gen. 16: 11. Son of Abraham by Hagar.

**Is-ra-el** (he who striveth with God), Gen. 32: 28. Name given Jacob and his posterity.

**Is-sa-char** (there is a reward), Gen. 35: 23. Ninth son of Jacob, and fifth by Leah.

## J

**Ja-cob** (supplanter), Gen. 35: 1. Son of Isaac and father of the twelve tribes of Jews.

**Jam-bres**, 2 Tim. 3: 8. One of the magicians who withstood Moses.

**James** (same as Jacob—supplanter).

1. Brother of John and one of the apostles. Matt. 10: 2.

2. Son of Alphaeus, one of the apostles, called the Less. Mark 3: 18.

3. The brother of Jesus, and writer of the epistle of James. Matt. 13: 55.

**Jan-nes**, 2 Tim. 3: 8. One of the magicians who withstood Moses.

**Ja-pheth** (let him enlarge), Gen. 10: 21. A son of Noah from which the white races descended.

**Ja-i-rus** (he arouseth), Mark 5: 22. A ruler of the synagogue whose daughter Jesus restored to life.

**Jeb-u-site** (belonging to Jebus), 2 Sam. 5:

6. A mountainous tribe in Canaan at the time of the Exodus who held Jerusalem until the days of David.

**Je-ho-vah** (the existing One), Ex. 6: 3. The incommunicable name of God.

**Jer-e-mi-ah** (exalted of the Lord), Matt. 16: 14. One of the Major Prophets and writer of the book which bears his name.

**Jer-i-cho** (fragrant), Luke 10: 30. A town on the Jordan east of Jerusalem, the first to be taken by Joshua when he entered Canaan.

**Jer-u-sa-lem** (foundation of peace), Matt. 2: 3. Religious and political center of the Jews, and the birthplace of the church of Christ.

**Jeth-ro** (his excellence), Ex. 3: 1. Priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses.

**Jews**, 2 Kings 16: 6. Those belonging to the kingdom of Judah; later applied to any descendant of Jacob.

**Job** (hated), Job 1: 5. A descendant of Shem; a citizen of Uz; the author of the book which bears his name.

**Joch-e-bed** (Jehovah is glory), Ex. 6: 20. Wife of Amram and mother of Moses.

**John** (whom Jehovah has graciously given).

1. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. Matt. 3: 1.  
 2. Son of Zebedee, brother of James, an apostle. Matt. 10: 2.  
 3. John Mark, companion of Paul and writer of the Gospel of Mark. Acts 12: 12.  
 4. Father of Peter, also called Jonas. John 1: 42.
- Ju-nah** (a dove), Matt. 12: 40. A prophet sent to preach to Nineveh and the writer of the book which bears his name.
- Jor-dan** (descender), Matt. 3: 6. The principal river of Palestine.
- Jo-seph** (increaser), Gen. 41: 40. A son of Jacob by Rachel who was sold into Egypt.
- Josh-u-a** (Jehovah is Saviour), Josh. 1: 1. Son of Nun and successor of Moses.
- Ju-dah** (praise), Gen. 35: 23. Fourth son of Jacob by Leah, head of one of the tribes of Israel; the name of the southern kingdom after the division.
- Ju-das** (praise).  
 1. Judas Iscariot. A man of Keriath; one of the twelve apostles who betrayed Jesus.  
 2. A son of Mary and brother of Jesus. Matt. 13: 55.
- Jude**, English form of Judas. A brother of James and writer of the epistle of Jude.
- K**
- Ke-tu-rah** (incense), Gen. 25: 1. Wife of Abraham and mother of six sons.
- Ko-rah** (baldness), Num. 16: 1. Great-grandson of Levi, and one who rebelled against Moses.
- L**
- La-ban** (white), Gen. 24: 10. Father of Leah and Rachel.
- Laz-a-rus** (God has helped).  
 1. A beggar at the rich man's gate. Luke 16: 20.  
 2. Brother of Mary and Martha, and one whom Jesus restored to life. John 11.
- Le-ah** (wearied), Gen. 29: 17. Wife of Jacob and mother of six of his sons.
- Le-vi** (crown), Gen. 35: 23. Third son of Jacob by Leah and head of the Levites.
- Lot** (veil), Gen. 11: 27. Son of Haran, and nephew of Abraham.
- Lu-ci-fer** (light-bearer), Isa. 14: 12. A.V. A name applied to the king of Babylon, but has now come to be applied to Satan with little or no scriptural foundation.
- Luke**, 2 Tim. 4: 11. A physician who became the companion of Paul in mission work.
- M**
- Mag-a-dan**, Matt. 15: 39. The same as Magdala, probably on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Mah-lon** (sickly), Ruth 1: 2. A Moabite and first husband of Ruth.
- Mal-a-chi** (contraction of a word meaning "messenger of Jehovah"), The last of the Minor Prophets and perhaps an associate of Nehemiah.
- Ma-no-ah** (rest, quiet), Judges 13. A Danite of the city of Zorah; father of Samson.
- Mar-tha** (lady, mistress), John 11: 2. Sister of Mary and Lazarus of Bethany.
- Ma-ry** (same as Miriam of O.T. and means "bitter").  
 1. Mother of Jesus.  
 2. Sister of Lazarus and Martha of Bethany.  
 3. Mother of Mark. Acts 12: 12.  
 4. Mary Magdalene, but not the sinful woman of Luke 7: 36-50. See Luke 8: 1-3.  
 5. Wife of Clopas who stood with the mother of Jesus at the cross. John 19: 25.
- Mat-thew** (God's gift), Matt. 10: 3. Also called Levi; a publican who became an apostle; the writer of the book which bears his name.
- Med-i-ter-ra-ne-an** (middle of the land). The sea west of Canaan and south of Asia Minor.
- Mel-chiz-e-dek** (king of righteousness), Heb. 7: 1. Priest and king of Salem in the time of Abraham, whose priesthood was a type of that of Christ.
- Mes-o-po-ta-mi-a** (high land of two rivers), Acts 7: 2. A country east of Palestine with Ur in the south and Haran in the north, extending along the Euphrates river.
- Mes-si-ah** (anointed), John 4: 25. The Hebrew term for Christ, the Anointed of God.
- Me-thu-se-lah** (man of offspring), Gen. 5: 21. Son of Enoch; father of Lamech; a descendant of Seth.
- Mi-di-an** (strife), Ex. 2: 16.  
 1. Son of Abraham by Keturah.  
 2. A country east of Egypt where Moses kept sheep.
- Mi-ri-am** (their rebellion), Ex. 15: 20. Sister of Moses and one who rebelled on one occasion.
- Mo-ab** (meaning uncertain, perhaps "from my father").  
 1. Son of Lot by one of his daughters. Gen. 19: 37.  
 2. A country east of the Dead Sea, home of Ruth.
- Mo-ri-ah**, Gen. 22: 2. Name of the land in which Isaac was offered.
- Mo-ses** (drawn out), Matt. 19: 7. The deliverer and lawgiver of the children of Israel, and the mediator of the old covenant.
- N**
- Na-a-man** (pleasantness, grace), 2 Kings 5: 1. A Syrian general who came to Elisha to be cured of leprosy.
- Na-in** (pasture), Luke 7: A town in the northwest corner of Little Hermon where Jesus restored to life the son of a widow.
- Naph-ta-li** (wrestling), Gen. 35: 25. Sixth son of Jacob whose mother was Bilhah.
- Naz-a-reth** (branch), Luke 4: 16. A town in Galilee where Jesus lived with his parents.
- Ne-he-mi-ah** (consoled of Jehovah), Neh. 1: 1. A prophet who rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem and who wrote the book which bears his name.

**Neph-i-lim** (giant), Gen. 6: 4. Said to be men of renown in the time of Noah, and used of physical giants in Num. 13: 33.

**Nic-o-de-mus** (conqueror of the people), John 3: 1. A ruler among the Jews who believed in Jesus and came to him by night for teaching.

**Nile**. The greatest river of Egypt whose waters Moses turned to blood.

**Nim-rod** (firm, strong), Gen. 10: 8. A great hunter and founder of Babylon, according to tradition.

**Nin-e-veh** (abode of Ninus), Jon. 1: 2. Capital of Assyria, and the city to which Jonah preached repentance.

**Ni-san**, Neh. 2: 1. The first month of the Jewish year, same as Abib, but not used until the time of Nehemiah.

**No-ah** (consolation), Gen. 6: 9. Son of Lamech and second father of the race.

**Nod** (wandering), Gen. 4: 16. A land east of Eden to which Cain went to live.

## O

**Ol-i-vet**, Luke 19: 29. Same as Mount of Olives, from which Jesus ascended.

## P

**Pad-dan-a-ram** (the tableland of Aram), Gen. 28: 2. A section of country east of the Euphrates river, six hundred miles northwest of Ur, and north of Damascus.

**Pal-es-tine** (land of strangers). The word occurs four times in the King James Version, but not at all in the American Standard Version, which has Philistia. It is used to mean only a part of Canaan along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. But common usage today applies it to all of Canaan, the Holy Land.

**Pass-over**, Acts 12: 4. A Jewish feast to commemorate the deliverance of the first born of Israel when the first born of Egypt were slain.

**Paul** (little), Gal. 1: 1. The apostle to the Gentiles, and missionary from Antioch.

**Pe-ni-el** (the face of God), Gen. 32: 30. A place between Jabbock and Succoth; called Penuel in 1 Kings 12: 25; fortified by Jeroboam.

**Pen-ta-teuch**. The Greek name given the five books of Moses.

**Pen-te-cost** (fiftieth), Acts 2: 1. A Jewish feast day fifty days after Passover.

**Pe-rae-a**. This is not a Biblical name, but a common name applied to the "land beyond the Jordan" of which Gadara was the principal city.

**Per-iz-zite** (dwellers in unwalled cities), Ex. 33: 2. One of the seven nations of Canaan at the time of the conquest under Joshua.

**Pe-ter** (rock), Matt. 10: 2. One of the twelve apostles and an outstanding leader of the early church.

**Pha-raoh** (sun), Ex. 1: 11. A title applied to all rulers of Egypt.

**Phar-i-sees** (separated), Acts 23: 6. A religious sect of the Jews who believed in angels, spirits, and the resurrection.

**Phil-ip** (lover of horses), Acts 8: 26. An evangelist who preached in Samaria, and who went to convert the Ethiopian nobleman.

**Phoe-ni-ci-ans**. People inhabiting a narrow strip of country running one hundred twenty miles along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea beginning at Mt. Carmel; Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities.

**Pi-late** (armed with a spear), Luke 13: 1. The Roman governor who condemned Jesus and allowed him to be crucified.

**Pi-shon** (streaming current), Gen. 2: 11. The first river of Eden.

**Pi-thom**, Ex. 1: 11. One of the store-cities which the Jews built for Pharaoh.

**Pot-i-phar** (belonging to the sun), Gen. 39: 1. Pharaoh's chief officer in the time of Joseph, and the one who bought Joseph for a slave.

**Pub-li-can**, Luke 18: 10. One who gathered taxes for the Roman government.

## R

**Ra-am-ses** (Ra created him), Ex. 1: 11. One of the store-cities which the Jews built for Pharaoh while in bondage.

**Rab-bi** (master), Mark 9: 5. A title of respect given teacher in time of Christ.

**Ra-chel** (ewe, sheep), Gen. 29: 9. Daughter of Laban, wife of Jacob.

**Ra-mah** (the height), 1 Sam. 1: 19. The birthplace of Samuel the prophet.

**Re-bek-ah** (ensnarer), Gen. 24: 67. Sister of Laban, and wife of Isaac.

**Reu-ben** (see, a son), Gen. 35: 23. First son of Jacob by Leah.

**Reu-el** (friend of God), or **Ra-gu-el**, Num. 10: 29. Father-in-law of Moses.

**Ru-fus** (red), Rom. 16: 13. Son of Simon of Cyrene and perhaps the one Paul mentioned in his letter to Rome.

**Ruth** (friendship), Ruth 1: 4. A woman of Moab who became the wife of Boaz.

## S

**Sad-du-cees** Acts 23: 7. A religious sect of the Jews, followers of Zadok, who opposed the Pharisees in belief in angels, spirits, and the resurrection.

**Sa-lo-me** (peaceful), Mark 15: 40. Wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John.

**San-he-drin**. The supreme court of the Jews consisting of seventy members.

**Sap-phi-ra** (sapphire or beautiful), Acts 5: 1. The wife of Ananias who lied to the apostles about the amount of money received for property.

**Sarah** (princess), Gen. 17: 15. Wife of Abraham, and example of obedience to all Christian women.

**Sar-ron** (the strong one), Isa. 20: 1. King of Assyria.

**Sa-tan** (adversary), 2 Cor. 4: 4. The god of this world and father of lies.

**Scribe** (writer), Matt. 23: 15. Public writers, transcribers; specialists at transcribing and teaching the law of Moses.

Seth (appointed), Gen. 4: 25. The third son of Adam and Eve.

Sham-ma-i (desolated). A great teacher in Israel about 50 B.C. who differed from Hillel on the interpretation of the law of Moses concerning marriage and divorce.

She-chem (shoulder), Josh. 20: 7. A city of Samaria; a city of refuge; important in the record of Abraham's sojourn.

Shem (name, fame), Gen. 5: 32. The first son of Noah, and father of the Semites.

Shi-nar (the country of two rivers), Gen. 11: 2. The plain in which the people planned to build a tower to reach to heaven.

Si-don (fishery), Acts 12: 20. A seacoast town of Phoenicia, just west of Damascus.

Si-na-i (jagged), Ex. 19: 1. Mountain on which Moses received the ten commandments.

So-dom (place of lime), Gen. 13: 10. One of the wicked cities destroyed by fire and brimstone in the time of Abraham.

Sol-o-mon (peace), Matt. 6: 29. Son of David, and third King of Israel.

Ste-phen (crown), Acts 6: 8. The first Christian martyr.

Syn-a-gogue (place of coming together), Luke 12: 11. The house of worship of the Jews, thought to have had its rise during the captivity.

Syr-i-a, Matt. 4: 24. The country north of Palestine between the Taurus mountains and the Euphrates river.

## T

Tal-mud. Not a Biblical term; it is a digest of the Jewish traditions, and a compendium of the whole ritual law reduced to writing by Rabbi Jehudah in the second century A.D.

Te-rah (turning, wandering), Gen. 11: 27. Father of Abraham.

Thad-dae-us, Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles, called Judas son of James.

Thes-sa-lo-ni-ca, 1 Thess. 1: 1. A city of Macedonia where Paul established the church. Now called Salonica, Greece.

Ti-be-ri-as, Sea of, John 6: 1. Another name for the Sea of Galilee.

Ti-gris. A river east of Canaan running parallel with the Euphrates, called Hiddekel in Gen. 2: 14.

Tis-ri. The seventh month of the Jewish calendar, corresponding with our October.

Tro-as, Acts 16: 11. The city where Luke joined Paul's company, and where Paul saw the vision of a man calling for help in Macedonia.

Tyre, 1 Kings 5: 1. A Phoenician city, and the home of King Hiram.

## Z

Zac-chae-us (pure), Luke 19: 1-10. A publican who climbed the tree to see Jesus.

Zach-a-ri-as (Jehovah has remembered), Luke 1: 5. Father of John the Baptist.

Za-dok (righteous).

1. Son of Ahitub, who anointed Solomon. 1 Kings 1: 39.
2. A man said to be the founder of the sect of the Sadducees.

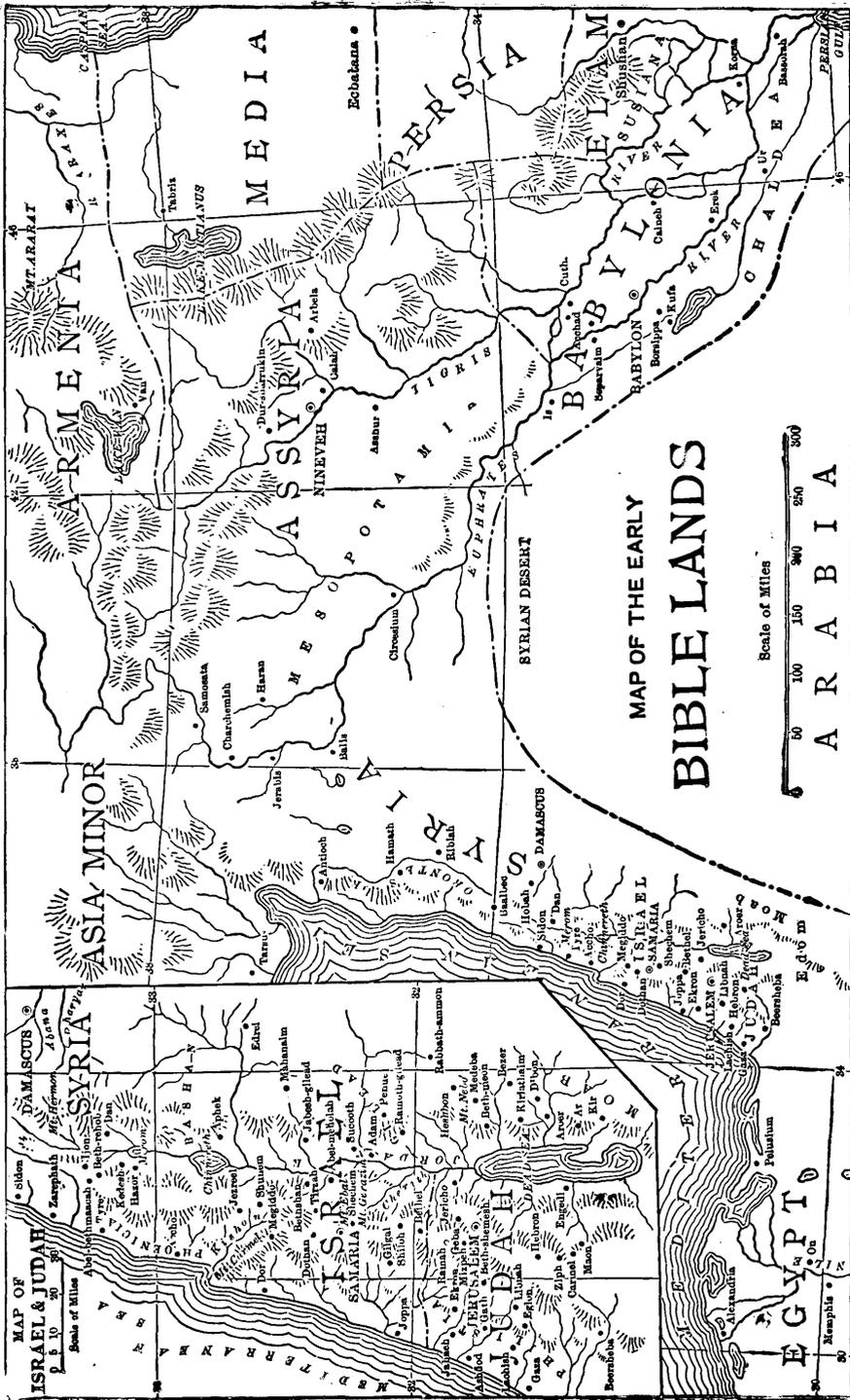
Ze-be-dee (Jehovah's gift), Mark 1: 19. Father of James and John and husband of Salome.

Ze-bu-lun (dwelling), Gen. 30: 19. Tenth son of Jacob, and sixth of Leah, the head of one of the twelve tribes.

Zil-pah (dropping), Gen. 29: 24. Leah's handmaid and wife of Jacob.

Zip-po-rah (sparrow), Ex. 2: 21. Wife of Moses, and daughter of Jethro.

Zo-ar (smallness), Gen. 19: 22. The city to which Lot escaped when Sodom was destroyed.



# FIRST QUARTER

## STUDIES IN GENESIS (First Half)

AIM.—To lead the student to understand and appreciate the practical significance of Genesis with particular reference to God as the Creator, to the lives of outstanding personalities, and to the establishment of moral and social standards.

### Lesson I—January 6, 1952

## THE INANIMATE CREATION

### The Lesson Text

Gen. 1: 1-10. 14-19

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered to-

gether unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years:

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

Golden Text.—“For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” (Psalm 33: 9.)

Devotional Reading.—Psalm 148.

### Daily Bible Readings

- December 31. M..... Heavens the Work of God (Psalm 102: 23-28)
- January 1. T..... The Earth Not a Waste (Isa. 45: 14-19)
- January 2. W..... Worlds Formed by the Word of God (Heb. 11: 1-6)
- January 3. T..... The God Who Made the World (Acts 17: 22-31)
- January 4. F..... Worlds Made Through Christ (Col. 1: 9-20)
- January 5. S..... Creation Subjected to Vanity (Rom. 8: 18-25)
- January 6. S..... Works Declare His Glory (Psalm 19)

TIME.—4004 B.C.

Place.—Heaven and Earth.

Persons.—The Godhead.

## Introduction

Again we find ourselves beginning the study of the Old Testament. Too many people do not appreciate the value of Old Testament study. Since we do not learn from the study of the Old Testament what to do to be saved or how to worship God acceptably in this Christian dispensation, many brethren fail to realize the important place which the Old Testament fills in the study of God. The New Testament is written on the basis of the knowledge of the character of God which is given in the Old Testament, and people who never read anything but the New Testament do not have the proper background with reference to the character of God. Paul indicates that the Old Testament was written for our learning that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope. (Rom. 15: 4.) Many of the essential attributes of God which are rather fully developed in the Old Testament are merely referred to in the New Testament. So that if one fully appreciates New Testament statements with reference to God he must have the Old Testament picture of God as a background.

The first aim of the studies of the lessons of this first quarter is to understand and appreciate the teaching of Genesis with reference to God. As we proceed with the lessons these essential attributes of God will be pointed out and emphasized.

The second aim of this quarter is to understand and appreciate the outstanding personalities mentioned in Genesis. Some of the greatest characters of history are pictured on the pages of Genesis. Enoch, the man

who walked with God and had the testimony that he pleased God; Noah, the man perfect in his generations and who alone was counted worthy to repeople the earth after humanity's first failure both are found in Genesis. Abraham, the father of the faithful who believed God in spite of seemingly impossible circumstances and whose faith was counted for righteousness is introduced to us in this book. The growth of Abraham's family into twelve tribes of about three million people is given to us in this book. Moses is introduced as the deliverer, lawgiver, and mediator between God and the children of Abraham, and his patient dealings with a rebellious people are spread before us in the pages of the Old Testament. No one can lay claim to being a Bible student who is not familiar with these great characters. Principles in the New Testament are illustrated by the use of these great men, and the full significance of these New Testament principles cannot be appreciated by those who are ignorant of what the Old Testament says of these men.

The third aim of these studies is to establish moral and social standards. To do this it will be necessary for us to know the things which God approved and the things which he disapproved in the lives of the people whom we meet in the book of Genesis.

These are worthy aims and to the accomplishment of these purposes each student should dedicate himself and be willing to give sufficient time and effort to do the job in a way which is worthy of the material studied.

## Golden Text Explained

1. God's Power. In our text David refers to the creation of matter when he said God spoke and it was done. There is nothing with which man is acquainted that illustrates the omnipotence of God with greater force than the creation of the universe. All that man can see, and doubtless many things beyond the limit of his vision, were called into existence by the naked word of God. The writer of Hebrews says, "By faith we understand that the worlds have been

framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear." (Heb. 11: 3.) There is a philosophy which says that both spirit and matter are eternal, and that spirit simply arranged matter in its present form. But inspiration says that the things which are seen were not made out of things which appear. Without any tools to work with, without any substance to work upon God spoke into existence that which before had no existence.

Modern scientists are inclined to the position that matter is responsible for all that is in the world. Materialists of all classes give matter the pre-eminent place in the universe. They must either believe that matter has always existed and that it produced mind, or they must believe that there was a time when absolutely nothing, neither spirit nor matter, existed. If they believe in the eternity of matter, they make a god out of matter. If they believe there was a time when absolutely nothing existed, they must take the position that nothing got busy and became something. With such a conclusion the thoughtful mind refuses to rest. The only other alternative is to believe in the eternity of mind, which mind is God. Mind now controls and uses matter at its will, but matter never controls mind. Hence it is easier to believe that mind is eternally existent and is the source of all matter. Hence, we believe that David was right when he said that God spake and it was done.

2. God's Purpose. We read often of God's eternal purpose. (Eph. 3: 11.) We also read of God doing certain things "according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1: 5) and "to the praise of the glory" (Eph. 1: 6). David said that men "shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glory of the majesty of his kingdom." (Psalm 145: 11, 12.) Undoubtedly one purpose God had in the creation of the universe was for his own glory. It was also a part of the purpose of God in the creation that his Son might have the pre-eminence, and

that he might have rule over all things upon the earth and in heaven. (Col. 1: 15-20.) The happiness of man also finds a place in the purpose of God in the creation of the universe. Man is the crowning act of God's work of creation. He was given dominion over a portion of that creation that he might be happy in his relationship with God, and that he might live and serve to the glory of God. And had man been true to God's original aims and purpose, his happiness would have been complete and the glory of God that which God had a right to expect.

3. God's Praise. David pictures the earth as trembling and the foundations of the mountains as quaking. He pictures the rivers and the seas as giving praise unto God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." All inanimate creation is pictured as singing the praises of God. "Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the skies. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel, he giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God." (Psalm 68: 34, 35.) In this connection the student should read our psalm of devotion, Psalm 148. In this all the heavenly bodies, the waters, and even the seas, the mountains, and the rivers, beasts, cattle, and creeping things are calling upon God to praise him. Kings and princes, young men and maidens, old people and children alike are calling upon God to praise him for his power, his majesty, and his greatness.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. In the Beginning (Verse 1)

The creation of matter is said to have taken place "in the beginning." The word *beginning* suggests time, but this time has reference only to created things. It cannot have reference to God. Certainly no one would think that Moses meant to say that things were created in the beginning of God. There is an endless eternity back of the time referred to by this expression. But to locate the time to which it refers is impossible. There are those who believe that the be-

ginning referred to is the first day of the week of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. There are others who believe that matter was called into existence a long time before the first day mentioned in Genesis 1: 3-5. Brother Milligan in his *Scheme of Redemption* suggests that there was an order of creatures on the earth before it became waste and void, the condition described in verse two. His position seems to be a mere conjecture, and it would be foolish to argue that it is true, or that it is

false. But that matter was called into existence by the creative power of God some time before the period described in verse two is most probable.

Even the careless reader can hardly read this first verse of inspiration without being struck by the person mentioned in it. In the beginning *God*. This places God back of all matter as well as distinguishing him from matter. One philosophy (Pantheism) claims that the totality of existing things equals God, so that if every material atom in the universe should be destroyed God would be destroyed. But the first author of inspiration distinguishes God from creation and declares him to be transcendent to creation.

The next word in this statement that catches our attention is the word *created*. Moses used a Hebrew word which is consistently used to mean, not the arranging, making, or assembling of matter already in existence, but the word implying the original production of matter where there was none before. It signifies calling into existence that which previously had no existence. Making the things which are seen out of the things which did not appear. (Heb. 11: 3.) In this first chapter of Genesis, Moses used two words which are generally translated by our word create. One is used in the first verse, the twenty-first verse, and the twenty-seventh verse, and means the calling into existence that which did not previously exist. The other is used as in verse seven where it is said God made the firmament. This word made implies the arranging or assembling into new forms that which already had an existence. These words are used not only in Genesis but throughout all the Old Testament in a consistent manner. Their Greek equivalents in the New Testament are just as consistently used so that we conclude God created (called into existence that which previously had no existence) the heavens and the earth, but that in the six days of the first chapter of Genesis God made (arranged or assembled) the firmament, the lights in the firmament, and the vegetation.

## II. A Period of Waste (Verse 2)

Moses says that the earth was waste and void, but Isaiah says, "The God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited." (Isa. 45: 18.) Surely Isaiah believed what Moses said about the condition of the earth at the time of its creation. Since Isaiah says it was not created a waste we should look carefully into the language of Moses to see whether he intended to affirm that the earth was waste and void at the time of creation. The Septuagint Version (a Greek translation of the Hebrew) translates this second verse in these words, "But the earth had become waste and void." Harry Rimmer, an outstanding scholar of the present generation, says a literal translation of the verse should read, "But the earth had become desolate, ruined, and unfurnished, covered with water and shrouded with darkness. And the spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters." (Modern Science and the Genesis Record, p. 26.) Perhaps no better statement of this theory can be given than that which is given by Rimmer which is as follows: "The original creation of the heaven and the earth, then, is covered in the first verse of Genesis. Only God knows how many ages rolled by before the ruin wrought by Lucifer fell upon the earth, but it may have been an incalculable span of time. Nor can any student say how long the period of chaos lasted; there is not even a hint given. But let us clearly recognize in these studies, that Moses, in the record of the First Week of Creation, is telling the story of God's reconstruction; rather than the story of an original creation. Therefore Moses uses the word '*asah*' to manufacture, to form, to release from restraint, or to make, rather than the word '*bara*.' to create, until he reaches that part of his narrative where *life appears*, and he then turns to the latter word. It is natural that if life had previously existed it would have perished in this great upheaval when the earth was made '*waste and empty*,' and the new orders God produced must come from pure creative action. It has been suggested that the manifold fossils the rocks contain may be a relic of that pre-Adamic age; but of

this no man can know definitely." (Modern Science and the Genesis Record, p. 28.)

### III. Days of Creation

*God said, Let there be light.* The creation of light is one of the most wonderful phenomena of creation. That light existed as a creature independent of the sun is now an admitted fact but one that is difficult, maybe impossible, for us to understand. Some sources of light other than the sun are the aurora borealis, the phosphorus from the glowing bodies of myriads of marine creatures in semitropical waters, the luminiferous ether known to surround the earth, to say nothing of the lowly lightning bug. Critics of the Bible have thought they had some proof of the mistakes of Moses in the fact that he spoke of light existing before any mention was made of the sun. However, real scientists have dropped that contention.

*God saw the light, that it was good.* The divine approval is in similar language placed upon all the works of creation. But that light is good is easy for us to comprehend. Several reasons have been suggested why light is good. First, it is absolutely pure. There seems to be no way to dilute or adulterate light. There is no such thing as dirty light. Perhaps this characteristic of light is the reason why God is likened unto light. Next, light is good because it is useful and absolutely necessary to life. Neither man nor animal nor vegetation can get along without light. Light is good because it contributes to our protection and instruction. Darkness encourages and protects evil, and evil men love darkness. But light arrests evil, makes hopes manifest, and contributes to our instruction. Science has made its advances because men have had the light as their servant.

*There was morning and evening the first day.* The old question of the length of time covered by the word day comes up again and again and will perhaps never be settled to the satisfaction of all. There are those who contend that the six days of creation were long geological ages and that we are still in the seventh day. Others contend that the word day is to be taken in its usual meaning of

approximately twenty-four hours. According to Harry Rimmer, the Hebrew word here translated day occurs 1,480 different times and is translated into the English by 54 different words. It is translated by our word day 1,181 times. However, our English word day does not always mean a period of approximately twenty-four hours. We read that today is the day of salvation. Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see his day. (John 8: 56.) So proper translation will not enable us to determine its meaning. However, there are certain seemingly insurmountable difficulties encountered by those who claim these days were long periods. First, when a numeral is used in connection with the word, as one day, or first day, the word refers to a twenty-four hour period. If there is an exception to this rule the writer does not know of it. Next, vegetation appeared on the earth on the third day. If this were a long geological age, vegetation would have existed during the darkness as well as the light of that period, but it is a known fact that vegetation cannot exist for so long a time without sunlight. Since the theory of geological periods was not known in the days of Moses, it must be admitted that Moses used the word day to mean twenty-four hours. Hence Moses had the idea that this day was simply the period of twenty-four hours. Last, if the sixth day was a long period of time and Adam were created about mid-day, he would be considerably older than Methuselah by the end of the day. Since his age is given at the time of his death as 930 years (Gen. 5: 5), we conclude that he did not live a half million years during a part of a long geological age.

*God said, Let there be a firmament.* This refers to the space above us sometimes called the heavens. It is said that God divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament. What is the nature of the waters above the firmament is difficult to decide. Whether they are atmospheric vapors is not certain but probable. This firmament between the waters God called heaven.

*God said, Let the waters be gathered unto one place.* This was a part of the work of the third day. The waters

under the heaven were gathered together and called oceans or seas. When this was done the dry land appeared. Here again it is said that God saw that this was good. It is easy to see that this was good because the different types of life demand different spheres in which to live. Some types of life demand water; others, dry land and atmosphere. Hence the necessity of the separation of the water from the land. Again, the beauty of the earth depends upon the separation. If the earth were completely shrouded in water or vapors there would be little beauty. But still if there were no waters on the earth, the earth would be unbearably dry and barren. Also the division of water from the land was necessary for the cultivation of food necessary to man and animals. Hence the goodness of God in the separation.

*God said, Let there be lights in the firmament.* In verse three, God created light. In verse fourteen he speaks in a similar way of lights as if there were two separate creations of light. But it should be pointed out that different words are used in these verses. In verse three we have a word which signifies that light is itself a creature. In verse fourteen we have a word that signifies a light holder. These light holders are the sun, moon, stars, and other heavenly

bodies. They are not primary sources of light; they are but the holders and reflectors of light.

*God made two great lights.* Moses says the greater light was given to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night. The words greater and lesser most probably refer to size. We can see why the sun is called the greater light when we remember that its diameter is 886,473 miles, while the diameter of the moon is only 2,172 miles. The purpose of these lights is said to be (1) to divide the day from the night; (2) to be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and (3) to give light upon the earth and in the firmament. Scientists have learned many things even in recent years about the relation of these heavenly bodies to the earth. Until comparatively recent times men thought the earth was the center of the universe and that the sun traveling around the earth caused day and night. The scientist who discovered that the sun is the center of the universe and that day and night are caused by the revolutions of the earth was severely punished by the pope of the Catholic church for teaching the theory. There is likely much more to be learned about these matters than scientists know today. Hence, we ought to approach these subjects with reverential care.

### Topics for Discussion

1. In the story of creation many of the necessary attributes of God are manifest. His omnipotence is clearly demonstrated. His omniscience is as clearly seen since nothing less than an all-wise Being could plan and bring such a universe into being. His goodness is seen in the provisions which he has made for his creatures. His unchangeableness is demonstrated in the unvarying laws he has set in operation in nature.

2. Man's ignorance of the universe should cause him to bow in reverence before such an all-wise, almighty, and immutable Creator. Nothing less

than colossal pride and arrogance could cause a man to deny God's own statement with reference to his marvelous works of creation.

3. The goodness of God in providing for man's happiness lays on humanity eternal obligations to serve and worship God in whatever way he demands. If man cannot create and maintain a universe, he ought to admit his weakness and ignorance and bow in reverent submission before that Being who not only has given him an existence but who continually provides for his happiness.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Why do some fail to realize the importance of Old Testament study?

What important lesson with reference to God does one fail to learn who never reads the Old Testament?  
What does Paul say of the importance of the Old Testament?  
What is the first aim of the lessons of this quarter?

What is the second aim?  
Discuss the benefits to be derived from the third aim.

#### Golden Text Explained

What attribute of God does the creation emphasize?  
Through what instrument was the power of God exerted in creation?  
State and discuss the difference between the materialists and the believer in God on the subject of creation.  
Was there ever a time when absolutely nothing existed? Why?  
What purpose did God have in creation?  
What place did the Son of God have in God's purpose?  
What place did man have in God's purpose?  
Why has man failed to realize that purpose?  
What did David say of the praise which God is due for creation?

#### In the Beginning

What is the meaning of the word beginning?  
State and discuss Milligan's theory with

reference to creatures on earth before the time of our lesson.  
Contrast the Bible view of God and creation with that of Pantheism.  
Contrast the meaning of the word *created* and *made* as used in our text.

#### A Period of Waste

Discuss the statements made by Moses and Isaiah as to the condition of the earth.  
Read and discuss Rimmer's statement with reference to creation.

#### Days of Creation

Is it possible for light to exist separate from the sun?  
Name and discuss reasons why light is good.  
What is your view as to the length of the days of creation? And give your reason for it.  
What distinction is made between light and light holders in our lesson?  
What do you know of the relative size and work of the two great lights?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson II—January 13, 1952

# THE ANIMATE CREATION

### The Lesson Text

Gen: 1: 11-13, 20-28

11 And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, *and* fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

20 And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.

23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And Jehovah God -formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*” (Gen. 2: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 8.

### Daily Bible Readings

- January 7. M..... Hills Girded with Joy (Psalm 65: 9-13)
- January 8. T..... Earth Full of the Riches of God (Psalm 104: 10-24)
- January 9. W..... God Sends Rain and Snow (Job 37: 1-13)
- January 10. T..... The Origin of Rain (Job 38: 25-30)
- January 11. F..... Man’s Ignorance of Beast and Bird (Job 39: 13-30)
- January 12. S..... Marvels of God’s Creation (Job 40: 15-24)
- January 13. S..... All Creation Should Praise God (Psalm 148)

TIME.—4004 B.C.

PLACE.—Unknown.

PERSONS.—God and Man.

### Introduction

The order of creation is interesting. There is an ascending order in the different things created on the successive days of creation. With only slight difficulties there seem to be two divisions of the days of creation with some correspondence between the things created in these two divisions. The following table will help the student to remember the things created on each day and to see this correspondence:

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. Light    | 4. Lights  |
| 2. Air      | 5. Fowl    |
| Water       | Fish       |
| 3. Dry land | 6. Animals |
| Plants      | Man        |

From this arrangement it will be seen that light as a creature appeared on the first day and that the light holders, the sun, moon, and stars, were created on the fourth day. The Hebrew words justify making the distinction between light as a creature and these light holders as suggested in our former lesson. We have been accustomed to saying that the firmament was created on the second day, but mention is made of a division of the waters above the firmament from the waters under the firmament and hence justifies the use of water in this

outline. In the second division it will be seen that fowl and fish were created on the fifth day. There is a correspondence between the air of the second day and the fowl of the fifth day since fowls move in the air. And there is a correspondence between the fish mentioned as created on the fifth day and the water in which they move as mentioned in the second period. Dry land was made on the third day when the water was gathered in one place and formed the seas. On this same third day plant life had its beginning. Separation of land and water precede the appearance of plant life as was natural. In the second division animals and man are said to have been created on the sixth day. The correspondence here is that both animals and man inhabit the dry land and at that time both fed upon plants. One difficulty with this arrangement is that the water mentioned as being under the firmament on the second day may, or may not, mean that which on the third day was gathered into the seas and oceans. If it does refer to this, the arrangement seems most logical and will help the student to remember when each thing was created by associating the two divisions with each other.

### Golden Text Explained

1. Man’s Lowly Origin. Our text says that Jehovah formed man of the dust of the ground. Surely there is intended an indication here of the lowly origin of man. When speaking of the origin of animals God said, “Let the earth bring forth living crea-

tures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so.” (Gen. 1: 24.) Hence the body of man has something in common with all animals in that both came from the dust of the earth. Another thing suggested

in this statement is the frailty of man. Someone has represented man as a few particles of dust held together in the hand of God. If God should release his hold upon man, he would immediately crumble back to the dust. David suggests the frailty of man when he said, "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103: 14.) Again the frailty of man is suggested in this statement: "And he remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again." (Psalm 78: 39.) Nothing could be more suggestive of man's weak and temporal nature than to liken him to a puff of wind which is felt but for an instant and is forever gone. Another gust of wind may come, but that which has passed can never return. James raises the question, "What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4: 14.) Peter says, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass." (1 Pet. 1: 24.) Both David and Job spoke of the lowliness of man by referring to him as a worm. (Psalm 22: 6; Job 25: 6.) Solomon referred to the lowly origin of man by saying that he came from the dust and to dust is destined to return. (Eccles. 12: 7.) If one is tempted to be vain and proud, he may with profit meditate upon the fact that God has likened him to these various things

which are calculated to destroy, or at least discourage, pride.

2. **The Dignity of Man.** This is suggested by the fact that when God created animals he said, "Let the earth bring forth"; but with reference to man he said, "Let us make man," and as in our text, "Jehovah God formed man of the dust." With reference to this David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: wonderful are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." (Psalm 139: 14.) Another thing that suggests the dignity of the body of man is the fact that it has been made the tabernacle of the offspring of God. Our text says that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Paul speaks of man being the offspring of God. (Acts 17: 28, 29.) Surely no one would think of the body of man as being the offspring of God. Hence it must be the inner man who uses the body as a tabernacle. If the temple of old was glorified by the presence of God, we may conclude that the presence of God's offspring in this body dignifies the body. Again the dignity of the body is suggested in the fact that it is to have a part in the redemption of man. And last, its dignity is suggested in that it is to be resurrected on the last day and may be glorified, made immortal and incorruptible, fitted to dwell in the presence of God forever.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Life in the Vegetable Kingdom

(Gen. 1: 11-13)

*Let the earth put forth grass.* Again we see a demonstration of the power of God's word. When there was no light God said let there be light. And when there was no firmament God spoke one into existence. All things that exist were spoken into existence. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear." (Heb. 11: 3.) God did not need a workshop equipped with tools to bring into existence this marvelous universe in which we live. He spoke and it was done. This should cause men to have a healthy respect for God's word. Some, it seems, have concluded that the written word of

God has not the power of his spoken word. But if we judge from human affairs, the written word is even more powerful than the spoken. A man's written word witnessed by his signature is considered more binding than his spoken word. Hence it is foolish to suppose that God's written word is less powerful than his spoken.

*Fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind.* Here is announced a law to which there is no exception. Seed may degenerate, but they cannot in one season produce anything other than that from which they came. If this law were to be repealed, a state of confusion would result. But because there is no exception to this law, farmers may plant in hope of reaping what they sow. We might learn a lesson, too, about seed-sowing

in the spiritual realm. Jesus said the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8: 11.) When this spiritual seed is sown it will produce after its kind; it produces children of the kingdom, members of the church of our Lord. Never in all the experiences of the apostles did they sow the seed of the kingdom and reap members of any denomination. If nothing but the seed of the kingdom had ever been sown, there would never have been a denomination in existence. In order to produce a denomination something other than the seed of the kingdom had to be sown.

*And God saw that it was good.* This statement is made with reference to all the works of God. The work of this third day was good in that it has contributed to the pleasure of mankind. Think what a dreary place this earth would be without grass and trees. It would be a bleak, barren, shadowless land, a naked form without adornment. Next, the work of this third day was good because it furnishes much of the food for man and animals. For a time the fruit and herbs furnished man all his food, and even now much of our table delight is taken from the vegetable world. And last, the work of this day was good in that it has provided work for man. In the garden of Eden man's work consisted of dressing and keeping the vegetation.

## II. Creatures for Sea and Air (Gen. 1: 20-23)

*Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures.* First, it is worth while to note something of the order of creation. God did not create fish before the creation of water and find himself with no suitable place to put them. But we are not necessarily to conclude from this that the fish evolved from the water, or that higher forms of life are evolved from lower forms in the water. If the fact that these living creatures came from the water proves that they evolved from the water, we would be obligated to say that the birds which were made for the firmament evolved from the firmament. But so far, no one has been foolish enough to try to prove that birds had such origin. It should also be noticed that prior to this time there were no living creatures in the

water. We might as well argue that there was light before God said let there be light as to argue that there were living creatures in the water before God said let there be living creatures in the water. The wisdom of God is seen in the fact that he created the various creatures to correspond with the elements in which they were to live. The variety in marine life as well as in the animal kingdom is another indication of the wisdom and power of God. "The creator's wisdom and power is as admirable in an ant as in an elephant. The curious formation of the bodies of animals, their different sizes, shapes and natures, with the admirable power of the sensitive life with which they are indued, when duly considered, serve not only to silence and shame the objections of atheists and infidels, but to raise high thoughts and high praises of God in pious and devout souls." (Matthew Henry.)

*God created the great sea monsters.* The King James Version has *whales* instead of sea monsters. Adam Clarke says that the original word here "must be understood rather as a *general* than a *particular* term comprising all the great aquatic animals." God's power, as has been suggested, is seen in both the large and small creatures. There are some "so minute that thirty thousand may be contained in one drop of water," and others so large that men marvel at their ponderous size.

*And every living creature that moveth.* Here the evolutionist comes in direct conflict with the word of God. Moses said God created every living creature. The evolutionist says that all these living creatures evolved from one little creature.

*Wherewith the waters swarmed.* This expression is strikingly true. Few people, unacquainted with the ability of marine life to multiply, can have any conception of its meaning. According to men who have studied in this field, the fish we call a carp may lay as many as twenty thousand eggs, and an ordinary cod will lay nine and one-third millions. This will help us to understand God's meaning when he said that the waters swarmed with fish. Again, if one drop of water may contain as many as thirty thousand of the minute forms of life, we can see

why it is said that the waters swarmed with this life.

*After their kind.* It is said both of the fishes that swarmed in the sea and the winged birds of the air that they brought forth after their kind. If it is true that each life created brought forth after its kind, the evolutionist must deny God's word. He believes that every kind of life known to man came from one form. It is admitted that there have been variations within species, but that one specie of life brought forth an entirely different specie has never yet been demonstrated. If God's rule that each produces its kind is true, there are no more species in existence today than there were in the day of creation. And if time goes on for a million years, not one more specie will be added to the list. Every one brings forth after its own kind.

*Be fruitful and multiply.* God gave his blessing to the creatures of sea and air by telling them to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the waters in the sea and the air. A law was set in operation to continue that which began by miracle. This is a rule common to all of God's creation. God created one pair of the human race and then set in operation the law of procreation. God started the church by miracle, but he does not maintain it by miracle. He set in motion a law by which the church perpetuates itself. As the vegetation has within itself the seed which perpetuates its life, and as the animal kingdom perpetuates itself similarly, so the church has the seed, the word of God, by which its life is perpetuated. God has ordained that the church shall live from generation to generation by the preaching of the gospel. This generation is to plant the seed in the hearts of the children who will be the church tomorrow. They in turn will plant the seed in the hearts of their children and so on as long as time shall last. Those who expect God to perpetuate the life of the church by miracle may as well expect the human race or vegetation to be perpetuated miraculously.

### III. Animal Life Created (Gen. 1: 24-28)

*Let the earth bring forth living creatures.* Attention has been called

to the two words which are used in this first chapter, one meaning the creation of something out of nothing, and the other the arrangement of existing substance into new forms. The first word, "*bara*," which indicates absolute creation, is used in verse one while the second word is used with reference to all other things made in this first chapter until we come to this part of our lesson. The living creatures, or beasts of the earth, were created, not merely a new arrangement of existing matter.

*God saw that it was good.* First, this animal creation was good in that it afforded man the opportunity to exercise his God-given dominion. In verse 28 we read that man was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, and every living thing that moves upon the earth. Next, it was good for man's happiness. Being created to have dominion, man finds his greatest happiness in the exercise of this dominion. Hence the creation of the animal kingdom and man's dominion over it contributed to his happiness. Last, the creation of this lower animal life was good for man in that it supplies food. It seems that man's food was intended to be vegetable. In verse 29 God told man he had given him every herb and every fruit tree to be food both for man and beast and bird. It is very probable that if man had never sinned, that would have been his only food. But knowing that man would sin, God gave man a digestive system suited for the consumption of meat, and much of man's food now consists of meat.

*Let us make man in our image.* The first lesson for us in this statement is the suggestion of the Trinity. The plural form "*us*" suggests the Trinity though if that were the only proof it would not be sufficient on which to base a doctrine. However, from other scripture we learn that both the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had a part in the creation of the universe. The writer of Hebrews says, "The Father made the worlds through the Son." And Job suggests the part the Spirit had when he said, "By his Spirit the heavens are garnished." (Job 26: 13.) We would notice also that man is made in the image of God. We should not make

the mistake of thinking that our bodies are created in God's image. If that were so, the idolater would make a likeness of God from wood or stone. But Paul says, "Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man." (Acts 17: 29.) The image consists in, (1) Man has an intellect akin to that of God; (2) holiness, and; (3) consciousness, both of self and of God. The animal has not the power of self-consciousness, much less a consciousness of his Creator. But man has the power to distinguish between self and others as well as the power of evaluating his actions to feel good when he has done good and to smart under the sting of conscience when he has done wrong. In these matters, the materialistic scientists contradict the Bible. The Bible reports man as

beginning at the height of his capabilities but through sin descending, sunk to the lowest depths of which man is capable. The scientist has man beginning at the lowest depths of animal life and ascending through millenniums of physical and mental progress to perfection.

Be *fruitful and multiply*. It should be noticed that this command was given while Adam and Eve were still in the garden. The old idea that man's sin consisted of the act which brought children into the world is clearly false since they were given the command to multiply before they sinned. The responsibility and inconvenience and considerable labor involved in the bearing and rearing of children cause some in this modern age to refuse to comply with this commandment. People make their greatest contribution to God and society, however, in obedience to this commandment.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The bigness of the universe impresses us with the power of God. But the life of this animate creation and the power to perpetuate that life impresses us with the wisdom of God. Man can make that which resembles an egg, but he cannot put within it the power to hatch out a life. Only the wisdom and power of God are able to do that.

2. The fact that God gave life to this animate creation raises it in the scale of creatures above the inanimate; so the gift of his spirit to man

raises man above the level of the brute creation. Those who deny the existence of a never-dying soul tabernacled in this body have a difficulty in proving that they are any better than a hog or a cow.

3. Man was made to have dominion over God's creation, but his voluntary servitude to Satan has robbed him of that dominion. In Christ, through our submission to him, is our only hope of recovering that dominion which we lost to Satan.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

What convenient divisions of the days of creation may be made?

Distinguish between the creation of light on the first day and the light holders of the fourth day.

What correspondence is there between the creation of the second day and the fifth day?

What was created on the third day? On the sixth day?

What is said to have been above the firmament as well as over the firmament?

#### Golden Text Explained

What in our text suggests the lowly origin of man?

What other characteristic of man is suggested in our text?

Name and discuss a number of terms used in the Bible to teach the frailty of man.

How does our text suggest the dignity of man?

What did God place in man's body which dignifies it?

How is the dignity of man suggested by redemption?

How does the resurrection suggest the dignity of man's body?

#### Life in the Vegetable Kingdom

How is the power of God's word suggested in this lesson?

This should cause men to have what attitude toward God's word?

Is God's written word as powerful as his spoken word, and why?

What common law of nature is suggested in this text?

What would be the result if this law should be repealed?

Can you show that this law operates in the spiritual realm?

Give three reasons why the work of the third day was good in God's sight.

Creatures for Sea and Air

- What is suggested in this section as to the order of creation?
- What proof do we have in this lesson of immediate creation of marine life?
- In what way is the wisdom of God manifested in the creation of fish and birds?
- What is suggested as to the variation in size of marine life?
- How does the evolutionist come into direct conflict with God's word as to creation?
- What is said of the ability of marine life to multiply?
- If all animals bring forth after their kind, can the theory of evolution possibly be true?
- What command did God give all his creatures?
- Can you show how this law of reproduction works in the spiritual realm?

Animal Life Created

- Can you distinguish between absolute creation and arrangement of existing material into new forms?
- Name and suggest three ways in which animal creation was good.
- What proof do we have in this lesson of the Trinity?
- What part did each person of the Trinity have in creation?
- What part of man is made in the image of God?
- In what does this image consist?
- What power does man have which is not found in the lower animals?
- Was the command to multiply given to man before or after his sin?
- How do people make their greatest contribution to God and society?
- What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson III—January 20, 1952

MAN'S FIRST HOME

The Lesson Text

Gen. 2: 8-17

8 And Je-ho'-vah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made Je-ho'-vah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads.

11 The name of the first is Pi'-shon: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Hov'-i-lah, where there is gold;

12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13 And the name of the second river is Gi'-hon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush.

14 And the name of the third river is Hid'-de-kel: that is it which goeth in front of As-syr'-i-a. And the fourth river is the Eu-phra'-tes.

15 And Je-ho'-vah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And Je-ho'-vah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." (Gen. 2: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 2: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- January 14. M..... Man's First Home Lost (Gen. 3: 22-24)
- January 15. T..... Humanity Scattered (Gen. 11: 1-9)
- January 16. W..... Trouble in Abraham's Home (Gen. 16: 1-6)
- January 17. T..... Eli Ruled Not His Home (1 Sam. 2: 22-36)
- January 18. F..... The Worthy Woman and Her Home (Prov. 31: 10-31)
- January 19. S..... A God-fearing Home (Luke 1: 5-23)
- January 20. S..... Advice to Homemakers (Eph. 6: 1-9)

TIME.—4004 B.C.  
 PLACE.—Garden of Eden.  
 PERSONS.—Adam and Eve.

## Introduction

This lesson is on a subject which should be of interest to every individual. Everyone is connected with a home, and practically everyone will sooner or later occupy a principal place in a home. Hence, all of us should be interested in what God has to say about the home. Like the beginning of everything else, the home was built according to God's idea. When God built his church he made it as nearly perfect as the beings involved in it would permit. As the first church serves in many respects as an example for all succeeding congregations, likewise the first home built serves in many respects as an example of what God wants a home to be.

In the first place, the first home was monogamous. By this we mean one wife for one man and one husband for one woman. This was not accidental on the part of God. He did it because he willed that it should be so. With reference to this a prophet once said, "And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." (Mal. 2: 15.) In this passage the prophet indicates that God could have made more than one wife for Adam, but he did not do so because he sought a godly seed. Hence, God intended this to be an example for all to follow. Next, polyg-

amy was unknown in the world until the fifth generation after Adam, and then it came in the line of Cain who was evil instead of the line of righteous Seth. (Gen. 4: 19.) Cain showed a disposition to be rebellious against the will of God and do his own will when he made an offering contrary to God's will. We are not surprised therefore, when his descendants soon make sufficient departure to practice polygamy.

The home may be considered a fairly safe barometer of the nation. When people have a high regard for the sanctity of the home, the morals of a nation are good. But when people cease to have respect for the home and laws which safeguard the home, you may expect the morals of the nation to be at a low ebb. Nations of antiquity have not been able to continue long after they lost due regard for the sanctity of the home. America has gone a long way toward losing its respect for the home and the standards of righteousness which safeguard the home. Nearly three out of every five marriages end in the divorce court. Second marriages are made without any regard for God's law. Parents refuse to suffer inconvenience, choosing rather to put that burden upon their children. How long these conditions can continue without a complete breakdown in the morals of the nation no one can predict. But obviously we are dangerously near that breaking point.

## Golden Text Explained

1. The First Home Was Made by the Lord. It has already been suggested that the Lord made the first home and intended that it should be in many respects a pattern for all others. The emphasis here is on the fact that the home was made by the Lord. It is the Lord's institution. There are but three institutions which can claim the Lord as their maker—the home, the government, and the church. Since the home was made by the Lord, we would naturally expect the Lord to make laws governing the home. In the first place, the Lord joins the principals of the home, the husband and wife, in matrimony. In the next place? children are looked upon as

gifts from the Lord. David said, "Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be put to shame, when they speak with their enemies in the gate." (Psalm 127: 3-5.) Again, "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children." (Psalm 113: 9.) Next, God has made laws by which (1) the home is to be formed, and (2) by which the home is to be governed. A union between husband and wife which is not in harmony with God's

law is an unlawful and adulterous union. (Matt. 5: 31, 32; Matt. 19: 9; Rom. 7: 1-3.) The New Testament abounds in teaching with reference to maintaining proper relationship between the principals of the home. The husband is taught how to treat his wife; the wife is taught due regard for her husband. Parents are taught how to rear their children, and children are taught proper respect for their parents. (Eph. 5: 22-31; 6: 1-4; 1 Pet. 3: 1-7.) If the teaching of Jesus and his apostles were followed, homes would be happier, society purer, the nation stronger, and the church would not have so many problems of discipline.

2. The Activities of the First Home Were Determined and Directed by the Lord. Our text says that God "took the man, and put him into the garden." The place where this home should be was determined by the Lord. Next, the number of people who comprised the home was determined by the Lord. The home was then directed to be self-perpetuating in that man was told to multiply and replenish the earth. Not only was man to replenish the earth, but he was to subdue it. He was also to

have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heaven, and over every living thing that moved upon the earth. (Gen. 1: 28.) Next, he was directed to dress and to keep the garden in which he lived. In all of this we see God determining and directing the activities of man. Had man never gone beyond that determined by the Lord and that in which he followed the directions of the Lord, he would have been eternally happy. It was when man departed from, or went beyond the directions of the Lord that he brought shame and sorrow upon him and his posterity. So today if people will build their homes in harmony with the will of the Lord and conduct those homes in harmony with his will, they will have happy homes. But those who despise the regulations and limitations that God has placed about the home, or who simply have no interest in the Lord's will concerning the home, will most certainly come to grief. Homes are not built according to the Lord's pattern by accident. Hence, everyone should acquaint himself, through a study of the Bible, with God's laws concerning building and maintaining a Christian home.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Abundant Provisions for Man (Gen. 2: 8, 9)

*Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden.* There are two things suggested with reference to the provisions which God made for man. First, there were those things which appealed to the outward man. The word garden itself indicates a place of beauty, and the word Eden signifies pleasure or delight. "We may well suppose this garden to have been the most accomplished place the sun ever saw; when the all-sufficient God himself designed it to be the present happiness of his creature, man, in innocency and the type and figure of the happiness of the chosen remnant in glory." (Matthew Henry.)

Second, there were those things that appealed to the inward man. In this home God was a frequent visitor. Adam and Eve communed with their maker until sin rendered them unfit. It is still true that God provides the necessities of life and that he is a frequent visitor in the homes of his

people. Everyone should seek to build a home in which the Lord may be a visitor. But to do this, people must know and follow his will in the building of their homes.

*Every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food.* "In the peace of man's pristine abode respect was had to ornamentation as well as utility. Every specie of vegetation that could minister to his corporeal necessities was provided. Flowers, trees, and shrubs regaled his senses with their fragrance, pleased his eye with their exquisite forms and enchanting colors, and gratified his palate with their luscious fruits. Hence the garden of the Lord became the highest ideal of earthly excellence." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* What kind of trees are here referred to we do not know, and it would be folly to speculate. The fruit of the tree of life must, however, have had some life-perpetuating qualities. When man

had sinned, God drove him out of the garden lest he should put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. (Gen. 3: 22.) If the fruit of this tree had such qualities, it is obvious that we have no such fruit tree now. It is commonly suggested that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was an apple. It may or it may not have been. Nothing is indicated with reference to the qualities of that fruit as is indicated with reference to the fruit of the tree of life. It was the action of eating the fruit in disobedience to God which brought a knowledge of sin to our first parents. Some test of man's obedience had to be made. If it had been impossible for man to sin it would not have been possible for him to do right. Hence some positive law requiring man to do something or to refrain from doing something had to be given. In no other way could man manifest his submission to God.

## II. Location of the Garden (Gen. 2: 10-14)

*A river went out of Eden.* Of the location of the garden of Eden there is less exact knowledge and more wild speculation than on nearly any other subject. Adam Clarke lists more than a dozen different locations which have been suggested by various authors. Such places as the third heaven, the moon, the middle regions of the air, the North Pole, and the South Pole, to mention a few of the wildest guesses, have been suggested. But more conservative guesses locate the garden somewhere between the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf along the courses of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

*And became four heads.* This river which went out of Eden is said to have divided into four. The names of these four heads or streams are given. The name of the first is Pishon, which borders on the land of Havilah. But no one knows for sure where the land of Havilah is and hence cannot be certain to what river the name Pishon refers. The most conservative scholars seem to think this river is one now known as Phasis, which empties into the Black Sea.

*The name of the second river is*

*Gihon.* This is supposed to be the Araxes which empties into the Caspian Sea. Since it is said that this river compasses the whole land of Cush, and since the King James Version has the word Ethiopia instead of Cush, some have thought the Nile River was intended. But there is good reason for assigning the term to a land nearer the general locality of the three rivers fairly well identified.

*The name of the third is Hiddekel.* This river is said to go in front of Assyria and is admitted by all to refer to the Tigris.

*The fourth river is the Euphrates.* If we had no other rivers mentioned we would be compelled to locate the garden somewhere along the course of this river. There are four rivers which rise in the same general vicinity just south of the eastern extremity of the Black Sea, and some believe this to be the location of the garden. However, others think the garden to be located farther south where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers come closest together. In this vicinity there are a number of streams connecting the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, and some of these branches are long enough to be given separate names. On some maps two of these rivers are given the names Gihon and Pishon. The land of Cush and the land of Havilah are by some scholars located in this vicinity. But after all, the location of the garden is of minor importance compared with the events which transpired there.

## III. Restrictions Placed on Man (Gen. 2: 15-17)

*To dress and to keep it.* There are many who think that work is a part of the curse which came on man as a consequence of his sin. But man had the duty of cultivating the garden of Eden before his transgression. Hence work is not a curse. Work is good for man first, for his health. Man enjoys his best health when he is actively engaged in physical labor. Those who work in offices will readily agree with this statement. Next, work is good for the mind of man. Work speeds up the circulation of blood and keeps the mind physically healthy. But more important still,

work furnishes the mind with activity and keeps it free from corruption. The old statement, "An idle brain is the devil's workshop" is true. A mind which is not used in honorable and constructive activities will most likely be filled with evil.

*Jehovah God commanded man.*

Without looking at this specific command it is good to take a general view of this statement. First, God has a right to command man since God is the creator of man. Those who despise the commandments of God, who refuse to be submissive to any higher power, should reflect upon their relationship to God. It ill becomes the creature to despise his Creator—more so than for a child to despise his parents. Next, God has a right to command man because he preserves the life of man. If God were to withdraw his preserving or unholding powers from man he would immediately cease to exist. It is a mark of ingratitude for a man to refuse to obey him on whom his life depends. We despise the man who hates the government which guarantees him life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. How much more despicable is that man who refuses to be submissive to his Creator and Preserver!

*Of the tree of the knowledge of good, and evil, thou shalt not eat.* God gave man dominion over the earth and all the creatures connected with it. But man needed to be reminded that he was only a creature, and as such had to be obedient unto his Lord. Hence, some duty had to be imposed; some restriction placed upon his activities. Without this positive commandment no test could be made of his loyalty unto his Lord. It is not in ourselves to question the wisdom of placing man on probation to see whether or not he would prove loyal and obedient. For good and wise reasons God saw fit to do so, and the creature is out of place who questions God's wisdom in this matter. How long man lived in obedience to God's law we have no way of knowing. But it seems that it was not a long time. Another matter has been suggested which is worthy of our thought. That man was placed in the garden on probation is obvious. How long his term of proba-

tion was to be cannot be known; or whether there was any time limit set it is impossible to know. Some have gone so far as to say that if man had lived out his time of probation without sin he would have been confirmed forever in righteousness. Here again it is foolish to speculate. Another suggestion of interest in this connection is that the world was created in the light of what man would actually become. The garden of Eden was prepared for the home of the sinless man. But the world was made as the home of the sinful man. This suggests the foreknowledge of God and his wisdom in the preparation of things in the light of that foreknowledge.

*In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die.* Critics of the Bible have said that the penalty was not inflicted since Adam did not die that day. But from one point of view Adam died that day. He died spiritually; he was separated from God. He was driven from the garden where he had communion with God into the world where he was denied this intimate fellowship. Being separated from God, he was dead. Next, man was sentenced to die that day, but in the wisdom and mercy of God the sentence was deferred. If man had died physically that day, God would either have had to abandon his project or started anew. Since God's works are perfect, he could not have made a better man, so it would have been unwise to destroy Adam and start again. We should notice next the fearful consequences of sin. First, there was separation from God. Sin makes one unfit for communion with God. Sin disinclines one for communion with God. Next, man was rendered mortal by sin. Disease and all its train of misery came as a result of sin. Death came not only upon Adam, but upon all his posterity as a consequence of sin. Paul says all die in Adam. (1 Cor. 15: 22.) Again, "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." (Rom. 5: 12.) In this passage we are informed as to the origin of sin, and next, as to the origin of death. We are also told that all die because all

sinned. It is one thing to sin personally and another to sin representatively. In Adam, the federal head of the race, all mankind sinned representatively. Representative sin does not carry with it guilt, but it does

carry consequences. We bear the consequences of Adam's sin because of our relation to him as the head of the race. We do not bear the guilt of his sin because we were not personally involved in it.

**Topics for Discussion**

1. The goodness of God has been abundantly manifested from the very beginning of the human race. The home which he gave our first parents is evidence of his goodness. The fact that we receive blessings beyond number is proof of his continued goodness to the human race.

2. The sin of Adam was an indication of a lack of appreciation of the goodness of God. Our sins today are proof of the same in us. Paul uses the mercy of God (Rom. 12: 1) to cause us to give our bodies as living sacrifices to God. In another place he

says the goodness of God leads man to repent. (Rom. 2: 4.) The supreme manifestation of his goodness is the central fact and the drawing power of the gospel of Christ.

3. Rulers have always found it difficult to obey; those who exercise dominion find it difficult to be submissive. As ruler over the lower creation, Adam found it difficult to live in submission to his ruler. Those in high places, both in the church and the state, would do well to remember Adam's mistake and the misery that followed as a consequence.

**Questions for the Class**

What is the subject of this lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

**Introduction**

Why should everyone have an interest in this lesson?  
Why was the first home monogamous?  
When was polygamy introduced and by whom?  
What is said to be a safe moral barometer of the nation?  
What indications do you see of the moral decline of America?

**Golden Text Explained**

What three institutions have been ordained of God?  
Why should we respect God's laws governing the home?  
What does David say of children in the home?  
Name two divisions of God's laws with reference to the home.  
What is the nature of a union between man and wife which is contrary to the law of God?  
What home relationships does the gospel regulate?  
What did God determine with reference to the first home?  
Was the home to be perpetuated by a miracle or by natural law?  
Make an application of this principle to the perpetuation of the church.

**Abundant Provisions for Man**

What was there about the first home to appeal to the inward man?  
What was there about the first home which appealed to the outward man?  
What did the Lord provide to please the sight and taste of man?

Name two particular trees which grew in the garden.  
Did Adam and Eve have access to the tree of life while they were in the garden?  
What brought a knowledge of sin to our first parents?  
Why was a positive prohibition necessary?

**Location of the Garden**

What fact is proof that man does not know the exact location of the garden?  
Along what rivers may we safely locate the garden?  
Name the four rivers mentioned and give their present locations.  
Of the location of which of these rivers can we be most sure?

**Restrictions Placed on Man**

Is work a part of the curse brought upon man by sin?  
Why is work good for man's health?  
Why is work good for man's mind?  
Why does God have a right to command man's obedience?  
Why does disobedience prove ingratitude on man's part?  
Why was man forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?  
Discuss man's time and conditions of probation in Eden.  
For what kind of man was the garden of Eden prepared?  
For what kind of man was the world prepared?  
Did man die the day he sinned? If so, what kind of death?  
Discuss the mercy and the wisdom of God in deferring the physical death of man.  
Discuss the fearful consequences of sin.  
Discuss personal and representative sin.  
What is there of interest to you in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson IV—January 27, 1952

## MAN'S FIRST HELP MEET

## The Lesson Text

Gen. 2: 18-25; 1 Cor. 11: 8, 9

18 And Je-ho'-vah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground Je-ho'-vah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him.

21 And Je-ho'-vah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof:

22 And the rib, which Je-ho'-vah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man:

9 For neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

Golden Text.—“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” (1 Tim. 2: 13.)

Devotional Reading.—1 Tim. 2: 8-15.

## Daily Bible Readings

January 21. M.....A Good Woman Helps Elisha (2 Kings 4: 8-16)  
 January 22. T.....Ruth Expresses Devotion (Ruth 1: 15-18)  
 January 23. W.....Esther Makes a Great Decision (Esther 4: 13-17)  
 January 24. T.....A Worthy Woman Is a Crown (Prov. 12: 1-7)  
 January 25. F.....A Prudent Wife Is from Jehovah (Prov. 19: 10-18)  
 January 26. S.....Woman the Glory of Man (1 Cor. 11: 1-16)  
 January 27. S.....Holy Women Hope in God (1 Pet. 3: 1-7)

Time.—4004 B.C. for Genesis and A.D. 58 for 1 Corinthians.

Places.—Eden and Corinth.

Persons.—Adam, Eve, Paul and Saints at Corinth.

## Introduction

Our lesson today deals with woman as man's helper. She is said to be a help meet, not a helpmate. Though she is man's mate, this passage represents her to be meet, that is fit or suitable, for man, a help which corresponded to his every physical and social need. There are several words used in the Bible to describe a woman in this capacity. Solomon says, "A worthy woman is the crown of her husband; but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his

bones." (Prov. 12: 4.) The word worthy here is the same word found in Proverbs 31 where Solomon described at length the "worthy woman." The expression means one of power either in mind or body, or both. The same expression is used with reference to Ruth. (Ruth 3: 11.) Such a woman is said to be the crown of her husband. This means that she is the most valuable possession a man has, the cause of his greatest happiness and honor. "Such a woman

is not simply loving and modest and loyal, but is a crown to her husband; is an honor to him, adores and beautifies his life, making, as it were, a joyous festival (Pulpit Commentary.)

Again Solomon says, "Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers; but a prudent wife is from Jehovah." (Prov. 19: 14.) A prudent woman is one able to regulate and discipline herself through the exercise of reason; one who is skilled in the management of her affairs for practical ends; one who is cautious, circumspect, and discreet in the conduct of her affairs. Such a one Solomon says is a gift from Jehovah. This is true because a woman of such qualities does not just happen. She is the product not of nature, but of gospel teaching.

The third characteristic of man's help meet is graciousness. "A gracious woman obtaineth honor." (Prov. 11: 16.) A gracious person is one who is full of grace or charm; one who is attractive and pleasing in her manners; one who is courteous, kindly, affable, and benevolent. If we put these three characteristics together, we can see why such a woman would be a help meet or worthy, of man. In fact, a man who is not Christian in every sense of the term would not be worthy of such a helper. Only when a man measures up to the Christian standard is he worthy of such a helper and only when a woman's steps are ordered of the Lord is she a help meet for man.

### Golden Text Explained

1. Man's Headship Over Woman Is Based on Priority in Creation. Our text is given by Paul as a reason why woman is not to exercise dominion over the man. While Paul was regulating the conduct of worship it is still a fact that man is head of the home for the same reason that he is to be in charge of the public worship of the church. If God had intended for woman to exercise dominion over the man, he would have made woman first instead of man. We may not be able to see the strength of this argument, but the fact that the Holy Spirit directed Paul to give this *as* a reason for the headship of man should cause us to accept it whether we are convinced by his argument or not. Man's headship is demonstrated in that men are the shepherds or overseers of the church. The Holy Spirit does not allow women to rule in the church. Again, it is seen in the fact that the public proclamation of the gospel is entrusted to men. Women may assist in the program of teaching, but they may not be preachers of the gospel. (1 Cor. 14: 34ff.)

2. The Headship of Man Is Based on the Fact That Woman Was Taken Out of Man. She not only was created second to man, but she was made of a portion of man's body. Again we have the authority of Paul for saying that woman is of the man and because of this she should recognize him as her

head. (1 Cor. 11: 3, 10.) Here again we may not be able to see why the fact that woman was made from the rib of man should cause her to be subject to the authority of man, but whether we see clearly or not, we can accept it by faith. This inferiority is not mental or moral, but rather applied to her station in life. Woman is said to be the weaker vessel. (1 Pet. 3: 7.) But surely no one thinks she is inferior to man either mentally, morally, or socially. She is weaker physically and she is second in authority in the home, and so may be said in these ways to be inferior to man.

3. Woman Is to Recognize the Headship of Man by Being His Helper Rather Than a Dictator. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so he gave him woman as a helper. Hence woman's position as helper is ordained of God. When she leaves this realm and begins to give orders, she is out of her God-given place. Another reason why woman should recognize her place as helper is the fact that she was first in the transgression. (1 Tim. 2: 14.) When she presumed to take the lead she involved herself and her posterity in the fearful consequences of sin. She ought, therefore, to keep within the sphere which God has given her. We have no proof that Adam would not have fallen to the tempter, but it is clearly implied that Satan felt that

woman was an easier victim and hence made his approach to the human family through her. Some women have thought there was unfair discrimination in the arrangement revealed by the apostles. But if the woman fulfills her mission in her place, she will be rewarded as much as the man who does the work God gave him to do. She might also

take consolation from the fact that she does not have certain heavy responsibilities which go with the headship of the home and the church. It will be better for all of us, both men and women, to accept God's arrangement as a matter of the highest wisdom and be pleased to do his will in all these matters and leave the results and the rewards with him.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. God's Concern for Man (Gen. 2: 18-20)

*It is not good that the man should be alone.* Some critics profess to see a contradiction between this statement and that made in the first chapter when God looked upon his creation, including man, and said it was very good. Man as a creature was good. But that it was not well for this good creature to dwell alone our text affirms. (1) It was not good socially for man to be alone. All other creatures were made male and female. Only man stood alone. Even the Godhead has its social aspect. The Father was never alone even before the creation of angels, and has as the object of his love his son. But man before the creation of woman was the loneliest creature in the universe. His social inclinations and desires must be satisfied if he is to be happy. (2) It was not good for man to be alone if the race was to be propagated. (3) It was not possible for God to be glorified in man if he existed alone as he would be glorified in the multiplication of man. Though sin might never have entered the world, man could never have glorified God as he is now glorified through the scheme of redemption. Had Adam remained alone Jesus Christ would never have manifested! the Father on earth, nor would heaven ever have resounded with the shouts of angels over the redemption and glorification of man through the redeeming love of God.

*Out of the ground.* Moses says that all the beasts and birds were made from the ground. Man himself was made of the dust of the earth, but when a help meet for man was to be made, a purer, higher grade of substance was used. This may or may not be an indication of woman's

higher, finer sense of morals than is usually found in man.

*Man gave names to all cattle, birds, and beasts.* God brought one of every specie of creation before Adam and whatever Adam called that creature was made the name thereof. This is an indication of the mental ability of Adam. Possibly there is not a university professor who can give the correct name of anything like all of the different species in existence today. So Adam was not only created full grown physically, but very mature mentally.

*There was not found a help meet for man.* Of all the creatures brought before Adam, there was not one his equal. There was not one fit for him from a mental and social point of view. In the creation of Adam he was given a spiritual nature which no other creature received. Hence they fail to measure up to his requirements spiritually and intellectually. Man's need of intellectual and spiritual companionship demanded a partner of equal powers to satisfy man's need. And in man's need and woman's power to satisfy that need is laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage. And today when a man selects a woman who is not near his equal in these respects, his marriage will be unhappy and will likely fail. And it is just as true when a woman selects a man who is far her inferior intellectually and spiritually. It is as necessary for people today to select partners which are *meet* for them as it was in the day of creation for God to give Adam a helper who was meet for him.

### II. God's Provision for Man (Gen. 2: 21-25)

*He took one of his ribs.* Moses said that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. This was not the

sleep of exhaustion from work, nor was it ordinary sleep, but a supernatural sleep. Had it not been supernatural, the operation which followed would surely have wakened him. It is idle to speculate on whether Adam was created with an extra rib; whether he went through life with one less than the average man, or whether one grew back in the place of the one taken. But we should not go so far as the modernist who makes this merely a dream of Adam. If God saw fit to use dust from which to begin his creation of Adam, it is not unreasonable that he should use some tangible material from which to create Eve. Matthew Henry observes that woman was taken "not out of his head to top (command) him, not out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved." Others see in this the likeness of Christ and the church. As the rib was taken from Adam's side to make the woman so the blood was shed from the side of our Lord to purchase the church which is his bride. There is a similarity here, but perhaps the former is not prophetic of the latter.

*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* There is a relationship in this union more intimate than would have been possible if woman had been created from dust as was Adam. On the order of creation and the source of the material from which woman was made depend some very important doctrines. Woman's subordination to man and her subjection to his authority both in the home and in the church are founded upon this.

*She shall be called woman.* The word woman is the feminine form of the word for man. This name was given to her because she was taken out of man. Again we see implied man's authority over woman in the fact that he gave her this name. His dominion over the animal creation gave him the right to give them their names. Hence it is implied that he has authority over the woman because he gave her this name.

*A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife.* Here is the record of the found-

ing of the institution of marriage. That this statement is to be given a general application is obvious from the fact that it was not strictly true of Adam. Adam certainly did not leave his father and mother to cleave unto Eve. A practical suggestion is in order here. It is good for a man to leave his parents and for the woman to leave her parents and build their home on their own. A young man who is still tied to his mother's apron will not make a very good husband. A young woman who has to run to mother before she can make up her mind about what she ought to do in the home will never make a very good wife. And a couple who has not the courage to get out on their own have little hope of making a very great success.

*They shall be one flesh.* Jesus referred to this when teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19: 1-9), and he added this conclusion, "so that they are no more two, but one flesh." Our respect for the Lord's teaching on this subject is important because (1) the safety of the family and society in general depend upon it. The institution of marriage is in grave danger of being destroyed on account of a disregard for the teaching of God on this point. (2) The purity of the church is involved in this matter. When people divorce for trivial causes and remarry, it is almost impossible, certainly improbable, that they will cease to live in that adulterous union. They seek to be accepted in the church and expect to be used in the public functions of the church. If this condition continues, the moral standards of the church will be so low that the world will have little respect for it.

*They were not ashamed.* This statement is made as a comment concerning the nakedness of Adam and Eve. But when sin entered the world, God clothed them both. As long as sin is in the world, modest clothing is imperative. Modesty and nudeness do not keep company. Purity and nudeness do not keep company. Those who think they can disregard God's will in this matter will do well to remember that man has never proved smarter than God on any question.

### III. Relation of Man and Woman

(1 Cor. 11: 8, 9)

*Man is not of the woman.* In the verses preceding our text, Paul teaches that the head of the woman is the man. As Christ is the head of the man he lays down an ascending order going from woman to man to Christ and to God. God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. On this doctrine Paul bases the subjection of woman to man and the sign of this which she is to wear on her head. In our text Paul obviously refers to the creation. His statement is that man was not taken out of woman, that is, made from the rib of woman, but that the woman was taken out of man, being made from his rib. This he uses as an argument to prove that man is the head of

the woman and that the woman is to be in subjection to man.

*Neither was the man created for the woman.* This is the second argument used by Paul to prove that woman should be in subjection to the man. The woman was created for the man. "The woman was made for the comfort and happiness of the man. Not to be a slave, but to be a helpmeet; not to be the minister of his pleasures, but to be his aid and comforter in life; not to be regarded as of inferior nature and rank, but to be his friend, to divide his sorrows, and to multiply and extend his joys; yet still to be in a station subordinate to him . . . she was created to aid him in his duties, to comfort him in his afflictions, to partake with him in his pleasures. Her rank is therefore honorable, though it is subordinate." (Albert Barnes.)

### Topics for Discussion

1. The father's place in a home is a challenge to any man regardless of how capable he may be. As the head, protector, provider, and example, he has grave responsibilities, and woe to that man who either refuses to accept these responsibilities or treats them lightly.

2. Woman's place in the home as a

companion to her husband and mother to his children involves her in her greatest duties and brings her the greatest rewards of this life.

3. The child's place in the home is one of dependence and cooperation. Obedience and appreciation should be paramount characteristics of every Christian boy and girl.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, places, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Distinguish between help meet and helpmate.  
Discuss the word worthy as applied to woman.  
What is a prudent wife? And from whom is she said to come?  
What is the third characteristic of man's helpmeet?  
What is the meaning of the word gracious as applied to a wife?

#### Golden Text Explained

On what is man's headship over woman based?  
Does man's headship extend to all phases of life?  
How does this affect the work of men and women in the church?  
Give the second reason for man's headship over woman.  
In what ways is woman the weaker vessel?  
How should a woman recognize the headship of man?  
In what did woman involve the world when she first took the lead?  
Do we have an indication that Satan thought woman the weaker vessel?  
Is this arrangement of authority unfair to women?

#### God's Concern for Man

Name and discuss three reasons why it is not good for man to be alone.  
What indicates the extent of Adam's store of information?  
Why could Adam not find a help meet for him in the lower creation?  
In what is laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage?

#### God's Provision for Man

In what kind of sleep did God place Adam?  
Read and discuss the thoughts suggested by Matthew Henry's statement concerning Eve.  
What is there in Adam's experience which is similar to the experience of Christ in the purchase of the church?  
What doctrines does Paul base on the order of creation of Adam and Eve?  
What is said of young people leaving their parents to form a family?  
In what way is the safety of the family and society endangered today?  
How is the purity of the church involved in this matter?

#### Relation of Man and Woman

How does Paul prove that man is the head of woman?  
Give the second argument Paul makes to prove that woman should be in subjection to man.  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson V—February 3, 1952

MAN'S FIRST SIN

The Lesson Text

Gen. 3: 1-8, 16-18, 24

1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Je-ho'-vah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the "voice of Je-ho'-vah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Je-ho'-vah God amongst the trees of the garden.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cher'-u-bim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Golden Text.—"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Rom. 5: 12a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 3: 9-15.

Daily Bible Readings

January 28.	M.....	Satan's Approach to Jesus (Matt. 4: 1-11)
January 29.	T.....	All That Is in the World (1 John 2: 12-17)
January 30.	W.....	Origin of Sin in Us (James 1: 12-18)
January 31.	T.....	Growth and Consequence of Sin (Josh. 7: 16-26)
February 1.	F.....	First Recorded Sin in the Church (Acts 5: 1-11)
February 2.	S.....	How to Overcome Evil (Rom. 12: 9-21)
February 3.	S.....	Resisting Our Adversary (1 Pet. 5: 1-11)

TIME.—4004 B.C.

PLACE.—Garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—Adam and Eve.

Introduction

Our lesson this week deals with a subject of universal interest. Paul says, "All have sinned, and fall short

of the glory of God." (Rom. 3: 23.) John says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and

his word is not in us." (1 John 1: 10.) Since the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6: 23), and the soul that sinneth shall die (Ezek. 18: 20), and the death is described as a lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21: 8), each individual should be supremely interested to know what sin is, how it may be overcome in his life, and how to be saved from the penalty thereof. John gives the following definition of sin: "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4.) A lawless character is one who lives as he pleases regardless of what the law says. Those who live as they please regardless of the law of the Lord are religious criminals. Again John says, "All unrighteousness is sin." (1 John 5: 17.) The prefix "un" denotes a lack of the quality signified in the word to which it is attached. The word unhappy means a lack of happiness; unmerciful denotes a lack of mercy. So unrighteous denotes the lack of the quality of righteousness. Any word or deed which is lacking in the quality of righteousness is sin. Since David says that the commandments of God are righteousness (Psalm 119: 172), we conclude

that anything contrary to the commandments of God is unrighteous and therefore sinful. James teaches us that we sin if we fail to do that which we know to be good. (James 4: 17.) And Paul teaches that whatever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14: 23.)

For convenience sins may be classified as (1) sins of ignorance; (2) sins of weakness; (3) sins of rebellion. By sins of ignorance we mean doing things wrong which are not known to us to be wrong and failing to do right for a lack of knowledge. God did not excuse sins of ignorance under the law (Lev. 5: 17-19), nor does he excuse them now (1 Tim. 1: 13). By sins of weakness we mean going contrary to God's will through the influence of others, or by giving way to our own desires. By sins of rebellion we mean those sins done not only in spite of our knowledge, but with an utter unconcern for God's will. (Heb. 6: 4-6; 10: 26-31.) Space will permit only the suggestion of a further classification as follows: (1) unscriptural in morals; (2) unscriptural in doctrine; (3) unscriptural in religious practices.

### Golden Text Explained

1. Entrance of Sin. Our Golden Text is a part of one of the most difficult passages in all the Bible. But there are some easy, practical lessons suggested in it. The first has to do with the entrance of sin into the world. Paul takes it for granted that his readers know how sin entered into the world, so he only makes reference to it to teach another lesson. He says sin entered through one man and that man was Adam. There are two things we should notice about this sin of Adam. First, it was an act. God made a law restraining or limiting Adam's activities. Satan tempted man to transgress that law. He succeeded in inducing man to violate God's law. This act of man was a sin. That sin is the thing to which Paul refers when he said, "Through one man sin entered into the world." Second, we do not inherit sin. Since sin is an act in violation of God's law, it is not of such nature as can be inherited. Prominent denominations include in

their creeds the idea that man has inherited the sin of Adam. One might as well think he can inherit the sin of stealing chickens from his grandfather as to think he can inherit the sin of Adam.

2. Death the Penalty for Sin. Paul not only tells us how sin entered the world, but he also tells us how death came to be in the world. Sin is the act of Adam, and death is the penalty for his sin. The word death here means nothing more nor less than physical death. In verse 14 Paul says, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression." (Rom. 5: 14.) This verse being immediately after our text, the word death used in it is obviously the same as the word death in our text. The death that reigned from Adam until Moses can be nothing more or less than physical death. Hence, the word death in our text can mean no more than that. Next, we should notice

that death is here used as the *penalty* for sin and not the *effect* of sin. The effect of robbery is one thing and the penalty prescribed by law is quite a different thing. So we need not look upon the presence of death in the world as the effect of one transgression, but as the penalty which in the wisdom of God, Adam and his posterity must suffer. Next, we, as the posterity of Adam, suffer the penalty of his sin. Paul continues in the same verse with our text saying, "So death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." Since all sinned, all must suffer the penalty. But the question naturally arises, how can Paul truthfully say all sinned? The answer is all Adam's posterity sinned in him as their federal head. Adam was the federal head and representative of all humanity. In him all humanity sinned. This principle is illustrated in Paul's treatment of

Levi paying tithes to Melchizedek. (Heb. 7: 4-10.) Levi did not pay tithes *personally*, but he did pay tithes *representatively*. Abraham was the federal head and representative of all Jews, including Levi. Hence, through Abraham Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek. So Adam was the federal head and representative of all humanity and in his disobedience all humanity sinned. We do not inherit the *guilt* of Adam's sin, but we do fall heir to the penalty of Adam's sin on account of our relationship to him. This is Paul's way of accounting for the presence of sin in the world and for the fact that death reigns over all. Having laid this groundwork, he goes on to the conclusion that by the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, humanity is to be redeemed from the death which came upon all men through Adam's disobedience.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Tempter and His Devices (Gen.

3: 1-5)

*The serpent was more subtle than any beast.* There has been much speculation as to the serpent in this temptation. Adam Clarke argues that the creature used was an ape for the following reasons: (1) he stood at the head of inferior animals for wisdom and understanding; (2) he walked erect; (3) he had the power of speech; (4) he had the gift of reason, and (5) these things were common to this creature since Eve showed no surprise when this creature approached her. But since the identity of the creature is not of primary importance, we leave the subject with this observation that Satan made use of one of God's creatures to bring about the downfall of another.

*Yea, hath God said?* Satan started his temptation by raising a question in the mind of Eve. It should be noticed at the same time that Satan approached Eve instead of Adam. This was a part of the subtlety of Satan. It is also worthy of mention that Satan tempted Eve when she was alone. Had she been with Adam, she no doubt through his help would not have fallen. In the next place, it seems that Satan waited until he found her near the forbidden tree. In this question which Satan raised,

there is an implication of unfair treatment. The implication is "Surely God has not placed such an unfair restriction." One of the quickest ways to plant doubt and dissatisfaction in the mind of a person is to cause that one to think some imposition has been worked on him.

*And the woman said unto the serpent.* From what Eve said we know that she had a clear understanding of her duty. She said she was at liberty to eat of any of the trees of the garden except the one which grew in the midst of the garden. It is equally clear that she understood the penalty for violation of the law. Eve's first mistake was made in discussing the matter. Her safety lay in refusing to give the matter any consideration. Whether we shall do or not do what God commanded, or whether we shall refrain from, or not refrain from, what God has forbidden is not a matter of study or reason. The person who begins to reason about such things will, like Eve, soon be found going contrary to God's will. Man's safety lies in complete submission to the will of the Lord without any argument. This is not blind, servile subjection, it is rather complete surrender in the belief that whatever the Lord wills is best for us. The gift of his Son to

die for us while we were yet his enemies is sufficient proof that his supreme interest is in our welfare. We ought therefore to believe that all his restrictions and limitations of our activities are for our good.

*And the serpent said unto the woman.* That which follows is the first recorded lie in the Bible. Satan told the woman that she would not die. Eve should have known this statement to be false, for it flatly contradicted God's statement. Satan knew that it was false because in his experience he had learned that those who disobey God are separated from him. In the next place, this was a malignant falsehood, told for the purpose of bringing about the ruin of humanity.

*Then your eyes shall be opened.* This suggests that God was withholding something good from Eve. Satan promised that she would be as God, knowing good and evil. This suggests that she would be on equality with God, at least so far as her knowledge was concerned. The opening of her eyes did not refer to physical sight but to an increase of intellectual powers. And to know good and evil suggests an experimental knowledge. Next, Satan promises speedy blessings for he said, "In the day ye eat thereof" these blessings will come. Satan represented God as knowing these things but withholding them from Eve. He not only excited her curiosity, but gave her the impression that God was being unfair in withholding something good from her.

## II. Transgression and Its Fruit (Gen.

3: 6-8)

*When the woman saw that the tree was good.* This suggests that Eve was convinced by the arguments of Satan. Satan attempted to prove three things. First, that the fruit was good for food. In this he made an appeal to her physical senses. John says, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2: 16.) The lust of the flesh is the avenue through which Satan appeals to Eve by convincing her that the fruit was good for food; it would satisfy the desire of the flesh. Satan used the same tactics on Jesus

when he suggested that the stones be turned into bread. Second, Satan appealed to Eve's sense of beauty by convincing her that the fruit of this forbidden tree was "a delight to the eyes." This in the language of John is the "lust of the eyes." In the temptation of Jesus, Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and promised to give them to him in exchange for his worship. Third, Satan appealed to Eve's desire to be as wise as God. He told her that she would be as God, knowing good and evil and then arguing that the fruit of this tree was all that was necessary to make her as wise as God. John speaks of this as the "vainglory of life." In the temptation of Jesus Satan suggested that he cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple to gain the praise and attention of the people. Since John says that these are all there is in the world, we conclude that he means that these are all the avenues of approach which the devil has to mankind, and since he used these same three approaches on Eve and Jesus, we may be sure that he has no other avenues of approach.

She took of *the fruit thereof.* Notice the order of progress in this temptation. (1) She saw. These words indicate that she looked upon the fruit, that she gave consideration to the arguments made in favor of eating it, and that she reached a conclusion. (2) She took. The deed follows consideration. Had she refused to give favorable consideration to the thought, she would not have been guilty of the deed. (3) She gave also unto her husband. Sin is not content with one victory. It likes to spread; it lives by spreading and multiplying. Sin is contagious. It affects those with whom we are associated, and those with whom we are most closely associated are the first to be affected by it.

*The eyes of them both were opened.* This does not refer to their physical eyes but to their understanding and their conscience. They became conscious of sin and of the fact that they had lost their likeness and image of God.

*They sewed fig leaves together.* This was man's effort to cover his nakedness, the shame of which his sin had made him conscious. But as

usual, man's effort is not adequate, so God provided a better covering. (Gf.n. 3: 21.)

*Hide themselves from the presence of Jehovah.* Prior to this time God came into the garden to commune with man. Man was neither afraid or ashamed. But when sin came, man was both afraid and ashamed to come into the presence of God. Sin makes one unhappy in the presence of God. We may learn the folly of man (1) by giving consideration to a suggestion contrary to the will of God; (2) in trying to provide for ourselves a covering for sin. Man's self-righteousness is as inadequate as the fig leaf aprons made by Adam and Eve. (3) Man's folly is seen in trying to hide from God. We can no more hide our sins or escape the guilt and punishment of our sins than Adam and Eve could hide behind a bush so God could not find them. We think of them as being childish to try to hide, but they were no more so than the person who thinks he can hide his sins from God.

### III. Sentence Pronounced (Gen. 3: 16-18, 24)

*Unto the woman he said.* (1) The first consequence of Eve's sin was the multiplication of pain in childbearing. God said, "I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children." The physical pain connected with childbearing may be all that is intended in this passage, but it is probable that the sorrows incident to the rearing of children are included. Certainly if sin had never entered the world, the sorrows connected with the rearing of children would never have been known. Unruly children are a source of unending sorrow to a mother who has any regard for their welfare. (2) Woman was placed in a state of subjection to man on account of her sin. God said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Paul mentions woman's sin as a reason for her subjection to man. (1 Tim. 2: 11-15.) "This sentence amounts only to that command, *Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands*; but sin has made that duty a punishment, which otherwise would not have been. If man had not sinned, had always

have ruled with wisdom and love; and had not woman sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness, and then the dominion had been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy; therefore the subjection ought never to be complained of though harsh; but sin must be complained of, they made it so. Wives who do not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence." (Matthew Henry.)

*Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife.* From this we learn that Satan did not make a direct approach to Adam. Some have conjectured that Adam reasoning about the matter decided he had rather be outside the garden with his wife than to remain in the garden without her. At any rate Paul says Adam was not beguiled as was Eve. (1 Tim. 2: 14.)

*Cursed is the ground for thy sake.* The ground was cursed to that extent: (1) Extra toil—sometimes fruitless toil—was necessary on the part of man to raise crops. (2) The curse upon the ground resulted in thorns and thistles growing to distress man. These thorns and thistles were given the strength to choke that growth which was for man's food. Hence, man must spend his time and his energy in cultivating the soil to keep the thorns and thistles from making the ground fruitless. Such toil is to continue all the days of the life of man. This suggests that man will never be free from this struggle for food. The next verse suggests that man's food is to be earned by the sweat of his face. This suggests that so persistent and abundant is the growth of thorns and thistles that man must labor excessively to succeed.

*So he drove out the man.* This concludes the immediate consequences of sin. Man was driven out of the garden and a flaming sword was placed at the gate to keep man away from the tree of life. Man's spiritual death had been accomplished and now his physical death comes ever and ever nearer.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The primary cause of sin is unbelief. Satan's first effort was to create doubt in the mind of Eve. The primary cause of salvation is faith in God. God's first effort is to cause man to believe in him and in his Son.

2. In departing from God we see (1) unbelief; (2) disobedience; (3) guilt; (4) exile from God; and (5) death. Man's return to God is characterized by (1) belief; (2) obedience;

(3) forgiveness; (4) union with God; and (5) everlasting life. Disbelief alone was not sufficient to separate Adam from God. Not until his disbelief manifested itself in disobedience was he separated from God. So, belief alone is not sufficient to bring man into union with God. Not until his belief is manifested in his obedience to God can he expect to be united with God and enjoy everlasting life.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Give and discuss several reasons why each person should be interested in the subject of sin.

Give several definitions of sin.

Name and define three classifications of sin.

Name and discuss a second classification of sin.

#### Golden Text Explained

Through whom does Paul say sin entered the world?

Can you prove that sin is an act on the part of man?

Can you prove that we do not inherit sin?

What death is the penalty for sin?

Distinguish between the penalty for sin and the effect of sin.

Give proof that we suffer the penalty of Adam's sin.

Distinguish between personal and representative actions.

#### The Tempter and His Devices

What do you know about the serpent that tempted Eve?

How did Satan start the temptation?

In what ways did Satan take advantage of Eve?

Did Eve have a clear understanding of her duty?

In what did Eve's first mistake consist?

In what does man's safety lie in time of temptation?

What is the first recorded lie in the Bible?

What did Satan suggest with reference to Eve's relation to God?

What blessings did Satan promise?

#### Transgression and Its Fruits

What three things did Satan attempt to prove to Eve?

Point out these same three things in the temptation of Jesus.

What is the order of progress in this temptation?

What was the first result of their sin?

What efforts did Adam and Eve make to remedy their situation?

In what three ways do we learn the folly of man in this incident?

#### Sentence Pronounced

In what two ways did Eve suffer?

What sentence was imposed upon man?

How was the serpent punished?

What things of interest do you find in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VI—February 10, 1952

### CAIN AND ABEL

#### The Lesson Text

Gen. 4: 1-12

1 And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with *the help* of Je-ho'-vah.

2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Je-ho'-vah.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Je-ho'-vah had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well,

sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it.

8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.”* (Heb. 11: 4a.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—1 John 3: 10-16.

### Daily Bible Readings

February	4. M.....	The Penalty for Murder (Gen. 9: 1-7)
February	5. T.....	Expiation for Unknown Crime (Deut. 21: 1-9)
February	6. W.....	Cities of Refuge for Manslayer (Num. 35: 9-28)
February	7. T.....	Jesus Teaches on Murder (Matt. 5: 21-26)
February	8. F.....	Abel Yet Speaks (Heb. 11: 1-6)
February	9. S.....	Abel a Righteous Man (Matt. 23: 29-36)
February	10. S.....	The Way of Cain Condemned (Jude 5-16)

**TIME.**—4003 B.C. for the birth of Cain; 3875 B.C. for the death of Abel.

**PLACE.**—Near the Garden of Eden.

**PERSONS.**—Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel.

### Introduction

Our lesson this week has to do with the first persons born into this world. The book of Genesis deals with the beginning of things. The word Genesis means beginnings. Hence we are told of the beginning of the world about us, the beginning of the human race, and the beginning of sin. It is therefore logical that we should be told of the character and activities of the first people born into the world. The names of these first two boys are significant. The word Cain signifies acquisition or possession. Some think the word Lord or Jehovah is a part of the name and that Eve considered Cain to be the fulfillment of the promise that she was to bear a seed which would overcome Satan. However, our accepted texts do not admit of this construction, but report her as saying she had acquired a man from the Lord, or with the help of Jehovah. The word Abel means vanity. Various reasons have been suggested for giving the child this name, but none seem very satisfactory. Practically all commentators deal with the problem as to whether these boys were twins. The conjecture that they are twins is based upon the statement

made with reference to their birth as compared with the statements relating to the birth of other men. Of Cain it is said she conceived and bare; of Abel it is said, “Again she bare his brother Abel.” If they were not twins, the customary form of mentioning his conception would have been followed. “Whence, as there is not the usual mention of a previous conception, the belief is general among the Jewish, and received by many Christian commentators that Cain and Abel were twins.” (Bush.) Adam Clarke makes a more extended argument to prove the same position.

The time of the sacrifice mentioned in our lesson has by some been supposed to be early in the life of these two men. There must have been sufficient time between their birth and this offering for the human family to multiply, for (1) Cain was afraid someone would slay him (Gen. 4: 15); (2) Cain went immediately to another land east of Eden to live among other people and build a city (Gen. 4: 17). The chronology which we follow in these lessons gives a period of 125 years which according to one eminent

scholar would allow time for more than half a million people as descendants of Adam and Eve. Hence we

may not be surprised when we learn that Cain went to the land of Nod and built a city.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Doing Things by Faith.** Our text says that Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. To do a thing by faith is to do it in harmony with God's commandment. We are told that Noah built his ark by faith. (Heb. 11: 7.) From the record given by Moses we read, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." (Gen. 6: 22.) This is a commentary on doing things by faith. Paul says that faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. (Rom. 10: 17.) So in order to do a thing by faith one must do it according to the instruction given by the Lord. We conclude therefore that God had told Cain and Abel, as well as all other people of their time, how they were to offer their sacrifices. Abel followed these instructions of the Lord, believing them to be the will of the Lord, and believing that his acceptance with the Lord depended on his following such instructions. In humble submission to the will of the Lord, despising and rejecting his own wisdom, Abel offered his sacrifice as God directed.

2. **Faith Makes Both the Act and the Person Acceptable to the Lord.** It is said that God had respect unto Abel and to his offering. By this it is meant that God accepted or was pleased with Abel and his offering. We reach this general conclusion therefore: (1) that any act done by faith is acceptable to the Lord, and (2) the person offering that act is acceptable to God. Paul says, "We walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5: 7.) From this we conclude that our Christian worship and service are matters of faith. Remembering that to do a thing by faith is to do it as God directs, we conclude that all our worship and service are to be performed in harmony with God's will. It follows therefore that the doing of things not commanded is not an act of faith. A thing which is not an act of faith is not a part of the Christian

walk. The burning of incense is taught in the gospel of Christ. Hence one cannot burn incense by faith. The sprinkling of water on people for baptism is not taught in the gospel, therefore is not an act of faith. Those who walk by faith cannot practice a thing not taught by the Lord.

3. **Lack of Faith Characterizes Both the Person and the Act as Evil.** Moses simply says that God did not respect the offering of Cain. This is sufficient for us to conclude that his offering was rejected. But it would be difficult to determine from the Genesis account why his offering was not accepted. However, John tells us that "we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3: 11, 12.) From this we learn that Cain's offering was evil and Abel's offering was righteous. The obvious lesson therefore is (1) that which is not offered by faith is evil, and (2) the person making the offering is rejected. Remembering that to do a thing by faith is to do it in harmony with God's command, we learn that the person who worships God in any way not specified by the Lord is doing an evil work and is to be rejected. Our Lord taught the Jews this lesson when he condemned them for washing hands as an act of worship to God. The act of washing the hands is obviously good and right, but to wash hands as an act of worship is sinful simply because God has not commanded it. The use of instruments of music in worship falls in the same category. When done for our pleasure or intellectual development, playing instruments is good. But when done as an act of worship to God, it is evil and the one performing the act is rejected on the same ground that Cain was rejected and his offering was evil.

### Exposition of the Text

**I. Family and Occupations** (Gen. 4: 1, 2)  
I *have gotten a man.* This was

Eve's statement when her first son was born. There is a note of joy and satisfaction in the statement which

leads many to believe that Eve thought the promise of Genesis 3: 15 was fulfilled in this son. If Eve had such a thought, we may be sure it was not from the Lord, because Cain grew to be a wicked man, and the Redeemer came through Seth. (Gen. 5: 25.) This is but a reminder that children often turn out to be a disappointment to their parents.

*With the help of Jehovah.* The words *the help of* are in italics in our text indicating that they are not in the original, but are supplied by the translators to make the sense clear. Those scholars who hold to the idea that Eve thought Cain was the fulfillment of the promise reject these words in italics and make the word Jehovah a part of Cain's name. The King James Version inserts the word *from*, making Eve say she had gotten a man from the Lord.

*Again she bare his brother Abel.* As mentioned above, the failure to mention his conception in connection with his birth in this verse has led many to believe that the boys were twins. These two are usually considered the first children of Adam and Eve, but there is no positive proof for this conclusion.

*Abel was a keeper of sheep.* How many different occupations there were at this time we have no way of knowing. But the human race had developed sufficiently that a distinction is made between a keeper of sheep and a tiller of the ground, between the shepherd and a farmer. It is probably an indication of progress in that a man devoted all of his time either to a shepherd's life or that of the farmer instead of combining the two.

*Cain was a tiller of the ground.* From the beginning of time animal husbandry and agriculture have been primary occupations. It was not long until the descendants of Cain branched out into other occupations such as musicians and forgers of brass and iron. (Gen. 4: 20-22.)

## II. Cain and Abel Worship God (Gen. 4: 3-7)

*Cain brought of the fruit of the ground.* The offering which Cain brought seems not to have been commanded by the Lord. If not commanded, it was not of faith. It was of the nature of a thank offering.

*Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock.* By some scholars it is thought that the word *also* indicates that Abel brought a thank offering similar to that of Cain, but in addition brought the firstlings of his flock. Bringing the animal sacrifice indicated (1) a conviction of sin on the part of the offerer; (2) a belief that God would forgive; (3) the belief that life is forfeited by sin; and (4) that God would accept a substitute for man, the sinner. These are important lessons for humanity to learn and lessons which God continually held before his people until these texts were fulfilled in Christ. Cain's refusal to bring a blood sacrifice implied his denial of (1) a guilty conscience, (2) his need of a Saviour, and (3) his lack of faith in a substitutionary offering. In this disbelief and rebellion we find the ground of the rejection of his person and sacrifice. This is the proof of his lack of faith. Hence it could not be said of him as it was of Abel that he made his offering by faith.

*Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering.* The writer of Hebrews says that God bore witness in respect of his gifts, meaning that God gave some outward demonstration to indicate his acceptance of the offering. What this outward demonstration was it is impossible for us to know. However, it was such that Cain could see and appreciate. Some have suggested that the offering was consumed by fire as in the case of Elijah. (1 Kings 18: 38.) But this is hardly probable since there is no reason for this offering to be so consumed while all such later offerings were not consumed in this manner.

*Unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.* In whatever way God manifested his acceptance of Abel and his offering we are told that Cain did not receive such an indication of God's pleasure. Notice that God had, or had not, respect (1) to the offerer and (2) to the offering. There is no such thing as God respecting the offerer but rejecting his offering. The two stand or fall together. Men sometimes vainly hope that though their worship is not authorized and consequently not acceptable to God, that their persons will be acceptable to him. This lesson of Cain and Abel

should teach them that if their offerings are not of faith, neither the offering nor the person is acceptable to God.

*Cain was very wrath and his countenance fell.* The rejected worshipper became angry and, as usual, his anger did not find its proper object. The reasonable object would have been himself for not making a proper offering, or if he considered his offering proper he should have been angry with God for not accepting it. But anger and reason seem not to dwell in the same heart, so Cain directed his anger to his more fortunate brother. The same thing is seen today when two men aspire to be elders of a congregation and one is chosen; the other is not. Usually the one who is not chosen fails to see any fault in himself and rarely becomes angry at the church for not selecting him, but makes his fortunate brother the target of angry words and deeds.

*If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up?* This is the lesson of God directed to Cain. These words are capable of three interpretations. (1) If you were innocent and sinless in your offering; (2) if your offering was made in the right spirit (this being held by Luther and Calvin); or (3) if you repent and make the proper offering. The words *shall it not be lifted up* likely refer to his guilt and so imply forgiveness. The statement would then read, if you do right in this matter, it shall be forgiven you.

*If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door.* The word sin here some take to mean a sin offering while others take it to mean a guilty conscience. If the word is to be taken in the sense of a sin offering, the meaning is, if you realize you did not make a proper offering, there is even now a proper offering at your door which may yet be offered and the acceptance of the Lord obtained thereby. If this be the true meaning, Cain's refusal to make the offering confirms his rebellious nature and is proof of his lack of faith in God as well as a lack of the realization of his need of a Saviour.

*Unto thee shall be its desire.* This is a very difficult statement. The difficulty lies in not being able to locate the antecedent of its. There are three possible antecedents: (1) Abel, (2) sin, and (3) the sin offering.

If Abel is the antecedent, the meaning is that Cain's right as the first born would not be taken away from him, and Abel would as the younger be subject to him. If sin is the antecedent, the meaning is that sin would ever be following Cain, that he would never be able to rid himself of it. If the sin offering is the antecedent, the meaning is that the sin offering is near, seemingly desiring to be offered in the place of Cain. But whatever is selected as the antecedent, one lesson is that Cain is being warned against the danger of yielding to sin. The last words of the verse *do thou rule over it* indicate that Cain's most important duty will be to exercise due care with reference to sin.

### III. Cain's Sin and Curse (Gen. 4: 8-12)

*Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.* This wicked deed followed a conversation between the brothers. The verse opens with the statement that Cain told Abel of the visit of Jehovah. There is an indication in this that Cain's deed was not premeditated. As they talked about their sacrifices, the acceptance of Abel and the rejection of Cain, Cain's wrath was again stirred and in the heat of his passion he took his brother's life. John says that he slew his brother because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. This implies envy and jealousy on the part of Cain. He envied Abel because of his acceptance with God. He was jealous because God had preferred his brother. We are told that "where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3: 16.) This does not mean that a jealous person is guilty of every vile deed, for such is not the truth. But it does mean that if one allows jealousy to rule in his heart he will soon become capable of any vile deed. There is no deed so vile or wicked that a jealous person will not do. Few things are worse than murdering one's brother, but Cain's jealousy made him capable of doing it.

*Where is Abel thy brother?* This is the language of Jehovah. It is a question intended to bring a feeling of guilt to the heart of Cain.

*I know not: am I my brother's keeper?* In the first part of this

statement Cain lied; in the second part he denies his responsibility to his brother. This shows what men will do to cover their sins, and, too, we have evidence of Satan's influence on Cain. Satan is said to be a liar and the father of lies. (John 8: 44.) No one can doubt that Cain's deliberate lie was uttered under the influence of Satan. A refusal to accept any responsibility for the welfare of others is also of the devil. People today who refuse to recognize their responsibility for the welfare of the poor or the lost are walking in the steps of Cain. One writer sums up the matter by saying, "He showeth himself a *liar* in saying I know not; *wicked and profane* in thinking he could hide his sin from God; *unjust* in denying himself to be his brother's keeper; *obstinate and desperate* in not confessing his sin." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*The voice of thy brother's blood crieth.* Blood is here spoken of as having a voice and of crying for justice. Adam Clarke thinks that the words indicate that Cain had buried his brother to escape detection and that the blood was crying for justice.

*Cursed art thou from the ground.*

### Topics for Discussion

1. Sins grow in clusters. A little analysis shows unbelief, disobedience, envy, anger, falsehood, and murder in Cain's heart. Sin refuses to live alone in the human heart.

2. Adam and Eve experienced that bitterest punishment which parents undergo when they see their own defects and infirmities and evil passions repeated in their children and leading

The form of the curse here is different from that in the case of Adam. The ground was cursed for Adam's sake, but here the curse is directed at Cain, and the ground which he was to till was to have a part in executing the sentence. The curse was to come from the ground, and from what follows it seems that the curse was to come from the ground because Abel's blood had been taken up in the ground.

*It shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength.* The land was to become partially barren. It would not yield as much per acre as it had yielded before. Whether that was intended for Cain alone or was intended to be the case with all tillers of the soil is not known. But it is known that soil tends to lose its strength when continuously cultivated.

*A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.* This is a part of the punishment placed upon Cain for his sin. The curse seems to be threefold. (1) A curse upon him personally; (2) a curse upon his labor in that it would not be rewarded with as great a yield as before; and (3) no permanent abiding place.

them astray as they once led themselves.

3. There are evils and sorrows unfolded in sin beyond what men can conceive of before they commit the sin. If Adam and Eve could have seen clearly all the evil which would come from their sin, surely they would not have sinned.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Give the time, place, and persons.

Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What is the meaning of the word Genesis?

We are told of the beginning of what things in Genesis?

What is the meaning of the words Cain and Abel?

On what is the idea based that Cain and Abel were twins?

About how old were Cain and Abel at the time of our lesson?

What has been suggested as to the population of the world at that time?

#### Golden Text Explained

What is meant by doing things by faith?

Illustrate this principle as suggested in the work of Noah.

On this basis what was wrong with Cain's sacrifice?

What is implied by the statement that God had respect unto the offering of Abel?

By what rule does Paul suggest that we walk?

Give two or three illustrations of religious acts which cannot be done by faith?

What does John teach us about the offering of Abel and Cain?

According to this lesson, what is an evil work? A righteous work?

#### Family and Occupations

What did Eve say at the birth of her first born? And what its meaning?

Do we have proof that Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve?

What is said about different occupations at the time of our lesson?

Cain and Abel Worship God

What is the nature of Cain's offering?

What is suggested with reference to the offering of Abel?

Name and discuss the four lessons suggested by the bringing of animal sacrifice.

What is meant by God bearing witness in respect of Abel's gift?

Does God respect the one who offers a sacrifice which is not an acceptable sacrifice?

What effect did God's rejection of Cain have upon him?

What is meant by "If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up?"

What is meant by sin couching at the door?

What is meant by "Unto thee shall be its desire"?

Cain's Sin and Curse

Why did Cain slay Abel? and what dispositions are implied?

What does James teach on this question?

What is said of the character of Cain?

What is said of the curse placed upon Cain?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VII—February 17, 1952

NOAH AND THE ARK

The Lesson Text

Gen. 6: 9-22

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God.

10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Ja'-pheth.

11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 Make thee an ark of go'-pher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15 And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16 A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish

it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17 And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; every-thing that is in the earth shall die.

18 But I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

20 Of the birds after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." (Heb. 11: 7a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 24: 37-44.

Daily Bible Readings

- February 11. M.....Noah Classed with the Great (Ezek. 14: 12-20)
- February 12. T.....Conditions in Noah's Day (Gen. 6: 1-8)
- February 13. W.....Extent of the Flood (Gen. 7: 13-24)
- February 14. T.....Noah Leaves the Ark (Gen. 8: 13-22)

February 15. F.....	A Picture of Days to Come (Luke 17: 26-37)
February 16. S.....	Noah, a Man of Faith (Heb. 11: 1-7)
February 17. S.....	Noah's Experience a Type (1 Pet. 3: 18-22)

TIME.—2348 B.C.

PLACE.—Unknown.

PERSONS.—Noah and his family, eight persons.

### Introduction

About 1,556 years have elapsed since the time of our last lesson. During this time two distinct lines of people developed. One was the line of Cain, who had a definite tendency toward evil, and the other was the line of Seth, generally regarded as a righteous man. Only a few verses of scripture are devoted to the line of Cain. (Gen. 4: 16-24.) Chapter 5 is devoted to the line of Seth from Adam to Noah. Chapter 6 begins with a statement which must be applied to a considerable portion of this period from Adam to Noah and not simply to the last few years of the period. It was during this portion of time that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose . . . the Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." (Gen. 6: 2-4.) The sons of God were descendants of Seth while the daughters of men refer to descendants of Cain. There are some difficulties in connection with this interpretation, but no other interpretation has as few as this one. Some think that the angels spoken of in Jude 6 are the sons of God and that their offspring were the Nephilim, or giants. But (1) the interpretation is

most unnatural and has nothing in fact to support it. (2) A little closer reading of the verse will show that the Nephilim were not descendants of the sons of God and the daughters of men. Notice the expression "also after that" which means that the connection between the sons of God and the daughters of men progressed after the days of Nephilim.

People generally have had the idea that it took Noah 120 years to build the ark and that conclusion was based on Gen. 6: 3 where we read, "Yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years." This 120 years was the time given to see whether or not the human race would repent and improve. It is probable that Noah preached during this entire time, but there is no passage which indicates that he was building on the ark during all this time. The first record we have of God's direction concerning the ark included Noah's sons and their wives. Hence the boys must have been married at the time Noah was told to build the ark. But Noah was 500 years old before either son was born. (Gen. 5: 32.) Shem was only 92 years old at the time of the flood. (Gen. 11: 10.) Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood. From these figures it will be seen that the building of the ark required less than 100 years.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Noah's Faith Accepted God's Word as Truth.** Our text suggests that Noah was warned of "things not seen as yet." In spite of the fact that there had never been a flood upon the earth, or rain in such proportion as would enable Noah to accept God's statement on the basis of reason, Noah believed what God said. This characteristic is an essential of saving faith. People who do not believe what God says on any and every question have no right to claim sav-

ing faith. Those who talk loudest and longest about salvation by "faith only" seem to have the least of that article. When they read "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" or "repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins," they argue that they can't see any conviction between baptism and salvation. If they had enough of the faith which Noah had, they would not require to see a reason between the thing done and the object to be gained. Naaman

probably never saw any connection between dipping seven times in the Jordan and cure for leprosy; Joshua probably never saw any connection between marching around the walls of Jericho thirteen times and the destruction of that city. If people could see a scientific connection between the conditions of salvation and the blessing of salvation, there would be no opportunity for the exercise of faith. The fact that God says a thing is sufficient basis for faith. Those who expect or demand some reasonable or scientific connection are walking by sight and not by faith.

## 2. **Noah's Faith Feared God to the Point of Submitting to God's Way.**

Our text says Noah was moved with godly fear. Probably the world needs nothing more than it needs a fear of God. The underlying reason for the apostasy of the Jewish nation is stated in these words, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. 3: 18.) People need to be afraid to violate God's law. We need to fear the terrible consequences of sin. We need to have a healthy fear of falling into the hands of God unprepared. (Heb. 10: 30, 31.) When God says we are "buried with him in baptism," we ought to be afraid to substitute sprinkling. When God teaches us to worship on the first day of the week, we ought to be afraid to do otherwise. Our text indicates that godly fear is an element of the faith by which Noah prepared the ark. People who do not have this godly fear which moves

them to submit to God's way do not have Noah's faith.

## 3. **Noah's Faith Obeyed God's Word in Spite of Opposition and Ridicule.**

Our text says that Noah built the ark by faith. From the Old Testament record we learn "Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him." (Gen. 7: 5.) This is simply another way of saying that Noah obeyed God's commandments. The religious world today teaches that there are two contradictory schemes of salvation. One is salvation by faith; the other salvation by obedience or works. Denominations generally teach salvation by faith only because they think the only alternative is salvation by works. There is a type of work which has always been repulsive to God and has no place in the plan of salvation. Works of man's wisdom have never been acceptable to God, but God has never in any age of the world offered salvation to anybody without works of obedience. Noah did not build the ark by faith only. Yet his salvation was not of his own works nor of his own wisdom. He had a faith that worked in obedience to God's commandments and in godly fear. If we expect to be saved today, we must have the same kind of faith. Believing God's word, moving with godly fear, if we do what God teaches one must do to be saved, we may expect salvation. This is salvation by faith, offered to us by the grace of God.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Noah and the World of His Day

(Gen. 6: 9-12)

*Noah . . . was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations.* A righteous man is one who does righteousness. (1 John 3: 7.) From David we learn that keeping God's commandments is doing righteousness. (Psalm 119: 172.) Hence, when we read that Noah was a righteous man, we know that he was one who obeyed the commandments of God. The statement that he was perfect in his generations does not mean that he had reached the state of sinless perfection. In the margin we have the word blameless. The original word means complete or whole. It describes "completeness of

parts rather than of degrees in the renewed character." (Bush.) He was not lacking in some quality essential to a righteous man, though some qualities might not be as prominent as some others.

*Noah walked with God.* Enoch is the only other man of that distant past of whom this statement is made. (Gen. 5: 24.) To walk with God denotes agreement and fellowship. (Amos 3: 3.) Walking with God also denotes activity. No one can walk with God without being actively engaged in obeying God's commandments. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." (1 John 2: 6.)

*Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.* It is difficult to know the order of birth of the sons of Noah. In the King James Version Gen. 10: 31 indicates that Japheth was the elder brother of Shem, while the American Standard Version says that Shem was the elder brother of Japheth. Ham was certainly the youngest of the three and seems to have been the worst character. (Gen. 9: 20-27.) Adam Clarke thinks that Japheth was older than Shem because he is mentioned first in a genealogy of 1 Chronicles. But if his conclusion is correct, we would also have to conclude that Ham was older than Shem because Ham is mentioned in this same connection before Shem. (1 Chron. 1: 1-17.)

*The earth was corrupt before God.* The earth was so corrupt that it is said "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6: 5.) There are three thoughts suggested in this statement: (1) Every imagination was evil.

(2) Every imagination was *only* evil. This strengthens and emphasizes the first thought. It is difficult to conceive of a heart being so wholly given to evil that every imagination is evil and wholly evil. This suggests that purity had absolutely no place in the thoughts of man. (3) This condition is said to have been continual. It was not for a day or a week, but throughout the whole life of the man. We are led also to believe that this was the condition, if not of every man, of the vast majority of men. Noah and his family are the only exceptions mentioned. Certainly no others were exceptions to the extent that the Lord could save them from the flood.

*God saw the earth.* Wickedness cannot exist without God detecting it. The fact that he is omnipresent and omniscient makes it impossible for the slightest evil to exist without his knowledge. "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good." (Prov. 15: 3.) Again, "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." (2 Chron. 16: 9.)

*All flesh had corrupted their way.* Notice that this extremely corrupt

condition is the work of the flesh of man. It was not the work of God, nor in harmony with his will.

## II. Instructions Concerning the Ark

(Gen. 6: 13-16)

*The end of all flesh is come before me.* The term "all flesh" includes more than humanity. God justified his change of mind with reference to Nineveh on the ground that there was "much cattle" which would have been destroyed with the city. (Jonah 4: 11.) But the wickedness in Noah's day was so great that the lower animals perished with man.

*Make thee an ark of gopherwood.* This ark was to be the means of Noah's salvation. Gopherwood was very likely cypress. The form of the Hebrew word and its Greek equivalent seem to indicate cypress. Cypress wood abounded in the section where Noah is supposed to have lived; was anciently used for building ships because it is not liable to rot. Pitch was to be used inside and out. "The substance to be employed was probably bitumen or asphalt." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*This is how thou shalt make it.* Following this we have the dimensions of the ark as 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. It is impossible to know the exact length of the cubit. It is generally thought to be eighteen inches. But certain authorities have good grounds for contending that it is nearer twenty inches. Infidels have argued that the ark was not large enough to contain all the Bible says was put in it. Taking the cubit at eighteen inches, there was more than one million and a half cubic feet of space. It should also be remembered that representatives of the various families of animals are all that needed to be included. None of the large sea animals needed to be included as they would not be executed by the flood. Those who are interested in a further study of this question may see an argument in Adam Clarke's commentary and a treatment by Harry Rimmer.

*A light shalt thou make to the ark.* The lighting of the ark is admittedly a difficult subject. The margin of our text has the word *roof* in the place of *light*, and several other authorities agree with that translation. The size

and location of the light is also uncertain. Our text says, "To a cubit shalt thou finish it upward." Some take this to mean that the opening for light ran the entire length of the ark, a cubit wide, just under the eave.

*The door shalt thou set at the side thereof.* The fact that the ark had but one door has given about as much trouble to skeptics as the one window. No mention is made of the size nor the location, except to say that it was put in the side of the ark. Whether it was put in the first, second, or third story is not said. Some authorities who are usually counted as conservatives feel that they must help the Lord a little and say that it means one door in each story. Speculation is idle and may easily become a folly. The basic reason for all such speculation is unbelief. Even conservative scholars sometimes feel that they must account for everything on the basis of the natural instead of the miraculous. There seems to be nothing in connection with the building of the ark or taking the animals into it which cannot be accounted for naturally. But if the miraculous is necessary, we should not hesitate to resort to it for an explanation.

### III. Provisions for Saving Life (Gen. 6: 17-22)

*I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth.* The pronoun *I* is repeated in our text for sake of emphasis. This was not a natural flood but one brought through divine visitation. The word for flood is never used in the Bible to refer to any other inundation. It is used in Isa. 54: 9 and Psalm 29: 10, but in each of these places it refers to the flood of Noah's time. Hence we conclude that this flood was of miraculous proportions and extent.

*Everything that is in the earth shall die.* The only exception to this statement is the marine life. There is no known reason for this exception other than that the means of destruction of man was such that it did not involve marine life. God's primary purpose was to destroy man, and the means chosen unavoidably destroyed land animals.

*I will establish my covenant with thee.* This was his covenant with reference to saving Noah and his fam-

ily in the flood. The word translated covenant probably signifies, according to Adam Clarke, a purification or purifier because in all covenants made between God and man sin and sinfulness were supposed to be on man's side and God could not enter into a covenant with him without a purifier. It is for this reason that a sacrifice on the part of man was always an essential part of a covenant.

*Two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark.* Here is another statement which infidels use to prove a contradiction. In Gen. 7: 2, 3 it is said, "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female: of the birds also of the heavens, seven and seven, male and female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." The best explanation seems to be that in chapter six we have the record of the announcement of the flood and of the building of the ark. At that time only a general statement was necessary and this general statement was to the effect that male and female of every sort were to be saved to preserve life. But in chapter seven after the ark had been built and the time had arrived to bring the animals and birds into it, more specific and detailed instruction was necessary. Hence Noah was told to bring a sufficient number of clean birds and animals for food and sacrifice as well as for the two which were necessary to preserve life.

*Take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten.* Included in this command was food not only for human consumption but also food for every kind of creature taken into the ark. Considerable knowledge of animal nature and habits was necessary in order to carry out this command. Whether Noah had any special help from God is not intimated.

*According to all that God commanded him, so did he.* This is an indication (1) of Noah's faith, (2) of his godly fear, and (3) his complete obedience. God saves the obedient and punishes the disobedient. No proposition has more scripture to sustain it, and man is extremely foolish to doubt or deny the truthfulness of this statement.

## Topics for Discussion

1. Man's life is often characterized as a walk. (1) Enoch and Noah walked with God. (Gen. 5: 24; 6: 9.) This suggests companionship. (2) Abraham was told to walk before God. (Gen. 17:1.) This denotes God's inspection of our walk. (3) Israel was told to walk after Jehovah. (Deut. 12: 4; Hos. 11: 10.) This suggests that man follows an example set by the Lord. Hence our walk should be a fellowship with God under his inspection and after his example.

2. The ark was God's provision for

salvation in Noah's day. Those who entered it were saved. Those who refused to enter were lost regardless of social, political, or financial standing. God's mercy did not extend so far as to cover one who refused to enter the ark. The church is God's provision for salvation in this age of the world. Those who enter and live as God directs are saved. Those who refuse are lost regardless of their prominence in society. Neither money nor morals can make up for one's refusal to comply with God's demands.

## Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

### Introduction

What two distinct lines of people developed in the time between our last lesson and this?  
Who were the sons of God? And the daughters of men?  
What are the Nephilim? and what theory is suggested as to their origin?  
Did the building of the ark require 120 years?  
What facts suggest that less than one hundred years were required to build the ark?

### Golden Text Explained

What is the first characteristic essential to saving faith?  
Give some present day illustrations of faith like Noah's and of faith which differs from his in this respect.  
Show the difference between walking by faith and walking by sight.  
What is the second essential characteristic of saving faith?  
Illustrate this characteristic by present day situations.  
What is the third essential characteristic of faith?  
Show the difference between works of man's wisdom and works of obedience to God's commandment.

### Noah and the World of His Day

What is said of the character of Noah?  
What is meant by the word perfect as used in this text?

What is implied by the statement that Noah walked with God?  
Of what other man is this statement made?  
What do you know of the respective ages of Shem, Ham, and Japheth?  
What is said of the condition of the earth at this time?  
What three thoughts are suggested by this statement?  
What characteristics of God make it impossible for evil to escape his notice?  
Who was responsible for the wickedness existing in Noah's day?

### Instructions Concerning the Ark

What is meant by all flesh in our text?  
What was gopherwood? And pitch?  
Give the dimensions of the ark.  
What do you know of the length of a cubit?  
What do you know of the lighting of the ark?  
What do you know of the door in the ark?

### Provisions for Saving Life

Why do we conclude that the flood was of miraculous proportions?  
What type of life was exempt from the destruction of the flood?  
What is suggested in the meaning of the word covenant?  
What difficulty is suggested with reference to the number of animals taken into the ark?  
On what principle did Noah operate in building the ark?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VIII—February 24, 1952

# THE TOWER OF BABEL

## The Lesson Text

Gen. 11: 1-9

1 And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in

the land of Shi'-nar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn

them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And Je-ho'-vah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And Je-ho'-vah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do: and now nothing will be with-

holden from them, which they purpose to do.

7 Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So Je-ho'-vah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city.

9 Therefore was the name of it called Ba'-bel; because Je-ho'-vah did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did Je-ho'-vah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*“Except Jehovah build the house, Thy labor in vain that build it: Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain.”* (Psalms 127: 1.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Psalms 125.

### Daily Bible Readings

- February 18. M..... God Determines the Bounds of Nations (Acts 17: 22-31)
- February 19. T..... God Rules in the Affairs of Nations (Dan. 4: 19-27)
- February 20. W..... Opposition to God Is Foolish (Psalms 53)
- February 21. T..... Nations Should Praise God (Psalms 67)
- February 22. F..... Jehovah's Power and Dominion (Psalms 97)
- February 23. S..... Prosperity Is from Jehovah (Psalms 127)
- February 24. S..... Jehovah Contrasted with Idols (Psalms 115)

**TIME.**—2247 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Land of Shinar, Babylon.

**PERSONS.**—God and the people.

### Introduction

Since our lesson deals with the Tower of Babel, it will be well to review the history of Babylon. Moses connects Babel with the land of Shinar and with Nimrod, the mighty hunter. (Gen. 10: 9, 10.) Babel is said to be the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom.' According to Price in *Monuments and the Old Testament*, Babylon is one of the oldest cities of which we have any knowledge. According to records left by Sargon I and Hammurabi dating back nearly to 3000 B.C. Babylon was quite a city in their day and has been the capital of that region from antiquity.

Another thing of interest in this lesson is the genealogical line of Shem. Shem is said to be the father of the children of Eber. (Gen. 10: 21.) Some have thought the word Hebrew comes from this word Eber and hence identifies the Hebrews as the descendants of Shem. It is true that the Hebrews came from Shem, but

conservative scholars deny that the word Hebrew is derived from the word Eber. In Genesis 11: 10-26 we have the line of Shem traced to Abraham and this is all the proof we need that Abraham and his descendants came from Shem. Nimrod, who built Babylon, was a descendant of Ham. (Gen. 10: 6-8.)

From general Bible teaching and from the context in which our lesson is found especially, the human race is said to be derived from one source. This unity of the human race is suggested by a number of characteristics. Adam Clarke gives thirteen of these evidences of unity. The fact that all divisions of the human race count by tens and that they compute time by a cycle of seven days; their use of sacrifice both sin-offering and thank-offering; the consecration of temples and altars; giving one-tenth of their income to religious purposes; support-

ing a priesthood; abstinence from sinful gratifications prior to sacrifices, and the tradition of a general deluge

among all divisions of the race are cited as proof of a common source for all these divisions of the human race.

### Golden Text Explained

1. Exposition of the Text. The word house in our text may be taken to mean a dwelling house or a temple. It is also used to mean a family. There is no particular reference in our text to any certain builder. The thought is simply that anyone who builds independently of Jehovah is laboring in vain. The word vain suggests that he is laboring to no profit, that he will not succeed in his intentions and desires. The second division of our text shifts from the builder to that of a watchman. But the thought is the same as that in the first section. The writer of this psalm intended to impress upon his readers the necessity of regarding God as being over all men. The success of man's labors is dependent upon God's sanction and only those who labor in harmony with God's will may expect to succeed.

2. Application of the Text. David did not mean to teach that a man cannot build a dwelling house without taking God into consideration. He simply used the word house in a figurative sense expecting his readers to make a practical application of his poetic statement.

(a) In our application of the text we would say except Jehovah build a home people labor in vain that build it. Much of the sorrow and disappointments come as a result of people trying to build homes without taking God into consideration. Many young people start in the business of building a home knowing little and caring less about what God has taught on the subject. Years later they find that their building has been contrary to the teaching of the Lord and they find it difficult and practically impossible to rebuild so as to meet the Lord's approval. The time and the labor invested in the build-

ing of their home have been in vain.

(b) It ought to go without argument that people who build a church without taking God into consideration labor in vain. Many religious groups make their own laws, carry on their work and worship according to the decrees of councils and the conclusions of synods and conferences that build according to man's wisdom. They do that which to them seems right; they see no reason why God would be opposed to what they are doing, but it seems never to have occurred to them that all they do must be done in harmony with God's revealed will. We walk by faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of God. Hence our church life is determined by what is revealed in God's word.

(c) A careful study of the Daily Bible Readings will show that God is interested in and takes part in the affairs of nations. Kings, dictators, presidents, and congressmen laboring to build nations should realize that their labor is in vain if they do not build in harmony with God's will. The prince of righteousness and of morality cannot be disregarded if they expect their national structure to endure. It seems that the builders and directors of nations have about reached the point where they must admit the failure of human wisdom. International organizations and great armies with terrible destructive power are unable to keep peace. These are not the Lord's ways and hence will never be successful. The sooner world rulers recognize God and begin to depend upon him for guidance, the sooner we may expect peace to reign. A wholehearted acceptance of the Golden Rule would do more to bring peace than all the political schemes and armies the nations can muster.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Man's Sinful Purpose (Gen. 11:

1-4)

The whole earth was of one language. Adam Clarke says, "The names and their significations given in the Scriptures seem incontestable

evidences that the Hebrew language was the original language on the earth—the language in which God spake to man, and in which he gave the revelation of his will to Moses and the prophets." But other author-

ities deny that the Hebrew language was the one language of all the earth. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* says that the Hebrew of the Old Testament was not the language of Abraham when he entered Palestine, but was a form of the Chaldee language. It is probably impossible to know which was the primitive language, or if that primitive language has been preserved.

*They found a plain in the land of Shinar.* One version says they found this plain as they journeyed from the East. The margin in our version says *in the East*. The term east signifies a section of the country east of Palestine. It is said that the wise men came from the East. (Matt. 2:

1.) Balaam came from the East to Moab to curse the children of Israel. (Num. 23: 7.) Isaiah refers to Abraham as coming from the East (41: 2) and we know that he came from the Ur of Chaldees. (Gen. 11: 28, 31.) So the word East of our text must refer to that general section known as Babylonia and Assyria. Our text says that the land of Shinar was in the East. The meaning of the term Shinar is unknown "though it probably meant the land of the two rivers." (Pulpit Commentary.) It is generally located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, northwest of the Persian Gulf.

*Come, let us make brick.* The art of brickmaking was known thus anciently. They knew the art of heating clay, for they said they would burn their brick thoroughly. It was necessary to use brick because of the scarcity of rock in this section. It was a low section, flooded during the rainy season, but dry and dusty during the rest of the year. For mortar they used slime or bitumen.

*Come, let us build a city and a tower.* Herodotus, one of our oldest sources, described Babylon as having been laid out in squares much like a modern city with streets at right angles. Whether these people laid out their city in such fashion cannot be known. The tower which they built had some resemblance to the pyramids. When the Jews were carried into captivity they thought they found near Babylon the very tower here mentioned. There is no proof that they actually found the tower,

but any one of the several towers in that section would surely resemble the one in our text. One such tower is described as having a base 272 feet square and 26 feet high. The second story is 230 feet square, the third 188 feet square and so on up until the seventh story is reached which is only 25 feet square. These stories are off-center, making the steps on one side thirty feet wide while on the other only twelve feet wide. Some of the towers were round with circular stairs reaching from the ground to the top. They proposed to build a tower that would reach to heaven. What their conception of heaven was and just how high they intended to build we cannot know.

*Let us make us a name.* Here we see the first sinful purpose of these people. The flood had destroyed whatever marks of civilization had been left by the people. These descendants of Noah seemed to resent the loss of that civilization and intended to take measures to prevent such another loss. There were ambition and pride in their motives. Those today who have such ambition to perpetuate their wisdom and attainments might reflect upon the fact that neither the tower, nor the rock of the tower, nor the names of the builders of that tower are known today. And if such knowledge was held by Moses or any of his contemporaries it was not preserved in their records. "It is just with God to bury those names in the dust which are raised by sin. These Babel-builders put themselves to a great deal of foolish expense; but we do not find in any history the name of so much as one of them." (Matthew Henry.) Tradition says that they engraved the names of the builders on the bricks, but in spite of that they are still unknown.

*Lest we be scattered abroad.* This is the second motive for building the tower. The tower was to serve as a rallying point, a gathering place which would serve to keep or hold the people together. It is thought that these people rebelled at the command of God to Noah to multiply and replenish the earth. (Gen. 9: 1.) Instead of scattering to the various parts of the earth as God intended, they determined to stay together in

this portion of the earth. This indicates (1) a rebellious attitude on their part; (2) this indicates their ignorance and shortsightedness. They seemed unable to see that within a few generations man would multiply to that extent that this one section of the earth would be unable to maintain them. God's plan provided for thousands of years of growth and the development of various nations. Their idea provided for neither. As usual, when man opposes God he is foolish, and if he lives long enough his foolishness becomes apparent to him.

## II. God's Righteous Judgment (Gen. 11: 5-9)

*And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower.* Since God is omnipresent, it is not necessary for him to come down. This is accommodative language to convey the idea of close inspection.

*They are one people.* The unity of the people as to language and design is indicated in our text. They were one people because of one common source: they were all the descendants of Noah. It is said that they all had one language which no doubt was that which came down from Adam.

*This is what they begin to do.* The building of this tower for the purpose of perpetuating their name and their family, and of waging a successful rebellion against the will of God is the result of the unity here mentioned.

*Nothing will be withholden from them.* The thought is that this tower is the beginning of their rebellious actions, and if such an ambitious undertaking is only the beginning nothing would be impossible for them to undertake. Rather than allow them to go on in such sinful undertakings God saw fit to destroy the unity which made such ambitious undertakings possible.

*Let us go down and confound their language.* This was God's way of destroying the unity of the people. We should not conclude that each man was given a different language, though we have no way of knowing how many different languages were given at this time. Some conjecture that at least three languages were given, one each for the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But certainly a sufficient number of

languages were given to make it impossible for the people to continue their cooperative endeavors.

(1) We might learn a lesson here that unity of speech contributes to strength, growth, and success, while a confusion of speech brings defeat. Paul exhorts us to speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1: 10), and Peter tells us to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4: 11). Spiritual strength depends upon spiritual unity of speech. A confusion of tongues spiritually results when each speaks his own mind and brings confusion, weakness, and defeat.

(2) We might also be reminded of the far-reaching consequences of sin. The sinful ambition and rebellion of these people brought confusion of tongues, and to this day we suffer the consequences of that sin. Our association and cooperation with other nations are limited because of our inability to speak their language and to understand them and their problems.

*That they may not understand one another's speech.* A failure to understand another's speech can be overcome to some extent through a study of languages. Through study we may be able to carry on a conversation with one of another nation, but there is a deeper meaning suggested here. There are shades of meanings that are not capable of being translated from one language to another. Sentiments and implications clearly discerned by the speaker are not brought over in the translation. This gives room for a misunderstanding and a lack of appreciation of another's point of view. This definitely has been recognized by the representatives of the various nations working together on the international problems of the day.

*They left off building the city.* Since their unity of language was destroyed, their unity of purpose was shattered. Consequently, their unity of interest was made impossible. In this is seen the folly of taking issue with God. People today who try to live without God should be warned by the fact that these people could not build in opposition to God. They could have continued in a weak way to carry on, but they realized they could not accomplish what they started out to do. So people today

can live after a fashion without God. but they should realize that they cannot attain to the highest and most useful lives in this world and that their efforts will be absolutely a failure with reference to the next.

*Therefore was the name of it called Babel.* The word Babel has come to mean confusion because it was at the Tower of Babel that God confounded the languages. Some have thought that Moses intended to say that the word Babel itself means confusion but Hebrew authorities tell us that the word means "the gate of God."

### Topics for Discussion

1. The brickmakers in Shinar are examples of (1) ingenuity, (2) earnestness, (3) perseverance, and (4) unity in sin. The brickmakers of Egypt (Ex. 5: 7) are illustrations of (1) bondage, (2) degradation, (3) misery, and (4) hopelessness of sin.
2. The Tower of Babel is a monu-

(Smith's Bible Dictionary.) This is no doubt the original intention of the appellation as given by Nimrod, though the other since came to be attached to it after the confusion of tongues. In Gen. 10: 10 Babel is given as the name of the kingdom of Nimrod. If Nimrod called it Babel we are forced to conclude that the term Babel was not given because of the confusion of tongues, but since tongues were confused in the Tower of Babel, the word Babel, which originally meant "the gate of God," came to mean confusion.

ment of man's (1) sinful ambition, (2) laborious ingenuity, (3) demonstrated feebleness, and (4) stupendous folly. But the Tower is also a memorial of God's (1) overruling providence, (2) resistless power, (3) retributive justice and (4) beneficent purpose. (Pulpit Commentary.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

With whom does Moses connect Babel?  
How far back in the world's history does Babylon reach?  
The Hebrew people are descended from which of the sons of Noah?  
Name and discuss the evidences of the unity of the human race as suggested in our lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What is said of those who labor independently of Jehovah?  
What is said in our text of the watchmen?  
Discuss the meaning of our text as it applies to building a home.  
Discuss the text as it applies to the building of the church.  
What application does our text have in the building of a nation?  
What turn must be taken in human events before we may expect peace to reign?

#### Man's Sinful Purpose

What fact suggests that the original language of the earth was Hebrew?  
Is it possible to know which was the primitive language of mankind?

To what section of the world does the word east of our text refer?  
What is the probable meaning of the term Shinar?  
Between what two great rivers was Shinar located?  
What building material did the people use?  
What do you know of towers such as are mentioned in our text?  
What do you know of the height of the tower they planned to build?  
What was wrong with their intentions to build a tower?  
What practical lesson is suggested in their failure?  
What was the people's second motive for building the tower? And what is implied by it?

#### God's Righteous Judgment

What is said of the unity of the people?  
What was done to destroy this unity?  
Of what practical benefit is unity of speech in religion?  
What is suggested as to the far-reaching consequences of sin?  
Their inability to build in opposition to God suggests what lesson for us?  
What do you know of the meaning of the word Babel?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson IX—March 2, 1952 ABRAHAM AND LOT

### The Lesson Text Gen. 13: 1-12

1 And Abram went up out of E-gypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South.

2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the South even to Beth'-el, unto the

place where his tent had been at the beginning, between B6th'-el and A'-i,

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Je-ho'-vah.

5 And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Ca'-naan-ite and the Per'-iz-zite dwelt then in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my

herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou take* the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Je-ho'-vah destroyed Sod'-om and Go-mor'-rah, like the garden of Je-ho'-vah, like the land of E'-gypt, as thou goest unto Zo'-ar.

11 So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelt in the land of Ca'-naan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sod'-om.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God."* (Matt. 5: 9.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 14: 13-24.

### Daily Bible Readings

February 25. M.....	Lot's Relation to Abraham (Gen. 11: 24-32)
February 26. T.....	Lot Captured by the Kings (Gen. 14: 1-12)
February 27. W.....	Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (Gen. 18: 20-33)
February 28. T.....	Lot Rescued from Sodom (Gen. 19: 12-28)
February 29. F.....	Lot and His Descendants (Gen. 19: 30-38)
March 1. S.....	Lot Distressed by Wickedness (2 Pet. 2: 1-11)
March 2. S.....	Remember Lot's Wife (Luke 17: 22-37)

TIME.—1918 B.C.

PLACE.—Between Bethel and Ai.

PERSONS.—Abraham and Lot.

### Introduction

The location of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah has been a difficult question for a long time. Many of the older scholars supposed these cities were located at the south end of the Dead Sea, but there are several very valid objections to this position. Our text says that these cities were in the "Plain of the Jordan." Instead of the word plain the margin has the word circle. If these cities were located in the circle of the Jordan they were obviously north of the Dead Sea, for the Jordan ends there. And if the word plain is to be retained, it is difficult to see how there could be a plain of the Jordan at the southern end of the Dead Sea. It is also said that Lot lifted up

his eyes and beheld all the plain or circle of the Jordan. From where Abram and Lot lived it would have been impossible for him to see the section of the country south of the Dead Sea. In Deut. 34: 3 Moses associated the city of Zoar with the valley of Jericho. This Zoar was one of the five cities of the plain in which Sodom was situated. Since it was near Jericho, it must have been at the north end of the Dead Sea. Brother McGarvey says, "A candid consideration of the evidences above adduced seems to require us to abandon the old theory as to the location of these cities, and to suppose that the local traditions, which furnish almost its only support, orig-

inated from an unsuccessful attempt at an early period since the Christian era to settle the question which still remains unsettled among scholars and explorers. (Lands of the Bible, p. 349.)

As to the destruction brought upon Sodom, there are numerous references. Moses suggests that it was such that nothing would be sown and not even grass would grow.

(Deut. 29: 23.) Isaiah indicates that like Babylon Sodom shall never be inhabited, nor shall flocks lie down there. (Isa. 13: 20.) It is to be "a possession of nettles and saltpits and the perpetual desolation." (Zeph. 2: 9.) And Peter says the cities were turned into ashes. (2 Pet. 2: 6.) Jude tells us these cities "are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." (Jude 7.)

### Golden Text Explained

1. The Active Beatitude. All the beatitudes, except the one in our text, refer to some attitude or quality of character. The poor in spirit, the sorrowful, the meek, the merciful, the poor, and those that are persecuted are included in the other beatitudes. But our text deals with people who are active. They are the peacemakers. These busy themselves in the business of making peace. Purity of heart, meekness, and poverty of spirit do not suggest action. But making peace suggests an active, aggressive course of conduct.

2. Qualifications of a Peacemaker. Whether the peacemakers mentioned here are those who make peace between man and God or between man and man is not indicated. Perhaps both are included. But in order to do either, one must be at peace with God. One who lives in rebellion against God and the authority of his Christ would not be in a position to lead men to be at peace with God, nor could he be very successful at bringing estranged men to be at peace with one another. To be a good peacemaker one should be in control of the warring elements of his own life. A split personality is too unstable and unpredictable to be a peacemaker. The ungodly fight of his character would make it impossible for him to have influence for good. We need people with single purpose and determination and steadfastness not only to teach people to live in peace, but to set an example to illustrate the principles taught. Another qualification of the peacemaker is a genuine interest in the welfare of others. Too many of us are inclined to live to ourselves and let the other fellow do the same. Paul's interest in others who had not made peace with God led him to sacrifice

the pleasures, the honors, and the ease of this life to suffer persecution and death that he might reconcile man to God. Luke, the physician, we may safely conclude, left a lucrative practice perhaps in Troas to give Paul the help and service he needed to carry on his great work. Matthew left his place of custom to follow the Prince of Peace and influence others to be at peace with God. How many of us would be willing to leave as much as these men left to spend our lives reconciling people to God? Some other qualifications of the peacemaker are tact, wisdom, courage, good common sense, and a willingness to give time and attention to the needs of others.

3. The Reward of the Peacemaker. First, our text says that the peacemaker shall be called the child of God. To be called a child of God simply means to be of such character that we may truthfully be called a child of God. Hence, it is equal to saying that peacemakers are children of God. They are children of God because they partake of the nature of God. God is called the God of peace. (Phil. 4: 9.) We are told that children of God partake of the nature of God. (2 Pet. 1: 4.) Since he is the God of peace and we partake of his nature we should be children of peace, that is characterized by (a) a peaceable nature, (b) given to the task of bringing others to be at peace with God and man. Next, peacemakers may be called the children of God because they are engaged in the same work as Jesus, who is the Son of God. Since Jesus is the Prince of Peace and we are engaged in carrying on his work, we would be engaged in making peace between God and man.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Abram Returns to Canaan (Gen.

13: 1-4)

*Abram went up out of Egypt.*

Abram had been in Egypt for the first time prior to the events of our lesson. He went there on account of a famine in Canaan. (Gen. 12: 10.) It was on this journey that through fear he misrepresented his relationship with Sarah. Not only his wife, but Lot also was with him on the journey. It is said that they came into the south, meaning the south portion of Canaan.

*Abram was very rich.* His riches consisted largely in cattle and sheep, though it is mentioned that he had silver and gold. Josephus says that part of his riches was acquired by teaching in Egypt. This is the first mention of silver and gold in the Bible. It implies a knowledge of the arts of mining, refining, and coining the metals.

*He went on his journey to Bethel.*

It is suggested that Abraham went back to his former location between Bethel and Ai. Bethel has many associations in scripture. It was there that Jacob saw the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and it was there that Jeroboam instituted idol worship for the northern kingdom.

*Unto the place of the altar.* Some have suggested that Abraham was sorry for his misdeeds in Egypt and that his return to the altar near Bethel was in reality to start his life anew in the promised land. We are told that he "called on the name of Jehovah," but this cannot be used to prove anything other than that he worshiped God at this altar on his return. It is significant that no mention is made of his erecting an altar while he was in Egypt.

### II. Strife and How to Settle It (Gen.

13: 5-9)

Lot also had *flocks and herds and tents*. Lot was Abraham's nephew. He was the son of Haran, who was the third son of Terah. (Gen. 11: 27-28.) Lot came from Ur of Chaldees with Abraham. Several of Abraham's kinsmen left Ur with him and went as far as Haran, where Terah died. Nahor, Abraham's brother, remained in Haran when Abraham and Lot set

out for Canaan. Lot's father died before the family left Ur of Chaldees.

*The land was not able to bear them.* Three things perhaps contributed to the inability of the land to sustain them. (1) The numerous flocks and herds of Lot and Abraham, (2) the scarcity of good pasturage, (3) and the presence of other people in the land. When Abraham pitched his tent at Shechem we are told, "the Canaanite was then in the land." (Gen. 12: 6.) Abraham and Lot could not take over all the land, nor could they select any portion of it they desired unless they were able to pay the fair market price. Our text mentions only one of these reasons and that because their substance was too great for them to dwell together. The reasonable conclusion is that they could not find a tract of land not held by a Canaanite large enough to afford pasturage and water for their flocks and herds.

*And there was strife between their herdsmen.* It is to be noticed that the strife was between the herdsmen and not between Abraham and Lot. This strife was probably due to the scarcity of water and pasturage. Abraham's herdsmen wanted the best for their master's cattle and so did Lot's herdsmen look out for Lot's prosperity. Mention is made here of the fact that both the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt in the land. This mention is made in connection with the fact that there was strife between the herdsmen of the two men. It is made in such way as to indicate that it was bad for the herdsmen of these two men to quarrel in the presence of their enemies. This might be used to teach church members to live in peace with one another because they live in the presence of and are observed by the people of the world.

*Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife.* As is to be expected, Abraham, the elder, took the lead in suggesting that peace should reign. This statement, *Let there be no strife*, could well be used as a text for a sermon to the average church. In all too many places there is strife between preacher and elders, or elders and deacons or song leaders. In all these situations someone should covet the blessedness of the peace-

maker and lead these warring individuals or factions to be as far advanced in spirituality as Abraham and do everything necessary to maintain peace among brethren.

*For we are brethren.* This is given as the reason why there should be no strife between them. There should be no strife between brethren because (a) they have the same father and partake of the same nature, (b) They are working together for the same purposes. Men cannot gain their purposes through strife. Jesus said that if a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand. No program of work or worship can be carried on to a successful conclusion unless those involved are at peace with one another, (c) Brethren should not engage in strife here because they expect to live together in the next world. Brethren who refuse to speak to each other when they meet seemingly expect to go to heaven when they die. One cannot keep from wondering how they would greet each other on the streets of glory. Let no one think that death is going to change one's whole attitude and disposition so that he will love in heaven the people he hated on earth. These strifes and divisions, and sinful hatreds and enmities must be cured here in this life if we expect to be free of them in the next world.

*If thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left.* This is the magnanimous proposition which Abraham made to Lot. Lot was allowed to choose the direction he would go, and Abraham was willing to take what was left. There is no better way of settling a strife than to allow the other fellow to have his way. We are usually afraid that we will be imposed upon if we follow this course of action. But one who has such fears forgets God's promise and providence. Much of the Sermon on the Mount is devoted to teaching such principles as are obviously in Abraham. They are the plain, unscientific rules of life which require faith in God's goodness to his children. Abraham believed that he was under the care of God and that God would provide the necessities of life regardless of the section of the country he inhabited. Paul teaches us some of these enduring principles

by saying, "Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." (Phil. 2: 3, 4.)

### III. Lot's Selfish Choice (Gen. 13:

10-12)

*Lot lifted up his eyes.* Lot was a worldly man. It is not meant that he was immoral, but that he was worldly minded; he valued material things more highly than he did spiritual things. He lifted up his eyes and beheld the fertile land. He was looking for material things, for material advantages. He had no eyes for the spiritual values nor for the dangers that lurked in the rich plain of the Jordan. Many church members are like Lot. They have no ability to see anything spiritual; they have the ability to see the time and the energy to acquire material riches, but they have neither the time nor the energy for the spiritual things of life. Lot was unconscious of his weakness, and so are people unconscious of this very weakness today. If Abraham had pointed out these dangers to Lot, Lot very likely would not have listened. Neither will people today who are thus inclined to worldliness listen when they are warned of the dangers toward which they are driving.

*Like the garden of Jehovah.* This expression is used to describe the plain in which were situated Sodom and Gomorrah. It is also said to be like the land of Egypt. This very likely is said to imply the beauty and the fertility of this land which Lot saw. The garden of Eden is known for its beauty, and the land of Egypt on either side of the Nile is known for its great fertility. This land which Lot looked upon compared with both qualifications. No wonder Lot was attracted by it.

*So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan.* Lot's choice indicates (a) selfishness. It would have been better for Lot to have offered the older man the better grazing land. Youth owes such consideration to age, and lack of such consideration is an indication of an ugly disposition, (b) Lot's choice indicates a lack of con-

cern for the welfare of others and a willingness to gain wealth by the impoverishment of others, (c) Lot's choice indicates a greater appreciation of material wealth than for good company. He advanced his worldly fortunes by trading the company of Abraham for that of the ungodly men of Sodom.

*They separated themselves from each other.* This separation does not indicate any bad feelings but simply that they got far enough from each other that there could be no friction between their herdsman. But there is a spiritual implication which may be legitimately drawn from the words. It is a sad day in the life of anyone when he separates himself from the company of the godly and pitches his tent toward the world. David praised the man that refused to walk with

the wicked or stand with sinners or to sit with the scoffers. (Psalm 1: 1.)

*The men of Sodom were wicked.* Our text goes on to say that the Sodomites were exceedingly wicked. It seems that Lot was able to live a godly life in spite of his wicked surroundings, for Peter tells us that God delivered righteous Lot who was "sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked." (2 Pet. 2: 7.) But he exposed his family to an environment with which they were not able to cope. His children became so worldly that they would not leave Sodom and his wife became so attached that she looked back in spite of God's warning. Many men today expose their families to godless, churchless environments in order to make money. Let all such be warned by Lot's experience.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Selfishness is an ugly trait. It is most unlike Christ. It is doubtful if one can become more unchristlike than is the selfish individual.

2. Material prosperity costs entirely too much when a man has to lose his family to gain it. Lot paid a fearful price for running water and green pasturage. If a man should gain the whole world and lose one child he

has been miserably cheated.

3. Abraham was rewarded for his magnanimity. Short pastures with the blessing of God are worth more than green pastures without God. Lot suffered for his selfishness, so we conclude with Peter that God knows how to reward the righteous and how to keep the unrighteous unto the day of punishment. (2 Pet. 2: 9.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Read and discuss what is said with reference to the location of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

How complete was the destruction of these cities?

What other city suffered a similar destruction?

#### Golden Text Explained

What one thing is peculiar to the beatitude of our text?

What is the business of people who practice our text?

What characteristic is essential in the peacemaker?

Name and discuss several qualifications of peacemakers.

What is the reward of the peacemaker?

Why are peacemakers called the children of God?

#### Abram Returns to Canaan

Where had Abram been and why?

Who accompanied him on this journey?

Of what did Abram's riches consist?

What metals are first mentioned in our lesson?

To what place did Abram return and what

later characters are mentioned in connection with it?

Did Abram erect an altar in Egypt?

#### Strife and How to Settle It

How was Lot related to Abraham?

Name some of Abraham's relatives who left Ur of Chaldees with him.

What three things contributed to the inability of the land to sustain Abraham and Lot?

Was there strife between Abraham and Lot?

Why is the presence of the Canaanites mentioned in this connection?

What good exhortation did Abraham give Lot?

Why did Abraham say there should be no strife?

What magnanimous offer did Abraham make?

#### Lot's Selfish Choice

In what sense was Lot worldly minded?

In what respects are people like Lot?

How is the plain of the Jordan described?

Name and discuss three things which Lot's choice indicates.

Who suffered more by this separation, Abraham or Lot?

What is said of the people of Sodom?

How may people today be guilty of the folly of Lot?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson X—March 9, 1952

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

The Lesson Text

Gen. 22: 1-13

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even I-saac, and get thee into the land of Mo-ri'-ah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and I-saac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon I-saac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And I-saac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And

he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?

8 And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound I-saac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of Je-ho'-vah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac.*” (Heb. 11: 17a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 11: 17-19.

Daily Bible Readings

- March 3. M.....Abraham Gives Up Ishmael (Gen. 21: 8-21)
- March 4. T.....Stephen Tells of Abraham (Acts 7: 1-10)
- March 5. W.....Walking in Abraham's Faith (Rom. 4: 1-22)
- March 6. T.....The Sons of Abraham (Gal. 3: 1-14)
- March 7. F.....Inheriting Through Endurance (Heb. 6: 13-20)
- March 8. S.....Abraham's Faith Worked (James 2: 14-26)
- March 9. S.....We Are Children of Promise (Gal. 4: 21-31)

TIME.—1872 B.C.

PLACES.—Beersheba and Land of Moriah.

PERSONS.—Abraham and Isaac.

Introduction

Men are known to **posterity** **lor** one or more outstanding **traits** **of** character. Abraham **is known for**

his faith. However, we should not conclude that he was perfect even with respect to his faith. There **are**

times when he made mistakes **which** showed a weakness in his faith, but when we consider the number of tests of his faith and the long period of time involved we are impressed with the strength and depth of his trust in God. The first test of his faith came in his separation from all of his kindred. He was told to leave Ur of the Chaldees to go to some unknown land. His father, brother, and nephew accompanied him on the first leg of the journey. This may not have been displeasing to God, but he certainly had not separated himself from all his family. Terah died **in** Haran and Nahor chose to remain, but Lot accompanied Abraham into Canaan. Still Abraham was not entirely separated from his kindred. When their herds became too great for the land to bear, Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom and Abraham took to the hill country. At that time Abraham was completely separated from his family. His faith in the promise of God and his trust in God to take care of him and fulfill his promises enabled Abraham to leave his family and live alone among the Canaanites.

Another indication of the greatness of Abraham's faith is the fact that he clung to the promises of God through a long period of childlessness. God had promised to make a great nation of his posterity, yet he had no children. This weighed heavily on Sarah's mind and she attempted to help God fulfill his promises by giving her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham. Whether Abraham considered Ishmael the heir through whom God was to bless him we cannot know. If he did not, there was a period of nearly twenty-five years after the first promise was made before he had any concrete evidence that the promise would be fulfilled. (Acts 7: 2-5; Gen. 12: 1-4.)

The third test of Abraham's faith is in his lifelong pilgrimage in the Land of Promise "as in a land not his own." (Heb. 11: 8-10.) The fact that Abraham believed that God would give the land to his seed, though Abraham lived and died a stranger in the land, is proof that Abraham accepted the word of God as true with very little *concrete* evidence. He believed because of God's word and not because God made him owner of any of the land.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Abraham Believed God in Spite of His Natural Inclinations.** Our text has to do with Abraham's offering of Isaac. When God told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice, every human and paternal emotion within him must have been stirred. The deed was contrary to every worthy human emotion. The burning of human flesh is repulsive to any good man, but the burning of one's only son is much more repulsive. Hence when Abraham responded immediately to stab and burn his son we see faith in God triumphing over his human and paternal emotions.

**2. Abraham Obeyed God in Spite of His Understanding of God's Promise.** Abraham believed that Isaac was the child of promise. God had told him that the world was to be blessed through Isaac. This command to offer Isaac in sacrifice seemed contrary to everything God had said with reference to him. Abraham might easily have questioned the commandment since obedience to the commandment

seemed to make impossible the fulfillment of the promise. How God made known that Abraham was to offer Isaac is not known. If the commandment was conveyed through an angel, as on some other occasions, Abraham could well have questioned the authenticity of the command. But his faith was such that he asked no questions and made no arguments either to delay or avoid the unpleasant duty. In this connection it is interesting to note that Abraham solved the problem as to how God would fulfill his promise to make a great nation out of Isaac in spite of his death and sacrifice. Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 11: 19.) But as usual, man's opinion about how God will or should operate is wrong.

**3. Abraham Was Schooled for This Ordeal.** God never brings a trial upon **man** which he is unable to bear. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) Former experiences in the life of Abraham strengthened his faith so that he was able to stand this

test. Sarah's conception, in spite of her lifelong barrenness and her old age, was sufficient to convince Abraham that God was able to keep his promises. Paul uses these very difficulties to prove the strength of Abraham's faith. (Rom. 4: 16-22.)

**4. Abraham's Faith Was Demonstrated by His Works.** In Rom. 4, Paul emphasizes faith as the condition of Abraham's justification. James emphasizes work as the condition of Abraham's justification. (James 2: 20-24.) Some have concluded that James and Paul held contrary views

concerning justification. Instead of being contrary they are complementary. Paul emphasizes faith, yet he speaks of walking in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4: 12), which implies obedience. James emphasizes works which proves one's faith. "Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." (James 2: 22-24.)

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. The Command Issued (Gen. 22: 1-4)

God *would prove Abraham*. The Authorized Version uses the word *tempt*. James says that God does not tempt any man. (James 1: 13.) The word *tempt* sometimes means to induce to sin. God never induces or encourages one to sin. The word *tempt* is also used in the sense of trying or proving, and God often proves his children. Our lesson has to do with the proving of the faith of Abraham.

*Take now thy son, thine only son.* Isaac is called Abraham's only son because he is the only son by Sarah. God seems not to have recognized Ishmael as a part of the covenant of promise. The order of words in this command is important. He is first called *thy son*; next, by way of emphasis, *thine only son*; and then it is said, *whom thou lovest*; and last, that name which brought laughter to Sarah and joy to Abraham is used, *even Isaac*. These terms no doubt suggest the thoughts which ran through Abraham's mind when the command was given. He would naturally rebel at the thought of offering his son. Then when he reflected that this was the only son of Sarah, the offering would be more difficult. And when he thought of his love for Isaac, the order to sacrifice him was all the more difficult. Either of these considerations might have been urged as a reason for not obeying the command, but his faith did not waver in spite of these difficulties.

*Get thee into the land of Moriah.* The location of Moriah is not certain,

but is supposed to be in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Some have thought that the place of Isaac's offering was the hill of Calvary where God's only Son was sacrificed some centuries later.

*Offer him there for a burnt offering.* This seems to be the greatest trial to which Abraham's faith could be subjected. He had left his kindred and homeland; he had separated from Lot, but now he is called on not only to give up his own flesh, but to destroy his own child. This not only tested his faith in God's promise and his ability to fulfill that promise, but it was a test of his love. In this he proved that he loved God more than his own son.

*Abraham rose early in the morning.* His early start indicates his willingness and readiness to obey God. It also suggests that Abraham put obedience to God first. Many of us could have found enough of our own affairs needing attention to have kept us busy until late in the day.

*On the third day.* Abraham lived at Beersheba, which is more than forty miles from Jerusalem. He traveled two full days and a part of the third. This added to the strength of the trial. For three days he walked along with Isaac contemplating his grim duty. There was plenty of time for reconsideration, the weakening of his faith, and returning home in disobedience. But Abraham's faith wavered not at difficulties, but in the language of Paul "waxed strong . . . being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Rom. 4: 20, 21.)

## II. Preparation for the Offering- (Gen. 22: 5-9)

*We will worship.* Abraham was assisted on this journey by some of his servants. At a spot "afar off" Abraham left these servants saying that he and the lad would go farther to worship. We may presume (1) that Abraham wishes to be alone with Isaac in this ordeal. (2) It is possible that Abraham knew that his servants did not share his faith in God and that they might seek to prevent the offering by force. And for these reasons the servants were left behind. Notice that Abraham calls this experience worship. Though grim and terrible in its nature, to Abraham it was an act of worship because God commanded it.

*And come again to you..* Here Abraham shows his faith. He said *We will go*, and *we will worship*, and *we will come again to you.* Abraham expected confidently to bring Isaac back with him, though he was mistaken in his opinion as to how he would be able to do so.

*The wood laid upon Isaac.* Perhaps bearing the wood for this offering was not intended as a type of Christ's bearing his cross, but it certainly reminds us of the statement that Jesus "went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha." (John 19: 17.)

*Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?* As Isaac walked with his father toward the place of sacrifice, he asked this question. From this we know that Abraham had not explained the matter to Isaac. We may well imagine that he had not said anything about it to Sarah that he might save her the sorrow and anxiety she would have borne through those days of their absence. This is another indication of the strength, of Abraham's faith. He confidently expected to bring Isaac back to Sarah.

*God will provide himself the lamb.* This can hardly mean that Abraham expected God to provide an animal in the place of Isaac since we are told that Abraham expected God to raise Isaac from the dead. Yet it is difficult to see what Abraham understood by his own statement. It is generally accepted as prophetic with reference

to Christ as the lamb for the sin of the world.

*Abraham built the altar.* Altars were little less than a pile of stones on which wood might be arranged for the burning of an offering. In later times twelve stones were used because of the number of the tribes of Israel.

*Bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar.* According to accepted chronology, Isaac was about twenty-four years old at this time. Since his father was more than 120 years old, Isaac could easily have prevented the sacrifice. This emphasizes the submission of Isaac as well as the piety of Abraham. Certainly Abraham must have lived a definitely religious life before his son. Otherwise Isaac would not have been willing to cooperate with his father in this action of worship. Our curiosity makes us wonder what Abraham said to Isaac between the events of verse eight and this statement in verse nine. Obviously, Isaac knew nothing of his part in this worship when he asked about the burnt offering. Between the time he asked that question and the time Abraham bound him, some explanation had to be made. His consent had to be gained. Here again we wonder if Isaac's submission is intended to be a type of the submission of Jesus to his heavenly Father in becoming a sacrifice.

## III. Offering a Test of Faith (Gen. 22: 10-13)

*Abraham stretched forth his hand.* There seems to have been no hesitation on the part of Abraham. The man who would rise early in the morning to start on such a mission would not hesitate to execute the command when the sacrifice lay bound upon the altar.

*The angel of Jehovah called unto him.* This expression *angel of Jehovah* is frequently used of the second person of the Godhead. Undoubtedly it is so used here. In verses 1 and 2 of our text, it is said that God appeared to Abraham and sent him on this mission. In verse 12 this angel of Jehovah said, "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." From a comparison of these verses, it will be seen that God commanded Abraham to offer his son to him, and

that the angel of Jehovah spoke of Isaac as being offered to him. Hence, we conclude that this angel of Jehovah was none other than God in another form. Jacob saw Jehovah at Bethel when he had the vision of the ladder (Gen. 28: 13-16) and he wrestled with God at Peniel (Gen. 32: 22-32). But Jacob spoke of this being as the angel in Gen. 48: 16, and Hosea says he prevailed over the angel which he found at Bethel "even Jehovah, the God of hosts; Jehovah is his memorial name." (Hos. 12: 4, 5.) So we may safely conclude that the second person of the Godhead is speaking to Abraham on the occasion in our lesson.

**Now I know that thou fearest God.** This is accommodative language. God knows all things from the beginning. Certainly he knew that Abraham would stand his test, for all the purposes even down through the gospel age were based upon Abraham's faithfulness. But from this we may learn that obedience to every commandment regardless of how difficult it is manifests a healthy fear of God. This is one quality of faith sorely needed today. People need to fear God. Paul said one reason why the Jewish world apostatized was "there is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. 3: 18.) Godly fear will cause people to submit to God's way instead of doing things their own way. When people refuse to be buried in baptism

and sprinkle water on the head instead, they demonstrate a lack of that godly fear which characterized Abraham.

**Thou hast not withheld thy son.** The fact that Abraham was willing to offer his only son, the dearest possession he had, is said by the Lord to be a demonstration of his godly fear. If we make minor sacrifices, giving things of little value or of no further use to us, we cannot say they are proof of genuine love and godly fear. Only when we give our best do we demonstrate our love for God.

**Abraham beheld a ram caught by his horns.** This is what Jehovah provided for the sacrifice, though there is no evidence that Abraham believed such would be done. Jehovah's provision was a substitute for Isaac. Perhaps this is meant to suggest that Jehovah provided a substitute for man generally in the gift of his Son. The joy that must have filled Isaac's heart when he saw this ram take his place on the altar is little in comparison with that which should fill our hearts when we look to Calvary and see Jesus dying in our place. The ram took Isaac's place in temporal death; Jesus suffered in our place to save us from eternal destruction. Man demonstrates himself to be an ungrateful wretch who refuses to acknowledge his gratitude for such a sacrifice.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Human sacrifice in heathen religions was fairly common in Abraham's day as well as in later Jewish history. This sacrifice on the part of Abraham was a demonstration that the followers of God would make as great sacrifice as the devotees of heathen religions. Do churches of Christ generally make as great sacrifice for the spread of the gospel as

denominational people make for the spread of their doctrines?

2. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." (John 8: 56.) This is generally supposed to be a reference to the sacrifice of Isaac. In the provision of the ram to take the place of Isaac Abraham saw typically and prophetically the Son of God given as a substitute for sinners.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What is the outstanding characteristic of Abraham?  
What was the first test of Abraham's faith?  
When was Abraham completely separated from his family?

What connection is there between Abraham's childlessness and his faith?  
What is the third test of Abraham's faith?

#### Golden Text Explained

Abraham believed God in spite of what?  
Abraham obeyed in spite of his understanding of what?  
How did Abraham think God would keep his promise with reference to Isaac?

How was Abraham schooled for this ordeal?

How was Abraham's faith demonstrated? Show the harmony between James and Paul on faith and work of Abraham.

**The Command Issued**

What is the meaning of the word tempt?

In what sense was Isaac Abraham's only son?

What reasons might Abraham have urged for not offering Isaac?

In what place was the offering to be made? and where was it?

The offering of Isaac tested Abraham in what two ways?

What act of Abraham shows his prompt obedience?

How far did Abraham live from the place of offering?

Would this distance add to the strength of the trial?

**Preparation for the Offering**

For what reasons were Abraham's servants left behind?

What statement of Abraham to his servants indicated his great faith?

Who carried the wood for the sacrifice and what later incident was suggested by it?

What significant question did Isaac ask his father?

About how old was Isaac at this time?

What suggests the submission of Isaac?

Of what is the submission of Isaac probably prophetic?

**Offering a Test of Faith**

Who prevented the death of Isaac?

What do you know of this angel of Jehovah?

Was it necessary for Abraham to go through this ordeal in order that God might know his faithfulness?

How did Abraham show that he feared God?

Name some religious practices which indicate a lack of Godly fear in people today.

What was offered instead of Isaac?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

**Lesson XI—March 16, 1952**

**ISAAC AND REBEKAH**

**The Lesson Text**

Gen. 24: 1-4, 10, 11, 23-25, 57, 58, 66, 67

1 And Abraham was old, *and* well stricken in age: and Je-ho'-vah had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his servant, the elder of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by Je-ho'-vah, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Ca'-naan-ites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son I-saac.

10 And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed, having all goodly things of his master's in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mes-o-po-ta'-mi-a, unto the city of Na'-hor.

11 And he made the camels to kneel down without the city by the well of water at the time of evening,

the time that women go out to draw water.

23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee. Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Be-thu'-el the son of Mil'-cah, whom she bare unto Na'-hor.

25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Re-bek'-ah, and said unto her, Will thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

66 And the servant told I'-saac all the things that he had done.

67 And I'-saac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Re-bek'-ah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and I'-saac was comforted after his mother's death.

*Golden Text.—"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of Jehovah"* (Prov. 18: 22.)

*Devotional Reading.*—Gen. 24: 1-27.

### Daily Bible Readings

March 10. M.....	The Servant in Rebekah's House (Gen. 24: 28-49)
March 11. T.....	Rebekah Leaves Her Home (Gen. 24: 50-60)
March 12. W.....	Rebekah Meets Isaac (Gen. 24: 61-67)
March 13. T.....	Isaac's Sons Are Born (Gen. 25: 19-26)
March 14. F.....	Isaac a Peaceful Man (Gen. 26: 18-33)
March 15. S.....	Isaac Deceived by Jacob (Gen. 27: 1-29)
March 16. S.....	Isaac Sends Jacob for a Wife (Gen. 28: 1-22)

TIME.—1856 B.C.

PLACES.—Hebron and Haran.

PERSONS.—Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, and her family.

### Introduction

Isaac was the son of Abraham's old age. It has been said that Isaac obeyed the Sermon on the Mount hundreds of years before it was preached. "He was a lover of quiet ... he was not a stuffed specimen of a content, sleek animal. He was a man of industry, as his successful *farming and ever-growing* riches testify . . . the gentler virtues—and these we take to have been rare in that age—shine with a sweet, pleasing and steady light, like the stars in the heavens ... he steadily maintains the worship of Jehovah, honors the memory of his father, cherishes great affection for his mother, is true to his wife, and works righteousness day by day." (Errett.)

1. He was a good son. Abraham was out with his herds much of the time, so Isaac grew up much in company with his mother. He gave no thought to marriage as long as she lived and refused to be comforted for some time after her death. A boy's character may well be measured by his attitude toward his mother. He was also obedient to his father. No greater evidence of this could be given than his immediate and com-

plete submission to his father's wishes in connection with his sacrifice. Isaac was at least twenty years of age when Abraham bound him upon the altar. He could easily have prevented his aged father from making the sacrifice. In his submission he showed great respect for his father's religion. This is also an indication of his good character.

2. Isaac was a good citizen. He was a man of peace and refused to allow the rough treatment of his neighbors to cause him to fight back. Selfish neighbors took one well after another from him. His kindness and gentleness outlasted the violence of his neighbors. In this matter he practiced the doctrines of peace taught by Jesus.

3. Isaac was a good husband and father. He refused to marry a woman of Canaan and at his father's suggestion sent back to Haran for his wife, Rebekah. His father had concubines, but Isaac never loved but one woman. Other men of his time and some of the prominent in the Bible had affairs with other women, but if Isaac ever shared his love for Rebekah, nothing is said about it.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **How to Find a Wife.** There are two things that stand out prominently in the selection of a wife for Isaac. The first is that she must not be a woman of Canaan, but one of Abraham's kindred. While there were special reasons for being careful of the family connections in this case, it is always good for young people to give consideration to the family of one they are considering for marriage. It is not best for young people of extreme social circles to marry.

There is no intimation in this that a poor child is not as good as one whose parents are rich. It is not a matter of one's standing before God, or of his value to society, but a girl who has been reared in the lap of luxury is not likely to be contented to live and rear a family in poverty. A young man of learning and refinement will not likely be happy with a girl who has had no opportunities for education and for learning some of the niceties of social life. Hence, se-

rious consideration should be given to the family. Opportunities for getting acquainted should be provided before the case is developed too far. Another consideration should be that of religion. Christian boys and girls should not marry out of the church. Whether such marriages are a violation of a positive commandment is a matter of question. But to Bible students and close observers, there can be no question about the wisdom or advisability of such unions.

2. **Why Is Finding a Wife Good?** First, God said it is not good for man to be alone. (Gen. 2: 18.) Man is a social being and needs the companionship of woman. Next, a man finds a good thing when he finds a wife because he needs a helper in building a home. Seeing that it was not good for man to be alone, God gave him woman as his companion and then gave them the command to build a home and replenish the earth. And next, man finds good in his wife as a helper in his spiritual life and activities. The intimate companionship of a Christian man with a Christian woman creates an atmosphere in which spirituality thrives. The peace and contentment of a Christian home is fertile soil for the growth of a spiritual character. Lack of companion-

ship between a husband and a wife makes spiritual growth difficult if not impossible. This is another reason why Christians should not marry people who are not Christians. There can be no spirituality in companionship with a child of Satan. Hence, one who has not a Christian wife cannot say he has found a good thing.

3. **The Favor of Jehovah.** Our text says the man who has found a good wife "obtaineth favor of Jehovah." First, this is true because she is looked upon as a gift from God. Eve was no more a gift to Adam than a Christian woman is to a Christian man today. We should make the selection of a mate a matter of prayer. When one has prayed fervently and followed God's teachings with reference to the selection of a mate, he should feel that the mate is an answer to his prayer. This being true, she is in every sense of the word a gift from God. Next, a Christian wife is a favor of Jehovah because her help is an expression of God's favor. God made woman to be man's helper in many ways, and every assistance which she renders is an assistance from God through her. So when man obtains a wife in harmony with God's will, he enjoys the favor of God through life.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Proper Bride Sought (Gen. 24:

1-4, 10, 11)

Abraham *was old*. Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah (Gen. 25: 20), so Abraham was 140 years old at this time.

*Jehovah had blessed Abraham.* Our text says Abraham had been blessed in all things. He was a very wealthy man. He had enough servants to engage several petty kings in battle and come off victorious. (Gen. 14: 14.)

*The elder of his house.* This perhaps refers to Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15: 2), who would have been heir to Abraham's possessions if he had died childless.

*Put thy hand under my thigh.* This ceremony connected with oaths is mentioned only here and in Gen. 47: 20 where Jacob had Joseph to swear in such fashion. The significance of putting the hand under the thigh is

uncertain. Calvin and others interpreted it as symbolizing lordship or authority. Luther and others have regarded the thigh as a symbol of the source of posterity and so the servant is pictured as swearing by Abraham's posterity that he would be faithful in view of that posterity. (See Pulpit Commentary.)

*Thou wilt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.* The reasons for this are: (1) The difference in religion. Abraham was monotheistic in his religion while the Canaanites were polytheistic. Abraham had been given the task of building a nation for God. He knew this could not be done if he mixed believers in the true God with worshippers of idols. (2) The ideals of Isaac were not harmonious with those of heathen families in Canaan. Isaac was reared in a devoutly religious atmosphere. To marry a woman who was an idolater and with

the low ideals of the Canaanites would have been to defeat the purposes of God. (3) Isaac was born of a free woman. The Canaanites, though not now in slavery, were condemned and doomed to such position. The land on which they lived was to be given to Abraham's seed. The descendants of the Canaanites were to be driven out or enslaved. For Isaac to marry a woman of Canaan would have meant to mix free men with slaves.

*Thou shalt go unto my country.* Though Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, he lived several years in Haran. Ur was in the southern part of Mesopotamia, while Haran was in the northern part. Verse 10 says that they went to the city of Nahor for Isaac's wife. From Gen. 11: 27-32 we learn that Nahor, in company with his brother Abraham, went with Terah their father unto Haran where they lived until the death of Terah. At that time Abraham moved down into Canaan while Nahor continued to live in Haran. Hence, the city of Nahor is Haran.

*The servant took ten camels.* It seems that the servant determined what should be taken as presents for the bride. Our text says that he had "all goodly things of his master's in his hand." The margin reads, "for all the goods of his master were in his hand." These ten camels were loaded with food for the journey and presents for the bride.

*The time that women go out to draw water.* When the servant reached Haran he went to the city well. Here he knew he would contact someone who could tell him where to find Abraham's people. The statement that women came out to draw water suggests the customs of the day; women did the carrying of the water.

## II. The Proper Bride Contacted (Gen. 24: 23-25)

*Whose daughter art thou?* The servant had prayed that God would show kindness to his master and give him good speed on his mission. He asked that the Lord would give him a signal to show which girl was to be Isaac's bride. This signal was the courtesy of giving the servant a drink and drawing water for his camels. When the servant asked Rebekah for

a drink she generously offered not only to give him a drink, but to draw water for his camels. When Rebekah did this the servant knew that his mission was about accomplished. He took a golden ring and two bracelets as the first gifts. From verse 47 we learn that ring was not for her finger, but for her nose. The orientals are very fond of rings and bracelets. Often, the whole arm from the wrist to the shoulder is practically covered. Adam Clarke says that there are seven different parts of the body mentioned in scripture as being ornamented, such as the forehead, the nose, the ears, the arms, fingers, neck, and ankles. The servant not only asked Rebekah whose daughter she was, but if there was room in her father's house for him and his associates to lodge.

*I am the daughter of Bethuel.* This Bethuel is said to be the son of Milcah and Nahor. Nahor was Abraham's brother. Haran was also a brother to Abraham and Nahor; Milcah was the daughter of Haran. Hence Nahor married his niece. To this union eight sons were born. Bethuel was the youngest of the eight. (Gen. 11: 27-29; ss: 20-24.) Since Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, he and Isaac were first cousins, so Isaac and Rebekah were second cousins.

*We have both straw and provender enough.* Eastern hospitality is evident here. The daughter did not have to return home to see whether this stranger could lodge with the family. She was able to give him assurance that he would be welcome in her father's house. Upon being given this assurance, the servant bowed his head and worshiped Jehovah. In the midst of business the servant takes time to thank Jehovah for his kindness. This worship consisted of a prayer of thanksgiving that Jehovah had led him to the house of his master's brethren where he had every right to expect that he would find the bride for Isaac.

## III. Consent of the Bride and Marriage (Gen. 24: 57, 58, 66, 67)

*We will call the damsel.* It is necessary to refer to the preceding verses for the connection. Upon leaving the well, Rebekah ran home to show her parents the ring and bracelets the

servant had given her. Laban, Rebekah's brother, went to the well to bring the servant to the house. Food was set before him, but he refused to eat until he had told his business. He then related how Jehovah had abundantly blessed his master, saying that God "hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and menservants and maid-servants, and camels and asses." He told of the birth of Isaac, of the oath he had sworn to Abraham to take a wife for Isaac from among their kindred. He told them why he was sure that Rebekah was the Lord's choice for Isaac since she had done what he requested the prospective bride should do when he met her at the well. The servant pressed Bethuel for an immediate answer as to whether they would consider allowing him to take Rebekah. When Laban and Bethuel had talked the matter over, they agreed that "the thing proceedeth from Jehovah: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as Jehovah hath spoken." The servant then brought jewels of silver and gold and changes of raiment for Rebekah. He also gave gifts to her brother and her parents. The next morning the servant asked to be sent away to take Rebekah to his master. But her parents asked that she be allowed to stay a few days longer. However, the servant insisted that since God had so prospered him in his mission he must not delay his return. It was at this point that they said we will call the damsel to inquire at her mouth.

*Wilt thou go with this man?* This is the question which her parents put to Rebekah. The point of the question was not whether she was willing to go to be Isaac's wife, but whether she would go immediately as the servant insisted. Her answer was, "I will go." Sharing the opinion of her parents and Laban that this might proceed from the Lord, she was willing to go immediately. Had she always been as anxious to do the will of the Lord, she would have avoided some sorrow and would not have been known to posterity as a partial mother and a deceiver of her husband.

*The servant told Isaac all.* When

the servant and Rebekah reached Canaan, they found Isaac in the field. Isaac had come from Be-er-la-hai-roi. This is the place where Hagar was found when she fled from Sarai because Sarai had dealt severely with her. The word means "the well of the living one who seeth me." (Gen. 16: 14.) This is not far from Kadesh, from which place the twelve spies were sent into Canaan. (Deut. 1: 19-24.) This was the extreme southern point of the grazing locations of Abraham and Isaac. Isaac had recently been in this section but returned no doubt expecting the servant to come soon.

*Isaac brought her into his mother's tent.* There seems to have been little ceremony. Perhaps the only necessary ceremony for marriage was the solemn acceptance one of the other in the presence of competent witnesses. In this instance, the servant and his attendants would be sufficient. Whether Abraham was present on this occasion, we cannot know.

*And he loved her.* The truth of this statement Isaac demonstrated over and over through the balance of his life. Her self-sacrifice in leaving her family and friends to come to a strange land to marry a man she had never seen simply because she believed it to be the Lord's will deserved such a reward as the love of Isaac.

*Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.* Sarah died about four years before Isaac's marriage. The fact that Isaac found no comfort during that time emphasizes his love for his mother. This is an indication of the good character of Isaac; it also indicates the fact that man is not complete in himself but needs the love and companionship of woman. Many a young man since has learned to transfer his affection from his mother to his wife. Some have made the mistake of refusing to make that transfer, embarrassing and aggravating their wives by refusing to cut loose from mother's apron strings. It is no more necessary for a wife to break away from her parents for the sake of her husband than it is for the man to break loose from his parents for the sake of his wife. When each has given up parents, it follows that they find comfort in each other such as Isaac found in Rebekah.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The success of Isaac's marriage contrasted with the failure of Solomon's marriages will demonstrate the wisdom of Isaac in choosing a wife from his own people and the folly of Solomon in choosing strange women. Solomon made marriages for political and financial reasons. Those who marry for money and position instead of following scriptural principles need not expect to enjoy the blessings of God.

2. It is said that Isaac loved Rebekah and that Rebekah comforted Isaac. Paul teaches husbands to love their wives as Jesus loved the church. (Eph. 5: 25.) Husbands who love their wives after this fashion may reasonably expect to find them a comfort. Husbands who consider their wives merely a physical and temporal convenience do not deserve and need not expect the comfort which a Christian companion can give.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, places, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

To what country did the servant go for Isaac's wife?  
With what was the servant equipped for seeking a wife?

#### Introduction

Isaac lived by the principles of what sermon before it was preached?  
Discuss Isaac's character as a son.  
What of his character as a citizen?  
What do you know of Isaac as a husband and father?

#### The Proper Bride Contacted

For what did Abraham's servant pray?  
What do you know of ornaments worn by the orientals of that time?  
How was Rebekah related to Isaac?  
How was hospitality shown to Abraham's servant?  
What act on the part of Abraham's servant shows his deep piety?

#### Golden Text Explained

What was the first consideration in a wife for Isaac?  
Discuss this principle as it applies to young people today.  
What was the second consideration and its present day application?  
Give several reasons why God says woman is good for man.  
Give two reasons why a good wife is a favor from Jehovah.

#### Consent of the Bride and Marriage

What shows the diligence of Abraham's servant in accomplishing his business?  
Who was Laban, and what right did he have to determine whether Rebekah should marry?  
On what ground did they finally decide to allow Rebekah to go immediately?  
Where was Isaac when Rebekah first saw him?  
What do you know of the marriage ceremony?  
How long had Sarah been dead, and what of Isaac's mental disposition during that time?  
What is necessary for a husband or a wife to do in order to find comfort in the spouse?  
What is there of interest in the Topics for Discussion?

#### The Proper Bride Sought

How old was Abraham at the birth of Isaac?  
How old was Isaac at the time of his marriage?  
What is said of the wealth of Abraham?  
Who was the elder in Abraham's house?  
In what way was the servant required to make oath to Abraham?  
Give three reasons why Isaac was not to marry a Canaanite.

## Lesson XII—March 23, 1952

### JACOB AND ESAU

#### The Lesson Text

Gen. 27: 18-32

18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am E'-sau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

20 And I'-saac said unto his son,

How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because Je-ho-vah thy God sent me good speed.

21 And I'-saac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son E'-sau or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto

I-saac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of E'-sau.

23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother E'-sau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, Art thou my very son E'-sau? And he said, I am.

25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father I'saac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Je-ho'-vah hath blessed:

28 And God give thee of the dew of heaven,

And of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and new wine:

29 Let peoples serve thee, And nations bow down to thee: Be lord over thy brethren, And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: Cursed be every one that curseth thee, And blessed be every one that blesseth thee.

30 And it came to pass, as soon as I'-saac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of i'-saac his father, that E'-sau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he also made savory food, and brought it unto his father; and he said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32 And i'-saac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, E'-sau.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another”(Eph. 4: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 27: 1-17.

Daily Bible Readings

- March 17. M..... Esau Sells Birthright (Gen. 25: 27-34)
March 18. T..... Jacob Bargains for Rachel (Gen. 29: 1-20)
March 19. W..... Laban Deceives Jacob (Gen. 29: 21-35)
March 20. T..... Jacob Fears to Meet Esau (Gen. 32: 1-21)
March 21. F..... Jacob Wrestles with God (Gen. 32: 22-32)
March 22. S..... Jacob Meets Esau (Gen. 33: 1-20)
March 23. S..... Esau Leaves Canaan (Gen. 36: 1-8)

TIME.—1779 B.C.
PLACE.—Beersheba.
PERSONS.—Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau.

Introduction

According to the accepted chronology, Jacob and Esau were born 1905 B. C. At the time Esau sold his birthright, they were about thirty-one years of age. The record says, "Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents." (Gen. 25: 27.) "The key of Esau's character is found in the epistle to the Hebrews, where he is styled 'a profane person'—that is, of low order of thoughts and desires, destitute of spiritual affections and aims. He was irreligious; his life was largely one of animal excitement and enjoyment . . .

present good, present enjoyment was worth more to him than all besides; hence the ease with which he sold his birthright—which had no value except in the distant future, and then a religious value chiefly—for a mess of pottage to make him happy in the present hour." (Errett.) When we first meet Jacob, we see a man of self-sufficiency and selfish ambition. He had a deep appreciation of things spiritual, but his method of obtaining these spiritual values displays his selfishness. "There is such a thing as divorcing religion from morals; and in Jacob's case his religious faith

seems to have had but little control of his conduct," but the experiences Jacob had on his way to Padan-aram and back made an altogether different character of him. In his early life we read of sharp bargains and deceit, but after his struggle with the angel at Peniel (Gen. 32: 22-32), we read of altars erected to God, of family worship, of confession of sin and unworthiness, and of mercy sought through sacrifice.

The date of the events of our lesson is given as 1779 B.C. which would

make Jacob and Esau fifty-seven years of age. We are prone to think of the two as being mere boys when the birthright was exchanged and when the blessing was stolen. Esau was already married at the time of our lesson. By some it is thought that Jacob was seventy-seven when he left Canaan and that he spent only twenty years in Padan-aram. Those who are interested in a further study of this point should read Adam Clarke's Commentary, Volume 1, page 197.

### Golden Text Explained

**1 Putting-Away Falsehood.** Jacob is a good example of putting away falsehood. He was a deceiver in the early part of his life. His name means "supplanter," and Esau complained that Jacob had supplanted him two times. But upon Jacob's return from Padan-aram, he had seen the folly and the sinfulness of such deception and had put away falsehoods. In recognition of this change, his name was changed by the Lord from "supplanter" to Israel—"a prince with God." Falsehood is among the things which God hateth.

There are six things which Jehovah hateth;

Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him:

Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,  
And hands that shed innocent blood;

A heart that deviseth wicked purposes,

Feet that are swift in running to mischief,

A false witness that uttereth lies,  
And he that soweth discord among brethren.

(Prov. 6: 16-19.)

And again Solomon says that "lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are his delight." (Prov. 12: 22.) The attitude of God toward this sin may be seen (1) by the fact that one out of the ten commandments is directed against falsehood—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Ex. 20: 16.) (2) In the story of God's dealing with Ananias and Sapphira we have an indication of God's attitude toward falsehood in this dispensation. (Acts 5: 1-11.) If the Lord

were to punish sins as swiftly today as he did in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, there would either be a lot less people in the world or less sin. The fact, however, that the execution of sentence against sin is delayed should not be interpreted to mean that it will not surely be executed. God will not forget such sins in the judgment. (3) Another indication of the Lord's attitude toward falsehood is the fact that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21: 8.) In this verse liars are associated with murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, and idolaters. When tempted to use the truth recklessly, we should think of this classification and of the consequences visited upon all liars. (4) Another indication of God's attitude toward this sin is seen in the source of falsehood. Jesus said of Satan, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof." (John 8: 44b.) Since Satan is the father of lies, those who indulge in falsehoods are the servants or children of Satan. Hence, we ought to put away falsehood.

**2. Speaking the Truth.** Paul lays this duty upon each one of us. God is the source of truth as Satan is the source of falsehood. When we speak the truth, we are speaking that which is of God, and to that extent render him service. Sometimes it is difficult to speak the truth, for it may bring persecution or ridicule, but these are only tests of our submission to God and our willingness to be like him in spite of the consequences. Paul says, "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new

man." (Col. 3: 9, 10.) Here we are told not to lie because we have put on the new man. Lying is consistent with the old manner of life in Satan's kingdom, but lying is wholly inconsistent with our new relationship. In our text Paul says we are to speak the truth because we are

members one of another. One member of the body should not deceive or harm in any way another member of the same body. For one member of Christ's body to lie to another member would be like one hand working against the other hand in the physical body.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. The Deception (Gen. 27: 18-22)

*Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born.* The student should review the first seventeen verses of this chapter, for in these verses we learn that Isaac had instructed Esau to prepare his favorite food so that he might eat and give Esau his blessing. When Rebekah heard Isaac giving such instruction to Esau, she told Jacob to bring her meat so she might cook it before Esau had time to return. She then instructed Jacob to lie to his father in order to secure the blessing. Jacob feared that his father might detect his voice and demand proof that he was Esau. Since Esau was a hairy man, it was necessary for Jacob to put the skins of kids of the goats upon his hands and neck. It is difficult to understand how a mother could teach her son to practice such deception and equally difficult to understand how she could take advantage of her aged husband. Jacob lived to see the folly of such conduct as well as to suffer from such conduct on the part of others.

*How is it that thou hast found it so quickly.* Rebekah lost no time in preparing the food with which Jacob was to deceive his father. She was bent upon seeing that her favorite son got the blessing. One of the greatest mistakes we can find in the life of Isaac in connection with his family affairs was that he showed partiality to Esau. Rebekah was equally partial to Jacob. No doubt she thought she was helping to fulfill the prediction made at the birth of her sons concerning their future when Jehovah said, "The elder shall serve the younger." But God does not need deceitful activities to assist in the fulfillment of his predictions. Sarah thought she was helping to fulfill a promise when she gave Hagar to Abraham as his wife, but this only complicated matters. How Jacob would have received the blessing we

do not know, but we may be sure that such deception as was practiced by Rebekah was not part of God's plan. God's purposes were worked out in spite of the human errors connected therewith.

*The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.* In this we see the care which Isaac exercised in bestowing his blessing. When Jacob brought the food more quickly than Isaac was expecting, Isaac's suspicions were aroused. When he asked how it had been done so quickly, Jacob said, "Jehovah thy God sent me good speed." In this statement is an indication of the extent to which one will go to carry his point. Jacob had no scruples in using the name of God to work his deception. The fact that Isaac asked Jacob to come near that he might feel him to see whether he was actually Esau or not is another indication of the care Isaac exercised in bestowing his blessing. This statement concerning the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau has become a proverb to express duplicity. There are those both in business, social, and religious life who walk one way and act another. Some of it may be due to inconsistencies; some to an inability to make close distinctions and to be logical in their thinking, while others are downright deceitful.

#### II. The Blessing (Gen. 27: 23-29)

*So he blessed him.* "From the time that God entered into covenant with Abraham and promised extraordinary blessings to his posterity, it appears to have been customary for the father of each family in direct line, or line of promise, immediately previous to his death, to call his children around him, and inform them according to the knowledge which it pleased God to give him, how and in what manner the divine blessing conferred upon Abraham was to descend

among them. Upon these occasions the patriarchs enjoyed a divine illumination, and under its influence their benediction was deemed a prophetic oracle, foretelling the events of the future with the utmost certainty, and extending to the remotest period of time." (McClintock and Strong, Volume 1.)

*He smelled the smell of his raiment.* Here again we have another indication of the care which Isaac exercised in bestowing his blessing. There is also an indication of the perfection of the cunning and deception of Rebekah. She not only thought of counterfeiting Esau's hairy skin, but she had Jacob to wear some of Esau's clothes in case Isaac should detect the smell of his raiment.

*God give thee dew of heaven.* One peculiarity of the arid section of Canaan was that in spite of the small amount of rain, dews were unusually heavy. As evidence of this, Gideon's fleece collected enough dew during one night to fill a bowl when wrung. (Judg. 6: 36-40.) On account of this moisture the land was more productive than it would otherwise have been. Hence when Isaac blesses Jacob with the dew of Heaven, he is giving him prosperity.

*The fatness of the earth.* This is another term which indicates prosperity. It may be taken to mean the choicest produce or the choicest parts of the earth. Since there seems to be a difference between this and that suggested by the dew of heaven, it is probable that the choicest or most productive parts of the earth are meant.

*Plenty of grain and new wine.* This is the climax of temporal prosperity with which Jacob was blessed. He was to have the choicest parts of the earth, watered with the dews of heaven, producing plentifully the things to make one wealthy.

*Let peoples serve thee.* Isaac now turns from temporal prosperity to pre-eminence and dominion in world affairs. The next line shows how peoples were to serve Jacob when it says, "Nations bow down to thee." This was fulfilled when the descendants of Jacob entered Canaan and subjected the other nations of that land. Then in the days of David,

their dominion was extended far to the north, south, and east.

*Be lord over thy brethren.* Jacob is here appointed ruler over Esau and his descendants. This is in keeping with the prophecy made at the time of their birth when it was said, "The elder shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25: 23.) We find the elder serving the younger when David slew 18,000 Edomites (instead of Syrians—see margin) in the Valley of Salt. (2 Sam. 8: 13ff.) Again Edom's king accepted the supremacy of Judah (2 Kings 3: 9) and Amaziah invaded Edom and slew 10,000 in the Valley of Salt (2 Kings 14: 7).

*Cursed by every one that curseth thee.* This is somewhat in keeping with the Abrahamic blessing and may be intended to convey all that was contained in that blessing as stated in Gen. 12: 3, though the key sentence, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," is omitted.

### III. Esau Discovers the Deception

(Gen. 27: 30-32)

*Esau came in from his hunt.* We are told that Jacob was scarcely out of the presence of Isaac before Esau returned. The wisdom of Rebekah in requiring Jacob to act quickly is seen in the near failure of their scheme.

*Let my father arise and eat his son's venison.* The characters of Isaac and Esau should be closely examined in this connection. Esau knew that he had sold his birthright and undoubtedly he knew that God had said he was to be the servant of his younger brother. Yet on this occasion, without intending that Jacob should be cognizant of it, he attempts to get the blessing to which he must have known he was not entitled. Isaac also must have known that God had said, "The elder shall serve the younger." And he must have known that this statement meant that Jacob was to have the blessing. Yet he operates with Esau in preparing to give the blessing contrary to God's will. Shall we conclude that neither Isaac nor Esau understood the meaning of God's statement? or shall we conclude they understood the statement and they intended to thwart the purposes of God? Our information on this subject is not sufficient to

warrant a conclusion either way. "Esau was at this time a man of mature age, being either fifty-seven or seventy-seven years old, and must have been acquainted with the heavenly oracle (chapter 25: 23) that assigned the precedence in the theocratic line to Jacob. Either, therefore, must have supposed that his claim to the blessing was not thereby affected, or he was guilty of conniving at Isaac's scheme for resisting the Divine will. Indignation at Jacob's duplicity and baseness, combined with sympathy for Esau in his supposed wrongs, sometimes prevents a just appreciation of the exact position occupied by the latter in this extraordinary transaction. Instead of branding Jacob as a shameless deceiver, and hurling against his fair name the most opprobrious epithets, may it not be that, remembering the previously-

expressed will of Heaven, the real supplanter was Esau, who as an accomplice of his father was seeking secretly, unlawfully, and feloniously to appropriate to himself a blessing which had already been, not obscurely, designated as Jacob's? On this hypothesis the miserable craft of Jacob and Rebekah was a lighter crime than that of Isaac and Esau." (Pulpit Commentary.)

This position is given here for the consideration of the student. The writer neither agrees nor disagrees with the position taken, but believes that it is worthy of studious consideration. Most people have looked upon Jacob and his mother as being the only persons in the wrong, but certainly the point is well taken that Isaac and Esau had every right to know that it was God's will for Jacob to have the blessing.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Parental partiality is unwise and often leads to grievous sins.

2. God's foreknowledge of man's action enables him to accomplish his purposes in spite of man's sins.

3. When God uses sinful men to accomplish his purposes, he is not to be judged as the author of their sins, nor are they relieved of their guilt.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Give the date of the birth of Jacob and Esau.

How old were they when Esau sold his birthright?

Explain what is meant when Esau is said to have been a profane person.

What is said of Jacob's appreciation of things spiritual?

What is said of the age of Jacob and Esau at the time of our lesson?

#### Golden Text Explained

Show how Jacob is a good example of putting away falsehood.

Give some Old Testament teaching on falsehoods.

What four things in our lesson indicate God's attitude toward falsehood?

What is said of the sources of truth and falsehood?

With what is lying consistent? And inconsistent?

#### The Deception

Who worked with Jacob in this deception?

What mistake did Isaac and Rebekah make in the rearing of their children?

What good excuse could Rebekah give for her part in this deception?

How did Isaac manifest his carefulness in bestowing the blessing?

How did Jacob try to involve God in his falsehood?

What proverb had its rise in the facts of this lesson, and make present-day applications of it?

#### The Blessing

What patriarchal custom was Isaac following?

Were these patriarchs inspired when giving these blessings?

What shows the care which Isaac exercised in giving the blessing?

What shows the cunning of Rebekah in her work of deception?

What is said of the dew of Canaan?

What temporal blessings did Isaac bestow upon Jacob?

What was said of his relation to his brethren and other people?

When did Jacob become the lord over his brethren?

#### Esau Discovers the Deception

Is it possible that Esau had sinful motives in his effort to obtain the blessing?

Is it possible that Isaac and Esau were as much in the wrong as Rebekah and Jacob?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

**Lesson XIII—March 30,1952**  
**JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT**

**The Lesson Text**

Gen. 37: 23-36

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ish'-ma-el-ites was coming from Gil'-e-ad, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to E'-gypt.

26 And Ju'-dah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ish'-ma-el-ites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him.

28 And there passed by Mid'-i-an-ites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ish'-ma-el-ites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into E'-gypt.

29 And Reu'-ben returned unto the

pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a he-goat, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said, This have we found: know now whether it is thy son's coat or not.

33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down to She'-ol to my son mourning. And his father went for him.

36 And the Mid'-i-an-ites sold him into E'-gypt unto Pot'-i-phar, an officer of Pha'-raoh's, the captain of the guard.

**Golden Text.**—*“And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him.”* (Acts 7: 9.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Gen. 37: 1-22.

**Daily Bible Readings**

March 24. M.....Joseph in Potiphar's House (Gen. 39: 1-23)  
 March 25. T.....Joseph in Prison (Gen. 40: 1-23)  
 March 26. W.....Joseph and Pharaoh (Gen. 41: 25-47)  
 March 27. T.....Joseph's Family (Gen. 41: 45-57)  
 March 28. F.....Joseph Deals with His Brothers (Gen. 42: 1-25)  
 March 29. S.....Joseph Revealed to His Brothers (Gen. 45: 1-20)  
 March 30. S.....Joseph Meets His Father (Gen. 46: 28-34)

**TIME.**—1728 B.C.

**PLACES.**—Dothan in Canaan, and Egypt.

**PERSONS.**—Joseph and his brothers.

**Introduction**

Joseph was the son of Jacob by Rachel. The reader will remember that Jacob went to Padan-aram after he had deceived his father and stolen the blessing from Esau. There he

met Laban and his family. Laban was Jacob's uncle. Jacob worked seven years for Laban in return for which he was to receive Rachel as his wife. Through deceit of Laban,

Jacob found himself married to Leah and was obliged to work seven more years for his favorite, though he was allowed to marry her after his week was fulfilled with Leah. Leah bore Jacob six sons and one daughter. Rachel was the mother of only two children, Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was born before the family left Haran and Benjamin was born on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem. Rachel died at the birth of Benjamin, leaving her sons to be reared by Jacob's other wives. Being sons of his favorite wives, Jacob bestowed more affection upon them than upon the others, which was the source of envy and jealousy on the part of the other sons. Jacob should have remembered the evils of parental partiality in his father's home. But in spite of such partiality as characterized his father's home, Jacob was

even more partial than his father. He made Joseph a coat of many colors. Students of ancient customs agree that this was a mark of distinction and some suggest that it was Jacob's way of indicating his intentions to give Joseph the pre-eminence in the family. Such partiality invariably brings suffering upon the favored child. The disadvantage and ill-treatment from the other children of the family outweigh the favors bestowed by the parent. Such treatment of a child is unfair in the family and usually causes associates in the community to dislike the favored child. Children accustomed to such treatment at home are likely to be disappointed in school and society generally. Children enjoying such favors rarely learn the lessons of self-denial, cooperation, and fair play.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Jealousy Defined.** Webster says that jealousy means "unpleasant fear, suspicion, or resentment, arising from mistrust of another." He also says that it means the state or quality of being jealous. The word jealous is defined as "exacting exclusive devotion; intolerant of rivalry." Our text says that Joseph's brothers were moved with jealousy against him. This means that they were intolerant of his rivalry in the affections of their father. It also suggests their resentment which they bore toward him on account of the special love and favor of their father which he enjoyed.

2. **Jealousy a Moving Force.** Our text says that the patriarchs were moved with jealousy. Jealousy was such a moving force in their hearts that they stooped to inhuman cruelty in the treatment of their brother. We are told that, "Where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3: 16.) This does not mean that one who is guilty of jealousy is also guilty of every other vile deed, for certainly one can be guilty of jealousy without being guilty of many sins. The obvious meaning is that one who is controlled by a jealous disposition will stoop to committing any deed regardless of how vile it is if it seems

necessary to gain his point. Men will stoop to lying and murder because of jealousy. Leaders in the church who are ordinarily good men have been known by the writer to stoop to lying and underhanded schemes which involved the very life of the church because they were moved with jealousy.

Solomon says that, "Jealousy is cruel as Sheol; the flashes thereof are flashes of fire." (Song of Sol. 8: 6.) Sheol is the unseen abode of the dead, taking infants and good men and women as well as the wicked. It spares none regardless of character or accomplishments, so Solomon means to say that jealousy is so cruel that it spares none regardless of character or standing. The only way for us to treat people as they deserve to be treated is to keep our hearts from being moved with jealousy toward them. Again Solomon says, "For jealousy is the rage of a man; and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts." (Prov. 6: 34, 35.) This describes a man as being cruel and unrelenting in his vengeance when moved with jealousy. A ransom regardless of how great he will not regard. Jealousy will not allow him to rest content until he has accomplished his evil

purposes though many gifts may be offered.

3. Examples of Jealousy. From the many Biblical examples we choose (1) that of Miriam and Aaron against Moses. (Num. 16: 1.) They were jealous of the position and power of Moses and spoke against him before the people. As usual they tried to hide their jealousy and insisted that their opposition to Moses was due to the fact that he had married a Cushite woman. (2) Korah and

others rebelled against Moses accusing him of exercising too much authority. They brought grievous false accusations against him and influenced 250 families among the princes to follow their example of rebellion simply because they were jealous of Moses. (3) A splendid example in the New Testament is that of the elder brother who was jealous of the prodigal's place in the affections of his father when he returned from the far country. (Luke 15.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Joseph Sold by His Brothers (Gen.

37: 23-28)

*Joseph was come unto his brethren.* Being younger than his brothers and a son of Jacob's favorite wife, Joseph stayed at home more than his brothers. His father used him as an errand boy to check on the activities of his brothers and to bring a report. At the time of our lesson he was on such a mission. His father sent him to Shechem where he supposed the brothers were quartered. But when Joseph arrived at Shechem he was informed by one of that place that his brothers had gone to Dothan.

*They stripped Joseph of his coat.* The brothers took this coat for at least three reasons: (1) To rob Joseph of that which indicated his father's affections; (2) such a coat was an indication of pre-eminence and respect and would be easily identified; (3) they needed something to help them cover their crime. The coat dipped in blood would enable them to deceive their father.

*They cast him into the pit.* This pit was a cistern. In this dry section of the country such cisterns were dug in many places where water would drain into them so that it might be stored for use during the dry season. Obviously, the brothers intended to leave Joseph to starve or they might have intended to fill the cistern and bury him alive.

*They sat down to eat bread.* This indicates something with reference to their characters. They were so cruel and calloused that they could sit down to eat within the hearing of the pitiful cries of their brother begging for his life. It is difficult to understand how men can become so de-

praved as to treat a young brother in such fashion. Joseph was only seventeen years of age at this time. (Gen. 37: 2.)

*A caravan of Ishmaelites was coming.* These traders are called Midianites in verses 28 and 36. Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25: 2); another son of Keturah was Medan and some versions use the word Medonites in verse 36. The Ishmaelites were descendants of Abraham through Hagar. No doubt the caravan was composed of individuals of these several families. They all lived in the Arabian peninsula around Sinai. It was there that Moses found his wife, who was a Midianite.

*Bearing spicery, balm and myrrh.* These traders had been to Gilead for their merchandise. Gilead is a mountainous region east of the Jordan between Bashan on the north and Moab on the south. Sometimes it is referred to as Mount Gilead, though there is no one mountain which bears that name. Besides abounding in spices and aromatic gums, we are told that Gilead had much rich pasture land, well suited for flocks and herds. These spices were used by the rich in Egypt for perfuming their baths, and myrrh was used for embalming.

*What profit is it if we slay our brother?* This is the language of Judah who seems to have had a less murderous disposition or a more covetous inclination than the rest; the financial opportunity was recognized by Judah. This seems to have been an early characteristic of Jews and has been cultivated by them through the years.

*For he is our brother.* This is an-

other reason given by Judah for selling Joseph in preference to murdering him. However, this seems to have been an afterthought since there was an opportunity to sell him for money. It was not difficult to persuade his brothers to sell Joseph rather than stain their hands with his blood.

*They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver.* Under the law of Moses a child from five to twenty years old might be redeemed for twenty shekels or pieces of silver and a grown man might be redeemed for fifty shekels. The price of a full-grown slave under the law of Moses was thirty shekels of silver. (Ex. 21: 32.) There is an interesting parallel between Joseph and Jesus. Both were beloved of their fathers and were sent by their fathers to visit their brethren. Both were innocent of any wrong toward their brethren, yet both were sold by their brethren for a few pieces of silver. The sale of Joseph was proposed by Judah; Jesus was sold by Judas, which is the same name. Both became saviours of the people who sold them, though Judas did not take advantage of the saving power of Jesus. The sale and mistreatment of both seemed to be a necessary step towards the salvation effected by each. Joseph suffered in prison with two criminals and Jesus suffered on the cross between two thieves. Joseph foretold the deliverance of one of his fellow prisoners and the death of the other; Jesus saved one of the thieves, while the other perished for his crimes. While these parallels are interesting, we should not necessarily conclude that Joseph was intended to be a type of Jesus Christ.

## II. Joseph's Father Deceived (Gen. 37: 29-36)

*Reuben returned unto the pit.* It was Reuben who saved Joseph from death by suggesting that he be put into the pit. He made this suggestion "that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father." (Gen. 37: 22.)

*The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?* Reuben was troubled enough over this affair to rend his clothes, but he seems not to have had the courage to tell his father the truth.

This statement, "Whither shall I go" is about the same as our common expression, "What shall I do?" It was commendable in Reuben to wish to save his brother and to be distressed at his disappearance, but we lose sight of this when we see him taking part in the deception of his father with reference to the disappearance of his brother. The fear and weakness which he exhibited are about as contemptible as the jealousy and consequent mistreatment of the rest of the brothers. There are modern day Reubens who would like to see right prevail but who have not the courage to suffer the consequences entailed in making the right prevail. People often see conditions in both the church and community which they deplore, but they have not the necessary zeal and courage to institute a crusade of betterment.

*They dipped the coat in blood.* In order to deceive their father these men killed a goat, dipped Joseph's coat in its blood, and brought it to their father. This is cruelty in its lowest degree. They not only are guilty of deception, but they coolly contrived to break their father's heart.

*Know now whether it is thy son's coat or not.* First, these men lied to their father. They said, "This have we found." They did not find the coat; they took it off Joseph. Next, they practiced deceit; as they handed the coat to their father they asked him to judge whether it was his son's coat or not. By this they implied that they did not know whether the coat belonged to Joseph or not. An implied lie is as bad as one expressed.

*Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.* This was Jacob's conclusion after looking at the coat. It was the conclusion which his sons intended he should reach. It was the only conclusion he could reach with the evidence submitted.

*Jacob mourned for his son many days.* As was customary on such occasions, Jacob rent his garments and put sackcloth upon his loins, and though his children attempted to comfort him he refused to be comforted. Again we see the hypocrisy and deceit of these ten sons when they along with his daughters rose up to comfort him. How hollow must have

been their expressions of comfort. Jacob had but one daughter, Dinah, a child by Leah, but likely his sons' wives are included in this mention of daughters who comforted him.

*I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning.* This is Jacob's response to his children in their efforts to comfort him. He expected to go to his grave feeling the loss of his son. But subsequent history tells us that Jacob was allowed to enjoy the company and the sustaining love of Joseph in his latter days. About twenty years later Jacob's sons were sent to Egypt to buy corn. There they found Joseph the second ruler of the land. On finding that the brothers had changed in character, Joseph revealed himself to them and sent wagons for the removal of the family. About seventy souls were

moved to Egypt where they lived in the Land of Goshen.

*The Midianites sold him unto Potiphar.* Potiphar is said to have been the captain of the guard, or as the margin says, chief of the executioners. This Potiphar is said to have been an officer, which word is the translation of the Hebrew word used for eunuch. Adam Clarke says that it should be so translated and says that examples might be given of eunuchs maintaining families and even a harem, but the Pulpit Commentary says the word is employed here to denote simply an officer or courtier without any reference to the primary signification. However, no other such use of the word is cited, either in the Bible or other literature. It was Potiphar's wife who caused the arrest and imprisonment of Joseph.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Jacob learned a truth so aptly expressed by Paul that men reap what they sow. He deceived his father and in turn was deceived by his sons.

2. Our misfortunes are often blessings in disguise. Though Joseph suffered by being sold into Egypt, he was thereby placed in position to save his family later. At the con-

clusion of events he realized that God had sent him to preserve his family in time of need.

3. God had one purpose in sending Joseph into Egypt, but the brothers had another. God overruled their wicked purpose and brought good to the family in spite of their wickedness.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, places, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Review Jacob's experiences in Laban's house.  
Who was Joseph's mother and brother?  
Where was Joseph born?  
Why did Joseph and Benjamin receive better treatment from their father than their brothers did?  
How did Jacob show his partiality?  
Of what was this coat of many colors an indication?  
How does parental partiality affect a child?

#### Golden Text Explained

What is the definition of jealousy?  
Discuss jealousy as a moving force in the lives of people.  
What does Solomon say of jealousy?  
Discuss three Biblical examples of jealousy.

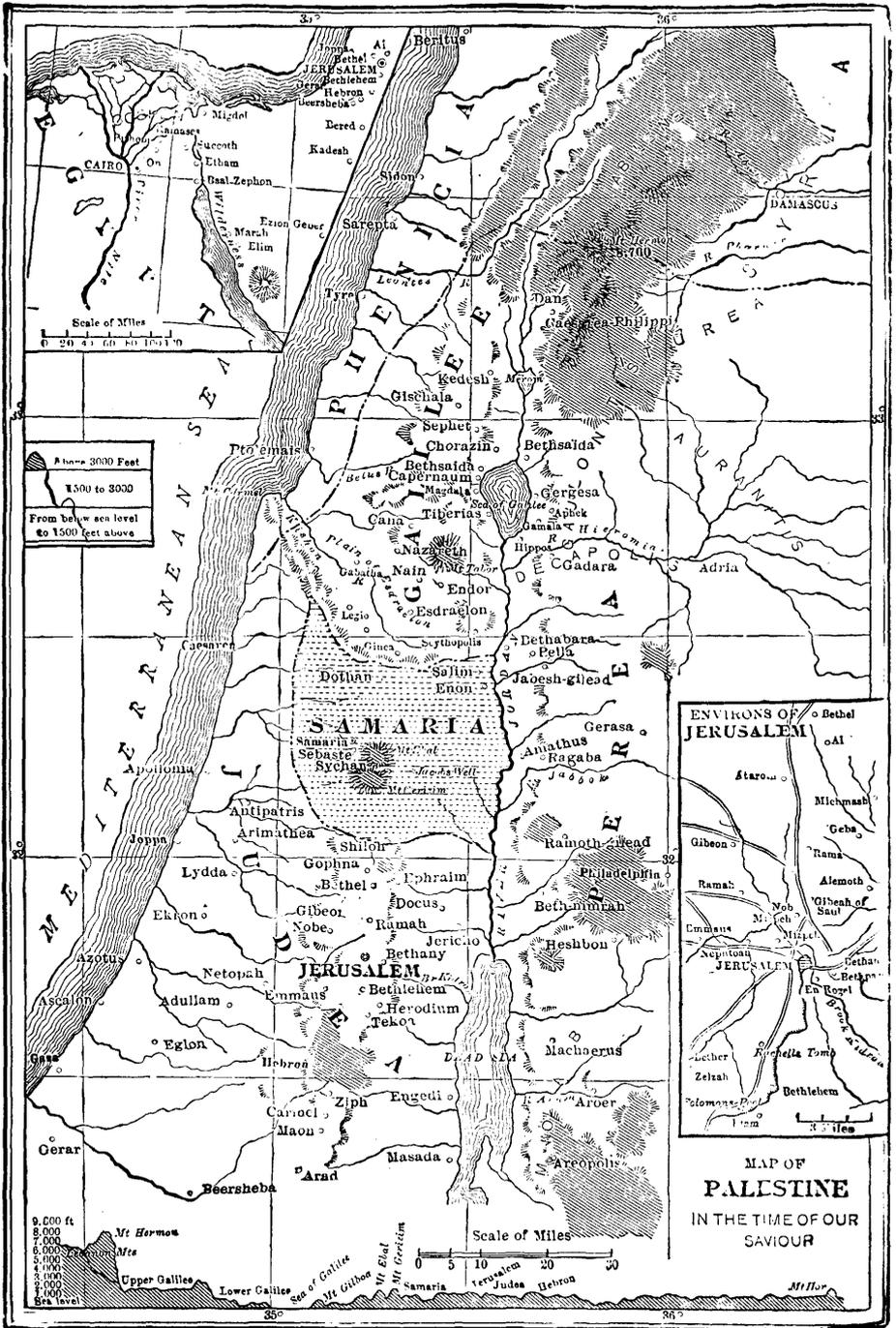
#### Joseph Sold by His Brothers

What were Joseph's duties in the home?

Give three reasons why Joseph's brothers took his coat.  
What indicates that Joseph's brothers were cruel and hardhearted?  
How old was Joseph at the time that he was sold?  
To whom was Joseph sold, and from whom descended?  
In what were these Ishmaelite traders dealing?  
Which of the brothers saved Joseph from death?  
For how much money did they sell him?  
Develop the parallel between Joseph and Jesus.

#### Joseph's Father Deceived

What did Reuben intend to do with Joseph?  
How did the brothers deceive their father?  
Did the brothers actually lie to their father, or leave him to reach untrue conclusions?  
How did the sons continue to practice deceit on their father?  
What did the Midianites do with Joseph?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?



## SECOND QUARTER

### THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

(Six months course—first half)

AIM.—To study afresh the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, that the student may more closely follow the example of him who was sinless in word and deed.

#### Lesson I—April 6, 1952

### GABRIEL APPEARS TO MARY

#### The Lesson Text

Luke 1: 26-35, 38

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Ga'-bri-el was sent from God unto a city of Gal'-i-lee, named Naz'-a-reth,

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

28 And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.

29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be.

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

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

32 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:

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

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

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, 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.

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

Golden Text.—*“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.”* (Matt. 1: 21.)

Devotional Reading.—Luke 1: 46-55.

#### Daily Bible Readings

March 31. M.....	Angel Visits Joseph (Matt. 1: 18-25)
April 1. T.....	Angels Visit Shepherds (Luke 2: 8-20)
April 2. W.....	Simeon Speaks of Jesus (Luke 2: 22-32)
April 3. T.....	Anna Speaks of Jesus (Luke 2: 33-39)
April 4. F.....	Angel Visits Manoah (Judges 13: 2-20)
April 5. S.....	Joshua Sees an Angel (Josh. 5: 13-15)
April 6. S.....	Angels Visit Abraham (Gen. 18: 1-15)

Time.—5 B.C.

Place.—Nazareth.

Persons.—Gabriel and Mary.

#### Introduction

The aim of the lessons of this second quarter suggests Jesus as our example, and truly he is an example

both in word and in deed. Some general principles with reference to this example will now be in order. First,

Jesus is our example in that he made the will of God his supreme rule of conduct in all the affairs of life. He said it was his meat to do the will of his father. (John 4: 34.) "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6: 38.) Even in the shadow of the cross, he prayed, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26: 39.) Naturally we would expect him to conform to the will of God in all important matters, but he was careful to conform to the will of God in smaller matters. When the matter of the half-shekel temple tax was raised, he said that the tax should be paid lest some be caused to stumble. (Matt. 17: 24-27.)

Jesus is our example in the matter of overcoming temptations. (1) He sets us the example of resisting temptations rather than being overcome by them. (2) He shows us how to overcome temptation by using the word

of God. He had laid up the word of God in his heart in keeping with the teaching of David. (Psalm 119: 11.)

Next, Jesus is our example in recognizing the authority of the written word. (1) He told the cleansed leper to make the offering commanded in the law. (Mark 1: 40-45.) (2) He told the people to observe those commandments taught by scribes and Pharisees which were found in the law of Moses. (Matt. 23: 1-3.) (3) He quoted Old Testament scriptures and accepted their teaching as final on the point treated. (Matt. 22: 41-46.)

Jesus sets us an example of entire personal consecration to God. His whole time and energy were spent in the service of God. He had no ambition for a political or social career. He did not care about becoming rich. He was satisfied to consecrate his entire being to the accomplishment of the purposes of his Father in his life.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **She Shall Bring Forth a Son.** Our golden text is the statement of an angel to Joseph who was betrothed to Mary. Joseph had discovered that Mary was with child and was considering putting her away privily because he did not wish to make her a public example. The angel pointed out the fact that her condition was the fulfillment of a prophecy made by Isaiah, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel." (Matt. 1: 23; Isa. 7: 14.) The angel told Joseph that her conception was not a natural conception, but one brought about by the Holy Spirit. "It was intimated from the beginning that the Messiah should be born of a virgin, when it was said that he should be the *seed of the woman*, so the seed of the woman was not to be the seed of any man. Christ was born of a virgin not only because his birth was to be supernatural, and altogether extraordinary, but because it was to be spotless, and pure, and without any stain of sin. Christ would be born, not of an empress or queen, for he appeared not in outward splendor, but of a virgin to teach us spotless purity, to tie to all the delights of sin, and so to keep

ourselves unspotted from the world and the flesh that we may be presented chaste virgins to Christ." (Matthew Henry.)

2. **Thou Shalt Call His Name JESUS.** The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Old Testament name of Joshua. Both words mean "saviour." The name Jesus was the personal name of our Lord. The prophecy of Isaiah said his name should be Immanuel which means "God with us." This name has reference to the nature of our Lord, implying that he was the gift of God in the flesh. He was God becoming one of us and living among us. This name was not as common among the Jews as the personal name.

3. **He Shall Save His People.** The salvation which Jesus offers has both its present and future aspects. The present salvation is our forgiveness of sins, the freedom from the dominion of sin, the cleansing from the pollution of sin and the remission of the guilt of sin. The future salvation consists of salvation from the presence of sin and from the penalty of sin. Paul rejoices in Jesus, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of

our God and Father." (Gal. 1: 4.) Again he praises the Father, "who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." (Col. 1: 12-14.) Our text says that he shall save his people from their sins. Some take the term "his people" to mean the Jews. But this is too limited

since he is said to be the Saviour of the whole world. (John 4: 42; 1 John 2: 2.) His people are those who have been redeemed by him. All people belong to him by right of creation and preservation, but only those who have accepted him as their Saviour and rendered obedience to his gospel can say that they belong to him by right of redemption. Hence Paul says that he "is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." (1 Tim. 4: 10.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Gabriel Approaches Mary (Luke 1: 26-29)

*Now in the sixth month.* The events of our lesson occurred in the sixth month after the experience which Zacharias had with the angel when was foretold the birth of John. Since Mary's conception was immediately after the visit of Gabriel, we conclude that Jesus was about six months younger than John.

*The angel Gabriel was sent from God.* The word Gabriel means "man of God." It is quite common to refer to Gabriel as an archangel, but the Bible does not so describe him. Michael is called the archangel. The word archangel occurs in one other place in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4: 16), but is not used with reference to any named angel.

*A city of Galilee named Nazareth.* From this we learn that Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, though Joseph's family home was at Bethlehem. (Luke 2: 4.) Since Galilee was on the fringe of Jewish territory, it was subject to heathen influence and had partaken of many of the customs of the heathen nations. Hence, the inhabitants of Galilee were not considered as orthodox as the people in Judea. This accounts partially for Nathanael's asking, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1: 46.)

*To a virgin betrothed to Joseph.* Mary affirmed her virginity in conversation with the angel when she said, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The Jews considered the betrothal much more seriously than the engagement is considered at the present time. The week of betrothal was celebrated by a visit at which time it was customary es-

pecially among later Jews, for the bridegroom to place a ring on the bride's finger. After the betrothal, the woman lost all power over her property if she had such and it became vested in the husband unless he had previously renounced his right to it. Between the betrothal and the marriage, one week for virgins and a month for widows, the bride-elect lived with her friends and all communication between herself and her future husband was carried on through a friend referred to as the "friend of the bridegroom." (John 3: 29.) Unfaithfulness on the part of the betrothed subjected her to death. (Deut. 22: 23, 24.) If the bridegroom falsely accused his bride-elect of unfaithfulness during this time, he was severely punished. (Deut. 22: 13-19.)

*Of the house of David.* Joseph's connection with David is mentioned for the sake of giving proof that Jesus was a descendant of David. A question has been raised as to whether the phrase "house of David" modifies the word virgin, or Joseph. But it is of little consequence since both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David.

*Thou that art highly favored.* This is the salutation of Gabriel to Mary. Many Jewish women had devoutly prayed that they might be the mother of the Messiah. But Mary was favored above them all in that she was the chosen one.

*The Lord is with thee.* While the Lord is with all who love and serve him, the statement here refers to some special blessing, or a special sense in which the Lord was with her. We often use the expression in a similar way when explaining some un-

usual accomplishment of men by saying that the Lord was with them.

## II. Gabriel's Message to Mary (Luke 1: 30-33)

*Fear not, Mary.* Mary was greatly troubled at the saying of Gabriel, wondering what was its meaning. The angel allays her fears that she may give her undivided attention to his message. He then assures her that she has found favor with God. The fact that she had *found* favor suggests that she had been seeking such favor. She, as many devout Jewish women, no doubt desired that she might be the mother of the Messiah.

*Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son.* Mary evidently got the idea that her conception was to be in the immediate future, for she asked how this could be since she was not married. Gabriel tells Mary as the angel told Joseph that her child was to be named Jesus. Since his mission into the world was to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19: 10), it was important that his name should signify his work and character.

*He shall be great.* The angel now sets out to explain why Mary's son was to be great. First, he was to be the Son of the Most High. He was the son of God in that eternal relationship with the Father, but perhaps this refers to his humanity begotten not by a human father, but by the Holy Spirit. In either sense he was the Son of God in a sense in which no one of us can be a son of God.

*God shall give him the throne of David.* This is another reason why Mary's son should be called great. From this verse we learn (1) that Christ was to be the son of David, (2) that he was to have the throne of David. Future kingdom advocates hold that Christ is now on the throne of God and that he will reign on the throne of David for one thousand years after his second advent. From 1 Kings 2: 12 we learn that Saul sat upon the throne of David, and from 1 Chron. 29: 23 we learn that Saul sat on the throne of Jehovah, so God's throne and David's throne are the same, and when Jesus sits on God's throne he is on the throne on which David sat. The kingdom of Christ is that which was predicted by the prophets. It is also called the king-

dom of God. It is also admitted that Christ is king over this kingdom of God and of Christ. Since he is king, there is a throne in each. In the kingdom of God the throne shall surely be the throne of God; in the kingdom of Christ the throne may be called the throne of Christ. Surely there are not two thrones in one kingdom; hence the throne of God and of Christ are identical. But the throne of Christ is by our text called the throne of his father David. Hence the throne of God which formerly belonged to his father David is the throne of Christ.

*He shall reign over the house of Jacob.* Gabriel tells Mary that God will give the throne to her son, intimating that the Jews would not accept him, but that in spite of their rejection God would give him the throne. His reign should be over the house of Jacob, not the fleshly descendants, but simply the people of God. Paul teaches that if we belong to Christ we are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3: 29.) He also says, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; . . . but he is a Jew who is one inwardly." (Rom. 2: 28, 29.) So the house of Jacob is not the outward family, but the inward or spiritual family of Jacob. Over these the son of Mary rules forever.

*Of his kingdom there shall be no end.* The mediatorial reign of Christ will end in the time of the resurrection when he shall abolish death and deliver up the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15: 22-29), but the everlasting reign will have only begun, for Peter indicates that we shall then have an "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1: 11.)

## III. Further Information to Mary

(Luke 1: 34, 35, 38)

*How shall this be?* Understanding that her conception was to be immediately, Mary was puzzled and expressed her troubled mind by saying that she had not *known* a man. For an illustration of the sense in which the word *known* is used in this verse, see a similar statement in Matt. 1: 25.

*The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee.* This is the angel's explanation of the manner in which her concep-

tion should take place. The Holy Spirit was the divine instrument and the human nature of Jesus was the product of the Spirit's work. If someone hesitates to believe this story because of his inability to understand how the work was performed, he should remember that he does not understand his own origin. Solomon says that we do not know "how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all." (Eccles. 11: 5.) David suggests our lack of knowledge of such things when he says, "I was made in secret, and curiously wrought." (Psalm 139: 15.) The God that can create the universe and people it with humanity can certainly beget a child in a virgin.

*Shall be called the Son of God.* The angel says two things with reference to this conception. First, the one begotten is called holy; second, he says that which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. The word begotten refers here undoubtedly to the physical body and life of Christ. The divine nature of Christ did not

begin to exist at this time; hence, the term begotten as used in this verse would not refer to it. Scholars disagree on the question as to whether the eternal Word, the divine nature of Jesus may be called the Son of God. For a discussion from the negative point of view, see Adam Clarke's discussion of this verse. Since this verse refers to that which was begotten on this occasion it cannot be used as a proof text by those who believe in the eternal sonship of Christ.

*Be it unto me according to thy word.* This is Mary's simple and yet sublime acceptance not only of the honors, but of the burdens and responsibilities of being mother to the Messiah. How much she understood with reference to the sorrows and the sufferings that lay in her pathway at this time we have no way of knowing. Later she was told that "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul." (Luke 2: 35.) But the joy of being so highly favored was sufficient reward and encouragement to enable her to accept readily and gladly any suffering which might be in store for her.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Modernists deny the miraculous conception of Jesus, yet many of them wish to be looked upon as believers in Jesus. To maintain their position they must deny the inspiration of both Matthew and Luke. If neither of these writers was inspired, how can we be sure that any other New Testament writer was inspired? Furthermore, if the story of the conception of Jesus may be rejected, we may with similar reason reject any or all that these writers have given us.

2. If Jesus is not now on the throne of David, Gentiles have no right to the blessings of Christianity. Jesus sees in the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David a reason why the

name of the Lord may be called upon the Gentiles. (Acts 15: 16, 17.) The tabernacle of David includes the throne of David. Hence, in the rebuilding of that tabernacle we have the re-establishment of his throne. In this re-establishment of David's throne we have the fulfillment of Gabriel's promise to Mary that her son would be given that throne.

3. Peter says that Jesus was raised from the dead to fulfill a promise made to David that of the fruit of his loins God would set one upon *his* throne. Peter declared that this promise to David was fulfilled when Jesus was made both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2: 30-36.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Show that Jesus is our example in making the will of God his rule of conduct.  
In what ways is he our example in overcoming temptation?

How does he set us an example in recognizing the authority of the written word?  
Discuss Jesus as our example of entire personal consecration.

#### Golden Text Explained

What prophecy was fulfilled in the conception of Jesus?  
What is implied in the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin?

What is the meaning of the word Jesus, and what is the Old Testament form?  
 What is the meaning of the word Immanuel?  
 What two aspects of salvation are mentioned in our lesson?  
 Why does Paul praise the Father?  
 In what three ways do we belong to the Lord?

Gabriel Approaches Mary

How do we arrive at the conclusion that Jesus was six months younger than John?  
 What is the meaning of the word Gabriel?  
 Was Gabriel an archangel?  
 Where was the family home of Joseph and Mary?  
 Why were the people of Galilee not considered as orthodox?  
 How did Mary affirm her virginity?  
 What is said in our lesson about the customs of marriage?  
 Why was Mary thought to be highly favored?

Gabriel's Message to Mary

Why was the child of Mary to be named Jesus?  
 Why was he to be great?  
 On whose throne was Jesus to sit?  
 Can you prove that the throne of God, the throne of David, and the throne of Christ are identical?  
 What is meant by the "house of Jacob" over which Jesus was to reign?  
 In what sense will the kingdom of Christ have no end?

Further Information to Mary

How did the angel explain the conception of Jesus to Mary?  
 What did Solomon and David say of our knowledge of our origin?  
 According to our text, what was to be called the Son of God?  
 How did Mary express her submission?  
 Of what future sorrows was Mary warned?  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson II—April 13, 1952

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Luke 2: 4-16

4 And Joseph also went up from Gal'-i-lee, out of the city of Naz'-a-reth, into Ju-dae'-a, to the city of David, which is called Beth'-le-hem, because he was of the house and family of David;

5 To enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

6 And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.

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

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

9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them,

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people:

11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

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

14 Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'-le-hem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

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

Golden Text.—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased" (Luke 2: 14.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 2: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

April 7. M.....Birth of Jesus Announced (Luke 1: 26-38)  
 April 8. T.....Joseph Told of His Birth (Matt. 1: 17-25)

April 9. W.....	Mary's Song of Praise (Luke 1: 46-55)
April 10. T.....	Hannah's Song of Praise (1 Sam. 2: 1-10)
April 11. F.....	Simeon Sings His Praise (Luke 2: 25-32)
April 12. S.....	Born the Son of David (Matt. 22: 41-46)
April 13. S.....	Born in Fullness of Time (Gal. 4: 1-7)

TIME—4 B.C.

PLACE.—Bethlehem.

PERSONS.—Joseph, Mary, Jesus, Shepherds.

### Introduction

Luke tells us that Augustus Caesar sent out a decree that all the world should be enrolled and that this enrollment took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria. There are two difficulties in this statement, one of minor importance and one involving the veracity of Luke. The expression "all the world" could not, of course, mean more than the known world, but since all the known world was not included in the decree, the territory must be limited still further. Adam Clarke says no historian mentions a general census at this time and goes on to show that the expression refers to the land of Judea and cites a number of scripture references as proof.

The second difficulty arises from the fact that though Quirinius is known to have been governor of Judea ten years later than the birth of Christ, there is no evidence that he was governor at the time Jesus was born. Critics of the Bible have affirmed that Luke made a mistake and hence his inspiration is disproved or at least under serious question. Adam Clarke gives two possible explanations of the difficulty, but neither of

them seems quite satisfactory. Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia gives an explanation worked out by a man named Zumpt which seems nearer the truth. According to him, Quirinius held the office of legate of Syria at about the time of the birth of Jesus and that this enrollment was begun during the time he held this office and was either completed when he came to be governor or that two separate enrollments were made. According to another authority, William Ramsay, who elaborates the theory of Zumpt, the Roman government made such enrollments periodically, one every fourteen years. There would still be due an explanation why these two enrollments were not fourteen years apart, but Ramsay says that Herod was in trouble with Caesar and that on account of this trouble the date of the enrollment which should have been 8 B.C. was not taken until the time of the birth of Jesus. The fact that the enemies of the church in the first century such as Celsus and Porphyri did not criticize this passage is a good indication that those who lived in that time accepted Luke's statement as correct.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Glory to God.** Our text is the song of the multitude of angels who appeared to the shepherds when Jesus was born. First, they ascribe glory to God on account of the birth of Jesus. These are beings who are continually around the throne of God and beholding his glory as a radiance in the heavens, but at the birth of Jesus they have sufficient cause for glorifying God to an extent to which they have never glorified him, for in Jesus they see the unfolding of a greater love than they had ever seen before. The fact that God could give his Son to come to this world of sin and sorrow was proof of a greater love than

angels had seen. We must not think of angels as being all-wise. Peter implies such when he said that angels desire to look into the salvation offered to men. (1 Pet. 1: 12.) The angels that sinned are reserved in chains for destruction. (2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6.) When man sinned it must have been obvious to the angels that some plan of redemption was to be offered. In the unfolding of this plan, the angels got a greater conception of God's wisdom, love, and power than they previously had. At this point in the development of that plan they gave glory to God by singing to the shepherds.

The statement of the angels may also be looked upon as a song of prophecy of the glory which Jesus would give the Father by his life of purity and his sacrificial death. It was the constant aim and primary purpose of Jesus all during life to glorify the Father. On the night of his betrayal he said, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." (John 17: 4.)

This statement of the angels may also be accepted as a prophecy of the glory which man might bring to God through Christ. In spite of our weakness and sinfulness, we can glorify God. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." But man is not in position, nor does he have the ability, to glorify God except as he does so through Christ. Peter urged us to use the abilities which God gives, "That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever." (1 Pet. 4: 11.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Place and Circumstances of His

#### Birth (Luke 2: 4-7)

*Joseph also went up from, Galilee.*

Being a descendant of David, Joseph was a native of Bethlehem. When Joseph went to Galilee, or how long he had been there we have no way of knowing. He lived in Nazareth, so his return to Nazareth after the birth of Jesus is not difficult to understand. The people of Galilee did not stand well in the eyes of the orthodox Jews in Jerusalem. Since Galilee was on the fringe of Jewish settlement and influence, the people had been influenced to such an extent that it was called Galilee of the nations or Gentiles. (Matt. 4: 15.) But this does not account for the bad reputation of Nazareth, for Nathanael, who lived in Cana of Galilee, doubted that any good thing could come out of Nazareth. (John 1: 46.)

*The city of David called Bethlehem.* Bethlehem was a small community five or six miles south of Jerusalem. It is 2,350 feet above sea level. Our interest in the city begins when Naomi and Ruth came back from Moab. At the suggestion of Naomi, Ruth loved and won Boaz, a near-

2. **On Earth Peace.** Since Jesus is the Prince of Peace, his coming to earth might well be celebrated by the angelic choir in the words of our text. Peace had come to earth both in precept and example. Jesus taught lessons which would bring peace (1) between man and God, (2) between man and man. If the teachings of Jesus were believed and obeyed, this sinful World would be changed into a world of righteousness. If the Golden Rule were adopted by all men, there would be no more wars, no more race hatred, no more trouble between capital and labor, and no more broken homes.

3. **Peace Is Conditional.** The angels sang that this peace was to be on earth among men in whom God is well pleased. God is well pleased with those who believe in and obey Jesus. Hence, the peace of which the angels sang can be enjoyed to the greatest degree by those only who become Christians.

kinsman and of that union came within three generations David, who was to be one of the greatest kings of Old Testament times. Bethlehem was never a large city and would never have been remembered had it not been for David and Jesus.

*To enroll himself with Mary.* The authorized version says that "He went to be taxed," but our version says to be enrolled. The enrollment was for the purpose of taxing as well as other things. Clarke says of this enrollment, "1. The account which the people were obliged to give in of their *names, quality, employments, wives, children, servants, and estates;* and

2. the value set upon the estates by the censors, and *proportion* in which they adjudged them to contribute to the defense and support of the state, either in *men or money, or both.*"

*Who was betrothed to him.* Luke speaks of Mary as still betrothed. Since the betrothal was taken much more seriously than our engagements, she is still spoken of as betrothed, but from Matthew's account, we learn that the marriage was consummated soon after the angel visited Joseph. Joseph was told to fear not to take

"unto thee Mary thy wife . . . and Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife." (Matt. 1: 20-24.)

*While they were there the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.* It seems that it was not necessary for Mary to go with Joseph on this trip, and her physical comfort would have suggested that she not make the trip. What her reason was for going we are not told, but God's purpose was that the scripture might be fulfilled. (Micah 5: 2.)

*She brought forth her first-born son.* Jesus could be referred to as first-born without there being other children born to Mary, but Matthew records the names of his brothers and mentions sisters, which undoubtedly were children of Mary. (Matt. 13: 55, 56.)

*Laid him in a manger.* On account of the enrollment being taken, the inns were crowded. Arriving after all rooms were taken, Joseph was obliged to take Mary to a stable. Frequently, these were what we would call a basement, being hewn out of the rock on which foundation the inn was built. They were closed in on three sides, and hence afforded good shelter when tent cloth was hung over the opening.

## II. Birth Announced by Angels (Luke 2: 8-12)

*There were shepherds abiding in the field.* Nothing as to the date of the birth of our Lord can be certainly proved from the fact that these shepherds were keeping watch by night over their flocks. Some have used this in an attempt to prove that Jesus was not born on December 25. There is no proof that he was born on that date, but we should not try to force a passage to prove what is not in it.

*An angel of the Lord stood by them.* Why shepherds were selected to receive this message we can never know. But we are reminded that in the long ago when Samuel went to this same vicinity to anoint a king after rejecting what looked promising to Samuel, they had to send to the field for David who was keeping the sheep.

*And the angel said unto them.* First,

the angel quieted their fears by saying that he was bringing good tidings of great joy which should be to all the people. Next, the angel indicates that the cause of his appearance is near by, for he said a Saviour was born in the city of David. Next, he describes this Saviour as Christ, the Lord. This word Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah. To devout ears this word Messiah was calculated to bring more joy than any other word that could have been spoken. It means "the anointed one." All kings, prophets, and priests were anointed in the general sense of that term, but there was a specific sense in which it was used only of the one who was to come to deliver Israel. Since angels were announcing his coming, these shepherds may well have believed this was the long hoped for Messiah. Another item of good news is that he is called the Lord. This word Lord is the same as Jehovah in the Old Testament. The Jews expected their Messiah to be born as any other person and to be anointed for his work of deliverance. They did not conceive of the Messiah as both human and divine. Hence, the Jews could not tell Jesus why David called the Messiah Lord. (Matt. 22: 41-45.)

*This is the sign unto you.* That the shepherds might make no mistake in locating the child, they were given an exact description of his surrounding. They were to look for a newborn babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

## III. Song of the Angels (Luke 2: 13-16)

*Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host.* Only one angel was present when the announcement of good tidings was made, but a multitude is present for the song. This song is primarily a song of praise to God. When Joseph was given assurance, only one angel was present; when Mary was told that she was to be the mother of a child begotten by the Holy Spirit, only one angel was present. The presence of a multitude on this occasion would indicate the importance of this occasion and give added assurance and encouragement to Mary and Joseph.

*Glory to God in the highest.* The

words "in the highest" may mean (1) "in the highest places, proper abode of him who is repeatedly in these early chapters called the highest." (Expositor's Greek Testament.) (2) Clarke says it may mean "in the highest and most exalted degrees, for in this astonishing display of God's mercy attributes of the Divine Nature which had not been and could not be known in any other way should be now exhibited in the fullness of our glory, that even the angels should have fresh objects to contemplate, and new glories to exult in."

*On earth peace among men.* The Authorized Version says "On earth peace, good will toward men." We are told that only a bare majority of old authorities justify the new reading of this verse, but that so many of the old manuscripts support the Authorized Version "that it is among scholars an open question whether or not the text followed in the Authorized Version should not in this place be adhered to." (Pulpit Commentary.) According to the Authorized Version the birth of Jesus was God's way of sending peace and good will toward men, and surely no greater demonstration of God's good will could possibly have been made than to send his son to die for sinful men that they might be reconciled unto God through Him.

*Let us now go even unto Bethlehem.* This is the language of the shepherds when the song of the angels died away. It will be noticed that these shepherds did not delay their visit, not even until the next day. In this

they become a good example to all who hear the message of God from heaven. It is further said that they came with haste. They not only refused to delay their start, but they made haste in their going. When people today hear gospel sermons, they should recognize that they are hearing messages from heaven and that the salvation offered and the doom threatened are sufficient reasons for the utmost haste and those who delay or rebel show their contempt, not for the messenger, but for God from whom the message comes.

*They found the babe lying in a manger.* A brief contrast of what the shepherds saw in that babe with what we with the advantage of scripture see is worthy of consideration. (1) They saw just another human being brought into the world involuntarily, but we see not merely a human but a divine person coming voluntarily. (2) They saw one whose birth was accidental as to time and place, but we see one whose time (Gal. 4: 4) and place (Micah 5: 2) of birth were predetermined. (3) They saw one for whose birth no preparation was made, but we see one for whose birth God used both angels, priests, and governments to prepare for his coming. (4) They saw a babe born in poverty; we see one rich enough to give us all our physical and spiritual needs. (5) They saw a subject of Rome, but we see a king greater than Caesar and the one to whom all kings must answer.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The announcement of his birth to lowly shepherds instead of to the King and nobles is an indication of his attitude throughout life, as the following will show:

- a. He came to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19: 10.)
- b. He associated with sinners on the ground that the sick need a physician. (Mark 2: 15-17.)

c. He called fishermen and a publican to be his apostles rather than religious leaders.

d. He was revealed to the simple rather than the wise. (Luke 10: 21-24.)

e. Paul recognized the same principle at work among the churches. (1 Cor. 1: 26-29.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What caused Joseph and Mary to be in Bethlehem at the time of our lesson?

Discuss the extent of this enrollment.  
Discuss the difficulty arising from the fact that Quirinius is said to have made the enrollment.

What fact indicates that the people who lived in Luke's time accepted the statement as correct?

## Golden Text Explained

What do the angels sing of first?  
 What is suggested as to the nature and knowledge of angels?  
 What have the angels learned in God's dealings with man?  
 The song of the angels included a prophecy of what?  
 What is suggested in the angels' song about peace?  
 By whom can the peace about which the angels sang be enjoyed?

## Place and Circumstances of His Birth

Why was Galilee spoken of as "Galilee of the nations"?  
 What reputation did Nazareth have?  
 What do you know of the location of Bethlehem?  
 What was the purpose of the enrollment?  
 What do you know of the nature and obligations of betrothal?  
 Do we have proof that Mary bore children other than Jesus?

What do you know of the place where Jesus was born?

## Birth Announced by Angels

Can the day of the birth of Jesus be determined?  
 What message did the angels deliver to the shepherds?  
 What terms did the angels use to describe the babe that was born?  
 What sign did the angels give the shepherds?

## The Song of the Angels

What indicates the importance of the occasion?  
 What is the meaning of the phrase "in the highest"?  
 How did God demonstrate his good will toward men?  
 How soon did the shepherds go to Bethlehem?  
 Give and discuss several contrasts between what the shepherds saw and what we see in the babe born in Bethlehem.  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson III—April 20, 1952

## THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

## The Lesson Text

Matt. 2: 12-23

12 And being warned *of God* in a dream that they should not return to Her'-od, they departed into their own country another way.

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 Her'-od 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 Her'-od: 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 Her'-od, 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 Beth'-le-hem, 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 Jer-e-mi'-ah the prophet, saying,

18 A voice was heard in Ra'-mah,  
 Weeping and great mourning,  
 Ra'-chel weeping for her children;

And she would not be comforted,  
 because they are not.

19 But when Her'-od 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'-ra-el: 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'-ra-el.

22 But when he heard that Ar-che-la'-us was reigning over Ju-dae'-a in the room of his father Her'-od, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned *of God* in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Gal'-i-lee,

23 And came and dwelt in a city called Naz'-a-reth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Naz'-a-rene'.

Golden Text.—*"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"* (Matt 2: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Hosea 11: 1-12.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- April 14. M.....Abraham Sojourns in Egypt (Gen. 12: 10-20)
- April 15. T.....Joseph Sold into Egypt (Gen. 37: 29-36)
- April 16. W.....Jacob Moved into Egypt (Gen. 46: 1-7)
- April 17. T.....Israel Enslaved in Egypt (Ex. 1: 8-22)
- April 18. F.....Israel Delivered from Egypt (Ex. 14: 21-31)
- April 19. S.....Jews Warned Not to Go to Egypt (Jer. 42: 7-17)
- April 20. S.....Egypt to be Base Among Nations (Ezek. 29: 8-16)

TIME.—4 B. C.

Places.—Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the Angel, Mary, Joseph, Herod, and the Wise Men.

**Introduction**

The Jews have been connected with Egypt one way or another from the very beginning of their national history. Abraham had been in Canaan but a short time when on account of a famine in the land he went to live in Egypt. It was at this time that he told the half-truth that Sarah was his sister. (Gen. 12: 10-20.) It is significant that while he was in Egypt no mention is made of the erection of an altar. When people are conscious of wrong in their lives, there is little inclination to worship God. There is some interest in the fact that Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, was an Egyptian and that Ishmael, her son, took a wife out of the land of Egypt. (Gen. 21: 21.)

The next event of any importance is the sale of Joseph by his brethren to a group of Midianites, who in turn sold him into Egypt. (Gen. 37: 36.) There Joseph prospered until he became second in authority in Egypt. Again on account of famine, Jacob sent his sons into Egypt to buy grain. On their second trip Joseph made himself known to them and made arrangements for the entire family to move into Egypt. When Jacob was 130 years old he moved his family into the northeastern section of Egypt, the

land of Goshen. There he lived until his death and was carried back to Canaan in great pomp for his burial. Not long after the death of Joseph, there arose a Pharaoh who enslaved the people. God heard the groanings of his people and saw the injustice they were bearing and sent Moses to deliver them. From the time of the deliverance until the time of David and Solomon little mention is made of Egypt in connection with the Jews. Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh. (1 Kings 11: 1.) Soon after Solomon's death Shisak king of Egypt waged war on Jerusalem and took away much treasure. It is told by some that this invasion was caused by the expectation of the Egyptians that Solomon's son by the daughter of Pharaoh should have the throne. In later days the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel warned the kings of Judah not to put their trust in alliances with the kings of Egypt. Jeremiah was left in Jerusalem at his request when the rest of the people were carried into captivity. But through treachery and murder of the leader of the little group, Jeremiah was carried into Egypt where in all probability he died. (2 Kings 25: 25, 26; Jer. 43: 5-7.)

**Golden Text Explained**

1. **Moving at God's Bidding.** Matthew tells us that Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a righteous man. (Matt. 1: 19.) We are told but very little about him in the scriptures. In fact, it seems that he died before Jesus began his public ministry. But every act of which we have a record bears out Matthew's estimate of him. So far as we know he never took any

important step with reference to Mary and her son without having direct authority from the Lord, and it is clearly intimated that he followed faithfully and minutely every direction which the Lord gave him with reference to the care of Mary and her son. When he found that Mary was with child, he decided to put her away privately instead of making a pub-

lie example of her. (Matt. 1: 19.) But while he was thinking on these matters an angel appeared to him in a dream telling him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 1: 20.) From Matthew's account we gather that Joseph immediately did what the angel directed him to do, for "Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife." (Matt. 1: 24.) The next direction which Joseph received from the Lord was to take the mother and her child into Egypt, and Matthew tells us that he arose and took the young child and his mother by night. There was no questioning of the command, nor was there any hesitation in complying with it. And the language of our text is the third command to Joseph, to arise and take the young child back to the land of Israel. The fourth direction from the Lord was in another dream in which he was directed to go to Nazareth. On each of these occasions we have (1) Joseph listening attentively to what the Lord had to say, (2) immediate compliance with the direction given, and (3) a compliance without question or argument. In this way Joseph sets an unusually fine example for our obedience today. Those who hesitate or question the reasonableness of a command or argue whether or not it is essential have not that faith and submission to God's will which characterized Joseph.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Flight into Egypt (Matt. 2: 12-15)

*Being warned of God in a dream.* This verse refers to the direction given the wise men who came to visit Jesus. Herod had told them to find the child and bring him word so that he might worship him. Knowing his murderous intent, God warned the wise men to return to their country by another way.

*Arise and take the young child and his mother.* This is the direction which Joseph received in a dream from an angel of the Lord. We are not given directions in such manner today, but we should be as quick to heed the admonitions and directions of the Lord given us in the Bible as

2. They Are Dead That Sought the Young Child's Life. The plural *they* has given some difficulty in this place. So far as is known Herod the Great is the only one who sought the life of Jesus. His son Antipater may have been associated with him in the slaughter of the innocents. It is known that he had the same cruel disposition that his father had and that he had ambitions to reign in his father's stead. It was through his influence largely that the two sons of Herod's favorite wife were slain, and in about two years, and just five days before the death of Herod, Antipater was executed by order of his father. His death took place the same year Jesus was born, so it is possible that Herod and his son Antipater are mentioned as those who sought the young child's life.

3. Men and Movements Perish, but Jesus Lives On. Though Herod was the first to oppose Jesus for a while and die in utter failure, he was not the last. The Jewish leaders opposed him vehemently and thought they triumphed over him when they forced Pilot to condemn him to death. But today their names are remembered only to their shame, while the name of Jesus is loved and revered and adored by millions of people. Infidels and atheists in every generation since that day have blasphemed his worthy name. They have died and have been forgotten, but Jesus lives on in the hearts and lives of people in every land.

Joseph was to heed the directions given him in dreams. The fact that God's word is written makes it no less effective or binding than if it were given to us in dreams and visions. This is a truth which many religious people are slow to believe and accept. They think they would do anything the Lord tells them to do provided he would tell them in a dream or a vision. But our disobedience stems not from the manner in which we are informed of the Lord's will, but in the disposition of heart we have toward the Lord and his expressed will. (Luke 16: 27-31.)

*Be thou there until I tell thee.* Joseph was willing not only to go at the

Lord's commandment, but also to wait. If the Lord made any other appearances or statements to Joseph until time for him to leave, it is not known. He had his orders to wait until further direction. His faith in God, his submission to the will of God, and his dependence upon God for direction enabled him to wait in patience.

*Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.* Here is proof of God's foreknowledge and an example of his action in view of his foreknowledge. There are a number of things in this chapter which illustrate God's foreknowledge. The place where Jesus was born, the time of his birth, the intentions of Herod when he asked the wise men to tell him where Jesus was, and the character of Archelaus and Joseph's fear of him were all foreknown of God. Prophecies were made hundreds of years before these events, and plans were laid in keeping with God's foreknowledge. Why should anyone doubt today that the details of our lives are known to God?

*Until the death of Herod.* There is no way of knowing how old Jesus was at the time he was taken to Egypt, nor is it possible to determine how long he stayed there, though chronologists usually say it was less than a year.

*Out of Egypt did I call my son.* Matthew says that the flight into Egypt was made "that it might be fulfilled" which was spoken by the prophet. We are not to get the idea that Herod's attitude toward Jesus and the flight of Joseph were ordered simply because a certain prophecy had to be fulfilled. This prophecy is from Hosea 11: 1. Its primary application was to the people of Israel, and if it were not for Matthew's use of it, we would not see clearly its application to Jesus. We ought therefore to be careful when reading the prophecies of the Old Testament lest we make an unscriptural interpretation. There is also a suggestion in this of a parallel between the life of Jesus and the life of the nation of Israel. Both were forced into Egypt, both were called out of Egypt, and both moved under the providence of God.

## II. Slaughter of the Innocents (Matt. 2: 16-18)

*Herod was mocked by the wise men.* Herod was not accustomed to being disobeyed. No one of his subjects had the courage to refuse to do his bidding. When the wise men disobeyed his command, Matthew says he "was exceeding wroth." This was no unusual temper for Herod. Few men of history have more cruel murders to their credit than Herod.

*Slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem.* "Baffled in the hope of attaining his object through the magi, the reckless tyrant sought to secure it by an indiscriminate slaughter of all the children in Bethlehem and its immediate neighborhood, from two years old and under. True, considering the population of Bethlehem, their number could only have been small—probably twenty at most. But the deed was none the less atrocious, and these infants may justly be regarded as the first witnesses of Christ, the blossom of martyrdom." (Edersheim.) Josephus makes no mention of this slaughter and for this reason critics have doubted Matthew's account. But the fact that Josephus makes no mention of it may be accounted for in that Josephus, not being a Christian, would not go out of his way to record anything in favor of Christ and his church. Next, if the number of children slaughtered was as small as Edersheim suggests, it was a rather trivial incident as compared with other atrocities of Herod. It is also possible that the decree was given and carried out in secret and that Josephus might not have known about it.

*Then was fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy.* Here again Matthew uses a prophecy not in its primary application. This is taken from Jeremiah 31: 15. It refers to the people of Jerusalem being taken into captivity. They were collected at Ramah, which is some six miles northwest of Jerusalem. There the weak and aged and sick who were unable to make the journey were killed, and from that point they began their mournful trek across the desert to Babylon. This was in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin, together with that of Judah and many of the Levites, made up the kingdom

of Judah which was then being led into captivity. Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, and Jacob's beloved wife. For this reason her name is used instead of either of the other wives of Jacob. Jeremiah uses these beautiful words to describe the sorrow produced by the captivity and the persecution the Jews were undergoing. She is represented as refusing to be comforted or to cease her mourning for her children "because they are not." Those who had not been slain were taken into captivity, which to the Jew was worse than death. That this statement of Jeremiah was intended to be a prophecy of the death of the innocents by Herod, no one would guess by reading it. Nor is it necessary for us to conclude that it is definitely a prophecy simply because Matthew says that in the slaughter of the innocents these words of Jeremiah were fulfilled. He sees in the two events a parallel. As Rachel wept for her children so the mothers of Bethlehem wept for theirs.

### III. Return from Egypt (Matt. 2: 19-23)

*But when Herod was dead.* Herod reigned thirty-seven years. His reign was long and bloody. He killed his wives and several of his children. He had one son put to death only five days before his own death. He made his sister and her husband swear that they would put to death a great number of prominent men whom he imprisoned during his last illness so there would be mourning in his realm at the time of his funeral.

*He arose and took the young child and his mother.* The death of Herod was a signal for the return of Joseph with his family from Egypt. Since both Herod and his son Antipater were dead, it was safe for them to return. Only three of Herod's sons outlived him, and at the time of his death his kingdom was divided between the three.

*Archelaus was reigning over Judah.* When Joseph knew that Archelaus was reigning in Judah, he feared to return to Bethlehem. This indicates that Joseph preferred to live in Bethlehem instead of his former home in Nazareth. Joseph's fears with reference to Archelaus were justified by subsequent conduct of the ruler. At

one time he had three thousand people put to death in Jerusalem. He paid no attention to the law of Moses with reference to marriage. Though Augustus Caesar allowed him to rule about nine years over Idumaea, Judea, and Samaria, he banished him on account of his wickedness, and it is supposed that he died in banishment.

*He withdrew into the parts of Galilee.* Galilee and Peraea fell to Herod's son, called Antipas. Antipas was the son of Herod's Samaritan wife. Antipas is said to have been a rather mild ruler, interested more in satisfying his lusts than in oppressing people. It was Antipas that married his brother's wife, for which he was rebuked by John the Baptist. Under the influence of his wife he went to Rome to gain the title of king instead of tetrarch. He was opposed before Caesar by Agrippa, and was condemned to perpetual banishment. It is said that Herodias voluntarily shared his punishment and that both of them died in exile.

*He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.* Nazareth was a small town on the south regions of Lebanon overlooking the plain of Esdraelon. The origin of the disrepute in which Nazareth was held is not certainly known. All the inhabitants of Galilee were looked upon with contempt by the people of Judah because they spoke a ruder dialect, were less cultivated, and were exposed by reason of their position to contact with the heathen. But this hardly explains why Nazareth had such a hard name because it was a resident of Cana of Galilee who asked if anything good could come out of Nazareth. The fact that the people of Nazareth attempted to kill Jesus, expelled him from their city twice, and were so willful in their unbelief that he performed few miracles among them, and that he made his home in Capernaum (Matt. 4: 13) indicate the moral status of the people of Galilee.

*That he should be called a Nazarene.* The word Nazarene simply means a citizen of Nazareth, but the meaning of Nazareth is uncertain. It is generally thought to mean a shoot or a sprout, so when men called Jesus the Nazarene in ridicule, they unconsciously used one of the names given in prediction of him as the Messiah.

**Topics for Discussion**

1. God works out his purposes in spite of opposition of kings and other rulers.
2. Joseph moved only when he was instructed by the Lord to do so. If we expect to please the Lord, we must learn what is his will, and be willing to do his will immediately.

3. Joseph and Mary were mindful of the treasure intrusted to them in the infant Jesus and so were most careful to preserve his life and cultivate his mind. Parents today should follow their example in training the imperishable souls committed to their care.

**Questions for the Class**

- What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.
- Introduction**
- What is the first connection that Abraham and his family had with Egypt?  
What is the second contact the family of Abraham had with Egypt?  
How old was Jacob when he moved to Egypt?  
What connection did the Jews have with Egypt in the time of Solomon?  
What message did the major prophets give the kings of Judah concerning Egypt?

- Was Joseph told how long to remain in Egypt?  
What is there in our lesson which indicates the foreknowledge of God?  
What do you know of the length of time Jesus stayed in Egypt?  
What prophecy was fulfilled by this flight into Egypt?  
What may we learn from this about the interpretation of prophecy?  
What parallel is there between the life of Jesus and the life of Israel as a nation?

**The Slaughter of the Innocents**

- Golden Text Explained**
- What do you know of Joseph, the husband of Mary?  
What decision on the part of Joseph shows his kindness toward Mary?  
What is there in the lesson to indicate Joseph's entire submission to the will of God?  
In what three ways does Joseph set an example for our obedience?  
Who were seeking the life of Jesus?  
What do you know of the cruelty of Herod?  
What is said of the enduring qualities of men and movements as compared to Jesus?

- Did the wise men follow the instructions of Herod?  
About how many infants were slaughtered?  
What is the probable reason why Josephus makes no mention of this incident?  
What prophecy was fulfilled in the slaughter of the innocents?  
What was the primary meaning of this prophecy?  
Would we take this passage from Jeremiah to be a prophecy of this slaughter without the aid of inspiration?

**Return from Egypt**

- Flight into Egypt**
- What instruction did Herod give the wise men?  
What instruction did the angel give Joseph?

- What do you know of the reign of Herod?  
Why did Joseph not return to Bethlehem?  
Why did Joseph go to Galilee?  
What do you know of the city of Nazareth?  
What reputation did Nazareth have?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

**Lesson IV—April 27, 1952**

**THE YEARS IN NAZARETH**

**The Lesson Text**

Luke 2: 40-51: Mark 6: 3

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

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'-sa-lem at the feast of the passover.

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

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Je'-sus tarried behind in Je-ru'-sa-lem: and his parents knew it not;

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

45 And when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, seeking for him.

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

47 And all that heard him were

amazed at his understanding and his answers.

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

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the

saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Jo'-ses, and Ju'-das, and Si'-mon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”* (Luke 2: 52.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 6: 1-6.

### Daily Bible Readings

- April 21. M..... Teaching of Jewish Children (Deut. 6: 1-9)
- April 22. T..... A Synagogue Service (Luke 4: 14-22)
- April 23. W..... Another Synagogue Scene (Matt. 12: 9-14)
- April 24. T..... Jesus Lived in Capernaum (Matt. 4: 12-22)
- April 25. F..... Timothy's Home Training (2 Tim. 1: 3-14)
- April 26. S..... Training in Christian Home (Eph. 6: 1-9)
- April 27. S..... Thoughts for the Young (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)

TIME.—For Luke, 4-8 B.C.; Mark, 27 B.C.

PLACE.—Nazareth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his family.

### Introduction

We could wish to know more about the home life of Jesus. We can only suppose that his home life differed little if any from that of the average in Nazareth. Nazareth is known to have been composed of poor people. "But Nazareth was not the city of the wealthy or influential, and such festive evening entertainments, with elaborate ceremoniousness of reception, arranging of guests according to rank, and rich spread of board, would be rarely, if ever, witnessed in those quiet homes. The same simplicity would prevail in dress and manners." (Edersheim.) Though manual labor was not held in contempt among the Jews, the carpenter's trade was not a lucrative trade, and Jesus undoubtedly grew up in a poor home. It is very probable that Joseph died about the time Jesus was able to take over the responsibilities of the home. Though we have not positive proof that Jesus worked at the carpenter's trade, there is every probability that he did so. It was considered an inexcusable sin for Jewish parents to neglect to teach their sons a trade.

We may get some idea of the inter-

ests and activities of Jesus during youth by noting his acquaintance with the ordinary things of life in his teaching. He knew the habits of farmers, the nature of birds and animals. He knew the seasons for sowing and reaping; he knew the sorrows and suffering of the sick and the dying. He knew the nature of the rich, the oppression of the poor, the exactions of the tax collector, and the conniving of unjust judges. He came in contact with the prevailing political and social ideas of his time. Edersheim thinks that James was a disciple of the school of Shammai, and that his brother Simon was a member of the nationalist party called Zelots.

This desire to look into the life of Jesus as a youth has found expression in the books of the Apocrypha. In the book of "I Infancy" there are a number of impossible stories concerning his childhood. In one Jesus is pictured as causing the death of a boy who was acting a bully. In another his teacher lifted his hand to whip him, and the hand withered and the teacher soon died. In one Jesus is pictured as making clay birds and



*The grace of God was upon him.* Luke indicates that on account of the growth of Jesus in strength and wisdom, the grace of God was upon him. Though Jesus never knew any sin, yet he grew in the grace or favor of God. As a human being, he cultivated the graces which his father intended he should have, and as he increased in these characteristics he enjoyed more and more the grace of God.

*His parents went every year to Jerusalem.* All male Jews were commanded to go to Jerusalem three times each year—once for the Passover, once for Pentecost, or feast of first fruits, and once for the Feast of Tabernacles. (Lev. 23.) Wives and children were not commanded to go, though they often accompanied their husbands. At the time of our lesson Jesus and his parents were going up for the feast of the Passover.

*When he was twelve years old.*

Adam Clarke suggests that Jewish boys were expected to begin attending these feasts at the age of twelve, since according to Jewish law it was the age at which they were obliged to learn a trade. Whether we are justified or not, we usually think of children arriving at the age of accountability at twelve. It is usually agreed by commentators that Jesus got a new vision of his responsibility and his relationship to God.

*When they had fulfilled the days.* The feast extended over eight days. The Passover meal was eaten on the first day, and on the second day the first ripe barley was waved before the Lord. With the third day there was nothing of special interest to detain the people and they might, without violating the law, return home.

*The boy Jesus tarried behind.* What thoughts filled the boy's mind as he beheld the scenes in the temple we can never know. But there are some things suggested in a general way in the events which transpired at this time. Surely by this time Mary had told him something of the unusual events connected with his birth. He shows surprise that his parents would be uneasy about him, or expect to find him anywhere other than the temple. He calls it his Father's house. May we not from these things con-

clude that at this time Jesus got a glimmer of his relation to God and of his mission in the world?

*Supposing him to be in the company.* Since Jews traveled in large companies to and from these feasts, it is not surprising that a child would not be missed for some time. When they could not find him in their own company they sought for him among the kinsfolk, and then among their acquaintances. Some have used this as the basis for a lesson as to where we may expect to find Jesus today. Most religious people would be offended to have it suggested to them that Jesus is not in their own company, or in the company of their kinsfolk and acquaintances, but when Joseph and Mary found him not in either of these companies they went back to Jerusalem. So a good lesson is suggested that instead of expecting to find Jesus in the theories and practices of our parents and kinsfolk, it is better to go back to Jerusalem and the inspired apostles to learn the doctrines and practices which are acceptable to the Lord.

## II. Jesus Visits the Learned (Luke 2: 46-49)

*After three days they found him in the temple.* Whether they were actually hunting for him three days, or whether this three days included the day which was consumed on their journey is not clear, but perhaps it is to be counted that one whole day was spent in Jerusalem and on the third day they found him in the temple.

*Sitting in the midst of the teachers.* We are told that in the temple enclosure there were three synagogues and that in these the rabbis expounded the law. Jewish tradition gives other instances of precocious students taking part in popular discussions during such public feasts. Some of the teachers of that time who may have been present were the two great leaders of thought, Hillel and Shammai. Gamaliel, the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, Jonathan, the compiler of several sacred books, and perhaps Nicodemus may have been among the number.

*Both hearing and asking questions.* A good student is characterized by his ability to hear as well as to speak. But the fact that Jesus both

heard and asked is an indication that the conversation was about on his level of intelligence. It would be a mistake to think that he had as much knowledge at twelve as he had when he began his public ministry. He could not therefore put the teachers to shame by exposing their ignorance and their false theories. Edersheim devotes considerable space to a consideration of possible questions Jesus asked on that occasion. He thinks that Jesus may have discussed the Passover and its meaning in his life and mission; or that he might have discussed his relationship to the temple, which the writer thinks he may have come to understand for the first time. Such conjectures are interesting, but not conclusive, and therefore not too profitable.

*Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?* We could wish that Jesus had answered his mother's question. Clarke suggests that Mary was more at fault than Jesus. It would also be interesting to know if Jesus was conscious of the fact that his parents had left Jerusalem. Was he so intensely interested in his new religious emotions that he completely forgot where he was and when he was supposed to leave? Mary's reproach indicates that they had not left before their scheduled time, and hence we must conclude that Jesus either was not conscious of the passing of time, or that he deliberately caused his parents this concern. Our respect for him will not allow us to accept this last conjecture. Hence, we can hardly escape the conclusion that in his new and exciting religious emotions he was not conscious of the passing of time.

*Thy father and I sought thee.* It is noticeable that Mary does the speaking and that she calls Joseph the father of Jesus. Since Jesus was legally the son of Joseph, and since his miraculous conception was not generally known, we conclude from this incident that Mary generally referred to Jesus as the son of Joseph.

*Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?* Jesus showed surprise that they would have been seeking for him, or that it would have been necessary for them to seek for him. There is in this an implication that they should have known where

he was. Whether to translate the statement of Jesus "in my Father's house," or "about my Father's business," it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine. The Greek will permit either translation, the one as well as the other. Some have seen in this reply a mild rebuke to Mary for calling Joseph the father of Jesus, since Jesus immediately said he must be in his Father's house. Whether it was intentional or not, there is certainly a sharp contrast in the use of the word father. This also implies that Mary had talked with Jesus about the circumstances of his birth and of her hope for his future. If they had not talked of such things, Jesus would not have expected her to understand his staying in the temple. In this incident we find unusually good material to use in teaching children their responsibility to God. Jesus sets for them a fine example of beginning early in life to be interested in things spiritual and of giving one's life wholly and without reservation to the accomplishment of the Father's business.

### III. Jesus in His Home (Luke 2: 50, 51; Mark 6: 3)

*They understood not the saying.* In spite of his miraculous conception, the visit of the angels, and all the unusual circumstances of his birth, time and the monotony of association seems to have dimmed their perception of the destiny of Jesus. Yet we must not measure their understanding of these affairs by our understanding of them because of the fuller light or revelation thrown upon them for us. Yet it is said that his mother kept these sayings in her heart. Undoubtedly she was caused to think again of all the unusual experiences attending his birth and of the many questions her child had asked, as well as the answers he had been able to give to her questions. Certainly we cannot believe that this experience at Jerusalem with the doctors of the law was very far out of line with conversations which had taken place in the home. We are inclined to attach miraculous importance to the public activities of Jesus and forget his home life. While undoubtedly the truth of the matter is that he was

acting and speaking in the presence of these doctors in the very same way he acted and spoke at home. Perhaps the excitement of the religious environment at the great feast stimulated his mind somewhat beyond that of the everyday home sessions, but not to any miraculous extent.

*He went down with them and was subject unto them.* How much is implied in the statement that he should be in his Father's house or about his Father's business is difficult to know. Since he went back home with his parents and lived a quite ordinary life, we cannot conclude that he thought it was time for him to begin his life's work. His being subject to his parents during these years is a good example for young people today. Though it is not implicitly stated, most everyone supposes that he worked at the carpenter's trade with Joseph. Apocryphal stories relate how he made furniture much better than anyone else, and related one impossible story of the miraculous enlargement of a chair which Joseph made too small by mistake.

*Is not this the carpenter?* This is the nearest we have to a positive statement that Jesus followed the carpenter's trade. The Jewish father was bound by law and custom to do

four things for his son: (1) to circumcise him, (2) to redeem him. Under the law all the first-born males had to be redeemed. (Ex. 13: 13.) The price of redemption paid by the father was five shekels. (3) To teach him the law; (4) to teach him a trade. The father who failed to teach his son a trade was looked upon as having taught him to steal. Hence we may safely conclude that Joseph taught Jesus a trade, and since his countrymen were astonished that a carpenter should do such things as he performed, we may safely conclude that Jesus learned the carpenter's trade from Joseph.

*The brother of James, Joses, Judas, Simon.* Scholars are hopelessly divided on whether these were the children of Joseph and Mary and therefore the half brothers and sisters of Jesus, or whether they were cousins of Jesus. Catholics take the latter view as well as some Protestants. Edersheim says, "It seems to us as if the primary meaning of the terms would scarcely have been called in question but for a theory of false asceticism and an undervaluing of the sanctity of the marriage state." Needless to say, the writer believes these to have been the children of Joseph and Mary.

**Topics for Discussion**

1. The apocryphal stories of Jesus reveal a tendency in people to minimize the humanity of Jesus and make him a God in his youth.
2. Jesus dignified honest labor and humble poverty by being reared in a

home where both were well known.

3. Jesus showed submission to his parents by being subject to them, and to his heavenly Father by waiting patiently several years after he became a man to begin his public work.

**Questions for the Class**

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

**Introduction**

- What indication do we have that Jesus grew up in a poor home?
- What was considered an inexcusable sin in Jewish parents?
- What is there in our lesson to indicate the interests and activities of Jesus as a youth?
- What writings seek to satisfy people's curiosity concerning the youth of Jesus?
- Do you know some of the stories related in these writings?

**Golden Text Explained**

- Name some groups who have denied the humanity of Jesus.
- What in the life of Jesus implies his humanity?

Give some statements of scripture concerning his humanity.  
Name and discuss the three phases of the growth of Jesus.

**Jesus Goes to Jerusalem**

- What writer emphasizes the humanity of Jesus? Who emphasizes his divinity?
- How could Jesus grow in the grace or favor of God?
- For what three occasions were people expected to go to Jerusalem?
- How old was Jesus at the time of our lesson?
- Where did Jesus think his parents would expect to find him?
- What practical lesson may be drawn from the fact that Mary expected Jesus to be with her kinsfolk and acquaintances?

**Jesus Visits the Learned**

- How many synagogues are said to have been in the temple enclosure?

What great Jewish teachers may have been present at the time?  
 Did Jesus have as much knowledge at the age of twelve as he did when he began his public ministry?  
 Do you think Jesus intentionally stayed behind in Jerusalem?  
 What is suggested in the use of the term "Father" by Jesus and Mary?  
 What is there in this incident to suggest that Mary had told Jesus of the unusual circumstances of his birth?  
 What good example does Jesus set for children?  
 Jesus in His Home  
 Did his parents understand the meaning of his statement?

Was his conversation with the doctors any different from his conversations with his parents?  
 Did the statement that it was time to be about his Father's business mean that he should begin his public ministry?  
 What four things was a Jewish father bound by law to do for his son?  
 What proof do we have that Jesus was taught the carpenter's trade?  
 What proof do we have that Mary had children other than Jesus?  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson V—May 4, 1952

JESUS BEGINS HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

The Lesson Text

Matt. 4: 13, 17-25

13 And leaving Naz'-a-reth, he came and dwelt in Ca-per'-na-um, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zeb-u-lun and Naph'-ta-li:

17 From that time began Je'-sus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 And walking by the sea of Gal'-i-lee, he saw two brethren, Si'-mon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left the nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zeb'-e-dee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zeb'-e-dee

their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

23 And Je'-sus went about in all Gal'-i-lee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people.

24 And the report of him went forth into all Syr'-i-a: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes from Gal'-i-lee and Decap'-o-lis and Je-ru'-sa-lem and Judae'-a and from beyond the Jordan.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 4: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 4: 16-32.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 28. M..... John's Work of Preparation (Matt. 3: 1-12)
- April 29. T..... The Baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-17)
- April 30. W..... The Temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4: 1-11)
- May 1. T..... Testimony of John (John 1: 19-34)
- May 2. F..... Calls His First Disciples (John 1: 35-51)
- May 3. S..... Mark's Record of These Matters (Mark 1: 14-28)
- May 4. S..... Went About Doing Good (Acts 10: 34-43)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

## Introduction

Our lesson plan omits two very important events in the life of Christ to which we give passing attention at this time. The first is his baptism. Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan and asked John to baptize him. He thought enough of the importance of the act to make this long journey that he might obey this commandment of God. A considerable portion of the religious world looks upon baptism as simply an outward ordinance of religion with which one may comply or not as he sees fit. Another group of people of high moral rank, but who profess no religion, hope to be acceptable to God without being baptized. If the sinless Son of God could not ignore this commandment and be pleasing to his Father, how do people today expect to be pleasing to God without it? The usual argument is that since baptism is an outward ordinance, it is of little importance as compared with having a right heart. People usually say that if one's heart is right, it makes no difference whether one conforms to the outward ceremonies of religion or not. But the question arises, can one's heart be right when he refuses to comply with any demand of God?

Furthermore, if one is obedient in one realm and disobedient in another, will he not be looked upon as disobedient? Must one violate every law on the statute books of the land in order to be condemned as a criminal? So if one disregards the outward ceremonies of religion, is he not clearly judged a sinner?

The next matter of interest is that of the temptation of Jesus. In this temptation the devil used the same three avenues of approach which he used on Eve. John says the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are all that is in the world. (1 John 2: 16.) When Jesus was tempted to turn the stones into bread, the avenue of the lust of the flesh was used; when he was shown the kingdoms of the world he was approached through the lust of the eyes; when he was encouraged to jump from the pinnacle of the temple in view of the throng, he was tempted by the avenue of the pride of life. Jesus set us an example of resisting a temptation by his use of the scriptures. Having laid up the word of God in his heart, he was able to say, "It is written." (Psalm 119: 11.)

## Golden Text Explained

1. Repent. Jesus preached the same message that John had been preaching for six months. The necessity of repentance is seen in the fact that the people of Israel had broken their covenant with God. The writer of Hebrews says, "For they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." (Heb. 8: 9b.) It was necessary for the people of Israel to repent of having continued not in the covenant that they might be in position to receive the kingdom when it was established.

The nature of repentance is not too well understood. Some mistake sorrow for sin to be repentance. There are two kinds of sorrow, the sorrow of the world and godly sorrow. (2 Cor. 7: 10.) Judas was moved with the sorrow of the world which works death. (Matt. 27: 3.) Peter was moved by godly sorrow and went from the place of trial to weep. (Luke 22: 54-60.) Paul teaches us

that godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation. (2 Cor. 7: 10.) Since sorrow works repentance, it cannot be the same as repentance. The cause cannot be the effect. There are others who mistake reformation for repentance. But reformation is the effect or result of repentance. Paul speaks of the earnest care which was wrought in the Corinthians and the cleansing of themselves with fear and zeal. These are a part of the reformation wrought in the church at Corinth by the repentance worked by godly sorrow. Hence repentance must be something between sorrow for sin and a reformed life. Jesus says the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. (Matt. 12: 41.) By turning to the Old Testament we learn, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways." (Jonah 3: 10a.) Jesus says they repented, and Jonah that they turned from their evil ways.

Hence, we conclude that repentance is the turning from evil to God. Sorrow for sin causes this change of heart, and this change in heart causes reformation.

2. **Kingdom of Heaven.** Jesus urged people to repent on account of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven. Mark says that Jesus began his preaching saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1: 15.) The prophet had declared that the kingdom would be established. (Dan. 2: 44; Isa. 2: 2-4.) Paul said God sent Jesus in the fullness of time. (Gal. 4: 4.) Hence we are forced to conclude that the time for the establishment of the kingdom had come. There are some who admit that the time had arrived, but on account of being rejected by the Jews Jesus postponed the establishment of his kingdom and built the church instead. There are two things wrong with this position. (1) Jesus was not rejected because he tried to establish a temporal kingdom to reign on David's throne in Jerusalem. The Jews tried to take him by

force and establish such a kingdom. (John 6: 15.) His enthusiastic reception on his triumphal entry is proof that he could have established such a kingdom. (Matt. 21: 1-11.) He was rejected because he refused to establish such a kingdom. (2) The next thing wrong with this doctrine is that it fails to recognize the fact that the Holy Spirit uses the terms kingdom and church as synonyms. Jesus said, "I will build my church; and ... I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom." (Matt. 16: 18, 19.) Unless Jesus built one institution and gave his apostles the keys to another, entirely different institution, the church and the kingdom are the same. Jesus appointed his disciples a kingdom that they might eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. (Luke 22: 29, 30.) Hence we conclude that the Lord's supper is to be eaten in the kingdom. Paul wrote that the Lord's supper is to be eaten in the church. (1 Cor. 11: 17ff.) Unless there are two institutions differing from each other in which the Lord's supper is to be eaten, the kingdom is the church.

### Exposition of the Text

I. Jesus As a Preacher (Matt. 4: 13, 17)

*Came and dwelt in Capernaum.* Capernaum was situated on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum, as much as, if not more than, any other city, was the center of our Lord's activities. Our text says that he left Nazareth and dwelt in Capernaum. In Mark 2: 1 we have the expression "in the house," and in the margin "at home," which scholars generally agree is an indication that he maintained this place as his home. This city would probably not be remembered were it not for the fact that the Lord lived and preached there. We might expect its citizens to appreciate Jesus enough to receive him and be loyal to his teachings, but because of their lack of faith Jesus says it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum. (Matt. 11: 23, 24.) From our text we gather that his preaching began at Capernaum, for following the statement that he came there to dwell we read, "From that time began

Jesus to preach." "The phrase expresses not merely 'at that time,' but 'from that time,' as the starting point." (Pulpit Commentary.) The message of Jesus was the same as that of John the Baptist. It was a message of repentance. Since the Jewish people generally had forsaken God, they needed to be called back into covenant relationship with him. By reading the twenty-third chapter of Matthew we get a picture of the religious leaders of that day, and since people are somewhat like their leaders, we have a fair picture of the average Jew. Jesus called them hypocrites because of their lack of respect and reverence for God. They were hypocrites because they tithed the little things as mint and anise, but left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. They were hypocrites because they were full of extortion and excess and because they made the appearance of righteousness but inwardly they were full of iniquity. Unless such people could be brought to repentance and reformation of life, they

would not be fit material out of which to build a kingdom. We should notice also the expression used by Matthew. According to him, Jesus preached that the "kingdom of heaven" is at hand. But Mark says the "kingdom of God is at hand." With but one exception (Matt. 19: 24), Matthew always uses the term kingdom of heaven. But Mark, Luke, and John always use the kingdom of God. It is the kingdom of heaven because it is from heaven, and it is heavenly in its nature. It is the kingdom of God because he is its great designer and author.

## II. Calls for Disciples (Matt. 4: 18-22)

*He saw two brethren.* Peter and Andrew, sons of John or Jonah, made their home in Capernaum. They made their living by engaging in fishing. According to John's record, these same two had been contacted some time earlier. (John 1: 40-42.) This occurred shortly after his baptism and temptation. It is said that John was in Bethany beyond the Jordan (John 1: 28), and it was the morrow after John bore witness of Jesus and pointed him out as the lamb of God that John again told Andrew and Philip that Jesus was the lamb of God. This would indicate that following his temptation he came back to the vicinity where John was baptizing to contact these disciples. However, it seems that they did not take this first contact as a call to permanent discipleship.

Come *ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.* The invitation to follow him implied discipleship. It was the custom in those days for teachers to go about over the country gathering disciples. These disciples went about with their teacher studying under his direction. The teacher not only gave them instruction, but gave them training as well in the things they were instructed to do. Hence, in this invitation Jesus bids them (1) to begin their study under him as teacher, and (2) to pattern their lives after him. Another thought is suggested in his use of the term *fishers of men.* "The word suggests care, patience, skill, endurance of privation, and fatigue." (Pulpit Commentary.) These men were acquainted with the hardships of the

fishermen's calling. Being now called to be fishers of men, they would not expect to enter a life of ease and luxury. They would expect their new calling to be one that would call for hard work, long hours, difficulties to overcome, and sometimes attended with little success. Successful fishermen know that it takes work to catch fish. Those who engage in it for pastime will occasionally catch a few. They may sometimes have large success, but the consistently successful fisherman is the man who puts both skill and labor into his work. So, the preacher who expects to be successful in winning men to Christ must be willing to put into his work both skill and labor. The unskilled may occasionally win a few people, and the lazy man may occasionally baptize a few people into Christ. But the consistently successful soul-winner is one who uses both skill and continued effort. The church which employs a preacher who is not willing to study and to work from person to person should give their preacher a few lessons in the art of fishing.

*He saw two other brethren.* These brethren were James and John, the sons of Zebedee. These two were the partners of Peter and Andrew in the business of fishing. (Luke 5: 10.) All four of these not only became disciples of Jesus, but were appointed as apostles. (Matt. 10: 2-4.) It is significant that Jesus called men from the lowly walks of life to be his apostles. Men of rank and position were unwilling to jeopardize their reputation by being followers. Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus was a prophet from God, yet on account of his prominence he was not willing to be a humble follower. Many of the rulers among the Jews (John 12: 42) believed in him, but for the sake of holding their place in the synagogue and the Sanhedrin they refused to confess him. The church began and for a long while grew among the poorer people. Such has been its history in every nation where it has gone, and in every community. Missionaries who expect to convert big businessmen and leaders in society will fail. Preachers who go into communities where the church is not known need not expect to convert the bankers, the city councilmen, and

the leaders of society; churches begin among the poor and humble and reach upward.

*They straightway left the boat and followed him.* There is a lesson to be gained in noticing that these men immediately accepted the call of Jesus. Their response was both immediate and final. When people have come to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, it is time for them to make their decision. If they dally around in making their decision, it is altogether probable that their Christian life will be characterized by continued dallying. The Lord wants people who are able to count the cost, to make a decision, and to act definitely upon it. The man who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of him. (Luke 9: 62.)

### III. Extent and Success of His Preaching (Matt. 4: 23-25)

*Jesus went about all Galilee.* This is the first circuit which Jesus made in Galilee. It is significant that Jesus did his first preaching in Galilee, a part of the country and a people despised by the orthodox Jews of Jerusalem. But being a little less orthodox by their contact with other nations, these people of Galilee were in better frame of mind to consider the teaching of Jesus.

*Teaching in their synagogues.* We notice that Jesus took advantage of the opportunities afforded in the synagogue. Being a Jew, he had access to the synagogue. And having a message for the people which he could take from their scriptures, he made use of every opportunity afforded.

*Teaching and preaching.* Some brethren make the mistake of failing to distinguish between teaching and preaching. Others think that all preaching is teaching, though not all teaching is preaching. The word preaching is from a Greek word which simply means to *bring good news, to announce glad tidings*. Of this word Vincent says, "The standing expression in the New Testament for the proclamation of the gospel; but confined to the *primary announce-*

*ment of the message and facts of salvation, and not including continuous instruction in the contents and connections of the message, which is expressed by DIDASKEIN (to teach).* Both words are used in Matt. 4: 23; 9: 35; 11: 1." (Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol: 1, page 30.) So the preaching of Jesus was simply his announcement of their need of repentance on account of the kingdom being near. But when he wished them to know the nature of the kingdom and the personal characteristics of citizens in the kingdom, and how they were to enter the kingdom he used another form called teaching.

*Divers diseases, possessed with demons.* It is said that as Jesus went about preaching and teaching he healed all manner of disease and sickness among the people. His reputation spread into the country around so that people were brought to him having all manner of diseases and people who were possessed with demons. The Holy Spirit thus makes a distinction between disease and demon possession. Modernists claim that there is no such thing as demon possession and account for such expressions as this on the ground of ignorance of the people of that day. They were simply sick, but thought they were possessed with demons. Jesus also made a similar distinction when he sent out his apostles. We read that he "gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." (Matt. 10: 1.) If there is no difference between demon possession and sickness, why did Jesus give them authority over both?

*There followed him great multitudes.* It is said that the report of his work went into all Syria which was the country lying north of Galilee. Decapolis was east of Galilee, and people from as far away as Jerusalem and some from beyond, or east of the Jordan, were in the crowds that followed him about Galilee. Hence, the preaching of Jesus was as popular as that of John when he first began to preach.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Though Jesus was not as austere and antisocial as John, his message

of repentance was as positive and effective. (Matt. 11: 18, 19.)

2. The apostles left good jobs to follow Jesus. They learned to be content with food and raiment in this life, and hoped for eternal life.

3. The result and proof of repentance is reformation—quitting sin.

Restoration, making right our wrongs as far as possible, is another result and proof of repentance. Where either reformation or restoration is lacking, the genuineness of one's repentance may well be questioned.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What shows the importance which Jesus attached to baptism?  
Why do many people attach little importance to baptism?  
Can one be obedient in one realm of activity while disobedient in another?  
What three avenues of approach did Satan use on Eve and Jesus?  
What does John say concerning the ways Satan has of tempting us?  
How was Jesus tempted by the lust of the flesh?  
Why was Jesus able to meet temptation?

#### Golden Text Explained

Why was repentance necessary on the part of the people to whom John preached?  
What two kinds of sorrow are mentioned in our lesson?  
Name persons who were moved by each of these kinds of sorrow.  
Make a distinction between godly sorrow and repentance and between repentance and reformation.  
Whom does Jesus give as a good example of repentance?  
What kingdom did John refer to as being at hand?  
Give two arguments to prove that the establishment of the kingdom was not postponed until the second coming of Christ.  
What proof can you give that the kingdom is the church?

#### Jesus as a Preacher

What evidence do we have that Jesus made his home in Capernaum?

How does the message of Jesus compare with that of John the Baptist?  
How do we get a fair picture of the religious life of the average Jew?  
What do you know of the use of the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God"?

#### Calls for Disciples

What two brethren did Jesus contact on this occasion?  
What previous contact had he had with them?  
What did the call to discipleship mean in that day?  
What did Jesus promise to make of these disciples?  
What must one do if he expects to be a successful fisher for men?  
Name two more disciples contacted on this occasion.  
Give some reasons why Jesus contacted men in humble stations of life.  
What good example did these four men set for people today?  
What characteristics does Jesus want in disciples today?

#### Extent and Success of His Preaching

In what section of the country did Jesus do much of his work?  
What two terms are used to express the work of Jesus?  
Can you make a distinction between teaching and preaching?  
Can you make a distinction between disease and demon possession?  
Name and locate the different districts from which the hearers of Jesus came.  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VI—May 11, 1952

### THE FIRST MIRACLE

#### The Lesson Text

##### John 2: 1-11

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Ca'-na of Gal'-i-lee; and the mother of Je'-sus was there:

2 And Je'-sus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when the wine failed, the mother of Je'-sus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 And Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Je'-sus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw

out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it.

9 And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of his signs did Je'-sus in Ca-na of Gal'-i-lee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*For no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.*” (John 3: 2b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 20: 30, 31; 1 Cor. 13: 8, 9.

### Daily Bible Readings

May 5. M.....	Miracle Showing Authority (Matt. 8: 5-13)
May 6. T.....	A Miracle of Power (Mark 4: 35-41)
May 7. W.....	A Miracle of Compassion (Luke 7: 11-17)
May 8. T.....	Miracles of Healing (Matt. 15: 29-31)
May 9. F.....	Providing Food by Miracle (John 6: 1-14)
May 10. S.....	A Miracle of Mercy (Mark 9: 14-29)
May 11. S.....	Miracle in Response to Faith (Matt. 15: 21-28)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Cana of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his mother, and wedding guests.

### Introduction

Miracles have a great part in the life of Christ. Those who deny the miraculous but accept the moral teachings of Jesus might be surprised if they were to delete all the passages which refer to the miraculous in the life and labors of Jesus. The miracles Jesus performed are proof of God's presence in him. Nicodemus realized this when he said no one could do the works which Jesus did except God be with him. (John 3: 1, 2.) Jesus himself used his miracles as proof of his divine mission. When John was put in prison, he sent a committee of his disciples to ask Jesus, “Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?” John wished to know either for his own satisfaction or for the instruction of his disciples whether Jesus, was the Messiah of prophecy. Jesus did not send back a yes or no answer. He said, “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.” (Matt. 11: 2-5.) Since the Old Testament predicted that the Messiah

would do such work (Isa. 35), Jesus expected John to conclude that he was the Messiah because he was doing these things.

If we refuse to accept the miraculous in the life of Christ, we would be inconsistent in accepting his moral teachings. We are dependent upon all the Four Gospels for a record of the teachings of Jesus during his personal ministry. If they have faithfully recorded his teachings, how can we assert that they have been unfaithful in recording the miraculous incidents. If they were mentally capable of recording his teaching, they were capable of taking knowledge of and recording the miraculous incidents of his life. If they were deceived as to the miracles he performed, we could not accept them as capable of remembering and recording his teaching. If they were guided by inspiration in recording his teaching, there is no reason to believe they were not inspired to record his miracles. Hence, men are inconsistent to accept the gospel records of the teaching of Christ and reject those same records as to his ability to work miracles.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. Miracles Are Proof of God's Presence.** Nicodemus realized that the works which Jesus did were beyond the power of human beings. But the statement of Nicodemus is not necessarily a confession of the divinity of Jesus. The apostles performed miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some prophets of the Old Testament as Elijah and Elisha performed miracles, so the performance of miracles is not proof of his divinity, but simply of the presence of God with him. The fact that God was with Jesus was sufficient to obligate all who beheld his miracles to accept him as a teacher come from God.

**2. Miracles Are Proof of God's Endorsement.** Miracles not only prove the presence of God, but they prove the endorsement of God upon the teaching done by the miracle worker. It is said that the Lord was with the apostles "and confirming the word by the signs that followed." (Mark 16: 20.) Again "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." (Heb. 2: 4.) Since God gave Jesus and his apostles the power to work miracles to confirm the word preached, we conclude that the miracles were an endorsement of the things preached. Since God cannot be false, we conclude that everything he endorses must be true. Since all the teaching of Jesus and the apostles was confirmed and endorsed by the Lord, we are bound to accept this teaching as true or brand God as false.

Jesus appealed to his miraculous works as the endorsement of his Father. On one occasion the Jews were about to stone him, and Jesus asked for which of his works they were going to stone him. The Jews replied that they were not stoning him for a good work, but for blasphemy. They contended that he blasphemed when he spoke as if he were equal to God. He replied by saying, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (John 10:

37, 38.) In this place Jesus teaches that his works justified his claims; he claimed to be the Son of God and on equality with the Father. (John 5: 22, 23.) Since the Father empowered him to perform the miracle and this power constitutes an endorsement of his teaching, we conclude that the Father endorsed his claim to equality with the Father. Again Jesus claimed the power of the resurrection. He said, in speaking of his life, "No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father." (John 10: 18.) Also he said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11: 25a.) As proof of his power of resurrection, he raised Lazarus when he had been dead four days. The Father gave him the power to work this miracle to prove his statement concerning the resurrection. If Jesus has not the power of resurrection, the Father endorsed by miracles a false statement. It is inconceivable that God should endorse a false statement. Hence, we conclude that he had the power of resurrection.

**3. Measuring Present-Day Wonder Workers.** There are those today who claim to have the power to work miracles. They do some wonderful things. Some of them may be beyond our power to explain. But there is an unailing rule by which we may determine whether these marvelous works are done by the power of God. Since miracles were performed for the purpose of confirming the word preached, all we need to do is to determine whether these modern miracle workers are teaching the truth. If they are teaching things unscriptural, we know the power to do their works is not from God. If God empowers men to perform these works, he is a party to the teaching of false doctrines. Miracles established the truth of things preached until those things were recorded. Since the teaching of Christ has been recorded by inspired writers, we are to measure teachers by their teaching and not by their works. John says for us to prove the spirits whether they are of

God and "hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh

is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God." (1 John 4: 2, 3.)

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Jesus Honors Marriage (John 2: 1, 2)

*There was a marriage in Cana.* Authorities are not agreed as to the location of this village. The majority seem to think it about five or six miles northeast of Nazareth. It was the home of Nathanael and was the scene of a second miracle when Jesus healed the son of a certain nobleman in Capernaum. (John 4: 46, 47.)

*The mother of Jesus was there.* Since Mary is spoken of as being there, but Jesus is spoken of as having been invited, some have concluded that Mary had some connection with this home or with those who were being married. There is a tradition according to Clarke that this was the marriage of John.

*Jesus also was bidden.* The fact that Jesus attended this wedding has been used and rightly so as proof of his endorsement of marriage. It may also be used as an endorsement of social activities. The Jews of his time made quite a social event of marriage. There was usually a whole week of festivities. This week ended with a wedding feast which was celebrated in the house of the bridegroom. After an all-day feast and a confession of their sins, the bride with her hair flowing and a myrtle wreath on her head, was conducted with music, singing, and dancing to the house of the bridegroom. The streets through which the nuptial procession passed were lined with people who greeted the joyous train and scattered cakes and roasted wheat before them. Wine was on hand for all to drink. When the procession reached the house of the bridegroom, the "marriage settlement" or dowry was given. The marriage could not be celebrated before this settlement was made and written. Following this comes varying in expense according to the circumstances of the parties were placed upon the heads of the bridal pair, who with their friends sat down to the waiting feast. This was enlivened by songs and riddles. Following the feast, over a cup of wine the **seven**

nuptial benedictions were said in the presence of at least ten persons, giving the last religious consecration to the marriage covenant.

#### II. Jesus Fills a Present Need (John 2: 3-10)

*When the wine failed.* Since the feast usually lasted a week, it was no uncommon thing for the supply of wine to run low. In fact, the ruler of the feast suggests that the best grade of wine was usually exhausted before the end of the feast. (Verse 10.)

*They have no wine.* This is the language of Mary and was evidently spoken with the thought that Jesus was able and would do something about it. Though she had never seen him work a miracle, she no doubt believed he could do so if necessary. There is no proof that she expected him to work a miracle on this occasion, but obviously she expected him to solve their difficulty.

*Woman, what have I to do with thee?* Some have taken the word *woman* to be a disrespectful address, but it is the same form used when he commended his mother to the care of John. (John 19: 26, 27.) Surely in his dying hour he would not be accused of disrespectful address. Next, it is thought by some that his statement is intended as a reproof or rebuke to Mary. It is not likely that he intended this as a rebuke. It may be that in these words Jesus meant to convey to Mary the idea that she was not to direct his activities in the spiritual realm. As a child he had been subject to her, and no doubt as a young man he had given due respect to her counsel and guidance, but with reference to his spiritual activities she must learn that he is under the direction of his heavenly Father, and not his earthly mother.

*Mine hour is not yet come.* Here again it is difficult to determine the exact meaning of his language. Does he mean to say that the time for the beginning of his miraculous work **has** not arrived; or does he mean to **say** it is not yet quite time to supply the need of this feast. Since he did work

a miracle on this occasion, we reject the former and accept the latter explanation. Perhaps the wine was simply running low and Mary, anxious about the situation, wished him to do something about it before the need was acutely felt. Jesus preferred to wait until the need was felt and everyone was aware of the failure of the wine. This would attract the attention of all the guests and would make them conscious of his power to supply their needs.

*Whatsoever he saith unto you do it.* From this language of Mary it is obvious that she did not consider the statement of Jesus to be a severe rebuke. It is also obvious that she expected him to comply with her request. This statement might well serve as a text for a sermon on obedience to Jesus. The term *whatsoever* should be stressed. Whether we can understand why he commands a certain thing or not, we are obligated to do it. Regardless of whether his commands are easy or difficult we are to do them.

*Six waterpots after the Jews' manner of purifying.* It is said that these waterpots contained two or three firkins apiece. Authorities differ on the capacity of these waterpots. Some say a firkin is as little as two and one-fourth gallons, while others say as much as nine gallons. The usual estimate is seven and one-half gallons. These waterpots were used for the purifying ceremonies of the Jews. In these they washed their hands and vessels. (Mark 7: 1-4.)

*The ruler of the feast.* When Jesus had the vessels filled with water, he told those serving to bear a sample of it to the ruler of this feast. This ruler was the one who presided over the feast and directed the ceremonies of the occasion. He occupied the place of honor at the end of the table and was expected to furnish and superintend the entertainment.

*Every man setteth on first the good wine.* The ruler of the feast had no knowledge of what Jesus had done. When he drank the wine he recognized its superiority over that which had been used. The language of this ruler has been construed to mean that the guests were drunk on this occasion. However, this is not a neces-

sary conclusion, nor in this case a correct conclusion. The ruler simply stated that which was customary. It was common practice that the best wine was served first and then the inferior. But on this occasion so far as the ruler of the feast knew, the bridegroom had reserved the best wine to serve last. The reason for this common practice is stated by the ruler that when men have drunk to their fill, they reach the point where they are not particular about the grade of wine they drink. There is nothing in the connection to suggest that Jesus endorsed the drinking of enough wine to make a man careless of the grade he drank. In the next place, there is nothing in the connection to suggest that the guest at this feast had drunk to the extent that they could not distinguish between good and poor wine. In fact, it is obvious that the ruler of the feast was still capable of making the distinction. From this we may conclude that the other guests were of a similar character. And finally, we cannot conceive of Jesus, his mother, and his disciples being present on an occasion when people were so drunk they could not distinguish between a good and poor grade of wine.

*Thou hast kept the good wine until now.* By the term *good wine* some have understood stronger wine. Albert Barnes produces a number of ancient authorities to prove that good wine was not necessarily stronger wine, but wine which had not been adulterated by the addition of some other juice. He quotes Pliny as saying that good wine was that which was destitute of spirit. Many have used this scripture to justify their habit of drinking wine. No mention is made of Jesus drinking on this occasion. Next, the ordinary wine of today has intoxicating elements added which the common wine of Jesus' day did not have. It was simply the juice of the grape either fermented or unfermented with no spirits added. Observation, experience, and scripture teaching all concur in teaching us that total abstinence is the safest practice for people of our day. The church suffers and the individual involved loses his respect when the habit of drinking is formed.

### III. Jesus Manifests His Glory (John 2: 11)

*Jesus manifested his glory.* In this miracle Jesus manifested divine power. This power over nature is proof of his divinity, hence a manifestation of his glory. In the next place, he supplied the needs of people thus indicating his knowledge of our needs and his ability to fill those needs. This is another manifestation of glory.

*His disciples believed on him.* This indicates the purpose of the miracles of Jesus. John says that a record of his miracles was written in order that people might believe. (John 20: 30, 31.) When we behold the power and wisdom of God manifested in the natural realm, and when we see the power of God as demonstrated in the salvation of sinful men, we should be led to believe on Christ and to trust him for the saving of our souls.

#### Topics for Discussion

1. Many are willing to invite Jesus to their scenes of sorrow, but forget to take him along on occasions of joy. When sickness or death invades our home, we become prayerful, but often we forsake and forget him in times of prosperity and happiness.

2. The advice of Mary to do whatever Jesus bids may find practical applications in our lives. He who is

not willing to do whatever Jesus bids should not expect to be blessed for doing the things he is pleased to do of his own will.

3. Though the glory of Jesus was manifested in this miracle, we should be able to see his glory in his providential care of us in giving us daily bread and in filling our every spiritual need.

#### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

##### Introduction

What part does the miraculous have in the life of Jesus?  
How did Jesus answer John's question as to whether he was the Messiah?  
Can one be consistent who rejects the miraculous but accepts the moral teachings of Jesus?

##### Golden Text Explained

Was the power to perform miracles proof of the divinity of the one performing them?  
What was the purpose of miracles?  
How did God show his endorsement of the preacher's message?  
Of what sin did the Jews accuse Jesus?  
What claims of miraculous power did Jesus make for which he has the endorsement of the Father?  
How may we measure present-day wonder workings?

##### Jesus Honors Marriage

What do you know of the location of Cana?  
What proof do we have that Jesus endorsed social activities?

What do you know of the marriage customs of the time of Jesus?

##### Jesus Fills a Present Need

How long did wedding feasts usually last?  
Did Mary ask Jesus to perform a miracle?  
Did Jesus rebuke his mother on this occasion?  
What is the meaning of the statement that his hour was not yet come?  
How much wine did Jesus make on this occasion?  
What did the rulers say of the wine he made?  
Did the ruler know who had made the wine?  
Is there anything in this lesson to suggest that the wedding guests were drunk?

##### Jesus Manifests His Glory

How did Jesus manifest his glory?  
What was the primary purpose of Jesus in performing this miracle?  
Since Jesus exercises such power in the natural realm, what should we conclude with reference to his power in the spiritual realm?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VII—May 18, 1952

### JESUS AT MATTHEW'S HOUSE

#### The Lesson Text

##### Mark 2: 13-22

13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 And as he passed by, he saw Le'-vi the son of Al'-phae'-us sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto

him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Je'-sus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And the scribes of the Phar'-i-sees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, *How is it* that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 And when Je'-sus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

18 And John's disciples and the Phar'-i-sees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of

the Phar'-i-sees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Je'-sus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.

21 No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but *they put* new wine into fresh wine-skins.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."* (Mark 2: 17a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 9: 9-13.

### Daily Bible Readings

- May 12. M..... Balm in Gilead (Jer. 8: 18-22)
- May 13. T..... Many Medicines Are Vain (Jer. 46: 3-12)
- May 14. W..... Jesus Came to Sinners (Luke 5: 27-32)
- May 15. T..... He Came to Save the Lost (Luke 19: 1-10)
- May 16. F..... Jesus Healed a Woman (Mark 5: 25-34)
- May 17. S..... Jesus Associates with Sinners (Luke 15: 1-7)
- May 18. S..... Jesus Healed the Blind (Luke 18: 35-43)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Levi, and the Jews.

### Introduction

Very little is known about Matthew, either before or after his call. He calls himself a publican, but no other writer uses that term except Luke. Mark says that he was sitting at the place of toll when Jesus called him. Nothing is said in the Acts of Apostles about the work of Matthew. Tradition says that he did some work in Ethiopia. Eusebius mentions some work in Judea for a period of fifteen years, and then to foreign nations, but does not name them. Another tradition says that he preached among the Persians.

Matthew was a publican. There were two or three classes or ranks of publicans or taxgatherers. The Roman government farmed out the taxes to rich men who were able to

pay for the concession. Sometimes these capitalists formed stock companies to buy concessions of large provinces. Usually one member of the company lived in the province and farmed out portions of the province to natives. It seems that Zachaeus (Luke 19) was either one of a company or had a concession of a large territory which he farmed out to such men as Matthew. These stock company officials had almost unlimited power at Rome. They demanded laws in their favor and depended on the army to enforce their exactions. These tax collectors often brought false charges of smuggling in the hope of extorting "hush money." They were classed with the very lowest of characters such as

harlots, sinners, and heathen. The Talmud enumerates three classes of men with whom promises need not to be kept, and the three are murderers, thieves, and publicans. According to Jewish traditions, no money known to come from a publican was received in the alms box of the synagogue or in the treasury

of the temple. Their testimony was not accepted in court. Jesus showed an unusual brand of courage when he dared to call Matthew as one of his disciples. The Jews were not slow in taking advantage of this action to bring criticism against him and to try to turn the other disciples against him.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Humanity Is Diseased Spiritual-ly.** The language of our text implies that humanity is in a diseased condition. Jesus came because of this condition. His work of teaching and his death on Calvary were the means used by him to recover humanity from this diseased condition. Many today, like the Pharisees in our lesson, do not realize their need of Jesus, but surely if we take stock of ourselves we cannot keep from realizing our lost condition and our need of someone to heal us. In describing the condition of the human race, one writer says, "Every faculty is impaired; every power disordered; the plague spot is upon it; the leprosy defiles it; the fever consumes it; it is affected with the torpid paralysis. The eyes of the mind are blinded, the ears are stopped, and the tongue is speechless. The afflictions of the soul are complicated, deep-seated, universally prevalent, painful, and absolutely fatal. They never exhaust their strength or cure themselves, neither are they curable by any human agency whatever."

**2. Jesus, the Great Physician.** In order for a physician to effect a cure, he must have a knowledge of the disease, of the one diseased, and the cure for the disease. Jesus is the only one in the universe who can qualify in this respect. He knows the nature of sin and its effect upon people; he knows the nature of human beings and how they are affected by sin; he knows what is required to overcome the effect of sin in the human soul. Next, the physician who expects to cure a disease must have a remedy of sufficient power to overcome the disease preying upon the patient. In this respect Jesus is the only one who can qualify as a physician, for only he has the power to heal the sin-

sick soul. Another quality in a successful physician is the sympathy and understanding which the physician must have toward the patient. Jesus came to this world that through experience he might learn the strength of sin and that he might become a sympathetic high priest. Next, as a physician Jesus is infallible. There are no cases beyond his power to heal. The time one has been diseased, whether long or short, has nothing to do in determining his success. There is only one thing that can prevent a cure, and that is failure on the part of the patient to cooperate with the physician.

**3. Call of the Sinners versus the Righteous.** Our text says that Jesus came not to call the righteous but sinners. The first thing necessary on the part of the patient in order to be healed by the Great Physician is his realization of his lost condition. Jesus spoke of the Pharisees from their point of view when he called them the righteous. They were righteous in their own eyes and hence felt no need of his services. There is nothing that Jesus can do for an individual who is self-righteous. The first work of gospel preachers and teachers is to convict a person of sin, to make him realize his need of a savior. The second thing that one must do to be healed by the Great Physician is to be cooperative. Regardless of how skilled the doctor may be, if the patient refuses to take his medicine there is little hope for a cure, so the sin-sick soul that refuses to do what Jesus says and insists on using some home remedy can never expect to be cured of sin. The religious world is making the mistake of depending upon the home-spun remedies of their forefathers rather than taking directions from Jesus.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Call of Matthew (Mark 2: 13, 14)

*He went forth by the seaside.* The sea mentioned here is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was in Capernaum at this time, which is on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

*The multitude resorted unto him.* Everywhere Jesus went multitudes of people followed him. Our text says that he taught them. Jesus was not a man to lose opportunities for teaching. So consistently did he teach, and so continually did he work that John said, "The which if they should be written . . . the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." (John 21: 25.) In this Jesus set an example (1) for preachers today in the use of their time. Though some recreation is needed, no doubt many spend time at golfing or fishing and other sports which Jesus would use teaching. (2) He sets an example for every church member. There is so much waste of time and loss of opportunity in the lives of everyone. Elders of the church have been known to sit on the porch of a country store and talk of politics and other things day after day without making any effort to teach the people with whom they associate. Housewives often visit day after day with their neighbors, but never use their opportunities to teach. Young people engage in frivolous conversation hour after hour, and never use their opportunities to teach others.

*He saw Levi, son of Alphaeus.* Why he was called both Levi and Matthew is not clear. Some have suggested that the two are not identical, but Matthew's record of his own call (Matt. 7: 9-13) agrees too much with our text to doubt the identity of the two. He is said to be the son of Alphaeus. This was a common name among the Jews. Matthew Henry says that he was the son of the Alphaeus which is also called Cleophas (Clopas), the husband of one Mary (John 19: 25) and the father of James the less, one of the twelve apostles (Matt. 10: 3; Mark 15: 40).

*Sitting at the place of toll.* This suggests that Matthew was a tax collector, but it is to be noticed that Mark does not use the unpopular term publican.

*He arose and followed him.* How much acquaintance Jesus had with Matthew is not known. From his general associations with publicans and sinners, we may conclude that he was fairly well acquainted among them. We should notice also how quickly Matthew responded to the call of Jesus. Whether he closed up his business and left it in the hands of someone else, and whether he ever returned to it cannot be determined, but certainly he may be classed with Peter and others who had left all to follow Jesus. (Mark 10: 28-30.)

### II. Feast Given by Matthew (Mark 2: 15-17)

*Sitting at meat in his house.* From Matthew's record it would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine in whose house the feast was held (Matt. 9: 10.) Mark says in "his house," but Luke is specific, saying, "And Levi made him a great feast in his house." (Luke 5: 29.)

*Many publicans and sinners sat down.* The word sinners is used with reference to heathens, or apostate Jews of the lowest class. The fact that publicans are associated with Gentiles in the minds of the Jews is proof of the Jewish hatred of them. The gathering of so many publicans and sinners in the home of Matthew is usually taken as an indication of the interest which these people had in Jesus and in the response of one of their number to the call to become one of his disciples. We can imagine the pride and satisfaction this class of people would get from the knowledge that one of their number was included among the disciples of this great teacher and wonder-worker. The call of Matthew and the going to his house for a feast with such characters served only to widen the breach which had already come between Jesus and the religious leaders of the day.

*The Pharisees and the scribes murmured.* At this early stage it is said that the Pharisees murmured. However, at a later time they became more critical of his actions and openly accused him, saying, "Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

(Matt. 11: 19.) Eating with people served to classify a person socially. Such has been the practice in practically every age of the world. One may do business with all classes; a doctor may serve all classes without being classified with them socially; but when one eats with others he puts himself in their class. Jesus disregarded the customs and ate with the Pharisees when they would invite him (Luke 7: 36) and with the publicans as opportunity to teach or do good was afforded him.

*They that are whole.* In this verse Jesus justifies his action on this occasion. He speaks from the Pharisees' point of view as much as to say, You are whole and do not need my services, but you recognize these people as sinners and in need of my services. No one would criticize a doctor for spending his time among the sick instead of those who are well, so Jesus implied to the Pharisees that they were inconsistent in criticizing him for going among the very people whom they regarded as in need of his services. Later in his ministry he went at great length to justify himself in a similar situation. He gave the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the story of the prodigal son to justify his association with publicans and to teach the Pharisees that they were as much in need of the love and mercy of God as the publicans and sinners. (Luke 15.) In the story of the prodigal son, Jesus pictures the publicans and sinners as the prodigal son, and he pictures the scribes and Pharisees in the elder brother. Since the elder brother was as much out of line with his father's will as the prodigal, the Pharisees felt the force of his teaching as it applied to them.

### III. Jesus Justifies the Feast (Mark 2: 18-22)

*John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.* The law of Moses demanded that the Jews fast at certain times, but the fasting mentioned in this verse was not one commanded by the law. If it had been commanded by the law, Jesus and his disciples would have been observing it. In addition to the feasts commanded by the law, the traditions of the Jews included a number of others. For

instance, the Pharisee whose prayer was condemned by the Lord said, "I fast twice in the week." (Luke 18:

12.) It is probable that Matthew's feast was given at the time of one of these traditional fasts. Again, it is possible that the disciples of Jesus had already begun to practice what Jesus taught about fasting when he said, "When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance . . . but thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in secret." (Matt. 6: 16-18.)

*But thy disciples fast not.* The question asked by the disciples of John and the Pharisees was why the disciples of Jesus did not observe these traditional feasts. This is not the only time that Jesus was found in conflict with the traditions of the elders. (Mark 7: 1-13.)

*Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?* In this statement Jesus begins his justification of the action of his disciples on this occasion. He refers to himself as the bridegroom. John also uses the same figure when he called himself the friend of the bridegroom who rejoiced greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. (John 3: 29.) The statement here is a reference to a custom among the Jews of feasting for a week prior to the wedding ceremony but as soon as the ceremony was said and the bridegroom had left, the friend of the bridegroom and all the attendants were filled with sorrow. The application is that Jesus the bridegroom was at this time with his disciples who are called the "sons of the bridechamber," and as long as he was with them they were to rejoice instead of fast.

*But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away.* In this statement Jesus refers to his being taken from the disciples. When that occurred it would be in place for them to fast, but as long as he was with them there was no occasion for them to fast.

*No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment.* This language is an illustration in which Jesus says it is not fitting that a new piece of cloth should be used to patch an

old garment, for when the new garment shrinks with washing, it will make matters worse. The application is that Christianity is not a patch on the old system of Judaism. The teachings of Jesus are new and would not be in harmony with the general tone and standards of the old covenant. If his disciples were to hold to the old system of Judaism and in addition try to practice his teaching, they would be as inconsistent and out of harmony as one who patches an old garment with a new piece of cloth.

*No man putteth new wine in old wineskins.* This is the third illustration which Jesus used to justify his disciples in their disregard of the

Jewish traditions concerning fasting. *Wineskins* is a term used to describe the manner in which liquid was transported. Skins were taken from animals and were sewed up so as to hold water or wine. The size of these water vessels varied according as the size of the animals from which they were taken. An ox-skin would hold about sixty gallons. These skins by long wear would get thin and holes would appear. It was not wise to patch these holes with new unshrunk skin, so Jesus teaches the lesson that the teaching of Christianity is not to be viewed as a supplement or patch on the system of Judaism.

**Topics for Discussion**

1. Christianity is not dependent upon social, political, or financial power for its establishment and growth. Jesus disregarded these things when calling his apostles. We should disregard them when going into new fields.

2. Jesus looked for character in the

men he called. He looked for both purity and depth of character rather than wealth and social power.

3. Christianity is not a patch on the old garment of Judaism. It is new in every respect. Many of the doctrines of Christianity are directly opposed to those of Judaism. (Matt. 5 and 19.)

**Questions for the Class**

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

**Introduction**

What is known of Matthew and his work as an apostle?  
What do you know of publicans and their manner of collecting taxes?  
What is said of their influence in high government circles?  
What was the attitude of loyal Jews toward them?  
Give two ways in which this attitude was manifest.

**Golden Text Explained**

What does the language of our text imply as to the condition of humanity?  
What is said of the ability of humanity to realize this condition?  
Name and discuss several qualities of a successful physician, and show how Jesus possesses these qualities.  
What two things are necessary on the part of an individual to be healed by the Great Physician?  
What serious mistake is the religious world making with reference to being cured of sin?

**The Call of Matthew**

By what sea did Matthew live?  
How did Jesus set an example for preachers for today in the use of their time?

What other church workers might profit by this example?

What do you know of the family of Levi?  
What in our text suggests that Matthew was a tax collector?

What is there to suggest that Matthew was acquainted with Jesus prior to his call?

**Feast Given by Matthew**

Who tells us that this feast was in the home of Matthew?  
What class of people attended this feast?  
What was the attitude of the Pharisee toward Jesus for attending the feast?  
What significance was attached to eating with people?  
How did Jesus answer their criticism?  
What parables did Jesus give at a later date to justify similar action?

**Jesus Justifies the Feast**

How do we know that the fasting of John's disciples and the Pharisees was not commanded by the law?  
What did Jesus teach his disciples about fasting?  
On what ground did Jesus excuse his disciples for not fasting?  
How did Jesus teach that Christianity is not a patch on the old garment of Judaism?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VIII—May 25, 1952

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

The Lesson Text

Mark 3: 7-19

7 And Je'-sus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Gal'-i-lee followed; and from Ju-dae'-a,

8 And from Je-ru'-sa-lem, and from Id-u-mae'-a, and beyond the Jordan, and about Tyre and Si'-don, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him:

10 For he had healed many; inso-much that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him.

11 And the unclean spirits, when-soever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he charged them much that

they should not make him known.

13 And he goeth up into the moun-tain, and calleth unto him whom he himself would; and they went unto him.

14 And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have authority to cast out demons:

16 And Si'-mon he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the *son* of Zeb'-e-dee, and John the brother of James; and them he surnamed Bo-a-ner'-ges, which is, Sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bar-thol'-o-mew, and Mat'-thew, and Thomas, and James, the *son* of Al-phae'-us, and Thad-dae'-us, and Si'-mon the Ca-na-nae'-an,

19 And Ju'-das Is-car'i-ot, who also betrayed him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples."* (John 8: 31b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 16: 24-28.

Daily Bible Readings

May 19. M.....	Disciples Contacted (John 1: 35-42)
May 20. T.....	Other Disciples Invited (John 1: 43-51)
May 21. W.....	Making Many Disciples (John 4: 1-10)
May 22. T.....	Calling Fishers of Men (Luke 5: 1-11)
May 23. F.....	Choosing Twelve Apostles (Luke 6: 12-19)
May 24. S.....	Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14: 25-35)
May 25. S.....	Badge of Discipleship (John 13: 31-38)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Galilee, near the Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the apostles, the disciples, and the multitude.

Introduction

Though it was early in the ministry of our Lord, his teaching and his work had already aroused the enmity of the Jews. The very success that he had with the common people was sufficient to cause the Jews to be jealous of him. Only a short while before the time of our lesson Jesus had forgiven the sins of a man. (Mark 2: 1-12.) For this he had been severely criticized by the scribes. The Jews correctly reasoned that no one

could forgive sins but God. Thinking that Jesus was nothing more than a man, they accused him of blasphemy when he claimed the power to forgive sins. In order to prove that he had the power to forgive sins, he performed a physical miracle. He healed the man sick of palsy and stated that his reason for so doing was "that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins." (Mark 2: 10.) Though his

critics were silenced for the time being, they nourished their enmity in their hearts for a more favorable time. However, the people were amazed, and they glorified God saying, "We never saw it on this fashion."

Another thing which aroused the animosity of the Jews was the attitude of Jesus toward their traditions concerning the Sabbath. Jesus was careful to keep the law. He never at any time violated the law of Moses; he told all others to be careful to keep the law. But Jesus had little respect for the traditions of the Jews concerning the Sabbath, or any other subject. Hence, the Jews were often accusing him of doing that which was unlawful to do on the Sabbath. Im-

mediately before the events of our lesson, Jesus had gone into the synagogue where he saw a man with a withered hand. The Jews wondered if he would heal the man on the Sabbath. Undoubtedly there had been some discussion of the subject as to whether it was lawful to heal the man. Jesus asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" (Mark 3: 4.) When the Jews could not answer his question he healed the man with a word. Not having done any work that they could see, they were powerless to accuse him and yet he had accomplished his purpose. This is only one more example of the ability of Jesus to outwit his enemies whenever he had occasion to do so.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Abiding in His Word,** (a) To abide in the word of the Lord means first, that we believe the word. It would be impossible to abide in that in which one has no faith. The infidel and those to whom the word *modernist* is applied cannot abide in the word for the simple reason that they do not believe in the word, (b) To abide in his word implies a hearty reception of the word. One might believe all that is taught in the word and yet never receive it into his heart. We read that the people on Pentecost received the word and were baptized. (Acts 2: 41.) Paul throws light on the manner in which we should receive the word when he commended the Thessalonians for receiving his message as the word of God and not as the word of men. (I Thess. 2: 13.) (c) Abiding in God's word includes walking in the teaching of God's word. When people receive the word of God they will be influenced by it in their lives. Those who are not influenced in the sense of being directed by it have simply not received the word in a scriptural sense. Jesus said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15: 10.) (d) Those who abide in God's word are willing to submit to its demands. This is a step beyond walking in the teaching of the word, for one might live in the light of the teaching of God's word where no de-

mands of sacrifice and self-denial are made, but submitting to the demands of God's word in every phase of life is the acid test as to whether we are abiding in his word, (e) The word of God has a restraining influence, and one who abides in his word will be restrained by the warnings which abound in God's word. The individual who lives as he pleases regardless of the warnings of God's word cannot say that he has received the word to any practical benefit, (f) The one who abides in God's word may rejoice in its promises. The word of God abounds in promises to the obedient person. Abiding in his word not only inclines us to rejoice in the promises, but lays a good foundation upon which to base our expectation of reaping the rewards promised.

**2. Discipleship Is Conditional.** Our text says, if ye abide in my word ye are my disciples. This implies that the individual who does not abide in the word of the Lord is not and cannot be the Lord's disciple, (a) This leads us to conclude that abiding in his word is a condition of a permanent union with Christ. Being a disciple is a relationship, a union which we form with Christ and its permanency depends upon our continued abiding in his word, (b) Abiding in his word is a condition of *real* discipleship versus *nominal* discipleship. There are many who claim to be his disciples and have their names on the church roll, but their surface claims

and relationship are obvious because of their lack of abiding in his word, (c) A growing appreciation of Christ is contingent upon abiding in the

word of Christ, (d) Real discipleship, which is conditional upon abiding in his word, means growing in usefulness in the service of the Lord.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Jesus Attracts Multitudes (Mark 3: 7-12)

*Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea.* Jesus had been for some time in Capernaum teaching and healing. All of the events in chapter 2 occurred in Capernaum, and there is no indication that he had left the city before the time of our lesson. His withdrawal to the sea was therefore an effort to get away from the crowded conditions of the city where he might rest and be free from the growing antagonism of the rulers.

*A great multitude followed.* This multitude of people is said to have been from Galilee, Judea, Idumaea, and as far as Tyre and Sidon. Galilee was the northern province of the Jews and Judea was the southern. Samaria lay between the two, all of them being on the western side of the Jordan River. Idumaea is the Greek form of the word Edom, which is another name for Esau. Hence, these Idumaeans were descendants of Esau. This country lay south of Judea. During the Babylonian captivity these Edomites took over much of the territory of the Jews. Many of them had accepted circumcision, and in the time of Christ were identified with the Jews. The family of the Herods were among these Idumaeans that had come into Palestine. Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities of Phoenicia, a tiny country lying northwest of Galilee. This little country holds the distinction of being the only foreign country which Jesus visited so far as the record goes. (Matt. 15: 21.)

*Hearing what great things he did.* This is given as the reason why people over such a wide area followed Jesus. From Phoenicia on the north to Idumaea on the south is quite an extent of territory and includes all that might be termed Palestine, or the Holy Land. This is an indication of his fame and popularity. There is little wonder that the Jews were jealous of him.

*A little boat should wait on him.*

Our text says that this boat was called for because of the danger of the crowd thronging him. Luke tells us that Jesus entered one of the boats, one which belonged to Simon and asked him to row a little from the land. There he sat in the boat and taught the people. (Luke 5: 3, 4.) So intent were the people on being near him and hearing him, or touching him that they might be healed, that it became necessary for him to sit in the boat.

*For he had healed many.* The power to heal people of their diseases contributed to the popularity of Jesus. It also contributed to the jealousy of the rulers of the Jews. They had no such power, consequently could wield no such influence over the people as Jesus did. All they could do was to stand by and criticize that they might confuse the people and prevent some of them from believing in him.

*Unclean spirits fell down before him.* Our text says the people "pressed upon him," but the unclean spirits "fell down before him." The people had the liberty of closer contact than demons. Their falling down before him was not an act of love or devotion, but an expression of fear. They recognized him as the one who would inflict their torment upon them. They feared that he would drive them out of the bodies which they inhabited and send them back to a place of torment. Thus they asked, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8: 29.)

*Thou art the Son of God.* This is the statement of the unclean spirits. There are those who deny the existence of spirits, and many deny that they ever inhabited human bodies. Their explanation of such passages where Jesus is said to have driven the demons out of people is that they were ill or insane. But if that be true, how can we account for the unusual knowledge displayed by these people afflicted with disease or insanity. Before the people had suf-

ficient evidence on which to believe on the Messiahship of Jesus, much less to recognize his divinity, and before Jesus was willing for the statement to be broadcast, these demons recognized him as divine and made the statement publicly. To say that this is the language of demented people is to ascribe to them greater wisdom and a keener insight into the nature and work of Jesus than the average people with sound minds.

*He charged them not to make him known.* There are two probable reasons why Jesus charged the demons not to make him known. In the first place, he did not care for the recognition and support of demons. Their recognition of him could not possibly do him any good. Some scholars even suggest that the demons confessed him in an attempt to insinuate that he was in league with them and thus to minimize his influence with the people. In the next place, Jesus was revealing himself gradually according as wisdom and sound judgment might dictate. If the demons were allowed to publish these things before it was proper, his persecution might be hastened and his work among the people hindered. The fact that Jesus exercised this authority over the demons is an indication of his divinity.

## II. Jesus Selects Twelve (Mark 3: 13-19)

*And he appointed twelve.* Some ancient authorities add the statement in the text *when also he named apostles.* Luke adds this statement according to our revised text. (Luke 6: 13.) Here then we have a record of the appointment of twelve disciples to be his apostles. The word apostle means *one sent*. Jesus is called an apostle (Hebrews 3: 1) because he was sent from God. In this same sense John the Baptist was an apostle, the word *sent* being from the verbal form of the Greek word for apostle. In the next place, men who were sent by the church for the performance of special duties were called apostles. In this sense we read, "But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it . . . (Acts 14: 14.) They were apostles because the church "sent them away." (Acts 13: 3.) The third class of apostles is that men-

tioned in our text. They were apostles because they were sent by the Lord and were authorized and equipped by him for the accomplishment of his purposes.

*Authority to cast out demons.* Here it is stated that Jesus gave them authority to cast out demons. Unless demons are a reality, we must accuse Jesus of being ignorant of their nature, or of dealing deceitfully with his newly appointed apostles. Those who claim that demon possession was no more than a disease or insanity must explain why Jesus gave his apostles this authority. Surely no one would accuse Jesus of being ignorant of the real condition of these people. If he knew that they were only ill or demented, he practiced deception on his apostles, giving them the power to heal a disease, but making them believe that they had power over evil spirits.

*Simon he surnamed Peter.* Perhaps Peter is the best known of all the original twelve apostles. He was ever the spokesman for the group. He was zealous, impetuous, and by nature qualified to be a leader. That he was given any supremacy, or that the other apostles recognized in him any supremacy is wholly without foundation. Why did they argue who would be the greatest in the kingdom if Peter had been given this supremacy?

*James and John, sons of Zebedee.* These two, in company with Peter, formed an inner circle who seemed to be closer to the Lord, and entered more sympathetically into his aims and work than the others. These were the sons of Zebedee and Salome. (Matt. 27: 56; Mark 15: 40.) According to Matthew 27: 56 and Mark 15: 40, we learn that Salome was among the women who stood at the cross. John mentions the mother of Jesus and his mother's sister, but gives neither one's name. Since he does not name Salome, it is generally inferred that she is the one mentioned as the sister of Mary. This would make Jesus the cousin of James and John, the nephew of Zebedee and Salome. This view is disputed by some, but it is supported by others of equal ability.

*Surnamed Boanerges.* Our text explains this word to mean Sons of

thunder. "The word was not intended as a term of reproach; although it certainly expressed that natural impetuosity and vehemence of character which showed itself in their desire to bring down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village, and in their ambitious request that they might have the highest places of honor in his coming kingdom. But their natural dispositions, under the Holy Spirit's influence, were gradually transformed so as to serve the cause of Christ, and their fiery zeal was transmuted into the sustaining flame of Christian earnestness and love, so as to become an element of great power in their new life as Christians." (Pulpit Commentary.)

**Andrew, Philip, and Bartholomew.** Of these we know but little. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. (John 1: 41, 42.) Philip lived in Bethsaida (John 1: 44) and was instrumental in bringing Nathanael to Jesus. He is mentioned as being among the twelve

when Matthias was chosen, but of his work as an apostle we know nothing. Of Bartholomew we know even less. Some think he is to be identified with Nathanael who is associated with Philip. (John 1: 45.) The mention of Nathanael, in John 21: 2, with a number of apostles is difficult to explain unless Nathanael was an apostle.

**Matthew, Thomas, James, Thaddaeus and Simon.** Matthew is known for his gospel, and Thomas is known for his doubting. (John 20: 24, 25.) James the son of Alphaeus is also called James the less. This Alphaeus is probably the Clopas of John 19: 25. Of his work as an apostle we know nothing. In the list given by Luke, Thaddaeus is called Judas the son of James.

**Judas Iscariot.** The name of Judas appears last on every list of the apostles. The word Iscariot means "man of Kerioth." He was the only apostle from Judea; the balance were from Galilee.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Great crowds followed Jesus. Some followed for the loaves and fishes, some followed to see the miracles, and some followed just to be with the crowd. A few followed to be taught.
2. The demons confessed Jesus to be the Son of God. Where did they get their information? Did they

know him before his incarnation? Did they learn it from Satan, their prince?

3. Jesus appointed men while he was still on earth to train and supervise them in their work. This personal training was helpful in later life. So elders should seek to train younger men to take their places when they can no longer carry on.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

Why were the Jews jealous of Jesus?  
Why did they accuse him of blasphemy?  
How did Jesus prove he had power to forgive sins?  
What was the attitude of Jesus toward the traditions of the Jews?  
How did Jesus demonstrate his ability to outwit his enemies?

#### Golden Text Explained

What is the first thing necessary for one to do to abide in the word?  
What is the second thing implied in abiding in the word?  
What activity is involved in abiding in the word?  
What is said of submission as a part of abiding in the word?  
What other lessons are suggested by abiding in the word?  
Abiding in the word of God is a condition of what?

#### Jesus Attracts Multitudes

Why did Jesus withdraw from Capernaum to the sea?  
From what sections of Palestine did people come to hear Jesus?

What do you know of the Idumaeans?  
For what was Phoenicia distinguished?  
Why did Jesus use a boat for a pulpit?  
What contributed to the popularity of Jesus and the jealousy of the Jews?  
What shows that people had the liberty of closer contact with Jesus than demons?  
What confession did demons make?  
What proof do we have that demons inhabited human bodies?  
Give two reasons why Jesus charged the demons not to make him known.

#### Jesus Selects Twelve

What is the meaning of the word apostle?  
What three classes of apostles are mentioned in scripture?  
What do you know of the parents of James and John?

What surname was given James and John, and why?  
 What is known of Andrew? Of Philip? Of Bartholomew?

From what section of Palestine was Judas Iscariot?  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson IX—June 1, 1952

JESUS AND JOHN

The Lesson Text

Luke 7: 18-28

18 And the disciples of John told him of all these things.

19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

20 And when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

21 In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight.

22 And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them.

23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This *is he of* whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,  
 Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“He must increase, hut I must decrease.”* (John 3: 30.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—John 5: 30-38.

Daily Bible Readings

May 26. M.....	The Messenger to Come (Mal. 3: 1-6)
May 27. T.....	John Begins to Work (Matt. 3: 1-12)
May 28. W.....	John's Testimony of Jesus (John 1: 19-34)
May 29. T.....	John Points Disciples to Jesus (John 1: 35-51)
May 30. F.....	John Baptizes Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-17)
May 31. S.....	Jesus Talks About John (Matt. 11: 2-19)
June 1. S.....	The Death of John (Matt. 14: 1-12)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Somewhere in Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, John's disciples, and the multitudes.

Introduction

The coming of John the Baptist and his work has something of the miraculous about it. Malachi spoke of his coming to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the

heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” (Mal. 4: 5, 6.) Unusual circumstances are connected with his birth. While his father, Zacharias,

was burning incense in the Holy Place, an angel appeared telling him that Elisabeth would bear a son whose name would be John. Zacharias asked proof how that he and his wife being old could have a son. The angel told him that he should not be able to speak from that day until the birth of John. The angel also gave some indication of his character and his work. He was to be great in the sight of the Lord, take no strong drink, and was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. He was to do his work in the spirit and power of Elijah and "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." (Luke 1: 13-18.) John grew up in the desert of Judea (Luke 1: 80); his raiment was camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. He began his work in the wilderness rather than in the city; his message was one of repentance as preparation for the coming of the kingdom which he said was at hand.

His preaching attracted multitudes of all classes. The penitent and humble he baptized, but the proud and arrogant he turned away saying that God was able of stones to raise up children to Abraham. (Matt. 3: 1-12.)

The people had false opinions with reference to John. Some thought he was Elijah; others thought he was the prophet which was to come. But in a humble, straightforward manner he denied that he was the Christ whose shoes he was unworthy to bear, but that he was simply a voice crying in preparation for the Christ. He said that one purpose of his mission was to bear witness that Jesus is the Son of God. He also said that one purpose of his baptism was the manifestation of the Messiah to Israel. John said that he did not know who the Messiah was until he beheld the sign which the Lord gave him, the sign of the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and abiding upon him. This he beheld when he baptized Jesus. (Matt. 3: 13-17.)

### Golden Text Explained

1. He Must Increase. This is the language of John the Baptist concerning Jesus. The statement was called forth by a dispute which arose between the disciples of John and a Jew about purification. (John 4: 24, 25.) John explained his relationship to Jesus as that of the friend of the bridegroom. The friend would rejoice in the good fortune and success of the bridegroom. John was doing the work of the friend preparing the way and making things easier for Jesus. Naturally he would rejoice in the increase of Jesus, (a) Jesus was to increase in popularity. He began his work by calling a few disciples. Some of them had been disciples of John whom John had encouraged to follow Jesus. The fact that he taught as one having authority and not as the Jews, and the fact that he taught in clear, simple terms which could be understood by the common people contributed to his increase in popularity, (b) He was to increase in the number of disciples. As his popularity increased, the number of disciples attaching themselves to him and his work increased, (c) He was to increase in influence. As

the number of disciples increased, and his popularity with the multitudes grew, his influence was extended, (d) He increased in honor and glory. As his opportunities for teaching and service were multiplied, he increased in his influence and correspondingly in the honor which was given him. People left their homes and followed him for days at a time that they might hear him preach. They wondered where he had learned such lessons since he did not attend the Jewish universities.

2. I Must Decrease. John realized that as the work of Jesus increased, the necessity for his work would diminish, (a) So John decreased in the number of disciples. Part of this was due to the fact of the increasing interest of the people in Jesus, but no doubt the majority of John's disciples left him to follow Jesus because of the teaching of John. On one occasion he pointed to Jesus and said to his disciples, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1: 29.) (b) John was to decrease in influence. As his disciples left him to follow Jesus, his influence diminished, and since his

work was preparatory in nature it was natural that he should decrease when that for which he prepared began, (c) John was to decrease in the importance of the work done. The more active Jesus became and the more the people flocked to him, the less need was there for the work of John to point him out to the people and to encourage them to follow him.

3. The Effect of John's Philosophies. John's philosophy tended to put Jesus in his proper place. Being the Son of God, manifested in the flesh, Jesus deserved first place even from John whose work was so important that it was the subject of prophecy. John's desire to exalt Jesus and to encour-

age his own disciples to follow Jesus shows the respect which John had for him. (b) John's philosophy not only put Jesus in his proper place, but it shows that John knew his proper place. He was second to the Messiah and realized his inferiority. After attracting multitudes, pulling them out of the cities into the wilderness to hear his message, it would have been easy for John to have felt his importance and to have been jealous of the growing popularity of Jesus, but John demonstrated a brand of humility that is unusual in public servants by encouraging the growth of the work of Jesus at the expense of his own.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. John's Question Answered (Luke 7: 18-23)

*Disciples of John told him these things.* The things referred to include the raising from the dead the widow's son at Nain. The report of this miracle was widespread, and on account of it people glorified God by saying that a great prophet had arisen. John's disciples knew that their master would be interested in this report.

*Art thou he that cometh?* By this expression, John meant the Messiah for whom the Jews had long been looking. Luke tells us that the people were in expectation of the coming of the Messiah and for this reason thought that John might be the prophet who was to come. (Luke 3: 15-17.)

*John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee.* It is difficult to determine whether John was seeking information for his own satisfaction, or for that of his disciples. John was at this time in prison having been put there for his criticism of one of the Herods. (Matt. 14: 1-12.) It is possible that John became discouraged because of his suffering in prison and no effort made by the Messiah to release him. This was the view of Tertullian and many of the present-day scholars, but the scholars of the time of the Reformation and for some time thereafter generally held that John sent these disciples that they might learn of the work of Jesus and become his disciples. This certainly is

in line with John's statement that Jesus must increase but that his own following would be decreased. To think that John was discouraged and sought the information to bolster his wavering faith is to accuse him first of forgetting or distrusting the sign which he saw from heaven when he baptized Jesus. Could he forget the sight of the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and could he forget his own testimony which he had given so many times to encourage his own disciples to leave him and follow Jesus? Next, one would have to accuse John of misunderstanding the nature of the kingdom which Jesus was to establish. It is true that the Jews generally misunderstood, but there is no indication that John shared this misunderstanding as to the nature of the kingdom. His statement that Jesus must increase but that his own work would decrease and that he was only a voice crying in the wilderness in preparation of the kingdom and that he baptized in water but Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit—these all indicate that John had a correct conception of the nature of the kingdom. If this is true, he certainly did not expect Jesus to raise a force of men and deliver him from prison, and hence no discouragement over the fact that it was not done.

*Go tell John the things ye have seen and heard.* It is significant that Jesus did not give the disciples of John a definite message for John.

He cured many of their diseases and plagues and freed others from evil spirits. John knew this to be the work of the Messiah. Hence, when his disciples returned saying that these things were done by Jesus, John would have the answer to his question. This put the matter in such form as to make it easy for John to teach his disciples the lesson which he intended for them to get.

*Lepers are cleansed and the dead are raised.* For the modernists of our time, there are two pertinent questions. Are the accounts of Luke and other writers true? Were these men telling the truth, or falsifying about what actually happened? The second question is, are they reliable witnesses? Were they competent to determine whether the lepers were cleansed and whether the dead were raised. If they were competent witnesses, and if they were honest men, Jesus actually cleansed the lepers and raised the dead. Neither of these things can be done by modern science, and hence the divinity of Jesus is established. If these men were deceived, we must conclude that the perpetuation of a deception has done more good than the truth which modernists today claim they possess.

*Blessed is he who finds no occasion of stumbling.* Jesus pronounces a blessing on all who can receive his teaching rather than rejecting it because of some preconceived notion. The Jews rejected him because he did not fit their conception of a Messiah. The Greeks rejected him because his simple, everyday teaching did not measure up to their idea of learned philosophy. Modernists reject him because he claimed a miraculous beginning, a miraculous life, a miraculous death, and a miraculous ascension. Those who stumble at the miraculous element of the gospel are not among the number whom Jesus blessed in this verse.

## II. Jesus Comments on John (Luke 7: 24-28)

*What went ye out into the wilderness to see?* When the messengers from John had departed Jesus began to talk about John. His statements have been termed the funeral oration of John.

*A reed shaken with the wind.* Jesus uses some figures of speech to emphasize the characteristics of John. A reed was a light, fragile plant which when dry was so light as to be swayed by the gentlest breeze. The figure indicates one who was the height of inconstancy, one who had no courage or steadfastness, swayed by the opinions and action of others. This is a rhetorical question which needs no answer. In fact, it is a form of assertion. John was not of a changeable, inconstant nature.

*A man clothed in soft raiment?* The type of raiment mentioned here is such as worn by women or the most effeminate men. It might also refer to the finery worn by those who stayed in kings' palaces. John was the opposite of the soft, effeminate character; he lived in the desert, wore rough clothing, was the very epitome of sturdiness, self-reliance, and hardiness. Jesus then said that they that are gorgeously appareled and lived delicately are in kings' courts. This is an indication of the meaning of soft raiment used in the preceding statement. Rich people and those charged with the affairs of government have never been inclined to be devoutly religious. If John had gorgeously appareled himself and had moved among kings and courtiers, they would have paid little attention to his message, and it would have been impossible for him to reach the common people. But since he dressed and ate as the poorest of the poor, the common people heard him, and the intensity of their interest attracted the attention of the wealthy class. Great religious movements have all "worked from the bottom up; never has there been a worth-while religious movement to begin from the top and work downward.

*Much more than a prophet.* The third question of Jesus is whether they went out to see a prophet. He answers by saying that they saw much more than a prophet. There had not been a prophet among the people since the time of Malachi until John was looked upon as a prophet, and did hold that distinction because of the nature of his work. He was more than a prophet in that he was preparing the way for the Messiah. It was his privilege not only to fore-

tell the coming of the Messiah as other prophets had done, but to introduce the Messiah to the world by baptizing him. No other prophet had such an exalted privilege and experience. Jesus elaborates on this thought of much more than a prophet by quoting from Malachi 3: 1. Here he says that John is the one of whom Malachi wrote. Being the messenger of the Lord and preparing his way is that which in the mind of Jesus characterized John as much more than a prophet.

*None is greater than John.* This is the estimation which Jesus had of John, that none born of women was greater than John. This is high praise and is an indication of the type of life which Jesus considers best. John had no political or social ambitions. He devoted his life wholly to his work of preparing the way for his Lord. If a life of this type is so highly praised by Jesus, we should be encouraged to give more of our time and efforts to this kind of living rather than to the enjoyment of the material world about us.

*He that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.* Because of the difficulty of seeing how the least

in the kingdom could be greater than the greatest prophet who ever lived, some have attempted to see in this a comparison between Jesus and John. By these interpreters "he that is but little" is made to refer to Jesus. Those interested in studying this interpretation should read the Pulpit Commentary on this verse. We should not think that Jesus means that the least in the kingdom is holier than John, or that he is more seriously engaged in his work than John. None could exceed John in these respects and few, if any, can equal him. The only reason those who are little in the kingdom are greater than John is that they enjoy greater privileges and blessings than John was allowed to enjoy. John was not in the kingdom. It was established after his death. John prepared the way for Christ and pointed forward to the atonement made by him when he called him the Lamb of God. But those in the kingdom, even the least, can point sinners back to a sacrifice made for their sins and to a Saviour who does now, not in the future, save them through his blood. Being blessed with greater privileges, we should strive at least to equal the zeal and holiness of John.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The humility of John is an outstanding characteristic of the man. He sets a good example for preachers of the gospel to follow when a stronger man comes within the circle of their influence.

2. It takes a big character to rejoice

in the superior qualities and greater accomplishments of another man.

3. From what Jesus said of John, we are sure he approved of the character and work of John. The big thing in life is to live in such manner as to win his approval.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What Old Testament prophet spoke of the coming of John?  
Who was the father of John?  
What proof was given him that the angel was telling the truth?  
What did the angel say of the character of John?  
What do you know of the dress and habits of John?  
What false opinion did the people have with reference to John?  
What was the purpose of his mission? And of his baptism?

#### Golden Text Explained

What did John say of the work of Jesus?

Name and discuss four ways in which Jesus was to increase.

Name and discuss three ways in which John decreased.

Give and discuss two effects of John's philosophy with reference to his relation to Jesus.

#### John's Question Answered

About what miracle of Jesus did the disciples of John inform him?  
John sent his disciples to ask Jesus what question?  
Was John asking the question for his own satisfaction?  
What experiences in the life of John would make it difficult for him to lose faith in Jesus as the Messiah?  
Is there anything to indicate that John had a true conception of the kingdom?  
What answer did Jesus give John's question?

What relation is there between these miracles and the divinity of Jesus?  
 What blessing did Jesus promise on this occasion?

**Jesus Comments on John**

What questions did Jesus ask concerning John?  
 What caused the common people to hear John gladly?

Among whom do great religious movements begin?  
 How long had the people been without a prophet before John?  
 In what way was John more than a prophet?  
 What did Jesus say of the greatness of John?  
 In what way are we greater than John?  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

**Lesson X—June 8, 1952**

**THE GREAT INVITATION**

**The Lesson Text**

**Matt. 11: 20-30**

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

21 Woe unto thee, Cho-ra'-zin woe unto thee, Beth-sa'-i-da! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Si'-don 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 Tyre and Si'-don in the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Ca-per-na-um, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Ha'-des: for if the mighty works had been done in Sod'-om 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 Sod'-om in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that season Je'-sus 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.—“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* (John 6: 37b.)

*Devotional Reading.—Rev. 22: 17-21.*

**Daily Bible Readings**

- June 2. M.....Moses Invites Hobab (Num. 10: 29-36)
- June 3. T.....Cyrus Invites the Jews to Return (Ezra 1: 1-4)
- June 4. W.....Jehovah's Great Invitation (Isa. 55: 1-3)
- June 5. T.....God's Invitation to Israel (Ezek. 18: 25-32)
- June 6. F.....Jesus Invites the Hungry (John 6: 32-51)
- June 7. S.....Jesus Invites the Thirsty (John 7: 37-44)
- June 8. S.....The Fountain of the Water of Life (Rev. 21: 1-8)

**Time.—A.D. 27.**

**Place.—Galilee.**

**Persons.—Jesus and the Jews.**

**Introduction**

This lesson on “The Great Invitation” is one that moves the heart of man as much as any subject we could

study. There are a number of things implied by this invitation which are worth our notice. (1) This invitation

implies the fall of man. Man is in sin; he was not created a sinful being, therefore his fall in the past is implied. We are told that God created man in his own image and after his own likeness. Through man's sin this image has been greatly marred and is in need of being restored. This fall of man or the marring of the image of God is said to be the cause of all of man's sorrow and suffering. Paul teaches us that sin entered into the world through the trespass of one man, and that death passed upon all men for that all had sinned in Adam. (Rom. 5: 12.) (2) This great invitation implies the willingness of God to save man from sin. If God were not willing to save, it would be cruel on his part to issue the invitation. No parent in his right mind would encourage a child to believe that he was to receive something he greatly desired unless the parent intended to satisfy the child's desire. Jesus re-

sons that if parents are willing to do good to their children, much more will our heavenly Father bless us. (Matt. 7: 11.) We therefore conclude that God is willing to save because he has invited man to the enjoyment of salvation. (3) This great invitation implies that God has a plan for the saving of man. God is not inviting people to a salvation for which he has made no plans or provisions. The Bible is a revelation of the scheme of redemption which is now in the process of being worked out. In it we learn of God's concern for his fallen creatures, of his plans for their redemption, of the manifestation of his love in the gift of his Son that the plan might be materialized. Nor should we get the idea that God has done all his work and that now it is up to man, for God continues to work through the church in the preaching of the gospel to bring about the salvation of the lost.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Man's Responsibility.** Jesus says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The responsibility is placed squarely upon man. This does not mean, as stated above, that God does not continue to exert all the influence he can, short of violating man's will, to move man to respond to his generous invitation. But it does mean that man is a creature of choice and that it is up to him either to respond or resist the call of God. Since man is a creature of choice, he determines where he will spend eternity. God has limited his power in dealing with man to the extent that he will not force a man to respond to the invitation, and any doctrine which robs man of the power of choice or attributes to God a force over man which violates man's choice is an unscriptural doctrine. Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives and wept over Jerusalem saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not!" (Matt. 23: 37.) Again he said to the Jews, "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5: 40.)

2. **God Draws Men to Respond to the Invitation.** Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him." (John 6: 44.) Though Jesus invites us to come unto him to find rest, yet he plainly tells us that no man can come unless the Father draws him. Some have taken this to mean that none can respond to the invitation unless they experience a miraculous appearance of angels, or direct impact of Holy Spirit upon human spirit. But Jesus goes on in this same connection to say, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 45.) From this we learn the drawing power of God. They shall all be taught of God, and those who are taught come unto Jesus. Hence, God draws by or through teaching. Paul says that the goodness of God leads men to repent. (Rom. 2: 4.) If people are taught of the love and goodness of God, they will repent. But in repentance we turn unto the Lord. Therefore, men are drawn unto the Lord when they are taught of the goodness of God.

3. **Assurance of Acceptance.** Jesus

assures us that those who come to him, he will in no wise cast out. What is the ground of this assurance? First, he is unchangeable. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb. 13: 8.) The fact that God cannot lie, and that he is always the

same assures us that he will not cast us out so long as we remain constant to him. In the next place, the death of Christ in our behalf proves his willingness to save us. That being his attitude once, it is still his attitude since he changes not.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Reproof for Rejection (Matt. 11: 20-24)

*He began to upbraid the cities.* Jesus had been teaching in the cities of Galilee. They had not repented, so he upbraided them for their lack of response.

*Woe unto thee, Chorazin.* The location of this town is uncertain, but supposed to be about two miles from Capernaum. The next town mentioned is Bethsaida. This was the home town of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. (John 1: 44; 12: 21.) It was also in the vicinity of Capernaum and on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

*If the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon.* These are cities of Phoenicia situated on the Mediterranean Sea, northwest of Jerusalem. This is the city from which Solomon obtained much of the material that went into the temple. The city of Tyre was known for its merchants and its extensive commerce by land and sea.

*They would have repented.* Isaiah predicted the destruction of Tyre several hundred years before it was finally accomplished. (Isa. 23.) Ezekiel also spoke of the destruction of the city. (Ezek. 26, 27.) These cities, like all ancient kingdoms, fell because of their sinfulness, but Jesus says that if these cities had had the opportunities which Chorazin and Bethsaida had, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

*It shall be more tolerable.* Since these cities would have repented if they had had the opportunity enjoyed by Chorazin and Bethsaida, it will be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment. This does not affirm the salvation of the people of Tyre and Sidon. In fact, the affirmation that they will be punished is definitely found in this passage. It also affirms that their punishment will be more tolerable or bearable

than the punishment of the cities which Jesus visited. Another thing suggested in this verse is that there is a day of judgment, and that the wicked will be made to suffer for their sins at that time. Those who think that all the suffering for sin and all the judgment that sinners will experience is to be in this life have difficulty in explaining what Jesus meant by the day of judgment.

*And thou, Capernaum.* Capernaum was situated on the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus made that city his headquarters during the great Galilean ministry. On that account, Capernaum had unusual privileges. Whether the word exalted in this statement refers to the residence of Jesus there, or to the fact that the city was the principal city on the lake shore is not clear. It probably is the latter. Capernaum was the largest city with the greatest volume of commerce, and hence, the largest city in that part of the country. And as the people were congratulating themselves on their good fortune and worldly success, Jesus pointed out to them the fact that they were on the downward road. Many an individual has thought within himself that he had about reached the peak of success when in the eyes of the Lord he was a foolish man. (Luke 12: 13-21.)

*If the mighty works had been done in Sodom.* Jesus picks the most wicked city of antiquity to compare with this boastful city and affirms that if the people of Sodom had enjoyed the opportunities which Capernaum enjoyed, the Sodomites would have repented. Therefore, it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the judgment than for Capernaum. Jude says that the people of Sodom are suffering the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 7) for their sins, and yet he says that the people of Capernaum will endure greater punishment than that. The question of degrees of punish-

ment is naturally raised by this language. There certainly will be no degrees so far as duration is concerned, but that it will be more tolerable for some than for others is here affirmed. Jesus also indicated degrees of suffering when he said that the servant who knew his Lord's will but did not accordingly shall be beaten with many stripes, but the servant who knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few. (Luke 12: 47, 48.)

## II. The Revelation of the Father (Matt. 11: 25-27)

*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.* The form of address here is worthy of our notice. Jesus simply addresses God as Father. Some brethren are in the habit of using a number of adjectives in their prayers as they address God. When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he said they should address God as "our Father who art in heaven." (Matt. 6: 9.) Certainly Jesus knew that God was all-wise, omnipotent, holy and just, but he did not use these terms of address in his prayer, nor did he teach his disciples to do so. It is good to study about the omnipotence of God, but when we go to God in the intimate relationship of prayer, it is a bit out of place at least to multiply these terms. Notice next that Jesus recognized the Father as "Lord of heaven and earth." Such ascription of praise is certainly in place, and the apostles followed this example of their Lord when they said, "O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is." (Acts 4: 24b.)

*Didst hide these things from the wise.* Jesus thanked his Father for hiding certain things from the wise and the understanding of this world. Was there a direct effort on the part of God to hide anything useful from anybody? Surely God is as anxious to save one class of people as another, so we cannot conclude that God discriminates against the wise of this world. The only way in which he has hidden anything from them is that he has perfected a plan of salvation which the wise and worldly-minded cannot appreciate. The highly educated of our day do not be-

lieve in Christ because they cannot believe that miracles can be harmonized with science. They prefer to hold to what they call science rather than to exercise simple faith in Jesus. In this way God hid the things that Jesus taught from the wise.

*Didst reveal them unto babes.* The word babes here is not to be taken in its literal sense as a babe in arms, but that class of people who realized their helplessness and their dependence upon a higher power. It is the worldly wisdom and independence of the wise and the rich that prevent their belief and acceptance of the teachings of Jesus. But the simple and dependent people of the world have not these obstacles to overcome. Hence, they see and appreciate the truths which Jesus taught. God does not make any direct revelation to them of these matters any more than he hides these things by direct action from the wise.

*No one knoweth the Son, save the Father.* In this verse Jesus claims a unique relationship with the Father as well as a nature incomprehensible to man. He claims the power to know fully the Father, even as the Father knows the Son. This is a claim to omniscience.

*Whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal.* Jesus asserts that no man can know the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son reveals the Father. It is impossible for man to know God except as God is revealed through Jesus Christ. How grateful man ought to be for the revelation which we have of God in Jesus.

## III. Jesus Invites the Weary (Matt. 11: 28-30)

*Come unto me.* This is the greatest invitation the world has ever received. In this invitation is implied the divinity of Jesus. It would be foolish for an ordinary human being to stand before people and invite them to come unto him. It is also an indication of his love for people. If he did not love them it would be unreasonable to think that he would be sincere in his invitation.

*Ye that labor and are heavy laden.* Notice the class to which this invitation is given. In Jesus the poor and downcast have a friend. One

proof of the divinity of Christianity is that it favors the poor and down-trodden. If man had invented the religion, it would have appealed to the wise, the rich, and the powerful. Jesus said he came not to call the righteous but the unrighteous. Those who realize their lost condition and are sorrowing under their load of guilt for sin and who need a saviour are the ones invited by our Lord.

*I will give you rest.* Here again we have a promise which implies the divinity of our Lord. It would have been foolish for him to make such a promise if he was not more than a man. It is also an indication of his interest in the downtrodden of the earth.

*Take my yoke upon you.* Discipleship implies responsibilities. Jesus promises rest, but he also invites us to take his yoke. The yoke implies responsibility, burdens to bear, but since we are yoked with him it is not an unbearable yoke.

*And learn of me.* We profit by our relationship with Jesus in the degree that we learn of him. And we can be profitable to him only in the de-

gree that we learn of him. An individual who never grows in the knowledge of the Lord will never have the capacity to appreciate Christianity, nor will he ever have the ability to serve the Lord to any profitable degree.

*I am meek and lowly in heart.* This is said as an encouragement to people to accept his invitation. He is not like the high and mighty king who harshly tramples upon his subjects, but he is meek and lowly and gentle in his dealings with those who take his yoke.

*My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Lest the thought of a yoke should hinder our acceptance of his invitation Jesus hastens to say that his yoke is easy. And lest we should hesitate to accept his invitation for fear of the responsibilities, he hastens to say that his burden is light. Those that labor and are heavy laden would benefit little by taking on another hard yoke and another heavy burden. The burdens and responsibilities of Christianity are difficult if man tries to bear them alone, but his relationship to Jesus makes the yoke easy and the burden light.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The destruction of Sodom was centuries before the time of Christ, yet he spoke of a judgment which awaited the people of that city. Hence, we conclude that the wicked do not suffer all their punishment in this life.

2. God hides his teaching from the

wise and the great only as he emphasizes such things as seem foolish and unscientific to them.

3. The gospel is of such nature that it appeals to the poor, discouraged, and dependent people. Why should people seek to be in that class from whom God hid his wisdom?

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons of the lesson.

Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What does the great invitation imply as to the past of man?

What does the invitation imply as to God's attitude toward man?

On what does Jesus base his argument that God will bless his children?

What does this invitation imply with reference to God's plan of salvation?

#### Golden Text Explained

How much influence does God exert upon man to cause him to come to Jesus?

What power must we recognize in man?

What reason did Jesus give for men not coming to him?

What causes men to come unto Jesus?

How does God exert this drawing influence?

What assurance do we have that Jesus will accept us when we turn to him?

#### Reproof for Rejection

What cities did Jesus upbraid for rejecting him?

What apostles lived in one of these cities?

What Old Testament cities did Jesus compare with these of his day?

What did Jesus teach with reference to their punishment?

What do you know of Capernaum, and with what city was it compared?

Does Jesus teach that all wicked people will be punished alike?

#### The Revelation of the Father

How did Jesus address his Father in prayer? How does this compare with the way some men address him in prayer today?

What did God hide from the wise, and how did he hide them?

To whom did God reveal these things, and how did he do so?

What is omniscience, and how did Jesus lay claim to this attribute?  
Who can know the Father, and how did Jesus reveal him?

Jesus Invites the Weary

What is the greatest invitation, and what is indicated by it?

To what class of people is the great invitation given?

What does Jesus promise to people who accept his invitation?

What duties does he suggest for those who accept the invitation?

What does Jesus say of his character in this invitation?

What does he tell us about his yoke to encourage us to accept the invitation?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XI—June 15, 1952

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

The Lesson Text

Mark 4: 1-10, 14

1 And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching,

3 Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it.

5 And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

9 And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parables.

• • • • •  
14 The sower soweth the word.

Golden Text.—“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8: 11.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 13: 1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

- June 9. M.....An Old Testament Parable (Judges 9: 7-21)
- June 10. T.....Isaiah's Use of the Parable (Isa. 5: 1-7)
- June 11. W.....Ezekiel's Use of the Parable (Ezek. 17: 1-10)
- June 12. T.....Jesus Uses Parables (Matt. 13: 24-33)
- June 13. F.....Parable Concerning Laborers (Matt. 20: 1-16)
- June 14. S.....Parable Concerning Judgment (Matt. 25: 14-30)
- June 15. S.....Parable Concerning Humility (Luke 14: 7-11)

Time.—A.D. 27.  
Place.—By the Sea of Galilee.  
Persons.—Jesus and the multitude.

Introduction

Since our study is about one of the parables of Jesus, it is well that we know the meaning and something of the use of parables in the scriptures. Jesus did not invent the parable; the use of it was not original with him. There are a number of parables in the Old Testament. How-

ever, I think we may say that no one ever used the parable as expertly as did Jesus. It is significant that no one of the apostles ever resorted to its use in their teaching and preaching of the gospel. Someone has said that a parable is an extended metaphor. “In the more usual and

technical sense of the word, *parable* ordinarily signifies an imaginary story, yet one that in its details could have actually transpired, the purpose of the story being to illustrate and inculcate some higher spiritual truth. These features differentiate it from other and similar figurative narratives as also from actual history." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.) The parable differs from a fable in that the fable is an impossible story, while the parable deals with things in the realm of possibility. Jesus used the most ordinary things of everyday life such as the sowing of seed and casting nets into the sea to teach the great lessons of Christianity.

The purpose of parables was (1) to reveal the truth and (2) to conceal truth. For those who were humble and poor in spirit, who were will-

ing to search for the truth, parables revealed the principles of the kingdom; but for those who were arrogant and self-important and who looked upon Jesus as an upstart who refused to recognize the rabbi of his day, parables serve to conceal the teachings of Jesus. When the disciples came to Jesus on one occasion to ask for an explanation of a parable, he said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." (Luke 8: 10.) Some have suggested that Jesus did not begin the use of parables until he saw the attitude of the religious leaders and that he began speaking in parables to conceal his meaning from them and to reveal his teaching to those who sought his meaning.

### Golden Text Explained

#### 1. Seed Contains the Life Principle.

Jesus said in our text, "The seed is the word of God." By this he means that the word of God has certain characteristics which are to be found in seed. One of the most important characteristics of seed is that it contains the life principle, and when the seed is planted or buried this life principle begins to work and a plant is the result. This suggests to us that when the word of God is planted in the heart with life germ contained within, the word begins its work and if allowed to proceed in harmony with God's planning, a Christian is the result. The seed in the heart of man is all that is essential to produce a Christian. There are those who contend that the Holy Spirit must perform some extra work or exert some power not resident in the word in order to bring forth a Christian. But Jesus says, "The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." (Mark 4: 28.) According to this, when seed is planted in the earth no miraculous power is necessary for production. Since Jesus used this as an illustration of the operations of the kingdom, we would conclude that when the word of God is planted in the heart, no extra miraculous operation is essential to the bearing of fruit.

#### 2. Seed Produces After Its Kind.

This is a law as old as the earth. God said, "Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so." (Gen. 1:11.) This is a rule to which there is no exception. If there were exceptions to this rule, farmers would be upset and disappointed most of their time. But since there is no exception they can plant with all assurance that they will reap the same thing they sow. So, the word of God, the seed of the kingdom, produces after its kind and from this rule there is no exception. When the word of God is planted in the heart of an individual, it produces a Christian and nothing else. The seed of the kingdom will produce a child of the kingdom. The apostles and prophets went about sowing the seed of the kingdom. When that seed was received and obeyed, the result was the establishment of the kingdom in the various countries where it was preached. Not one time did the preaching of the gospel ever result in the establishment of any denomination. One may well ask, Why all the denominations? In reply, we say that these denominations came as a result of the sowing of a different seed. (Matt. 13: 24-30.) It takes the word

of God plus traditions of man to produce a denomination.

**3. Seed Can Be Mixed or Adulterated.** Everyone knows that any number of plants may be planted so close to each other that they mix and the seed from these mixed flowers will produce a mixed variety. It is also known that seed may deteriorate, as seen in melons going back to the citron. So the word of God may be mixed with human traditions so as to produce a mixed variety. This is the explanation of the rise of denominationalism. Had the seed, the word

of God, been kept pure, unmixed with human teaching, there would never have been anything but the church which our Lord established. But when human tradition became mixed with the word and this mixture was planted in the hearts of men, a Christian or a child of God could not be the result. It is our responsibility today to sift the teachings and interpretations preached about us to hold to that which is scriptural and reject the unscriptural. To do this we must be familiar with the teachings of Christ and reject anything not a part thereof.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Wayside Ground (Mark 4: 1-4)

*He began to teach by the seaside.* Jesus was preeminently a teacher; whether he was on the land or on the sea, in the mountain, or on the plain, he was busy teaching. The sea here mentioned is the Sea of Tiberias, otherwise known as the Sea of Galilee.

*A very great multitude gathered.* This suggests our Lord's growing popularity especially among the common people. While it is true many of them followed him for the loaves and fishes, yet there were many who followed that they might learn his teachings.

*Taught them many things in parables.* As said above, Jesus did not invent the parable, but he used it more extensively than any teacher before or after his day. Albert Barnes gives four reasons why Jesus spoke in parables: (1) to convey truth in a more interesting manner; (2) to teach spiritual truth so as to arrest the attention of the common people; to appeal to them through the *senses*; (3) to convey offensive truth or personal rebuke in such way as to bring it home to the conscience; (4) to conceal from one part of his audience truths which he intended others should understand.

*The sower went forth to sow.* This was a very common picture of a man with a sack of grain hung over his shoulders, taking grain from the sack with his hand and broadcasting it over the land. In the application, the sower is the teacher or preacher, and the seed is the word which he teaches. Since there can be no crop without a sowing, there can be no children of

the kingdom without the preaching of the word of the kingdom. This should impress us with the importance of a program of preaching which will reach every nation.

*Some seed fell by the wayside.* Here we have the picture of a bad patch, or any unplowed surface in the field. Seed falling upon this ground would not find an entrance and the birds would devour it. In the application this represents the **heart** hardened by unbelief so that the word could not enter. The birds represent Satan and his angels taking away the word lest people should believe and be saved. This shows that Satan realizes the power of the word in the hearts of people. Satan does not spend his time trying to prevent people experiencing a direct operation of the Holy Spirit; he uses his time taking the word out of the hearts of people.

### II. The Rocky Ground (Mark 4: 5, 6)

*Other fell on rocky ground.* Jesus explains that there was not much earth, "no deepness of earth," so that when the plant had come up it had little chance of living. The hot sun scorched the plant and the lack of soil about it made it impossible for it to resist the burning rays of the sun. In the application of the parable, Jesus said this represents those who received the word with joy and because they have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. (Luke 8: 13.) Mark says, "Endure for a while." Since Luke says they believed for a while we must admit that they were believers in Christ. But if they believed

for a while only, it is necessarily implied that they ceased to be believers. Since these are plants in the Lord's vineyard produced by the sowing of the seed of the kingdom, we must recognize them as children of the kingdom. If they endure only for a time, we must conclude that they continue for a time to be children of the kingdom. But if in time of temptation they fall away, or cease to be in that relationship, we are forced to conclude that they ceased to be children of the kingdom. Next, according to Mark, Jesus says, "When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble." Mark uses the word *stumble*; Luke says *fall away*. Hence we conclude that a child of the kingdom may enjoy the blessings of the kingdom for a while, but because of tribulations or persecutions he falls away from the kingdom; he ceases to be a child of the kingdom. Jesus said, "Because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24: 12, 13.) Since these endured for a while, and not to the end, the promise of salvation does not belong to them.

### III. The Thorny Ground (Mark 4: 7)

*Other fell among the thorns.* Jesus represents some seed as falling on ground with which no fault was found except that thorns were also growing there. The thorns grew up faster than the good seed, choking it so that it yielded no fruit. In the application of the parable, Jesus makes the thorns represent the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. It is well known that thorns and obnoxious weeds grow more rapidly than good seed. No doubt farmers wish that corn, cotton, and other useful plants would by nature choke out the weeds, but such is not true. And in the spiritual realm the sinful habits and inclinations are of such nature as to choke the good. This is simply another instance where Jesus used a most common principle to teach a very necessary spiritual lesson. Without continued cultivation, uprooting and destroying the evil in our lives, we can never hope to survive. If we leave our hearts uncultivated they are sure

to grow up with these things which choke the good seed. Two gardens side by side may illustrate our point. Both have the same kind of soil, the same amount of rain and sunshine; the same good seed is planted in each. One is cultivated, the other is left to the mercy of the weeds. One bears fruit; the other does not. Cultivation of the one, and the lack of it in the other is the explanation. So two individuals in the same community or the same family with identical environment may arrive at different eternal destinies. One has weeded out the things that would choke the good seed while the other has given no attention to the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things.

It *becometh unfruitful*. Here is a plant in the Lord's vineyard capable of bearing fruit, but because of a lack of cultivation no fruit is borne. What is the Lord's attitude toward unfruitfulness? Jesus gave a parable in Luke 13: 6-9 in which he taught his attitude toward the unfruitful tree. He said, "Cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground?" Again Jesus cursed the fig tree because it had no fruit, in spite of the fact that it had leaves at that stage of development which indicated fruit. And in the parable of the vine and the branches Jesus taught that a fruitless branch was to be cut off and burned. (John 15: 1-6.) So we conclude that a plant in the Lord's vineyard which becomes unfruitful is doomed to destruction. This lesson should forcibly impress every church member with the necessity of denying himself the pleasures of the world that he may bear fruit. And not only the *pleasures* of the world keep us from bearing fruit, but the *cares* of the world. Some people are so busy in their shops and offices that they have no time to do church work. Some women are so busy in their homes that they never have time to visit the sick or talk with people about where they expect to spend eternity. All have responsibilities, and it is well that they should, but when we allow these everyday duties to keep us from doing the Lord's work, we are giving them first place in our lives and putting the Lord in the background.

#### IV. The Good Ground (Mark 4: 8-10)

*Others fell into the good ground.* Jesus represents some seed as falling into the good ground. Luke defines this good ground to be "an honest and good heart." (Luke 8:15.) We are responsible for the type of soil which we are. The person who does not honestly investigate and receive the word of God is not proper soil for the seed of the kingdom.

*Growing up and increasing.* Jesus represents the seed which fell in good ground as following a normal course of growth and yield. In the application we conclude that those in the church are expected to yield fruit. When people are not fruit-bearing Christians, we may be sure that there is a hindering cause. One may be so deceived as to be unconscious of this hindering cause, but close examination will surely reveal that some thorns are choking the good seed. As it is natural for a plant to grow, or a child to grow physically, so it is natural in the spiritual realm for people to grow in knowledge, in usefulness and courage and in fruitfulness. One of the saddest sights one

can see is a child that has never grown physically. But there are many sadder sights in God's family where many have never grown either in knowledge or usefulness since they were born into the family.

*Thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.* This indicates the varying degrees of fruitfulness among Christians, and the degree of fruitfulness is determined by one's ability. A similar lesson was taught by Jesus in the parable of the talents, where he represented one man as having five talents, another two, and another one. The one who bears thirtyfold will be as acceptable to the Lord as the one who bears a hundredfold since his ability was only a third that of the latter.

*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

This is a statement which Jesus used to excite the interest and attention of his hearers that they might give sufficient effort to learning the meaning of these parables. Those who had ears to hear were those sufficiently interested to study. His admonition, let him hear, is an encouragement to attend to the things taught.

#### Topics for Discussion

1. Since the seed is the word of God, and seed sowing is essential to life, we conclude that the conversion of the world depends on us as sowers of the seed taking the word to all the world.

2. Jesus is not looking to the servants of Satan to sow his seed. He is looking to his people to sow the

seed in all the world. This is a big job, but not impossible.

3. If a few poor disciples of the first century could sow the seed in all the world of their day, we should be able to do the same in our day with so many more to work and so much more money and such better means of travel and communication.

#### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

##### Introduction

Was Jesus the first to use parables in teaching?  
Did the apostles use parables in their teaching?  
Give a definition of a parable.  
Give the difference between a parable and a fable.  
What type of things in life are most common in the parables of Jesus?  
Name two purposes of parables.  
Why should Jesus wish to conceal truth?

##### Golden Text Explained

In what way is the word of God like seed?  
What must be done with the seed in order to produce a Christian?

What age-old law governs production from seed?

What is the result of the sowing of the seed of the kingdom?

In what way can the seed of the kingdom be adulterated?

What is the result of planting adulterated seed?

What is our responsibility with reference to maturity of the seed of the kingdom?

##### The Wayside Ground

By what sea was Jesus teaching?

Is Jesus better known as a teacher or a preacher?

Give four reasons suggested why Jesus taught in parables.

What lesson is suggested by the wayside soil?

What does this parable teach us with reference to our responsibility of preaching the gospel?

What happened to the seed which fell by the wayside, and what lesson is taught?

The Rocky Ground

Whom does the rocky ground hearer represent?

What does this parable teach with reference to the possibility of apostasy?

What reasons does Jesus assign for the apostasy of people?

The Thorny Ground

What did Jesus make the thorns represent?

What is characteristic of the growth of thorns?

Discuss the necessity of cultivating our hearts.

What is the Lord's attitude toward unfruitfulness?

What are the things in this life which cause us to be unfruitful?

The Good Ground

How is the good ground described?

May one be hindered from spiritual growth and be unconscious of the cause?

Is lack of growth a common condition in the church?

What indicates varying degrees of fruitfulness among Christians?

Does the degree of fruitfulness determine our reward?

What is meant by "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear"?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XII—June 22, 1952

JESUS RAISES JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

The Lesson Text

Luke 8: 40-44, 49-56

40 And as Je'-sus returned, the multitude welcomed him; for they were all waiting for him.

41 And behold, there came a man named Ja-i-rus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Je'-sus' feet, and besought him to come into his house;

42 For he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as he went the multitudes thronged him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately the issue of her blood stanch'd.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the syn-

agogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher.

50 But Je'-sus hearing it, answered him, Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came to the house, he suffered not any man to enter in with him, save Peter, and John, and James, and the father of the maiden and her mother.

52 And all were weeping, and bewailing her: but he said, Weep not; for she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 But he, taking her by the hand, called, saying, Maiden, arise.

55 And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately: and he commanded that *something* be given her to eat.

56 And her parents were amazed: but he charged them to tell no man what had been done.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Weep not; for she is not dead, but sleepeth." (Luke 8: 52b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 9: 18-26.

Daily Bible Readings

- June 16. M..... Elijah Raises the Dead (1 Kings 17: 17-24)
- June 17. T..... Elisha Raises the Dead (2 Kings 4: 25-37)
- June 18. W..... Jesus Raises the Dead (Luke 7: 11-17)
- June 19. T..... Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11: 38-46)
- June 20. F..... Peter Raises the Dead (Acts 9: 36-43)
- June 21. S..... Paul Raises the Dead (Acts 20: 7-12)
- June 22. S..... Mark's Record of Our Lesson (Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43)

**Time.**—A.D. 27.

**PLACE.**—Capernaum.

**PERSONS.**—Jesus, his disciples, Jairus, and his daughter.

## Introduction

The resurrection, either individual or general, is a New Testament subject. Very little is said in the Old Testament about a resurrection. We do have instances of people being raised from the dead. Elijah raised a child from the dead (1 Kings 17), and Elisha raised a child from the dead (2 Kings 4); a dead body was brought back to life when it came in contact with the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13: 21). Daniel made the clearest statement concerning the resurrection which we have in the Old Testament. He said, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12: 2.) The resurrection of Jesus was spoken of by David, though the passage could not be used to prove a belief in a general resurrection. (Psa. 16; Acts 2: 25-32.) The Jews were divided on the subject, the Pharisees believing in a resurrection, and Sadducees denying it.

But in the New Testament there is much said about the resurrection. We have five instances of resurrection: (1) the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8); (2) the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7); (3) Lazarus of Bethany (John 11); (4) Dorcas (Acts 9); (5) Eutychus (Acts 20.) The apostles were empowered to raise the dead (Matt. 10: 8), though we have no record of their exercising this power during the lifetime of Jesus.

These instances of Jesus raising the dead were for the purpose first, of causing people to believe in him as the Son of God, and second, to inspire in them a belief in his ability to fulfill his promise of raising them from the dead in the last day. His own resurrection is said to be the first fruits indicating that the final resurrection is to be of the same kind. His was a bodily resurrection; hence, we may expect a bodily resurrection in the last day. It is becoming more and more common, even among brethren, to deny the resurrection of the body. It is urged that the resurrection of the body is scientifically impossible, and the classic illustration of the point is that of a man being thrown overboard and devoured by fish. The fish in turn are eaten by sharks, and the shark in turn is eaten by other human beings. Since man consists of an outward and inward man, and the inward man is never buried, it follows that if there is any resurrection at all, it must be the resurrection of the outward man. A careful reading of 1 Corinthians 15 will show that that which is buried is that which is raised. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. Without doing any violence to the scripture, we may say that which is sown in corruption is that which is raised in incorruption. We repeat, if one does not believe in the resurrection of the body, he does not believe in any resurrection at all.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Jesus Comforts the Sorrowing.

The first thing that Jesus said to the anxious father was, "Weep not." Jesus is still the source of comfort for all who have anxieties and sorrows. Christians are admonished not to sorrow for the passing of their loved ones as those who have no hope. (1 Thess. 4: 13.) Our belief in Jesus and in his power to raise the dead as well as his power to care for our loved ones between death and the resurrection should fortify us in times of sorrow. Though we will naturally grieve for

the passing of those we love, yet if we know the truth we will not weep for them but for our own loneliness. Paul had a desire to depart and be with Christ because he said, "It is very far better." (Phil. 1: 23.) If we believe that our loved ones fell asleep in Christ, and if we believe Paul's statement that it is very far better to be with Christ, there is no reason to weep for them. Paul admonishes us to comfort one another with such words. (1 Thess. 4: 18.)

2. **She Is not Dead.** Jesus did not

mean to deny that the child's spirit had not gone out of the body. He spoke of death here from the point of view of the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the "soul-sleepers" of their day. They believed that when one died he ceased to exist. The late Judge Rutherford said that when one dies, "He is as dead as a dead dog." His followers still hold to that theory and occasionally a brother in the church may be found who believes it. Jesus opposed the theory of the Sadducees on numerous occasions. He taught them that God who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living. (Matt. 22: 32.) When Paul saw that the council was composed of Pharisee and Sadducees, in order to make friends he said, "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." (Acts 23: 6b.) When he said this, the Pharisees in the council took his part. Hence we conclude that both Jesus and Paul opposed the Sadducees in their view of death and resurrection.

3. **She Sleepeth.** Jesus spoke to her condition as sleeping because his view of death was not that of the Sad-

ducees, but that of the Pharisees. Death resembles sleep (1) in that the body is inactive while the mind continues to be active. Everyone has been aware of the activity of his mind when dreaming while the body is asleep. (2) Death resembles sleep in that we expect to rest. Sleep is a period of rest for the body, and death is a rest from the labors and trials of this life. (3) Death resembles sleep in that we expect to awake from both. When Jesus spoke of Lazarus as being asleep, he intimated an intention to raise him from the dead, or awake him from that sleep. (4) Death resembles sleep because we expect to retain our identity. No one expects to lose his identity when he lies down to sleep. Jesus teaches us that we shall not lose our identity in death. With this view of death the Christian has little to fear. Jesus died that he "might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2: 15.) David got a vision of this when he said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." (Psa. 23: 4.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jairus Appeals for Help (Luke 8: 40-42)

*The multitude welcomed him.* Our text begins with the return of Jesus from the country of the Gerasenes. (Luke 8: 26-39.) This was a district across the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum. It was there that he found the man possessed with a legion of demons and cast them out. When the people saw this demonstration of power, they were afraid and they asked Jesus to leave. Leaving the man whom he blessed to go through the district telling people what great things God had done for him, Jesus returned and found the people waiting for him.

*There came a man named Jairus.* We know nothing of this man except that he was a ruler of the synagogue. He was therefore a Jew and one of high standing in his community. In large synagogues there were several rulers. In Mark's record, we are told that Jairus was one of the rulers of

the synagogue. (Mark 5: 22.) They were in the synagogues about what elders or bishops are in the church of Christ. They were chosen from among the old and experienced men of the synagogue the same as bishops in the church. They had about the same duties in the synagogue that elders have in the church, and there were servants under their supervision the same as there are deacons under the supervision of elders.

*Fell down at Jesus' feet.* Matthew says, "He worshipped him." (Matt. 9: 18.) It was an expression of his dependence upon him and of his faith in him to grant the request that he was about to make.

*Besought him to come into his house.* This man was a ruler of the synagogue and yet it did not occur to him that Jesus could keep his daughter from dying or to raise her to life after she died without coming into the house. Yet we find a Roman centurion in a similar situation saying, "I am not worthy that thou should-

est come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." (Matt. 8: 8.) Jesus responded by saying he had not seen so great faith, no not in Israel. And here is an example of that weaker faith on the part of one who should have exercised a greater faith.

*And she was dying.* Mark says that Jairus told Jesus his daughter was "at the point of death," while Matthew says, "My daughter is even now dead." (Matt. 9: 18.) Mark and Luke both tell of Jairus coming to Jesus and asking him to go to the house and while on the way to the house Jesus heals an unfortunate woman. Before they reached the house, the news is brought to Jairus that his daughter was already dead. Matthew gives a shorter account of the whole series of events and seems to combine the two statements and pictures Jairus as asking only that his daughter may live again.

## II. Jesus Heals a Woman (Luke 8: 43-44)

*A woman having an issue of blood twelve years.* What the disease was we have no way of knowing, but it must have been such as would render her ceremonially unclean. Adam Clarke discusses the case at length, saying that the case of the woman was a very afflicting one "(1) because of the nature of her malady; it was such as could not have been made public without exposing her to shame and contempt. (2) It was an inveterate disorder; it lasted twelve years. (3) It was continual; she appears to have had no interval of health. (4) Her disorder was aggravated by the medicine she used. (5) Her malady was ruinous both to her health and circumstances—she spent all she had.

(6) She was brought to the last point of wretchedness, want, and despair; she was growing worse and had neither money nor goods to make another experiment to procure her health.

(7) She was brought so low by her disorder as to be incapable of earning anything to support her wretched life a little longer."

*Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment.* These words suggest her fear and her timidity, but they also suggest her faith in Jesus. When Jesus asked who had

touched him, and there was some confusion among the many who were crowding about him, the disciples suggested that it might have been any one of the many of the multitude who unconsciously and unintentionally touched him. But Jesus said that he perceived that power had gone out from him. Hence he knew that someone had touched him for the purpose of being healed. The woman then came forward and confessed what she had done, and in gratitude told how she had been healed. With characteristic gentleness and compassion, Jesus said to her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." (Luke 8: 48.) For a spiritual application of this lesson we might view people going from one philosophy to another and from one human tradition to another seeking peace and comfort. And as this woman found no relief in the ordinary physicians, so these people today find no genuine rest and satisfaction in the philosophies and traditions of men. Like this woman they need to turn away from the wisdom of the world to Jesus, the source of all comfort and satisfaction and be healed by him and given hope of a better life in the future.

## III. The Dead Raised to Life (Luke 8: 49, 50)

*Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher.* This is the message brought by some friend of the father who was seeking help from Jesus. Like Jairus, this one had the idea that Jesus might do good while with the person but that he had not power from a distance and, like Mary and Martha, this one thought that Jesus might have prevented death but did not suspect that he had power to raise one from the dead.

*Fear not; only believe.* With these words Jesus sought to give Jairus comfort and to encourage him to believe. Belief was all that was in the power of Jairus to do in this instance, and so Jesus said only believe. It is tragic and fatal that many preachers today tell sinners the same thing when clearly there are other things for them to do in order to be saved. Those who preach salvation by faith only are inconsistent in that they urge people to repent, but their

inconsistency goes unobserved by many who are anxious about their lost condition. Hence, they put their confidence in these preachers to tell them what the Lord requires of them.

*When he came to the house.* Luke tells us that when Jesus entered the house, he allowed no one except Peter, John, James, and the father and mother to go in with him. But when he said the girl was not dead we read, "They laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." If none but those mentioned went in with him, the question may be raised, who were there to laugh him to scorn? It is possible that there were hired mourners, or if not hired they were professional mourners and they would be in the house, but the multitude which followed Jesus was not allowed to enter.

*Were weeping and bewailing her.* This refers to those professional mourners who were already in the house when Jesus and the multitude arrived. Matthew says that when Jesus came into the house of Jairus he saw the flute players and the crowd making a tumult. Barnes tells us, "The people of the East used to bewail the dead by cutting the flesh, tearing the hair, and crying bitterly. The expressions of grief over a friend, in Eastern countries are extreme. As soon as a person dies, all the females in the family set up a loud and doleful cry. They continue as long as they can without taking breath and the shriek of the wail dies away in a

low sob . . . they hire persons of both sexes, whose employment is to mourn for the dead in the like frantic manner. They sing the virtues of the deceased, recount his actions, dwelling on his beauty, strength, on his learning, on the comforts of his family and home, and in doleful strains ask him why he left his family and friends. They employ minstrels to add their grief, and to entune their expressions of sorrow. This violent grief continues, commonly, eight days. In the case of a king, or other very distinguished personage, it is prolonged through an entire month. This grief does not cease in the house; it is exhibited in the procession to the grave, and the air is rent with the wailings of real and of hired mourners."

*Knowing that she was dead.* Luke being a physician, would be expected to mention this, and his mention of it serves to give us assurance that Jesus really raised the girl from the dead and that this is not a case of resuscitation. Unbelievers have denied that this was a resurrection, but they are not to be accepted as witnesses on a par with Luke and the three apostles who accompanied Jesus and these mourners who were eyewitnesses to all that transpired.

*And her spirit returned.* Luke identified himself with those who believe that man is something more than flesh. The fact that he says her spirit returned is proof that she was dead, for the body without the spirit is dead. (James 2: 26.)

### Topics for Discussion

1. The interest of Jesus is ever directed to those who appeal to him for help. No one is too poor to attract the attention of Jesus or too insignificant to receive his help.

2. Jesus raised the dead to cause people to believe in him as the Son of God. If he could raise the dead, then surely he can save our souls and

give us everlasting life in heaven.

3. Some of the Jews laughed at Jesus when he suggested that the girl would rise as from sleep. And still people refuse to believe that the Lord can raise these bodies which sleep in the dust. A thing may seem scientifically impossible to us and yet be possible with God.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What is said of resurrection in the Old Testament?  
How were the Jews divided on the subject?

How many instances of resurrection mentioned in the New Testament?

What is said of the power of the apostles to raise the dead?

What does the term "first fruits" indicate with reference to Christ's resurrection?

What doctrine concerning the resurrection is becoming more popular?

What is there about man which can be resurrected?

Golden Text Explained

- What did Jesus first do for the sorrowing?
- What is there in the gospel to fortify us in times of sorrow?
- How did Paul use the word of God for comfort?
- What did Jesus mean by saying the girl was not dead?
- What group of people today hold the same view as the Sadducees?
- With which group was Paul identified?
- Name and discuss four ways in which death resembles sleep.

Jairus Appeals for Help

- What do we know of Jairus?
- What do you know of the office Jairus held?
- What request did Jairus make of Jesus?
- What did Jesus say of the faith of Jairus?
- Can you harmonize the accounts of the child's death given by Matthew and Mark?

Jesus Heals a Woman

- What is said in our lesson of the disease of this woman?
- What is said of her efforts to find a cure?
- What application can be made of her efforts in our life today?

The Dead Raised to Life

- What news was brought to Jairus as he approached his home?
- With what words did Jesus comfort the man?
- What unscriptural use is made of these words today?
- What do you know of the custom of hiring mourners?
- What positive proof do we have that the girl was actually dead?
- What is said of the girl's spirit?
- What does this teach with reference to the nature of man?
- What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIII—June 29, 1952

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

The Lesson Text

Matt. 16: 1-12

1 And the Phar'-i-sees and Sad'-du-ces came, and trying him asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the heaven is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot *discern* the signs of the times.

4 An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jo'-nah. And he left them, and departed.

5 And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread.

6 And Je'-sus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the

Phar'-i-sees and Sad'-du-ces.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread.

8 And Je'-sus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread?

9 Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Phar'-i-sees and Sad'-du-ces.

12 Then understood they that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Phar'-i-sees and Sad'-du-ces.

Golden Text.—*Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*" (1 Cor. 5: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 8: 10-21.

Daily Bible Readings

- June 22. M.....Jesus and the Pharisees (Matt. 22: 15-22)
- June 23. T.....Jesus and the Sadducees (Matt. 22: 23-33)
- June 24. W.....Jesus Denounces the Pharisees (Matt. 23: 1-27)
- June 25. T.....Jesus Warns Against Pharisees (Luke 12: 1-12)
- June 26. F.....How Pharisees Prayed (Luke 18: 9-14)
- June 27. S.....Sadducees Oppose the Gospel (Acts 4: 1-12)
- June 28. S.....Council Composed of Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23: 1-10)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Borders of Magadan.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the Jews.

### Introduction

The location of the events of our lesson is rather indefinite. Jesus came from the coast of Tyre and Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 15: 21, 29), but what part of the sea is not known. It was there that he fed the four thousand. In Matthew 15: 39 we are told that he came into the borders of Magadan and that he arrived there by boat. It is presumed that the multitudes were fed somewhere on the western coast of Galilee, and yet it is also probable that Magadan was on the western border of the sea. In Mark's account the word Dalmanutha is used instead of Magadan. Some suppose that Magadan is related to Magdalia, the home of Mary Magdalene, but with no very good evidence.

As our lesson deals with the two prominent sects of the Jews, it will be well for us to give some attention to them. The Pharisees were the most numerous and wealthy sect of the Jews. The word Pharisee means "separated," and they wore this name because they professed to separate themselves from the evil of the world about them. They claimed to have started at the time of the separation

of foreigners from the Jews under Ezra. (Ezra 9: 1; Neh. 9: 2.) Their movement was as much political in the beginning as religious, but later came to be merely a religious sect. The two conditions of membership were (1) a pledge to set apart all sacred tithes, and refrain from eating anything except that which had been tithed; (2) to observe all laws and traditions concerning purity both in food and in family relationships. Jesus characterized them as hypocrites because they were careful about small matters and gave no attention to the weightier matters of the law.

The Sadducees take their name from Zadok who lived about 175 B.C. They were the aristocratic and priestly party. It is thought that they accepted only the Pentateuch, and certainly they rejected the Pharisaic traditions. They denied the resurrection which the Pharisees believed; they also denied the existence of angels and spirits. (Acts 23: 8.) They professed to believe in serving God without any hope of reward or fear of punishment; hence they did not believe in a resurrection.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. This Glorifying Is Not Good.** The church at Corinth was glorying in a situation about which they should have been ashamed. It seems that an aged man had, after the death of his first wife, married a young woman, and his son by his former wife had taken the young woman away from his father. Paul characterized this as a type of fornication which was not practiced even among the heathen. Paul said they were "puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. (1 Cor. 5: 2.) It is in this connection that Paul said their glorying was not good. We may conclude then that when people glory in something of which they should be ashamed they are unchristian. Paul says that those who glory in their shame are the enemies of the cross of Christ. (Phil. 3: 18, 19.) To glory

in their shame is to do just what the Corinthians were doing, glorying in something of which they should have been ashamed. Glorying on the part of man is rarely ever good, though the word is sometimes used in a good sense. Paul said that he gloried on behalf of the Macedonians for their liberal contribution to the poor. (2 Cor. 9: 1, 2.) But it is never good for people to glory in the sense of boasting about the good which they do. This was one of the besetting sins of the Pharisees.

**2. The Meaning and Nature of Leaven.** The word leaven in our text referred to the portion of dough left over from a former baking. Any agent which causes bread to rise would be classed as leaven. We have the same process of change in liquids, but in this case it is referred to as fermentation. Leaven, or fermenta-

tion, is therefore used *tropically* for corruptness, perverseness of life, doctrine, heart, etc..... (Matt. 16: 6, 11; Mark 8: 15; Luke 12: 1; 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.) It is in this sense that our Lord warns his disciples to beware the leaven of the Pharisees, and Paul admonishes the Corinthians to purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness. Jesus used leaven on one occasion in a good sense illustrating the growth of the kingdom. (Matt. 13: 33.) The kingdom works like leaven in that it works quietly, without show, and changes into its own nature that with which it comes in contact.

3. Moral and Spiritual Lessons. The moral of our text is (1) instead of accepting and glorying in the evil of others about us, we should do our

best to purge out the leaven of evil; (2) we are reminded that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. This is true with reference to individuals and congregations. A congregation which allows a little evil may expect quite a brood of evils to spring up, and then may expect these to grow. Evil is contagious, and one person given over to sin may exert an influence in a congregation either in doctrine or life that may destroy the peace and harmony of the church. We should be just as careful with reference to our personal lives. A little evil if allowed or nursed in our hearts will spread until the whole heart is corrupted. Our safety depends on our entire consecration to the will of God.

### Exposition of the Text

I. Jesus Gives the Jews a Sign

(Matt. 16: 1-4.)

*The Pharisees and Sadducees came trying him.* These two sects of the Jews were continually at war with each other, but like Pilate and Herod during the trial of Jesus, these sects often united to combat a common enemy. They could forget their lifelong differences and combine to destroy Jesus.

*Asked him to show them a sign from heaven.* Jesus had performed many miracles such as healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and even raising the dead, but all of these had been in one way or another connected with the earth. Not one had been what might be termed a sign from heaven such as Old Testament prophets had given. When Israel demanded a king and Saul had been anointed, Samuel gathered the people and gave them some parting advice and warning. To impress his words upon them he called upon the Lord to send thunder and rain. (1 Sam. 12: 17.) Isaiah caused the sundial of Ahaz to turn backward ten steps as a sign from Jehovah. (Isa. 38:1-8.) When Joshua needed more time to win a battle, he commanded the sun to stand still (Josh. 10: 12-14), and Moses gave Israel bread from heaven for forty years. It was some such sign as these for which the Jews asked.

*It will be fair weather.* Jesus criticized them for being able to read

the weather signs and yet were not able to see the proof of his claims in the miracles which they had beheld. When they saw the heaven turn red in the evening, they predicted fair weather; but if the heavens were red and lowering in the morning, they predicted foul weather for the day. Jesus did not say whether they were right or wrong in their predictions, but usually the weather can be determined a day or a night in advance by such signs. And it is rather implied that they were forecasting the weather correctly, since he reprimands them for not being able to interpret the spiritual signs which they were beholding.

*Evil and adulterous generations.*

Jesus characterized the Jews as being both evil and adulterous. The Jews were the people of God; God often spoke of himself as being married to Israel. (Isa. 54: 3-7; 62: 4, 5.) Since the Jews had forsaken their covenant with God, they were looked upon as being in spiritual adultery. Evidence is not lacking that they were an adulterous people in the primary sense of the term, but probably the word is to be given a spiritual meaning here. Jesus implied that it was only such an evil generation that would demand a sign such as they required.

*No sign shall be given but the sign of Jonah.* Jesus did not say that he would not give this wicked generation a sign. Rather he said the opposite. He said no sign *except* the sign of Jo-

nah would be given, which certainly implies that he would give them that sign. The meaning of this sign of Jonah is that as God preserved Jonah in the belly of the whale three days and nights so Jesus would be preserved and would come back to life. The obligation of the Jews in this matter is implied in that since the people of Nineveh believed Jonah and repented at his preaching, so when the Jews beheld this sign they would believe in Jesus and repent. No doubt many of them were led to believe and repent when they beheld the open tomb.

## II. Jesus Warns His Disciples (Matt. 16: 5-12)

*Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* The location changes from one side of the sea to the other during our lesson. They left Magadan and went to the other side which was on the east. Those who are not careful for the purity of the doctrine of the church should study the life and teaching of Jesus more closely. Some people have the idea that it matters little what a person believes and teaches so long as he is sincere in the matter and clean morally. But Jesus was very careful about the doctrine which his disciples believed. He warned them against false doctrines; he exposed false doctrines and even discussed or debated them openly. He condemned the Jews for their traditions. (Matt. 15; Mark 7.) He even went so far in these passages as to teach that the practice of human traditions makes vain the worship which people offer to God. His frank and open attacks on the false doctrines of the Jews would make many church members apologize to their friends for bringing them to hear that particular sermon.

*We took no bread.* When Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Jews, his disciples failed to get his point. They had forgotten to take bread for their journey and thought that he was criticizing them for their thoughtlessness.

*Oh ye of little faith.* When Jesus perceived that they were troubled about not bringing bread, he reprimanded them for their lack of faith. No doubt our Lord today judges us

to have very little faith when we have more concern about the temporal necessities of life than we do about the growth of the kingdom and the saving of souls. It has been suggested that we have here, as in a number of other places, proof of the inspiration of the scriptures. If these apostles had invented the story which they record, they would not have pictured themselves as being so simple and lacking in understanding. And the change which these apostles experienced between the time they met Jesus and the time they gave themselves up to a life of persecution and death is proof of the power of Jesus in the lives of men.

*Do ye not yet perceive?* Jesus then reminds them of the time when he fed thousands of people from a very small supply of food. The feast to which he refers is the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. (Matt. 14: 15-21.) At that time the multitude had followed him into the desert or uninhabited district. The disciples suggested that the multitude be sent away, but Jesus suggested that the disciples feed the multitude. They explained that they had nothing but five loaves and two fishes, which would not begin to feed such a multitude. Jesus asked that this food be brought to him. He then had the people to sit down in orderly array, and he fed them and had enough remnants picked up to fill twelve baskets. The second instance to which Jesus refers is recorded in Matt. 15: 32-38. This happened only a few days before the time of our present lesson. The people had been three days without food, and he was afraid to send them away without food lest they should faint. On this occasion his disciples had seven loaves of bread and a few small fishes. After giving thanks, he distributed the food to the disciples, and they to the multitude. When the people had eaten all they desired, there remained seven baskets of fragments. After such demonstrations as this, it would seem impossible that the disciples should worry over the lack of bread. But perhaps we are not in position to criticize them, since we often show as little faith in spite of our knowledge of even greater miracles than these. Jesus tells us to seek first the king-

dom of God and his righteousness and all these temporal things will be provided. (Matt. 6: 25-34.) And yet, in spite of this promise of the Lord, God's people often worry and even become alarmed over their condition, wondering if they will get provisions for the next day or month.

*I spake not to you concerning bread.* After rebuking them for their lack of faith, he then explains that he was not speaking of bread for the body but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Undoubtedly the disciples had had frequent opportunities of hearing and appreciating such language as Jesus used. We cannot

imagine that Jesus would criticize them for failing to understand a figure of speech which they had never heard and with which they had no way of becoming familiar. Jesus made use of such figures of speech in order that he might stamp his lessons upon the memories of his hearers. His parables as well as this figure of speech were used for this same purpose. With moderate care and diligent study, we should be able to see the spiritual meaning in passages of scripture where the worldly person is unable to discern the lesson.

### Topics for Discussion

*Beware of the leaven.* The disciples came to understand that by leaven Jesus meant the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Some of the distinguishing doctrines of these sects were true, and so were not included in the warning. For instance, the Pharisees believe in the resurrection and in the existence of angels and spirits. Certainly Jesus would not warn his disciples against these. The doctrine of the Sadducees on these points were unscriptural and would be included in the warning of Jesus. Some of the doctrines of the Pharisees included in this warning are (1) "Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoso-

ever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor." (Matt. 23: 16.) They also taught that it is wrong to swear by the gift which was upon the altar, but right to swear on the altar itself. Jesus condemned them for this teaching and taught them not to swear at all. (2) They taught that it was essential to tithe, but they were careless of justice, mercy, and faith. (3) They were careful to keep up outward appearances, but were careless about the disposition of the heart. Jesus compared them with sepulchres which were kept freshly painted outside, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. (Matt. 23: 27.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Golden Text.

#### Introduction

What is known of the location of the events of our lesson?  
What do you know of the sect of the Pharisee?  
Why did Jesus characterize them as hypocrites?  
What do you know of the sect of the Sadducees?

#### Golden Text Explained

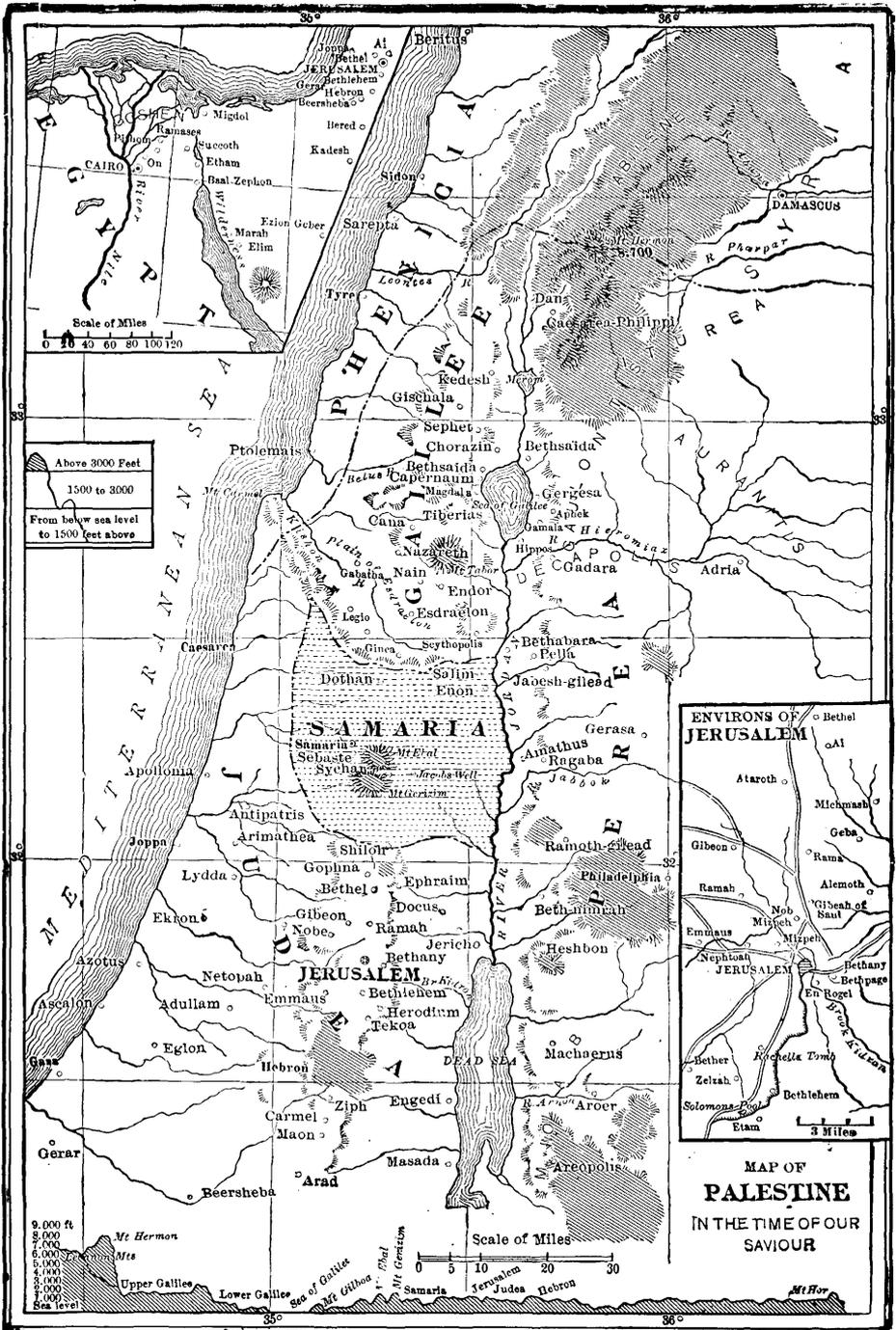
Of what sin was the church at Corinth glorying?  
What does Paul say of people who glory in their shame?  
Is it ever good for people to glory about anything?  
What is the meaning of the word leaven?  
What is the name of the same process in liquids?  
What does the word leaven mean when used with reference to life or doctrine?  
What lesson did Jesus teach by saying that the kingdom is like leaven?  
What are the moral and spiritual lessons of our text?

#### Jesus Gives the Jews a Sign

What brought the Pharisees and Sadducees together?  
What request did they make of Jesus?  
Give examples of such signs as they requested.  
How did Jesus characterize their generation?  
What sign did Jesus say they would be given?

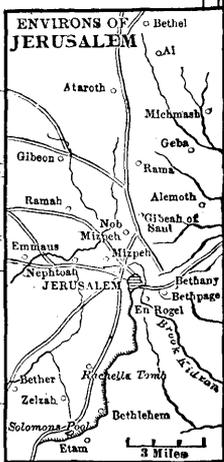
#### Jesus Warns His Disciples

Against what did Jesus warn his disciples?  
What do you know of the attitude of Jesus toward false doctrines and unscriptural practices?  
Why did Jesus say they had little faith?  
What proof of inspiration of the scriptures is suggested in this lesson?  
Of what important occasions did Jesus remind his disciples?  
Name some doctrines of the Jews against which Jesus warned his disciples.  
Discuss the general teaching of the New Testament with reference to our responsibility to warn others of the danger of false doctrine.  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?



Scale of Miles  
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120

Above 3000 Feet  
 1500 to 3000  
 From below sea level  
 to 1500 feet above



9,000 ft  
 8,000  
 7,000  
 6,000  
 5,000  
 4,000  
 3,000  
 2,000  
 1,000  
 Sea level

Scale of Miles  
 0 5 10 20 30

MAP OF  
**PALESTINE**  
 IN THE TIME OF OUR  
 SAVIOUR

# THIRD QUARTER

## The Life and Teaching of Jesus

AIM.—To study afresh the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, that the student may more closely follow the example of him who was sinless in word and deed.

### Lesson I—July 6, 1952

## JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH

### The Lesson Text

Matt. 16: 16-26

16 And Si'-mon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Je'-sus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Si'-mon Bar-Jo'-nah: 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 Ha'-des 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 Je'-sus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Je-ru'sa-lem, 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 Je'-sus 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.

26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”* (Matt. 20: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isaiah 53.

### Daily Bible Readings

- June 30. M.....David Foretells the Death of Christ (Psalm 16)
- July 1. T.....Jesus to Be Rejected (Luke 9: 18-27)
- July 2. W.....His Death Foretold Again (Matt. 17: 9,22,23)
- July 3. T.....Foretells Death in Parable (Matt. 21: 33-46)
- July 4. F.....Foretells His Betrayal (Matt. 26: 14-25)
- July 5. S.....Foretells Peter's Denial (Mark 14: 27-31)
- July 6. S.....His Death on the Cross (Mark 15: 22-41)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Near Caesarea Philippi.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his apostles.

### Introduction

The events of our last lesson occurred in the borders of Magadan. From that territory Jesus traveled

northward until he came into the region of Caesarea Philippi. This is one of the most northern points of the

journeys of the Lord. Caesarea Philippi has no Old Testament connections. The word Philippi is used to distinguish it from the Caesarea on the Mediterranean sea coast, which was the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. Caesarea Philippi is situated near the base of Mount Hermon. Near the city is one of the sources of the Jordan River. The town was originally called Paenias. Some think that it bore this name because the god Pan had a temple erected there for his worship. The name was changed by Phillip in honor of Tiberias Caesar; hence the name Caesarea Philippi.

It was on this occasion that Jesus asked his disciples what the people thought of him. The disciples had been out on a preaching tour (Matt. 10: 5f.) and had come in contact with people in various sections of Palestine. Jesus was anxious to hear what the people were thinking and something of the impression which the disciples had made upon them. Some thought that Jesus was John the Baptist. This

was the opinion of the man who killed John, for Matthew tells us that when Herod heard of the things Jesus was doing he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him." (Matt. 14: 2.) Some said that Jesus was Elijah come back to earth. Perhaps this opinion was founded on an Old Testament prophecy, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come." (Mal. 4: 5.) They had failed to see the fulfillment of this prophecy in John the Baptist, for in speaking of this prophet it is said, "Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things; but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would . . . then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." (Matt. 17: 11-13.) Others said he was Jeremiah or some other prophet. These were opinions, and as usual the opinions of the multitude were wrong.

### Golden Text Explained

1. Jesus Taught That His Death Was His Own Act. Since our lesson concerns the death of Christ as foretold by him, it seems good to consider this golden text in harmony with this thought. Our text says that Jesus *came to give his life*. Jesus often spoke of his coming into the world as if it were his own act. He speaks of his birth and his coming in such way as to indicate that the time and purpose were determined by the Lord himself. As he stood before Pilate who asked him if he was a king, said, "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world." (John 18: 37.) When speaking of his death he referred to it as laying down his life. He said no man could take his life from him, that he had power to lay it down and power to take it up again. (John 10: 18.) Surely he was more than human, or he was very badly deceived, or he was a wicked man. If he was deceived, or if he was wicked, we must confess that such a character has accomplished more good than all the righteous people of the world. Since this is unthinkable, we must accept the only other alternative, that he was

the Son of God and all that he claimed to be.

2. Jesus Taught That His Death Was the Chief Aim of His Coming into the World. Our text says that he came to give his life a ransom for many. That was the purpose of his coming. The word ransom means a price which one pays for the redemption of captives. When children are stolen, kidnappers demand money for their release. This is called ransom money. So Jesus came to give his life to buy souls, or to redeem souls from the bondage of Satan. Here again is an absurd claim if Jesus was not more than human. What would we think of an individual today who would solemnly affirm that he came into the world for the purpose of ransoming people from spiritual bondage?

3. Jesus Taught That His Death Had World-wide Significance. Our text says that he came to give his life a ransom for *many*. Some have taken this statement to mean that his life was not a ransom for all. Their idea is that only the elect are ransomed and that they are the only people for whom Jesus gave his life. But the word *many* is often used in scrip-

ture for all. Paul says, "For if by the trespass of the one the many died . . ." (Rom. 5: 15.) Here the many died because of the trespass of one, Adam; but in 1 Corinthians 15:

22 Paul says, "All died in Adam." Hence, many means all. So when Jesus gave his life a ransom for many we are to understand that it was a ransom for all. Furthermore this harmonizes with other statements of scripture. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2: 2.) To sum up, we have Jesus speaking as if his coming into the world and his living were determined

by himself, that the purpose of his coming was to die, that his death was to be the ransom price to redeem sinners from sin, and that his death would have sufficient worth to redeem the whole world. If his teaching is true, he is the Son of God; if his teaching on these points is not true, we cannot afford to accept his word on any other. Modernism refuses to accept his word on these matters, but piously pretends to believe his moral teachings. They should realize that his moral teachings are of no value if his teaching on this point is false.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Promises to Build His Church

(Matt. 16: 16-20)

*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* The word "Christ" is the Greek term for "Messiah" of the Hebrew and means "the anointed." This part of the confession has to do with the office and work of our Lord. The expression *Son of the living God* refers to the nature and person of Christ. The Jews held that the Messiah was to be born as any ordinary human being and that his anointing would qualify him for his special work. Holding this view, they were unable to answer a question which Jesus put to them when he asked them how David could call him Lord if the Messiah was to be the son of David. (Matt. 22: 43-45.) We cannot be sure that Peter understood all that was implied in this confession at the time he made it, but its comprehensiveness will be appreciated when we remember that it is the foundation on which the church rests and that our Lord did not see fit to add anything to it or require us to make any further confession.

*Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.* By "flesh and blood" we have usually supposed that Jesus referred to human sources, that Peter did not learn this truth from human beings, but from the Father in heaven. Albert Barnes suggests a different meaning of the terms, saying that Peter did not learn this truth from any external splendor of the Messiah, that his lowly appearance would not create the impression that he was the Messiah, but that Peter

learned it by revelation. It was revealed in the teaching and confirmed by the miracles of Jesus.

*Thou art Peter.* This statement of Jesus has given rise to several false doctrines. The Catholic Church says that Peter is here made the foundation of the church. Others say that the rock on which the church is built is Christ, but neither Peter nor Christ can be the rock on which the church is built and for similar reasons. (1) The word rock in this verse is the translation of the Greek word *petra*, which is feminine gender. If the word rock referred to Jesus himself, it would have been masculine gender. (2) In this figure Peter is given the keys to the house that is built on the rock. Peter could not occupy two positions, that of foundation and keyholder in the same illustration. Jesus is the builder in this figure, so he cannot be made both the builder and the foundation. (3) Since the word rock is in feminine gender, we will have to look for something that will be agreeable to this grammatical form. The truth which Peter confessed seems to be the only solution. The truth that Jesus is the anointed of God and the Son of God is the foundation on which the church rests. If he is what Peter confessed him to be, the church will stand; if Peter was mistaken and deceived, the church built by Jesus has no durable foundation. Hence, the truth of Peter's statement is the foundation of this verse.

*Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* These words are capable

of two interpretations: (1) that all the powers of evil will not be able to destroy the church, (2) that our Lord's entrance into Hades would not keep him from building the church. Both of these are true, though the first is not true locally, for the powers of evil have prevailed against local churches. But no one who believes in the omnipotence of God would believe for a moment that Satan can destroy the church universally. This writer prefers the second interpretation, holding that Jesus said I will build my church and though my body shall be killed and my soul spend three days in Hades, in spite of it all I will come back to fulfill this promise.

*Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth.* Though this statement was addressed to Peter, we learn from Matthew 18: 18 and John 20: 22,23 that the other apostles had as much of this power as Peter had. To bind and to loose simply meant to prohibit and to permit. If the apostles command obedience, we may be sure that God will require it of us. If they release us from an obligation, we may be sure that God will not require it of us.

## II. To Die in Jerusalem (Matt. 16: 21-23)

*That he must go unto Jerusalem.* Jesus had made obscure references to his death previous to this. He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2: 19.) The Jews thought he referred to the temple which Herod employed forty-six years to build, but John explains that he spake of the temple of his body. Again he said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." (John 3: 14.) The people who heard Jesus make this statement had no clear conception of its meaning, but as we look back upon it, we know that he referred to his being lifted up on the cross.

*Suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes.* Jesus no longer used obscure statements to his disciples, but told them plainly that he was to suffer even death at the hands of the religious leaders.

*The third day be raised up.* This statement was calculated to encourage

the disciples. They had left all to follow him. Now he speaks of his death in the near future. They would need this hope to bear them up through the trials that were immediately ahead of them. Here again we have proof of the divinity of Jesus. (1) That he knew of his death and resurrection beforehand and that he knew that his death would be caused by the religious leaders. It is also significant that he knew that his death would be in Jerusalem. (2) Not only is his divinity suggested in the prediction of his resurrection, but that his resurrection was to be accomplished. He was to be crucified because he claimed to be divine. He predicts his resurrection as a validation of his claims. Paul speaks of this as proof of his divinity in Romans 1: 4.

*Be it far from thee, Lord.* This is Peter's reaction to the prediction just made by our Lord. There is no indication that Peter spoke harshly to Jesus, but that he expressed an earnest wish that such might not happen to Jesus.

*Get thee behind me, Satan.* This is the reply of Jesus to Peter. Jesus calls Peter Satan in the sense that Peter was acting as an adversary on this occasion. He was putting a stumbling block in the way of Jesus, making it more difficult for Jesus to accomplish the purpose for which he came into the world.

*Thou mindest not the things of God.* Peter was reacting in a very human way. He was putting human feelings and considerations uppermost. Many of this day allow their feelings and desires to have first place rather than to view matters as God views them. In this way and to this extent we may be an adversary of the Lord.

## III. Losing Our Life for Him (Matt. 16: 24-26)

*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself.* The remarks in these verses were of a general nature, and according to Mark delivered unto the multitude as well as his disciples. (Mark 8: 34.) After telling Peter that he was not looking at this matter as God looks upon it, but as men would look upon it, Jesus seeks to show Peter, along with the multitude, God's viewpoint of these mat-

ters. Greatness is found in self-denial and sacrifice. God honors the man who gives himself in service and sacrifice. He does not honor those who shirk from service because it entails sacrifice. Jesus is willing to go on into Jerusalem where he knows he will suffer and be killed. He is willing to make this sacrifice that he may accomplish his purposes. Now, if any man would be his disciple he must have the same views; he must be willing to deny himself and take up his cross and follow his teacher.

*Whosoever would save his life shall lose it.* To save one's life means to preserve it from suffering and death in the cause of Christ. Jesus was going to give his life for the sake of his cause and would thereby save it. If a disciple should desert him or deny him in order to save his life from physical death, he would lose his life eternally.

*Whosoever shall lose his life.* Losing life here means giving it in service and sacrifice. Those who follow the example of Jesus and lose their life in his service will find it eternally. When the church was being

persecuted, people had this problem to face in a very literal fashion. Many of them weakened as they approached the fire or the arena where their bodies would be torn by wild beasts. Others found the courage to walk boldly into death, hoping to gain eternal life through their sacrifice. Some think that the principle does not apply today when we are free from such persecution. But we may as surely lose our lives as the martyrs of old. Those who give themselves in service to the church may expect to save their lives eternally, but those who save their lives that they may enjoy the pleasures of this world will as surely lose eternal life.

*What shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world and forfeit his life.* Jesus teaches that eternal life is worth more than all the world. If all the riches of the world could be translated into money and that should be piled in one great heap, it would not represent as much real worth as one soul; yet many people are losing their souls to gain a pitifully small fraction of that immense amount of wealth.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Religion without a dying Christ is a dying religion. Those who deny that the death of Christ is vicarious, rob the gospel of its power to save.
2. Jesus shows himself to be Lord both of life and death by coming of his own will and by giving up his life at the time before determined. In his

care we need not shudder at the responsibilities of life nor fear the approach of death.

3. The soul is worth more than all the world, but many are exchanging their souls for a pitifully small portion of the world. Each should ask, For what will I sell my soul?

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

What was one of the most northern points of the travels of Jesus?  
What do you know of Caesarea Philippi?  
What great conversation took place there between Jesus and his disciples?  
What opinions did the people generally have of Jesus?  
How was the prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah fulfilled?

#### Golden Text Explained

Did Jesus have anything to do with determining the time and purpose of his death?  
What is the meaning of ransom? Can you illustrate it?  
What does the claim of Jesus on this point imply?  
Can you prove that Jesus died for all?

Can one deny the miraculous birth and death of Jesus and be a Christian?

#### Promises to Build His Church

What is the meaning of the words Christ and Messiah?  
Can you distinguish between the meanings of "Christ" and the "Son of God"?  
Explain the statement that "flesh and blood" did not reveal the truth to Peter.  
What is the rock on which the church was built? Why cannot it be Peter?  
What is meant by the gates of Hades?  
What is meant by binding and loosing?

#### To Die in Jerusalem

In what obscure ways had Jesus referred to his death?  
Why did Jesus mention his resurrection in connection with his death?  
What proof do we have in these statements of the divinity of Jesus?  
What did Peter think of his statement? and what did Jesus call him?

**Losing Our Life for Him**

In what is greatness found?  
 What attitude must one have before he  
 can be a disciple of Jesus?  
 How can one save his life? and how can  
 one lose his life?

What is meant by losing one's life?  
 What does Jesus teach in our lesson about  
 the value of our life?  
 Compare this with Paul's statement in Acts  
 20: 24.  
 What is there of interest in Topics for  
 Discussion?

**Lesson II—July 13, 1952**

**JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**

**The Lesson Text**

John 7: 2, 10-24

2 Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand.

10 But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret.

11 The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

12 And there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning him: some said, He is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray.

13 Yet no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Je'-sus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Je'-sus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man willet to do his will, he shall know of the teaching,

whether it is of God, or *whether* I speak from myself.

18 He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Mo'-ses give you the law, and *yet* none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?

20 The multitude answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee?

21 Je'-sus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel because thereof.

22 Mo'-ses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Mo'-ses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a man.

23 If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Mo'-ses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?

24 Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

**Golden Text.**—*"If any man willet to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."* (John 7: 17)

**Devotional Reading.**—John 7: 25-36.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- July 7. M..... Institution of the Feast (Lev. 23: 33-44)
- July 8. T..... Restoration of the Feast (Neh. 8: 13-18)
- July 9. W..... God's Displeasure with His People (Amos 5: 14-24)
- July 10. T..... Jesus Attends Another Feast (John 12: 12-19)
- July 11. F..... Church Troubled During a Feast (Acts 12: 12-19)
- July 12. S..... Response of the People (John 7: 37-52)
- July 13. S..... At the Feast of Dedication (John 10: 22-39)

**TIME.**—A.D. 29.

**PLACES.**—Galilee and Jerusalem.

**PERSONS.**—Jesus, his brethren, and the Jews.

## Introduction

Since the events of our lesson took place during the Feast of the Tabernacles, it will be well for us to get some Old Testament background of this feast. It was one of the three annual feasts which all Jewish men were required to attend. Passover and Pentecost were in the spring, but the Feast of the Tabernacles was in the fall. It was to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of Tisri, which corresponds to the last half of our September and the first half of October. That was the first month of the civil, and the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year. This was sometimes known as the harvest festival, for it came at the end of the harvest. Moses said, "Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress." (Deut. 16: 13.) And he continues by saying that they should rejoice with their families, their servants, the fatherless and the widow, and the so-

journer, indicating that they were to share the bounties of their harvest with the stranger and with the poor. It was also stated that they were not to appear before Jehovah until "every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee." (Deut. 16: 17.) Once in seven years during this feast, the Jews were to gather for the reading of the law of Moses. (Deut. 31: 9-11.) It was at this time and in obedience to Moses' commandment that Ezra read the book of the law before the people in Jerusalem and discovered the commandment to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles by living in booths made from the branches of trees. (Neh. 8: 13-18.) The Jews were not faithful in the observance of this feast, for Nehemiah tells us that it had not been observed since the days of Joshua until the return from Babylonian captivity.

## Golden Text Explained

1. The Will to Know. In our text Jesus implies that a knowledge of him and his teaching may be had only by those who will to do his will. There must be a will to know as well as the will to do the things which the Lord commands, (a) Only those who have a genuine love of the truth can be said to will to know his truth. Paul speaks of some who perish by the deceit practiced by Satan because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thess. 2: 10.) So we would say that the first thing necessary to a knowledge of the Lord is a love of the truth, (b) There must be the intention of practicing the truth. It is not enough to learn the truth, nor is it enough to love the truth unless we love it to that degree that we will apply it in our everyday life. It is possible for people to love the truth for the sake of argument and for the joy of being victorious in an argument, but still not have that practical love of the truth which leads them to make application of it in their own lives.

2. Shall Know the Source of His Teaching. Our text says that if one is

willing to do the will of the Lord, he shall know about the Lord's teaching, that is he shall know whether it is of God or whether Jesus spake from himself. This verse teaches that the one who is in the proper frame of mind, who has the proper attitude toward God, will be capable of judging the source of teaching, (a) One who is willing to obey God and has a genuine love of the truth will recognize that teaching which is adapted to the nature of his heart. He will see in the gospel the facts which are adapted to his intellect. The facts of the gospel are simple and within the reach of the intelligence of the average person. He will also find commandments which are adapted to that part of the mind we call will, and he will find promises in the gospel which are suitable to the emotions. If there is that in the gospel which appeals to the intellect, the will, and the emotions of man, we conclude that the gospel is perfectly adapted to the nature of the heart it proposes to change, (b) The one who wills to know the truth of God will recognize in the teaching of Jesus that which fills every need of the soul. There

is food for the hungry, the water of life to satisfy the soul that thirsts after righteousness. There is reproof for the wayward, encouragement for the fearful, and guidance for the wanderer. No one has ever discovered a longing of the soul for which there cannot be found a corresponding provision in the gospel.

3. These Facts Given Above Account for the Fact That the Simple, the Poor, and the Humble of This World Understand and Appreciate the Gospel More Than the Wise, the Rich, and the Powerful. Very few of the

latter recognize their need and consequently do not will to know of the teaching of Christ. Jesus thanks the Father that he had hidden these saving truths from the wise and the understanding but revealed them unto babes. (Matt. 11: 25.) Paul suggests the same when he said not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. (1 Cor. 1: 26, 27.) In the wisdom of God it seemed good to form a plan of salvation which would appeal to and be understood by the weak and simple rather than the wise and wealthy.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Opinions of the People (John 7: 2, 10-13.)

*The Feast of the Tabernacles was at hand.* The law required the Jews to spend seven days in this feast, but it is generally known that they added one, making it an eight-day feast. More burnt offerings were offered during this feast than either of the other two annual feasts. This feast was to the Jews something like Thanksgiving is to us, since it came at the end of the harvest. It was also observed in commemoration of the goodness of God during the wilderness wanderings. God did not want his people to forget that he sheltered them through forty years of wandering. Hence, he had them to live in booths made from branches of trees one week in the year.

*When his brethren were gone to the feast.* These were the children of Joseph and Mary, despite the contentions of all Catholics and several Protestants. From verses 3 to 8 of this chapter, we learn that these brethren did not believe in him at this time. There is no evidence that any of his brothers believed in him until his resurrection and his appearance to James. (1 Cor. 15: 7.)

*He went up as it were in secret.* The jealousy of the rulers was increasing with every public appearance of Jesus. He did not wish unnecessarily to excite their feelings of jealousy, nor did he wish to come to an open break with the Jews before the proper time. In verse 6 of this chapter he says, "My time is not yet come," and in verse 30 John explains why no man laid his hand on him by

saying, "Because his hour was not yet come." So his secret arrival at Jerusalem was not because of any fear on his part.

*The Jews therefore sought him.* By the term Jews we are to understand the leaders of the Jews, the scribes, Pharisees and Sanhedrin.

*There was murmuring among the multitudes.* Though Jesus did his work quietly and without any effort whatever to sell himself to the people, he was in the minds and on the lips of all. The rulers were jealous and uneasy for fear he would supplant them in the eyes of the people. The people enjoyed his frank, forthright teaching which was not made tedious by the endless citation of authorities. They did not always agree with him, but they listened to him gladly.

*Some said, He is a good man.* As usual people were divided in their opinions about Jesus. These who said Jesus was a good man had no conception of his divinity. They may have thought him to be a prophet, but it is not likely that they regarded him as the Messiah.

*Not so, he leadeth the multitude astray.* Another portion denied his goodness because he led people astray. These obviously did not agree with his teaching. They still held to the teaching of their leaders, accepting their traditions with which Jesus differed so radically. It would be well for brethren to take notice of the fact that even these Jews considered one who would lead people astray from what they believed to be truth not to be a good man. We are inclined to think that men are good if

they are honest and clean morally, but a teacher who leads people astray from the faith is not a good man regardless of his clean character.

*No man spake openly of him.* The word openly means boldly. His friends seemed not to have the courage to speak their sentiments at this feast because they were outnumbered by the enemies of Jesus.

## II. Justification of His Teaching (John 7: 14-18)

*It was now the midst of the feast.* From verses 8 and 9 in this chapter we conclude that Jesus did not reach Jerusalem in time for the first days of the feast. Adam Clarke suggests that the first few days of the feast were taken up with observing Jewish traditions so that Jesus felt it not necessary for him to be there. As was his custom, he used his time in teaching the people. It is remarkable that Jesus accomplished so much in so short a time and there is not a case on record of a man utilizing his time as profitably as did Jesus.

*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* The Jews were surprised at the knowledge of Jesus. The expression "to know letters" does not mean simply the alphabet, but to be versed in their writings. They could not understand how he could be so well versed in the scriptures and their traditions since he had never attended any of their recognized schools. Jesus learned the scriptures as any other young man would learn them. His full knowledge of them is a tribute to his untiring efforts to lay up the word of God in his heart.

*My teaching is not mine.* Jesus does not claim originality, though being on equality with God he might very well have done so. However, he recognizes the Father as being the source of his teaching and himself as the ambassador of the Father to make known the Father's will. In this statement we have proof of a distinction between the Father and the Son. Those who hold to the "Jesus only" theory are unable to explain how Jesus could say the teaching is not mine but the Father's who sent me. Jesus indicates that (a) the Father gave him the teaching, (b) the Father sent him. If there is absolutely no distinction to be made between Jesus and

the Father, it would be impossible for him to say, without practicing deceit, that the Father gave him the teaching or that the Father sent him. The saying that the teaching which Jesus gave belongs to the Father emphasizes its importance and the necessity of our obedience to it. If we reject the teaching which he gave, we not only reject him but we reject the Father who sent him. (Luke 10: 16.)

*If any man willeth to do his will.* Before an individual obeys any part of the gospel, he must have a proper disposition of heart. We usually say that faith is the first step toward salvation. But the disposition of heart which wills to do the will of God also wills to believe in Jesus as God's son. The stubborn, rebellious soul can never become a believer. Jesus says that the individual who has this willing disposition will be able to know whether his teaching is from God or from a mere human source.

*He that speaketh from himself, seeketh his own glory.* Jesus intimates that he is not seeking glory for himself since he does not teach doctrine which originates with him, but he is seeking the glory of God because he teaches the gospel which originated with the Father.

*The same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.* Here Jesus makes a claim of sinlessness. His primary thought, however, is that his teaching is true, that he has told only that which the Father gave him to teach. The word unrighteousness may have the limited meaning of falsehood in this place, and indicates that Jesus is simply saying that he has been faithful in the delivery of the message his Father gave him, and there is no falsehood connected with it, that he is no impostor.

## III. Justification of His Conduct (John 7: 19-24)

*Did not Moses give you the law?* The Jews were proud to admit that Moses gave the law. And they were so jealous of the law that they used to put to death everyone who refused to keep it. They charged Jesus with violating the law because he had healed a man on the Sabbath. (John 5: 9, 10.)

*Why seek ye to kill me?* The law

which Moses gave forbade killing. Since they were accusing Jesus of breaking the law, he turns the accusation on them for violating the law which they professed to keep. It was as much a sin to kill as it was to break the Sabbath. This was not an admission on his part that he had broken the Sabbath, but it was answering them with their own argument.

*Who seeketh to kill thee?* There are two possible explanations of this reply, (a) Since they had taken no visible steps to kill Jesus, they could very well deny that he had correctly interpreted their intentions, (b) It is possible that the multitude made this statement and that they were ignorant of the designs of the rulers. Hence, they thought he had a demon, that he was deranged and not in control of his own mind since he made such unthinkable suggestions.

Moses *hath given you circumcision*. Jesus qualified this statement about Moses giving them circumcision by saying that the rite was of the fathers. By this he means that circumcision among the Jews was older than the law of Moses. The covenant of circumcision was first given to Abraham. (Gen. 17.) Since it was incorporated into the law of Moses, it would be correct to say that Moses had given it.

*On the Sabbath ye circumcise a man*. In this way Jesus justifies his conduct in the healing of the man on

the Sabbath. His argument is that since the Jews circumcised on the eighth day in harmony with the law, even though the eighth day fell on the Sabbath and in spite of the fact that circumcision requires more work and activity than was required of Jesus in healing the man, they could not accuse him of breaking the Sabbath by holding themselves guiltless. Jesus involved them in an inconsistency by showing that they would do more work on the Sabbath than he did, yet they would condemn him for his work and justify themselves. But such has ever been the case of legalists; they can always find grounds for justification of their own actions and can as easily find ground for condemnation of the actions of others.

*Judge not according to appearance.* "Attend to the law, not merely in the letter, but in its *spirit* and *design*. Learn that the law which commands men to rest on the Sabbath day is subordinate to the law of mercy and love, which requires them to bring every activity to the promotion of God's glory in the comfort and salvation of their fellow creatures; and endeavor to judge of the merit or demerit of an action, not from the first impression it may make upon your prejudices but from its tendency, and the motives of the person, as far as it is possible for you to acquaint yourself with them; still believing the best where you have no certain proof to the contrary." (Adam Clarke.)

### Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus was a man whom people cannot leave alone. People who were not actively for him were actively against him. So those who are not for him today are against him.

2. His own brothers had the best opportunity to know of his divine nature, but still they disbelieved. So

many today who have unusual opportunities fail to use them for their best interests.

3. If we would remember that God does not judge according to appearance, we would not give so much time to our efforts to make a good appearance.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

At what time of the year was the feast of tabernacles observed?

By what other name is this feast known?

And how long did it continue?

What was to be done once in seven years during this feast?

Tell of the observance of this feast in the time of Nehemiah.

#### Golden Text Explained

What attitude of mind is essential to a correct understanding of the will of God?

What two things are necessary to a will to know the truth?

Who is capable of judging the source of the teaching of the Lord?

What is there in the truth which is adapted to the needs of the soul?

What class of people are usually attracted to the gospel?

What is said of the type of people in the church at Corinth?

#### Opinions of the People

What type of offerings was most numerous during this feast?

What was this feast to help the people remember?

What do you know of the brothers of Jesus? And their attitude toward Jesus?

Why did Jesus go to the feast in secret?

What was the attitude of the rulers toward Jesus? And the common people?

What reason did some give to prove that Jesus was not a good man?

#### Justification of His Teaching

Why did Jesus not think it necessary for him to go during the first of the feast?

At what were the Jews surprised?

What did Jesus say of his teaching?

What is emphasized by the idea that his teaching came from the Father?

What is the first step necessary to sal-

vation, an attitude? Or an act of obedience?

How did Jesus prove that he was not seeking his own glory?

What unusual claim did Jesus make with reference to his life?

#### Justification of His Conduct

According to Jesus, who gave the law?

How were the Jews about to violate the law of Moses?

What did the people think of Jesus when he charged that some were planning to kill him?

How did Jesus justify his conduct in healing on the Sabbath?

What fault is common to legalists in religion?

What lesson did Jesus teach on this occasion about judging?

When is it right and when is it wrong to judge?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson III—July 20, 1952

# JESUS TEACHES THE WAY OF FREEDOM

### The Lesson Text

John 8: 31-46

31 Je-sus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly my disciples;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Je-sus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin.

35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever.

36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed: yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

38 I speak the things which I have seen with *my* Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from *your* father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Je-sus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

42 Je-sus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *Even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

45 But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And ye shall know the truth, and, the truth shall make you free." (John 8: 32.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 8: 1-20.

## Daily Bible Readings

July 14. M.....	The Value of the Truth (Psalm 19: 7-14)
July 15. T.....	Truth Good for Youth (Psalm 119: 9-16)
July 16. W.....	Truth of God Makes Us Wise (Psalm 119: 97-104)
July 17. T.....	Truth, a Light to Our Feet (Psalm 119: 105-112)
July 18. F.....	God's Precepts Are Right (Psalm 119: 121-128)
July 19. S.....	God's Commandments Are Truth (Psalm 119: 145-152)
July 20. S.....	The Sum of God's Word Is Truth (Psalm 119: 153-160)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Jews.

## Introduction

Since our lesson concerns freedom which comes through a knowledge of God, there are some things which need to be said on the subject for which a better place than the introduction cannot be found. Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (John 17: 3.) From this we conclude that freedom from sin comes from a knowledge of revealed truth, never through human philosophy. All the great moral truths which exercise a beneficent effect upon people have come through revelation. Knowledge of history and science is valuable, but such knowledge has no power to show us what is right and what is wrong, nor does it have any power to move us to do that which is right or restrain us from that which is wrong. In order to be specific, some divisions of this saving knowledge are here indicated. (1) Knowledge of the person and character of the Father. Jesus says that a knowledge of the Father and the Son is life eternal. But the world in its wisdom knew not God (1 Cor. 1: 21); hence we must depend

upon revelation for this knowledge. Some of the ancient philosophers concluded that there must be a maker of the universe, but they knew nothing of the holiness or the goodness and love of this creator. (2) The unity of God is a matter of revelation. There are three persons in the godhead, yet there is but one God. Humanity does not understand, nor is it capable of grasping the significance of this unity from revelation, and certainly could not have originated the idea. (3) The person of Christ and his relation to the Father are known only by revelation. "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." (Matt. 11: 27.) Jesus told Peter that flesh and blood had not revealed the truth of his person to him but the Father in heaven. (Matt. 16: 17.) (4) The conditions of salvation are matters of revelation. Surely no philosopher or scientist could analyze sin and arrive at the conclusion that one may be saved from sin by doing that which Christ teaches as conditions of salvation.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Ye Shall Know the Truth.** This text very logically connects with that used in the introduction above. A knowledge of God and of his Son leads to eternal life. However, not all degrees of knowledge are capable of bringing this salvation, (a) There is a degree of knowledge which gives us a smattering idea of the material in hand, but it does not give us a clear, satisfactory view, (b) There is that degree of knowledge which satisfies the person, but it has not sufficient grasp of the material to

explain it to others. When a student says he understands a problem, or knows the answer to a question, but cannot tell it to the teacher, we conclude that the student does not know the subject material. No one would expect such knowledge of God to have any saving influence on a person. (c) There is that degree of knowledge which gives one a clear understanding of the material in hand so that one may clearly and fully explain the matter to others. But the knowledge does not have any

effect on the life of the individual possessing it. He is not moved to live in harmony with it. This is not the knowledge which Jesus says is life eternal. Paul says such knowledge profits nothing. (1 Cor. 13: 1, 2.) (d) There is that degree of knowledge which not only enables an individual to impart the matters known to others, but it moves the individual to live in harmony with the knowledge possessed. This is the knowledge that saves.

There are two things necessary to the possession of such knowledge of saving truth, (a) There must be a revelation on God's part. As indicated above, the knowledge which saves is not such as comes from science and philosophy but from God. We have in Jesus the complete revelation of God. We should not confuse revelation as used here with inspiration. By revelation we mean the manifestation of God in the person of Christ, and by inspiration we mean the record which we have in the Bible of this revelation, (b) In order to have this saving knowledge, there must be study on our part. It matters not how clearly God has been revealed in Christ, nor how fully inspiration has preserved a record of that revelation, it will be of no benefit to one who is too lazy or indifferent to study. Salvation does not come to the ignorant and indifferent

out in the cornfield or in the shop like a bolt of lightning. A saving knowledge of the truth comes to people who will do the will of God. (John 7: 17.)

2. **Truth Makes Free.** Some regard the commandments of God as burdensome limitations. They are cramped by the "thou-shalt-nots"; hence they look upon Christianity, not as freedom, but as slavery. They fail to distinguish between *freedom* and *license*. They are seeking for some form of religion because they think it is the proper thing, or they are afraid to live and die without it; yet they do not want a form which will deny them their license to indulge in the lusts of the flesh and the pleasures of this world. A knowledge of the truth makes one free (a) from the practice of sin. It restrains our inclinations to do wrong and encourages us to do right, (b) It frees from the guilt of sin. By obeying the truth we meet the conditions upon which God has promised to forgive, (c) It frees from the penalty of sin. Jesus suffered in our place. Those who obey the truth are relieved of the necessity of suffering the penalty for their sins, (d) Truth makes us free from the presence of sin. One who learns and lives by the truth will be taken into the presence of God where there will be no sin. (Rev. 20: 26, 27.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Freedom in the Way of Truth

(John 8: 31-37)

*Those Jews that had believed him.* It will be noticed that in verse 30 John said these Jews "believed on him." Sometimes the word believe is used in the sense of an obedient faith as in John 3: 16, Titus 1: 6, and other passages, but obviously the expression here cannot be taken in that sense, for in verse 44 Jesus speaks of these very believers as children of the devil.

*If ye abide in my word.* To abide in the word of Christ is to accept it without reservation and to follow it without questioning. Many people think they believe in the Lord who believe only so much of God's word as is verified by their moral conscience, or their sense of what is right and wrong, and either dispute or

dispose of the rest of it by saying it is simply the ideas of the writers of the first century.

*Then are ye truly my disciples.* Abiding in the truth is the badge of discipleship. One is inconsistent to say that he is a disciple (learner) of Christ when he refuses to accept and abide by the teaching which Christ gives.

*Ye shall know the truth.* Jesus indicated to these believers that they had something more to learn of him and that the knowledge that they were to learn would make them free from sin.

*We are Abraham's seed.* These Jews, though believers, caught the implication of bondage in the words of Jesus. They thought their connection with Abraham was sufficient to free them from sin. From this we learn that, though they believed, they

were not yet free from sin and that they had to learn and obey the truth to be free from sin. This is sufficient to disprove the doctrine of salvation by faith only.

*Everyone that committeth sin.* When they affirmed their freedom on account of being Abraham's children, Jesus taught them that every individual regardless of his ancestors who commits sin is a bond servant of sin.

*The bond servant abideth not.* After teaching them that sin made them a bond servant, he then says that the bond servant does not abide in the master's house, but the son abides. Here is the distinction between those who are slaves and those who are sons. A slave might be sold or sent away at any time, but a son could not be so treated.

*If therefore the Son shall make you free.* Jesus pictures them as being in sin and himself as a redeemer from sin. He tells them that they can be made free from their sin only if they accept and abide in the truth as taught by him. And if they are thus made free, it is freedom indeed, that is lasting freedom.

*I know that ye are Abraham's seed.* Jesus now seeks to convince them that they are sinners in spite of their relationship to Abraham. He charges them with intent to murder and says that this is a sign that his teaching has not free course, or is not abiding in them.

## II. Jesus Teaches About His Father (John 8: 38-42)

*I speak the things which I have seen with my Father.* Here is another confession on the part of Jesus as to the source of his teaching. He received it from the Father. (John 12: 49, 50.)

*Ye do the things which ye heard from your father.* Notice the contrast between how Jesus received from his Father and how they had received from their father. Jesus had seen and they had simply heard. In this statement Jesus implies that his Father is not their father.

*They answered, Our father is Abraham.* John the Baptist dealt with Jews of this type by saying, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these

stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. 3: 9.) Whether they understood that Jesus implied that Satan was their father we cannot know, but if they understood it they practiced deception and intimated that they thought he was accusing them of not being children of Abraham.

*If ye were Abraham's children.* Jesus says that they would do the works of Abraham if they were actually the children of Abraham. He does not deny their physical descent from Abraham, but he denies that they have partaken of the nature of Abraham.

*But now ye seek to kill me.* He charges them with intent to murder and later says, "This did not Abraham." This is his proof that they were not the children of Abraham. Hence, we know that he did not have physical descent in mind.

*A man that hath told you the truth.* This is an aggravation of their guilt. They were not seeking to kill an impostor or a blasphemer. They were not seeking to kill one who had enslaved them, or done them harm in any way. They were seeking to kill one who had told them the truth. On another occasion he said that the world hated him because he testified that their works were evil. (John 7: 7.) About the quickest way to cause the average worldly person to hate you is to tell him the truth about the way he lives.

*Which x heard from God.* This, too, is an aggravation of their guilt. They not only sought to kill him because he told the truth, but a truth which came from God whom they proposed to love and honor. He had worked sufficient miracles to prove that his word was from God. (John 3: 2.)

*Ye do the works of your father.* Here again Jesus implies that their father is someone besides Abraham or God. But they deny being born of fornication and affirm that they have but one father, even God.

*If God were your father.* God's children partake of God's nature and such love Jesus who was only good and pure. Their lack of love for him was undeniable proof that they were not sons of God. The fact that Jesus gave proof that he came from God and that he had taught the mes-

sage God gave him was enough to cause them to accept him if they had been partakers of the nature of God.

### III. Jesus Teaches About Satan (John 8: 43-46)

*Why do ye not understand my speech?* The fact that Jesus expected them to understand is proof that men are capable of understanding his teaching. In verse 44 he tells them they were children of the devil, yet he expects them to understand his teaching. The theory that the alien sinner cannot understand until a direct operation from God enables him to understand is here shown to be false.

*Because ye cannot hear my word.* These words have been taken as proof that the children of the devil are not capable of understanding spiritual things without a direct miraculous operation. The word *hear* in this passage is to be taken in the sense of *bear* or *tolerate*. It is so used in other passages as John 6: 60. They were so determined in their opposition to him, and so prejudiced against his message that they refused to give his words respectful hearing. These stand in contrast with the man described by Jesus when he said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." (John 7: 17.) There are some who will to know the will of God and some who will not to know it. These Jews, though they believed many of the things Jesus taught, refused to accept his teaching as their rule of life and to walk in the light of it.

*Ye are of your father, the devil.* Jesus lays aside all implications and makes a positive assertion which none of them can misunderstand. By this he means that they have the temper and disposition of the devil. They were imitating the devil in their opposition to Christ and hence betraying their relationship to him.

*He was a murderer from the beginning.* In bringing about the fall of Adam and Eve, which culminated in their death, Satan became a murderer. He not only caused physical death, but he is the cause of all spiritual death and hence a murderer from that point of view. The word *beginning* here surely refers to his seduction of Adam and Eve at the beginning of the human race.

*When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.* Jesus had just said that there is no truth in Satan. His whole nature and work are to deceive. Lying originated with Satan. Jesus says that he is the father of lies. All truth, moral and spiritual, originates with God; all falsehood, moral and spiritual, originates with Satan. Sometimes false doctrines are called traditions of men (Matt. 15: 9), but they are traditions of men in the same sense that the truth is the doctrine of the apostles. (Acts 2: 42.) Men do not originate false doctrines; they only propagate them.

*Which of you convicteth me of sin?* Though the word *sin* may here have the limited application of falsehood with reference to the things that he had taught on this occasion, as Barnes affirms with Calvin and others, yet "there is no need to limit its reference; and in the unanswered query, while we cannot say that by itself this passage is sufficient to demonstrate the sinlessness of Christ, it reveals a sublime depth in his translucent consciousness, that places him, unless he were the most deluded or self-sufficient of teachers — on a different position from that of all other divine messengers." (Pulpit Commentary.)

Jesus concludes by saying, "If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" They could not convict him of error, yet they refused to accept his teaching.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The service of sin is the most cruel unrelenting service man ever performs. Yes, there are pleasures—fleeting pleasures, but they lead to sorrow and death.

2. Jesus gave this lesson to people who believed on him. (Verse 30.) Though they believed on him, they

were still children of the devil. Hence we conclude that "faith only" is not sufficient.

3. Satan is the father, source, of all that is false. Hence all false religious teaching has its source in him. For this reason Paul calls false doctrines the "doctrines of demons."

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

Freedom from sin comes from what?  
Contrast a knowledge of revealed truth with a knowledge of the sciences and arts.  
Give and discuss four divisions of saving knowledge suggested in our lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

Give and illustrate four degrees of knowledge.  
What two things are necessary to the possession of such a saving knowledge?  
How much time per week should one spend in such study? Do you?  
Distinguish between freedom and license.  
A knowledge of truth makes us free in what four respects?

#### Freedom in the Way of Truth

Is the word "believe" ever used to mean a mere mental assent?  
Can you give instances of its use when it means more than mental assent?  
On what condition are we truly the disciples of Jesus?  
On what did the Jews rely to save them from sin?  
How does Jesus define, or identify, the sinner?

How did Jesus prove that the Jews were unlike Abraham?

#### Jesus Teaches About His Father

What did Jesus claim to speak in his teaching?  
What did he accuse the Jews of doing?  
What implication as to their relationship with Satan was in this statement?  
What served to aggravate the guilt of the Jews?  
What did Jesus say they would do if God were their Father?

#### Jesus Teaches About Satan

What proof do we have that men are capable of understanding the teaching of Jesus?  
What is the meaning of the statement of Jesus that the people "cannot hear" his word?  
Can the devil be the father of believers?  
What is the relationship between Satan and murder?  
What is his relationship to falsehood?  
Who is the source of truth? And of falsehood?  
In what sense is a false doctrine the teaching of man?  
What challenge did Jesus give the Jews? and why did they not accept it?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson IV — July 27, 1952

# THE SEVENTY SENT FORTH

### The Lesson Text

#### Luke 10: 1-12

1 Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come.

2 And he said unto them, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.

4 Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; end salute no man on the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in that same house remain,

eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say,

11 Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you: nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh.

12 I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sod'-om, than for that city.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And he said unto them, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest"*(Luke 10: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 10: 17-20.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 21. M..... Jesus Teaches the People (Matt. 9: 35-38)
- July 22. T..... Jesus Sends Out the Twelve (Matt. 10: 5-23)
- July 23. W..... Disciples Go in Pairs (Mark 6: 7-13)
- July 24. T..... Jesus Selects Followers (Luke 9: 57-62)
- July 25. F..... Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. 22: 1-14)
- July 26. S..... Servants Invited to the Feast (Matt. 22: 1-14)
- July 27. S..... The Great Commission (Matt. 28: 16-20)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably in Perea on his way to Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his seventy disciples.

Introduction

The sending forth of the seventy preachers was no doubt for the same general purpose as the sending of the twelve disciples on another occasion. Matthew gives us a better background of the reasons which moved our Lord to send additional workers. He says, "Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." (Matt. 9: 35, 36.) (1) Let us notice first the view which Jesus got of the people. It is said that he saw them as sheep distressed and scattered and not having a shepherd. We would expect Jesus to take such a view of the people since he said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. ... I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10: 11-14.) (2) Notice also how the condition of the people affected

our Lord. We are told that he was "moved with compassion for them." As the shepherd would have a feeling of pity for his wandering, wounded sheep so our Lord was moved with compassion for his people whose hiring shepherds had not given them the teaching and the protection which they needed and who had allowed them to be wounded by false teachers. (3) We are impressed with what Jesus did for them. He not only felt compassion for them, but he was moved to do something. People who have a feeling which does not move them to do something practical have no right to compare their feeling with that which characterized our Lord. In Mark's report of this he adds that Jesus "began to teach them many things." (Mark 6: 34.) From this we conclude that proper teaching is the work of the true shepherd and that it is calculated to cure their distressed and scattered condition. Such is implied in Matthew's account, for he says that when Jesus saw his people in this condition he told his disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers or teachers into the harvest.

Golden Text Explained

1. **The Harvest Is Plenteous.** When Jesus looked out over Palestine and saw the people distressed and scattered and was moved to say the harvest is plenteous, surely today when we take a view of the whole world with its teeming millions of souls who have never heard of God, we should be impressed with the same thought. Truly the harvest is plenteous. Great portions of the earth, containing a

vast portion of humanity, are untouched by teachers who carry the simple gospel. The great commission says for us to go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but in spite of this the majority of the people on earth today have never heard the gospel of Christ as preached by the apostles. Nor is it necessary that we confine ourselves to lands across the sea to find this

condition. In our own hemisphere there are millions of people who have never heard the gospel story. Central America, with its nearly ten million souls, and South America with many more are practically untouched by gospel workers. Nor do we have to get out of our own nation to find such conditions. There are whole states in our nation where the gospel in its purity is not preached with any regularity.

2. **The Laborers Are Few.** Jesus had less than one hundred teachers he could send out to give his message to the lost people of the house of Israel; a small number compared to the need of the field. What must he think today when he views not Palestine, but the world, as the field, and not very many more than he had in that day to depend upon to preach to the nations of the world. It is true that we have more preachers on foreign soil today than at any time since the days of the apostles. We have much to be thankful for and much to be encouraged about in our foreign mission program. Yet when we think of the immense amount of work that needs to be done and by comparison the infinitely small amount that is being done, we should be impressed

anew with the truth of our Lord's statement that the laborers are few. We might also say that the laborers are few compared with the amount of laborers we could have in the field. Our workers in mission fields are not few because we have no more available, but because we have no more who are willing to make the sacrifice of home and comfort and pleasures to give themselves to a life of hardships. We need more people who could say at least to some degree with Paul, "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake." (Rom. 9: 2, 3.) We need people who realize with Paul that they are "debtors both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel." (Rom. 1: 14, 15.)

3. **Pray for Laborers.** When Jesus saw this condition in his day, his remedy was twofold: (a) He began to teach; (b) he told his disciples to pray for more workers. If each one who belongs to the Lord will do his part teaching and will pray for more workers who will do the same, the laborers will be plentiful enough to take care of the harvest.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Appointment of Laborers (Luke 10:

1, 2)

*After these things.* Reference is here made to the events immediately preceding and these include the sending out of the twelve apostles on a mission similar to that of the seventy. It also includes the record of a number of men volunteering to be the disciples of Christ, but who had matters of an earthly sort standing in their way. One would be his disciple after he had buried his father. Another would be his disciple after he had said farewell to his family. To all of these Jesus gave the idea that they must be willing to sacrifice these worldly connections and give themselves wholly to his work.

*The Lord appointed seventy others.* Why seventy, no less and no more, were appointed we have no means of knowing. Some suggest that the twelve apostles are parallel to the twelve patriarchs of the old covenant and the seventy were appointed to

parallel with the seventy whom Moses appointed to aid him in judging the people. Clarke goes so far as to say that it was in harmony with the divine pattern for the church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament to have similar organization. But he forgot, or did not know, that the appointment of these seventy preachers was not part of the church and no mention is made of them after the establishment of the church.

*Sent them two by two.* Our Lord gives no reason for sending them in pairs, but it is easy to see the wisdom of doing so. They would be comfort and support to each other in times of danger and difficulty. Two will have more than twice the influence of one in a community, and men are not as liable to temptation to sin when they have a colaborer along as when they are alone. We are finding it wise to send missionaries to foreign countries not merely in pairs,

but in groups. Cooperation of churches in sending their missionaries to the same, or near-by fields is good. This cooperation must not be allowed to drift into objectionable grouping and control by ambitious churches, but so long as it is kept in the realm of *cooperation*, there is a beneficial result to be obtained from it, and on this ground it should be encouraged.

*Whither he was about to come.* Jesus sent these seventy preachers into districts where he was planning to go personally, hence their work was largely that of preparing the field for his coming. They were to teach, create an interest in the minds of the people and a desire to hear the master of these teachers. While this text was not given primarily to teach this lesson, yet it does suggest a very wholesome thought. Jesus does not go today into any village, state, or nation his teachers have not gone. If we wish Jesus to live in and influence for good a nation, we as his teachers must go before him and create in the hearts of people an interest in him and a desire for him.

*The harvest indeed is plenteous.* This verse has been discussed as a golden text, but it remains here to say that Jesus sent his workers into a field which was ready for harvest, and he sent them because of the readiness of the field. Surely the field of Palestine was no more ready unto harvest than is the world today. Though he does not speak to us personally in audible tones, yet in his word he appeals for workers to go. If one of the seventy had said, "I don't have time," or, "the sacrifice is too great," we would all agree that he would have merited the disapproval of his master. No less today do we merit the Master's disapproval when we fail to accept our responsibility for carrying the truth to others.

### III. Instructions to Laborers (Luke 10: 3-9)

*Go your ways.* In these words Jesus sends his disciples as lambs among wolves. Theirs was not an easy task; they were not going among friends and well-wishers. They were being sent on a dangerous mission, and among people who might not receive them.

*Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes.* The word *purse* here is from a Greek word which means *girdle*. We are told that the girdle was made sometimes of crude leather or camel's hair, but often of much finer material as silk, and that it was made in such way as to carry money in the folds. The wallet, called *scrip* in the Authorized Version, is from a different Greek word and means a bag such as shepherds carry and was sometimes of considerable size. Various societies through the ages have taken this as a demand that preachers go without any financial provision whatever. It certainly meant that these disciples were to make no unusual financial preparation for their journey, but even that is not to be accepted as a law in the church, which was not established until later. The word for shoes in this verse is a Greek word which denoted a heavy shoe, used on long journeys. Mark says that Jesus told his workers on such missions to go shod with sandals. (Mark 6: 8.) The sense of this whole verse seems to be that their journey was to be short and hurried.

*Salute no man on the way.* The eastern form of salutation was often long and tedious and if a traveler met many people during the day, much of his time was consumed in formal salutations. Jesus did not mean for his workers to be impolite, but dressed as a carrier of news on an important and hurried mission, there would be no impropriety in passing the traveler without the long formal salutation.

*Peace be to this house.* They were to enter the first house in a community which returned their peace. They were not to go from house to house. This expression of peace was simply an expression of their good will and best wishes; it was their formal salutation.

*If a son of peace be there.* The term *son of peace* means one who is disposed to be peaceful, or who returns an agreeable salutation to the visitor. It simply means that he accepts the visitor and is willing to show him the common courtesies.

*Your peace shall rest upon him.* If the owner of the house was disposed to receive the visitors, the visitors' salutation rested upon him or

was simply accepted by him. But if the man of the house was not disposed to receive the visitors, the visitors' expressions of peace would turn to him, or would not be allowed to remain upon the house.

Go *not from house to house*. This instruction was necessary on account of oriental customs. "A failure in the due observance of this system of hospitality is violently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds among neighbors; it also consumes much time, causing unusual distraction of mind, leading to levity, and in every way counteracting the success of a spiritual mission." (Barnes.)

*Eat such things as are set before you*. This practical instruction might very well be taken to heart by some preachers among us. Preachers being entertained in homes of brethren while they do the preaching in a gospel meeting are out of place when they criticize the cooks and the keepers of their quarters. If conditions are unbearable, they might be justified in a move to better quarters, but no one is ever justified in criticizing others when he is a guest in their homes.

*Heal the sick that are therein*. The healing of the sick had a twofold purpose: (1) to confirm the word preached. They could not prove their message by giving book, chapter, and verse. They proved it by the working of miracles. (2) It was a service calculated to soften and open the hearts of the people to their message. The church today that fails to serve will find the majority of hearts closed against its message.

*The kingdom of God is come nigh*. This was their message. It was a soul-stirring message to the Jew. Long had they loathed the tyranny of Rome. Great was their expectation of delivery by the Messiah. When these preachers said the kingdom of God is come, it meant that the Messiah was coming to establish a kingdom which would deliver them from their op-

pressors. Their idea of the kingdom was material when they should have had a spiritual conception of it. Our hearts should be stirred even more today than were theirs, since our conception of the kingdom means a spiritual delivery from sin.

### III. Punishment for Rejection of Laborers (Luke 10: 10-12)

*The dust from your city*. Jesus told his disciples that if they entered into a city which would not receive them, they were to go out into the streets where they would be in plain view of all, and shake off the dust from their feet. The dust of all heathen countries was considered impure and was defiling to a Jew. And any Jewish city which refused to accept the messengers of Jesus was to be treated as a heathen city. Even the dust of their streets was considered polluted because of this rejection. These men were the messengers of the Messiah and as such deserved to be accepted and treated in keeping with the dignity of their mission. Those who fail to accept them as such were to experience the wrath of the Messiah.

*Nevertheless know this, the kingdom of God is come*. So important was their message that they were to deliver it in spite of their rejection by the people of the city, but it became a message of doom rather than a message of promise. So the gospel today may be a savor from life unto life or from death unto death. (2 Cor. 2: 16.)

*It shall be more tolerable in that day of Sodom*. That we might appreciate the seriousness of rejecting the messenger of the Lord, Jesus says that the people who reject his messenger will fare worse in the day of judgment than the people of Sodom. Jude tells us that Sodom is an example to us that the wicked will suffer the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 7), so we may see how serious it is for people to reject the messengers of the Lord.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus saw a connection between prayer and a sufficient number of laborers to take care of the harvest. We do not know the power of prayer, but we do know that people who

pray earnestly and sincerely are most likely to do something to see their prayers answered. Hence, if we leave out the power of prayer at the throne of grace and consider only its effect

upon the one who prays, it is still worth while to pray that laborers be sent into the harvest.

2. There has been opposition to the program of service which some of our missionaries have carried on in foreign countries. Jesus equipped his missionaries to serve and gave them

the instructions to serve in the communities where they went. He himself realized the value of service for he "began both to do and to teach." (Acts 1: 1.) Those who follow his example of serving that they may have the opportunity to teach will most likely succeed.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

How did Jesus view the people of his time?

What effect did the condition of the people have on Jesus?

What did Jesus begin to do for the people?

What does this suggest with reference to the importance of our teaching program?

#### Golden Text Explained

What is meant by the great harvest of our text?

What impression do you have of the greatness of the harvest today?

How did the number of laborers compare with the harvest then? And now?

How does the number of missionaries on foreign fields compare with times past? And with our ability to send them? Are missionaries available?

How did Jesus propose to increase the number of laborers in the field?

#### Appointment of Laborers

What did Jesus teach people who would be his followers and laborers?

How many laborers did Jesus appoint and send out?

Why did Jesus send his workers out two by two?

Why did Jesus send these men into the places where he wished to go later?

#### Instructions to Laborers

What instruction did Jesus give them about temporal necessities?

What do you know of eastern customs of salutation?

What is meant by son of peace? By peace resting upon a house?

What did Jesus say for them to do about a place to stay when in a city?

What services did he tell these preachers to render the people?

What message did he give them to deliver to the people?

How do you think this message stirred the hearts of faithful Jews?

#### Punishment for Rejection of Laborers

How did the Jews consider the dust of heathen countries?

What is meant by shaking off the dust of a city?

Were they to deliver their message to a city which rejected them?

What did Jesus say of the punishment of the city which rejected his messengers?

What wicked city is used as an example to teach us of this punishment?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson V—August 3, 1952

# THE LOST SHEEP AND THE LOST COIN

### The Lesson Text

#### Luke 15: 1-10

1 Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him.

2 And both the Phar'isees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3 And he spake unto them this parable, saying,

4 What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.

8 Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and

neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 15: 12-32.

### Daily Bible Readings

July 28. M.....	Jehovah Is My Shepherd (Psalm 23.)
July 29. T.....	Unfaithful Shepherds (Jer. 23: 1-4)
July 30. W.....	Jehovah Seeks His Sheep (Ezek. 34: 1-24)
July 31. T.....	They Shall Have One Shepherd (Ezek. 37: 24-28)
Aug. 1. F.....	Rejoicing in Heaven (Matt. 18: 7-14)
Aug. 2. S.....	Elders Care for the Flock (Acts 20: 28-35)
Aug. 3. S.....	The Chief Shepherd Rewards (1 Pet. 5: 1-10)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—In Perea, on his way to Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Jews.

### Introduction

Since our lesson deals with sheep and shepherd, and the golden text presents Jesus as coming and seeking that which was lost, it seems in place to say something of shepherds by way of the introduction. Abraham and his descendants were shepherds. Regardless of man's wealth, the work of the shepherd was not beneath his dignity. It is said that the Egyptian captivity did much to implant a love of settled abode in the people of Israel, and that the increase of agricultural activities in Palestine decreased pasturage and changed the work of many from that of shepherds to farmers and husbandmen of vineyards. On account of this change, the position of the shepherd became a rather humble one. Amos seems to speak of the position of a herdsman as a lowly position as compared to that of the prophet and the ruler. (Amos 7: 14, 15.) However, in the poetical portions of the Bible the shepherd's life and position became the ideal as in the pastoral poetry of several other nations. David speaks of Jehovah as his shepherd, leading him into green

pastures and beside the still waters. (Psalm 23.) Isaiah says, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young." (Isa. 40: 11.)

The one outstanding characteristic of the shepherd is his faithfulness in feeding and protecting the flock. It was the duty of the shepherd to protect his flock with his life, and Jesus said that only the hireling will flee when danger comes to his sheep. The good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep. (John 10: 11-15.) The hard conditions under which shepherds served in Palestine, the heat and cold, the rugged country infested with wild beasts, and the barren wastes over which they led their sheep to pasturage, serve to emphasize the faithfulness and steadfastness with which the Judean shepherds served their flocks. When Jesus pictures himself as a shepherd, he emphasizes his humility, his faithfulness, and his willingness to suffer for those whom he came to serve.

### Golden Text Explained

1. That Which Was Lost. Since Jesus came to seek and save the lost, let us see the condition of that which was lost, (a) Lost from God. To be lost from God means to be separated from his fellowship and communion, from his guidance and protection. All efforts to picture the

sad condition of the lost soul will fall short of its aim. It is impossible for us to realize fully the terrible consequences of being lost or separated from God. (b) Lost in sin. This is but another way of saying that one is lost from God, for all who are separated from God are in sin; there is

no middle ground. One is either in fellowship with God or with the devil. All those who are in sin are in fellowship with Satan and own him as their lord and master. With him they are associated in rebellion against God, the ultimate consequence of which is to suffer his punishment for disobedience and rebellion against God. (c) Lost from usefulness to God and man. No one can live in sin and live a useful life. Since sin means rebellion against God, one in sin cannot be useful to God. The sinner is also in no position to be useful to humanity. He may serve humanity in temporal ways to some advantage, but viewed as a whole his life is far more detrimental than useful. (d) Lost as to hope for eternity. A lack of hope for life after death of the body is a part of the sinner's condition. There is no such thing as living in sin and entertaining a hope of happiness hereafter. The wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6: 23.)

2. **Seeking the Lost.** (a) Our text says Jesus came to seek the lost. Since Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, we have the unusual picture of God seeking man. We hear a lot about man seeking God, and certainly man's primary purpose in life is to seek God and to find him (Acts 17: 27), but here we have the unusual thing in God seeking man. (b) In God seeking after man we have an

indication of the value of man in God's sight. Man's value is not the primary reason for God seeking man, but it is not out of place to call attention to the evaluation of man as demonstrated in his seeking for him. If God considers man worth seeking for, every missionary and every mission effort will seem justified, since they are doing only that which God has done, seeking to save that which is lost, (c) God seeking the lost is a demonstration of the love which God had for man. Heaven could not better demonstrate its love for the lost than by sending the only begotten Son of God.

3. **Saving the Lost.** The object of seeking was to save, (a) Saving the lost means bringing back to God. Man had wandered as a sheep from its shepherd. He must be reconciled, brought back into harmony and fellowship with God. (b) Saving the lost means delivering from sin. Sin is a hard master which destroys all its servants. Jesus came to seek and to save from destruction those held in the grasp of sin. (c) Saving the lost means restoring man's usefulness. The sinner is in no position to serve either God or man, but when the sinner is saved by grace, he is made a vessel unto honor, fit for the Master's use in serving and saving. (2 Tim. 2: 20, 21.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Jews Criticize Jesus (Luke 15: 1, 2)

*Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near.* Publicans were servants of Rome for the purpose of collecting taxes. Since the Jews despised the Romans, and had strong feelings of resentment about paying their taxes to a foreign power, they hated all who were connected with the system. When a Jew became a taxgatherer, he was looked upon as having betrayed his people. The system of taxation was so corrupt that there was some ground for the attitude of the Jews toward them.

When Jesus showed sympathy for them, his enemies immediately classified him with them. The word *sinners* in this passage refers both to Gentiles and the outcasts among the Jews. Paul says, "We

being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles." (Gal 2: 15.)

*The Pharisees and scribes murmured.* The upper class of the Jews looked upon the publicans and sinners as hopelessly lost; no effort was made to reform them or to better their condition socially.

*This man receiveth sinners.* This statement was calculated to stir up prejudice against Jesus. It seemed not to occur to these Pharisees that a good man could have a good motive in associating with these outcasts. Hence, when they saw Jesus associating with them they simply classed him on a social plane with them.

*And eateth with them.* The Pharisees might have overlooked Jesus' work of teaching among the outcasts, but they would not excuse his freedom in eating with them. Jesus did

not violate any rule of religion or good morals by eating with these outcasts. It would be a mistake to say that he made them his bosom friends and associates. It has sometimes been said that if Jesus were on earth today he would not associate with the leaders of the church, but with the outcasts of our community. This statement is a misrepresentation of Jesus. It would be unfair to say that he found his bosom friends among the outcasts of his day. Lazarus and his sisters, the apostles, and the seventy disciples were not outcasts. But it would also be a mistake to say that Jesus would completely ignore the outcasts of our great cities, those who live in the slums and on the edge of the city dump. Churches who never make any effort to better the social, moral and religious conditions of these unfortunate people are not like Jesus. One distinguishing mark of the Messiah was that he preached the gospel to the poor. (Matt. 11: 5.) It is still a distinguishing mark of the disciples of Jesus that they are interested in the poor and are seeking to better their conditions. If it becomes necessary for us to eat with them or to have them in our homes to eat with us in order to reach them with the gospel, we should be willing to associate with them in this way even though it might mean the loss of our social standing in the community. Jesus not only lost his social standing, but he lost his life that he might save such people. Why should we be unwilling to lose our social standing in order that we may reach them with the gospel?

## II. The Lost Sheep (Luke 15: 3-7)

*What man of you having a hundred sheep.* Jesus appealed to these Pharisees with the most touching appeal and the one most likely to obtain his objective. They could appreciate the interest of the shepherd in the sheep that was lost. They could appreciate the idea of recovering the value represented in a lost sheep. This parable has several objectives. (1) Perhaps the first idea that strikes us is the fact that Jesus was justifying his course of action on this occasion. He had eaten with publicans and sinner. He was severely criticized by the leaders of the Jews for doing so. He

now justifies himself by picturing himself as the shepherd and the publican and sinner as the sheep. The shepherd would not only be justified in going after that which is lost, but he would be severely criticized for not doing so. On another occasion Jesus represented himself as the physician and the publican and sinner the sick who needed the physician. (Matt. 9: 12.) (2) Jesus spoke this parable to teach the love of God for the lost. He pictures himself as the shepherd going after the lost sheep and since he claimed to be the Son of God, we have his indication of the depth of the love of God for the sinner.

*Having lost one of them.* This is perhaps intended to indicate the value which God attaches to the lost soul. The shepherd leaves *ninety* and nine to go out after the one that is lost. We must not push the comparison so far as to teach that only one in a hundred of the world's population needs saving, but rather to indicate the value of the lost. But even though there might be but one out of a hundred, the effort to save that one is justified. If that be true, how much more that multiplies our guilt in allowing the ninety and nine lost to go unsaved while we entertain the saved one.

*Go after that which is lost until he find it.* In these words we have a suggestion of the diligence and the persistence of the Lord in his efforts to save the lost. We should profit by his example. We sometimes go to a community and spend ten days in what we are pleased to call a mission meeting. We advertise our work in the community and invite all to come. We preach to the few who respond to our invitation. We move out of the community until time for another meeting next year. We have shown very little interest, diligence, or persistence in our efforts to save the lost. If Jesus had done no more to save the lost, it is rather certain that none of us would be among the number saved.

*Layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.* This indicates something of the value of the sheep and the interest which the shepherd had in them. Jesus represented himself as finding great joy in saving even the outcasts of his

day. If we could look upon mission work as a joyful experience rather than as an endless duty which we must perform, no doubt we would engage in it more often.

*Calleth together his friends and neighbors.* This serves to emphasize the joy of the shepherd over finding his sheep. It further suggests his wish to share his joy with others. It is implied that his neighbors responded to his invitation to share with him his good fortune. It we could be sincere as this shepherd is pictured in saving the lost, and if we wish to share our joy with our neighbors, and if they were of the disposition to enjoy our good fortune, there is no doubt that the program of saving the lost would have a greater place in our lives. Perhaps the apostle Paul came nearer perfection in this respect than anyone else. He often speaks of his joy and satisfaction in his mission work and speaks of his converts as his joy and his crown in the Lord. Everyone of us should make a sincere effort to cultivate an interest in the lost, a joy in saving the lost and a willingness to share our joys with others that we may move them to greater efforts in saving the lost.

*Joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.* This again is an effort on the part of Jesus to justify his work among the outcasts. If heaven rejoices when one of them repents, he is justified in losing his social standing in order to save one of them. There is also an implied rebuke to the Pharisees; they were murmuring because Jesus gave attention to these outcasts. This was an ugly contrast with the attitude of heavenly beings. They rejoiced when Jesus went among these outcasts to save one of them. Why was there joy in heaven over one penitent outcast? (1) Because that which is the offspring of God has returned to its Father. Though the sinner is in one sense a child of the devil, there is another sense in which he is at the same time the offspring of God and belongs to

God. The ownership of Satan is usurped and illegal. The soul has returned to its rightful owner. (2) There is joy in heaven over the returning sinner because the suffering of Christ has not been in vain. One more for whom Christ died has been brought back to safety and to purity. Angels in heaven rejoice because they see the fruit of their own labors, for they are sent forth to do service for them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1: 14.)

### III. The Lost Coin (Luke 15: 8-10)

*What woman having ten pieces.* In the parable of the lost sheep, it was the lost sheep that was in danger, that was suffering, but in the parable of the lost coin it is the woman that is suffering the loss. Being one in ten, her loss is emphasized. From this we gather that there is a real loss on the part of God when a soul goes away from him.

*Seek diligently until she find it.* Jesus represents the woman as lighting a lamp and sweeping the house in her diligent search for the coin. So again, the diligence of God in the interest of heaven in that which is lost. There is another line of study suggested in these parables which has not been mentioned. In the parable of the lost sheep, there is an indication of how people are lost. As the sheep had his head down to the ground looking for a sprig of grass to satisfy his hunger and wandered away unconsciously until he was lost from the shepherd and the flock, so men today in their lust for wealth and pleasure with their heads down to the material things of life are wandering away from God and the church. In the parable of the lost coin the coin was lost because when dropped it followed the path of least resistance. So people today leave God because they follow the path of least resistance. It is easier to follow the ways of the world than it is to deny ourselves these worldly things and take up the cross to follow Jesus.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The interest heaven has in a lost race is incomprehensible. The efforts God has put forth to save humanity from sin cannot be understood. We can only wonder, love, and adore him

for his immeasurable love and power.

2. When man sinned against God, God did not withdraw and leave man alone in his sin. God came seeking and wooing man to save him. In this

is a wonderful example to show us how to treat people who sin against us.

3. If the church should imitate the

angels in their interest in saving the lost, there would be more activity, sacrifice, and self-denial in the church than we have ever seen before.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

How was the work of a shepherd regarded in the time of Abraham? And of Amos?

How are the shepherd's life and work pictured in the poetical books of the Bible?

What is the outstanding characteristic of a shepherd?

What characteristics does Jesus emphasize when he refers to himself as a shepherd?

#### Golden Text Explained

Whom did Jesus come to seek and save?

What four things are mentioned to describe the lost condition of a sinner?

What unusual thing do we have suggested by Jesus seeking the lost?

What does this seeking indicate as to the value of man?

What does this imply as to God's attitude toward lost man?

What three lessons are implied in saving the lost?

#### The Jews Criticize Jesus

Why did the Jews criticize Jesus?

What do you know of publicans and their work?

What action of Jesus was most objectionable to the Jews?

Did Jesus violate any rule of morals or religion to eat with publicans?

Does eating with them prove that he made them his bosom companions?

What should be our attitude toward the poor and outcasts from society?

#### The Lost Sheep

What is the primary lesson in the parable of the lost sheep?

How does God indicate his estimate of the value of one lost soul?

How do we sometimes show our lack of proper valuation of the lost?

What is said of the joy in heaven over the saving of a soul?

Is seeking the lost the duty of the preacher only? How much of such work is the average member of this class doing?

What can we do to increase the interest and activity of this class along that line?

#### The Lost Coin

In what respect does this parable differ from the parable of the lost sheep?

How is the lesson of diligence suggested in this parable?

What is suggested in the parable of the lost sheep as to how people are lost?

What is suggested in the parable of the lost coin as to how people are lost?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VI—August 10, 1952

### PARABLES ON PRAYER

#### The Lesson Text

##### Luke 18: 1-14

1 And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint.

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them?

8 I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phar-i-see, and the other a publican.

11 The Phar-i-see stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.

13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his

breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.

14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather

than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Pray without ceasing”*(1 Thess. 5: 17.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 6: 1-13.

### Daily Bible Readings

- August 4. M.....Ezra’s Prayer for Israel (Ezra 9: 5-15)
- August 5. T..... Daniel’s Prayer for Israel (Dan. 9: 4-19)
- August 6. W.....Jesus Teaches on Prayer (Luke 11: 1-13)
- August 7. T..... Jesus Prays to His Father (John 17: 1-26)
- August 8. F..... Paul Prays and Asks Prayers (Rom. 15: 30-33)
- August 9. S..... Paul’ Prayer for Ephesus (Eph. 3: 14-21)
- August 10. S..... Paul’s Prayer for Philippi (Phil. 1: 3-11)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—In Perea, on his way to Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Jews.

### Introduction

By way of introduction we will study some conditions of acceptable prayer. (1) Since no man can come unto the Father but by Jesus (John 14: 6), and since Jesus is high priest over the house of God (Heb. 10: 21), it follows that those outside the house of God do not have Jesus as their high priest through whom they may approach God. There are but two spiritual houses or families of which people may be members — the family of God and the family of Satan. Jesus is high priest over the family of God, not over the family of Satan. Hence if one in the family of Satan approaches God he must make direct approach. Since no man can come to the Father but through Jesus, it follows that no one can make this direct approach. (2) But there are conditions which those in the house of God must meet to pray acceptably. James says we must ask in faith, not wavering. (Jas. 1: 6.) (3) We must also be obedient to God in order to be heard. John says, “Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1 John 3: 22.) James teaches the

same thing when he said, “The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.” (Jas. 5: 16.) Since a righteous person is one that doeth righteousness and all God’s commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119: 172), it follows that the righteous man is the one who keeps God’s commandments. And it is the prayer of this righteous man that availeth much. (4) We must also ask in harmony with the will of God. “And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.” (1 John 5: 14.) Jesus taught his disciples to pray “thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.” (Matt. 6: 10.) In the garden he set us an example of praying, “not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22: 42.) (5) James teaches us that our prayers must be unselfish. He says, “Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures.” (Jas. 4: 2, 3.) Praying for prosperity that we may maintain high standards of living is not an acceptable prayer.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Meaning of the Text.** Our text tells us to pray without ceasing. This cannot mean, of course, that we are to be on our knees in prayer at all times. Nor can it mean that we are to be speaking at all times. Some have

argued that a prayer must be an expressed desire and have used Romans 10: 1 as proof of a difference between the heart’s desire and the prayer. But if the heart’s desire must be expressed before it is accepted as

prayer, our text demands continuous expression with the lips which would be an unreasonable demand. Others have taught that our text demands regular hours of prayer such as the Jews observed morning, noon, and night. But this could hardly be called praying without ceasing. The only plausible meaning of the text seems to be that one should maintain a spirit of prayer constantly, that we should constantly recognize our need of God, our inability to approach him directly, and hence our need of the mediation of Christ. It goes without saying that we should never be in a place or have such an attitude or disposition that would make it impossible for us to pray. If one maintains this constant attitude it will not be necessary to insist on that person observing regular habits of prayer. One may observe regular hours of prayer and never cultivate this prayerful disposition, but it would be impossible for one to have the disposition and attitude of prayer and not maintain regular habits of prayer. Someone has said that apostasy begins at the closet door. Jesus told his disciples to enter into their closet, close the door and pray in secret. As long as one maintains such habits of prayer in secret, that one will not drift far from God. But when he loses this habit of secret prayer he is well on the road to apostasy.

## 2. Prayer, a Duty and Privilege. Prayer is commanded. Jesus gave

the commandment in the sermon on the mount. (Matt. 7: 7.) Our text has all the force of a commandment. Hence it is the duty of Christians to pray. Jesus says that not all of those who say Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of the Father. It is the will of God that his people pray. Those who do not pray are disobeying God, hence have no right to expect to go to heaven.

Christians should not however, look upon prayer so much as a duty as a privilege. It is difficult to see how the Christian could have and enjoy a greater privilege than prayer. Someone has said that prayer is the key to the great storehouse of God, and certainly we have but to ask that we may receive anything we need. We may not always receive what we ask for, or if we receive it, we may not get it at the time or in the way we expect; but when we pray that the Father's will may be done we may rest assured that the answer we receive will be for our good. Many church members are living beneath their privileges, for James tells us that we have not because we ask not. The Bible student can, with a little searching, read the great prayers recorded in the Bible and in many instances see the answers to those prayers. These are recorded for our encouragement that we may obey the teaching of our text to pray without ceasing.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Perseverance in Prayer (Luke 18:

1-8)

*That they ought always to pray.* Luke says that Jesus gave this parable to teach men the necessity of continuing in prayer.

*And not to faint..* The word *faint* is not to be taken in the literal sense, but that of growing weary and giving up. Sometimes prayers are not answered immediately. This may or may not be a trial of faith, but if an individual becomes discouraged and ceases to pray, he may be said to faint in the sense in which the word is used here.

*A judge who feared not God.* A judge of this character was necessary to teach the lesson which Jesus intended to teach. People who are de-

pendent on such a judge before whom to plead their cases are unfortunate. A judge who has no fear of God or respect for him cannot be depended upon ever to do the right thing.

*Regardeth not man.* This, too, is a characteristic of the judge. It is such a characteristic as we would expect in one who has no fear of God. In fact one could hardly have proper regard for man unless he had some fear of God.

*There was a widow in the city.* Jesus constructs his parable so as to increase our interest. We would expect the judge to be more considerate of a widow than of some man who was able to take care of himself.

*Avenge me of mine adversary.* Jesus says that the widow came off

to the judge making this petition. In the margin instead of *avenge* we have *do me justice of*. We are not to think that the widow was asking the judge to take vengeance on some one for the satisfaction of this woman's desire. "All she wanted was that the judge should deliver her from the oppression which her adversary exercised over her, no doubt in keeping from her the heritage to which she was lawfully entitled." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*He would not for a while.* This is another indication of the poor character of the judge. His lack of fear for God and lack of regard for man rendered him senseless to the rights of the oppressed widow.

*Because this widow troubleth me.* Jesus represents the judge as reminding himself that he did not fear God and that he had no regard for man's welfare, yet for his own relief from the trouble which the widow afforded him, he would take action.

*Let she wear me out.* The judge is pictured as taking action from purely selfish motives. He would not grant the woman's request because it was right in the sight of God, nor would he grant her request because it was the humane thing to do. He had so little regard for the rights of the poor and oppressed that he would not go to the trouble to do his duty as a judge to relieve the poor. But out of base selfishness he would take action in the behalf of this oppressed widow lest he be worn out by her continual petitions.

*Shall not God avenge his elect?* Jesus draws a contrast; on the one hand we have a selfish man who neither fears God nor regards man. On the other side we have the Lord whose love and pity for his people are well known. There is another contrast suggested; on the one side this poor widow unknown to the judge and unrelated to him with no appeal to him other than his sense of duty. On the other hand we have the elect of God, related to God as his creature and as his elect children. Here then is the conclusion; if this judge would respond to the continual petitions of this woman who meant nothing to him, surely God, the merciful Father, will respond to the continual petitionings of his elect children.

Yet *he is long-suffering over them.* This language is capable of two interpretations. (1) God is slow to punish evildoers on the behalf of his elect. This is in harmony with the widow's request in the parable to be avenged of her adversaries and suggests that God will hear such prayers of the oppressed, but will be long-suffering or slow to take action against the wicked. (2) God will hear his elect, but may try their faith in his response to their petitions.

*I will avenge them speedily.* This seems to be a contradiction of his long-suffering in the preceding verse, but the thought is that he will avenge them suddenly, "quickly, quite compatible with delay; quickly when the hour comes, that is suddenly." (Expositors Greek Testament.)

*Shall he find faith on the earth?* Jesus was sure of God's faithfulness to hear the prayers of his people, but the language of our text suggests that he was not so sure that God's people would persevere in prayer. The word faith in this verse is that humble obedient persevering faith which should characterize every child of God. Will there be sufficient faith on the earth in spite of the continued worldliness, tribulation and persecution to pray to God with the perseverance which this widow manifested? No doubt there will be formal religion on earth when Jesus comes, but there can be formal religion without the determined faith which characterized this widow who continued to petition the judge until she got what she wanted. It would be well for church members to ask themselves this question, am I as determined and continual in my prayers to God as was this widow?

## II. Humility in Prayer (Luke 18: 9-14)

*Trusted in themselves that they were righteous.* These two parables teach two practical lessons with reference to prayer. This one has to do with humility. Jesus pictures that man as a self-righteous individual who exalted himself above all others.

*Set all others at naught.* One characteristic of a self-righteous person is that he has a very low estimate of other people. He must shut his eyes at his own faults and at the good in

others. He must magnify what little good there is in himself and magnify the evil in the other person.

*One a Pharisee, the other a publican.* Jesus was in continual conflict with the Pharisees on account of their hypocrisy. They viewed themselves as having a special connection with heaven on account (1) of their relationship to Abraham, and (2) on account of their rigid and minute obedience to the precepts and traditions of the fathers. Jesus used these two classes, the Pharisee and the publican, because they stood at two extremes of society. The Pharisee represented the formal church member and the publican represented the lowest of the outcasts.

*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.* (1) The Pharisee stood. This seems significant since the usual posture of prayer of the humble penitent is bowing or kneeling. (2) Prayed with himself. This language seems to place himself before God. It was not a humble address to God, but a speech which took himself into consideration more than God.

*I am not as the rest of men.* The Pharisee took occasion to acquaint God with his character, not realizing that God knew more about him than he knew of himself. Whether the Pharisee considered his good character to be his own work or that of God is not clear, but since he gives himself so much credit in the prayer, it is probable that he felt that his goodness was the product of his own attention and exertions.

*Extortioners.* An extortioner is one who wrests from a person by force or any undue or irregular power or iniquity a thing desired.

*Unjust.* The Pharisee was thankful that he was not unjust in the treatment of his fellow men. He was also thankful that he was not an adulterer. Then, as if to sum up all of the sins that mar men's characters, he said he was thankful that he was not like the publican who was near by.

*I fast twice in the week.* After telling God all the things he was not, he turns to the positive side and informs

God of what he is. The Jews had a custom of fasting on the second and the fifth days of every week. This was their private fast and was in addition to the public fasts which all were expected to keep. Naturally the Pharisee would not make mention of these public fasts, but of the private fasts which would not be seen of men.

*I give tithes of all that I get.* Tithing was the glory of the Pharisee. In fact, it is thought that the sect originated with tithing as one of their distinguishing characteristics. Jesus called them hypocrites for tithing mint and anise and cummin while they left undone the weightier matters of the law such as justice and mercy and faith. Jesus said they should have tithed, but should not have left the weightier matters undone. (Matt. 23: 23.)

*The publican would not lift up his eyes:* Jesus contrasts the humility and self-abasement of the publican with the pride and arrogance of the Pharisee. The publican was so ashamed of his sins that he would not look toward heaven.

*Be thou merciful to me, a sinner.* He did not enumerate either his good points or his faults. He simply begged for mercy.

*This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* Some have taken this statement to mean that if either prayer had been heard, the publican's prayer would. This does not seem to do justice to the connection. Jesus says the publican was justified rather than the other. The word *rather* has the sense of *but not*. His conclusion is that everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. The application is the Pharisee exalted himself, therefore was humbled in that his prayer was not heard. The publican humbled himself and was exalted in that his prayer was acceptable to the Lord. We should be careful in our prayers to maintain proper humility and to remember that we are sinners addressing the holy God.

### Topics for Discussion

1. If one had the privilege of talking with the President, or with the King of England, he would feel hon-

ored. How much more should we honor the privilege of prayer, for that is talking with God.

2. Paul's prayers for the churches to whom he wrote letters are models of brevity and pointedness, and we will do well to use them as examples.

3. Paul suggests prayer as a part of the cure of anxiety and worry so that we may enjoy the peace of God which passes understanding.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

Can you show how those outside Christ have no way to approach God in prayer?

Name and discuss five conditions essential to acceptable prayer.

#### Golden Text Explained

What is meant by praying without ceasing?

Must the heart's desire be expressed audibly in order to be a prayer?

Is the regular habit of prayer suggested by our text?

Where does apostasy begin? Why?

Are we commanded to pray?

Can you distinguish between duty and privilege as relates to prayer?

#### Perseverance in Prayer

What is meant by fainting as related to prayer?

What is said of the judge before whom the woman of our text appeared?

What request did the widow make of the judge?

What response did the judge make to the widow's petition?

Why did he finally grant her the thing she requested?

What conclusion did Jesus draw from this parable?

What is meant by the Lord being "long-suffering over them"?

What kind of faith did Jesus indicate would be hard to find when he comes again?

#### Humility in Prayer

What attitude does the self-righteous have with respect to others?

How does he view his own faults? And his own good traits?

What do you know of the Pharisees? and the publicans?

What is said of the posture of the Pharisee in prayer?

What did the Pharisee say of himself in the prayer? What should he have said?

Fasting and tithing were outstanding characteristics of Pharisees; what did this one say about these things?

What is suggested with reference to the attitude of the publican in prayer?

What did the publican say about himself?

What request did he make of God?

Give the central lesson in this parable.

Does Jesus teach that the publican's prayer was heard?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VII—August 17, 1952

### PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

#### The Lesson Text

#### Luke 19: 12-26

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

13 And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye *herewith* till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading.

16 And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more.

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

18 And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds.

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

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

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

22 He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow;

23 Then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” (Matt. 25: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 25: 14-30.

### Daily Bible Readings

August 11. M.....Rewards to the Faithful (Matt. 24: 45-51)  
 August 12. T..... Our Gifts Are from God (Rom. 12: 1-8)  
 August 13. W..... Self-Commendation Discouraged (2 Cor. 10: 8-18)  
 August 14. T..... Gifts to Each One of Us (Eph. 4: 1-16)  
 August 15. F..... Stewards of the Grace of God (1 Pet. 4: 7-11)  
 August 16. S..... Faithful in Use of Gifts (Luke 16: 1-13)  
 August 17. S..... Gifts Measure of Responsibility (Luke 12: 41-48)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jericho.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Jews.

### Introduction

The dual nature of the parable in our lesson has given commentators some trouble. Some have supposed that Luke has combined two parables, one concerning a king and his subjects and the other the parable of the talents given in Matthew 25. Indications of this dual nature are that the main actor appears to be at once a king and a private person, a nobleman and a tradesman. The persons to whom this actor is related are both subjects and servants, and the sum he gives the servants is unworthy of a king, while the rewards are inappropriate to the character of a trader. Bruce explains the dual nature as follows:

“Jesus found himself surrounded by a mixed multitude of people of diverse tendencies, and variously affected towards himself. On one side were men of Pharisaic sympathies, to whom it was an offense that he had gone to be a guest of a man like Zacchaeus, who, being a chief publican, was therefore of course a chief sinner; on the other side were many who had followed him from Galilee, full of the admiration awakened in their minds by his ministry in that region, and confidently believing that the journey towards Jerusalem portended

the near approach of the long and ardently expected kingdom. From the lips of the one class came sullen murmurs; in the countenances of the other were visible the traces of enthusiastic and romantic expectation. By both classes Jesus was utterly misunderstood; the one having no comprehension of, or sympathy with, the yearning love for the lost which was the key to his conduct towards Zacchaeus, the other being equally ignorant of the nature and future history of the kingdom whose coming they eagerly desired. He was alone in the midst of that great crowd. Here was a situation fitted to evoke the *parabolic mood*; for it was, as we pointed out in our introductory observations, when made conscious of isolation, by the stupid or malignant misapprehensions of men, that Jesus spake in parables. But if a parable is to be the outcome of the situation, we expect that it will be a faithful reflection of the situation; that it will show on the one hand what the murmurs of the disaffected will come to, and on the other hand, how far the hopes of the friends will be fulfilled or frustrated by coming events. We are not surprised, therefore, to find in the evangelistic record a parable said to have

been spoken at this time of the two-sided character which the circumstances called for, with one side turned towards foes, and the other side turned towards friends; warning the one of the fearful doom awaiting

them if they persisted in their present mind, and seeking to moderate the ignorant enthusiasm of the other by a sober picture of the future that lay before them." (The Parabolic Teachings of Christ, pp. 217, 218)

### Golden Text Explained

#### 1. When the Service Was Performed.

Our text deals with the reward of the "good and faithful servant" who had received his five talents and by trading with them had gained another five. This reward came because of his faithfulness in service. This service was rendered between the time of the going away of the master and his return. In the parable of the talents, from which our text is taken, and which is very similar to the parable of the pounds, a master is pictured as distributing his money to his servants that they might put it to use while he was away on an extended tour. Jesus also represents the master of these servants as calling the servants together for a reckoning *as soon as* he returned from his journey. Hence, all the work which these servants did to gain this reward was done between the time of his going away and his return. In the application of the parable we have the master representing Jesus; the servants represent those blood-bought servants of Christ whose duty it is to serve the master in his absence. The going away of the master represents the ascension of Jesus to the Father. The return of the master and his reckoning with the servants represents the second coming of Jesus and the final judgment in which his servants receive rewards for faithfulness or are punished for a lack of faithfulness. Hence, we conclude that all the work which the servants of Jesus render and for which they may expect rewards is to be done between the ascension of Jesus and his second coming. Our premillennial friends would have us believe that the greater part of the work is to be done subsequent to the return of Jesus instead of all of it being done prior to his second coming. According to their

conception, the servants of Jesus will do much more and much better work under the personal supervision of Christ on David's throne in Jerusalem. But if this parable teaches the truth, the time for work is during the absence of the master; the coming of the master is a signal for judgment, for rewards for the faithful and punishment for the unfaithful.

#### 2. Faithfulness in a Little Is Rewarded with Authority over Much.

The master is represented as saying, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things." This is a principle on which Jesus deals with servants. He gives them such as they are able to accept and use for his glory. When they have proved their faithfulness he gives them greater responsibilities. People who sit and wait for big opportunities while many little opportunities pass them by unused will be disappointed, because the Lord gives the big opportunities to them who use the little opportunities for good.

3. **Entering into the Joys Prepared by the Lord Is Conditional upon Our Being Faithful.** It matters not whether we have little or much with which to serve the Lord, whether our opportunities are small or great. The reward depends on how we use the opportunities we have. The man who received two talents was told to enter the joys of his lord the same as the man who had the five talents.

4. **He Who Meets the Lord's Approval Must be Both Good and Faithful.** Both the two talent and the five talent men were called good and faithful. Their goodness and faithfulness did not depend upon the number of talents they returned to their master, but upon the honest and faithful use of the talents which they had.

### Exposition of the Text

I. **Receiving: a Kingdom** (Luke 19: 12-14)

*A certain nobleman went into a far*

*country.* Jesus is represented as a nobleman or a prince, one who had some right to expect to receive a

kingdom. Jesus represents himself as going into a far country to receive for himself this kingdom. This was not an unusual idea in the time in which Jesus lived. Both Herod and Archelaus had gone from Palestine to Rome to receive their kingdoms from Caesar. We are not, however, to press the details of the parable so far as to teach that the king did not exercise any authority in his kingdom until his return. In fact, the work which these servants performed for this nobleman was not performed in the kingdom which this nobleman went away to receive.

*He called ten servants.* There is no significance to be attached to the number ten. In fact, in the unfolding of the parable the number ten is not used, as only three of the servants gave reports of their activities.

*Gave them ten pounds.* In this parable the master is represented as giving each servant one pound. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25), the servants each received a different amount. In the parable of the talents they were given money according to their ability to handle it and were rewarded for their faithfulness. In this parable they are given the same amount and rewarded according to the amount of gain they showed.

*Trade ye herewith till I come.* In this statement we find the nobleman placing a responsibility upon his servants. In the application of the parable our Lord places responsibility upon his servants. According to God's eternal purpose Jesus is dependent upon his servants to do the work of preaching the gospel which is God's power to save. He places this responsibility upon us and imposes this trust in us. If we prove unfaithful to this trust we can deserve only the punishment as pictured in this and other parables.

*His citizens hated him.* Here we have another familiar item in this parable, for it was not unusual for citizens to send a hostile deputation to the emperor to oppose his granting the kingdom to one of their fellow citizens. When Archelaus went to Rome to receive his kingdom, the Jews sent an embassy of fifteen men to oppose him. Their mission was unsuccessful, and in the parable Jesus represented the nobleman as

receiving a kingdom in spite of the efforts of his citizens. Here again we have an item in the parable for which there can be no application. Certainly no embassy could be sent from earth to heaven to oppose Jesus. It is simply a detail to emphasize the fact that some people refuse to allow Jesus to reign over them, and prepare the way for his teaching as the dire consequences following such refusal.

## II. The Day of Accounts (Luke 19: 15-23)

*When he was come back, having received his kingdom.* Giving the money to these servants and demanding that they trade therewith indicated that the nobleman expected to be gone a long time. Jesus gave this parable to teach his disciples that the kingdom was not immediately to appear. (Verse 11.)

*That he might know what they had gained by trading.* Upon the return of the nobleman, he demands that his servants come before him to give an account of their activities during his absence. In this respect this parable agrees with the parable of the talents. The going away of the nobleman, his tarrying in the far country for a long time, his return, and the accounting of the servants are all similar points in the two parables. Some have taken this parable of the pounds as proof that Jesus went away to receive a kingdom and to administer the affairs of the kingdom after his return, but both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds emphasize the judgment of the day of accounting immediately upon the return of the master.

*Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more.* We are told that the word pound here refers to the Jewish *minah* which is worth about \$15 of our money. "Here the very smallness of the sum entrusted to the servants has its typical meaning. The 'nobly born' one who is about to receive a kingdom, represents our Lord, who here is in a state of the deepest poverty and humiliation. The little sum in one sense represents the work he was able then to entrust to his own. Again, the paltriness of the sum given them seems to suggest what a future lay before them."

(Pulpit Commentary.) This small sum indicated that they need not expect a rich, worldly kingdom which would satisfy their desires for financial security and worldly ambitions for power and authority. Their relationship with their Lord in his kingdom was to be one characterized by humble service in the use of little opportunities day by day.

*Well done, thou good servant.* The nobleman commends his servant for the faithful use of the pound with which he had been entrusted. For this faithful service in a very little the servant is given authority over ten cities. Here again, our premillennial friends give us a literal interpretation. They expect Jesus to set up his kingdom on earth at his second coming and each one expects to receive some portion of the earth as his reward. Such literalizing is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and forces lessons from the parable which Jesus did not intend. We might as well take the money in this parable literally and expect Jesus to start each Christian out with a pound or a talent as to make the ten cities literal and expect Jesus to give us ten cities over which to reign in his everlasting kingdom. The only lesson Jesus intended to teach is that faithful service will be rewarded.

*Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds.* This is the report of the second servant and he is rewarded according to his accomplishment. He is given five cities over which to rule.

*Lord, here is thy pound.* Jesus reports this servant as having wrapped the pound in a napkin for safe-keeping until the master's return.

*I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.* This servant is ready with his excuses. He has failed to serve and is ready to tell why. He represents that class today who think the Lord expects too much for the little he gives. He also represents a class who never do anything because they have nothing with which to do. They have so little ability and can do so few things that they are satisfied with doing nothing.

*Out of thine own mouth I will judge thee.* Since the servant knew the austerity of the master, he should have been all the more careful to render acceptable service. Since the serv-

ant knew that the master reaped what he did not sow, he should have put the master's money out on interest. He could not plead a lack of knowledge, either of his master or of what his master expected of him. Neither can church members today plead an ignorance of these things. As to the truth of this faithless servant's excuses, nothing is known, nor are we to interpret this as meaning that our Master is an austere person. The practical lesson for us is that in judgment each man will be judged according to his works and if any expects the mercy and compassion of Jesus to excuse laziness, indifference, and unfaithfulness, he must deny the truth as set forth in this parable. Certainly Jesus gives no comfort in this parable to those who expect him to overlook unfaithfulness.

### III. Rewards and Punishment (Luke

19: 24-26)

*Take away from him the pound.* Jesus represents the nobleman as commanding them that stood by to take from this unfaithful servant the pound which he had not used. There is no principle more clearly taught in scripture than that we lose that which we do not use. How often we hear people say they cannot remember things as well as they once did. They have lost their power to remember because they have not exercised it.

*Give it unto him that hath the ten pounds.* Here again is an illustration of a well-known scriptural principle. Those who have are the ones who receive.

*Unto everyone that hath shall be given.* This is our Lord's concluding lesson from this part of the parable, and this is a principle of scripture which is often taught. In everyday life we often see the same principle at work. A landowner has two tenants, one cultivates the farm diligently and raises bountiful crops. The other allows his farm to grow up in weeds and reaps a poor harvest. When the leases are out, the landowner dismisses the careless, lazy farmer and leases the farm to the man who has made good.

*From him that hath not even that which he hath shall be taken away.*

The thought in this verse is that that servant which has not accepted responsibility and has not responded to the expectations of his master, even that which the master entrusted to him will be taken away. The Lord does not allow unfaithful servants to enjoy forever his mercy and long-suffering. When they have proved their lack of appreciation and their unwillingness to show appreciation by rendering faithful service, their opportunities for service are taken

away from them. This lesson really has a twofold application. (1) One's ability to serve in this life becomes less and less as he passes by his opportunities and offers excuses for not using them. (2) In the final day of reckoning, the faithless servant will suffer his great and eternal loss. From him will be taken every vestige of hope that he may have entertained and he will be sent away to spend eternity with the devil and his angels.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The Lord never requires more of us than we are able to do. He knows our ability and demands of us what we are able to do.

2. It is human to minimize our ability in order to evade responsibility. People often say they can't when they mean they do not wish to try. All

such must answer to their Lord in the last day.

3. Excuses are usually untrue. The unfaithful man of our lesson gave the excuse that his master was an austere man, but there is no evidence it was true. Our excuses rarely have any better foundation.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of the lesson.

#### Introduction

What is there in the parable in our lesson which makes it difficult to explain?

To what two classes of people was this parable spoken?

For what purposes was this parable spoken?

#### Golden Text Explained

Between what two events was the labor of this parable performed?

What do these two events represent in the application of the parable?

How does this affect the doctrine of premillennialism?

On what basis were the servants rewarded?

On what condition were the servants allowed to enter the joys of their master?

What two characteristics are necessary for servants to meet the approval of the Lord?

#### Receiving a Kingdom

Where does Jesus represent himself as going to receive his kingdom?

What rulers of his time had gone to Rome to receive their kingdoms?

What did the master expect of his servants while he was gone?

Compare this parable with the parable of the talents in Matthew 25.

What responsibility did the master put upon his servants?

What was the attitude of some of his servants towards the master?

What do these things mean in the application of the parable?

#### The Day of Accounts

What did Jesus teach as to the time of the coming of the kingdom?

What did the master demand of his servants upon his return?

Is there any proof in this parable that the affairs of the kingdom are to be administered by the Lord after his second coming?

What was the value of a pound as used in this parable?

What is suggested by the small sum allowed each servant?

How were the servants rewarded for their work?

What report did the unfaithful servant make?

How did the master deal with the unfaithful servant?

What lessons do we get as to our rewards and punishment from this parable?

#### Rewards and Punishments

What lesson do we learn from the fact that the unfaithful servant's pound was taken away from him and given to the one who had ten pounds?

What two lessons are suggested in the twofold application of this parable?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VIII—August 24, 1952

### THE BARREN FIG TREE

#### The Lesson Text

Mark 11: 12-18; Matt. 21: 19-22

12 And on the morrow, when they were come out from Beth-a-ny, he hungered.

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and

when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season of figs.

14 And he answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And his disciples heard it.

15 And they come to Je-ru'-sa-lem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves;

16 And he would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers.

18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they

might destroy him: for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.

19 And seeing a fig tree by the way side, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How did the fig tree immediately wither away?

21 And Je'-sus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done.

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

GOLDEN TEXT.— *"Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them."* (Matt. 7: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.— Luke 19: 45-48.

### Daily Bible Readings

- August 18. M. .... Jehovah's Vineyard (Isa. 5: 1-7)
- August 19. T. .... Tree Known by Its Fruit (Matt. 7: 15-23)
- August 20. W. .... Fruitless Tree Cut Down (Luke 13: 6-9)
- August 21. T. .... Bear Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-24)
- August 22. F. .... The Fruit Bearer Is Blessed (Heb. 6: 1-8)
- August 23. S. .... Fruit Indicates the Nature (Isa. 3: 7-18)
- August 24. S. .... Good Tree Bears Good Fruit (Matt 12: 22-37)

TIME.— A.D. 29.

PLACES.— Mount of Olives and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.— Jesus, his disciples, and the Jews.

### Introduction

Since our lesson has to do with trees and the fruit they bear to teach us spiritual lessons, it will be well for us to observe that in the Bible three different kinds of trees are used to represent the Christian and his relationship to the Lord. (1) There is the tree that bears good fruit. Jesus speaks of the vine which bears fruit as being pruned so that it may bear more fruit. (John 15.) The fruit which we are to bear as trees in the Lord's vineyard is called the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5), and the fruit of righteousness. (Phil. 1: 11.) The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-con-

trol. These may be viewed as elements, not as 'different fruits, but nine elements that make one fruit. (2) The tree that bears evil fruit. Isaiah pictures Israel as the Lord's fruit trees planted in a very fruitful hill. The Lord expected his vineyard to bear grapes, but it bore wild grapes. He had planted Israel in Palestine, a land flowing with milk and honey, "and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry." (Isa. 5: 7.) We have the same lesson from Paul when he said, "The land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for

them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. 6: 7, 8.) This represented people in the church who are expected to bear the fruit of the Spirit, but who engage in the works of the flesh. Their end is to be

burned. (3) The non-fruit bearing tree. Fruit trees may be barren. From their nature they are expected to bear fruit, but for some reason they are barren. Jesus represents them as not being worth the space they occupy nor the labor which is required to keep them. (Luke 13: 6-9.)

### Golden Text Explained

#### 1. We Are Expected to Bear Fruit.

Our text implies that every individual bears fruit. On fact, it is impossible for an individual to live in this world without bearing some kind of fruit. The amount of fruit one bears seems not to enter so much into this lesson as the quality of the fruit. In the verses preceding our text Jesus said, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (Matt. 7: 17.) He continued by saying that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. So not the amount, but the quality of the fruit is under consideration. Since this lesson was given in connection with false prophets, we may conclude that this lesson applies especially to teachers and preachers of the gospel. We certainly have a right to measure a preacher by the work that he does. (1) If he preaches a poor sermon, if his material is scattered and disorganized, if his lessons are shallow and have little spiritual strength, we have a right to conclude that there is something wrong. (2) If every church where a certain preacher lives for any length of time is involved in trouble and division, we have a right to conclude that this is the fruit of that preacher's work and teaching. Not every church trouble is the fault of the preacher, but if there is trouble in every church where a certain preacher labors, we have a right to conclude that trouble is the fruit of this man's labors.

2. Fruit versus Leaves. In the body of the lesson we will learn that fruit

represents practice while leaves represent profession. It is significant that Jesus did not say that a tree is known by its leaves, and we may be sure that a man is not known by his profession. His profession may differ considerably from his practices. A group of religious people may profess to be the church of the Lord, but if they engage in scriptural worship and hold to and teach unscriptural doctrines we must conclude that the church does not belong to the Lord regardless of its profession. Schools and colleges sometimes profess to be engaged in the building of Christian character, but practice sometimes denies the profession. When students of a college regularly come out infidels or skeptics, we judge the school to be of that nature regardless of its profession. If the majority of the graduates of a school believe and teach premillennialism, we must conclude that the school is of that type. The fruit is the proof of the nature of the institution.

3. Fruit Bearing and Judging. Some oppose determining the nature of a tree by its fruit because Jesus said for us not to judge. (Matt. 7: 1.) But the same Lord said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7: 24.) Determining the nature of a tree by the fruit it bears is not the kind of judging which Jesus condemned. It was censorious, self-righteous judgment that Jesus condemned. We cannot keep from judging a tree by its fruits.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Cursing the Fig Tree (Mark 11: 12-14)

When they were come out from Bethany. The events of our lesson were during the last week of our Lord's life on earth. He made his

home with Lazarus and his sisters during this time, spending the nights there and his days in Jerusalem teaching. The Mount of Olives lay between Bethany and Jerusalem. There were two roads into the city,

one around the mount to the south, the other directly over the mount into Jerusalem. Jesus took the direct way into the city. Climbing the mountain in the early morning, he became hungry. Some think that his hunger on this occasion indicates that he had spent the night in prayer as he often did.

*Seeing a fig tree away off having leaves.* There has been much discussion as to whether Jesus expected to find fruit on this tree. Mark says that it was not the season of figs. Barnes thinks that this statement is to be interpreted as meaning that the season for gathering figs was not passed. The fact that the tree had well-developed leaves is an indication that fruit might be found upon it. It is peculiar to the fig tree that its fruit begins to appear before the leaves, and since this particular tree had leaves, Jesus had every right to expect to find fruit.

*No man shall eat fruit from thee henceforward forever.* This is the curse which Jesus placed upon the fruitless tree. Here unbelievers have found a pretext for criticizing Jesus. They questioned his divinity for not knowing that there would be no fruit on the tree, or if knowing there was no fruit for deceiving his disciples by pretending to look for fruit on a tree which he knew to be fruitless. It is true that our Lord was divine, and that he could read even the hearts of people. It is also true that he was human and did not know some things. He did not know the time of his appearing. (Matt. 24: 36.) If in his humanity he did not know the time of his appearing, may we not conclude that he practiced no deception whatever when he looked for figs on the tree? We may not understand how he could know the heart of a critical Jew (Mark 2: 8) and still not know the day of his return, but we believe it because of his word. So we may not understand why he did not miraculously discern the fruitlessness of this tree, but rather acted as any other human being to determine its fruitlessness. We may safely surmise that he went through this incident for the very purpose for which he used it and that was to teach the disciples a very practical lesson. Fruitlessness

on the part of his disciples will no more be tolerated than fruitlessness in this tree. Professing to be something when we are nothing is a kind of hypocrisy which Jesus does not allow in his disciples. We should learn from the destruction of this tree what will happen to all professing to be Christians, but who do not fill their lives with Christian work.

## II. Cleansing the Temple (Mark 11: 15-18)

*They came to Jerusalem.* Some months before Jesus had told his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and the third day be raised up. (Matt. 16: 21.) He has now come to the city to endure what the foreknowledge and counsel of God had determined. (Acts 2: 23.)

*He entered into the temple.* This does not mean he went into the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place. Not being of the tribe of Levi, Jesus had no right to go into the Holy Place and much less the Most Holy Place. He was in that part of the temple to which all Jews had a right.

*Began to cast out them that sold and them that bought.* In the beginning of his ministry (John 2: 13-22) Jesus cleansed the temple, calling it "my Father's house." This time he speaks of it as his house. It was hardly possible for worshipers from foreign lands to bring their animals for sacrifice, so they expected to buy the animals for sacrifice. Jews in and around Jerusalem took advantage of this situation to raise and sell animals for this purpose. There seems to be nothing wrong with the practice unless it was abused. Undoubtedly these who sold animals for sacrifice were charging exorbitant prices.

*Overthrew the tables of the money-changers.* These, too, could have rendered good service to their brethren from foreign lands. The temple tax was collected in small coin. It was not convenient for foreign Jews to bring enough of such small coins to use in their worship. Hence, it would be necessary for them to exchange large coins for smaller. It would also be necessary for some of them to exchange foreign money for the half-

shekel which was used in the temple. There would necessarily be a rate of exchange, so Jesus cast them out of the temple perhaps for two reasons. (1) That the temple area was not the proper place for carrying on such business. (2) Because of the dishonesty and greed practiced on the part of those who were in business. Whether he had authority to do what he did has been a question with many. Believing in him as the Son of God, we would not deny him the right to cleanse his own temple, but whether the Jews who did not believe in him as the Son of God could recognize his right is another problem. He not only drove out those that sold and changed money, but it is said that he would not allow any one to carry a vessel into the temple.

*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.* As suggested above, he here speaks of the temple as his house and not as his Father's house. He openly asserts his ownership and thereby justifies his unusual action in driving out the money-changers.

*Ye have made it a den of robbers.* Instead of using it for prayer they had made it a den of robbers. This justifies the conclusion reached above that those who sold animals were charging too much, and those who changed money were charging too high a rate of exchange.

*Sought how they might destroy him.* The chief priests and scribes were angered by his action and the assertion of his authority and they began to devise ways and means of destroying him that they might be rid of his competition.

*For they feared him.* There was a bearing and carriage about our Lord which seemed more than human. When they sent men to arrest him, they came back without him saying that man never so spake. When they did put him to death, they were afraid of him. Their fear is emphasized by the fact that when they went to arrest him, they took along a mob of unusual numbers.

### III. More About the Fig Tree (Matt. 21: 19-22)

*How did the fig tree immediately wither?* In this section of our les-

son we have Matthew's record of Jesus looking for figs on the barren tree and his pronouncing a curse upon it. From Matthew's account we might conclude that the fig tree withered while the disciples were standing about it. But from Mark 11: 20, 21 we read, "And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedest is withered away." So we conclude that they did not notice the withering of the tree until about the same time the next morning.

*If ye have faith.* This is the language of Jesus in response to their statement that the fig tree had withered away. Whether we are to take this statement about removing mountains by faith literally or whether we are to get a spiritual lesson from it is difficult to decide. Perhaps both lessons are suggested. There is such a thing as a miraculous faith, a gift of the Spirit imparted by the laying on of the hands of an apostle. (1 Cor. 12: 9.) And then there is the common faith which comes by hearing the word of God. (Titus 1: 4, Romans 10: 17.) If one had the miraculous faith he could actually remove mountains, for certainly it would take no more power to remove a mountain than to raise the dead. But perhaps the lesson that Jesus intended for his disciples to get is that there is no difficulty in the way of a Christian which cannot be overcome through faith in God. In another place Jesus indicates that a little faith, as much as a grain of mustard seed, is all that is necessary to remove the mountain. (Matt. 17: 20.) Hence, it is the nature of faith and not the quantity of the faith that gets the results.

*Whatsoever ye ask in prayer.* This seems to be the conclusion which our Lord intended his disciples to get from the incident. When you ask in faith, ye shall receive. When difficulties are before us we are not to depend on our own wisdom or ingenuity, but to take the matter to the Lord in prayer.

## Topics for Discussion

1. Our Lord expects us to be fruitful in every good work. There is no place in the kingdom of Christ for non-producers. The lazy, indolent, and indifferent need not entertain hope of reward in this life or that which is to come.

2. Profession may cover up in the sight of men, but God looks through the thin covering of hypocritical profession to see us as we actually are. The thought that God sees and knows

us for what we actually are should sober us and move us to ever increasing activity in his work.

3. As Jesus cleansed his Father's house, so he has power and authority to drive out of his kingdom all who do not meet his approval. It is our task, by the help of his grace, to bring ourselves into harmony with his will so that we will not be a part of that which is displeasing to him.

## Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

### Introduction

Name and discuss the three kinds of trees which are used in the Bible to represent the Christian and his relationship to the Lord.

What is to be the end of unfruitful persons in the vineyard of the Lord?

Of what is the fruit of the Spirit composed?

### Golden Text Explained

Is the emphasis in this lesson on the amount or the quality of the fruit?

By what are we allowed to measure a preacher?

Did Jesus say a tree is known by its fruit or its leaves?

How may this principle be applied to individuals? And to colleges?

Are we guilty of unrighteous judgment when we judge the tree by its fruit?

Can you distinguish between righteous and unrighteous judgment?

### Cursing the Fig Tree

In what city was Jesus staying? And in whose home?

What route did Jesus take into Jerusalem?

Why did Jesus have a right to expect to find fruit on this fig tree?

How can you account for the fact that

Jesus did not know the tree was fruitless?

What curse did he pronounce upon the tree? And what lesson do we get from this?

### Cleansing the Temple

Did Jesus foreknow his death in Jerusalem?

Into what part of the temple could Jesus not go? And why?

Did Jesus speak of the temple as his house, or as his Father's house?

What was being sold in the temple? And why?

To what did Jesus object in this situation?

What did he do to cleanse the temple?

What did he say his house was to be called?

What did he say they had made his house?

What did the Jews seek to do on account of his action? And why did they not do it?

### More About the Fig Tree

When did the disciples notice the withering of the fig tree?

What did Jesus say one must have to accomplish such great things?

What two kinds of faith are mentioned in the Bible?

Is it the nature or the quantity of faith which gets results?

What connection is there between faith and prayer?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson IX—August 31, 1952

# JESUS SILENCES THE SADDUCEES

## The Lesson Text

Luke 20: 27-40

27 And there came to him certain of the Sad'-du-ceeds, they that say that there is no resurrection;

28 And they asked him, saying, Teacher, Mo'-ses wrote unto us, that if a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother should take the wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven

brethren: and the first took a wife, and died childless;

30 And the second.

31 And the third took her; and likewise the seven also left no children, and died.

32 Afterward the woman also died.

33 In the resurrection therefore whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her to wife.

34 And Je'-sus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 For neither can they die anymore: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

37 But that the dead are raised, even Mó'-ses showed, in *the place concerning* the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of I'-saac, and the God of Jacob.

38 Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39 And certain of the scribes answering said, Teacher, thou hast well said.

40 For they durst not any more ask him any question.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."* (John 11: 25.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 22: 23-33.

### Daily Bible Readings

August 25. M. .... Jesus Debates the Jews (Matt. 15: 1-20)  
 August 26. T. .... Jesus Debates the Herodians (Matt. 22: 15-22)  
 August 27. W. .... Jesus Debates the Pharisees (Matt. 22: 34-46)  
 August 28. T. .... Jesus Exposes the Pharisees (Matt. 23: 1-22)  
 August 29. F. .... Stephen Debates the Jews (Acts 6: 1-15)  
 August 30. S. .... Apollos Silenced the Jews (Acts 18: 24-28)  
 August 31. S. .... Elders to Silence False Teachers (Titus 1: 5-16)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—In the Temple at Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Sadducees.

### Introduction

The student should give special attention to the daily Bible readings in this lesson. The first four references are reports of debates which Jesus had with the various sects of Jews. On one occasion he debated the question of human traditions with the Jews. In this debate the Jews were affirming that the disciples of Jesus, as well as all others, should obey the traditions of the elders. Jesus denied this proposition and showed the consequences of such a course. In his debate with the Herodians, the question of paying tribute to Caesar was considered. In this debate Jesus took the unpopular side of the question and affirmed that it was their duty to pay tribute to Caesar, and yet he said it in such way that the Herodians were unable to offer much objection. His next debate was with the Sadducees. In this debate Jesus was in the affirmative, introducing scriptures to prove the resurrection, as well as disproving the various contentions of the Sadducees. After he had disposed of the Sadducees, the Pharisees gathered them-

selves together, feeling that they were more unanswerable than the other sects. The debate was more in the form of asking difficult questions than in the affirmation of specific propositions. When the Pharisees had asked their questions and Jesus had answered them, Jesus then put a difficult question to them. When they were unable to answer his question, they were embarrassed and left him in control of the field. Leaders of the early church followed the example of Jesus in carrying on debates with those with whom they differed. Stephen so embarrassed his opponents in debate that they became enraged so that they stoned him to death. It is said that Apollos silenced the Jews with his unanswerable arguments. Paul often engaged in religious discussions. (Acts 17: 1-3.) Paul also says that men who serve as elders are to be able "both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." (Titus 1: 9.) He continues by saying that there are false teachers going about teaching things which

they ought not and that it is the business of the elders to stop the mouths of these teachers. Since we cannot use force to stop their mouths, we must do it by exposing their false doctrines. This necessitates public dis-

cussion. Churches should not be afraid of such discussions; the elders should want to see to it that when such discussions are conducted they be held on a plane consistent with Christian love and consideration.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Jesus Asserts His Character and Relation to Life.** First, Jesus says, "I am the resurrection." By this he can mean nothing more than that he is the author of the cause of the resurrection. He said, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day." (John 6: 44.) This and several similar statements attribute the resurrection to Jesus. Hence we conclude that the resurrection will be through his agency. We might also consider this statement as meaning that his resurrection in a very real way involves the resurrection of all his disciples. Paul speaks of the resurrection of Christ as the first fruits, saying, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming." (1 Cor. 15: 22,23.) In this Golden Text we find Jesus affirming his divinity, his deity. Surely the resurrection can be accomplished by nothing less than omnipotence and this is enjoyed by none other than God.

Next, Jesus *says*, "I am the life." This expression also suggests that Jesus is the source of life. John, after saying that the Word of God said also, "In him was life." (John 1: 4.) Jesus said, "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will." (John 5: 21.) In this statement, Jesus claims equality with the Father in the matter of giving life. He is the source of both physical and spiritual life.

**2. Jesus Asserts His Power to Communicate to the Living and the Dead,**

**the Power to Triumph over Death.**

Jesus promises the believer, even though he may die physically, that he shall live again and follows this with the statement that in reality the believer shall never die. In his own experience he triumphed over death and the grave and this becomes the assurance to the believer that he will exercise this same power to give him triumph over death. Though the body may be brought to the grave, the soul goes on to be with Christ. And as surely as Christ arose from the dead, these bodies of ours shall rise and shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body in the resurrection. (Phil. 3: 21.) Again we notice that this claim is equal to an assertion of his divinity. Surely no one less than God could promise to give people triumph over death.

**3. Jesus Reveals the Condition on Which He Gives Power over Death.** In our text Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." The belief under consideration here is an obedient belief. It is not such a belief as the Jews of John 8: 30, 31 had, for Jesus speaks of them as being the children of the devil. (John 8: 44.) Nor is it the kind of belief which the rulers of the Jews had when they refused to confess him because they were afraid they would be put out of the synagogue, loving the glory of men more than the glory of God. (John 12: 42, 43.) But it is humble, obedient faith such as the people on Pentecost had when they repented and were baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins and were added to the church. (Acts 2: 41, 47.)

### Exposition of the Text

**I. Sadducees State the Question** (Luke 20: 27-33)

*There came to him certain of the Sadducees.* We have noticed in preceding lessons that the Sadducees were a group of Jews who did not believe in the possibility of a resur-

rection, and Luke adds by way of identifying this sect that they are the people who say there is no resurrection. A resurrection implies a burial; it is the coming forth from the burial. That which has never been buried cannot be resurrected. The heavenly

body in which we will live is a resurrected body, not a created body. There are a few Sadducees among us today who believe that our bodies will not be resurrected but that an entirely new body will be given the spirit in heaven. It remains for them to show why this can be called a *resurrection* and not a *creation*.

*Moses wrote unto us.* The Sadducees pointed to a law given by Moses on which to base a hypothetical case. The law is contained in Deuteronomy 25ff. They state the law as briefly as can be stated. "That if a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother shall take the wife and raise up seed unto his brother." This has been called the levirate law, Latin word meaning *a husband's brother*. There are some interesting features of this law which were not necessary to mention to make out their case. One of these is that if the husband's brother refused to marry the widow and raise up children to his deceased brother, the elders of the city were to call him before them and in the presence of the widow, this brother was to affirm that he would not perform his duty. Following this the widow was to loose his shoe from off his foot, spit in his face, and say, "So shall it be done unto the man that doth not build up his brother's house." Another interesting feature of this law is the fact that it authorized in some instances polygamy. An interesting example of this type of marriage may be found in the case of Ruth and Boaz. While Boaz was not the brother of Mahlon, the principle extended to the nearest of kin. There was one man who was a closer relative than Boaz and hence entitled to marry Ruth. He declined to do the part of the near kinsman, so in the presence of the elders of Bethlehem, this man removed his shoe and gave it to Boaz and Boaz was thus free to take Ruth to be his wife.

*In the resurrection whose wife shall she be?* The problem submitted by the Sadducees was this: Seven brothers had taken a woman to wife in accordance with this levirate law. All seven of them died, leaving no child. They wished to know to which of the seven she would belong in the resurrection. They seemed to believe

that the same relationships we enjoy here would be continued after the resurrection. To them this was positive proof either that there would be no resurrection, or that such confusion would result in heaven as would be out of harmony with the nature of God and of heaven. To avoid such confusion they preferred to believe that there would be no resurrection of the body.

## II. Jesus Gives His Answer (Luke 20: 34-36)

*The sons of this world marry.* Jesus draws a contrast between this world and the world to come. Marriage is for this world and not for the world to come. Jesus does not mean by this use of the word *world* to say that marriage is a worldly thing or had its origin in worldliness. He simply means to say that marriage is an arrangement given by the Lord for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in this world, but that the purposes of God in the world to come do not include such an arrangement.

*Accounted worthy to attain to that world.* This suggests that our character has something to do with determining whether we will be in heaven. Since some are accounted worthy, we naturally conclude that others will be counted unworthy. We do not become worthy by any works of merit which we perform, but simply through humble obedience to the commands of the gospel of Christ. The teaching of Christ on the judgment scene (Matt. 25: 31-46) would indicate that our obedience to him will determine our worthiness in that day.

*Neither marry nor are given in marriage.* People of the earth were given the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. Heaven is a place of reward for those who prove faithful in this earthly life. Heaven is not a place where people multiply. Hence, there is no need for marriage.

*For neither can they die any more.* This is simply another item of contrast between this world and the next. In this world it is appointed unto men once to die, but in that world there will be no more death. (Rev. 21: 4.)

*For they are equal unto the angels.*

This statement implies that angels have bodies. It also teaches that in this respect we will be as the angels. This teaching was especially given for the Sadducees who did not believe in the existence of angels. Jesus took advantage of this opportunity to give them teaching not only on the point under discussion, but a point on which they needed instruction.

*And are sons of God.* This statement does not imply that we are not sons of God in this world. It may imply that we are sons in some different sense of this word from what we are here. Jesus adds, *being sons of the resurrection.* This phrase in some way explains the relationship expressed by the term *sons of God.* If the sonship spoken of is the result of the resurrection, there is a difference between that relationship and our relationship before the resurrection. Since Jesus was raised from the dead to die no more and is in that respect the first born from the dead forevermore, so we in the resurrection will be sons of God forevermore. Our sonship here is conditioned upon our obedience to God. If we continue to obey him, we continue in the relationship. But in heaven there will be no sin. Hence, our sonship will be eternal. This eternal sonship is dependent upon the resurrection and so the term *sons of God* is to be understood.

### III. Application and Conditions (Luke 20: 37-40)

*That the dead are raised Moses showed.* The Sadducees refused to accept the teaching of the prophets. They claimed to receive the teaching of Moses, but denied the authority of the prophets. Jesus meets them on their own ground by showing that Moses taught the resurrection. Jesus then mentioned the incident of the burning bush found in the third chapter of Exodus.

*Callesh the Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.* The incident referred to is that of Moses when caring for the sheep at Mount Horeb. Jehovah appeared in a flame of fire in the bush, but the bush was not consumed. When Moses saw it he turned aside to see why the bush was not burned. God spoke to him from the bush and identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

*He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* Since God is the God of these patriarchs, but is not the God of the dead, we must conclude that these patriarchs are living. This is not a positive proof of the resurrection of the body, but it does imply the resurrection of the body. It is positive proof that these patriarchs were in some way alive at the time of the experience of Moses at the burning bush. If at death these patriarchs ceased to exist, God would be the God of nothing, or of things that did not exist. The Sadducees denied any consciousness whatever after the death of the body, but since God is the God of these patriarchs, they must be conscious somewhere. If God preserves them in a state of consciousness, contrary to the belief of the Sadducees, their denial of the resurrection of the body would be rendered unreasonable. Matthew adds, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." (Matt. 22: 29.) Jesus used the only section of scripture which the Sadducees accepted to disprove their contentions. They did not have a working knowledge of those scriptures which they accepted. A good many mistakes today both in teaching and in practice are made because of a lack of knowledge. In the second place, Jesus said their mistake was to be attributed to their lack of knowledge concerning the power of God. No doubt the Sadducees, like many of their tribe today, thought it a scientific impossibility for God to raise the body after it had returned to dust. The God who has the power to create a body from dust can surely resurrect that body from the same dust.

*Teacher, thou hast well said.* This bit of commendation came from certain of the scribes standing near. The scribes were more often associated with the Pharisees and would welcome one who could defeat their long time opponents, the Sadducees. It did them good to hear Jesus use the few scriptures which the Sadducees accepted to destroy their position.

*They durst not any more ask him any question.* Jesus was an expert in debate as well as in all other forms of teaching. He so completely answered his opponent that there was nothing left to say.

## Topics for Discussion

1. The mistake made by the Sadducees was caused by their lack of knowledge of the scriptures and the power of God. (Matt. 22: 29.) Ignorance of God's word is the source of many mistakes.

2. Many people doubt statements of the Lord if it seems impossible for such things to be done. Some deny

the resurrection of the body because it is scientifically impossible.

3. Molding clay and spirit together to make man is a scientifically impossible process, but man is a living demonstration of the power of God to do such. Our failure to comprehend his power is the source of many mistakes and much of our lack of faith.

## Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

### Introduction

What do you know of the debate Jesus had on the subject of human traditions?

What question did Jesus debate with the Herodians? And who were they?

What questions did Jesus discuss with the Sadducees?

What leaders of the early church engaged in debates? And with whom?

According to Paul, who should be able to convict the gainsayers?

How and why should they be able to convict the gainsayers?

### Golden Text Explained

What did Jesus mean when he said he is the resurrection?

What does Jesus affirm as to his nature in this text?

In what words does Jesus affirm that he is the source of all life?

Jesus asserts his power to communicate what to the living and the dead?

On what condition does Jesus give us power over death?

What kind of faith is under consideration here?

### Sadducees State the Question

What is the meaning of the term resurrection? Can that which has never been buried be resurrected?

What is the levirate law? And where is it found in the Old Testament?

Name two interesting features of this law mentioned in our lesson.

What prominent Old Testament characters followed this law?

How did the Sadducees use this law in their debate with Jesus?

### Jesus Gives His Answer

How did Jesus contrast this world with the next?

What is implied by our being worthy to attain to the next world?

With what beings shall we be equal in the next world? And in what respects?

What is meant by being sons of God in the next world?

### Application and Conditions

What part of the Old Testament did the Sadducees reject?

Jesus used the teaching of what man to answer the Sadducees?

To what Old Testament incident did Jesus appeal in this discussion?

Jehovah is the God of whom?

What does this prove with reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

What two reasons did Jesus give to explain the error of the Sadducees?

Who commended Jesus for his part in this debate?

What effect did this debate have on his opponents?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson X—September 7, 1952

# THE JUDGMENT

## The Lesson Text

Matt. 25: 31-42, 46

31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:

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

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

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

35 For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in;

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

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink?

38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee?

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

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of

these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me.

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

42 For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—REV. 20: 11-15.

### Daily Bible Readings

- September 1. M.....Many Disappointed in Judgment (Matt. 7: 21-27)
- September 2. T.....Some Unprepared for the Judgment (Matt. 25: 1-13)
- September 3. W.....Secrets Known in Judgment (Eccles. 12: 11-14)
- September 4. T.....Judgment Day Appointed (Acts 17: 22-31)
- September 5. F.....All Meet in Judgment (2 Cor. 5: 1-11)
- September 6. S.....The Judge Appointed (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
- September 7. S.....Proof of the Judgment of God (2 Pet. 2: 1-11)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—JERUSALEM.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the Jews.

### Introduction

The idea of the judgment is to be found in both the Old Testament and the New. Solomon said, “For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Eccles. 12: 14.) John the Baptist implied as much when he said that God will “gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.” (Matt. 3:

given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17: 31.) According to this, God has determined the day when the judgment will be held. From Paul we learn that the judgment is to be the day of wrath, for he spoke of the impenitent as treasuring up for himself “wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” (Rom. 2: 5.) Again, he speaks of Jesus as delivering us “from the wrath to come” at the time of the second coming of Christ. (1 Thess. 1: 10.) That the judgment is to be at the time of the coming of Christ is taught in these words, “Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” (1 Cor. 4: 5.) Jesus places the time of the judgment at his second coming in that familiar passage concerning the judgment in Matthew 25: 31-46.

12.) Jesus had much to say of the judgment, saying that it would be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon and even for Sodom in the day of judgment than for the people to whom he preached. (Matt. 11: 20-24.) Judgment was often on the lips of the apostles in their preaching and their writing. Paul said that God overlooked certain ignorance for a time, but now commands all men to repent, ‘inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath

## Golden Text Explained

1. **All to Appear in Judgment.** The idea of one vast assemblage of all humanity in the judgment has come to mean but little to the modern student of the Bible. Many who would class themselves as conservatives see no need of a judgment, except for those living at the time Jesus comes, but according to Jesus, when he sits on the throne of his glory "before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25: 32.) However, many think this refers only to the nations alive at the coming of Christ. But Jesus said that the people of Tyre and Sidon would be in the judgment with the people of his day, and that the people of Sodom would also be in the judgment, and that it would be more tolerable for these ancient cities in the day of judgment than for the people to whom he spoke. (Matt. 11: 20-24.) Again he said the people of Nineveh would stand up in the judgment with the generation in which he lived, and that the queen of the south would rise up in the judgment with his generation because she came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and his generation refused to hear a greater than Solomon. (Matt. 12: 41-45.) From these passages we learn that people from five generations out of five nations separated by great periods of time will be in the judgment in the day of judgment. If these five generations out of five different nations will be in the judgment together, who can say with any degree of certainty that all other nations will not be in that same judgment?

2. **Christ to Be the Judge.** Our text states that all shall be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ. Paul says that Christ shall judge the living and the dead. (2 Tim. 4: 1.) Again Peter told Cornelius, "He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is

ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead." (Acts 10: 42.)

3. **The Purpose of the Judgment.** Some object to all nations being in the judgment on the ground that their eternal destiny has already been determined, hence, no need of a judgment. The Bible does not suggest that the purpose of the judgment is to hear evidence for and against a person and to reach a decision as to where each individual will spend eternity. Rather, the purpose of the judgment is to pass sentence upon the wicked and to reward the righteous. When Jesus spoke of all nations being gathered before him in judgment, he pictured them as being separated, the righteous on the right hand and the wicked on the left. There is no indication of the hearing of evidence but rather a statement of rewards to those upon the right hand and the passing of sentence upon those on the left. He closes the scene by saying that the righteous shall go away into eternal life, but the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment. (Matt. 25: 46.)

4. **Judgment Is on an Individual Basis.** The judgment will be as individual as if there were only one individual on earth to be judged. Paul says, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14: 12.) Neither will there be any partiality in the judgment, for according to our text, each one will receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. From this we conclude that we are not to be judged according to the love of God, but according to what we have done. Some people think that God loves us too much to punish, but according to our text the love of God is not the standard by which we are judged: our life determines where we will spend eternity.

## Exposition of the Text

I. **Setting of the Judgment** (Matt. 25: 31-33)

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory.* As already suggested, the time for the judgment is at the second

coming of Christ. We have also learned that this day has been appointed. (Acts 17: 31.) Notice that Jesus is here referred to as *Son of man*. This is a term which indicates

his humanity and is usually used with reference to his humiliation. So there is somewhat of a contrast when he speaks of the *Son of man* coming in *glory*. Paul speaks of him at the time of his coming as being glorified in his saints and marveled at in all them that believe. (2 Thess. 1: 9, 10.)

*And all the angels with him.* Jesus is pictured as being accompanied by a throng of angels at the time of his second coming. Paul speaks of the voice of the archangels accompanying his second coming. (1 Thess. 4: 16.) In the parable of the tares Jesus said, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. (Matt. 13: 41, 42.)

*Sit on the throne of his glory.* Some have mentioned this passage to teach that Jesus will begin at that time to sit on his throne. Zechariah said, "He shall be a priest upon his throne." (Zech. 6: 13.) If Jesus does not sit upon his throne until his second coming, it follows that he *cannot* be a priest until his second coming. But this is contrary to all the teaching on this subject, especially in the book of Hebrews. (Heb. 4: 14-16; 7: 26-28; 8: 4; 9: 11; 10: 21.) Our text simply means to say that when Jesus comes, he will sit as king and judge over his people.

*Before him shall be gathered all nations.* We have seen from our study of the Golden Text that the term *all nations* includes such as the people of Sodom, Tyre and Sidon and others. Hence, we conclude that the resurrection will precede this judgment. Paul says that the wicked people of Thessalonica who persecuted the church will be in that judgment and that they will be recompensed with affliction. And he specified the time when this punishment will be meted out by saying, "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire." (2 Thess. 1: 7.) This destroys the idea of separate resurrections, one for the righteous and one for the wicked a thousand years apart. Since both the wicked and the righteous of Thessalonica will be in the judgment at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, it

follows that the wicked of Thessalonica will be raised at the same time the righteous are raised and judged at the same time. Hence, no thousand years' reign between the two.

*Separate them one from another.* Jesus is pictured as a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats. Sheep are often used to represent righteous people, but the figure must not be pressed too far. Some have gone so far as to prove eternal election and damnation, pointing out that it has never been possible for a sheep to become a goat, or for a goat ever to become a sheep. But that a righteous person can become an unrighteous person and that an unrighteous person can become righteous is abundantly proved in scripture. (Ezek. 33: 10-16.)

## II. Dealing with the Righteous (Matt. 25: 34-40)

*Come, ye blessed of my Father.* This is the language of the King to those upon the right hand. He speaks of them as being blessed of his Father. They are to receive the rewards which the Father has determined in his wisdom for those who have conducted themselves during earth life in such way as to meet his approval.

*Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.* Here we have mention of a kingdom which is different from the kingdom in which they have lived and labored. Paul tells us that at the time of his second coming Jesus will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father and will himself be in subjection to the Father. Hence, the kingdom which the righteous inherit on this occasion is not the mediatorial kingdom over which Christ is now reigning. Peter speaks of the same kingdom when he said that those who have added the Christian graces shall be richly supplied with an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1: 11.) Jesus says this kingdom is prepared for the righteous. In another place he speaks of it as mansions in his Father's house. (John 14: 1-3.)

*From the foundation of the world.* The whole scheme of redemption existed in the mind of God even before the creation of the world. Jesus is spoken of as a lamb slain from be-

fore the foundation of the world. (1 Pet. 1: 20.) Paul speaks of our having been called according to God's own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal. (2 Tim. 1: 9.) Hence, we are not surprised to learn that the kingdom which the righteous shall inherit existed in the mind of God before creation, but is pictured as being prepared by him after his ascension. (John 14: 1-3.)

*I was hungry, and ye gave me meat.* The righteous are said to be blessed here because of what they had done for Christ.

*Lord, when saw we thee hungry?* From this statement we gather that the righteous include many who did not live in the time of Christ, for they imply that they had never seen him.

*Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren.* Jesus replies that it is not necessary to serve him in person, a privilege which none of us could have, but that serving even the least of his disciples is counted as service to him personally.

### III. Dealing with the Wicked (Matt. 25: 41-46)

*Depart from me, ye cursed.* This is the language of the King to those upon the left hand. They are said to depart into eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. Hell is never spoken of as having been prepared for God's people, but rather as a place for Satan. (Rev. 20: 1-15.)

*For I was hungry and ye gave me no meat.* Those on the left hand are said to be there because they did not feed the hungry and visit the sick. It is not intended that they were there because they had rejected Christ, rather it is implied that they had accepted Christ but had not served as Christians should. Those on the right hand were said to be there because they had done good works. Disbelievers, or alien sinners, seem not to be included in this judgment scene. Other scriptures teach that they are present in the judgment, but Jesus

deals only with his servants in this judgment picture. The parable of the virgins and the parable of the talents preceding this judgment scene deal only with servants. Hence, we conclude that some of the servants of Jesus will prove faithful during life and will be rewarded according to their works, and that some of his servants will prove unfaithful during life and will be punished for their lack of good works. It is not to be concluded that good works constitute the ground of their salvation or that the lack of good works constitutes the ground of the damnation of the wicked. But it certainly is taught in this passage that salvation is conditioned upon doing good to others. If only the servants of Jesus are included in this judgment lesson, the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is demonstrated to be false.

*These shall go away into eternal punishment.* It should be remembered that the judgment described in this lesson is held at the time of the second coming of Christ. From that judgment the wicked go away into eternal punishment. (1) We must conclude that the wicked have been raised prior to this judgment; they would certainly not be judged in their absence. Furthermore, they are spoken of as being present and as going away from this judgment. (2) We also conclude that there cannot be a reign of a thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked. (3) It is also obvious that there will not be a reign of a thousand years after this judgment since they go away to their eternal destinies.

*The righteous into eternal life.* No one doubts that the term *eternal life* means happiness without end. Hence, we conclude that the term *eternal punishment* means punishment without end. Since punishment implies consciousness, we conclude that the wicked will be eternally conscious of the punishment inflicted.

## Topics for Discussion

1. If it will be more tolerable for Sodom in judgment than for the people to whom Jesus spoke (Matt. 11: 24), will there be degrees of punishment?

2. If the judgment is held on the day the Lord comes, and if both the good and the evil are sent away from judgment to their eternal destinies, how can there be a reign of one

thousand years on earth after the coming of Christ?

3. Eternal destruction is to be the

portion of all the wicked on the day that Jesus comes again. (2 Thess. 1: 7-10.)

**Questions for the Class**

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

**Introduction**

Quote and discuss an Old Testament reference to the judgment.  
What did John the Baptist say concerning judgment?  
What reference did Jesus make concerning Tyre and Sidon and the judgment?  
What did Paul say with reference to the judgment?  
What is said about the time for the judgment?

**Golden Text Explained**

What proof can you give of the assemblage of all humanity in one judgment?  
What passages can you quote that teach that Jesus will be the judge?  
What is the purpose of the last judgment?  
From this judgment where do the wicked go? Where do the righteous go?  
What proof can you give that the judgment will be on an individual basis?

**Setting of the Judgment**

What is implied in the term Son of man?  
By whom will Jesus be accompanied at his second coming?  
What work will the angels do at that time?  
Does our text teach that Jesus will begin to sit on his throne at his second coming?  
What particular nations are mentioned as being in this last judgment?  
Can you prove that there will be no period of a thousand years after the res-

urrection of the righteous and before the resurrection of the wicked?  
What separation will be made in the judgment?

**Dealing with the Righteous**

How will Jesus address the righteous in the judgment?  
What blessing will Jesus bestow upon the righteous in that day?  
How long has this blessing been in store for the righteous?  
On what condition is this great blessing to be received?  
How can we today render such service to Jesus?

**Dealing with the Wicked**

What curse will be pronounced upon the wicked?  
Are alien sinners included in this judgment scene? Who are the wicked in this lesson? And whose duty is it to feed the hungry and visit the sick?  
If the wicked of this lesson are servants of Jesus who failed to do their duty, what effect does this have on the doctrine of impossibility of apostasy?  
Since this judgment is held the day the Lord comes, and since the wicked go from this judgment to eternal punishment, what must we conclude with reference to the resurrection of the wicked? With reference to a thousand years' reign between two resurrections? And a thousand year period on this earth after the judgment?  
What proof do we have that the punishment of the wicked will never end?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

**Lesson XI—September 14, 1952**

**JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER**

**The Lesson Text**

Mark 14: 22-25; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29

22 And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body.

23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that

the Lord Je'sus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread;

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

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

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

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

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

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

Golden Text.- *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."* (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

Devotional Reading.—Luke 22: 11-23.

### Daily Bible Readings

September 8. M.....	Institution of the Supper (Matt. 26: 20-30)
September 9. T.....	Breaking Bread in Worship (Acts 2: 37-47)
September 10. W.....	Breaking Bread at Troas (Acts 20: 7-12)
September 11. T.....	Communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10: 14-22)
September 12. F.....	Instruction to Corinth (1 Cor. 11: 17-22, 30-34)
September 13. S.....	Another Item of Worship (1 Cor. 16: 1-9)
September 14. S.....	Forsake Not the Assembly (Heb. 10: 19-31)

Time.—A.D. 29 for Mark; A.D. 58 for Corinthians.

Places.—Jerusalem and Corinth.

Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and the church at Corinth.

### Introduction

No one denies the importance of the Lord's supper, yet the religious world is divided on the question of how to recognize and emphasize this importance. Practically the whole religious world refuses to accept regular weekly observance of the Lord's supper as being necessary. The absence of any positive command makes it all the more necessary that we study the passages of scripture which deal with the institution and the observance of the Lord's supper. As to the time for the observance, we are dependent upon the example of the early Christians. "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them," (Acts 20: 7a.) One other mention of the first day of the week in connection with worship is to be found in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." (1 Cor. 16: 2.) It is true that no mention is made of the Lord's supper in this passage to the Corinthians, but

there is an implication of a meeting of the saints on that day, and Paul's instruction to them is that they contribute money when they are met together on the first day of the week. That the early disciples under the guidance and teaching of the apostles met upon the first day of every week is suggested in the language used with reference to the gathering at Troas. When we say that we celebrate our independence on the fourth of July, no one asks what fourth of July we mean. That is an annual date and whatever is to be done on that date is done as often as the date comes. We say the bill collector comes on the first of the month, and no one asks what month. That is a monthly date, and as often as the date comes, that which is to be done on the date is done. So the first day of the week is a weekly date and as often as the date comes, that which is done on the date should be done. Hence, when we read that the disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread, we conclude that it was a weekly observance.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **One Bread and One Cup.** Various doctrines have been taught with reference to the bread and the cup. The Catholics believe that when blessed by the priest, the bread becomes the literal body of Jesus Christ. On this ground they deny the cup to the laity since, they contend, that there is suf-

ficient blood in the flesh for the laity. Besides being an impossibility, the doctrine is revolting in that the creature turns worse than cannibal and eats the literal flesh of his God. When Jesus instituted the supper, he took bread and said, "This is my body." That language is as strong as the

idea can be expressed, and yet it is obvious that the bread was not transformed into his literal body because his fleshly hand held the bread. Paul says that a rock followed the Israelites in the wilderness, and that rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10: 4.) No one believes that the rock was literally Jesus Christ. Again Paul says, Hagar is Mount Sinai (Gal. 4: 24); no one believes that Hagar, Abraham's concubine, was actually and literally Mount Sinai. So when Jesus said this is my body, he simply meant this represents my body.

Others have difficulty with the text in reference to the number of containers used for the fruit of the vine. When Jesus instituted the supper, he took *the cup*. Nowhere is the plural of cup used; hence, some good brethren think it sinful to use more than one container when taking the Lord's supper. It should be noticed that the disciples drank the cup and that Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Surely no one thinks that the cup which they drank was the container, nor would anyone suppose that the container is the new covenant in his blood. Hence, the cup which Jesus took and blessed and which the disciples drank was simply the contents of the cup. Some brethren argue that the *cup of the Lord* is composed of both the container and the contents. If that be true, and one drinks the cup of the Lord, he must drink both the con-

tainer and the contents. When Paul was at Ephesus, he wrote the church at Corinth and said, "We partake of the one bread," and he said, "The cup of blessing which we bless." (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17.) Paul at Ephesus and the church at Corinth drank one cup and ate one bread. Surely no one gets the idea that Paul at Ephesus drank out of the same container used by the brethren at Corinth. The one cup is the fruit of the vine, the contents and not the container.

**2. Proclaim His Death.** Paul says as often as we take the Lord's supper we proclaim the Lord's death. The Lord's supper is a monument in proof of the fact that Jesus died. Marble monuments perish, but this monument is not of such nature that it will perish with the passing of centuries. As long as Christians take the Lord's supper, the world has the proof of the death of Christ. Such a practice could not have escaped the criticism and denial of the enemies of Jesus during the first century if it had not been based upon fact. But since there is not a line of writing in criticism of their observance of the supper without basis in fact, the enemies of Christ must grant the fact of the death of Christ. Paul teaches that this will be done until Jesus comes again. Hence, when we take the supper, we should think both of his death for our sins and his second coming to take us out of this world of sin.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Record of the Institution (Mark 14: 22-25)

As *they were eating*. This refers to the eating of the passover supper. The reader will find some instructions with reference to preparation for this last passover in Mark 14: 12ff. and Matt. 26: 17-25. A record of the institution of the passover is found in Exodus 12: 1-14. In the institution of the passover, it seems that nothing but roast and bitter herbs with unleavened bread were used in the supper. However, in later times, wine was added and Jewish writings specify as many as four cups of wine at certain intervals during the eating of the supper. The first cup was taken following a benediction, the second cup was taken in connection with

a son in the family asking his father to explain the significance of the passover. The third cup was taken in connection with a prayer which followed the meal, and the fourth cup was taken in connection with the singing of the Psalms which were usually used in connection with the passover. These Psalms were 113 to 118.

*He took the bread.* This was, of course, the unleavened bread of the passover. No one denies that our Lord used unleavened bread in instituting the supper, but many contend that that is no reason why we should be limited to use unleavened bread today. However, those who respect the example of Christ and his apostles will continue to use unleavened bread.

*When he had blessed it he brake it.* The word *blessed* has bothered many. Often we hear it said that we cannot bless the bread as did Jesus, but we can give thanks. Here Mark says that Jesus blessed the bread. Luke says that he gave thanks. (Luke 22: 19.) Hence, Jesus did not do some miraculous or mystical thing when he blessed the bread; he simply gave thanks for it. So we can do all to the bread that Jesus did. The breaking of the bread seems to have some significance. It is probable that Jesus intended to suggest the suffering which his body was about to undergo. One author says, "This breaking of the bread represented the sufferings of Jesus about to take place . . . this broken bread was the manner in which my body will be broken; or this will serve to recall my dying sufferings to your remembrance. It is not meant that his body would be literally broken as the bread was, but the bread would be a significant emblem or symbol to recall to their recollections his suffering." (Barnes.)

*Take ye; this is my body.* While Jesus was still living in the flesh and while his hand of flesh held a piece of bread, he said, "This is my body." Surely he did not mean for the statement to be taken literally. When Jesus said, "I am the vine," he certainly did not mean that statement to be taken literally. Again when he said, "I am the bread which came down out of heaven," he did not mean that he was transformed into actual bread. If his statement that he was bread does not mean that was transformed into literal bread, we should not take this statement, *this bread is my body*, to mean that the bread was transformed into his literal body.

*He took a cup.* Whether Jesus passed one literal container and all the apostles drank out of this container is not stated in this or any other passage. Mark simply says he took a cup and gave to them and they all drank of it. Furthermore, while holding this cup Jesus said, "This is my blood . . . which is poured out." The word *this* refers to the cup and yet Jesus says, "This is my blood," that is, this cup is my blood. Hence, the term cup cannot refer to the container, for by no stretch of the imagination can we think that Jesus said

that the container was his blood. Obviously he spoke of the contents of the cup which he held in his hand.

*Blood of the new covenant.* When the old covenant was given to the Jews, blood was sprinkled on the book and all the people (Heb. 9:19), and by this action was the covenant ratified or sealed. So Jesus says this cup is my blood of the new covenant, that is, it represents or symbolizes the blood which I am about to shed to ratify and seal the new covenant. A covenant was not of force without and until blood had been shed in connection with it.

*Which is poured out for me.* Some brethren carelessly use the word "spill" instead of "pour." The word spill implies accident. The shedding of Jesus' blood was not accidental; he poured it out or shed it on purpose. Hence, it is incorrect to say that Jesus spilled his blood for many.

*I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.* Jesus indicated in this language that he would drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of God, but since the Lord's supper is to be taken only until he comes again (1 Cor. 11: 26), and since he is to drink it in the kingdom we conclude that he drinks it in the kingdom of God before his second coming. Certainly he does not literally drink of it as we do, but he does commune with us as we drink the cup. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" In this passage Paul suggests our communion with Christ in the world. Paul condemned the eating of things sacrificed to idols on the ground that those doing so were holding communion with the demons. (1 Cor. 10: 20.) Hence, when we partake of the table of the Lord, we are holding communion with the Lord. In this sense, he drinks the cup with us.

## II. Paul's Teaching at Corinth (1 Cor. 11: 23-29)

*I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.* Speaking of the gospel which he preached, Paul said, "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1: 12.) Here Paul wishes the Corinthians to understand

that his teaching on the Lord's supper is not based on human tradition, but on a direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

*In the night in which he was betrayed.* The betrayal of Jesus was the act in which he was delivered to his enemies for crucifixion. Paul used this statement perhaps to include the whole of the sufferings of Jesus and to suggest the solemnity with which we should partake of the supper.

*When he had given thanks.* Here again we have the expression *thanks* instead of *blessed* as we have in Mark. Hence, we should have no trouble in concluding that Jesus simply gave thanks when he blessed the bread. Again we have the same order as we have in the gospel records of the giving of thanks and the breaking of the bread. The giving of thanks precedes the breaking, and it is well for us to follow that example.

*This is my body, which is for you.* The King James Version adds the word *broken*, suggesting that his body was broken for us. Some object to this statement because it is said that not a bone was broken. Our version leaves out the word *broken*, but not because it contradicted the statement with reference to the breaking of his bones. We often speak of our flesh being broken when wounded. So when his side was pierced, his body was broken. Hence, the statement in the King James Version is not objectionable.

*This do in remembrance of me.* No one wishes to be forgotten, and doubtless Jesus does not want us to forget him. But the joy which he derives from being remembered is not to be compared with the good which we derive from remembering him. Hence, it is primarily for our good that he gave us this monument by which to remember him. The bit of bread and fruit of the vine we take cannot be

of any physical good to us. Hence, the only good we derive from the Lord's supper is the meditation and its influence on us. Those who go through the form without meditating upon his death and looking forward to his second coming get absolutely no benefit from the supper. Paul says that, "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep." This is the result of failing to discern the body of Christ in the supper. By discerning the body is meant meditating upon the sufferings his body endured and the purposes for which he suffered. It does us good to be reminded each week that Jesus suffered the penalty for our sins. It helps to keep us faithful in the performance of our duty, and when we remember that sin made it necessary for him to suffer on the cross, we are restrained from indulging in sin.

*Drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner.* Those who fail to discern the Lord's body, or meditate upon his death, take the supper in an unworthy manner.

*Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* This is a rather difficult statement, but seems to mean that one who takes the supper in an unworthy manner is guilty of conduct equal to that of which the Jews were guilty in putting Christ to death. This thought is enforced by the statement that he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. This word judgment means condemnation. Hence, the individual who takes the supper in an unworthy manner eats and drinks condemnation. This condemnation follows because the individual is guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. This view of the matter should impress us with the seriousness and the solemnity of the Lord's supper and cause us to be more careful of the manner in which we partake of the supper.

### Topics for Discussion

1. When Jesus said the bread is his body and the cup is his blood, the statement is no more to be taken literally than is Paul's statement, "Now this Hagar is mount Sinai."

2. On what do your thoughts dwell while the emblems are being passed? This is a time of serious meditation—

not a time for visiting with the one sitting by, or for planning how to spend the afternoon.

3. Failure to observe the Lord's supper properly is the cause of spiritual illness and death. We should, therefore, give this part of the worship much prayerful thought.

Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson? Repeat the Golden Text. Give the time, places, and persons of this lesson.

Introduction

What does the religious world think of the importance of the Lord's supper? How do we determine the time for the observance of the Lord's supper? What other act of worship is mentioned as being on the first day of the week? Can you prove that the Lord's supper should be observed weekly?

Golden Text Explained

What is the Catholic position with reference to the bread? And the cup? What did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body"? Give examples to prove your position. How can you disprove the contention that that only one container may be used in the supper? Of what is the Lord's supper a monument? In what way does this monument differ from monuments men build?

Record of the Institution

In connection with what meal did Jesus institute the Lord's supper? What do you know of the manner in which the Jews celebrated the passover?

What is unleavened bread? And why should we use it in the Lord's supper? What did Jesus do when he blessed the bread? What is the significance of breaking the bread? What is the meaning of the word cup as used in our lesson? What did Jesus mean when he said the cup was the blood of the new covenant? Is it correct to say that Jesus "spilled" his blood? Why? What is meant by Jesus drinking the cup in the kingdom of God?

Paul's Teaching at Corinth

Where did Paul get his instruction as to how to observe the Lord's supper? Is the bread to be broken before or after giving of thanks? And is there any significance to be attached to this order? Was the body of Jesus broken for us? What indication do we have that Jesus wishes to be remembered? What is there about the Lord's supper which is profitable to us? What happens to us if we do not take the supper in the right manner? What is meant by being guilty of the body and blood of the Lord? What is meant by discerning the body and blood of the Lord? What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XII—September 21, 1952

JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

The Lesson Text

Matt. 27: 26, 29-38

26 Then released he unto them Bar-ab'-bas; but Je'-sus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

29 And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

30 And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head.

31 And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cy-re'-ne, Si'-mon by name: him they compelled to go

with them, that he might bear his cross.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Gol'-go'-tha, that is to say, The place of a skull,

34 They gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.

35 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots;

36 And they sat and watched him there.

37 And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JE'-SUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left.

Golden Text.—"But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.)

Devotional Reading.—Mark 15: 33-41.

**Daily Bible Readings**

September 15. M. ....	His Death Foretold (Isa. 53: 1-12)
September 16. T. ....	Judas Betrays Jesus (Matt. 26: 47-56)
September 17. ....	W. Peter Denies Jesus (Matt. 26: 69-75)
September 18. T. ....	Jesus Before the Jews (Matt. 26: 57-68)
September 19. ....	F. Jesus Before Pilate (Matt. 27: 11-25)
September 20. S. ....	Jesus Before Herod (Luke 23: 5-12)
September 21. S. ....	The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 22-41)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Barabbas, Pilate, Simon, and others.

**Introduction**

For the events between the institution of the Lord's supper and the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, we are indebted to John. In chapters 14-17 we have a record of the conversation which Jesus had with his disciples and of the prayer which he prayed to his Father before he entered Gethsemane. It was at this time that he spoke of the mansions in his Father's house which he was going to prepare for his disciples. It was at this time also that Philip asked him to show him the Father and Jesus replied, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In both the fourteenth and sixteenth chapters is recorded the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is from these statements that we learn much of the nature and the work of the Holy Spirit. The lesson on the vine and the branches, teaching the necessity of our relationship with Christ and the consequence of failing to abide in him were given at this time. In the prayer which Jesus prayed to the Father are a number of interesting things suggested.

(1) A knowledge of God and his Son means eternal life. Since we are dependent upon Jesus for a revelation of the Father (Matt. 11: 27), and since

this knowledge is essential to eternal life, we come to realize the importance of Jesus and his value to us.

(2) Jesus asserts that he came forth from the Father and that he was with the Father before the world was. This is equal to an affirmation of his deity and eternity. (3) Jesus suggests that faith comes by hearing the words of the apostles, for he says, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word." (Verse 20.)

(4) The nature of Christian unity is suggested in the unity which exists between the Father and the Son, for he prays that those who believe on him through the words of the apostles may be one as he and the Father are one.

Two other events of importance occurred between the time of our last lesson and this one. One was the agreement of Judas to betray the Lord for money; the other was the denial of Jesus by Peter. In spite of the fact that Peter was warned that he would deny Jesus, and in spite of his confident affirmation that he would not do so, he failed when the test came.

**Golden Text Explained**

**1. The Objects of God's Love, (a)**

The weak. If we include a part of the context in which this Golden Text is found, we will find a number of expressions which indicate the objects of the love of God. In verse 6 Paul speaks of our being weak. The word weak suggests that man was unable to save himself. He had neither the wisdom to devise the means of salvation nor the ability to execute a plan which would save him. It is

humiliating to the wise men of the world to suggest that they have not the wisdom to devise a plan of salvation, but Paul teaches very clearly that the world through its wisdom could not come to know God. (1 Cor. 1: 21.) He also suggests that "God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise." (1 Cor. 1: 27.) It was this weak condition of the world that became an object of pity on the part of

God and moved him to send his Son to save the world, (b) The ungodly. Paul says that Christ died for the ungodly. In another place he says that God justified the ungodly. (Rom. 4: 5.) In spite of the ungodliness of humanity, God loved them. This is the one thing about God's love that makes it infinitely greater than man's love. Though a man may be found who would die for the righteous, yet no one would die for the ungodly, but God commends his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. (c) It is true that the word *ungodly* is similar in meaning to the word *sinner*. But while the former suggests inactivity, the latter suggests activity. We were not only unlike God in that we failed to do good, but we were sinners in that we were consistently engaged in the doing of things that were wrong.

2. **Christ Died for Us.** (a) To atone for our sins. Nothing man can do can atone for sins. The obedience which we render to God does not atone for sin. We are taught that nothing short of the shedding of the blood of the Son of God could atone for our sins. Hence, it is said that Christ died for our sins. (1 Cor. 13: 3.) In this death he made satisfac-

tion for our sins so that God may forgive us without doing wrong. Whether we understand why or not, it was not possible for God to forgive us of our sins without Jesus suffering the penalty in our place. It was the suffering of the penalty that atoned for our sins, (b) To reconcile us to God. Men had been alienated and had become enemies of God through their evil works. (Col. 1: 21.) The sin of Adam had nothing to do with our alienation from God. (Isa. 59: 1, 2; Eph. 2: 1.) It was necessary that Jesus die for us in order to reconcile us unto God. "Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before him." (Col. 1: 22.) (c) To give us access to God. The death of Christ not only reconciles us to God but makes it possible for us to approach God. "For through him we both have our access in one spirit unto the Father." The Hebrew letter has much to say about our approach to God through Christ, teaching us that we enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way through the vail, that is to say his flesh. (Heb. 10: 19-21.)

### Exposition of the Text

I. **Jesus or Barabbas** (Matt. 27: 26)

*Then released he unto them Barabbas.* Little is known of this man. His name means "son of the father." The word simply suggests that he was the son of a rabbi. He is the man whom the Jerusalem mob chose to set free in preference to Jesus. Pilate had a custom of setting free one prisoner whom the people chose. Not wishing to condemn Jesus as the Jews demanded, Pilate thought he saw a way out of his dilemma. Surely the mob would not ask that Barabbas be set free instead of Jesus, for Barabbas had taken part in an insurrection in which murder had been committed. (Mark 15: 1.) But the high priests stirred the people to ask for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus. This incident may well be used to illustrate vividly the fact that Jesus died in our place. When the guard went for Barabbas and opened his cell door, likely Barabbas thought the time had come for

his execution. When the guard explained that Jesus was being substituted, that Jesus would die instead of Barabbas, surely his joy knew no bounds. But Jesus died in our places as surely as he took the place of Barabbas that day.

*Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.* Scourging is an ancient method of punishment. The law of Moses prescribed scourging for women guilty of unchastity as well as men. One type of scourging was known as bastinado, consisting of the use of a stick usually applied to the soles of the feet. The form used on Jesus was that of a whip made by fastening rawhide thongs to a handle, and usually knots were tied in the end of the thongs, or light pieces of metal or bone tied in the ends. The body was stripped to the waist and the hands were tied to a post. A Roman citizen was protected in that it was unlawful to scourge him. Scourging was practiced among the

Jews. They limited the number of stripes to forty and they stopped at the count of thirty-nine for fear of exceeding the limit. (2 Cor. 11: 24.) But Jesus was not a Roman citizen, hence did not have that protection. The only limit to the number of stripes laid upon him was the strength of the soldier or his thirst for blood and cruelty.

## II. Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers

(Matt. 27: 29-31)

*The soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium.* The word Praetorium is used to indicate the headquarters of the Roman officers and was usually applied to the governor's official residence. We are told that this building which was the palace of Herod occupied the highest part of the southwest hill in Jerusalem called Zion.

*Gathered unto him, the whole band.* The word *band* here is from cohort and usually consisted of six hundred men, or a tenth part of a Roman legion. Army life in our day makes no contribution to the good manners or gentleness of men. The common soldier of the time of Christ was known for his brutality. It is almost unthinkable that our Lord should be forced to bear the insults and foul treatment of such a bestial group.

*They stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe.* In the place of scarlet, Mark says they put a purple robe on him. We are told, "The ancients gave the name *purple* to any color that had a mixture of red in it, and consequently these different colors might be called by the same name." (Barnes.) "This was probably the short military woolen cloak worn by officers, in color either scarlet or purple, and fastened by a buckle on the right shoulder. Some think it was a castoff garment from the wardrobe of King Herod, which they found and appropriated to this purpose." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*They platted a crown of thorns.* Their object was to mock Jesus in his claim to be a king. They used some sort of bramble or thorny vine which grew abundantly in Palestine with which to make a crown. They would not be careful to keep the thorns from piercing his flesh.

*A reed in his right hand.* The reed was a straight, slender growth

found in marshy places especially along the banks of the Jordan. The reed was a poor imitation of a scepter, and hence, appropriate for the use which the soldiers made of it.

*They knelt down before him.* As they knelt before him they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" The word *hail* is a term commonly used in a salutation to a king. It might also be used in saluting friends. It is a term of high respect. In this use of the word it was for ridicule and mockery. They had no intentions of paying honors to Jesus. They considered him a religious fanatic who would be overcome and outdone by the religious leaders. They spat upon him. As in our time so then, spitting in the face of an individual was a means of showing the greatest contempt possible.

*They smote him on the head.* This was done with the reed which they had put in his hand. Perhaps a reed was not a sufficient weight to do much injury, but it would serve to drive the thorns of his mock crown deeper into his flesh. After offering him every insult it was possible for coarse, cruel soldiers to give him they put upon him his own clothes and led him away to the place of crucifixion.

## III. Simon Carries the Cross (Matt. 27: 32)

As *they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name.* Little is known of this man who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus. It is known, however, that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Paul mentions a Rufus in Romans 16: 13, which scholars have usually identified as the one here mentioned. If so, we may well suppose that Simon and his sons were believers in Christ. Cyrene was a district in northern Africa. Whether this Simon lived in Cyrene and was in Jerusalem solely for the feast, or whether he formerly came from Cyrene and now lived in or near Jerusalem has been a question with scholars.

*Him they compelled to bear the cross.* In John 19: 17 we learn that Jesus started out of the city bearing his own cross. Our text says that they found Simon "as they came out." Hence, we conclude that Jesus carried his cross about to the city limits where

they met Simon coming into the city. Tradition has it that Jesus fell through weakness and was unable to bear the cross any farther. Since the scripture does not say that he fell, we can only conjecture that Simon was compelled to bear it because he could bear it no farther.

#### IV. The Crucifixion (Matt. 27: 33-38)

*A place called Golgotha.* Golgotha is a Hebrew word and as our text explains means a skull. There are several wild speculations as to why this place was called Golgotha. One tradition attributed to Origen says that Adam was buried there and that his skull was found and gave the place its name. The most probable suggestion is that this was the common place for crucifixions and that skulls were plentiful. The actual location of this place is not certainly known since authorities differ in their conclusions. Some claim that the place is now within the city limits, while others point out a small hill northwest of the city on the Damascus road.

*They gave him wine to drink, mingled with gall.* This potion was given to stupefy the senses, to render men insensible to the pain incident to such a cruel death. Gall usually means a bitter secretion from the

liver, but here indicates simply some bitter substance which was mixed with the wine.

*He would not drink.* Jesus refused to take this drink because it was necessary in the wisdom of God that he suffer to atone for the sins of the world. Had he accepted this drink he would have been rendered less conscious if not altogether unconscious of his sufferings. If he had accepted this drink the thief would have gone unblessed, and we would have been robbed of several statements which indicate his thinking while on the cross.

*They parted his garments among them, casting lots.* Custom allowed the executioners to have the garments of the one crucified. It was customary to crucify people in the nude as a matter of humiliation.

*This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.* From John we learn that this title was prepared by Pilate and was conceived in terms studiously offensive to the Jews with whom he was deeply indignant.

*There were crucified with him two robbers.* In this was fulfilled the prophecy which said, "He was numbered with the transgressors." (Isa. 53: 12.)

### Topics for Discussion

1. If people could see a man crucified and see the suffering which our Saviour endured in order that sins might be forgiven, surely all would be more careful to resist temptations. It is not simply the sins of the other man, but our own sins that made it necessary for Jesus to die this horrible death.

2. Surely all of us would count it an honor to be privileged to bear the cross as did Simon of Cyrene, but we overlook the fact that we may as surely bear the cross as did Simon.

When we suffer ridicule and persecution and when we deny ourselves in order that we may preach the gospel to the lost, we are bearing the cross.

3. To the people of our Lord's time, crucifixion meant about the same as dragging the nude body of a man through the streets until he is dead means to us today. It was their way of showing the greatest ridicule and contempt, hence, Jesus suffered the most shameful and horrible death it was possible for man to inflict.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

To whom are we indebted for a narration of the incidents between the institution of the Lord's supper and the events of Gethsemane?

Name some of the items of interest mentioned in this connection.

Name some things said of the Holy Spirit in these chapters.

Name and discuss four interesting things suggested in the prayer of Jesus.

#### Golden Text Explained

Name and discuss the objects of God's love mentioned in our lesson.

What distinction is made between the meaning of the words ungodly and sinner?

Give and discuss three reasons why Christ died for us.

Jesus or Barabbas

What does the word Barabbas mean? And what is known of this man?

Of what crime was this man guilty?

Why was Barabbas brought into the story?

What is suggested to us by the fact that Jesus died in the place of Barabbas?

Can you describe the Roman method of scourging?

Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers

What is meant by the Praetorium?

How many men were usually in a band or cohort?

Describe the treatment Jesus received from the band of soldiers?

What was the primary purpose of such treatment?

What conception do you think the soldiers had of Jesus?

Simon Carries the Cross

What do you know of Simon? And of his sons?

Did Jesus fall beneath the weight of his cross?

How far do you think Jesus carried his own cross?

The Crucifixion

Where was Jesus crucified? And what is the meaning of the word?

Is the place of the crucifixion certainly known?

What was Jesus given to drink while he was on the cross?

Did he take the drink? Why?

What was done with the garments of Jesus?

What title was placed over Jesus? Who put it there? And why?

Who were crucified at the same time with Jesus?

What prophecy was fulfilled in this act? What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson XIII—September 28, 1952

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

The Lesson Text

Luke 24: 1-6. 50-53

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Je'-sus.

4 And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel:

5 And as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Gal'-i-lee,

50 And he led them out until *they were* over against Beth'-a-ny: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Je'-ru'-sa-lem with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, blessing God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay."* (Matt. 28: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 1: 9-12.

Daily Bible Readings

- September 22. M..... Angel Tells of Resurrection (Matt. 28: 1-10)
- September 23. T..... Women See Empty Tomb (Mark 16: 1-8)
- September 24. W..... Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Mark 16: 9-18)
- September 25. T..... Peter and John Examine Tomb (John 20: 1-10)
- September 26. F..... Mary Talks with Jesus (John 20: 11-18)
- September 27. S..... Stephen Saw Jesus (Acts 7: 54-60)
- September 28. S. .... Saul Saw Jesus (Acts 9: 1-9)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

## Introduction

Though others had been raised from the dead before the time Jesus was raised, his resurrection differs from theirs in several important points: (1) He foretold his own resurrection. "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, and the third day be raised up." (Matt. 16: 21.) No one could conceive of Lazarus or the son of the widow at Nain predicting their resurrection and the time for it. Yet Jesus was able to predict that he would be raised and that it would be on the third day. (2) He was raised to die no more. The resurrection of Jesus differed from all others in that he was raised to die no more, while they must meet the grim reaper a second time to be buried in the hope of the final resurrection. (3) He had something to do with his own resurrection. No one can conceive of Lazarus or the son of the widow at Nain having any-

thing to do with their own resurrection. And while we do not know how much Jesus had to do with his own resurrection, we do have his statement which indicates that his own power was to be used in the raising of his body. "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." (John 10: 17, 18.) Jesus said he had this commandment from his Father, yet it is clearly implied that his own power was used in his resurrection. (4) The resurrection of Jesus differs from all others in that it is said to be the first fruits of them that sleep. "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." (1 Cor. 15: 20.) The term *first fruits* implies that his resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all others.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **There Is No Other Event in All History Better Substantiated than Is the Resurrection of Jesus.** We have the word of an angel that he was raised from the dead. Matthew tells us that an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The rolling away of the stone was not essential to the resurrection of Christ. It simply made the soldiers watching the tomb conscious of the fact that they were guarding an empty tomb and it enabled the disciples to see for themselves that he had been raised. In the language of our text, the angel said, "He is not here; for he is risen. Again he said, "He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee."

2. **The Empty Tomb.** The angel not only said that he is risen but he also said, "Come see the place where the Lord lay." The empty tomb was a *t h o r n* in the side of the Jewish leaders who condemned him. They tried to invent a story which would explain the empty tomb. They paid the guards "much money" to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole

him away while we slept." Of course, this was a thin explanation, but it was the best that could be done; and the fact that no writer of the time denies the fact of the empty tomb is still evidence of the resurrection of the Lord.

3. **The Lives of the Men Who Wrote of the Resurrection of Jesus Prove the Truth of Their Statements.** These men ate and talked and lived with Jesus for more than three years before his death. They were separated from him but three days. It is unreasonable to think that they would fail to recognize a man with whom they had been so intimately associated after being separated from him for so short a time. Furthermore, these men all died violent deaths rather than give up their belief that Jesus arose from the dead. They went about telling the story of his resurrection, suffering persecution constantly for the privilege of telling people that Jesus not only died for them, but that he arose again for their justification. Surely these men would not have suffered for the privilege of perpetuating a falsehood.

#### 4. The Conversion of Saul Cannot Be Explained on Any Other Ground than That Jesus Arose from the Dead.

Saul was a zealous persecutor of the members of the church, going to Damascus for no other reason than to persecute those who believed in the resurrection. He went away from Damascus a believer in the resurrec-

tion of the Lord. What is the explanation? He says that he saw the Lord and talked with him. He has been accused of epilepsy and various other things, but no one can read his writings and hold seriously to any view other than that he saw the resurrected Lord who changed the whole course of his life.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. The Resurrection (Luke 24: 1-6)

On *the first day of the week*. Some have been bothered by the fact that Matthew says, "Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." (Matt. 28: 1.) Barnes explains that the expression in Matthew may be expressed in these words, "In the night following the Sabbath, for the Sabbath closed at sunset, as it began to dawn . . . ." It was early dawn when the women came to the tomb. The first day of the week started at six o'clock the preceding evening. Hence, there was plenty of time for the resurrection of Jesus between the beginning of the first day of the week and the time the women arrived at the tomb.

*Bringing spices which they had prepared.* Some of these spices had been prepared on the evening of the burial. It seems that time had not permitted them to put the body away as they wished to do, so they came early on the first day of the week to complete that which had already been begun. "The customs at this time would seem to have been to anoint the body and wrap it in fine linen, with spices and ointments in the folds, and afterwards to pour more ointment upon it, and perhaps also to burn spices. In the case of our Saviour, the hurried burial and the following of the Sabbath may have caused unusual delay. Ordinarily everything was probably completed at once." (McClintock and Strong.)

*They found the stone rolled away.* From Matthew we learn that the angel rolled the stone away. Some have carelessly concluded that Jesus rolled the stone away when he arose from the dead. The tomb was constructed by digging out a room in the solid rock. "In front of the tomb belonging to a rich family there was generally a vestibule open to the air, then a low entrance sometimes, as in this

case, in the side of a rock, leading into a square chamber of moderate dimensions, on one side of which was a place for the body, either cut some seven feet into the rock, or lengthways, three feet deep, with a low arch over it . . . the tomb had been lately made, and the door which closed the entrance, the only aperture into the room, was a large stone." (Speaker's Commentary.)

*Two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.* Critics have thought to find a contradiction in the fact that Luke mentions two angels, while Mark and Matthew mention but one. There is, however, no contradiction. Neither Matthew nor Mark deny there were two; they simply mention that an angel rolled the stone away and that an angel spoke to the women. Luke mentions the fact that two were present. Others think they find an inconsistency in that Luke says that two men stood by them, while Matthew and Mark mention angels. Since angels assume the form of men, they are often spoken of as men. (Gen. 18: 2, 16, 22; 19: 1-5.) The mention of dazzling, or shining apparel should indicate that these were heavenly beings.

*Why seek ye the living among the dead?* This is the language of the angel to the women. Jesus is referred to here as the living, or him that liveth, indicating that he had already been raised from the dead. This reminds us of the language of Jesus when he appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos on the memorable Lord's day and said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev. 1: 17, 18.) John also speaks of him in similar language saying, "And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare

unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John 1: 2.) Again John refers to him in a similar manner, saying, "This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John. 5: 20b.) He is spoken of as the Living one, not simply because he was raised from the dead but because, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1: 4.) Again, "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will." (John 5: 21.) The language of our text implies that we should not seek the Living one, the source of all life, among the dead.

**Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee?** This refers to another prediction of his resurrection. "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised up. And they were exceeding sorry." (Matt. 17: 22, 23.) See Mark 9: 30 and Luke 9: 44 for other records of what he told his disciples while they were yet in Galilee. The verses following this portion of our text explains that he told them while he was in Galilee of his approaching death and resurrection.

## II. The Ascension (Luke 24: 50-53)

**He led them out over against Bethany.** The exact site of our Lord's ascension, like so many other sites, is not known. Ancient tradition says that he ascended from the central summit of the Mount of Olives, but this language seems to indicate that it was somewhere on the eastern slope. Bethany was east of the Mount of Olives, and if he led them until they were over against Bethany, we would conclude that he was on that side of the slope next to Bethany. Dean Stanley says, "On the wild uplands which immediately overhang the village, he finally withdrew from the eyes of his disciples, in a seclusion which perhaps could nowhere else be found so near the stir of the mighty city; the long reach of Olivet screening those hills, and those hills the village beneath them, from all sound or sight of the city behind; the view opening only on the wide waste of desert rocks and ever-descending

valleys, into the depths of the distant Jordan and its mysterious lake."

**Lifted up his hands and blessed them.** Luke records some of the conversation that took place between Jesus and his disciples on this occasion. According to Luke they asked Jesus, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 6-8.) The term *blessed* indicates that he simply pronounced upon them his benediction.

**He was parted from them.** Our text says that while in the act of blessing them he was parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Again we have to turn to Luke's other record of this event to fill in the details. "And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." (Acts 1: 9-11.)

**And they worshiped him.** Barnes makes three practical suggestions from this verse. First, they offered this worship to an *absent* saviour. It was after he left them and had vanished out of their sight. It was therefore an act of religion, and was the first religious homage that was paid to Jesus after he left the world. Next, if *they* worshiped an absent saviour — a saviour unseen by the physical eye it is right for us to do so. It was an example which we may and should follow. Next, if worship may be rendered to Jesus, he is divine.

**Return to Jerusalem with great joy.** The apostles mourned when Jesus died and was buried. On this occasion, he leaves them for what they have every reason to believe is a longer period, and yet they rejoiced.

Surely they now began to see something far greater than they had ever seen in the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus.

*Continually in the temple, praising God.* Luke says that when the apostles returned to Jerusalem they spent their time in the temple praising God.

They understood sufficiently the plans and purposes of Jesus to rejoice in the fact that they were to have a part in the working out of these great plans. We, too, should count it a joy to be a part of the plans which had their beginning with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

**Topics for Discussion**

1. No other event in history has more valid evidence to support it than has the resurrection of Jesus, yet many refuse to accept it simply because it is not in harmony with human reason.

2. The resurrection of the human

nature of Jesus is proof of our resurrection. It is proof also that we may overcome death through his power.

3. His ascension is proof of the fact that our bodies may be made in the likeness of his glorious body and fit to enter heaven.

**Questions for the Class**

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

**Introduction**

Give and discuss four ways in which the resurrection of Jesus differs from the other resurrections mentioned in the Bible.

What is meant by the term "firstfruits" as applied to his resurrection?

**Golden Text Explained**

Whose word do we have as proof of the resurrection of Jesus?

How does the tomb of Jesus contribute to the proof of his resurrection?

How do the lives of the men who wrote of the resurrection tend to prove it?

What connection is there between the conversion of Paul and the resurrection of Jesus?

**The Resurrection**

On what day was the resurrection? And can you harmonize the accounts of it? Why did women come to the tomb of

Jesus? And how was such anointing done?

How was the tomb of Jesus constructed? And to whom did it belong?

How many angels appeared at the tomb? And how many rolled the stone away?

What term did the angel use to refer to Jesus? And what is the meaning of this term as applied to Jesus?

Of what conversation did the angel remind the disciples of Jesus?

**The Ascension**

Is the exact site of the ascension known? Near what city was it? And on what mountain?

What conversation took place between Jesus and his apostles at this time?

In what act was Jesus engaged when he was taken up from his apostles?

What three lessons do we learn from the fact that the apostles worshiped Jesus?

Where did the apostles go? And what were they doing after the ascension?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?



## FOURTH QUARTER

## STUDIES IN EXODUS

AIM.—*To exhibit God's providence and protection as revealed in the deliverance and preservation of his people, and the application thereof to our time.*

## Lesson I—October 5, 1952

## ISRAEL IN EGYPT

## The Lesson Text

Ex. 1: 1-14

1 Now these are the names of the sons of Is'-ra-el, who came into E'-gypt (every man and his household came with Jacob):

2 Reu'-ben, Sim'-e-on, Le'-vi, and Ju'-dah,

3 Is'-sa-char, Zeb'-u-lun, and Ben'-ja-min,

4 Dan and Naph'-ta-li, Gad and Ash'-er.

5 And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in E'-gypt already.

6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

7 And the children of Is'-ra-el were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose a new king over E'-gypt, who knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Is'-

ra-el are more and mightier than we:

10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pha'-raoh store-cities, Pi'-thom and Ra-am'-ses.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Is'-ra-el.

13 And the E-gyp'-tians made the children of Is'-ra-el to serve with rigor:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph.”* (Ex. 1: 8.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Acts 7: 15-19.

## Daily Bible Readings

September 29. M.....	Abraham in Egypt (Gen. 12: 10-20)
September 30.	T. The Future of Abraham's Seed (Gen. 15: 12-20)
October 1. W.....	Joseph Goes into Egypt (Gen. 37: 25-36)
October 2.	T. Joseph's Brethren in Egypt (Gen. 45: 1-15)
October 3. F.....	Jacob and Family in Egypt (Gen. 46: 28-34)
October 4.	S. Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons (Gen. 48: 8-22)
October 5.	S. Joseph Predicts Deliverance (Gen. 50: 15-26)

**TIME.**—1706-1604 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Egypt.

**PERSONS.**—Pharaoh and the people of Israel.

## Introduction

In the last fourteen chapters of the book of Genesis we have the story of the children of Israel going into

Egypt. It starts with the sale of Joseph by his brethren to the Midianites who in turn sold him to Potiphar.

Joseph had not long been in the service of Potiphar until through misrepresentation he was put in prison. Later Joseph was called into the presence of Pharaoh to interpret the king's dreams. Joseph not only interpreted the dreams but gave him what Pharaoh considered to be sound advice as to the manner in which he should prepare for the coming famine. Joseph was promoted to the second place in the realm, where he took over the business of storing provisions during seven years of plenty to tide the nation over during seven years of famine which were to follow. During the famine, Joseph's brethren came to Egypt to buy corn. Joseph took advantage of the fact that they did not recognize him to attempt to get his brother, Benjamin, into Egypt. We must remember that Joseph did not know how the brothers deceived their father into thinking that some wild beast had destroyed Joseph. Joseph felt that his father could have found him in Egypt and could have redeemed him from slavery. Since the brothers acted so wickedly and Joseph thought his father did not care, his only concern was to get Benjamin. So he told the brothers that if they expected to see him on a second

trip, they must bring Benjamin with them. Jacob refused to let Benjamin go until the pinch of the famine forced him. On this second trip, Joseph learned a number of things about his brothers that changed the picture. And he revealed himself unto them. He sent for his father and all his family so that he might care for them through the balance of the famine. So about seventy souls moved into Egypt and were settled in the land of Goshen.

Egypt was the greatest nation of its day. The religious and moral influence of Egypt were not good for the Israelites. They worshiped beasts, birds, fishes, and insects of all kinds. About the only good that can be said for the religion of the Egyptians is that they had a belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. In the arts and sciences the Egyptians excelled all other nations. They were skilled in handling gold, silver, wood, and stone; also, in weaving, embroidering, and dyeing. They also knew something of engraving. They had great universities and libraries with volumes numbering into the thousands. They had methods of embalming which have not been surpassed until this time.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Identity of the New King.** It will not be possible for us to determine positively which Pharaoh is referred to in our text. It should be remembered that the word *Pharaoh* is not the personal name but rather a title, such as Caesar. Which of the Pharaohs is the one who knew not Joseph and subjected the Jews to slavery has been a question of interest among scholars for a long time. A generation ago a man by the name of Price wrote "The Monuments and the Old Testament," and said: "This question is now reasonably laid to rest by the excavation in 1883 of Edouard Naville, under the auspices of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, within the old territory of Goshen." He goes on to say that in these excavations he found the treasure cities and storehouses which were of Ramses II. A part of the walls of these storehouses, which were twenty-two feet thick, were built with bricks which had straw and a part with strawless

bricks. This they take as positive proof that the storehouses built by Ramses II were built by the Jews who were required in their greatest oppression to make brick without straw. Merneptah, the son of Ramses, is, according to this theory, regarded as the Pharaoh whose heart was hardened and on whom the plagues were sent. But a later writer says: "As we have seen, the discovery of the Merneptah Stela by Petrie at Karnak in 1896 instantly threw the Ramses-Merneptah Theory into utter confusion, for it was obvious that an exodus such as is described in the Hebrew narratives could not possibly have occurred under Merneptah." (Ancient Records and the Bible, by Adams.) After giving his reasons for such a statement, he says: "On any score, as the conclusions suggested in the previous discussion are justified, Amenhotep II must be regarded as the Pharaoh of the exodus, while his father, Thutmosis III, must assume

the stigma of Pharaoh of the oppression of Israel through a considerable period of years. The evidence pointing to the correctness of these identifications is both cumulative and convincing." (Page 229.)

2. **Knew Not Joseph.** It is said that this new Pharaoh did not know Joseph. The word *know* is surely not to be taken to mean that this king had never heard of Joseph and the work which he had done, for surely a man who had been as great and who had wielded such an unusual influence over a nation as Joseph had in Egypt couldn't have been unknown to a man who had the ability to be king of the country. Hence, we take the word *know* in the sense of *approve*, and it is so used in many places in the Bible. The vast wealth of the kingdom which this very Pharaoh enjoyed was due to the administration of affairs by Joseph during the seven years of plenty. Joseph gathered grain and put in the vast storehouses

of Egypt. When the famine came, he had grain to sell not only to the nations round about, but to the people of Egypt. When their money was gone, the people traded their stock for corn to prevent starvation. When all their stock was gone, they traded their land. In this way Joseph caused the government to possess all the wealth of Egypt. Certainly a Pharaoh of a few decades could not fail to know such an administrator. But this Pharaoh knew not Joseph in the sense that he did not approve of the governmental policies of Joseph and especially of his policy toward that group of people who lived in the land of Goshen. So he not only refused to accord the Jews the special privileges which they had enjoyed under Joseph, and the Pharaoh who respected Joseph's authority, but he denied them equal privileges with other people. He brought them into bondage and, as our lesson indicates, made this bondage of an unbearable nature.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Children of Israel Increase

(Ex. 1: 1-7)

*Now these are the names of the sons of Israel.* Our text enumerates eleven of the twelve sons of Jacob. Joseph is not named because he was already in Egypt. The author simply means to tell us how many of them came with Jacob. It is well to learn the names of these sons as they are related to the wives of Jacob. The sons of Leah were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Next, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, were Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, were Gad and Asher. The sons of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. As important a place as these men hold in the history of patriarchal times everyone who claims to be a Bible student should be able to repeat their names from memory.

*All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy.* There is a difficulty between this statement and that of Stephen in Acts 7: 14. In this place Stephen says, "Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." In Gen. 46: 26 we are

told that all that came with Jacob not counting his daughters-in-law were sixty-six. If to this number we add Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, we have the number seventy. Those who are interested in a detailed study of the question should read Clarke's Commentary on Gen. 46 and Barnes' Notes on Acts 7.

*And Joseph died and all that generation.* This statement is made to indicate the passing of time between the settlement of Israel in Goshen and the coming of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Joseph and all his generation had time to come to maturity and old age and die, and here we have another difficult question in trying to tell how long the brethren of Israel were in Egypt. In Ex. 12: 40 we are told that the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was 430 years. And yet Paul tells us that it was only 430 years from the time the promise was made to Abraham until the law was given at Sinai. (Gal. 3: 17.) The Samaritan Pentateuch reads differently from the Jewish scriptures from which our Old Testament is translated. It reads as follows: "Now the sojourning of the brethren of Israel, and all his followers, which they

sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years." This reading agrees exactly with the statement of Paul in Galatians. It is most likely the true reading. We can account for half of this 430 years by noticing that Abraham was 75 years old when he came to Canaan. (Gen. 12: 4.) He was 100 years old when Isaac was born. (Gen. 17: 17.) Therefore, it was 25 years from the giving of the promise until the birth of Isaac. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born. (Gen. 25: 26.) And Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt. (Gen. 47: 9.) By adding these figures the reader will find that it was 215 years from the time the promise was made until Jacob went into Egypt. Since it was 430 years from the time the promise was made until the law was given at Sinai, the brethren of Israel could not have been in Egypt but 215 years. We know they were treated kindly by the Pharaoh who knew Joseph, so they were not in bondage for as long as 215 years.

*And the land was filled with them.* Our text says that the children of Israel increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty. These several terms are used for the purpose of indicating a phenomenal growth. Whether we are to understand that there was anything miraculous about it is not probable, but that we are to understand their increase was due to the providence of God is quite certain. Clarke attributes this phenomenal growth (1) to the fact that Hebrew women were exceedingly fruitful, often bearing twins, (2) that there were no premature deaths among them and that they lived to an old age.

## II. Children of Israel Oppressed (Ex. 1: 8-11)

*A new king who knew not Joseph.* A question which we did not consider under the Golden Text is whether this new king who knew not Joseph is simply a different king in the regular dynasty or was this the first king of a different dynasty. The latter supposition seems most proper. There would hardly be so abrupt and complete a change of policy by a king of a dynasty which had approved and enjoyed the work of Joseph. There-

fore, an interesting discussion on a change of dynasty is found in the Pulpit Commentary on this chapter.

*Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we.* We are not to suppose that this king said such to the people of Egypt, but rather to his counselors and important heads of the departments of government. That we are to take this statement as literally true is hardly possible. There were only 600,000 men of war in Israel which would account for some 3,000,000 people, and Egypt certainly had more than 3,000,000 people. The margin gives another reading as follows: "Too many and too mighty for us." This seems more in harmony with the context than the reading of the text.

*Let us deal wisely with them.* This new king looked far into the future realizing that the Jews had multiplied exceedingly during the last few decades, and knowing that their growth would be even more rapid in the future, he saw the need of doing something to check this growth.

*They join themselves unto our enemies.* His concern was that these people might become a menace, first, because they were of a different nationality, and second, that they might join themselves to an invader and give the invading army additional strength. A people who could raise an army of half a million men would certainly pose a threat to the security of a nation. Especially since they might be counted upon to be sympathetic with the people of Asia who were related to them.

*They did set over them taskmasters.* "They were marched to the quarries to hew out large blocks of granite and limestone, and then to drag them to respective destinations, or to put them on rafts and pilot them down the Nile. They would be employed in digging canals; in making bricks and mixing mortar for the countless erections always in progress. . . . Egypt in all ages has been so marked by the oppression of its toiling thousands that one of the crimes from which an Egyptian had to clear himself before the judge of the soul was cruelty to them. Thirty thousand men died in this valley in digging out a canal with their hands, without picks, or spades, or wheel-

barrows—falling worn out with toil exacted from them by the blows of the pitiless taskmasters; and the monuments show similar misery to have been inflicted from the remotest ages." (Geikie.)

*They built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raameses.* For a long time the location of these cities was indefinite. But in 1908 an expedition went over the territory and found cities with sufficient marks of identity to identify them as the very cities mentioned in the text. An inscription over the gateway of one reads, "I built Pithom." This is supposed to be an inscription by Rameses the Great. Examination was made as to the type of structure. The walls were found to be composed of bricks laid in mortar. The bricks in these walls were of two kinds. In the lower part of the wall the bricks were made of "Nile mud mixed with clean straw." But as the walls went up the straw became more scarce. The bricks show that they were made not of clean straw but of weeds including even the roots. But farther up in the wall there are bricks without any straw at all. This corroborates fully the Biblical story of oppression.

### III. Fears of the Egyptians (Ex. 1: 12-14)

*The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied.* The idea here is that in the proportion the Egyptians afflicted the Jews, in that proportion the Jews multiplied. This multiplication, from the very nature in which it is described, though not miraculous, was under the providence of God.

*They were grieved because of the children of Israel.* It was the Egyptians who were grieved at the increase of the Jews. They could not understand how a people so sorely persecuted could continue to grow so rapidly. The fact that they could not understand their growth under such conditions is an indication of the severity of the persecution.

*Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor.* This is an

explanation of their being grieved. "The monuments often, indeed, speak of brickmaking by forced labor, and in the various buildings which represent this, or any other kind of task-work, the overseer with his stick is rarely absent. Thus, among the pictures of Beni Hassan, workmen are represented being beaten severely with the sticks, which are different from the long rods of office, and were used solely to bastinado the unfortunate laborers. Some of these are women thrown naked on the ground, two men holding the arms end another the feet, while the taskmaster pours blows on the exposed body. There is even a picture at Beni Hassan of a woman being thus bastinadoed." (Geikie.)

*In mortar and in brick.* This statement used to give Bible scholars considerable trouble. Modernists criticize the Bible because it was claimed the use of mortar to hold bricks together was unknown in the days of the oppression in Egypt, and up to the time of Naville's discovery, Egyptologists were obliged to say that they knew nothing of walls laid in mortar in Egypt. Whatever might be their attitude toward Biblical statements in general, they knew nothing of bricks laid in mortar in Egypt. Yet, when Naville uncovered these store chambers, he found and reported that the walls were laid in mortar. Examination of the walls very soon showed that his report in this was absolutely correct. These walls are laid in good hard mortar, which, after 26 years' exposure to the torrential rains of the winter season in the Delta, still stood as perfect as the mortar in brick houses of the Western world. And these walls have stood for more than 3,000 years. Where Rameses' engineers got the idea of laying bricks in mortar is not certainly known, but probably in Palestine or Syria during Rameses' many raids in that part of the world. Since 1883 other walls have occasionally been found in Egypt in which bricks were laid in mortar." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.)

### Topics for Discussion

1. Suffering is often good for us. Israel was held together by it in Egypt; was kept from mixing with

Egyptians and losing their identity; and was caused to feel dependence upon God.

2. Suffering often develops a patience and humility which it would otherwise be impossible for us to have.

3. Our suffering gives God an opportunity to manifest his power and goodness on our behalf. Israel experienced unusual manifestations of the power and goodness of God in deliverance from suffering.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

With what incident does Israel's connection with Egypt begin?

How did Joseph fare in Egypt?

What conditions caused Israel to move into Egypt, and how many went?

What do you know of the religion of Egypt at that time?

What do you know of Egypt's knowledge of the arts and sciences?

#### Golden Text Explained

Is the word Pharaoh a name or a title?

Can you identify the Pharaoh of the oppression and the exodus?

In what sense did the Pharaoh not know Joseph?

Relate some things Joseph did which made him known to all succeeding generations.

#### The Children of Israel Increase

Can you name the sons of Leah? Of Bilhah? Of Zilpah? And of Rachel?

How many souls went into Egypt with Jacob?

How long were the children of Israel in Egypt?

How long was it from the promise to Abraham to Israel's going into Egypt?

How long were they actually in bondage to Pharaoh?

What is said of the increase of the Israelites in Egypt?

#### Children of Israel Oppressed

Does a king who knew not Joseph suggest a change of dynasty? Why?

Why did this new king fear the Jews?

What did the king do to prevent their rapid growth?

What type of work did he have the Jews do?

What cities did they build for him?

#### Fears of the Egyptians

Did their methods of affliction gain the desired results?

What indication do we have of the severity of the persecution by the king?

What do we learn from the monuments in Egypt about this slave labor?

What method of building did the Egyptians use which is now common in the western world?

What can be said for the quality of their work in building?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson II—October 12, 1952

# THE BIRTH OF MOSES

### The Lesson Text

Ex. 2: 1-10

1 And there went a man of the house of Le'-vi, and took to wife a daughter of Le'-vi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pha'-raoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it.

6 And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

7 Then said his sister to Pha'-raoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8 And Pha'-raoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pha'-raoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pha'-raoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Mo'-ses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.” (Ex. 2: 2b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 7: 20-29.

### Daily Bible Readings

October 6. M.....	Moses Makes His Choice (Heb. 11: 23-31)
October 7. T.....	Moses Marries Zipporah (Ex. 2: 16-22)
October 8. W.....	Moses Called to Deliver Israel (Ex. 3: 1-12)
October 9. T.....	Moses Receives the Law (Ex. 20: 1-17)
October 10. F.....	The Sin of Moses (Num. 20: 1-9)
October 11. S.....	The Death of Moses (Deut. 34: 1-12)
October 12. S.....	The Psalm of Moses (Psalm 90)

TIME.—1571 B.C.

PLACE.—Land of Goshen in Egypt.

PERSONS.—Moses, his parents, and Pharaoh's daughter.

### Introduction

The book of Exodus opens with an account of the change of dynasties in Egypt and the enslavement of the children of Israel. How long the children of Israel were actually enslaved has been a question of debate. In our last lesson, we showed that it was 215 years from the time the promise was made to Abraham until Jacob and his sons moved into Egypt. Briefly we account for this time in the following way: Abraham was seventy-five years old when the promise was made to him. (Gen. 12: 4.) From the promise to the birth of Isaac was twenty-five years. (Gen. 21: 5.) Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born (Gen. 25: 26), and Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt. (Gen. 47: 9.) Adding the numbers thus obtained gives us 215 years from the promise to the time they went into Egypt. But from the promise to the giving of the law was only 430 years, which leaves 215 years from the time they went to

Egypt until they were delivered. Joseph was thirty years old when he was made ruler. (Gen. 41: 46.) He was thirty-nine when the children of Israel went to Egypt. He lived to be 110 years of age. Thirty-nine subtracted from 110 leaves seventy-one, the number of years from the time the children of Israel went to Egypt until the death of Joseph. To this add eighty, the age of Moses when the children of Israel left Egypt, which gives 151. Subtract this from 215, and the result is sixty-four, the number of years from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses. During this short time, Egypt enslaved the children of Israel, and much suffering, unbearable suffering, was the result. At the time of the birth of Moses, in fact since their coming into Egypt, the children of Israel lived in Goshen. It was a small portion of Egypt covering some 900 square miles. A part of it was an irrigated plain which includes some of the best land in Egypt.

### Golden Text Explained

#### 1. Situation into Which Moses Was

**Born.** According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, Moses was born at Heliopolis just a few miles north of Cairo, Egypt. Another name for the city is On. This is the city where Asenath, Joseph's wife, lived. (Gen. 41: 45.) It was an important shelter for the worship of the sun god. With this system of worship, Moses must have been well acquainted, not only because he was born there, but because he very likely got most of his education there. According to Geikie, there was a great university there and his

description of the “shady cloisters” and “lecture rooms for the students, and quiet houses for the professors and preachers, in their many quarters and offices,” and rooms for temple servants, the library and writing chambers with their hosts of scribes, the gate keepers, laundry men, and cooks, sound like the description of some great university of our time. One library of that period contained 20,000 books, “and even yet we possess some papyrus rolls from it.” This was at Thebes.

## 2. The Birth of Moses Providential.

Since God is omniscient, he knew when the time would be ripe for the deliverance of the children of Israel. We should therefore expect him to bring in the deliverer at the most opportune time. Paul says that God sent forth his Son when the fullness of the time came. (Gal. 4: 4.) If the birth of Jesus was determined by the ripeness of the time, it would certainly not be out of place for us to conjecture that the birth of Moses, who was to deliver Israel from bondage, was determined in somewhat the same manner. We should not, therefore, think that the birth of Moses simply happened at about the right time. God doesn't do things by haphazard methods. Nor does he take chances of having the right man at the right place at the right time.

3. **He Was a Goodly Child.** Our text says that his mother saw that he was a goodly child. Perhaps every mother has this feeling about her child, but the words here used suggest that he was a perfect physical specimen such as would indicate beauty of form. We may well understand why his should be when the child was to be such as would appeal to the emotions of Pharaoh's daughter sufficiently to cause her to desire him.

(a) No doubt, his mother could not see the greatness of the choice which he was later to make, but as we look back upon Moses, we look upon him

as a goodly character because of that great choice. When he came to the years of maturity, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose rather to suffer afflictions with the children of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. (Heb. 11: 24, 25.) Having only the teaching of his mother during the first few years of his life as a basis for this choice, we marvel at her ability to instill into his heart such lessons as would enable him to make this choice.

(b) The goodness in Moses also showed itself in his waiting on God. Soon after Moses made his choice, he attempted to deliver his people in his own way, and at his own time. In this attempt, he killed an Egyptian and fled from Egypt to Midian. There he waited forty years for God to call him and use him in his own way. The ability to wait in patience is as outstanding as the ability to wage a fight in the heat of battle.

(c) The goodness of Moses appears also in his courage before Pharaoh when finally God called him for his work. Though he hesitated at first, he showed unusual courage in his demands upon Pharaoh.

(d) His goodness is seen also in his patience in dealing with the people. Perhaps no other man's patience, except that of Job, was tried so severely as was that of Moses. Only one time did he show impatience, though he was sorely tried during all the time of the forty years of wandering.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Parents of Moses (Ex. 2: 1-4)

*A man of the house of Levi.* This man of the house of Levi was Amram, and his wife, also of the house of Levi, was Jochebed. "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were a hundred and thirty and seven." (Ex. 6: 20.) The name of his mother, Jochebed, implied the knowledge of Jehovah in the midst of the family. Hence, in spite of the slavery they endured, the people had not completely forgotten Jehovah.

*She hid him three months.* It is said that Jochebed hid her son for three months because she saw that he was a goodly child. Jewish tradition has a lot to say about Moses and his

birth, making them both somewhat miraculous. According to Josephus, the birth of Moses had been foretold to Pharaoh by the Egyptian magicians. His birth, according to this source, had also been foretold to Amram in a dream. "The beauty of the new born babe — in the later versions of the story — amplified into a beauty and size almost divine — ... induced his mother to make extraordinary efforts for his preservation from the general destruction of the male children of Israel." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

*Ark of bulrushes.* When Jochebed could no longer hide her baby safely, she made an ark of bulrushes in which to set him adrift in the water. The bulrush might be any of several large rushes growing in wet land or in

water. In the margin here we have papyrus. A rush is a plant, usually round and hollow, and is largely used for the making of writing material.

***Daubed it with slime and pitch.*** This was for the purpose of making the ark float on the water and yet give the baby a dry place in which to rest.

***Laid it in the flags by the river brink.*** Only a mother can imagine the emotions which must have filled the heart of Jochebed as she pieced her baby in the ark and set it adrift in the water. By putting it in among the flags, we see her fear for the welfare of the child. To place the ark in the current of the river would, of course, mean either destruction or carrying him so far away that she would probably never see him again. Whether she had any intimation of what was to follow, we have no way of knowing. But that she wished to keep in close touch with the child and to know what happened to it we may be sure by the fact that she put her daughter, Miriam, near by to watch.

***His sister stood afar off.*** By the term *afar off* we are not to suppose that she was anything like a mile away. But at a sufficient distance that she might not appear to be guarding the baby. If she had been obviously guarding the baby, her offer of assistance might have aroused suspicion in the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. Miriam was the oldest of the three children of Amram and Jochebed. But how much older she was than Moses we are not told. Moses was the youngest of the three. Miriam must have been eight to twelve years of age at the time of the birth of Moses. The names Miriam and Mary come from the same word. In fact, Miriam is simply the Old Testament form and Mary is the New Testament form. Very few seem to have worn the name before it was popularized by the mother of Jesus.

## II. Found and Adopted by Pharaoh's Daughter (Ex. 2: 5-7)

***The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe.*** Josephus tells us that the name of this daughter of Pharaoh was Thermouthis. "Though not given in the Bible, the name of the daughter of Pharaoh has been handed down by tradition as Thermouthis,

and also as Merris, both of which occur in the inscriptions. Thermouthis is the name of an Egyptian town, in a fragment of Byzantze; and in a list of princesses, the monuments name one as Meri, which is evidently identical with Meris; while they give Thermouthis, the very name in Josephus, as that of one of the wives of Rameses." (Geikie.) This maiden, attended by her servants, came down to the river where they were accustomed to bathe. Perhaps Jochebed knew of this custom and entertained the hope that the beauty of the baby might appeal to the maiden. Whether she had any divine direction, we have no way of knowing. But certainly no one can fail to see the hand of providence in the working out of these plans.

***She had compassion on him.*** The helplessness of the child and his natural beauty worked together to the safety of the baby and the fulfillment of the wishes of the mother. Adam Clarke suggests that the extremely cruel edict of the Egyptian king to destroy all the babies was brought to an end by the finding of Moses. "The daughter of Pharaoh, struck with the dark fate of the Hebrew children from what she had seen in the case of Moses, would probably implore her father to abolish this sanguinary edict."

***Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women?*** This is the language of Miriam who was left to watch for the safety of Moses. Undoubtedly this part of the happenings had been planned by Jochebed. This suggests that she placed her child where she knew Pharaoh's daughter was in the habit of bathing. She expected this princess to find the baby and obviously had instructed Miriam as to what she would say when the baby was found. Whether Pharaoh's daughter knew the connection between Moses and Miriam is not here stated, and whether she knew that Jochebed was the mother of Moses during the time she cared for her baby is not intimated.

## III. Moses Has His Mother for a Nurse (Ex. 2: 8-10)

***The maiden went and called the child's mother.*** "Handed over to the care of his mother during the tender years — thanks to the quick wit of

his sister Miriam—Moses became a prominent inmate of the palace in his early childhood. Once there, he was adopted by Thermouthis and received the care and training of a king's son; Rameses the Oppressor becoming unconsciously his protector. Ebers has given us an idea of the splendor among which the wondering child must thus have grown up. The palace of Rameses, he tells us, was more like a little town than a house. The part of it used by the royal family commanded a view of the Nile, from which it offered to the passing vessels a pleasing prospect, for it stood, amidst its surrounding gardens, in picturesque buildings of various outlines. On each side, of a large structure which contained the state rooms and banqueting hall, three rows of pavilions of different sizes extended in symmetrical order. These were connected with each other by colonnades, or by little bridges, under which flowed canals that watered the gardens, and gave the palace the aspect of a town upon islands." (Geikie.)

*I will give thee thy wages.* This is the language of Pharaoh's daughter to Jochebed. She gave the baby to its own mother and offered to pay her wages for taking care of the child. This was the reward of Jochebed's faith. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's command." (Heb. 11: 23.) The writer of Hebrews says that the baby was hid by faith. We usually allow that one cannot do a thing by faith unless he was told to do that thing. Hence, we might safely conclude that the mother of Moses had been instructed by the Lord as to what she should do. She did what the Lord told her, expecting the child to be safe. Now that the child is delivered to her by the authority of the princess and she is paid wages for nursing it, she reaps the reward of her faith.

*She brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter.* How long Jochebed was allowed to keep the child we do not know. But surely it was long enough to give Jochebed the opportunity of teaching the child some lessons which influenced him all during his life.

We are told that it was by faith that Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. If our position be correct that to do a thing by faith one must do the thing as God directs, we know that Moses had some direction in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. This direction could hardly come from any other source than the mother. Hence, he was old enough when she returned him to Pharaoh's daughter to receive teaching and to cherish that teaching in his heart until the time came for action. The splendor amidst which Moses grew up in the palace was far beyond the poverty which his family had to endure. We have a good description of the quarters occupied by the women in Pharaoh's palace. "Passing through the gardens in which a hundred gardeners watered the turf, the flower beds, the shrubs and the trees, and the quadrangles in which horses were being trained and broken, the princess and her maidens, on returning from the river, would be received as her leader entered the gates by a lord-in-waiting, and then led by the chamberlain to her rooms amidst low houses. One of her chambers commanded a view of the river, to envelop the beauty of which, a doorway, closed with light curtains, opened on a long balcony with a finely worked balustrade, to which clung a climbing rose with pink flowers. The carpets in the room itself were of sky blue and silver brocade from Damascus; the cover of the seats and couches had been richly embroidered with feathers by Ethiopian women and looked like the breasts of birds. The images of the goddess Hethor, which stood on the house altar, were an interpretation of emerald called Mefhet...." (Geikie.)

*She called his name Moses.* The term Moses means "drawn out." "Josephus derives it from the Egyptian word *Mo*, water, and *Uses*, the saved one; "And this was obviously the opinion also, before his day, of the Alexandrian translators of the Bible, who gave the name as Mouses. It seems reasonable, therefore, to keep the old etymology of the Bible, since it was thus supported even in Egypt long before Christ." (Geikie.) Many guesses have been made as to the physical appearance of Moses. Jose-

phus tells us that he was "wonderfully tall when only three years old, and so beautiful that even the people stopped to look at him as they went by."<sup>4</sup> A shortened extract from another source preserved by a Jew stated that Moses was born at On but that it was changed to Moses by Pharaoh's daughter, and that Moses became a priest of Osiris in the great sun-temple of his native city. Josephus says that he was apparently a

general of an Egyptian army and won some great victories over the Ethiopians. All that we can know for sure is that he was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and may safely conclude that he studied in the great universities, the remains of the rooms of which may be seen today. From these rooms we may construct a fairly safe view of the environment in which the boy Moses must have grown up.

### Topics for Discussion

1. There are few, if any, greater characters in all the Bible than that of Moses. His unselfishness stands out very prominently. When the Lord would destroy the people and make a great nation of Moses, he was unselfish enough to plead for the salvation of his people.

2. The magnanimity of Moses is also outstanding. When it was suggested that his duties were too great for him, he graciously consented to allow others to be appointed to help him. When it was pointed out that another

was prophesying, Moses' associates expected him to express his objection, but he said "would that Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them!"

3. The meekness of Moses was unusual. It is said that he was the meekest man upon the face of the earth. (Num. 12: 3.) If we would try to follow his example, in his unselfishness, his magnanimity, and his meekness, we would be more like our Lord than we are.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

How old was Joseph when he was made ruler of Egypt?  
How long from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses?  
In what part of Egypt did the Jews live?  
And what do you know of this section?

#### Golden Text Explained

In what city was Moses probably born?  
What other Old Testament character lived there?  
What do you know of Moses' chance to get an education there?  
According to what was the time for the birth of Moses determined?  
What is meant by Moses being a goodly child?  
Name and discuss four ways in which the goodness of Moses was manifested.

#### Parents of Moses

Can you name the parents of Moses?  
What does the name of his mother suggest?  
What does Jewish tradition say of the birth of Moses?

How did Jochebed hide Moses?  
What did she do with him when she could hide him no longer?

#### Found and Adopted by Pharaoh's Daughter

What do you know of the name of Pharaoh's daughter?  
What is suggested in this lesson as to the providence of God?  
What is said of the attitude of Pharaoh's daughter toward Moses?  
Who was set to watch over Moses?  
What did Miriam suggest to the daughter of Pharaoh?

#### Moses Has His Mother for a Nurse

What do you know of the splendor of the new home of Moses?  
What statement of scripture suggests that God told Jochebed to hide Moses?  
How was Jochebed's faith rewarded?  
How long do you think Jochebed was allowed to keep her son?  
Who taught Moses to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter?  
What is the meaning of the word Moses?  
What do you know of the life of Moses during the first forty years?  
What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson III—October 19, 1952

GOD HEARS THE CRY OF HIS PEOPLE

The Lesson Text

Ex. 2: 23-25; 3: 1-10

23 And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of E'-gypt died: and the children of Is'-ra-el sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with I'-saac, and with Jacob.

25 And God saw the children of Is'-ra-el, and God took knowledge of them.

1 Now Mó'-ses was keeping the flock of Je'-thro his father-in-law, the priest of Mid'-i-an: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Hó'-reb.

2 And the angel of Je'-ho'-vah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3 And Mó'-ses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when Je'-ho'-vah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Mó'-ses, Mó'-ses. And he said, Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of I'-saac, and the God of Jacob. And Mó'-ses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And Je'-ho'-vah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in E'-gypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the E'-gyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Ca'-naan-ite, and the Hit'-tite and the Am'-or-ite, and the Per'-iz-zite, and the Hi'-vite, and the Jeb'-u-site.

9 And now, behold, the cry of the children of Is'-ra-el is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the E'-gypt'-tians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pha'-raoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Is'-ra-el out of E'-gypt.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works.” (Acts 7: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 6: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 13. M..... People's Burdens Increased (Ex. 5: 1-9)
- October 14. T..... God Remembers His Covenant (Ex. 6: 1-9)
- October 15. W..... God Confirms His Oath (Psalm 105: 1-11)
- October 16. Th..... Comfort in the Day of Trouble (Psalm 77: 1-15)
- October 17. F..... God Relieves His People (Psalm 105: 26-45)
- October 18. S..... Saved Them for His Name's Sake (Psalm 106: 1-16)
- October 19. S..... God Is Good to His People (Psalm 135: 1-14)

TIME.—1500 to 1491 B.C.

PLACE.—Egypt.

PERSONS.—Pharaoh, Moses, children of Israel.

Introduction

“But, as a whole, the Sinai mountains rank among the wildest regions. From a distance they rise, red and

gray, in huge masses and peaks of porphyry and granite. On all sides lie heaps of dark ashes of burnt-out

volcanic fires, or of fragments of porphyry, red as wax. Walls of rocks, with a green shimmer, rise naked and threatening; uncouth, wild crags tower steeply above mounds of black and brown stones, which look as if they had been broken by the hammers of giants. The horizon takes new forms with every short advance, as one closed-valley rises above another; the sublimity of the landscape increasing with the ascent. As each new level is reached the mountains rise in huge heights around, but as the journey leads on to the next plateau they seem to shrink into fateness before the new giants that encircle the way. . . .

"The influence of such a district on a mind like that of Moses must have been great. No region more favorable to the attainments of a lofty conception of the Almighty could have been found. Nature, by the want of water and the poverty of vegetation, is intensely simple; presenting no variety to dissipate and confuse the mind. The grand, sublimely silent mountain world around, with its bold, abrupt masses of granite, greenstone, and porphyry, fills the spirit with a solemn earnestness which the wide horizon from most peaks and the wonderful purity of the air tend to heighten. The wanderer looks down, for example, from the top of Jebel Musa, the Mount of Moses, with a shuddering horror, into the abyss below; and round, on the countless pinnacles and peaks, cliffs and precipices, of many colored rocks; white end gray, sulphurous yellow, blood red, and ominous black; entirely bare of vegetation. To the north, the desert of the Tih stretches out beyond the mountains in endless perspective. On the east and west the reflection of the blue sea shimmers up from the depths; beyond it, towards sunrise, are seen the pale sands of Arabia; while towards sunset the mountains of Egypt rise half veiled in the blue of distance. Such a place was far more fitted than

the narrowly hemmed-in valley of the Nile, or than Palestine, to call forth great thoughts.

"In such a desert region we take refuge in our own reflections from the monotony around; the senses are at rest. Undisturbed and uninfluenced from without, the mind follows out every tram of thought to the end, and examines and exhausts every feeling to its finest shades. In a city there is no solitude: each is part of a great whole on which he acts, and by which he is himself affected. But the lonely wanderer in a district like Sinai is absolutely isolated from his fellows, and must fill up the void by his own identity. The present retires into the background, and the spirit, waked to intensity of life, finds no limits to its thoughts. In a lofty spiritual nature like that of Moses, the solemn stillness of the mountains and the boundless sweep of the daily and nightly heavens would efface the thought of man, and fill the soul with the majesty of God. As he meditated on the possible deliverance of his people, the lonely vastness would raise him above anxious contrasts of their weakness compared with power of Egypt, which might have paralyzed resolution and bidden hope despair. What was man, whose days were a handbreadth, and whose foundation was in the dust, before the mighty Creator of heaven and earth — the Rock of Israel? Even less lofty spirits than his had, indeed, been kindled, age after age, to a nearer sense of the presence of God, amidst these magnificent and awful solitudes: for Serbal had been from the earliest times sacred to the worship of Baal, and, even still, the wandering Bedouin sacrifices lambs within stone circles raised on it, as thank-offerings for any special blessing received. So Horreb, already bore the name of "the Mount of God" when Moses came to live near it, and the whole group of mountains, like Ararat or the Himalaya, were holy among the tribes around." (Geikie.)

### Golden Text Explained

1. **His Egyptian Learning.** Our text says that Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. We know very little of that wisdom, but

we do have some intimations of the departments of learning covered by the Egyptians. Regarding the condition of Egypt at the time of the

Hebrews' entrance into the land, Geikie says, "The temple was in its full glory in the days of Joseph and during the centuries of the Hebrew sojourn. Great colleges of priests lived in chambers especially built for them within its holy precincts and besides taking charge of the sacred animals, attended to the services of many gods honored in its worship. In addition to these, there were numbers of learned priests connected with the mythical theology, and historical faculties of the temple, there were depositaries of the scientific, religious, and secular achievements for which Egypt was renowned. The observatory of the temple was famous, and it is to its priest-astronomers we are indebted for the exact computation of the length of the year. Of the four great temple universities of the land — Memphis, Thebes, Sais, and On — that of On held the first rank." With reference to the learning of Egypt, another source says that so high was the opinion entertained by antiquity that "the wisdom of Egypt" passed into a proverb. It was thought for a long time that the Egyptians invented a system of writing which served to hide their treasures of wisdom, but scholars finally found the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and since that

time much of their learning has come to light.

2. **Mighty in Words.** Though Moses claimed to be slow of speech, Stephen says he was mighty in words. We are to understand that Stephen's statement is not to indicate his oratorical powers, but rather the weight or wisdom of the words spoken. We have but to examine the law as given through Moses to verify Stephen's statement that he was mighty in words. We may also come to this same conclusion by reading the prophecy which Moses made. He prophesied the coming of Christ by saying that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto him to whom all the people must give heed. (Deut. 18: 18, 19.) He also gave a detailed prophecy concerning the future of the Jewish nation which proves him to be mighty in word. (Deut. 28.)

3. **Mighty in Works.** There is a tradition that Moses was a great military leader before he left the service of Pharaoh, but our inspired record of his deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage and his leadership of the people through forty years of wandering are sufficient to prove the truth of Stephen's statement that he was mighty in works.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. God Hears Their Groanings (Ex. 2: 23-25)

*The king of Egypt died.* As indicated before, we cannot be positive who this king was, but it is generally believed to have been Rameses II. "Rameses II left behind him the reputation of being the greatest of the Egyptian kings. . . . His buildings and other great works would, in fact, probably excel those of any other Pharaoh. His reign was the longest, if we except one, of any upon record. . . . After eighty years of life and sixty-seven of regal power, the great Rameses was gathered to his fathers . . . thousands of wretches toiled incessantly to add to his glory and cover Egypt with buildings, obelisks and colossi which still show forth his greatness." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage.* As indicated the Jews were used in the building of monuments and great storehouses and for

the enrichment generally of the country. Human life was cheap in the sight of the taskmasters, and hence many of them died at their tasks.

*Their cry came up unto God.* The children of Israel are reported as crying under the cruelty of the taskmasters, and their cry reached heaven. We are told that God heard their groanings and had pity upon them because of the unreasonable treatment received from their masters.

*God remembered his covenant with Abraham.* The covenant to which reference is made here is probably the promise which God made to Abraham to make of his seed a great nation and to give his seed the land of Canaan. (Gen. 22: 15, 16; 26: 2-5.) But another covenant might also be included. When God first promised Abraham a son, he told Abraham that his seed would sojourn in a strange land and be afflicted and that the nation who afflicted them would be

judged. (Gen. 15: 13, 14.) At that time God promised Abraham that his seed would come out of bondage in the fourth generation. These promises were renewed to Isaac and Jacob on several occasions. In looking back on these matters David said, "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance." (Psalm 105: 8-11.)

**God took knowledge of them.** We are not to take this to mean that God had hitherto forgotten his people, but we are to understand that God knows the condition of his people, and that in his own wisdom he does that which is best for them. We may take comfort from the experiences of the people of old and remember that God knows our trials and that he works for our welfare as well as he did for theirs.

## II. God's Appearance to Moses (Ex. 3: 1-4)

**Moses was keeping the flocks of Jethro.** Our text gives Jethro as the father-in-law of Moses. Adam Clarke says that Jethro was the son of Reuel, the brother of Zipporah, and so the brother-in-law of Moses. However, other eminent authorities agree with the translation of our text and speak of Jethro as being the father of Zipporah. Jethro is said to have been the priest of Midian. The Midianites were descendants of a son of Abraham by Keturah. They inhabited the land east of Egypt and south of Canaan.

**Came unto the mountain of God. unto Horeb.** Moses was employed as a shepherd keeping the flocks of Jethro. Our text says he led the flock to the "back of the wilderness" where he came to Mount Horeb. Horeb is another name for Sinai. "Sinai is mentioned, *as* a desert and a mountain, in thirty-five passages of the Old Testament. In seventeen passages the same desert and mountain are called Horeb or the waste. This term is chiefly used in Deuteronomy, though Sinai also occurs. (Deut. 33: 2.) In the other books of the Pentateuch,

Sinai is the usual name, though Horeb also occurs." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.) Adam Clarke speaks of Sinai and Horeb as being two peaks of one mountain.

**The angel of Jehovah appeared unto him.** This angel of Jehovah is Jehovah himself in a form adapted to man's vision. This being identifies himself in this same context as "I am that I am", and "Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." A study of this character will reveal that he is the second person of the Godhead, which afterwards was made flesh and dwelt among us and known to us as Jesus Christ.

**The bush was not consumed.** This angel of Jehovah appeared in a burning bush and the peculiar thing about it was that the bush was not consumed. Some take this to be a suggestion of the suffering of Israel in bondage and their ability to resist destruction on account of the bondage. Whether the Lord intended to make any such suggestion to Moses is not known, but a bush burning without being consumed is certainly a fit illustration of the ability of the Jews to continue to increase in spite of indescribable suffering.

**God called unto him out of the midst of the bush.** When Moses saw the bush burning without being consumed, he turned aside to see why the bush was not burned. So far as the record goes, the burning of the bush was to serve only to attract the attention of Moses that the Lord might get his attention and engage him in the conversation which was to follow.

## III. God Announces His Purpose to Deliver Israel (Ex. 3: 5-10)

**Put off thy shoes from off thy feet.** This is the language to Moses as he approached the bush. The reason given for the removal of his shoes is that the ground on which he stood was holy. It was made holy by the unusual presence of the Lord in that place. In one sense God is present everywhere at all times. This is the meaning of omnipresence. Yet, it must be true that God, though present everywhere may, in another sense, manifest an unusual presence in certain localities.

*I am the God of thy father.* Jehovah introduces himself to Moses through the use of the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because of the promises made to these patriarchs and to indicate to Moses that his appearance at this time was in connection with the fulfillment of these promises.

*He was afraid to look upon God.* This is given as a reason why Moses hid his face. In another place it is said that no man can look upon the face of God and live. (Ex. 33: 20.) In another place we read that no man hath seen God at any time (John 1: 18) and that no man hath seen the Father. (John 6: 46.) These passages must be understood as teaching that human eyes are not capable of beholding the full splendor of God's glory. These appearances of the second person of the Godhead as the angel of Jehovah were adapted to man's vision.

*I have surely seen the affliction of my people.* Moses had been gone from Egypt forty years. How much he knew of the condition of his people we have no way of knowing. But this statement of Jehovah would remind him of what he had seen before he left Egypt and would stir within him his compassion for his kindred.

*I have come down to deliver them.* Here we have an expression adapted to man's way of thinking. God announces his readiness to begin the work of deliverance by saying he had come down to do that work.

*Land flowing with milk and honey.* This is the Lord's way of describing the land which he had promised to

give to the seed of Abraham. It simply meant a land abounding in the things that would contribute to man's health and happiness. This land is described as the place of six different nations: the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Critics have accused God of wrong in displacing these six nations, but the children of Israel were left in Egypt until the fourth generation "for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full" (Gen. 15: 16), indicating that at the time of their entrance into Canaan the cup of iniquity of these six nations was full and that justice demanded their destruction.

*I have seen the oppression.* It is not to be thought that the oppression was unexpected, for God had foretold this oppression in the days of Abraham. (Gen. 15: 13, 14.)

*I will send thee unto Pharaoh.* Moses is told that it will be his duty to go to Pharaoh to negotiate the deliverance of the people of Israel. He must go without money or arms to deliver a nation of people from the greatest ruler of the world. It took considerable faith and trust to undertake such a task without any visible means of accomplishing his purposes. However, our Lord asked his disciples to build a kingdom that would stand forever without the use of any visible means such as are usually considered necessary to the building of great institutions. God's presence was all that Moses needed. If we conduct ourselves so as to enjoy the presence of God, we may be sure of succeeding in whatever task God lays upon us.

### Topics for Discussion

1. God schooled his people in Egypt, welding them into a nation and giving them the benefit of coming in contact with the best civilization of their day.

2. While schooling his people in adversities, their intended deliverer was receiving the best education in the arts and sciences of his day, and for forty years was disciplined in patience and steadfastness. It is sometimes more difficult to learn the lesson of patience than it is to perform feats of daring in the heat of battle.

3. The faithfulness of God in keeping his promises is an outstanding lesson in these passages. The fact that hundreds of years are consumed is no indication of God's slowness or lack of interest in these affairs. From these lessons we should take courage that God will keep his promises to us in his own good time and that if we wait for the fulfillment of these promises, we develop the patience that we need to be like Christ.

## Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

### Introduction

What do you know of the scenes around Sinai?

What is suggested as to the influence such scenes would have on the mind of Moses?

What was Mount Horeb called even before Moses went there?

### Golden Text Explained

In what was Moses instructed? And what do you know of the learning of Egypt?

Where were the four great universities located?

Why was Egyptian learning late in coming to light?

What did Stephen mean when he said Moses was mighty in words?

Can you give some examples of his mighty words?

Can you mention some of his mighty works?

### God Hears Their Groanings

What do you know of the Pharaoh of the oppression?

How did this Pharaoh value human life?

Which of God's covenants with Abraham did he remember at this time?

What is meant by God taking knowledge of the condition of his people?

### God's Appearance to Moses

In what work was Moses engaged when God appeared to him?

Where was Moses working at the time?

What do you know of the angel of Jehovah as used in this text?

What is suggested in the fact that the bush burned but was not consumed?

### God Announces His Purpose to Deliver Israel

Why was Moses to put off his shoes?

What lesson does this suggest to us with reference to our worship?

How did Jehovah introduce himself to Moses?

Why did Moses hide his face at the appearance of Jehovah?

What did Jehovah say he had seen?

What did Jehovah say he proposed to do for Israel?

To what land did he propose to take Israel? Who dwelt there at that time?

What characteristics did the task God gave Moses call for? Did Moses have them?

What was the biggest asset Moses had for the accomplishment of his task?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson IV—October 26, 1952

### MOSES AND AARON

#### The Lesson Text

Ex. 4: 27-31: 5: 1-7

27 And Je-ho'-vah said to Aar'-on, Go into the wilderness to meet Mó'-ses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him.

28 And Mó'-ses told Aar'-on all the words of Je-ho'-vah wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs wherewith he had charged him.

29 And Mó'-ses and Aar'-on went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Is'-ra-el:

30 And Aar'-on spake all the words which Je-ho'-vah had spoken unto Mó'-ses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that Je-ho'-vah had visited the children of Is'-ra-el, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

1 And afterward Mó'-ses and Aar'-on came, and said unto Pha'-raoh, Thus saith Je-ho'-vah, the God of Is'-ra-el, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2 And Pha'-raoh said, Who is Je-ho'-vah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Is'-ra-el go? I know not Je-ho'-vah, and moreover I will not let Is'-ra-el go.

3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Je-ho'-vah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

4 And the king of E'-gypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Mo'-ses and Aar'-on, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

5 And Pha'-raoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

6 And the same day Pha'-raoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying,

7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“He *sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom, he had chosen*(Psalm 105: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 105: 26-38.

**Daily Bible Readings**

- October 20. M..... Parents of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 6: 14-20)
- October 21. T..... Meeting of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 4: 27-31)
- October 22. W..... Aaron’s First Mistake (Ex. 32: 15-29)
- October 23. T. Miriam and Aaron Against Moses (Num. 12: 1-15)
- October 24. F. Mistake of Moses and Aaron (Num. 20: 1-13)
- October 25. S..... Psalm of Moses (Psalm 90)
- October 26. S..... Death of Aaron (Num. 20: 22-29)

TIME.—A.D. 1491.

PLACE.—Egypt.

PERSONS.—Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh,

**Introduction**

When the Lord appeared to Moses and called him for his work of delivering the people of Israel from Egypt, Moses made a number of excuses. The first excuse was, “They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee.” (Ex. 4: 1.) But God did not propose to send Moses to perform such a work without giving him the ability to convince people that he was sent of God, so he told Moses to cast his rod upon the ground. When he did so it became a serpent and when he picked it up it became a rod again. He was told to put his hand into his bosom. When he did so it became leprous and on taking it out again it was whole. With these signs Moses was equipped to convince the people that Jehovah had sent him. When God sent his son into the world he gave him power to work miracles so that people said, “We know that thou art a teacher

come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him.” (John 3: 2.) And when Jesus sent his apostles he equipped them with signs to convince the people of the truth of what they preached. (Mark 16: 17-20; Heb. 2: 3, 4.) The next excuse Moses gave was his inability to speak fluently. But God answered that by saying, “Is there not Aaron thy brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well . . . and thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people.” (Ex. 4: 14-16.) God never expects one to do something without giving that one the ability to do it. Hence, it is undoubtedly an indication of unbelief for one to admit that he should perform certain duties and then complain that he is unable to do so.

**Golden Text Explained**

1. In a Discussion of the Character of Moses, one cannot lose sight of the fact that he chose to give up wealth, luxury, and the highest position that government and society could offer him to become identified with and a part of a people being oppressed in the most cruel kind of slavery the world knew anything about. From a physical and visible point of view Moses was making a very poor choice. No doubt his Egyptian associates thought he had lost his mind, or was at least being a fool. But Moses was walking by faith and not by sight. To him, the real and enduring things

of life were the things which are unseen. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4: 18.) The writer of Hebrews tells us that Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. (1) He endured the temptations of the country. The wealth, luxury, and social impurities of the country in which he was reared constantly tempted Moses to give up his intention of delivering his slave kindred and enjoy the pleasures of sin for

a season. (2) He endured temporary rejection by his people. When he attempted to deliver them, he was rejected by his people. Stephen gives us some insight to the feelings of Moses when he was repulsed by his brethren when he says, "He supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not." (Acts 7: 25.) (3) He endured forty years of waiting with nothing better to do than herding sheep. The writer of Hebrews indicates that it was his vision of the invisible that made it possible for him to endure these trials for more than forty years.

Another thing which cannot be overlooked when thinking of Moses is his unusual death. (1) We see him dying in the midst of unfinished business. His failure to accomplish all that he set out to do does not indicate that his whole life was a failure. (2) Good health today is no indication that we may not be called to meet God tomorrow. We are told that at the time of his death "his eye was

not dim, nor his natural force abated." (Deut. 34: 7.) Hence, none of us needs to presume on long life simply because of good health today. (3) We see life ending at the bidding of God and in connection with sin. This shows God's sovereignty over life and our complete dependence. It also shows that sin may rob us of our blessings.

2. **Though Aaron Was Three Years Older Than Moses He Had Neither the Character nor Ability of His Younger Brother.** He took part with the people in the sin of making the golden calf (Ex. 32), and he joined with Miriam in a rebellion against Moses (Num. 12: 1-3). He was a good speaker and was made the mouth-piece of Moses to deliver God's message to the people. No doubt he was the best material available as the first high priest, but when we have said this we have said about all that can be said for Aaron. No doubt he did well, considering his lack of opportunities for mental and spiritual development.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Moses and Aaron Meet in the Wilderness (Ex. 4: 27-28)

*Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.* This is the language of Jehovah to Aaron. How or by what means this message was conveyed to Aaron we have no way of knowing. If an angel was used, it would still be correct to say that Jehovah said this to him. Adam Clarke says, "By some secret but powerful movement on Aaron's mind, or by some voice or angelic ministry, he was now directed to go and meet his brother Moses."

*Meet him in the mountain of God.* God had given instructions to Moses to go toward Egypt, saying, "He cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart." (Ex. 4: 14.) Here again we see the overruling providence of God in the lives of these two men. Had it not been for God's direction of them, they would have had less than one chance in a thousand to meet as the one journeyed eastward and the other journeyed westward in the wilderness. By the mountain of God we suppose Mount Horeb, as it is called by this name in Exodus 3: 1. However, quite a portion of country was

known by the term Horeb. Hence, we need not conclude that Moses and Aaron met in the very place where later the ten commandments were given.

*Moses told Aaron all the words of Jehovah.* So far as we know, this is the first time the brothers had met in forty years. God told Moses that Aaron would be glad in his heart to meet him, and in our text their affectionate greeting of each other indicates as much. Moses unfolded the plans which God had made known unto him concerning the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage. Undoubtedly Moses told Aaron the part that he was to play in the delivery. Moses told Aaron of the signs which they were empowered to perform, but whether these miracles were performed there in the mountain of God for the benefit of Aaron is not stated.

### II. Moses and Aaron Meet the Elders of Israel (Ex. 4: 29-31)

*Moses and Aaron gathered together all the elders.* Who these elders were we may not be able to learn for sure. It seems that even in the darkest days

of oppression that the Jews maintained some sort of local self-government. There were priests among the people before the law was given on Sinai. (Ex. 19: 22-24.) These elders were either hereditary heads of families, or they were men of influence and authority in the various districts of Egypt in which the people lived. At any rate, they had considerable influence with the people.

**Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses.** It seems that Moses was not merely alibiing when he gave the excuse that he was a poor speaker, for the very first time there is an occasion for a speech Aaron does the speaking. But the matter of Aaron's being only the speaker is kept clear by the statement that Aaron spoke the things which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses.

**And did the signs in the sight of the people.** From verse 29 it seems there was a meeting held with the elders before an assembly of the people was called. While no mention is made of the calling of a second meeting, it is very probable that when the elders had been convinced they called a general assembly before which Moses and Aaron performed the signs given to them.

**And the people believed.** This must have been a relief and an encouragement to Moses. Having been repulsed by his people on a similar attempt to become their deliverer and having affirmed that the people would not believe him this time, Moses must have derived considerable satisfaction from the results of that meeting. Though the lives of Moses and Jesus correspond in many details, here is one where there is no correspondence. The common people both in the case of Moses and of Jesus believed, but in the case of Moses even the elders of Israel believed while Jesus failed to convince the religious leaders of his day that he was sent of God to do his work.

**They bowed their heads and worshipped.** Two things are said to be the cause of this worship. (1) They realized that God had seen their affliction. (2) They believed that God had visited them in mercy. No doubt many of them wondered about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Young people heard their elders talk

of God's visiting the patriarchs and how he blessed them, but the drudgery of slavery and the cruelty of the taskmasters no doubt had a tendency to cause the younger generation to wonder and sometimes disbelieve. What a satisfaction it must have been to the old people who still clung to their faith and what a revelation it must have been to the younger generation who had their doubts to be assured that Jehovah was among them again to bless them and lead them. As they showed their faith and appreciation by appropriate acts of worship, so we today should not lose faith in the presence of God with us nor be negligent to manifest that faith in regular periods of worship.

### III. Moses and Aaron Meet with Pharaoh (Ex. 5: 1-7)

#### **Moses and Aaron said unto Pharaoh.**

The Moses who once fled in fear now comes boldly into the presence of the King of Egypt. "According to the bulk of modern authorities, and according to our own views of Egyptian history, this was Menephtah; the son and successor of Rameses II. Menephtah was a weak prince, whom events had favored and who would be thus led to have an exalted opinion of himself. A great invasion of Egypt had occurred at the beginning of his reign, which had been met and completely repulsed, not by his own skill or valor, but by that of his generals. Menephtah - himself had pointedly avoided incurring any danger. He claimed to be in direct communication with the Egyptian gods, who revealed themselves to him in visions, and pleaded a distinct command of Phtha as preventing him from being himself at the head of his army. Still, he counted as his own all the successes gained by his generals, and was as vainglorious and arrogant as if he had himself performed prodigies of valor." (Pulpit Commentary.)

**Who is Jehovah?** This was Pharaoh's reply to the request of Moses and Aaron that he allow the people to go that they might hold a feast in the wilderness. The form of the question could be that of asking the identity of this god, but most likely it is intended as an insult that some petty tribal god should make demands of the great Pharaoh. His answer was, "I will not let Israel go."

The God of the Hebrews. Jehovah is often spoken of as the God of Israel, and as the God of the patriarchs of Israel. This is not to be taken to mean that God is merely a tribal or national god, but at that time the Hebrews were the only people of whom we have any record who worshiped Jehovah.

*Three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice.* Some have had difficulty in understanding why the Israelites had to leave Egypt to sacrifice. It should be remembered that some of the animals which were required in sacrifice were held sacred to the Egyptians. Hence, they would not have been allowed to make their sacrifices without being disturbed in their worship. There is, however, a difficulty in this explanation since we can hardly conceive of their staying in Egypt 215 years without burning animals in sacrifice. The most probable explanation is that their sacrifices were on small scale and with no set regularity. Their worship to this time had been of patriarchal or family type. This worship which they must go three days' journey into the wilderness to perform was to be of national proportions. The urgency of their request is seen in the statement, "Lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword."

*Wherefore do ye loose the people from their works.* Pharaoh looked upon Moses and Aaron as being meddlers in other people's business and as interfering with the work of his slaves. Hence, he commanded the people, including Moses and Aaron, to get back to their burdens.

*The people of the land are now many.* This is another statement of Pharaoh in which he indicates his view of the seriousness of the interference which Moses and Aaron were making. Had the people been few in number, their interference would not have been so serious.

*Let them go and gather straw for themselves.* This is the language of Pharaoh to his taskmasters who drove the slaves to their work. Hitherto straw had been furnished the slaves to mix with the mud for the making of bricks. Now the slaves are compelled to gather the straw and yet to make the same number of brick per day they had been making. Hence, their labors were about doubled. It is interesting to read that archeologists have uncovered buildings and walls of cities containing brick mixed with straw in the foundations, but higher in the wall they find brick with little or no straw, proving the story as told by Moses.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Since Moses and Aaron were of the same parents, we may conclude that the better education Moses had gave him the advantage over Aaron.
2. When God has a big work to be done, he selects one who has made big preparations. Paul in the New

Testament and Moses in the Old Testament are sufficient proof of this.

3. Only a great character could be as thoughtless of his own good and as free of ambition for himself and sons as was Moses.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

What was the first excuse Moses gave for hesitating to accept his task?  
How did God answer this excuse?  
Give other examples of God equipping his servants for their work.  
What other excuse did Moses offer? And how did God answer it?

#### Golden Text Explained

What did Moses sacrifice to become identified with his people?  
What were the real and enduring things in the estimation of Moses?  
Name and discuss three things Moses endured by the help of God.

Discuss three lessons suggested in the death of Moses.  
What do you know of Aaron's character? and work?

#### Moses and Aaron Meet in the Wilderness

How is the providence of God seen in the meeting of Moses and Aaron?  
Were the brothers glad to see each other? And how long had they been separated?  
In what section of the country were they to meet?

#### Moses and Aaron Meet the Elders of Israel

Who were these elders of Israel?  
Who did the speaking before these elders? Why?  
Why is it probable that there was a second meeting with them?  
How did the people of Israel receive Moses?

What two things caused the people to bow their heads and worship?  
What did the worship indicate as to the attitude of the people?

Moses and Aaron Meet with Pharaoh  
What do you know of the character of this king? (Keep in mind that scholars differ as to who was on the throne at this time.)

What reply did Pharaoh make to Moses and Aaron?  
Why was Jehovah called the God of the Hebrews?

What request did Moses and Aaron make of Pharaoh?

Why was it necessary for them to leave Egypt to worship Jehovah?

Of what did Pharaoh accuse Moses and Aaron?

How did Pharaoh increase the labors of the people?

What evidence do we have outside the Bible to prove these statements of Moses?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson V—November 2, 1952

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS

The Lesson Text

Ex. 7: 8-19

8 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'-ses and unto Aar'-on, saying,

9 When Pha'-raoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a wonder for you; then thou shalt say unto Aar'-on, Take thy rod, and cast it down before Pha'raoh, that it become a serpent.

10 And Mo'-ses and Aar'-on went in unto Pha'-raoh, and they did so, as Je-ho'-vah had commanded: and Aar'-on cast down his rod before Pha'-raoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11 Then Pha'-raoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers: and they also, the magicians of E'-gypt, did in like manner with their enchantments.

12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aar'-on's rod swallowed up their rods.

13 And Pha'-raoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho'-vah had spoken.

14 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mo'-ses, Pha'-raoh's heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go.

15 Get thee unto Pha'-raoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the

water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thy hand.

16 And thou shalt say unto him, Je-ho'-vah, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened.

17 Thus saith Je-ho'-vah, In this thou shalt know that I am Je-ho'-vah: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

18 And the fish that are in the river shall die, and the river shall become foul; and the E-gyp'-tians shall loathe to drink water from the river.

19 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mo'-ses, Say unto Aar'-on, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the waters of E'-gypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their ponds of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of E'-gypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.

Golden Text.—"He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish." (Psalm 105: 29.)

Devotional Reading.—2 Tim. 3: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

- October 27. M..... Moses and Aaron Sent to Pharaoh (Ex. 7: 1-7)
- October 28. T..... Waters Turned to Blood (Ex. 7: 20-25)
- October 29. W..... Frogs in Rivers and Houses (Ex. 8: 1-15)
- October 30. T..... David Recounts God's Mercy (Psalm 78: 42-52)

October 31. F..... David Tells of the Plagues (Psalm 105: 26-45)  
 November 1. S..... Paul and a Magician (Acts 13: 4-12)  
 November 2. S..... Truth Triumphs Over Magic (Acts 19: 8-20)

TIME.—1491 B.C.  
 PLACE.—Egypt.  
 PERSONS.—Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, and the magicians.

**Introduction**

By the human standard of reckoning time in relation to matters of interest, God is sometimes slow in carrying out his purposes; but our standard of reckoning time is not a good standard by which to measure God in the accomplishment of his purposes. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3: 9.) When the time was ripe according to God's standards, he remembered his covenant with the fathers and moved to fulfill his promises to them. In Exodus 6: 2-13, we have the account of God remembering his covenant and taking proper steps to fulfill the promises which he made to the patriarchs before the time of Moses. In verse 5 he says, "I have heard the groanings of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant." He continues in this talk to Moses to renew the promise of deliverance from bondage to redeem

his people with an outstretched arm, and to bring judgment upon the nation enslaving his people. He makes them this promise, "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land which I swear to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah." (Ex. 6: 7, 8.)

When Pharaoh added to their burdens because of the agitation of Moses (Ex. 5: 6-9), the people seemed to prefer bondage to the suffering necessary to gain their freedom. So we read in Exodus 6: 9 that the people of Israel "hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." So strong was their influence that Moses hesitated to go before Pharaoh again, saying that if his own people would not believe him, surely Pharaoh could not be expected to let the people go at his request.

**Golden Text Explained**

**1. Contest Between Jehovah and the Gods of Egypt.** All of the ten plagues were direct thrusts at the gods which the Egyptians worshiped. In connection with the slaying of the first-born, Jehovah said, "For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Jehovah." (Ex. 12: 12.) Pharaoh started out by asking haughtily, "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go?" (Ex. 5: 2.) But before the contest was over, Pharaoh was forced to say, "I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." (Ex. 9: 27.) A little later he was made not only to confess that he had sinned against God, but to

plead, "Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat Jehovah your God, that he may take away from me this death only." (Ex. 10: 17.)

The plague with which our text deals in this lesson, the turning of water into blood, was directed against the Nile River. The Nile was regarded as divine and was worshiped under various names. A poem extant in the day of Moses has been preserved, and the following lines will be sufficient to prove that they worshipped the Nile.

Thou it is who coverest all the land  
 with water.  
 Thy path, as thou comest, is from  
 heaven!  
 Thou art the God Set, the friend of  
 bread!

Thou art the God Neptra, the giver of grain!

Thou art the god Ptah, who lightest every dwelling

Bringer of good!

Creator of all good things!

Lord of all things choice and delightful,

If there be offerings, it is thanks to thee

Oh, Nile, hymns are sung to thee on the harp;

Offerings are made to thee: oxens are slain to thee;

Great festivals are kept for thee: fowls are sacrificed to thee

Incense ascends unto heaven: oxen, bulls, fowls are burned." (Geikie.)

Not only was the Nile considered a god, but it furnished practically all the drinking water fit for human consumption. We are told that water from wells could hardly be used, but

that water from the Nile was so palatable that Egyptians preferred it to any other drink. One author says, "In truth, when one drinks of it the first time, it seems to be some water prepared by art." (Harmer.) When the Nile and all its tributaries were turned to blood, Jehovah was shown to be greater than the Nile, or any god connected with it; and before seven days were ended, the stench of the blood was unbearable and the Egyptians were made to loathe the river they once worshiped. No greater demonstration of the power of Jehovah could have been made than this which struck not only at their system of worship, but imperiled their very lives. Since their gods were unable to deliver them from their dilemma and they must appeal to the mercy of Jehovah, they should have realized the folly of continuing to worship such gods and turn to Jehovah.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. First Encounter with Magicians

(Ex. 7: 8-13)

*Show a wonder.* Since Moses and Aaron claimed to be representatives of Jehovah, it was expected that Pharaoh would demand a sign in proof of their mission. When Jesus came he performed miracles that the people might believe that he was from God. When he sent his apostles to preach the gospel he qualified them to perform miracles to prove that they were representatives of God.

*Take thy rod.* Moses was instructed to use the rod which he carried and which God had turned to a serpent for him at Horeb. With this he would be able to perform sufficient miracles to establish his identity as God's messenger. Unbelievers have quibbled as to the reality of this miracle, but the God who was able to create a serpent in the first place would certainly be able to change a rod into a real serpent. Because a different Hebrew word is used here from that which is used in other places, some think that a creature larger than the ordinary snake such as the crocodile is intended. Adam Clarke is inclined to this view and those who are interested should read his discussion in his commentary on this chapter.

*Pharaoh called for the wise men and sorcerers.* Egyptians were unusually well versed in secret and hidden arts. Some have thought that they performed miracles by the power of the devil. There seems to be no positive evidence for or against the idea that the devil works miracles through men. "The commonest view in the present day regards them as simply persons who had a knowledge of many secrets of nature which were generally unknown, and who used this knowledge to impress men with the belief in their supernatural power. . . . On the whole, we regard it as most probable that the Egyptian magicians of this time were jugglers of a high class, well skilled in serpent charming and other kindred arts, but not possessed with any supernatural powers." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Did in like manner with their enchantments.* In the margin we have the words "secret arts" instead of enchantments. A Hebrew authority says that the Hebrew word translated enchantments is one which means "secret or hidden arts." However, it is hardly satisfactory to say that the Egyptians turned their rods into serpents by secret arts. In view of this, some commentators suggest that God furnished the power necessary to

change these Egyptians' rods into snakes that he might show the superiority of Moses and Aaron over the Egyptians. Unless we grant that the devil has power to perform miracles through men, it seems that this is the most probable explanation of the success of the Egyptians in turning their rods into serpents.

**Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.** "Others think by the power of evil angels, artfully substituting serpents in the room of the rods; God permitting the delusion to be wrought by wise and holy ends that they might believe a lie, who receive not the truth wherein the Lord was righteous. Yet this might have helped to frighten Pharaoh to compliance with the demands of Moses. Note, God suffers the lying spirit to do strange things, that the faith of some may be tried and manifested (Deut. 13: 3; 1 Cor. 11: 19) that the infidelity of others might be confirmed (2 Cor. 4: 4)." (Matthew Henry) The fact that Aaron's rod swallowed the rods of the magicians should have convinced the Egyptians that the God of Aaron was greater than the god of the Egyptians. It is possible that the names of two of these magicians have been preserved for us. Paul says, "And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth." (2 Tim. 3: 8.)

**Pharaoh's heart was hardened.** Nowhere is there an indication that God operated in any miraculous way to harden Pharaoh's heart. He simply shut his eyes to a miraculous demonstration of the superior power of Jehovah over the gods of the magicians. On this point Adam Clarke remarks, "He receives no conviction, notwithstanding the clearness of the light which shines upon him." We all know the power of prejudice; where persons are determined to think and act after a predetermined plan, arguments, demonstrations, and even miracles themselves are lost on them, as in the case of Pharaoh here, and that of the obstinate Jews in the days of our Lord and his apostles.

## II. First Plague Brought on Egypt

(Ex. 7: 12-19)

**Pharaoh's heart is stubborn.** The King James Version uses the word *harden* instead of *stubborn*. This

word *stubborn* means *dull* or *heavy*. The consequence of this dullness or heaviness of heart was that he refused to allow the people to go out from Egypt.

As **he goest out unto the water.** This is the instruction of the Lord to Moses that he may contact Pharaoh. The purpose of Pharaoh's going to the water is not certainly known, but was probably for the purpose of worshipping the water. We have shown that the Nile was an object of worship; and since the superiority of Jehovah is to be manifest over the Egyptian gods and since the Nile was worshiped as a god, it seems probable that the purpose of Pharaoh's going to the water was to worship. Moses was to remind Pharaoh of the request which had been made to allow the people to go into the wilderness to worship and he was to renew the request.

**I will smite with the rod upon the waters in the river.** This is the threat which Moses was to make in order to move Pharaoh to submission. Mention is made of the rod. Moses was to smite the waters with the rod. This was the rod that Pharaoh had seen turn to a serpent; it was the rod which Pharaoh had seen as it devoured the serpents of the magicians. That incident was to be recalled to Pharaoh's mind, that, remembering the superior power of that rod, he might be moved to grant the request of Moses.

**They shall be turned to blood.** Unbelievers have made any number of attempts to explain away the miraculous powers of Moses on this occasion. One man tells of his experience on approaching the Nile and says that as the sun was rising, its beam struck the water to make a deep red reflection, the intensity of which increased with the increasing light until "the entire mass of the waters was opaque, and of a dark red, more like blood than anything else to which I could compare it." Others have sought to explain this phenomenon by the presence of an inconceivably rapid growth of infusoria and minute cryptogamous plants of a red color. It is said that these minute plants increase so rapidly that they seemed to flow. Those who are interested in a lengthy study of this matter should read Hours with

the Bible by Geikie, volume 2, chapter 5.

*The river shall become foul.* This statement is sufficient to disprove the theories that have been suggested as an explanation of this miracle. When the sun shines upon the river and its waters reflect the red rays, the taste of the water is not changed. In fact, the Arabs claim that the water never tastes better than when it is red. They refer to it as the "Red Nile." Neither does the multiplication of these minute plants of a reddish color affect the taste of the water. According to the statement of our text, the fish in the river died, and the water became foul so that the Egyptians loathed to drink the water from the river. Harmer tells of the delicious taste of the water of the Nile and says that it was not uncommon for the Egyptians to drink several gallons daily. If the water was so affected that they would loathe that which they had

formerly so much enjoyed, something more was done to the water than could be done by the shining of the red rays of the sun upon it. If we believe that God created the blood that runs in the bodies of man and animals, why should we hesitate to believe that he could change the water to blood? If we believe that the Son of God had power to change water into wine, why hesitate to believe that God could change water into blood? Those who question the miraculous power of God through Moses are the same people who question the miraculous power of God through Christ and his apostles. The safe course is to believe that which we read in the Bible. Until man can write a book that will compare with the Bible or that will accomplish as much good as the Bible has accomplished, we will be safe in accepting what it says as the truth.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Contrast the beginning of the work of Moses and Jesus. Turning water into blood versus wine.

2. The tendency to explain these plagues as unusual natural phenomena is plain infidelity. People who hold such views either hold such views with reference to the resur-

rection of Christ, or soon will hold such views.

3. The God who created blood to run in the arteries of Adam could change the water of a district into blood. To disbelieve the one is to pave the way for disbelief of the other.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

What is said of God's readiness to keep his promises?

Does God's time for fulfilling his promises always seem right to man?

What promise did Jehovah make to Moses at this time?

How did the people react to the added burdens which Pharaoh put upon them?

How did their reaction affect Moses?

#### Golden Text Explained

Against what were the ten plagues directed?

Describe the change of mind which was brought about in Pharaoh by the plagues.

Against what was the plague of our text directed?

What was the attitude of the people of Egypt towards the Nile?

How did this plague magnify Jehovah above the Nile?

#### First Encounter with Magicians

What sign did Moses perform before Pharaoh?

What do you know of the wise men of that time?

Were they able to duplicate the miracle of Moses?

How was the miracle of Moses shown to be superior to their miracle?

Do you know the names of these magicians?

What effect did these miracles have upon Pharaoh?

What do you know of the process of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart?

#### First Plague Brought on Egypt

What does the word "stubborn" as used in our text mean?

Why would Pharaoh be going out to the water?

Why did Moses make mention of his rod when speaking to Pharaoh?

How have critics attempted to explain this miracle as a natural happening?

Can you prove that the water was actually turned to blood?

What is said of the pleasure the Egyptians got from drinking water from the Nile?

What is said of their change in attitude toward the river?

Is it more difficult to believe that God turned the water into blood than it is to believe that he put blood in our body?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson VI—November 9, 1952

## THE LAST PLAGUE

## The Lesson Text

Ex. 11: 1-10

1 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mó-ses, Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pha-raoh, and upon E'-gypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

3 And Je-ho'-vah gave the people favor in the sight of the E-gyp'-tians. Moreover the man Mo'-ses was very great in the land of E'-gypt, in the sight of Pha'-raoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

4 And Mó-ses said, Thus saith Je-ho'-vah, About midnight will I go out into the midst of E'-gypt:

5 And all the first-born in the land of E'-gypt shall die, from the first-born of Pha'-raoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle.

6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of E'-gypt, such as there hath not been, nor shall be any more.

7 But against any of the children of Is'-ra-el shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Je-ho'-vah doth make a distinction between the E'-gyp'-tians and Is'-ra-el.

8 And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pha'-raoh in hot anger.

9 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mo'-ses, Pha'-raoh will not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of E'-gypt.

10 And Mó-ses and Aar'-on did all these wonders before Pha'-raoh: and Je-ho'-vah hardened Pha'-raoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Is'-ra-el go out of his land.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"He smote also all the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength."* (Psalm 105: 36.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Exodus 12: 29, 30.

## Daily Bible Readings

November 3.	M. The Plague of Frogs (Ex. 8: 1-15)
November 4. T.....	The Plague of Lice (Ex. 8: 16-24)
November 5. W.....	The Plague of Murrain (Ex. 9: 1-7)
November 6. T.....	The Plague of Boils (Ex. 9: 8-12)
November 7. F.....	The Plague of Hail (Ex. 9: 13-26)
November 8.	S. The Plague of Locusts (Ex. 10: 1-20)
November 9. S. ....	The Plague of Darkness (Ex. 10: 20-29)

**TIME.**—1491 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Egypt

**PERSONS.**—Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, and the first born.

## Introduction

The plagues which God brought upon Egypt have furnished material for criticism by the enemies of God and the Bible. Some have said that they may all be explained on natural grounds; that they were unusual, but not miraculous. Others have said that if we admit they are miraculous.

they are an indictment of God, proving him to be cruel and destructive. Those who make such contentions overlook the purposes God may have had in bringing the plagues upon Egypt. (1) Moses needed to be strengthened for the work before him, and these plagues were calculated to

educate and discipline him for that work. They served to give him confidence and courage to replace the timidity and reluctance which characterized him when God called him in Mount Horeb. (2) The people of Israel had been held in bondage so long that they needed demonstrations of God's power and glory to educate them to the point where they would turn their backs upon Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness. They needed to see great signs and wonders wrought through Moses to be assured that he was God's servant and that he was capable of taking care of them in spite of the power of Pharaoh. (3) We may well conclude that God designed to produce a salutary effect upon the people of Egypt and cause them to realize his power and majesty as superior to that of their national gods. We are told that a "mixed multitude" went up with the Israelites. (Ex. 12: 38.) No doubt they felt like Jethro, who said, "Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods." (Ex. 18: 11a.) Everyone of the plagues was calculated to destroy the faith of the people of Egypt in one or more of their gods. They worshiped serpents. When the rod of Moses was turned to a serpent and it destroyed the rods of the magicians which were turned to serpents, the power of the

God of Moses was demonstrated to be superior to the gods of the Egyptians. The Egyptians worshiped cattle. When all the cattle of Egypt were plagued with murrain, the objects of their worship were made contemptible. When Moses called for these plagues to cease, they ceased. This showed that Moses was greater than their gods who were powerless to stop the plagues. (4) No doubt the plagues were designed to give Pharaoh sufficient warning of the intentions of God to free his people from bondage and furnish him sufficient motive to free them from bondage without the destruction of the nation. Had Pharaoh heeded these warnings instead of hardening his heart, he could have saved himself and his nation from a lot of sorrow. There was never a time during the course of these plagues that Pharaoh could not have repented and allowed the people to go without further harm to Egypt. We must not think that God forced Pharaoh to be stubborn so he might manifest his power. It is true that God foreknew Pharaoh's stubborn attitude and that God planned his action in the light of that foreknowledge; but still Pharaoh was as free to choose his course of action as we are free to choose our course of action today.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. The Sovereignty of God Over All.

How can we justify the act of God in killing all the first born of Egypt? They were not responsible for enslaving the people of God. Nor were they responsible for keeping them in Egypt against their expressed desire to go into the wilderness. Why, then, were the first born killed? Only in the fact that God is the sovereign Ruler of all the earth can we see any justification of his course of action in this matter. The first born who were of age, who had reached the age of accountability, were in sin and rebellion against God and deserved to die on account of their sins. The first born who were not old enough to be accountable for their deeds would fare better to die and go to heaven than they would fare if they lived in that evil environment of Egypt, learned the ways of sin, and were finally lost. None but God had the

right to call the former to account at that or any other time, and none but God could take the innocent without involving himself in sin. The fact that all men are his creatures, sustained by him, and answerable to him at all times gives him the right to dispose of them in any way his wisdom and holiness may direct. He had given the first born their life: he had the right to take it. (Job 1: 21; 2: 10.) The foolish man said he had goods laid up for many years, but God said his soul was required that night. (Luke 12: 20.)

### 2. The Resourcefulness of God in Accomplishing His Purposes.

God's resources are unlimited. He is all-wise; he is all-powerful. He makes the mountains, the seas, the rivers—all creation, animate and inanimate, to serve him and his purposes. In his dealings with Pharaoh we see him using serpents, frogs, flies, disease,

the elements, and even death to accomplish his purposes. When the Egyptians would have overtaken his people to harm them, God took their chariot wheels off. He placed a cloud between the people and the Egyptians which was darkness to the Egyptians and light to his people. When his people were hungry in a desert waste, he rained manna from heaven and sent the quails in the evening. When the people would need precious metal with which to build sanctuary, God gave them favor with the Egyptians who furnished all the gold and other precious metals they would need. If the people needed water to drink, God caused an abundance of fresh water to flow from the flinty rock. There is no limit to his resourcefulness to accomplish his purposes. When he tells us that he will give us a home in heaven far beyond our poor power to imagine, we may well believe him

if we judge the future by the past. His wisdom and power are sufficient to do whatever he pleases to do for his people.

3. **The Wisdom of God Is Seen in the Timing of the Events of Our Lesson with the Men Necessary to Accomplish His Purposes.** God had to have a leader for his people. He had to have that leader at the time Egypt had a ruler of the character of this very Pharaoh. This leader of his people had to be prepared for his work, and time was required to develop such a leader. Foreknowledge as well as power was required to bring these men together at such a time as would serve the purposes of God. If God so ruled in the affairs of men and nations at that time, and if he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, may we not conclude that he rules in the affairs of the world today?

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Israel Prepares (Ex. 11: 1-3)

*Yet one more plague.* Students of Hebrew tell us that the first verse should read, "Jehovah hod said unto Moses . . ." Moses does seem to have had this information when he met Pharaoh as recorded in Ex. 10: 24ff., for when Pharaoh told Moses that Moses should see his face no more, Moses told him he was right about that. (Ex. 10: 29.) So Moses must have known at that time that there would be but one more plague.

*He shall surely thrust you out.* Jehovah told Moses that when Pharaoh finally decided to let Israel go, he would literally thrust them out, and compel them to go in haste. On account of this warning, Moses would naturally have the people prepare themselves and stay prepared to go in haste at a moment's notice. Considerable plans and organization were required to get more than two millions of people ready for such an exodus, but there had been plenty of time to make such plans and to perfect such an organization. Moses had been in Egypt working with Pharaoh for nearly a year before the tenth plague was brought upon Egypt.

*Let them ask jewels of gold and silver.* Moses was told to encourage the Israelites to ask of the Egyptians

pieces of jewelry. The King James Version has *borrow* instead of *ask*. Infidels have criticized the Bible, and God, for the fact that the people were told to borrow as if they intimated they would return the jewelry when they knew they would never see the Egyptians, again. But the Hebrew word is poorly translated by our word *borrow*. The people were simply to ask the Egyptians to give them jewelry, and God gave them such favor in the eyes of the people that their request was granted. In speaking of these critics Adam Clarke says: "Let these men know that there was no borrowing in the case; and that if accounts were fairly balanced, Egypt would be found still in considerable arrears to Israel. Let it also be considered that the Egyptians had never any right to the services of the Hebrews. Egypt owed its policy, its opulence, and even its political existence, to the Israelites. What had Joseph for his important services? Nothing! He had neither district, nor city, nor lordship in Egypt; nor *did he reserve any . to his children*. All his services were gratuitous; and being animated with a better hope than an earthly possession could inspire, he desired that even his bones should be carried up out of Egypt . . . and had built treasure cities or fortresses, we

know not how many; and two whole cities, Pithom and Raamses, besides; and for all these services they had no compensation whatever, but were besides cruelly abused, and obliged to witness, as the sum of their calamities, the daily murder of their male infants. These particulars considered, will infidelity ever again dare to produce this case again in support of its worthless pretensions?"

**Jehovah gave the people favor.** It is not necessary that we understand that God moved miraculously upon the hearts of the Egyptians. It is known that Pharaoh was not loved by his people. His treatment of the Israelites was so cruel that the sympathy of the people generally was stirred; and the plagues had created an impression in favor of the God of the Israelites. In these ways Jehovah gave the people favor.

**Moses was very great in the land of Egypt.** The reputation Moses had in Egypt was due to the miracles he had worked. Many of the servants of Pharaoh had long been convinced that Moses was superior to Pharaoh and that God was superior to the gods of Egypt. We are told that the servants of Pharaoh "feared the word of Jehovah" and saved their cattle from the hail. (Ex. 9: 20.) Pharaoh's servants also advised him to allow the people to go lest the nation be destroyed. (Ex. 10: 7.) And the people generally believed Moses to be the servant of a greater power than the gods of Egypt, hence they were willing to give their jewelry. It is also possible that the Egyptians were afraid to refuse the request of the Israelites for jewelry lest some calamity come upon them. So great was the reputation of Moses and the favor which Jehovah gave the people with the Egyptians that when time came to build the tabernacle the people had more than enough jewelry of gold and silver that they could give all that was needed to build the tabernacle and its furniture. (Ex. 35: 20ff.)

## II. Moses Warns Pharaoh (Ex. 11: 4-8)

**Thus saith Jehovah.** Moses used this solemn form of expression each time he announced the coming of a plague upon Egypt. It served to let Pharaoh know that Moses was acting

and speaking as Jehovah's representative and was calculated to cultivate in the heart of Pharaoh a respect for God.

**About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt.** There is something about night that adds to the horror of disaster. The weeping and wailing of people in the night carry farther and stir the imagination because of the inability to see what is causing the trouble. It should be noticed that Jehovah said he would smite the first born. People usually talk about the "death-angel" going over Egypt as if the Bible used that expression. Whether Jehovah used an angel or not is not told. Some commentators argue whether Jehovah used a *good* or an *evil* angel for this work of destruction when no mention is made of any kind of an angel.

**All the first born of Egypt shall die.** This meant a death in every home in the nation. Every home in the nation was to be bowed in grief at the same time. Throughout all Egypt the names of Jehovah and Moses were to be in the minds of all people and the fear of Jehovah was to be forced upon all the people. The first born of Pharaoh was to be the next on the throne and all first-born sons were to take the place of their fathers, hence this was the greatest blow short of absolute destruction that could be brought upon the nation. Not only were the first born of human beings to be taken, but also of all beasts. Since the Egyptians worshiped cattle, this was a blow at their religion. It showed Jehovah superior to the god which presided over their cattle.

**There shall be a great cry.** Moses predicted that there would be such a great cry as Egypt had never known and such as would never be known at any later time. With death striking in every home at the hour of midnight, the cry could be heard from one end of the nation to the other.

**A dog shall not move his tongue against man or beast.** Moses said harm would come to every home of the Egyptians, but absolutely no harm would come to the homes of the Israelites, not so much as a dog barking at them. Adam Clarke gives considerable space to the discussion of

this statement and suggests that since dogs often howl when their master's home is disturbed, the lack of barking of the dogs in Israel would be proof that no harm had come to those homes.

***Jehovah doth make a distinction.***

Some of the plagues were not felt in Goshen where the Israelites lived so that people might know that Jehovah cared for his people and that the gods of Egypt were not able to care for them. (Ex. 8: 22.) Since one main purpose of these plagues was to show the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt, this statement may be viewed as meaning that Jehovah makes a difference in the way he blesses the people who serve him and the people who worship idols. This would be an inducement for the people of Egypt to forsake idolatry and worship the true God. We must not think of God as ceasing to use every means possible to reclaim his creatures from idolatry as long as there is any possibility of doing so. Hence, these plagues served as a means of punishing Pharaoh and his servants for their cruelty to the Israelites and as a means of reclaiming as many as possible from the curse of idolatry which was practiced in Egypt. Often we view Jehovah as a national Deity, caring for the people of Israel and as being against all other nations. God had a peculiar purpose for the people of Israel to fill and special providence was exercised over them for the accomplishment of that purpose; but other than that, God loved and cared for the people of all nations then as he does now.

***Thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down.*** Moses predicts that the servants of Pharaoh will come to him and ask the people to leave, but he does not say that Pharaoh himself will come to him. In fact he said in Ex. 10: 29 that Pharaoh would never see his face again. He also predicts that the servants of Pharaoh will bow down to him and honor him as the real ruler instead of Pharaoh, or superior to Pharaoh.

***Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee.*** This is the statement which Moses predicted the servants of Pharaoh would make after the death of the first born. The last plague

would be such a terrible visitation that it would not merely gain the consent of Pharaoh to let the people leave, but it would cause him to thrust them out. Looking upon Moses as the king, ruler, of the Israelites, Pharaoh speaks of the people as those that followed him.

***He went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.*** Feeling between Moses and Pharaoh was as high and intense as was possible. Pharaoh had threatened to kill him. (Ex. 10: 28.) Perhaps only the providence of God had prevented his death already. It is difficult to conceive of Pharaoh allowing a man to live who had caused as much trouble in the kingdom as Moses had caused. However, in spite of the intense feeling on this occasion, Moses spoke calmly to Pharaoh. He did not indulge in bitter railing and abuse as men are tempted to do under similar circumstances.

**m. Obstinacy of Pharaoh (Ex. 11:**

9, 10)

***Pharaoh will not hearken unto you.***

This is what Jehovah said to Moses, and like verse 1, is to be viewed as having been said to Moses before the time Moses left Pharaoh for the last time. This was to fortify Moses against the delay caused by the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

***That my wonders may be multiplied.*** Here again we have what seems to be a statement of purpose contrary to what we know of the nature of God. Some have accepted this as meaning that God hardened Pharaoh's heart for the sole purpose of showing his wonders in Egypt. The truth is that God took advantage of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to make a display of his wonders, his power and majesty. Pharaoh was perfectly free to determine his own course, as free as we are today to determine what we will do. The obstinacy of Pharaoh, though it delayed the departure of the people of Israel for about one year, served several good purposes. (1) "It gave them time to organize themselves, and make all necessary preparations for a sudden departure. (2) It deeply impressed the Egyptians, and led them to abstain from all interference with the Israelites for above three centuries. (3) It impressed the neighboring nations also to some ex-

tent, and either prevented them from offering opposition to the Israelites, or made them contend with less heart, and so with less success against them." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh.* The presence of Aaron and the work he did in connection with the miracles and plagues on Egypt were mentioned more frequently in the beginning of this series of contests between Israel and Egypt than during the latter part. It will be remembered that Moses was timid

and somewhat lacking in self-confidence when he was called and when he began his work. Aaron was given to him as his mouthpiece and helper. No doubt he was needed more at the beginning than he was later. When Moses got into his work and gained self-confidence and assurance he soon assumed positive leadership, a thing which Aaron was never capable of doing. He was never capable of being anything more than a helper, and at times seemed unfit for that position.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Study Paul's use of this experience of Pharaoh in Rom. 9: 14-18.

2. Moses was held in favor by the people of Egypt. This is an indication that the men who governed Egypt were not popular rulers. People usually think for themselves and if allowed to do so will give expression to their thinking.

3. The fact that Moses was able to predict the action of Pharaoh was enough to prove to the Israelites and the Egyptians that he was a servant of God. This is one thing that caused him to be great in the land of Egypt, and it no doubt contributed to the favor which all the Israelites had in the eyes of the Egyptians.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

How did the ten plagues affect Moses?

How were the Israelites benefited by the plagues?

What effect did the plagues have upon the people of Egypt?

What was the purpose of the plagues with reference to Pharaoh?

Was Pharaoh free to let the people go after the third or fourth plague?

#### Golden Text Explained

What does our text suggest as to the sovereignty of God?

How does our text teach the resourcefulness of God in accomplishing his purposes?

How is the wisdom of God suggested in our text?

#### Israel Prepares

What did Moses predict with reference to their leaving Egypt?

What use did the Israelites make of the favor God gave them with the Egyptians?

What use have infidels made of this matter? And can you justify the Israelites in what they did?

Suggest some ways in which God gave the people favor with the Egyptians.

What made Moses great in the sight of the Egyptians?

#### Moses Warns Pharaoh

What solemn expression did Moses use when telling Pharaoh of the plagues? And why?

What was to be the last and most terrible plague?

How extensive was the plague?

How did Jehovah show a distinction between Israel and Egypt? And why?

Is there anything to indicate that some of the Egyptians came to believe in and serve Jehovah?

What relationship did Pharaoh look upon Moses as having with the Israelites?

What was the attitude of Moses when he left Pharaoh the last time?

Did Moses allow his anger to cause him to be ugly towards Pharaoh?

#### Obstinacy of Pharaoh

Did Moses expect Pharaoh to hearken to his last appeal? Why?

Give and discuss three ways in which the obstinacy of Pharaoh benefited the people of Israel.

Discuss the relationship of Aaron to Moses. Did Moses need Aaron as much at the time of our lesson as he did when he first began to talk with Pharaoh? Why?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VII—November 16, 1952

THE PASSOVER

The Lesson Text

Ex. 12: 1-12

1 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'ses and Aar'-on in the land of E'-gypt, saying,

2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Is'-ra-el, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household:

4 And if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Is'-ra-el shall kill it at even.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it.

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

9 Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof.

10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

11 And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Je-ho'-vah's passover.

12 For I will go through the land of E'-gypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of E'-gypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of E'-gypt I will execute judgments: I am Je-ho'-vah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For *our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ.*" (1 Cor. 5: 7b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Numbers 9: 1-12.

Daily Bible Readings

- November 10. M..... The First Passover in Canaan (Josh. 5: 10-12)
- November 11. T..... Passover Under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30: 13-22)
- November 12. W..... Passover Under Josiah (2 Kings 23: 21-23)
- November 13. T..... Passover Under Ezra (Ezra 6: 19-22)
- November 14. F..... Jesus Keeps the Passover (Mark 14: 12-25)
- November 15. S..... Jesus Our Passover (1 Cor. 5: 1-8)
- November 16. S..... The Lamb Without Blemish (1 Pet. 1: 17-25)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—Egypt.

PERSONS.—Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, and the first born.

Introduction

In the Jewish writings there is a distinction made between the *Egyptian passover* and the *permanent passover*. There was something added by Moses and by tradition that was not found in the Egyptian passover. Moses ordained that all male members of Israel were to appear in the sanc-

tuary of the Lord with the offering of firstlings. (Ex. 23: 14-19.) The waving of the first fruits of the harvest was also an addition by Moses. (Lev. 23: 4-14.) And if there were any who were not ceremonially clean or who were traveling and unable to attend the passover on the 14th of

Nisan, they might celebrate it one month later. (Num. 9: 1-14.) The Egyptian passover had to be consumed in haste and the eaters were to be dressed in their traveling clothes, while no such requirement was made concerning the permanent passover. The women were not required to come to Jerusalem for the passover although they were at liberty to do so if they chose. Since Jerusalem was the central gathering place, there was always the difficulty of finding places to stay during these feasts. The hospitality of the people of Jerusalem was taxed to the limit and it is said that guests left the skins of the paschal lambs and the vessels which they used in their religious ceremonies to their hosts in return for the hospitality. In commenting on the number of people attending these feasts Josephus says that there were 3,000,000 attending

the passover of A.D. 65 and on another occasion, there were nearly as many and they required 256,500 lambs to make their offerings. During this feast, no leaven was allowed to be used; everyone eating only unleavened bread. The time for beginning to use unleavened bread is said to have been determined as follows: "Two desecrated cakes of thanksgiving offering were placed on the bench in the temple: as long as they were thus exposed, all the people ate leaven; when one of them was removed, they abstained from eating but would not burn it; and when the other was removed, all the people began to burn the leaven." This was on the 14th day of Nisan. This was the first month of the Jewish sacred year and the 7th month of their civil year. It had 30 days and answers generally to the last part of March and the first part of April.

### Golden Text Explained

**Our Passover Is Christ.** Jesus as our passover lamb is similar to the lamb offered by the Jews in that he was appointed a sacrifice. He spoke of himself as the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1: 29.) That a lamb should have been used in the original passover instead of some other animal is due only to the appointment of God. In the wisdom of God it was thought best for the purpose. In like manner, by the appointment of God and because he was the only sacrifice adequate, Jesus became our passover.

There is another suggestion as to similarity in the innocence of the two. The lamb has always been considered a type of innocence and so our passover, though slain in connection with sin was himself perfectly innocent of sin. Another requirement of the passover lamb was that it must be without blemish. And so Peter says that we have been redeemed not with silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish. (1 Pet. 1: 19.)

Another resemblance between the two is that they both were slain and that they offered no resistance. The lamb is characterized by lack of resistance to ill-treatment and Isaiah refers to that when he predicted that the Messiah would be "as a lamb that

is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isa. 53: 7.)

The blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts. This sprinkling of blood was for the preservation of the first born when God came over to slay the first born of Egypt. So the blood of Christ our passover, is to be sprinkled for the salvation of our souls. Paul exhorts us to "draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not." (Heb. 10: 22, 23.)

The flesh of the paschal lamb was eaten. The whole of it was to be eaten or burned. This perhaps suggests our reception of Christ our passover. He is to be accepted wholeheartedly without any reservation. Those who go through the form of accepting Christ but have certain mental reservations as to the way they conduct themselves will find that they have not in reality accepted Christ as their passover lamb.

The offering of this paschal lamb in Egypt was for the purpose of saving the first born in each family from destruction. So the purpose of the offering of Christ our passover is for

our salvation from eternal destruction. If the Jews had depended on their relation to Abraham instead of the blood which was commanded to save their first born from destruction, they would have perished the same as the first born among the Egyptians that first passover night. It matters not what our relationship is to any individual or group of individuals, if we are found in disobedience to the commandments of the Lord, we must suffer the penalty. So our safety lies not in our wealth or our social and political positions. But our safety lies in humble submission to the commandments of the Lord. It is entirely probable that some Israelite

might have argued that his moral standards were so high and so perfect that it was not necessary for him to sacrifice a lamb. Surely everyone will agree that one's moral attainments would not have saved him from destruction. So there are people today who refuse to accept Christ because they think they are so nearly perfect in morals that they do not need Christ. Living a clean moral life is very important, but it cannot take the place of the blood of Christ as an atonement for our sins. And anyone who depends upon it and rejects the blood of Christ, will be disappointed in the day of Judgment.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. The Passover Instituted (Ex. 12:

1-4)

*This month shall be unto you the beginning of months.* The Jews had two calendars, the Civil and the Sacred. "It is supposed that God now changed the commencement of the Jewish year." The month to which this change refers, the month of Abib, answers to a part of our March and April; as it is supposed that previous to this, the year began with Tisri which answers to part of our September; for in this month the Jews supposed God created the world, when the earth appeared at once with its fruits in perfection. From this period, the Jews have formed a twofold commencement of the year, which have given rise to a twofold denomination of the year itself; to which they afterwards attend in all their workings: this which began with Tisri or September, was called their Civil year; that which began with Abib, or March, was called the Sacred or Ecclesiastical year. (Adam Clarke.) Clarke calls the month Abib instead of Nisan. Moses used the term Abib, but the later books, Nehemiah and Esther, use Nisan.

*In the 10th day of this month.* This was the day on which they were to begin their preparation for the passover. This was when the lamb was to be selected, but it was not until the 14th day that it was to be killed.

*A lamb for a household.* The critics of the passover have attacked this and similar points on the grounds

that since a household would not contain more than 5 to 10 persons and since there were some three million Jews in Egypt, too many lambs would have been required to satisfy the demands. Not that there was an insufficient number of sheep, but that there would not be enough of the age and character required. The lamb must be without spot or blemish and must be one year old. But the God who could foresee the bondage of Israel and who could make his plans hundreds of years before time to deliver them would have no difficulty in supplying a sufficient number of lambs to serve his purpose.

*If the household be too little for a lamb.* The Lord would not intend that there should be any waste of the meat. If there were not sufficient people in a household to consume a lamb, another household was to be invited to share the lamb. Some writers in meeting the arguments that there were not enough yearling lambs, have suggested that this passover meal was observed somewhat as we observe the Lord's Supper in our time and that one lamb would accommodate a large number of households. This argument, intended to defend the Bible statement, seems a little farfetched.

*Ye shall take it from the sheep or from the goats.* The original word used for lamb may mean either a young sheep or a young goat, though our English word according to common usage, does not permit of this meaning.

## II. Instructions for Preparation (Ex. 12: 5-7)

### *This lamb shall be without blemish.*

This refers to the physical condition of the lamb, which was to have no natural imperfections; it was not to be diseased; it was not to be torn; and no bones were to be broken. This was intended as a type of Jesus Christ and consequently, must have no imperfections. The Jews in this matter, as in nearly every thing else, went to extremes in their traditions. They made a list of some 50 things which render a lamb unfit as an offering. The lamb was to be a male a year old. According to the Jewish practice, this meant that it was not to be more than one year old. In fact, it was acceptable to the Jews any time within the age of 8 days and 12 months.

*Ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day.* The lamb was to be taken from the herd and kept apart until the fourteenth day. Why this was required, we have no way of knowing. Moses made no such requirement as putting the lamb up on the tenth day and keeping it until the fourteenth, and if the Jews have practiced it after this first passover there is no record of it.

*The whole assembly shall kill it at even.* This does not mean that there was only one lamb put up before the whole assembly and that all the people were to take part in killing it. It simply means that each family was to put up one and that any person in Israel might do the work of offering the lamb. The killing of the lamb was not, at that time, looked upon as a priestly act. The lamb was to be killed *at even*. The margin says that it is to be *between the two evenings*. There has been much controversy on the meaning of this expression. The Samaritans and a number of modern scholars understand it to mean the space of time between the setting of the sun and the moment when the stars become visible, at the time when darkness sets in. However, there is a tradition which interprets the phrase to mean "from afternoon to the disappearing of the sun, the first evening being from the time when the sun begins to disappear from its vertical or noon day point towards the West; and from

the going down and vanishing out of sight, which is the reason why the daily sacrifice might be killed at 12:30 p.m. on Friday . . . but as the paschal lamb was slain after the daily sacrifice, it generally took place from 2:30 to 5:50 p.m." Those who wish to read a lengthy discussion should see McClintock and Strong, Volume VII, page 735.

*Take of the blood and put it on the two side posts and on the lintel.* The blood of the passover lamb was to be sprinkled on the two door facings and the part at the top connecting them which was called the *lintel*. Someone has said that no blood was sprinkled on the threshold because this blood was typical of the blood of Christ and that his blood is not to be trampled underfoot. This, however, seems to be a rather farfetched argument. The blood was caught in a vessel and a mop made of hyssop was dipped in the blood to scatter it upon the door facing. This blood was to serve to identify the house as one belonging to God's people. When the Lord saw the blood, he passed over that house leaving the first born alive, but if no blood was found on the door facing, the first born in the house was killed. A lamb was substituted for the first born of the house. This is typical of Christ as our passover. He was substituted for us in death. He took our sins upon himself and died for us. When the people of Jerusalem chose Barabbas to be set free instead of Jesus, there must have been rejoicing in the heart of Barabbas, that someone took his place in death. So there ought to be rejoicing in our hearts today that Jesus took our place and suffered the penalty for our sins.

## III. Instructions for Eating the Passover (Ex. 12: 8-12)

*They shall eat the flesh roasted in fire.* The Egyptians ate raw flesh in honor of one of the gods. Some think that specific instruction was given here to roast the flesh that they might not be like the Egyptians.

*Unleavened bread with bitter herbs.* Leaven has always been considered a kind of corruption being produced by fermentation. Hence, it has been used as a type of corruption, moral and spiritual. It is in harmony with this thought that Paul urged the

church at Corinth to "purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.) It is not possible for us to be certain as to the meaning of the bitter herbs, but the unanimous opinion as to the reason for the use of these bitter herbs is that they were to remind the Jews of the terrible bondage they had experienced. Throughout their generations they ate this passover lamb and unleavened bread with bitter herbs in order to remind them that their fathers had been held in cruel bondage and that God remembered his covenant with them and delivered them.

*Eat not of it raw nor boil it with water.* Some have supposed that this command was given because the Jews were in the habit of eating raw flesh, but for this supposition there is no proof. It is known that the Jews commonly boiled flesh as many of us do today. Perhaps it was to be roasted on account of the haste in which they were to cook it and eat it.

*Its head with its legs and all the inwards thereof.* This indicates that the lamb was to be roasted whole. It was not to be cut in parts. For this reason, if a family was too small to consume it, another family was invited to share it. There is some difficulty from our point of view in understanding how the inwards were not to be removed. Adam Clarke is of the opinion that the inwards refer only to the heart, lungs, and liver, and

kidneys, and so on, and not the intestinal tract.

*Let nothing of it remain until the morning.* That which remained such as the inedible parts, was to be burned. It is supposed that this was done so that none of it would corrupt. Since it was typical of Christ as our passover, there was to be no corruption about it.

*Your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand.* This is the instruction the people had with reference to their dress while eating the passover. They were to eat in haste and be ready to move at a moment's notice.

*For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite the first born in the land of Egypt.* This was the climax of the punishment brought upon Egypt for their enslavement of the Jews. It was also the climax of the contrast between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt. Since the Egyptians worshiped animals, the slaying of the first born would show the superiority of God over the things which the Egyptians worshiped.

*I am Jehovah.* God's judgments ere never for his selfish pleasures. He was interested in his own people realizing his might and his holiness. He was also anxious that the Egyptians should understand these things as well as to suffer punishment which they so richly deserved. National punishments had a good purpose as well as punitive reasons. The punishment of one generation for its misdeeds may open the eyes of the next generation so as to bring about salvation. This undoubtedly was the purpose of the punishments brought upon Egypt.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Memorials always have facts back of them. Since the passover was observed throughout the ages by the Jews, it would be foolish to deny the reality of which it is a memorial.

2. In times of low spirituality in the national life of the Jews they for-

got to keep the passover and showed a lack of appreciation for God's blessings upon them. So when people today forget to observe the memorial of the death of Christ, they betray a low tide of spirituality.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Introduction

Name some ceremonies added to the passover which were not observed in Egypt. What do you know of the difficulty of car-

ing for crowds at the passover in Jerusalem?  
 What was not allowed in Jewish homes during passover week?  
 What was the signal for the time to get rid of the leaven?  
 In what month was the passover? And what do you know of the Jewish calendar?

Golden Text Explained

Name and discuss several ways in which the paschal lamb was typical of Christ.  
 Was the paschal lamb offered to save all the Israelites from death?  
 Would the social position or wealth of a first born have saved him from death?  
 What lesson should those who depend upon their morals get from this today?

The Passover Instituted

What do you know of the civil and ecclesiastical calendars of the Jews?  
 When did the preparation for the passover begin?  
 What do you know of the number of lambs consumed on this occasion? And of the difficulty in finding sufficient number that would meet the requirements?

Could a goat be offered at the passover?

Instructions for Preparation

What was required in the passover lamb as a fit offering?  
 On what day of the month was the offering made?  
 At what time of the day was the lamb to be slain?  
 What was to be done with the blood of the lamb?  
 Of what is this ceremony typical?

Instructions for Eating the Passover

How was the lamb to be cooked?  
 What was to be eaten with the lamb?  
 Of what is the unleavened bread typical?  
 And the bitter herbs?  
 What was to be done with that which could not be eaten?  
 How were the people to be dressed while eating? And why?  
 How did Jehovah show his superior strength over the gods of Egypt?  
 What were the reasons for punishing Egypt?  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

Lesson VIII—November 23, 1952

ISRAEL CROSSES THE RED SEA

The Lesson Text

Ex. 14: 21-31

21 And Mó-ses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Je-ho'-vah caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Is'-ra-el went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the E-gyp'-tians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pha'-raoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24 And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Je-ho'-vah looked forth upon the host of the E-gyp'-tians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the E-gyp'-tians.

25 And he took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the E-gyp'-tians said, Let us flee from the face of Is'-ra-el; for Je-ho'-vah fighteth for them against the E-gyp'-tians.

26 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mó-ses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again

upon the E-gyp'-tians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27 And Mó-ses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the E-gyp'-tians fled against it; and Je-ho'-vah overthrew the E-gyp'-tians in the midst of the sea.

28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pha'-raoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them.

29 But the children of Is'-ra-el walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30 Thus Je-ho'-vah saved Is'-ra-el that day out of the hand of the E-gyp'-tians; and Is'-ra-el saw the E-gyp'-tians dead upon the sea-shore.

31 And Is'-ra-el saw the great work which Je-ho'-vah did upon the E-gyp'-tians, and the people feared Je-ho'-vah: and they believed in Je-ho'-vah, and in his servant Mó-ses.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through a wilderness(Psalm 106: 9.)*

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Cor. 10: 1-5.

### Daily Bible Readings

November 17. M..... Israelites Avoid War (Ex. 13: 17-22)  
 November 18. T..... Jehovah Fights for Israel (Ex. 14: 10-20)  
 November 19. W..... The Song of Deliverance (Ex. 15: 1-18)  
 November 20. T..... Jehovah Led His People (Psalm 77: 16-20)  
 November 21. F..... Jehovah Works for His People (Psalm 78: 12-20)  
 November 22. S..... These Things Our Examples (1 Cor. 10: 1-13)  
 November 23. S..... Crossing the Sea by Faith (Heb. 11: 23-31)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—The Red Sea in Egypt.

PERSONS.—Moses, Israel, Pharaoh, and the Egyptian army.

### Introduction

Before the Israelites left Egypt, some very important ordinances were given. First, they were told to observe the passover annually. For seven days they were to eat unleavened bread, and the seventh day was to be a feast unto Jehovah. They were to recall their experiences in Egypt, especially their deliverances at the Red Sea and tell these experiences to their children. (Ex. 13: 3-10.) And the purpose of this memorial feast was “that the law of Jehovah may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt.”

The next ordinance given the people was that of the consecration of the first born to Jehovah. (Ex. 13: 11-16.)

- God said that all first<sup>1</sup>: born, both of man and beast, belong to him. The first-born males of all unclean beasts had to be redeemed or killed. They had no choice in the matter of the first-born male children, they had to be redeemed. There was a tradition among the Jews that if a father neglected to redeem his first-born son, the son had to pay the redemption

price when he reached his majority. This ordinance was also a memorial, for they were told to tell their children that the first born were redeemed because of the slaying of the first born in Egypt.

Another thing of interest in making arrangements for their journey is the cloud which attended the Israelites. By night it was a pillar of fire to give them light and by day it was a cloud. (Ex. 13: 21, 22.) This cloud served three purposes. (1) It was a guide by day. They were to move when the cloud moved; they were to stop and camp when the cloud stopped; and they were to turn when the cloud directed them to do so. (2) They would need light at night for the camp. Among more than two millions of people there would always be need for light in the camp. (3) The cloud served as a covering from the intense heat of the desert. The children and the aged needed protection from the desert sun. David said, “He spread a cloud for a covering.” (Psalm 105: 39.)

### Golden Text Explained

The origin of the name of the Red Sea has given rise to much study and discussion. Some scholars contend that the name Red was given it because of some natural phenomenon, such as the reflection of the mountains to the west of the sea. And it is generally admitted that there is such a reflection at certain times. Others say the term Red is given because of the great amount of red sea weeds

which abound in parts of the Sea. Still others say that red storks are so numerous on the water that the term was given the Sea. But according to Smith's Bible Dictionary, the reason that has the best foundation is that the Sea took this name from a great king who reigned in the country adjacent to the Sea. He was of a family named “Himyer,” which means red. Added to this tradition, there is

the fact that these "Himyerites" were descendants of Shem, so were called "red men." And Smith concludes, "The Red Sea, therefore, was most probably the Sea of the Red men." (Vol. 3, p. 2685.)

The place of the crossing of the Red Sea has been much disputed and with our present information it is not possible for one to be positive that he knows the exact location. The Sea lacks several miles extending as far north as it did in the time of Moses and reliable authorities think the place of crossing may not now be in the Sea. Pulpit Commentary says the crossing was somewhere between the Bitter Lakes and the present location of Suez which is on the extreme northern tip of the Red Sea. While McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia says the crossing was south of Suez a few miles.

"The importance of this event in Biblical history is shown by the manner in which it is spoken of in the books of the Old Testament written in later times. In them it is the chief fact in Jewish history. Not the call of Abraham, not the rule of Joseph, not the passover, not the conquest of Canaan, are referred to in such a manner as this great deliverance. In the book of Job it is mentioned with the acts of creation. (26: 10-13.) In the Psalms it is related as foremost among the deeds that God had wrought for his people. The prophet Isaiah recalls it as the great manifestation of God's interference for Israel, and an encouragement for

the descendants of those who witnessed the great sight. There are events so striking that they are remembered in the life of a nation, and that, like great heights, increasing distance only gives them more majesty. So no doubt was this remembered long after those were dead who saw the Sea return to its strength and the warriors of Pharaoh dead upon the shore."

"Endeavors have been made to explain away the miraculous character of the passage of the Red Sea. It has been argued that Moses might have carried the Israelites over by a ford, and that an unusual tide might have overwhelmed the Egyptians. But no real diminution of the wonder is thus effected. How was it that the Sea admitted the passage of the Israelites, and drowned Pharaoh and his army? How was it that it was shallow at the right time, and deep at the right time? This attempted explanation would have never been put forward were it not that the fact of the passage is so well attested that it would be uncritical to doubt it were it recorded on mere human authority. Since the fact is undeniable, an attempt is made to explain it away. Thus the school that pretends to the severest criticism is compelled to deviate from its usual course; and when we see that in this case it must do so, we may well doubt its soundness in other cases, which, being differently stated, are more easily attacked." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Jehovah Parts the Waters (Ex. 14: 21-23)

*Moses stretched out his hand over the sea.* Infidels deny that Moses had anything to do with the dividing of the water on this occasion. Certainly no one thinks Moses did the work of his own power, but that God used him as an instrument like he used the apostles in the working of miracles is clearly indicated in this lesson.

*Caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind.* Here again infidels have tried to account for the division of the water of the sea. They claim that the crossing was made at a time when the tide was going out. And with the blowing of the east wind

added to the ebbing tide a path sufficiently wide was opened for the passage. However, a wind of sufficient velocity to open a path wide enough to allow more than two million people to cross the sea within six or eight hours would have been so strong that it would have blown the people away. God uses nature to accomplish his purposes, and certainly the wind performed a useful purpose on this occasion. The east wind of this section is known to be very dry and hot, so would tend to dry the ground very rapidly. The term "east wind" refers to the wind that blows from the east to the west. Since the Israelites were going from

went to east in crossing the sea, they were facing the wind. If the wind was the sole cause of the dividing of the water it would have blown the water in the face of the people. The infidel needs a strong south wind to blow the water northward.

*All the night.* It will be noticed that the children of Israel crossed the sea by night. The cloud which accompanied them stood between them and the Egyptians. To the Egyptians it was a black cloud, but to the people of Israel it was a pillar of fire which gave sufficient light to enable them to make the crossing.

*Waters were a wall on the right hand and the left.* This passage has been a thorn in the side of infidels of all ages. If the waters actually stood in a wall on both the left hand and the right, the dividing of the waters was miraculous. If the waters were parted by means of low tide and the blowing of the wind, it would not have been possible for the waters to stand in a wall on either side. "An infidel may deny the revelation in toto, and from such we expect nothing better; but to hear those who profess to believe this to be a divine revelation endeavouring to prove that the passage of the Red Sea had nothing miraculous in it, is really intolerable. Such a mode of interpretation requires a miracle to make itself credible. Poor infidelity! How miserable and despicable are thy shifts!" (Adam Clarke.) Pulpit Commentary attempts to take the miraculous out of this passage by saying that the division of the water can be accounted for by natural means; and that since no miracle is needed, no miracle was used. But it is necessary to deny the statement of Moses that the water stood in a wall. Paul's use of this incident demands that we take the word wall in its ordinary meaning. He says the people were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor. 10:

2.) If the sea formed a part of the element in which the people were immersed it had to stand in a wall on either side. With the water on both sides and the cloud above and behind them they were completely immersed from the sight of the Egyptians. If the water did not stand in a wall, the cloud was the thing which hid the people from the Egyptians,

and therefore, Paul should have said they were baptized in the cloud only.

*The Egyptians pursued.* It is difficult to see how people can become so enraged and determined as were the Egyptians on this occasion. It seems they should have known that if Moses could bring the ten terrible plagues upon them, and if he could divide the waters, he could also cause the waters to come back in such destructive force as to take their lives. Only a man maddened by greed and revenge could have urged his army and himself on in the face of certain destruction. This army seems to have been composed wholly of cavalry. Mention is made only of horses, chariots, and horsemen. Again, in their song of triumph, it is said, "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." (Ex. 15: lb.)

## II. Jehovah Hinders the Egyptians

(Ex. 14: 24-28)

*In the morning watch.* The night was divided into four divisions called watches. Usually the morning watch is said to begin at three a.m. and end at six a.m. However, there is a difference between the Jewish and Roman systems of reckoning time. According to the Jewish method there were three watches in the night; they were from sunset to ten p.m.; from ten p.m. to two a.m.; and from two a.m. to sunrise. So the watch of our lesson was likely according to the Jewish reckoning and was two a.m. to sunrise.

*Jehovah looked upon the Egyptians.* Our text says that God looked upon the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud. Most commentators do their best to get rain clouds into the text. David makes mention of clouds pouring water and of the voice of thunder in the whirlwind; he mentions lightnings that lightened the world and thunder that caused the earth to tremble. (Psalm 77: 17-20.) Mention is also made of the Egyptians being discomfited. Moses gives no details as to how this was brought about. Possibly David's description might fill in some of the details of how the Lord produced disorder in the ranks of the Egyptians. However, this does not justify men in saying that the cloud over the Israelites was a storm cloud; nor does it justify

them in saying that any rain at all fell upon the Israelites.

*Took off their chariot wheels.* Here again the critics try to explain away the miracle. They cite the Septuagint and the Syriac version which use the word clogg to suggest that the wheels were clogged with mud. In this way they account for the hindrance to the Egyptians in a natural way.

*Jehovah fighteth for them.* This is the language of the Egyptians when, in spite of their mad determination to reclaim their fleeing slaves, they realize that the God who sent the plagues upon them was still the God of the Israelites. No doubt they remembered their helplessness during the time the plagues were visited upon them. Realizing now that the same God was causing their chariots to drive heavily, they attempted to do the only thing they knew to do—to flee from the presence of Jehovah. The infidel finds it difficult to explain why the Egyptians thought that God was fighting for the Israelites.

*Stretch out thy hand over the sea.* Moses was commanded to exercise the same power to bring the waters together again which he used in dividing them. There was as much of a miracle in the latter as in the former. Moses was told to bring the waters together again that they might come together upon the Egyptians.

*The sea returned to its strength.* The infidel's natural explanation reads as follows: "At the appointed sign, the east wind ceased to blow, and the waters of the Bitter Lakes, no longer driven to the northwest by its forces, flowed back with something of a reflux, while at the same time, the tide having turned, the Red Sea waves came rushing on at unwonted speed." There are several things wrong with this explanation. First, it has an east wind blowing the water toward the north. Next, it has the east wind ceasing to blow at exactly the right time, not to say anything about the strength of a wind which could hold back millions of tons of water yet not obstructing the march of the Israelites. Next, it has the tide on the south returning at exactly the right time and with "unwonted speed." There is no more difficulty in believing that God

worked miracles on this occasion than there is in believing that all these unusual natural phenomena occurred at the same time.

*Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.* How large an army Pharaoh had with him is not known, but surely not all the soldiers of Egypt. A nation as great as Egypt would have several armies. And since no infantry is mentioned we conclude that he had only a few cavalry. Our text says that not one of the soldiers that followed escaped alive. Whether this statement is to be taken literally or to mean an overwhelming disaster it is difficult to determine. However, Moses says "There remained not so much as one of them."

### III. Jehovah Saved the Israelites

(Ex 14: 29-31)

*The waters were a wall unto them.* Some significance should be attached to the fact that Moses repeats this statement. Obviously Moses intended to convey the idea that the waters provided protection to the people. If the waters merely receded, as infidels say, they could not possibly have afforded any protection to the people. In that case the statement of Moses in this connection would be meaningless.

*Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day.* Our denominational friends try to evade the force of this figure by saying that the Jews were saved by the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts back in Egypt. They make this experience only a symbol of the salvation obtained by the sprinkling of blood. However, it should be remembered that only the first born were saved by the sprinkling of blood; but all Israel was saved at this time. Next, the first born were saved from physical death by the sprinkling of blood, while here all Israelites were saved from Egyptian bondage. The Bible nowhere says, or indicates that the salvation spoken of in our text was intended as a symbol of the salvation which the first born enjoyed back in Egypt. Paul teaches us this experience of the Israelites was, from one point of view, to them what our baptism is to us. He says they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. This experience of the Israelites is called a baptism, and is said to bring them into Moses, that is,

into a new relationship to Moses. In this new relationship he was their lawgiver, deliverer and mediator. So when we are baptized into Christ, he becomes our deliverer from sin, our lawgiver and king, and our mediator between us and God. When those people were baptized into Moses they were entitled to the blessings of the priesthood inaugurated by Moses; so we, when we are baptized into Christ are entitled to the blessings of the priesthood of Christ. If we suppose that an Israelite refused to go through the Red Sea, would anyone suppose that Moses was his deliverer? His mediator? Or that he was entitled to the blessings of the Jewish priesthood? So if one refuses to be baptized into Christ he has no right to claim Christ as his deliverer, saviour, mediator, or high priest. We can say that Jehovah saved all Israel only because all Israel was baptized into Moses; so we can say that Jehovah saves all today who are baptized into Christ. Salvation for Israel was found in Moses and they enjoyed that salvation only when they were baptized into Moses. Salvation from sin today is in Christ (2 Tim. 2: 10), and we can enjoy that salvation provided into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.)

**And the people feared Jehovah.** When the people saw the terrible destruction visited upon the Egyptians and realized the fact of their salvation from bondage it is said that they feared Jehovah. The word fear is taken in the sense of reverence; it was a godly fear. With this destruction as a climax to the ten plagues which preceded, we should expect the people to have such an abiding respect for God and his power

and majesty that they would live godly lives the balance of their days. However, such was not the case. Not many days after these terrible scenes they forgot the goodness of God and complained that Moses had led them out in the wilderness to die. They forgot the power of God and complained that there was no food to keep their children from starving.

**They believed in Jehovah, and his servant Moses.** Since they had seen such mighty demonstrations of the power and majesty of God we would naturally expect them to believe in Jehovah as long as they lived. But again we are disappointed, for we find them being overthrown in the wilderness on account of their unbelief. The writer of Hebrews says "We see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3: 19.) This reminds us of what Jesus said about the seed which fell on rocky ground. He says, "Who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." (Luke 8: 13.) So these Israelites believed in Jehovah for a while, but when these temptations incident to the life in the wilderness came upon them they forgot the demonstrations of power and majesty and longed in their hearts to return to Egypt. They would have been willing to suffer the bondage in Egypt in order to escape the hardships in the wilderness. They wanted the rest and freedom promised in Canaan, but were unwilling to suffer the hardships that lay in their path to Canaan. So there are people today who wish to enjoy the glories and pleasures of heaven but they are not willing to endure the trials and tribulations which are encountered in the pathway to glory.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Pharaoh may be looked upon as a type of Satan. As Pharaoh was bent upon holding the Israelites in bondage, so Satan is determined to hold each one of us in his service. But as Jehovah was able to give the Israelites victory over Pharaoh, so he is able to give us the victory over Satan, provided we wish that victory enough to be faithful to him

2. Egypt may be viewed as a type of the world, or Satan's kingdom.

The people of Israel were not saved from Egypt until they had left Egypt. They left Egypt by being baptized into Moses. So we leave the world by being baptized into Christ. One is in the world so long as he refuses or neglects to be baptized into Christ.

3. The wilderness is a type of the church and Canaan is a type of heaven. Those who were unfaithful in the wilderness were not allowed to enter Canaan. Not even Moses was

allowed to enter Canaan because he sinned. So people in the church who are unfaithful to God will not be allowed to enter heaven. However, the figure must not be pressed too

far, for we might conclude that even one mistake would keep one out of heaven as one mistake kept Moses out of Canaan.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of the lesson.

#### Introduction

Name and discuss two important ordinances given Israel before they left Egypt.

What miraculous manifestation of God's presence attended the people from Egypt to Canaan?

In what three ways did this cloud serve the people?

#### Golden Text Explained

What do you know of the origin of the name of the Red Sea?

What do you know of the place of the crossing of the Red Sea?

What is said of the importance of this event in Biblical history?

#### Jehovah Parts the Waters

By what means were the waters of the sea divided?

What useful purpose did the wind serve?

What is said of the position of the water of the sea?

What does Paul say of the water on this occasion?

What act of Pharaoh shows his rage and determination?

#### Jehovah Hinders the Egyptians

What do you know of the division of the night into watches?

Do you know the details of how God discomfited the Egyptians?

Were there any rain clouds over the Egyptians? Over the Israelites?

What did God do to slow down the progress of the Egyptians?

When the wheels came off, what did the Egyptians conclude?

Give three things wrong with the infidel's explanation of the return of the waters.

Of what did Pharaoh's army consist?

#### Jehovah Saved the Israelites

What is meant by the water being a wall on the right and the left?

Was Israel saved by the sprinkling of blood?

From what were the first born saved? and from what were all the people saved?

Into whom were the Israelites baptized?

Into whom are we baptized today?

Can you show the necessity of baptism as suggested in our lesson?

Did the people fear Jehovah? And for how long?

Can people believe for a while and then cease to believe? If they cease to believe, will they be saved in spite of the unbelief?

Can you use the Israelites' experience to prove this point?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson IX—November 30, 1952

### THE MANNA AND QUAILS

#### The Lesson Text

Ex. 16: 2-14

2 And the whole congregation of the children of Is'-ra-el murmured against Mó'-ses and against Aar'-on in the wilderness:

3 And the children of Is'-ra-el said unto them, Would that we had died by the hand of Je'-ho'-vah in the land of E'-gypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

4 Then said Je'-ho'-vah unto Mó'-ses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them,

whether they will walk in my law, or not.

5 And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6 And Mó'-ses and Aar'-on said unto all the children of Is'-ra-el, At even, then ye shall know that Je'-ho'-vah hath brought you out from the land of E'-gypt;

7 And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of Je'-ho'-vah; for that he heareth your murmurings against Je'-ho'-vah: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?

8 And Mo'-ses said, *This shall be*, when Je-ho'-vah shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that Je-ho'-vah heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Je-ho'-vah.

9 And Mo'-ses said unto Aar'-on, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Is'-ra-el, Come near before Je-ho'-vah; for he hath heard your murmurings.

10 And it came to pass, as Aar'-on spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Is'-ra-el, that they looked toward the wilderness, and,

behold, the glory of Je-ho'-vah appeared in the cloud.

11 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'-ses, saying,

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Is'-ra-el: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Je-ho'-vah your God.

13 And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And he rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them food from heaven*” (Psalm 78: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 6: 31-36.

### Daily Bible Readings

November 24. M.....	Jehovah Furnishes Water (Ex. 15: 22-27)
November 25. T.....	Manna Given for Forty Years (Ex. 16: 31-36)
November 26. W.....	The People Murmur (Num. 11: 4-15)
November 27. T.....	Gave Them Food from Heaven (Psalm 78: 23-31)
November 28. F.....	God's Goodness to Israel (Psalm 105: 37-45)
November 29. S.....	Our Bread from Heaven (John 6: 47-59)
November 30. S.....	Hidden Manna Promised (Rev. 2: 12-17)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—In the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and Israel.

### Introduction

Some of the first experiences of Israel, after crossing the Red Sea, are significant and typical of what we may expect in our spiritual lives. They were on the mountain peak of joy and success as they sang the song of deliverance. Miriam led the women as they sang and danced in celebration of their salvation from the bondage of Egypt. As they turned their back upon the Red Sea and their face toward the wilderness, there was not a cloud of trouble or sorrow in their sky. No doubt they felt that their troubles were all past. And when they traveled for one day without finding water they thought but little about it. They went another day and found no water, and still another day. In the hot desert country, this is quite a trial. Then they came to Marah, or the bitter waters. There the water was not fit to drink, so the people murmured. Their sky

was overcast with the boiling clouds of trouble and disappointment. Such is life. Victory was sweet; disappointment was bitter. As one followed the other in quick succession in the experiences of Israel, so do they follow in our experiences today. When the people murmured, Moses took the matter to God and was told to cut down a certain tree to throw into the water. When this was done, the water became sweet and satisfying to the people. Since these experiences were written for our learning, we may draw a lesson from them. When they took their bitter experiences to God, he helped them. So we should take our experiences to him. If we nurse them to ourselves, if we try to get along without his help, they harden and embitter our souls. When the people left Mara, they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of good water. This

was a pleasant place to camp. They went from sweet to bitter, and from bitter to sweet. Such is our experience today. The sweet and pleasant experiences of life are for our encouragement, and to make us realize and appreciate the goodness and kind-

ness of God. The bitter experiences of life are to remind us that this world is not our eternal home, to wean us from this world and help us center our affection upon heaven, to teach us to depend upon God to make the experiences of life bearable.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Dependence upon God.** Moses was either a man of great faith in God and God's willingness to care for his people, or he gave very little thought as to how the life of the people was to be sustained during their journey through the desert. How could more than two million people find enough food in the desert and still have time to travel on toward Canaan? The wilderness could not furnish enough to feed that many people if it were cultivated and caused to produce to its greatest capacity. How could they expect to take enough from the desert country to feed a multitude of people merely passing through it? The people of Israel had not gone far when they became hungry and longed for the food which they enjoyed in Egypt. Why did God allow them to become hungry? Why did he not begin feeding them from heaven the first day out? He wished to teach them the lesson of dependence upon God. We have to be denied our blessings; we have to experience a real need before we can appreciate the gift from God as deeply as we should. So God allowed Israel to consume their supply of provisions, and allowed them to feel the pinch of hunger before he supplied them food from heaven that he might teach them to look to him to fill their needs. So we today art to learn to depend upon him. It is difficult for us to learn that dependence during days of prosperity. Some people cannot pray for daily bread as long as they have a big bank account. They have to feel the pinch of hunger and wonder where their next month's supply is coming from before they can learn to depend upon God. Some people never learn that God is the Giver of good health of mind and body until they are brought near death's door, or see a child linger between life and death for days.

**2. God's Faithfulness in Spite of the Lack of Appreciation.** Man's lack of appreciation seems to be unlimited. Man may be distinguished from all other creatures by his ingratitude. Ten men were cleansed of leprosy, but only one returned to give thanks. (Luke 17: 15.) It seems that gratitude for deliverance from Egyptian bondage would have enabled the people to accept any and all circumstances in the wilderness with gratitude. Freedom in the wilderness while hungry was better than having all they could eat in Egypt while in bondage. But the Israelites did not feel that way about it. They thought they preferred to be full in bondage rather than be free and hungry. So they murmured and complained at their lot. God's faithfulness to them is seen in that he did not cease to feed them when they complained, and when they showed their utter lack of gratitude. When we go out of our way to be nice to people, we expect them to show some gratitude. If they do not make some response to show gratitude for what we have done for them, we are inclined to cease helping them. But God fed the Israelites for forty years regardless of whether they sang his praises or complained of the bitter experiences through which he led them. So God gives us our daily bread; he gives us good health of mind and body; he sends the rain, the sunshine, and the fruitful seasons whether we serve and worship him or live for the world and the devil. But those who murmured and complained and rebelled at their lot in the wilderness died in the wilderness; they were denied the pleasures of Canaan. So those lacking in gratitude for the goodness of God may fail to reach heaven.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Murmuring for Food (Ex. 16: 2, 3)

#### *The whole congregation murmured.*

At the time of our lesson the people had been in the wilderness just about one month. Some have thought that some of the people, the poorest, had had time to feel the pinch of hunger, but that the people who had plenty of sheep and cattle had not and therefore were in no condition to murmur. No doubt the poorest of the people were destitute and had just grounds for their complaints. However, those who brought sheep and cattle (Ex. 12: 38) could see by this time their supply would not last long in the wilderness.

*Murmured against Moses and Aaron.* The people blamed these two men because they were the men who agitated the exodus. Had it not been for the work of Moses, the people would never have tried to get away from Egypt. Aaron did not have the ability to organize such a movement, and would never have attempted it without the help and encouragement of Moses.

*Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah.* Perhaps this refers to the manner in which the first born died in Egypt. It was a painless death. They preferred to die painlessly in Egypt rather than die of starvation in the wilderness. Though their feeling in the matter was natural, they are to be blamed for their lack of faith in God who had manifested his ability to care for them. They were utterly at fault because they had observed the goodness and power of God in so many ways during the plagues and their deliverance that there was no excuse for a lack of faith.

*Did eat bread to the full.* They spoke of gathering around the fleshpots in Egypt. Some think that the Egyptians fed them in community style, cooking their food in large containers and allowing families to get what they needed. At any rate, they seemed to have been well fed in Egypt. They ate flesh, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks (something like our greens, mustard or kale), onions, and garlic. (Num. 11: 5.) If they were provided with a sufficient quantity of such food, with milk and bread, they had a good diet. They would

soon miss such a variety of food in the wilderness.

*To kill this whole assembly.* This seems to be the first time this accusation was hurled at Moses, but it is by no means the last time he heard it. (Num. 16: 13.) He was also accused of bringing them into the wilderness that he might have a people over which to rule. "Human nature can never be reduced to a more abject state in this world than that in which the body is enthralled in *political* slavery, and the soul debased by the influence of *sin*. These poor Hebrews were both *slaves* and *simmers*, and were therefore capable of the meanest and most disgraceful acts." (Adam Clarke.)

### II. Food Promised from Heaven (Ex.

16: 4-8)

*I will rain bread from heaven for you.* This was called bread from heaven because it was miraculously given. Like every other miracle in the Bible, infidels have tried to account for this in a natural way. But if it was caused by natural means, why did the people not have it during the first month they were in the wilderness? And why did it continue to come as long as the people were in the wilderness, but stop when they went into Canaan? Why is the same material not to be found there today? Until these questions can be answered satisfactorily, unbelievers should admit the possibility of miracles.

*Gather a day's portion every day.* A day's portion for each person was an omer, which is equal to about one tenth of a bushel in our measure. And it mattered not how much a man gathered, or how little, he had no more than he needed. "And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating." (Ex. 16: 17, 18.) They were taught in this manner to trust God for their daily bread. The selfishness of men would lead them to gather great quantities and hoard it, or sell it for a big profit. But God did not allow that. Nor could

one eat less than he needed and in this manner save a great quantity of the manna, for that was left over night bred worms and spoiled. (Ex. 16: 20.)

**That I may prove them.** God has always required people to live by certain regulations for the purpose of proving whether they will be submissive to him. He thus tried Adam and Eve by a commandment with reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their gathering of the manna showed their trust or their lack of trust in God. If they gathered much today, they showed their lack of trust in God to give them their portion the next day. Many people today would fail such a test.

**Whether they will walk in my law.** The law here is not that given by Moses on Sinai, for that had not yet been given. The law under consideration here is that with reference to the gathering of the manna. However, the principle is the same. The test was whether the people would be obedient to the law of Jehovah.

**It shall be twice as much on the sixth day.** Here is something else that gives the infidel a lot of trouble. If a man was selfish enough to gather much on the first day, when he measured it with an omer he had nothing over; but on the sixth day he was to gather twice as much, so when he measured it by the omer he had twice as much as usual. Furthermore, if he had some left over any night in the week except Friday, it spoiled, but the extra omer on Friday night did not spoil. If Moses told the truth, we have evidence of a miracle; but if Moses did not tell the truth about this, we cannot afford to believe him on any point.

**Then ye shall know that Jehovah hath brought you out.** Moses was anxious that the people understand that he had not brought them out of Egypt simply to have a people to rule, to satisfy his lust for power and position. He promised that next day they should see the glory of Jehovah. Some have taken this to refer to the glory of Jehovah in the cloud mentioned in verse 10, but the connection seems to indicate that he had in mind the appearance of the manna in the morning and the quails in the evening.

*He heareth your murmuring s*

*against Jehovah.* The people did not intend to murmur against Jehovah; in fact they likely would have denied that they were murmuring against Jehovah. However, when they murmured against God's servant, they were sinning against God. People often treat the position and authority of elders lightly today, refusing to cooperate with them in church work because they do not agree with the plan as set forth by the elders. Often people rebel against the rule of the elders. If the elders are scripturally qualified and acting within the limits of their authority, those who rebel against them and criticize them openly are sinning against God the same as these Israelites were murmuring against Jehovah when they criticized Moses and Aaron. Moses plainly told them that their murmurings were not against him and Aaron, but against Jehovah.

**In the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full.** The promise of food both morning and evening is said to be on account of the fact that God had heard the murmuring of the people. The need of the people was real, but the manner in which they went about getting what they needed was not good. They were criticized and corrected for the latter, but heard and supplied on account of the former.

### III. The Promise of Food Fulfilled (Ex. 16: 9-14)

**Come near before Jehovah.** The people had murmured against Jehovah, so some act of homage or adoration on their part was in place. They were required to gather in the presence of Jehovah to acknowledge their sin against him and to recognize their dependence upon him for the necessities of life. And still it is good for people today to gather before Jehovah to acknowledge him as their God and to praise and adore him for his goodness and mercy.

**The glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud.** Whether this was the cloud which accompanied the Israelites we are not told. It may have been a special cloud which veiled the glory of Jehovah on this special occasion. At Sinai Jehovah came to the people in "a thick cloud." (Ex. 19: 9.) The appearance of God in the

cloud was still a part of the proof that Moses had not led them out of Egypt on his own authority; it was to convince the people that their God was directing Moses and that any criticism of Moses and his work would be a sin against Jehovah.

*I hear the murmurings of the people.* This is the language of Jehovah to Moses in the presence of the people. Speaking to Moses from the cloud so the people could see his glory and hear his voice was calculated to convince them that Moses was the servant of Jehovah and that all he did was at the bidding of Jehovah. It seems that after such a demonstration of his presence with and directions of Moses the people would never doubt that God was with him. However, such was not the case. They soon forgot this demonstration and sinned against God by rebelling against Moses. Even Aaron and Miriam were guilty of this sin in later years. (Num. 12: 1-8.)

*The quails came up.* There is some uncertainty as to whether the quails came every day with the same regularity as the manna came. There is no further mention of quails to eat until after the people left Sinai. When they had gone three days' journey into the wilderness of Paran (Num. 10: 12), the mixed multitude lusted exceedingly and the Israelites, influenced by their example, murmured again because they did not have the variety of food they enjoyed in Egypt. (Ex. 11: 4-6.) On that occasion it is said that a wind from Jehovah brought quails from the sea and let them fall round about the camp. Authorities tell us that quails fly over the sea in certain seasons of the year, migrating from one country to another, and that they are well ex-

hausted by their long flight and that they literally fall to the ground near the sea so that they may be picked up by people. Others tell of natives spreading their nets to catch them in great quantities during this migrating season. While quails come in the migrating season in great numbers, this would not account for enough of them to satisfy the hunger of two million people. Hence, we must conclude that God miraculously brought enough quails into the camp to feed the people of Israel. And if the matter was repeated anything like as often as the appearance of the manna, it would be absolutely necessary to conclude that the coming of the fowls was miraculous.

*A small round thing, small as the hoarfrost.* Moses tells us that in the morning the dew lay on the ground, and that when the dew was gone up there lay on the face of the wilderness a small round thing resembling hoarfrost in size. In Num. 11: 7 it is compared to "coriander seed" for size. Again, unbelievers try to explain the appearance of this manna by natural means. There is a substance which forms on the leaves of grass and trees in that country, but it is neither of the nature of manna nor does it appear in anything like the quantity in which the manna appeared. And undoubtedly this substance existed both before and during the time the Israelites were in that country. But manna did not exist there until the second month they were in the wilderness, and it ceased to appear when they no longer needed to be fed miraculously. Since this natural substance continues to be found in that country, we conclude it was not the manna which ceased to appear when no longer needed.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Some of the principles of true democracy had their rise in the experiences of the children of Israel. The dignity of man and the sanctity of the individual, as well as the equality of men were new principles in the time of Moses. And we may be grateful that Moses did not insist on his son ruling the people.

2. Moses taught the people that they were accountable to God for their morals. Heathen religions were

little concerned with moral standards. A few offerings and ceremonies would satisfy the demands of their gods regardless of how great a crime they committed

3. Moses taught the people that they were made in the image of God and shared in the divinity of God. This caused them to have such respect for themselves and for one another that they would not submit to bondage and the degradation that goes with it.

## Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

### Introduction

How long did the children of Israel go without water?

When they found water, what was wrong with it? And how was it made sweet?

How does this resemble our spiritual experiences?

What do we learn from the sweet experiences of life? And from the bitter?

### Golden Text Explained

Discuss the problem of feeding the people in the wilderness.

Why did God let them go until their supply of food was consumed before he gave them manna from heaven?

Can we feel dependence upon God better in days of prosperity or adversity?

How may man be distinguished from all other of God's creatures?

How did the people of Israel show their ingratitude?

How did God show his faithfulness in spite of their ingratitude?

### Murmuring for Food

How long had the people been in the wilderness before God sent manna?

Why did the people murmur against Moses and Aaron?

What did they prefer to starvation in the wilderness?

What do you know of their diet in Egypt?

For what reason did the people accuse Moses of bringing them into the wilderness?

### Food Promised from Heaven

Why was the manna called bread from heaven?

How would you answer the infidel claim that this manna was a natural product of the wilderness?

What was a day's portion of manna? And why could one not get more than his share?

What lesson was this intended to teach?

How did God prove them? And for what reason?

Did manna fall on the Sabbath? And what provision was made for it?

What effect does this have on the infidel's natural explanation?

How was the glory of Jehovah manifested?

In what way were the people murmuring against Jehovah? And how may we do the same now?

### Promise of Food Fulfilled

Why were the people gathered before Jehovah?

Why did Jehovah appear to the people in a cloud?

Did God's appearance to the people cause them to accept Moses as his servant?

How did God give the people flesh to eat?

What do you know of the habits of quails in that country?

Would the natural supply of quail be enough to feed the Israelites?

What is said of the appearance of manna?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson X—December 7, 1952

# ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI

### The Lesson Text

Ex. 19: 1-11

1 In the third month after the children of Is'-ra-el were gone forth out of the land of E'-gypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Si'-nai.

2 And when they were departed from Reph'-i-dim, and were come to the wilderness of Si'-nai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Is'-ra-el encamped before the mount.

3 And Mo'-ses went up unto God, and Je-ho'-vah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Is'-ra-el:

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the E-gyp'-tians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Is'-ra-el.

7 And Mo'-ses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Je-ho'-vah commanded him.

8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that Je-ho'vah hath spoken we will do. And Mo'-ses reported the words of the people unto Je-ho'-vah.

9 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mo'-ses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick

cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever. And Mo'-ses told the words of the people unto Je-ho'-vah.

10 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mó'-ses, Go unto the people, and sanctify

them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments,

11 And be ready against the third day; for the third day Je-ho'-vah will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Si'-nai.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Yon Sinai trembled at the presence of God, the God of Israel*” (Psalm 68: 8b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Hebrews 12: 19-24.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 1. M.....	Organization Before Sinai (Ex. 18: 13-27)
December 2. T.....	God's Covenant Confirmed (Psalm 105: 1-12)
December 3. W.....	God's Law from Sinai (Neh. 9: 9-15)
December 4. T.....	Some of Israel's Experiences (Acts 7: 30-43)
December 5. F.....	Moses at Sinai (2 Cor. 3: 12-18)
December 6. S.....	The Purpose of the Law (Gal. 3: 15-29)
December 7. S.....	Some Scenes at Sinai (Heb. 12: 18-29)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai in Arabia.

PERSONS.—Moses, Israel, and Jehovah

### Introduction

There are three things of interest between our last lesson and the one for today. First, the people soon needed water again, and again they murmured and accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness that their children and their cattle might die. So enraged did they become on this occasion that they were about ready to stone Moses. (Ex. 17: 4.) Jehovah told Moses to take his rod with which he had divided the waters of the Red Sea and strike the rock that was in Horeb. When Moses did so, water came from the rock in such quantity that the people had plenty for themselves and their cattle.

Next, the armies of the Amalekites came out against Israel in Rephidim. The battle was long and the men of Israel were not sufficiently armed and trained to win against the men of Amalek. So Moses took his rod in his hand and went up on the top of a hill overlooking the battle. When Moses held up his hands in supplication to Jehovah, Israel prevailed; but when his hands got heavy and he let them down, Amalek prevailed.

So Aaron and Hur stood by Moses and allowed him to put his arms on their shoulders so they might be held up in supplication to God long enough for Israel to win the battle. (Ex. 17: 8-15.) On account of this aggression on the part of Amalek, Jehovah swore to destroy the nation later. This was done in later times. (1 Chron. 4: 43.)

Third, Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses came to see him in the wilderness. He heard a recital of all the things Jehovah had done for the people and he said, “Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods.” (Ex. 18: 11.) Jethro observed Moses as he judged the people and advised him to appoint several men to help him in the work. He suggested that Moses concern himself with the important matters only, but that he allow other men to judge all the trivial matters. The counsel seemed good, so Moses appointed men to be rulers and judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens who feared God, men of truth, hating unjust gain.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Nature in the Presence of Jehovah.** In our text, nature is said to be responsive to the presence of Jehovah. Sinai is said to have trembled

when Jehovah came down in a cloud to give the law to Moses. Speaking of the time the law was given, Moses said, “And mount Sinai, the whole of

it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Ex. 19: 18.) Deborah also sang of the glory and majesty of Jehovah and made mention of the responsiveness of nature to the presence of God, saying,

Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;  
I, even I, will sing unto Jehovah;  
I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Jehovah, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,  
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,  
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,  
Yea, the clouds dropped water.  
The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah,  
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

(Judg. 5: 3-5.)

David calls upon all nature to praise Jehovah. In this connection the student should read Psalms 145 through 150. In Psalm 148, David reaches his climax of praise when he calls upon all nature in these words,  
Praise ye him, sun and moon:  
Praise him, all ye stars of light.  
Praise him, ye heavens of heavens.  
And ye waters that are above the heavens.  
Let them praise the name of Jehovah;  
For he commanded, and they were created.  
He hath also established them for ever and ever:  
He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.  
Praise Jehovah from the earth,  
Ye sea-monsters, and all deeps;  
Fire and hail, snow and vapor;  
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word;

Mountains and hills;  
Fruitful trees and all cedars;  
Beasts and all cattle;  
Creeping things and flying birds;  
Kings of the earth and all peoples;  
Princes and all judges of the earth;  
Both young men and virgins;  
Old men and children:  
Let them praise the name of Jehovah;  
For his name alone is exalted;  
His glory is above the earth and the heavens.

(Psalm 148: 3-13.)

## 2. Our Obligation to Be Responsive.

David said Sinai trembled in the presence of Jehovah, and then identified him as the God of Israel. This does not indicate that he is simply and only a national God, but it emphasizes the fact that he is the God of Israel, and therefore Israel should be as responsive to his presence as was nature. If nature trembled in the presence of Jehovah, certainly Israel should praise, adore, and obey him. Any number of reasons might be assigned why people should respond in this manner to Jehovah, but there are three chief reasons why Christians should do so. (1) God has created us, given us a being in the world. If we have had any pleasure in this life, we owe the Giver of our lives the praise for it. (2) God has preserved us all the days of our lives. If we have good health of mind and body, we are indebted to God for it and owe him praise and thanksgiving. Were it not for his providence we could not continue to exist. In him all things consist. (Col. 1: 17.) And (3) all Christians should praise and adore him for the fact that he has redeemed us from sin and death. We were condemned to eternal death on account of our sins, but he has redeemed us and made it possible for us to live with him in heaven forever and ever.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Arriving at Sinai (Ex. 19: 1, 2)

*In the third month.* The arrival at Sinai is said to be in the third month after they left Egypt. It will be remembered that Israel left Goshen on the night of the fourteenth of the first month. (Ex. 12: 6.) But since they left at midnight, it is usually said that they left Egypt on the fifteenth of the month.

*The same day came they into the wilderness.* The meaning of the term "same day" is difficult to determine. Some say it means the same day of the third month as the day of the month they left Egypt, that is, the fifteenth. According to this, they were exactly two months getting to Sinai. Others say the term means the third day of the third month. And

according to this interpretation, the people were forty-eight days going from Egypt to Sinai. The Jews account for the time between the passover and the giving of the law as follows: "From the departure out of Egypt to the coming to Sinai were forty-five days; for they came out on the fifteenth day of the first month, from which day to the first of the third month forty-five days are numbered. On the second day of the third month Moses went up into the mountain, when three days were given to the people to purify themselves; this gives the fourth day of the third month, or the forty-ninth from the departure out of Egypt. On the next day, which was the fiftieth from the celebration of the passover, the glory of God appeared on the mount; in commemoration of which the Jews celebrated the feast of Pentecost." (Adam Clarke.)

*There Israel encamped before the mount.* One writer thinks the very lay of the ground and the position of Sinai before the great plain on which the people gathered were such as to suggest that God had such a gathering in mind in the creation. And another says, "The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answers to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people from 'touching the mount.' The plain itself is not broken and uneven and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a lone retiring sweep, against which the people could 'remove and stand afar off.' The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of 'the mount that might be touched,' and from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide over the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys." (Dean Stanley.) If the plain before the mount did not afford sufficient room for the people to camp and have a gathering place, there was plenty of room in some of the valleys leading into the plain. And the

mount is in full view of people for long distances up these valleys. The location served the purpose for which it was used as if it had been made with the purpose in mind.

## II. Moses in the Mount with God

(Ex. 19: 3-6)

*Moses went up unto God.* When God called Moses to deliver the people from bondage, he told Moses that he should bring the people to this place and that he should serve God upon this mountain. (Ex. 3: 12.) Stephen says that Moses spoke with the angel of Jehovah on this occasion. (Acts 7: 38.) Here we have another instance where one writer of the Bible speaks of the second person of the Godhead as Jehovah and another writer speaks of him as the angel of Jehovah.

*I bare you on eagles' wings.* Jehovah reminded Moses to tell the people of the things in their immediate past that they might give the most earnest heed to what he was about to say to them. They were to remember how he had delivered them from Egypt and what he had done to the Egyptians who had held them in bondage. And they were to remember that he had carried them as on the wings of eagles. The figure of speech was intended to convey at least two ideas to the Jews. (1) It was to remind them of the power and might of Jehovah in delivering them and in bringing them thus far on their journey. (2) It was to suggest the tender care of their heavenly Father. "This expression . . . has been understood by Rabbinical writers and others to mean that the eagle does actually carry her young ones on her wings and shoulders. This is putting on the words a construction which they by no means are intended to convey: at the same time, it is not improbable that the parent bird assists the first efforts of the young by flying under them, thus sustaining them for a moment, and encouraging them in their early lessons." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

*Brought you unto myself.* This vicinity was called the mountain of God. (Ex. 3: 1.) So when Jehovah brought them to the place where he told Moses they would serve him, he spoke of bringing them unto himself. He

had brought them out of bondage to a place where they were free to serve him.

*If ye will obey my voice.* God's blessings have always been contingent upon man's obedience to God. There are many natural, or physical, blessings which man can enjoy without ever obeying God. And there are some by-products of the spiritual blessings of God which men can enjoy without ever obeying him. Many people enjoy freedom from slavery, a greater degree of moral purity than could be enjoyed were it not for the refining influences of Christianity, and a better system of law and order than is enjoyed by nations that know not God. These may be said to be by-products of God's dealing with his people on earth. Millions of people in our nation enjoy these and other blessings while they live in rebellion against God. But there are spiritual blessings which none but obedient children of God can possibly enjoy. Redemption, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life, the peace of God that passeth understanding, and that degree of the love of God enjoyed by the cheerful giver are blessings known only to obedient children of God.

*Mine own possession from among all peoples.* All people belonged to Jehovah by right of creation and preservation, but the Israelites were promised that they would belong to him in a peculiar way and for a special purpose. This did not mean that Jehovah became a national God and that he did not continue to rule over all nations. The Jews soon came to adopt the view that Jehovah was their God and theirs only; but he did not cease to be the God of all nations. However, he was the God of the Israelites in a manner and for a purpose that he was not the God of any other nation.

*A kingdom of priests.* This promise was made on the condition that the people would obey Jehovah and keep his covenant. This promise was never actually realized as it is now realized under the gospel of Christ. We are said to be a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which every citizen is his own priest and makes his sacrifice to God through his high priest. (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9.) This promise in-

volved a theocracy, that is, a kingdom in which God was the sole ruler and every citizen a priest capable of offering his own sacrifice. Man's lack of preparation made it necessary to have a priesthood, and finally, man's rebellion against Jehovah and his desire to be like the nations about him caused God to allow them to have a king. (1 Sam. 8: 1-9.)

*A holy nation.* (1) They were to be a nation. Up to this time they had simply been thirteen tribes bound together only by the ties of kinship. Now they were to be a nation under their own laws administered by their own people for their welfare. (2) They were to be a holy nation, a nation consecrated to God's service. The word holy suggests that which belongs to God, and since things which belong to him must be pure, the word came to have the meaning of purity or freedom from moral filth. If the people had obeyed the voice of Jehovah and kept his covenant as he required of them, they would have been a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. "They should be a holy nation, saved from their sins, righteous in their conduct, holy in their hearts; every external rite being not only a significant ceremony, but also a means of conveying light and life, grace and peace, to every person who conscientiously used it. Thus they would be both a kingdom, having God for their governor, and a nation, a multitude of peoples connected together; not a scattered, disordered, and disorganized people, but a royal nation, using their own rites, living under their own laws, subject in religious matters only to God, and in things civil, to every ordinance of man for God's sake." (Adam Clarke.)

### III. The People Promise to Obey

(Ex. 19: 7-11)

*Called for the elders of the people.* These were the heads of the tribes and the chief men of the families among the people. They were men who by reason of age and position among the people were respected by the people. It is probable that they were used for the purpose of getting the message to all the people in the quickest way possible. Some think that they acted on this occasion in behalf of the whole assembly, but

the next verse suggests that all the people had a part in the decision they made and in voicing their approval of the covenant which was being made at this time.

*All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do.* These are said to be the words of "all the people." The proposition God had made to them was laid before them by Moses through their elders. The proposition was this, that if they would obey God and keep his covenant, God would hold them as his peculiar possession and they would be to him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The commandments which they were to obey had not been revealed to them, but they were willing to trust Jehovah to be just and fair in the things he demanded of them. This was their act of entering into the covenant with Jehovah, they promised to obey his laws and keep his covenant.

I come *unto thee in a thick cloud.* God's presence must always be veiled when he appears to man. The angel of Jehovah, the second person of the Godhead, was in the form of man; deity was veiled by what appeared to be human form. When the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, deity was veiled in human flesh. When Jesus was transfigured before three of his apostles, the divine nature was allowed to shine through the veil of flesh more brightly than usual. At Sinai Jehovah was veiled by a thick cloud.

*That the people may hear when I speak with thee.* God wished to talk with Moses in the hearing of all the people so that they might be impressed again with the truth that

Moses was the servant of God. By this means Jehovah wished to make the people believe Moses forever. If the plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the miracles of manna and quails and the miraculous provision of water would not cause the people to believe Moses to be the servant of God, it seems that nothing would make them believe. And following events serve to prove that nothing God and Moses could do would cause many of them to continue long in the belief that Moses was actually a true servant of Jehovah.

Go *unto the people and sanctify them.* This was to be done in preparation for the coming of Jehovah upon Sinai to give the law. The method of sanctifying was by washing their garments, and according to later custom, their bodies. The student should read verse 15 of this chapter in this connection, and compare with this 1 Sam. 21: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 7: 5. The process of sanctifying the people was to impress them with the holiness of Jehovah and the significance of this occasion.

*The third day Jehovah will come down.* Two days were to be consumed in the process of sanctifying the people, and the third day refers to the next day after they were sanctified. Jehovah was omnipresent, that is, present everywhere all the time. However, he is able to manifest his presence at one place in ways in which it is not manifested anywhere else. Not being capable of understanding the nature of God, we must in reverence refrain from trying to explain some things he does which involve his inscrutable nature.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Sinai as a meeting place with God has been prominent. Moses met God there when the bush burned but was not consumed. He brought Israel there to hear the law given by the Lord. Elijah went there when threatened by Jezebel. (1 Kings 19: 8.) And some think Paul went there when he spent three years in Arabia. (Gal. 1: 17.)

2. A covenant is an agreement between two persons in which one binds himself to do certain things for the

other provided the other complies with certain conditions. God promised to bless Israel provided they obeyed his commandments. Israel continued not in his covenant, so God regarded them not. (Heb. 8: 9.)

3. God required the people to sanctify themselves in preparation for his appearance before them. He requires us to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7: 1), to lift up holy hands without wrath and disputing, (1 Tim. 2: 8.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

How did Moses obtain water from the rock?

Tell of the battle with the Amalekites.

Tell of the visit of Jethro with Moses and what advice he gave Moses.

#### Golden Text Explained

What is said of Sinai at the time the law was given?

What did Deborah say of the responsiveness of nature to Jehovah?

Read and discuss some things David said about all nature praising Jehovah.

What is suggested by calling Jehovah the God of Israel?

Name and discuss three reasons why Christians are obligated to praise Jehovah.

#### Arriving at Sinai

How long was Israel going from Egypt to Sinai. Can you account for the days?

What do you know of the lay of the land about Sinai?

What is said of room for so many people to camp?

#### Moses in the Mount with God

Did Moses expect to bring the people by Sinai? Why?

With whom did Stephen say Moses spoke in the mount?

What is meant by the statement that God bare them on eagles' wings?

On what condition was Israel to be blessed by Jehovah?

What blessings can people now enjoy while in disobedience?

What peculiar blessings are available only to the obedient?

Did Israel belong to Jehovah in any way that other nations did not belong to him?

What is meant by a kingdom of priests? Did Israel ever attain to that? Why?

What two thoughts are suggested in the statement "a holy nation"?

Do we enjoy these blessings to any greater extent than the Jews did? Why?

#### The People Promise to Obey

To whom did Moses give the words of Jehovah?

Who were the elders of the Jews at this time?

How did the people respond to the proposition God made to them?

How did God appear to talk with the people? And in what ways has deity been veiled on other occasions?

For what purpose did God speak with Moses from the cloud?

Did God accomplish this purpose? Why?

How were the people sanctified to meet Jehovah?

How could God come down to the people if he is omnipresent?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson XI—December 14, 1952

### THE GIVING OF THE LAW

#### The Lesson Text

##### Ex. 20: 1-17

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am Je-ho'-vah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of E'-gypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Je-ho'-vah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me,

6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Je-ho'vah thy God in vain; for Je-ho'-vah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;

10 But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Je-ho'-vah thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days Je-ho'-vah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Je-ho'-vah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long

in the land which Je-ho'-vah thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."* (John 1: 17.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Deut. 5: 1-6.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 8. M..... Law Written on Stones (Deut. 5: 22-27)  
 December 9. T..... Law to Be Taught to Children (Deut. 6: 1-15)  
 December 10. W..... The Curses of the Law (Deut. 27: 11-26)  
 December 11. T..... The Blessings of the Law (Deut. 28: 1-14)  
 December 12. F..... Moses with God in the Mount (Ex. 34: 1-9)  
 December 13. S..... Some Provisions of the Covenant (Ex. 34: 10-28)  
 December 14. S..... Dead to the Law Through Christ (Rom. 7: 1-6)

**TIME.**—1491 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Sinai in Arabia.

**PERSONS.**—Jehovah and all Israel.

### Introduction

Paul says some interesting things about the law of Moses in his letter to the church in Galatia. First, he says that no one could be justified by the law. (Gal. 3: 11.) In Antioch of Pisidia, Paul said that through Jesus remission of sins was granted, and "by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13: 39.) The reason people could not be justified by the law is that law operates on the basis of perfect obedience. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. 3: 10.) If one rendered perfect obedience, he could be justified by that obedience to law; but since no one can render perfect obedience, he is left to the mercy and grace of God.

Next, the law, given 430 years after the promise to Abraham, did not make that promise void, and our inheritance in Christ is of promise and

not of the law. (Gal. 3: 17, 18.) The law was added because of transgression until Christ should come that the promise might be fulfilled. The Jews had about lost sight of the promise to Abraham and were exalting the law beyond that which was right.

Third, the law was only a tutor to bring humanity to Christ that they might be justified by faith in him. The word tutor is from a Greek word which means *footman*. It was the business of the footman to bring the pupil to the teacher. So the law served as that footman to bring people to Christ that they might learn the truth that makes men free.

Fourth, men who insist on keeping the law given through Moses today are living in disobedience to God and have fallen from grace. (Gal. 5: 2-4.) Paul said if people keep circumcision, which is one point of the law, they are obligated to keep the whole of the law; but if they keep all the law, they are fallen from grace and Christ is become of no effect to them.

### Golden Text Explained

#### 1. The Law Came Through Moses.

Our text indicates that the law mentioned in it is inferior to grace and truth which came through Christ, and that it came to an end in Christ and

his work. Since the term law includes the ten commandments given through Moses, many people refuse to grant that all the law ended in Christ. Hence, they divide law into

*ceremonial* and *moral*. The former they say has been taken away, but the latter is eternal because of its nature. They further say that the ceremonial law is called the law of Moses, and the moral law is called the law of God, or Jehovah. However, this distinction will not stand investigation. Luke speaks of the ceremony of purification according to the law of Moses, and says it is written in the law of the Lord. (Luke 2: 22, 23.) In these verses the law of Moses is obviously the law of the Lord. In Nehemiah we learn that the people gathered to hear the priest read from the law of Moses, while in the same connection the book is called "the book of the law of God." (Neh. 8: 1, 8, 18.) That the ten commandments are a part of the law given by Moses is clearly taught by the Lord himself. Jesus accused the Jews of not keeping the law given by Moses when they were planning to kill him. (John 7: 19ff.) The commandment against killing is one of the ten. Again, Jesus was debating with the Jews about the law as compared with their traditions, and he said, "Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother . . ." (Mark 7: 10.) Everybody knows that this is one of the ten commandments, yet Jesus gives Moses credit for it. Hence, we conclude that Jesus recognized the ten commandments as a part of the law of Moses.

2. **Grace and Truth Came Through Jesus Christ.** Here law is contrasted with grace and truth. Paul says we are not under law, but under grace. (Rom. 6: 14.) Again law and grace are contrasted. Law says, Do and live; grace and truth say, Be faithful

and live. Law makes no provision for mercy; there is no forgiveness on the basis of justification by law. Salvation by grace according to truth permits of human frailty and ignorance and provides for remission of sins in the mercy of God. Law demands that we merit our salvation by perfect obedience; grace offers us salvation on the merits of Christ provided we love and obey him, and remain faithful to him to the end of life.

Since Paul says we are not under the law, but under grace, we conclude that we are not subject to the law as given by Moses. Moses once had authority to command, and people who refused to obey him were punished even unto death. (Heb. 10: 28ff.) However, we can refuse to obey him today without any evil consequence. In fact we would be lost if we obeyed Moses now. (Gal. 5: 2-4.) The authority of Moses continued until the time of Christ, for Jesus commanded people to keep his commandments. (Mark 1: 44; Matt. 23: 1-3.) When Jesus arose from the dead, he said all authority in heaven and on earth was given unto him. That left no authority for Moses, or any other man on earth to exercise, except as Jesus delegated it to him through his teaching. (Matt. 28: 18-20.) So we are obligated to hear and heed all that Jesus commands us to do. Moses told the people of his day that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto him from among the people and all who refused to hear him would be destroyed. (Deut. 18: 15ff.; Acts 3: 23.) Peter said Jesus is that prophet which Moses said would come. Hence, the importance of obeying all that he commands us to do.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Israel's Duty to Jehovah (Ex. 20: 1-11)

*I am Jehovah thy God.* On the meaning of the word *Jehovah* there is a great variety of opinion. Some scholars claim that it is "utterly inexplicable" and so do not try to explain it. Adam Clarke says that Exodus 34: 6, 7 contain "the proper interpretation of the venerable and glorious name of JEHOVAH." There are found eleven attributes of the divine nature, the only passage in the

Bible containing so many of the essential attributes of God in so small a compass. The eleven are: (1) Jehovah, or LORD; (2) the strong or mighty God; (3) the merciful Being; (4) the gracious One; (5) the Being who suffers long; (6) the bountiful Being; (7) the great One; (8) the true One; (9) the Preserver of bountifulness; (10) he who bears away iniquity and transgression and sin; (11) he who visits iniquity. The word translated God in our text is *Elohim*,

plural, indicating the plurality of the godhead. Clarke says that this word is derived from an Arabic word which means *he worshiped, adored, was struck with astonishment*. From this he concludes that the name taught people that their God was the only Being worthy of worship and adoration.

*That brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* This would suggest (1) that he was a Being of great power who could execute vengeance upon all who oppose him; (2) that he was capable of delivering his people from trouble and of blessing them richly if they obeyed him; and (3) that he had not deserted them as soon as he got them out of Egypt, but had kept his promise to go with them on their journey and be their God.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me..* The word *before* is to be understood in the sense of *addition*. God does not demand that he be adored above all other gods; he demands that his people worship no gods in addition to him; he will divide his love and honor with no other beings, animate or inanimate. "The very first commandment of the whole series is divinely calculated to prevent man's misery and promote his happiness, by taking him off from all false dependence, and leading him to God himself, the *fountain of all good*." (Clarke.)

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.* This second commandment is to prevent idolatry. The first commandment prohibits all *mental* idolatry and this one prohibits the outward or physical forms of idolatry. The commandment is extended to include (1) likeness of anything in heaven; (2) anything on earth; (3) or anything in the water under the earth. And in Deut. 4: 15-19, Moses breaks these down in more detail saying they are not to make graven images of (1) any beasts; (2) winged bird; (3) anything that creepeth; (4) or the likeness of any fish. The Roman Catholic Church leaves this commandment out of their writings, but in order to maintain the number ten, they divide the tenth into two and so have two commandments against covetousness. And yet they claim to be the sole preservers of the word of God!!

*For I am a jealous God.* As a jealous husband will not share the love of his wife, so Jehovah will not allow his people, to whom he is married, to divide their love for him and make creatures the object of their love and adoration. He continues by saying that his jealousy causes him to "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," even to the third and fourth generation. This refers to national sins, and even then he does not hold the children guilty of the sins of the father; they simply bear the consequence of the sins of their fathers. His jealousy is also shown in his loving-kindness to all who keep his commandments.

*Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.* (1) This forbids using Jehovah's name in connection with falsehoods. Oaths were common; and the name of God might be used in connection therewith, but since he is the God of truth, his name must not be connected with falsehood. (2) It forbids common swearing, or profanity. Business and judicial oaths were allowed under Moses, and may be under Christ, but people have never been allowed to use the name of Jehovah in connection with vulgar conversation. (3) This commandment forbids a loose unnecessary use of the sacred name. Many people use this name, or a derivative thereof, in such expressions as: "The good Lord knows I intended to do thus and so." The seriousness of violating this commandment is suggested in the fact that "Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." By this he means one is guilty and will suffer for such careless use of the name whether he intended to do wrong or not. We should measure our conversation in the light of this teaching and see whether we need to exercise care in this respect. The name is as sacred now as it was in the time of Moses.

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* Some have supposed that the word *remember* is proof that the Lord gave the Sabbath commandment in the beginning and that it had been binding ever since that time. However, we have no mention of anyone keeping the Sabbath before the deliverance from bondage, and we have no mention of anyone being punished

for not keeping it. Nehemiah said Jehovah came down on Sinai and made known his holy sabbath to the people. (Neh. 9: 13, 14.) If the Sabbath was binding before the deliverance from bondage, no one knew anything about it for Nehemiah says that God made it known on Sinai. To keep the Sabbath holy was to observe it as the Lord required through the law. See verses 9-11 for some of these instructions.

## II. Israel's Duty to One Another (Ex. 20: 12-17)

*Honor thy father and thy mother.* To honor parents includes two things.

(1) To obey them. In connection with this commandment Paul tells children to obey their parents. (Eph. 6: 1, 2.) Children cast a great reflection on their parents in the community when they disobey them. (2) When parents are old, the children should see that their needs are supplied; and Jesus teaches that a child dishonors his parents when he refuses to help them. (Matt. 15: 4-6.) Paul teaches that children should take care of aged mothers that the church be not burdened. (1 Tim. 5: 4-8, 16.)

*That thy days may be long.* Honoring parents contributes to long life. The Lord does not mean to say that all obedient children will live a long life, for there are other things that enter in for consideration; but he does mean that such a manner of life will be blessed by the Lord.

*Thou shalt not kill.* The sense of this commandment is to prohibit murder. The same Lord who gave this commandment gave Saul the commandment to kill all the Amalekites, men, women, and children. And when Saul failed to kill Agag, the king, Samuel slew him with his own hands. (1 Sam. 15.) Paul teaches us that the government does not bear the sword in vain, but is a minister of God to punish evildoers. (Rom. 13.) This commandment was given to regulate the private lives of people, not to regulate the government. One may be guilty of violating this commandment in various ways. (1) One who hates is guilty of murder. (1 John 3: 15.) (2) One who kills his fellow man. If the act is premeditated, he is guilty of murder in first degree; if

the act is not intentional, he is not guilty of so great a crime. (3) One who neglects to save a life. There is such a thing as criminal negligence, and one who refuses to administer first aid, or take an injured person to get assistance, is guilty.

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.* This commandment may be violated in three ways: (1) by the overt act of illicit intercourse; (2) by looking lustfully upon one of the opposite sex (Matt. 5: 27); and (3) by marrying a second time after getting a divorce for any reason other than fornication. (Matt. 19: 9.) While the word *adultery* does not usually include such ugly sins, such things as Paul mentions in Rom. 1: 27 and Moses forbids in Lev. 20: 13-16 are probably intended to be included in this commandment. They are certainly forbidden by the law whether the specific term *adultery* includes them or not. The term *fornication* as used in Scripture would include them. Churches should restudy the subject of adultery and teach the young people that a marriage which the Lord disapproves will make it impossible for them to get to heaven. And people who divorce for trivial reasons and marry another are said by our Lord to be in adultery. There is little hope of getting people out of such relationships, even to save their souls, but there is a possibility of saving young people from forming such adulterous relationships. Hence, the necessity of teaching young people what the Lord teaches on the subject.

*Thou shalt not steal.* The primary meaning of this commandment is that people are not to take from others that of value which belongs to them. It has been suggested that it is a violation of this commandment to charge more than an article is worth, or to buy something for less than it is worth, and no doubt this is true if one is in position to force such a bargain. Others have suggested that this commandment is violated when one deprives another of his good name. Paul teaches us that we should labor, working with our hands the thing that is good, that we may have whereof to give to him that hath need, rather than steal. (Eph. 4: 28.) Agur prayed that the Lord would not give him poverty lest he should steal and

profane the name of God. (Prov. 30: 8, 9.) Stealing is usually brought on by greed or need, though some steal for the pleasure they derive from it. In times of depression men will steal before they allow their families to suffer. Some will steal rather than work for a living for themselves and their families.

***Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*** This may be done either in court or in private life. Under the law a false witness was to receive the punishment he tried to bring upon his neighbor by his false testimony. (Deut. 19: 15ff.) This was calculated to restrain a witness who wished to see his fellow man suffer punishment. The law was not always applied righteously as in the case of the men who testified against Jesus. This law was flagrantly violated when Jezebel hired men to bear false witness against Naboth so Ahab could get the vineyard he coveted. (1 Kings 21.) This commandment forbids the circulation of false charges, insinuations which tend to cast suspicion on a man, and all whispering campaigns intended to hurt a man and lessen his influence. Some people think they are innocent so long as they do not resort to outright lying, but they may insinuate enough to ruin one's reputation.

***Thou shalt not covet.*** This commandment implies that God knows the hearts of men, for otherwise he could not judge man with respect to this law. This was a long step in ad-

vance of any law or any code of religion in the time of Moses. We sometimes hear it said that the law of Moses sought to control only the outward and overt acts of man, but the law of Christ seeks to control the heart. This is not strictly true, for this tenth commandment dealt entirely with the heart. People have difficulty in distinguishing between legitimate desire and covetousness. Legitimate desire never seeks to do harm to another, but covetousness is an inordinate, or excessive, desire which causes one to get the object of his desire regardless of the welfare or pleasure of others. This law specifies several things which belong to others which are not to be desired by us. This is not a complete list, as is evident by the words "nor anything that is thy neighbor's." The Roman Catholic Church divides this commandment, separating one item from the rest to make the coveting of another's wife a separate violation. This is done because they dropped the commandment against the making and bowing down to graven images. This one dishonest use of God's word should be enough to convince all honest Catholics that there is something wrong with the system which they have accepted and which they are asked to support. If a document so important as the ten commandments has to be mutilated in the interest of a system of religion, there is necessarily something wrong with the system.

### Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our hearts and the second is like the first, to love our neighbor as ourselves. On these two commandments, he said, hang all the law and prophets. (Matt. 22: 34-40.) If we love God with all our hearts, we will keep the first three commandments, and will observe the Lord's day as directed in the place of the fourth commandment. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will keep the last six commandments.

2. Jesus gave a deeper meaning to some of these commandments. If we hate, we are guilty of murder; if we lust, we are guilty of adultery.

3. The law was given (1) to bind the tribes together into one nation; (2) to serve as a code of morals which would lift them above the nations round about them; (3) to bring them to and prepare them for Christ and his conception of living; (4) to teach them what sin is and to make them realize their need of a Saviour from sin.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?  
Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

What does Paul say about the law and justification?

What does Paul teach about the law and the promise made to Abraham?  
 How did the law bring people to Christ?  
 What is the condition of people who insist on keeping the law of Moses today?

#### Golden Text Explained

When and in whom did the law of Moses come to an end?  
 What division do people make of the law? And what is included in each?  
 Give proof that the expressions "law of Moses" and "law of God" mean the same thing.  
 Show that Jesus recognized the ten commandments as part of the law of Moses.  
 What is the difference between law and grace?  
 How did Jesus teach that the authority of Moses was binding in his day?  
 How did Moses teach that his authority would cease and the authority of another would be binding?

#### Israel's Duty to Jehovah

What do you know of the meaning of the word Jehovah?  
 Why did Jehovah remind Israel that it was he who brought them out of Egypt?  
 What is meant by no other gods *before* Jehovah?  
 Contrast the teaching of the first and second commandments.  
 What is included in the second commandment?  
 How is God's jealousy manifested?  
 Name and discuss three ways of taking Jehovah's name in vain.  
 How is the seriousness of violating this commandment emphasized?

Do we have evidence that the Sabbath law was not binding before it was given on Sinai?  
 How was the Sabbath to be kept? And who was to keep it?

#### Israel's Duty to One Another

What is meant by honoring father and mother?  
 What is the promise attached to this commandment?  
 What is meant by the word kill in the sixth commandment?  
 Name and discuss three ways in which one may be guilty of violating this commandment.  
 Name and discuss three ways one may be guilty of adultery.  
 Why should there be more teaching on this subject in churches today?  
 How may one violate the commandment against stealing?  
 What did Paul recommend in the place of stealing?  
 Why do people steal?  
 Why did Agur pray that he not come to poverty?  
 In what two situations may people bear false witness? And what does the law of Moses teach about one who would give false testimony to convict another?  
 How was the commandment violated in connection with Jesus? And with Naboth?  
 What is the difference between legitimate desire and covetousness?  
 What does this commandment suggest with reference to the heart?  
 How does the Roman Catholic Church treat this and the second commandments?  
 What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson XII—December 21, 1952

### THE GOLDEN CALF

#### The Lesson Text

Ex. 32: 1-8, 30, 35

1 And when the people saw that Mo'-ses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aar'-on, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Mo'-ses, the man that brought us up out of the land of E'-gypt, we know not what is become of him.

2 And Aar'-on said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aar'-on.

4 And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf: and they

said, These are thy gods, O Is'-ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'-gypt.

5 And when Aar'-on saw *this*, he built an altar before it; and Aar'-on made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to Je-ho'-vah.

6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

7 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'-ses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of E'-gypt, have corrupted themselves:

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten

calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Is'-ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'-gypt.

ple, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Je-ho'-vah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin.

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Mo'-ses said unto the people, Golden Text.—“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them.” (1 Cor. 10: 7a.)

35 And Je-ho'-vah smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aar'-on made.

Devotional Reading.—Psalm 106: 19-25.

Daily Bible Readings

- December 15. M.....Jehovah’s Anger Waxes Hot (Ex. 32: 9-20)
- December 16. T..... Moses Pleads for the People (Ex. 32: 21-35)
- December 17. W..... Moses Finds Favor with Jehovah (Ex. 33: 1-23)
- December 18. T..... Character of Jehovah Revealed (Ex. 34: 1-9)
- December 19. F..... Moses Intercedes Again (Num. 14: 11-25)
- December 20. S..... Paul Warns Against Idolatry (1 Cor. 8: 1-13)
- December 21. S..... Israelites an Example to Us (1 Cor. 10: 1-22)

Time.—1491 B.C.  
Place.—Sinai in Arabia.  
Persons.—Jehovah and all Israel.

Introduction

In the context of our lesson we have a very fine contrast of the characters of Moses and Aaron. Aaron was a weak character, lacking in faith, loyalty and steadfastness. He was easily influenced by the people to do wrong. He seems to have offered no resistance at all when the people requested him to make an image for them to worship. And when Moses charged him with the sin, he laid the blame on the people, saying, “Thou knowest the people, that they are set on evil.” And further to excuse himself, he gave the childish explanation of the making of the golden calf, saying, “I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: so they gave it me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.” However, in his favor we must remember that Aaron was brought up in slavery like the balance of the people and perhaps we should not expect any more of him than of the average man.

ple, he never was inclined to forsake Jehovah for other gods. He was humble; he had no ambition to become the head of a great nation, for when the people sinned, Jehovah suggested that they be slain and a great nation made from Moses. However, Moses begged Jehovah to spare the people instead. Moses manifested a disposition like that of Jehovah in his response to the sin of the people in making the golden calf. First, he became so angry when he saw the people worshipping the calf that he threw down the tables of stone and broke them. His anger at sin in the people shows his likeness to God. Next, Moses destroyed the image by burning and grinding it to powder. He then mixed the powder with water and made the people drink it. When people hate sin in this manner, there is not much danger of their being involved in sin. We should develop a hatred for sin. Paul tells us to abhor that which is evil. (Rom. 12: 9.) If we can learn to hate all that is evil and love all that is good, we will have the problem of right living solved. We learn to hate evil through a study of God’s word, thus learning God’s attitude toward evil. (Psalm 119: 104.)

In Moses we find an altogether different character. He was able to make decisions and stand by them. His faith in God never wavered but once. (Num. 20: 12.) Though he was brought up among idolatrous peo-

## Golden Text: Explained

1. The Evils of Idolatry. (1) The people broke a solemn covenant which they had made with Jehovah. They had agreed to obey the voice and keep the covenant of Jehovah (Ex. 19: 5), and Jehovah had spoken the law against idolatry in their hearing. When they made the golden calf and worshiped it, they broke this solemn covenant. When we today love something more than we love God, we break our agreement with him to put him first in our hearts and lives. (2) Idolatry is degrading and debasing in its effects upon humanity. People tend to partake of the nature of that which they worship. People who worship licentious gods become licentious in their lives; people who worship Jehovah sincerely tend to be holy. The animal worship of the Egyptians is known to have been degrading in its nature. "In Egypt, the dancers appear to have been professionals of a degraded class, and the dancing itself to have been always sensual and indecent. . . . We must suspect that it was this sort of dancing in which the Israelites were engaged—whence the terrible anger of Moses." (Pulpit Commentary.) (3) Idolatry robs God of the glory which rightly belongs to him. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. . . . For that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 1: 22, 25.)

2. Some Present Day Forms of Idolatry. (1) Paul repeatedly says that covetousness is idolatry. (Col. 3: 5.) People who love their money more than they love the Lord are guilty of idolatry. Wealth in all its forms is alluring and deceptive. Peo-

ple think they are masters of their fortunes when they are slaves and are giving their wealth the love and services which rightly belongs to Jehovah. (2) Paul predicted that the time would come when men would be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. (2 Tim. 3: 4.) That which we love supremely is our god. Paul's prediction has come true in our generation, for there are many people who love pleasure more than they love God, and they show it by giving more money, time, and energy to pursuing pleasure than they spend in serving and worshiping God. (3) Others make their business, or their home, or their family their god. Whenever we allow these things to have first place in our hearts and lives, they become our gods and to that extent we are idolaters. (4) Some today worship idols, images of Christ, Mary, and many saints. They contend that they only use these images to represent the beings back of them. That is the only use anyone ever made of an image. But the making of such images is forbidden, and bowing ourselves down to them is strictly forbidden. (Ex. 20: 4-6.)

3. Consequences of Idolatry. We have learned already that idolatry tends to degrade humanity in that it brings one down to the level of the one he worships. However, the final consequence of idolatry in the world to come is far worse. Paul says the idolater has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph. 5: 5.) It is a work of the flesh and those who practice such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5: 20.) Idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Rev. 21: 8.) Idolaters and fornicators are said to be outside the city prepared for the faithful. (Rev. 22: 15.)

## Exposition of the Text

## I. The Making of the Calf (Ex. 32: 1-4)

*Moses delayed to come down from the mount.* After the Lord came down upon Sinai and spoke to the people, they were so frightened that they did not wish to hear the voice

of Jehovah any more, lest they should die. So they asked that Moses commune with Jehovah and relay his messages to them. "Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto

thee; and we will hear it, and do it." (Deut. 5: 27.) Then Moses went back to the mountain to commune with Jehovah. It was at this time that he was away forty days and nights getting the two tables of stone and further instructions contained in Exodus 21 through 31.

*Up, make us gods, which shall go before us.* This is the language of the people to Aaron when they had grown weary waiting for Moses to return. Stephen says they had turned back in their hearts to Egypt and suggests that this is what accounts for their request for gods, intending that these gods should take them back to Egypt. (Acts 7: 39, 40.) And since they made a calf after the manner of Egyptian gods it is possible that they had such thoughts in their minds. The suggestion is also made in our text that they wanted gods made because they did not know what had become of Moses. Jehovah had made such demonstrations of power on Sinai that the people may have thought him destroyed or taken away to be with God. Ignorant, superstitious, slave people could well imagine many things which would seem ridiculous to us.

*Break off the golden rings.* When the people asked Aaron to make gods to go before them, he told them to bring their jewelry. This is the jewelry they asked of the Egyptians the day before they left Egypt. (Ex. 12: 35, 36.) One commentator thinks that Aaron did not wish to make the gods, so when the people demanded he countered with the proposition that he would make them if they would part with their newly acquired jewelry, thinking they would not do so. This seems a little farfetched. We are told that both men and women wore rings as ornaments, hence enough to make the image. Since they acquired this jewelry through the favor which God gave them in the eyes of the Egyptians, they should have refrained from using it to dishonor God. But do we not all use blessings we get through the grace of God to dishonor him? When we spend our money for sinful pleasures, we use that which God gives us in ways which dishonor him.

*All the people brake off the golden rings.* The men and the women, the

sons and daughters are mentioned as giving their rings. We have no idea how large the calf was, so do not know how much gold was required. Some have suggested that the calf was not made of solid metal; either it was mixed with alloy, or was made of wood and covered with gold. This last opinion seems not well founded. At any rate, the people did not use all their jewelry to make the calf, for they had plenty left to make the coverings of the furniture of the tabernacle. (Ex. 35: 21ff.)

*Fashioned it with a graving tool.* This differs greatly from Aaron's story as to how the calf came into existence. Aaron said, "I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." (Ex. 32: 24.) This shows how men will stretch the truth in order to justify themselves and escape the blame for something wrong which they have done. And for this sin Moses later says that Jehovah was very angry with Aaron, so angry that he would have destroyed him, but Moses prayed for him and Jehovah spared him. (Deut. 9: 20.)

*Made it a molten calf.* This statement seems to suggest that the calf was all metal instead of being wood covered with gold as some have suggested. The terms used to describe the making of the calf are not sufficiently clear for us to know just how it was done.

*These are thy gods.* This is the language of the men who made the calf, including Aaron; the language was directed to the people of Israel. Why was the idol made in the shape of a calf? Some think the calf was selected because the Egyptians worshipped such, but the people had seen the Egyptian gods so thoroughly discredited so recently that we can hardly believe they would wish to worship them. And if they had wished to fashion their worship after the Egyptians, they would have used live bulls like the Egyptians did. No one says the Egyptians worshiped images of bulls, but the living animals. One author suggests that the calf was selected because such images were worshiped by the ancestors of Abraham, and these are the gods which Joshua warned the people not to worship when they went into the land of Canaan. (Josh. 24: 2, 3, 14, 15.)

## II. Worshiping: the Calf (Ex. 32: 5, 6)

*He built an altar before it.* How far Aaron went along with the people in this sin is difficult to determine. How much pressure the people brought upon him to do what he did we can never know. He is not to be excused on account of the pressure regardless of how great it was, but there are things which follow that will show that he did not intend that the people should forsake Jehovah entirely.

*Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah.* This indicates that Aaron did not intend that the worship of this calf should take the place of the worship of Jehovah. Surely he intended that the people should worship Jehovah through, by the aid of, this image. And people who use images today say they do not consider the image a god, but only an aid in worshipping the true God. That is what Aaron had in mind, but his act was viewed by Jehovah as a great sin. If some object to this view of the matter and say that Aaron said "these are thy gods, O Israel," they should remember that such language is often used when only a symbol or representation is meant. Jesus said, "This is my body," when talking of the bread of the supper. No one thinks it was actually his literal flesh. Again, Paul says the rock that followed the Israelites was Christ. Surely he does not mean to say the literal rock was Christ; it was a symbol or representation of Christ. (1 Cor. 10: 4.) So Aaron intended that the people should worship Jehovah, but that they should use the calf as an aid to that worship.

*Offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings.* This is further indication that Aaron did not intend for the people to forsake entirely the worship of Jehovah. These are two of the offerings which God required of the people. Though they were a part of the law later revealed to the people, they were a part of Jewish worship before. Jethro knew about burnt offerings. (Ex. 18: 12.) These burnt offerings were wholly consumed by fire, but peace offerings were only partially consumed; the balance going to the priest who made the offering and the man offering the

animal, which might be eaten by them. (Lev. 3: 1ff.)

*Sat down to eat and drink.* Being allowed to eat a part of the peace offerings, they sat down to a feast. This was common with all idolatrous people. Paul had trouble with the church at Corinth over the same matter. They viewed the Lord's supper as a feast to God, so they were making an actual feast of it. (1 Cor. 11.) And some were making gluttons and drunkards of themselves just as they had done formerly in their heathen feasts. It is well known that the Egyptians also had such feasts in which they went to excess in several ways.

*And rose up to play.* This play consisted of dancing in a sensual fashion. (Ex. 32: 19.) Adam Clarke tells us that the same Hebrew word is used in Gen. 39: 14 where Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of immoral intentions. "This 'play' was scarcely of a harmless kind. The sensualism of idol-worship constantly led to sensuality; and the feasts upon idol-sacrifices terminated in profligate orgies of a nature which cannot be described." (Pulpit Commentary.) In the King James version, we read that the people were naked during the dance. (Ex. 32: 25.) The Pulpit Commentary says that the original Hebrew word used here has naked as its primary meaning, "so that there is no reason for changing the expression used in the Authorized Version." If this reading be the correct one, we must conclude that the play, or dance, was of a most sensual nature. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that the Israelites were at this time capable of such a lascivious exhibition of sensual pleasure.

## III. Jehovah Punishes Idolatry (Ex. 32: 7, 8, 30, 35)

*Thy people . . . have corrupted themselves.* Notice that Jehovah calls the people of Israel "thy people"—the people of Moses. Does he mean to disown them on account of their idolatry? In the latter part of this chapter and the first part of the next, Jehovah tells Moses that he will not accompany the people on their journey, but that he will send an angel. So we may conclude that the

term "thy people" is to be taken seriously. Jehovah charges that they have corrupted themselves. This was done in two ways. (They had practiced idolatry. No doubt many of them went farther than Aaron in their conception of the calf and its worship, but even using the calf as an aid to the worship of Jehovah was a revolting corruption of the true worship. (2) They had practiced immorality and indecency in connection with the worship of the holy God. This was as corrupting as any practice can possibly be, hence the obvious truth of Jehovah's statement that the people had corrupted themselves.

*They have turned aside quickly.* Human nature has always been capable of such quick departures. Adam and Eve did not live long in the garden until they sinned against God. Solomon had not been king long until he had turned in his heart from Jehovah. Saul was a bashful young man when he came to the throne, but soon became a self-willed and headstrong rebel in the sight of God. The people who returned from Babylonian captivity had to be reproved by the prophets often to get them to remain faithful to God. Paul reproves the Galatians for being so soon removed from him who called them in the grace of Christ unto another gospel. (Gal. 1: 6.) No doubt each one of us can find at least a tendency in our own hearts and lives to turn back to worldly things after experiencing the grace of God in so many ways we cannot count them.

*Ye have sinned a great sin.* These are the words of Moses to the people. This is his estimate of their actions. Moses loved the people and was willing to be blotted out rather than see

them perish, but still he could see their mistakes and judge them for what they really were. A level head and clear judgment is required to see the sin of people we love. The fact that Moses had a clear conception of their sin and the enormity of it, and yet loved them enough to be blotted out rather than see them perish, is an indication of his true greatness of character.

*Peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin.* Moses seems to have had a plan in mind which he does not reveal to the people. There thousand men had been slain for this sin, but Moses feels that Jehovah will not be satisfied. And when he goes back to the mountain to Jehovah he is told that all who have sinned must bear the consequences. It was at this time that Moses asked the Lord to forgive the people or else blot him out of the book which God had written. What this book was is difficult to determine. Adam Clarke thinks it was a muster roll, or register, showing who were entitled to go to Canaan and the part they were to play in the land. Blotting men out of that book would mean that they would not be allowed to go there on account of their sin. So Moses prays God to forgive, or to allow the people to go on to Canaan in spite of this great sin they had committed.

*And Jehovah smote the people.* Perhaps this refers to the death of the three thousand mentioned in verse 28, as that is the extent of the punishment so far as we know. The Jews, in their writings, accounted for many severe judgments of later date by saying they were brought upon them on account of this sin of idolatry.

### Topics for Discussion

1. All sin tends to debase and degrade humanity. Idolatry especially debases humanity because of the tendency of man to become like his idol, or the object of his worship.

2. This lesson should impress us with the fleetingness of religious impressions and resolutions. It should warn us to be careful lest we quickly

drift away from our steadfastness of purpose to serve God all the days of our lives.

3. Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts. (Jas. 1: 14.) This lesson demonstrates the strength of the lusts within us and the danger of being drawn away by them quickly after soul-satisfying experiences in communion with God.

## Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

### Introduction

What do you know of Aaron's character?

How did Aaron seek to excuse himself for making the golden calf?

What do you know of the character of Moses?

How did Moses show his humility and lack of personal ambition?

How did Moses show his anger for the sin of the people?

What became of the golden calf?

How can we solve the problem of right living?

### Golden Text Explained

Give and discuss three evils of idolatry.

What common sin does Paul call idolatry?

How can innocent pleasures become our idols?

Wherein is the sin of using images to aid us in worshiping God?

According to the Scripture, what is the consequence of idolatry?

### The Making of the Calf

Why did the people ask that Moses speak with the Lord for them?

What did the people request Aaron to do for them?

What does Stephen suggest as a reason for this request?

Where did the people get enough jewelry to make an image?

Did Aaron use all the jewelry the people had in making the calf?

From Aaron's experience, illustrate how men will stretch the truth to justify themselves.

Why was this image made in the likeness of a calf?

### Worshiping the Calf

Do you think Aaron intended that the calf worship should take the place of the worship of Jehovah? Why?

What kind of offerings were made to Jehovah in connection with this calf worship?

What is the difference between a burnt offering and a peace offering?

Their eating a feast to Jehovah is similar to what New Testament incident?

What is meant by the people rising up to play?

What statement in the Authorized Version indicates licentiousness?

### Jehovah Punishes Idolatry

How did Jehovah indicate to Moses his rejection of the people?

In what two ways had the people corrupted themselves?

Give several instances of humanity turning quickly from Jehovah.

Can we find present-day illustrations of the same tendency in humanity?

In what words did Moses express his estimate of their sin?

How did Moses seek to atone for the sin of the people?

What was the immediate consequence of this sin?

What ultimate consequence is suggested in the intercession of Moses?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?

## Lesson XIII—December 28, 1952

# THE TABERNACLE SET UP

### The Lesson Text

Ex. 40: 1-11

1 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mo'-ses, saying,

2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou rear up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.

3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and thou shalt screen the ark with the veil.

4 And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

5 And thou shalt set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the screen of the door to the tabernacle.

6 And thou shalt set the altar of

burnt-offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.

7 And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

8 And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the screen of the gate of the court.

9 And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the furniture thereof: and it shall be holy.

10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of burnt-offering, and all its vessels, and sanctify the altar: and the altar shall be most holy.

11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and its base, and sanctify it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount”* (Ex. 25: 40.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Exodus 35: 4-29.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 22. M.....Builders Selected and Inspired (Ex. 31: 1-11)  
 December 23. T.....People Bring Offerings for Tabernacle (Ex. 35: 20-35)  
 December 24. W.....The Ark and the Table of Showbread (Ex. 37: 1-16)  
 December 25. T.....The Candlestick and Altar of Incense (Ex. 37: 17-29)  
 December 26. F.....The Laver and Altar of Burnt Offerings (Ex. 38: 1-8)  
 December 27. S.....The Cost of the Tabernacle (Ex. 38: 21-31)  
 December 28. S.....Tabernacle a Type of Better Things (Heb. 9: 1-22)

TIME.—1490 B.C.

PLACE.—Sinai in Arabia.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and all Israel.

### Introduction

Moses gives the sum of the things which went into the building of the tabernacle. (Ex. 38: 24ff.) According to the value set on the talent and shekel, the cost of the tabernacle was a little more than one million dollars. Adam Clarke says it amounted to 244,127 pounds in English money. This does not take into account the fine cloth and skins which went into the making of the tent.

When we remember that the Israelites got all this gold and silver by asking the Egyptians to give it to them, we can realize what is meant when we read that God gave them favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. Not only did they get this material to build the tabernacle, but all the gold which went into the making of the golden calf. But since there were at least one million adults among the Israelites, they would not have to get much more than a dollar per

head to have the amount needed to make these things.

Since the Jews were used for slave work, we would not expect any of them to be capable of doing such delicate work as we find in the tabernacle. So we read that God selected and inspired men to do the fine finishing work that was required in the tabernacle. A man named Bezalel was chosen to oversee the work. Of him God said, “I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work all manner of workmanship.” (Ex. 31: 3-5.) Another man named Oholiab was appointed and inspired to work with him. Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah; Oholiab was of the tribe of Dan.

### Golden Text Explained

1. The Tabernacle Was Made According to a Pattern. When Moses was with Jehovah in Mount Sinai, he was shown a model, a pattern, in the likeness of which Moses was to build the tabernacle. Just what Moses actually saw we may not be able to determine. Some contend that he saw something real and tangible; others say that he was given a vision of what he was to build. Ezekiel was given a vision of a great temple much more complicated than the simple tabernacle. (Ezek. 40ff.) Regardless of what Moses saw, he was

to build the tabernacle according to instructions from God and not according to his own ideas.

2. The Tabernacle Was a Shadow, or Type, of Heavenly Things. (Heb. 8: 5.) Jehovah wanted the tabernacle so constructed as to be a type of the church and of heaven. The holy place was a type of the church; the most holy place was a type of heaven. And the services of the tabernacle performed by the priests and the high priest were typical of the services we perform in the church today, and of the service which Je-

sus performs for us in heaven. The furniture in the holy place had its typical meaning. In all these ways the Lord was preparing his people for the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the church and the worship to be conducted in it. This was one way in which the law served as a tutor to bring the world to Christ. (Gal. 3: 24, 25.)

3. The Necessity for Making the Tabernacle According to the Pattern. Moses could never have made a tabernacle according to his own ideas which would have served as a type of the heavenly things, hence the necessity for following the pattern which God showed him in the mount. Man's thoughts and ideas are not those of God, for God's thoughts are higher than man's as much as the heavens are above the earth. (Isa. 55.) So if the tabernacle served its ultimate purpose it had to be built according to the plan of God. In some way that plan was shown to Moses for his is to follow.

4. This Is Another Example of Doing Things by Faith. In order to do a thing by faith it is necessary to do it like God commands. It is said that Noah built the ark by faith (Heb. 11: 7), and yet we read that he built it according to all that God commanded him. (Gen. 6: 22; 7: 5.) There is no other way to do a thing by faith. If we do contrary to the way God commands, we do not walk by faith. Faith comes by hearing God's word. (Rom. 10: 17.) The in-

dividual who does not hear and heed God's word does not have faith, nor does he walk by faith. Many people claim to be saved by faith who flatly refuse to hear and heed what the Lord tells them to do to be saved. There can be no such tiling as salvation by faith when people walk according to what seems right to them. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14: 12.) Had Moses been like some people of our day, he would have said he could not see any sense in making certain pieces of furniture for the tabernacle, so would have left them out. Or he would have said he thought some idea of his would work as well as that which God commanded, so he would have substituted his idea for that which God commanded. People today think sprinkling will do just as well as burying and raising people in baptism, so they substitute. In order to keep Moses from doing such as this, Jehovah strictly charged him to make all things according to the pattern showed him in the mount. However, he had no clearer instruction on this point than we have today. God has strictly forbidden us to add a word to his revelation or to take away a word. (Rev. 22: 18, 19.) Those who make any changes do so at the peril of their souls for all eternity. We have no more right to deviate from the pattern than Moses had, and dire consequences are bound to follow if we do.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Furniture of the Tabernacle

(Ex. 40: 1-5)

On the first day of the first month. When the people began building the tabernacle we have no way of knowing, but from this statement we conclude that they finished it within the first year after they left Egypt. They left on the fifteenth day of the first month (Ex. 12), and since they erected the tabernacle on the first day of the first month, we know that it was built within the year. This was a short period for the building of a tabernacle of such costly and curious workmanship, but we must remember that the whole multitude had little else to do and that all of

them might have been organized and pressed into service.

*Tabernacle of the tent of meeting.* The tabernacle and the tent are two separate things and must be distinguished in our minds. The tabernacle was the small house which consisted of the holy place and the most holy place. The tent was a covering which was placed over the tabernacle. Later in this chapter we read, "Moses reared up the tabernacle . . . And he spread the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it." (Ex. 40: 18, 19.) It was called the tent of meeting because that is the place where Jehovah promised to meet Moses and the peo-

pie. Important gatherings for the consideration of matters of interest were held before the door of the tent of meeting.

*The ark of the testimony.* This was to be placed in the tabernacle, in the most holy place. In Exodus 25 we find a minute description of this ark. It was made of acacia wood, which is said to have been the most durable wood known to represent the immortality and eternity of Jehovah. This ark was two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and the same in height. The wood was covered with gold both inside and outside. It was called the ark of the testimony because the tables of the testimony were kept in it. These were the two tables on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God. Above this ark and at either end was a cherub, and between these cherubim was the mercy-seat; in fact the lid of the ark was the mercy-seat. It was above this mercy-seat that God's presence was to be manifested, and it was there that God promised to meet and commune with Moses. (Ex. 25: 22.) A pot of manna was put in the ark to be preserved for future generations that they might know that God fed his people from heaven for a period of forty years. And at a later date Aaron's rod budded as proof that God had chosen him in preference to certain other men, and that rod was placed in the ark. (Num. 17: 1-10.)

*Thou shalt screen the ark with the veil.* This is the veil which separated the holy place from the most holy place. We know but little about the veil. It was made of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cherubim worked on it. This was the veil in the temple that was rent in two pieces when Jesus died. (Matt. 27: 51.)

*Thou shalt bring the table.* This was the table which held the showbread which none but the priests were allowed to eat, and which must be replaced every Sabbath with fresh loaves. This was made of acacia wood which was covered with pure gold. It was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one and a half cubits high. All these pieces of furniture were to be carried with staves covered with pure gold. All the dishes used

in connection with this table were made of pure gold also. (Ex. 25: 23ff.)

*Thou shalt bring in the candlestick.* This candlestick was of beaten gold and all in one piece. There were seven lights, three on either side of the center light. And there were a number of cups and snuffers and snuff dishes to be used in connection with the service of this candlestick and they were all made of pure gold. This piece of furniture was to furnish all the light which the priests had in the holy place. They were to keep these lights burning all the time, and were to trim and replenish the lamps both morning and evening. This seems to be typical of the Bible which is the only light we have in the church today; and the trimming of the lights may suggest our reading and meditating upon the teaching of the Bible daily. We are told that the Roman Titus, after the destruction of Jerusalem, took these vessels to Rome to display during his triumphal entry into the city. The Jews held to the types and refused to believe in him who was prefigured by these types, and they were destroyed for their unbelief and rebellion.

*Thou shalt set the golden altar for incense.* This altar was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. The top of it was to be one cubit square and it was two cubits high. Moses said this was to be placed before the ark of testimony with only the veil between them. The writer of Hebrews says this altar of incense was in the most holy place with the ark of the testimony. (Heb. 9: 3, 4.) Some account for this by the fact that when the high priest went into the most holy place he took the altar of incense with him. From Ex. 30: 7 we learn that sweet incense was to be burnt every morning on this altar, but the most holy place was to be entered only once a year, so we know that it was usually in the holy place where the priests were allowed to go daily.

*Put the screen of the door to the tabernacle.* This refers to the door to the holy place, the entrance. No permanent door was made for the holy place; it was only a screen which might be moved easily. The tent which covered the tabernacle

was enough to protect the entrance, so only a screen was necessary to shut out the vision of the curious.

## II. The Furniture of the Court (Ex. 40: 6-8)

*Thou shalt set the altar of burnt offerings.* This was to be placed between the entrance to the court around the tabernacle and the laver; it was the first thing to be seen upon entering the court on the east side. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with brass. This altar was simply a box five cubits square and three cubits high with a grating over the top. The Jews say that when it was to remain in one place for any length of time, it was filled with earth. Priests were not to use an altar which was approached by steps (Ex. 20: 26), so it is probable that they made a ramp of earth on the south side of this altar on which they stood to make their offerings. On this altar was burnt all the offerings of the Jews except those which were to be carried and burnt without the gate. (Heb. 13: 11.) From this altar the priests were to get the fire with which they burnt their incense: all who used strange fire, fire from any other place, were punished. (Lev. 10.)

*And thou shalt set the laver.* This piece was between the altar of burnt offerings and the door of the holy place. Nothing is known of the size of the laver, but it was made of mirrors given by the women who ministered at the door of the tent of meeting. (Ex. 38: 8.) The laver was kept filled with water in which Aaron and his sons were to wash before they were allowed to enter the service of the tabernacle. Some have denied that the bodies of these men were washed, but their denial rests upon no good foundation. (Lev. 8: 6; Ex. 29: 4.) As these priests were not allowed to minister in the holy place without being washed with water, so we are not allowed today to minister as priests in the holy place, the church, without having our bodies washed with pure water and our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. (Heb. 10: 22.) There were times when the priests were to wash only their hands and feet in the laver that they might perform certain

works. (Ex. 30: 17-21.) However, in the services of consecration when they were entering upon their life of service in the tabernacle, they were to be washed in the laver. (Ex. 40: 12.)

*Thou shalt set up the court round about.* This court around the tabernacle was one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide; it was a wall five cubits high. For a detailed description of how this wall was made see Ex. 27: 9-19. The court was accessible to all Israelites, but no Gentile was allowed to go inside. In later temples a Gentile court was added, but there was a wall between the courts which had to be respected. It was this wall between the court of the Jews and the court of the Gentiles to which Paul referred as the "middle wall of partition" which had been done away in Christ, so that there is no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile in Christ. (Eph. 2: 14ff.)

## III. Sanctifying the Tabernacle and Furniture (Ex. 40: 9-11)

*Thou shalt take the anointing oil.* This was not mere olive oil which was used for many purposes in Palestine. This holy anointing oil was a special preparation made by directions given by Jehovah. "Take thou also unto thee the chief species: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin; and thou shalt make it a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer: it shall be a holy anointing oil." (Ex. 30: 23-25.)

*Anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein.* We do not know all the details of this anointing service. However, in Lev. 8: 6-13 we have some details given. In connection with the anointing of the altar it is said that the anointing oil was sprinkled seven times upon the altar and all its vessels. So we may reasonably conclude that the other pieces of furniture were sprinkled seven times when they were anointed. Being simply a ceremony there was no need for covering the pieces with the anointing oil.

*And it shall be holy.* For a thing to be holy it had to be separated to the use of Jehovah by a ceremony prescribed by the Lord. When the holy anointing oil was put on these pieces of furniture and vessels used in connection with the worship of God, they were accepted by Jehovah as fit to be used in worship offered to him. In one verse we read that when the holy anointing oil was put on a piece of furniture it was holy, while in another verse we read that it was sanctified when the anointing oil was put upon it. That which was sanctified was holy.

It is interesting to notice that Jehovah did not allow the Jews to make and use this anointing oil for

their personal use. "Upon the flesh of man shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any like it, according to the composition thereof: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people." (Ex. 30: 32f.) If the Lord was so careful about the use of that which was holy, and if he was so careful that his anointing oil be properly compounded without adulteration, surely he is no less careful that his gospel, his saving power today, be preserved pure without human mixture and be used for the accomplishments of his holy purposes.

### Topics for Discussion

1. The tabernacle was for a dwelling place of God, where his people might have access to him. So the church is God's dwelling place today; it is that institution where we may meet and commune with Jehovah.

2. As the tabernacle was built according to the pattern, so the church today is to be built and kept functioning in harmony with the divine pattern. To deviate from that pattern is to reject the authority of Jesus Christ and to turn from God.

3. As Moses could never have built a tabernacle to please God by following his own wisdom, so no man today can build a church which will be acceptable to God unless he follows the pattern set by the apostles in building churches under the direction of the Holy Spirit. All who reject the pattern set by the apostles and build churches after their own wisdom are building on the sand and will see their work destroyed.

### Questions for the Class

What is the subject of the lesson?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons of this lesson.

#### Introduction

What do you know of the cost of the tabernacle?

Where did these slaves get enough gold to build such a building?

How could men reared in slavery do such highly specialized work as was required on the tabernacle?

Who were the men selected to lead in this work?

#### Golden Text Explained

How did Moses know how to build the tabernacle?

Do you know what this pattern was?

Of what was the tabernacle a type?

Why did the Lord want the tabernacle to be a type of the church and heaven?

Why was it necessary for Moses to follow the pattern instead of his own ideas?

Why is this an example of doing things by faith?

How do people today substitute their ideas for what God has commanded?

#### The Furniture of the Tabernacle

How long had the people been out of Egypt when the tabernacle was set up?

How could such a complicated building be built in less than a year?

Describe the ark of the testimony, and why was it so called?

What was kept in this ark?

What do you know of the veil and its location?

What do you know of the table of showbread and its use?

Describe the candlestick. Of what was it made and for what used?

Of what in the church is the candlestick typical?

What do you know of the altar of incense and its use?

What do you know of the location of this piece of furniture?

What was used for a door to the holy place?

#### The Furniture of the Court

Describe the altar of burn offerings.

For what was this altar used?

What did Jehovah forbid as a part of this altar?

What do you know of the size and shape of the laver?

Of what was the laver made? And where did they get such material?

For what was the laver used?

Of what is the laver typical? And why do you think so?

Give the dimensions of the outer court.

Who were not allowed in this court?

What do you know of the court of the Gentiles? And the middle wall of partition?

Sanctifying the Tabernacle and Furniture

Of what was the holy anointing oil compounded?

What do you know of the ceremony of anointing the tabernacle?

What words are used to describe the condition of the tabernacle and its furniture after this ceremony of anointing?

What restriction was placed upon this holy anointing oil? And what lesson does this suggest to you?

What is there of interest in Topics for Discussion?