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G O S P E L   A D V O C A T E   S E R I E S

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# Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1957

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

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## THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL VOLUME

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PRICE	
Paper Covers	
Single copy, postpaid	\$1.10
Five or more copies to same address, each, net	\$1.00
Clothbound	
Single copy, postpaid	\$1.50
Five or more copies to same address, each, net	\$1.35

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GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY  
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## P R E F A C E

This is the thirty-sixth annual volume published by Gospel Advocate Company to be used by churches of Christ. Twelve of these volumes have worn the title of **TEACHER'S ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY** on Bible School Lessons, eleven of them being written by the present author. The circulation of the book has grown steadily during these eleven years until it is more than three times as great as it was when the present author began writing it. We sincerely hope the good accomplished has grown in proportion to the circulation.

The first quarter this year is devoted to a study of some minor characters of the New Testament. The aim of the study of these characters is to learn what was good in their lives to imitate and what was evil in their lives to shun. There is no better way to learn what God will approve or disapprove in our life than to see God dealing with people who lived under circumstances similar to those under which we live.

The second quarter of this year will be spent studying the major prophets of the Old Testament. Most of us do not give enough time to the study of the Old Testament. The more we know about the Old Testament, the better we will be prepared to understand the New Testament. These prophets were men of like passions with us. Their inspiration did not make them immune to temptations or preserve them from sufferings. You will thrill at the visions of Isaiah and marvel at the ability of Jeremiah to bear his trials.

The last half of the year will be devoted to a study of the apostle John and his writings. Practically all the material we study is distinctly that of John, material not given us by other writers. John's writings are much later than the rest of the New Testament and are rich in matter not given by other writers.

The golden texts have been developed in such way as will give assistance to young men in preparing sermons and lessons for various groups. We hope they will prove helpful both to preachers and teachers.

Both the writer and the publishers sincerely hope the book will prove a blessing to the thousands of teachers and students who use it through the year.

THE AUTHOR

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## FIRST QUARTER

### SOME MINOR CHARACTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

*Aim: To learn lessons of value from the lives of the less prominently mentioned characters of the New Testament, that we may avoid their faults and imitate their virtues.*

#### Lesson I—January 6, 1957

### JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA

#### Lesson Text

Matt. 27: 57; Luke 23: 50-53; John 19: 38-42

57 And when even was come, there came a rich man from Ar-i-ma-thae'-a, named Joseph, who also himself was Je'-sus' disciple:

50 And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and righteous man

51 (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a man of Ar-i-ma-thae'-a, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God:

52 This man went to Pi'-late, and asked for the body of Je'-sus.

53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain.

38 And after these things Joseph of Ar-i-ma-thae'-a, being a disciple

**Golden Text.**—*"There came Joseph of Arimathaea, a councillor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus."* (Mark 15: 43.)

**Devotional Reading.**—John 19: 31-37.

#### Daily Bible Readings

December 31. M.....	Jesus Is Bound (Mark 15: 1-5)
January 1. T.....	Jesus and Barabbas (Matt. 27: 11-26)
January 2. ....	W. Jesus Is Led Away (Mark 15: 16-20)
January 3. ....	T. The Crucifixion (Matt. 27: 33-44)
January 4. ....	F. Death of Jesus (Mark 15: 33-41)
January 5. ....	S. The Women at the Tomb (Mark 16: 1-8)
January 6. S.....	On the Way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35)

**Time.**—A. D. 30.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Joseph, Nicodemus, Pilate.

#### Golden Text Explained

1. **Name and place,** (a) How distinguished. Joseph is a very common name in the Bible, there being more than a dozen men by that name. So,

it became necessary for the Holy Spirit to distinguish this Joseph from the others by giving the name of his birthplace or his residence. We can-

not be sure that he was born in Arimathaea, or whether he had moved from his birthplace and simply resided there at the time of the events of our lesson. At any rate, he was the Joseph who dwelt in Arimathaea. (b) Arimathaea. We do not have a lot of information on the place called Arimathaea. However, it is usually regarded as the same place as Ramah, the birthplace of Samuel. (1 Sam. 1:1.) Although in First Samuel Ramah is said to be "of the hill country of Ephraim," this need not be taken to mean in the territory of Ephraim. We learn in our lesson today that Arimathaea was a city of the Jews which would place it in the southern kingdom and most likely in the territory of Benjamin. Ramah was only six miles northwest of Jerusalem. One man writing about the place said, "The situation is exceedingly beautiful. It is about two hours distant from Jerusalem to the northwest, on an eminence commanding a view of a wide extent of beautiful diversified country. Hills, plains, and valleys, highly cultivated fields of wheat and barley, vineyards and olive yards, and spread out before you as on a map, and numerous villages are scattered here and there over the whole view. To the west and northwest, beyond the hill country, appears the vast Plain of Sharon, and farther still you look out upon the great and wide sea. It occurred to me as not improbable that in the days of David and Solomon this place may have been a favorite retreat during summer, and that here the former may have often struck his sacred lyre." (c) Councillor. Our text tells us that Joseph was "a councillor of honorable estate." This means that he was a member of the Jewish council of the Sanhedrin. This was the supreme court of the Jews, and this was the body which passed sentence upon Jesus and which demanded his death at the hands of Pilate.

## 2. Looking for the kingdom, (a)

All expecting. We are told that when John began his work of preaching and baptizing, "as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ," they came to John asking if he were the Messiah. This suggests that all the Jews were in expectation of the

Messiah and the kingdom which he would establish. And Joseph, like other Jews, was expecting the kingdom to be established, (b) Other expressions. Where our text says that Joseph was looking for the Kingdom of God, we find other expressions which give us a similar idea. For instance, we are told that Simeon who was a righteous and devout man was "looking for the consolation of Israel." (Luke 2: 25.) And on this same occasion which was our Lord's presentation in the temple, a prophetess named Anna "spoke of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2: 38.) (c) Lessons implied. (1) Jewish misconceptions of the kingdom. No doubt Joseph, along with all other Jews, was expecting Jesus to establish a temporal kingdom and reign on the throne of David in Jerusalem. Those who were looking for the "redemption of Jerusalem," undoubtedly had the idea that Jerusalem would be delivered from the bondage to Rome and that the Messiah would reign in Jerusalem as his capital city. And to the devout Jew, the "consolation of Israel" simply meant their deliverance from subjection to Rome and their independence as a nation again. (2) The fact that Joseph and all other Jews of his day were looking for the kingdom of God to be established is proof that the kingdom had not yet been established. The time of our lesson is the crucifixion of Jesus, and if they at the crucifixion of Jesus were still looking for the kingdom of God to be established, we may rest assured that the kingdom was not established during the personal ministry of our Lord.

## 3. Asked for the body of Jesus.

(a) From secrecy to strength. John tells us that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but that he was a disciple in secret for fear of the Jews. (John 19: 38.) It was quite a step for Joseph to take from secrecy to open boldness such as is demonstrated in our text. Yet, God in his providence had provided just such a character who, when the proper time should come, would have the courage to do that which needed to be done, (b) Belated but necessary service. Our Lord's disciples were not in position to render the service which Joseph



of Arimathaea rendered. They were under suspicion as being the followers of Jesus and a request on their part would have gone unheeded by Pilate. Nor were they in political position to demand the attention of

Pilate at this time. But being a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph was in such position as would give him an audience with Pilate and give him the necessary influence to get that which he desired.

## Introduction

In the statement of the aim for the lessons of this quarter, we are told that we shall study the characters for the purpose of avoiding their faults and of imitating their virtues. One fault of Joseph is that he was a secret disciple of the Lord. There are two probable reasons why anyone would be a secret disciple. One is that he might be *ashamed* of Jesus or, rather, ashamed to confess his faith in Jesus; the other is that he might be *afraid* to confess his belief in Jesus. We are glad to learn that Joseph was not ashamed to confess his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. We are told that he was afraid to confess his faith. Being a member of the Sanhedrin, he might have feared that he would lose his position, or he may have feared personal violence from those who were in power. We do not know what he feared; we only know that he was afraid to confess that he was a disciple of Jesus. This mistake we cer-

tainly ought to avoid. If we are ashamed or afraid to confess our faith in Jesus as the Son of God, we may rest assured that our Lord will refuse to confess us before his Father in heaven. (Matt. 10: 32, 33.) On the other hand, we see in Joseph something which we should imitate. When the time came to render a service which the confessing disciples could not render, Joseph found the courage to render that service. When the opportunity comes for us to serve the Lord, we must not allow fear or anything else to stand in our way. Prior to this time, Joseph's secrecy had not been challenged as it was on this occasion. Now he must either refuse to render a service to his Master which no one else was in position to render, or he must brave the dangers involved in open discipleship. It is to his credit that he had the courage to confess his attachment for the Lord and to render the service that only he could render.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jesus and the Rich (Matt. 27: 57)

*And when even was come.* Matthew tells us that Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. (Matt. 27: 50.) He then tells us of the bodies of saints being raised from their graves and of the women who were beholding from afar the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. He does not tell us of the breaking of the bones of the men on the crosses; only John relates this. Jesus died about the ninth hour (Matt. 27: 46); the sabbath day would start three hours later. The Jews did not want the bodies on the crosses after the sabbath began, so they requested that the legs of the men be broken so that death would follow immediately and the bodies could be taken down. (John 19: 31-37.) Adam Clarke tells us that the Jewish Passover started at about four o'clock in the afternoon and that Joseph would want to do what he wished to do with the body before that time. We

have no scripture authority for the beginning of the passover at four o'clock, but we do know that the Jews wanted the bodies down before six o'clock that evening.

*There came a rich man.* Common Jewish practice would have allowed the body of Jesus to be buried in a common grave with the two thieves with whom he was crucified. Had it not been for the providence of God, no doubt the body of Jesus would have been buried with the thieves. But a prophet of old was permitted to look into the future and see that our Lord would be buried in a rich man's tomb. Isaiah said, "They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death." (Isa. 53: 9a.) How could Isaiah see and foretell this small detail more than seven hundred years before the event occurred? This along with many other details of prophecy which were fulfilled in the death, burial, and resurrection

of our Lord proved beyond question the inspiration of the prophets of the Old Testament.

## II. A Friend Among Enemies (Luke 23: 80-83)

*A good and righteous man.* Our text mentions the fact that Joseph was a member of the Jewish council or Sanhedrin. We have already commented on that in the Golden Text, but this text also says that he was a good and a righteous man. We are saying much about a man when we say that he is a good man. It is said of Jesus that he went about doing good. (Acts 10: 38.) From this we would conclude that Jesus was a good man. And to say that Joseph was a good man is to say that he was like Jesus. This is as great a recommendation as can be given a person. But we are told also that he was a righteous man. John tells us that the one who does righteousness is righteous. (1 John 3: 7.) Since all of God's commandments are righteousness, the man that does righteousness is obeying the commandments of God. So, we conclude that Joseph was a man who was obedient to the commandments of God, for he was a righteous man, according to the law. (Phil. 3: 6.)

*He had not consented to their counsel and deed.* Luke wishes his readers to understand that Joseph did not agree with the Sanhedrin when they judged Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy and demanded his death as the penalty. The fact that Joseph was a good and righteous man would make it impossible for him to have anything to do with the bargain with Judas to betray his Master, nor would he have any part in hiring witnesses to swear falsely against Jesus. And since it was illegal to hold trial at night, Joseph could not consent to the way the trial of Jesus was conducted. And being a righteous man, Joseph could not take part in stirring up the mob to bring pressure on Pilate to crucify Jesus.

*Who was looking for the kingdom of God.* Joseph, along with other faithful Jews, was looking for the establishment of the kingdom of God. From the prophecies of Isaiah, Daniel, and others, they must have known that the time was ripe for the establishment of the kingdom. And since Joseph secretly believed that Jesus was the Messiah, he was expecting

Jesus to establish the kingdom. No doubt Joseph was disappointed, and his faith sorely tried in the fact that Jesus submitted to the shameful and disgraceful trial and crucifixion. All along he was expecting Jesus to assert his authority and manifest his power and overcome the enemy and establish his kingdom according to Jewish expectation. To interpret this statement of our text to mean that Joseph was looking for the establishment of the church would be to attribute to him entirely too correct and scriptural understanding of the matter. If the apostles of Jesus who had been taught continuously for three years did not have this mature idea of the kingdom, we need not expect Joseph, a secret disciple, to have such a mature conception of the kingdom.

*And laid him in a tomb.* Luke tells us that this tomb was hewn in a stone. It was common practice among the Jews to excavate large rooms in solid rock, rooms large enough to accommodate many bodies. These tombs were entered by an ordinary size door. This door was usually closed by a stone sometimes cut in circular shape so as to be rolled in front of the door. Both Luke and John tell us that this tomb had never been used. Luke says, "Where never man had yet lain." "Had our Lord been buried in the common burial ground of the malefactors, his resurrection could not have been so distinctly remarked, as the chief priests would never have thought of sealing the stone there, or setting a watch; but now that the body is got into the hands of a friend, they judge it necessary to make use of these precautions, in order, as they said, to prevent imposture; and from this very circumstance the resurrection of Christ had its fullest evidence, and was put beyond the power of successful contradiction." (Adam Clarke.) And Albert Barnes suggests that if this tomb had been used before and held other bodies, the Jews might have claimed that the body of Jesus was made alive by touching the bones of others as in the case mentioned in 2 Kings 13: 21.

## III. Secret Disciples S e r v e Jesus (John 19: 38-42)

*And Pilate gave him leave.* We

are told that Joseph went directly to Pilate for permission to take the body of Jesus from the cross and bury it. Only Pilate could have given this permission, and likely no one but Joseph or someone in position of authority such as his could have secured this permission from Pilate.

*There came also Nicodemus.* Nicodemus was also a member of the Sanhedrin. He is the one who came to Jesus early in our Lord's ministry and confessed his faith in him as one come from God, "for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 1, 2.) We do not know that Nicodemus became a believer at the time he went to Jesus that night, but if he did become a secret disciple that night he wasted three years of time. During these years Jesus needed someone in places of power to confess him and stand up for him, but Nicodemus was willing to allow the Sanhedrin to gather evidence against Jesus and to make efforts to catch him in his speech without ever raising his voice against such ill treatment. The service he now renders is praiseworthy, but it does not make up for his failure to stand up for the Lord and to speak out for him during those three years.

*Bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes.* John tells us that Nicodemus brought about one hundred pounds of this mixture for preparing the body for its burial. However, this was not intended as the complete and final preparation for burial, for Luke tells us that the women who followed these men beheld where the tomb was and how the body was laid and that they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and that on the first day of the week "they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared." (Luke 23: 56; 24: 1.) Although Herodotus describes at length three modes of embalming used by the ancients, "it does not appear that embalming, properly so called, was practiced by the Hebrews. Asa was laid 'in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the perfumers' art' (2 Chron. 16: 14); and by the tender care of Nicodemus the body of Jesus was wrapped in linen clothes, with spices, 'a mixture of

myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight ... as the manner of the Jews is to bury.'" (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) Some have objected to John's record that Nicodemus brought one hundred pounds of this mixture on the grounds that that amount would be sufficient for many, many bodies. However, authorities tell us that when one wished to do special honor to the deceased, a great amount of this mixture was used.

*There was a garden.* John tells us that in the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden, and in this garden where he was crucified was a new tomb. And in our lesson we have already seen that this new tomb belonged to Joseph. So, we would naturally suppose that this garden where Jesus was crucified belonged also to Joseph.

*Because of the Jews' preparation.* John also tells us that Jesus was placed in this tomb because there was not sufficient time to put his body elsewhere. One authority says, "From this it may be conjectured that they had designed to put him in a more magnificent tomb; or, that they intended to make one expressly for himself after the Passover; or, that they had designed to put him somewhere else, but could not do it for want of time, and that they put him here because the tomb was nigh." (Adam Clarke.) The "preparation" of this verse would naturally be taken to mean the same as that in verse 14 where we read, "Now it was the preparation of the Passover." Those who say that this is the preparation for the Passover must contend that Jesus and his apostles ate the Passover one day early. However, others as stoutly contend that this preparation was simply the preparation for the sabbath of the Passover week and that special preparation would be made since it was what was known as "a high sabbath." The limits of our lesson do not permit a discussion of this problem. If the reader is interested, he may consult Barnes and Clarke for commentators' views, or he may read under Passover in Smith's Bible Dictionary. These commentators and this dictionary give the various views and the arguments for each of the views.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Men of wealth and position deserve special commendation for confessing Jesus and serving the Lord because of the extra suffering and persecution they must bear.

2. Joseph manifested great courage in refusing to agree with the council in its condemnation of Jesus and in

asking Pilate for the privilege of giving the body a burial.

3. Fear often robs the Lord of the services of good people, but unless they overcome their fear as did Joseph, they will be in the lake of fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21: 8.)

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Discuss the aims of the lessons for this quarter.

### Golden Text Explained

Where did Joseph live? and what do you know of the city?

What position did Joseph hold among the Jews?

What evidence do we have that all Jews were expecting a Messiah?

What other expressions were used to suggest that they expected the Messiah's kingdom?

What did Joseph and other Jews expect to gain by Messiah's coming?

What is suggested here with reference to the time of the establishment of the kingdom?

What was unusual about Joseph's discipleship?

What service did Joseph render which the apostles could not? and why?

### Introduction

Name one fault in Joseph.

Give two probable reasons for secret discipleship.

Which reason did Joseph have for his secrecy?

Give some probable reasons why he was afraid to confess his faith in Jesus.

What is there in Joseph which we may imitate with profit?

### Jesus and the Rich

At what time was Jesus crucified? and at what time did he die?

Why did the Jews want the legs of the crucified men broken?

Name some things the Sanhedrin did to which Joseph could not agree.

What prophecy did Joseph fulfil? and how did he fulfil it?

What evidence do we have in this of the inspiration of the Bible?

### A Friend Among Enemies

What is said of the character of Joseph?

What course must one follow to be a righteous man?

Name some things the Sanhedrin did to which Joseph could not agree.

What caused the Jews to be expecting the kingdom at this time?

What reasons can you give that Joseph must have been disappointed in Jesus?

How does the fact that Jesus was laid in a new tomb contribute to the proof of his resurrection?

### Secret Disciples Serve Jesus

From whom did Joseph get permission to bury the body of Jesus?

Who assisted Joseph in the burial of the body of Jesus?

For what may these men be criticized during their years of secret discipleship?

What did Nicodemus bring to prepare the body for burial?

Was this preparation and burial intended as the final disposition of the body?

What is said of the place where Jesus was crucified?

Why was Jesus given a quick burial?

What do you know of the "Jew's preparation" of this text?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

Lesson II—January 13, 1957

## THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

### Lesson Text

Mark 7: 24-30

24 And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Si'-don. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid.

25 But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet.

26 Now the woman was a Greek, a Sy-ro-phoe-ni'-cian by race. And

she besought him that he would cast forth the demon out of her daughter.

27 And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

28 But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt” (Matt. 15: 28.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 15: 21-28.

30 And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out.

## Daily Bible Readings

January 7. M  
January 8. T.  
January 9. W.  
January 10. T.....  
January 11. F.  
January 12. S.  
January 13. S.

Faith Without Works, Dead (James 2: 17-26)  
Kept Through Faith (1 Pet. 1: 5-9)  
Examples of Great Faith (Heb. 11)  
Keeping the Faith (2 Tim. 4: 1-7)  
Work of God That We Believe (John 6: 29)  
Hearts Purified by Faith (Acts 15: 7-9)  
Great Faith (Luke 7: 9)

TIME.—A. D. 28.

PLACE.—The region of Tyre and Sidon.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the woman of Canaan.

## Golden Text Explained

1. Great faith, (a) Little opportunities. Many times people with few and poor opportunities accomplish more than people who have many and rich opportunities. Our accomplishments do not depend so much on the number and richness of our opportunities as upon the faith and zeal and energy with which we take hold of and use those opportunities. This Syrophoenician woman had very few and very poor opportunities for the development of her faith, but she used to the greatest extent possible the opportunities she had. Some people are waiting for one great opportunity to enable them to do something great enough to capture the attention and the admiration of the whole world. And while they are waiting for this one great opportunity, they are doing nothing. They usually go through life without doing anything worthwhile. If they had used the little opportunities that came their way, they would have been in position to use greater opportunities. This woman used the little opportunity she had for developing her character and consequently was ready when the opportunity presented itself to beg the blessing of the Christ, (b) In spite of discouragements. The language of our Lord was quite a discouragement to her when he said to her that he had not come to bless the Gentile world, but that his service was for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And further, she was discouraged in the fact that when she continued to plead her case, the dis-

ciples of Jesus requested that he send her away. (Matt. 15: 23.) But in spite of the fact that the Lord's disciples were willing to send her away empty-handed, and in spite of the fact that even the Lord seemed disinclined to listen to her, she continued to request a hearing. It was this insistence and this determined effort that manifested the greatness of her faith and won for her the blessing.

2. Great reward, (a) Attention of the Lord. This faith which would not cease as long as there was life brought to her the personal attention of the Lord. None of us can ask for a greater blessing or a greater reward of our faith than the personal, provident attention of our Lord. Jesus tells us of another woman who went continually to a judge asking him to avenge her of her adversary. And though the judge would not give her her wish for a while, yet because of her continual coming, he decided to grant her plea. And Jesus concludes that if this unrighteous judge would grant the woman's plea because of her continual coming, surely God will avenge his elect “that cry to him day and night.” (Luke 18: 7.) So, the insistence of this woman of Canaan and the reward of gaining the attention of the Lord becomes to us an example that we ought to persevere in our prayers and rest assured that we will have the attention which we deserve and which is characteristic of the Lord of mercy, (b) Assurance of blessing. On account of the persistent and determined faith of

this woman, the Lord gave her assurance that her request was granted and that she might go home in the assurance that the blessing was hers. And so we are assured by the Lord that in our patient continuance of well-doing, and our continuous prayers, our needs will be rewarded,

(c) To the degree of her desire. Our text says that Jesus said to the woman, "Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." Her blessing was to be as great as was her desire. Many times our conception of God and of his willingness to bless us is entirely too small. In the first place, we do not believe sufficiently in the power of God to do for us the things that we need, and many times we have not the courage to ask as great blessings as the Lord is willing to give us. Paul assures us that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Eph. 3: 20.) And so the quantity and the rich-

ness of our blessings may be limited by reason of our limited conception of the ability and the willingness of God to bless us.

3. **Lessons for us.** (a) The Lord blessed others. We should take encouragement from the fact that the Lord has abundantly blessed other people in days past. If the Lord would bless others, surely he would bless us. God is no respecter of persons, and if he has blessed others, we may rest assured that he will bless us likewise, (b) His promises to us. God keeps his promises. He has never been known to be unfaithful in his promises. The Lord promised this woman the thing which she desired, and when she returned home, she found his promise fulfilled. And just as surely as his promise to this woman was fulfilled, his promises to us will be fulfilled if we exercise a faith similar to the faith of this

## Introduction

God is always pleased when his people manifest faith in him. He has never failed to bless those who manifest faith in him. He has not promised to bless us unless and until we manifest faith in him. Sometimes in the past the Lord has blessed people when they manifested their faith in their own way. This woman of our lesson today manifested her faith in her own way. The sinful woman of Luke 7: 36-50 manifested her faith in her own way, and she received a blessing therefor. These people expressed their faith in their own way because the Lord had not given them a way in which to manifest their faith. But whenever the Lord gave people a way to manifest their faith, he would not recognize their faith nor bless their faith unless and until they had manifested that faith in the way in which he directed them. For instance, the man who was born blind was told to go

and wash in the pool of Siloam. (John 9: 7.) If this man had chosen to go to some other pool to wash, he would not have manifested faith in the revealed way. Or if he had decided simply to go to his home and wash the clay from his eyes, he would not have followed the directions of the Lord, and his faith would not have been blessed. So, our Lord expects us to manifest our faith in him. He has directed us how we shall manifest that faith. If we expect our faith to be rewarded, we must obey his commandments. If the Lord had not told us what to do to be saved, we might have manifested faith in our own chosen way, but the Lord has told us how to manifest our faith in him, and consequently, if we expect to be saved we must obey his commandments. We can manifest our faith in no other way.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Place and Plight of the Woman

(Mark 7: 24, 25)

*And from thence he arose.* Before the events of our lesson, our Lord had been laboring in the vicinity of Gennesaret, or the Sea of Galilee. (Matt. 15: 34; Mark 6: 53.) Both Matthew and Mark tell us that

as soon as Jesus landed and had come out of the boat, the people "ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And wheresoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick

in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole." (Mark 6: 54-56.) From this we see that Jesus had been unusually busy for some time. Following this we have the debate between Jesus and certain scribes and Pharisees who came from Jerusalem to find some flaw in his teaching. (Mark 7: 1-23.) Following this extended period of hard work, our Lord needed rest and so went from the Sea of Galilee westward into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.

#### *The borders of Tyre and Sidon.*

These are the two principal cities of the little country of Phoenicia. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, the little country of Phoenicia was no more than twenty-eight miles in length and a little more than five miles in breadth. Having so little territory, the people were compelled to turn from the land to the sea for their source of income. Hence, the Phoenicians were known for their seagoing activities. This is the only time of which we have any record that Jesus left the land of the Jews to go into a foreign country.

*He entered into a house.* Mark tells us that Jesus did not want anyone to know of his presence in this territory. Some have conjectured that Jesus was escaping the attention of Herod; others think his teaching was stirring up too much opposition from the scribes and Pharisees and that he did not wish to aggravate them at this time. There is also the possibility that he wished a period of rest from the arduous labors of the past month. At any rate, he did not wish his presence in this foreign country publicized. Since his work was primarily for Jews, he would not want his presence in Greek or foreign territory publicized.

*But straightway a woman . . . fell down at his feet.* Mark tells us that his presence could not be hid, and that a woman of that territory learned of his presence and came falling at his feet begging of him a blessing. And this woman came, not because she discovered him there, but because someone had told her of his presence. This indicates that the news of his presence spread rapidly. It also indicates that these people knew something of his ability to heal.

## II. The Woman Argues Her Case (Mark 7: 26-28)

*Now the woman was a Greek.* The Jews had a habit of dividing the whole world into two classes, the Jews and the Greeks. So Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1: 16.) From this we see that Paul considered the world to consist of only two classes, the Jew and the Greek. Again, he said, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3: 28.) So, since this woman was not a Jew, she is classed here as a Greek. However, Mark immediately says that she was "a Syrophoenician by race." Matthew calls her a "Canaanitish woman." (Matt. 15: 22.) "This woman is called, also, a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth, . . . anciently the whole land, including Tyre and Sidon, was in possession of the Canaanites, and called Canaan. The Phoenicians were descended from the Canaanites. The country, including Tyre and Sidon, was called Phoenicia, or Syrophoenicia. That country was taken by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and those cities, in the time of Christ, were Greek cities. This woman was therefore a Gentile, living under the Greek government, and probably speaking the Greek language. She was by birth a Syrophoenician, born in that country, and descended, therefore, from the ancient Canaanites. All these names might with propriety be given to her." (Barnes.)

*She besought him.* Matthew says that she cried "saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon." (Matt. 15: 22.) This suggests that she not only knew something of the reputation of Jesus as a healer of diseases and as having authority over demons, but that she also understood that he was the son of David, or the expected Messiah. Hence, these people of Phoenicia had rather complete information concerning Jesus. The woman's request of Jesus was that he would cast a demon out of her daughter. This woman said that the demon griev-

ously vexed her daughter. There are many who have modern ideas who deny the reality of demons. They claim that people were diseased, or perhaps insane and thought these effects were brought on by the indwelling of demons. And it is argued that, though Jesus knew their real condition, he simply tolerated this ignorance and allowed the people to continue to believe in the reality of demons. We summarize some arguments made by one commentator to refute this modernistic position, (a) Christ and the apostles spoke to and of demons as such, and not as diseases. (b) Those who were possessed spoke, asked questions, gave answers, and expressed their knowledge of Christ and their fear of him in ways which people who did not know Jesus could not possibly have spoken. (Matt. 8: 28; Luke 8: 27.) (c) The demons, or evil spirits, are represented as going out of persons possessed and as entering other bodies. (Matt. 8: 32.) (d) Jesus spoke to them and asked their name, and they answered him. He also threatened them on some occasions and commanded them to be silent on other occasions. (Mark 1: 25; 5: 8; 9: 25.) (e) Those possessed are said to know Christ and to be acquainted with him as the Son of God. (Luke 4: 34; Mark 1: 24.) (Albert Barnes.)

*Let the children first be filled.* When the woman begged Jesus to heal her daughter, Jesus replied that the children had a right first to be filled, and he said it was not meet, or fit, to take bread which belonged to children and cast it to the dogs. Matthew tells us that Jesus said, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 15: 24.) Putting the two records together, we find that Jesus classed the people whom he came to serve as the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and he classed these Phoenicians and all other Greeks as dogs. This was the common Jewish position, and it was used by our Lord to test and perhaps to cultivate and strengthen the faith of this woman.

*But she answered.* The faith of this woman would not take no for an answer. She admitted that she had less right to the service and the blessings of the Lord than the Jews. She compared herself to a dog under the table where the children partook

of the bounties provided for them. And as the dogs ate the crumbs that fell from the master's table, so she begged for a crumb of blessing which would not impoverish the Jews whom Jesus came to serve. Certainly Jesus did not have the common Jewish views of the inequalities of the Jews and Greeks. If he had entertained such views, he would never have blessed this woman, regardless of her faith. But he used the common Jewish expression with which the woman was undoubtedly familiar to teach her that his ministry was for the Jews, and also to test her faith or to give the faith which he could see within her an opportunity to exercise and manifest itself. And when she accepted the position of the inferior one and pleaded not for the blessings of the children, but only for that portion which fell from their table, Jesus rewarded her faith.

### III. The Woman Is Blessed (Mark 7: 29, 30)

*For this saying go thy way.* This expression of faith was gratifying to Jesus and he told her to go her way with the realization that this faith would be rewarded. And as assurance of that he said, "The demon is gone out of thy daughter." From the wording of our text, we gather that Jesus rewarded this woman because of her great faith and of her unique expression of that faith. We read, "For this saying go thy way." For this expression of her faith she was rewarded. Jesus is never said to marvel at the faith of the Jews, but he is said on some occasions to marvel at the faith of people who were not Jews. The faith of this woman was unusually great, and we have another example of such faith in the centurion who told Jesus there was no need for him to go to the centurion's house to heal his servant; he only needed to speak the word and the servant would be healed. And Luke tells us, "When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said ... I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Luke 7: 9.) As Gentiles on some occasions manifested greater faith in Jesus than did the Jews, so it is possible today that some who have not obeyed the gospel may manifest greater faith and zeal for the Lord than do the Lord's peo-



pie who have correctly obeyed the gospel. We should be careful lest our faith in the Lord and our zeal for his cause should be less than that of those who have not learned the truth as it is in Christ. To the extent that we fail to manifest greater faith and more ardent zeal than those who are not Christians, to that extent we bring shame and reproach upon the church of our Lord.

*She went away unto her house.*

The woman left Jesus in the full assurance that she had gained her objective, and when she reached home she found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon was gone from her daughter. Jesus had blessed her for her faith and for her zeal and determination to gain the blessing she so much desired.

### Lessons to Learn

1. As this woman went to Jesus with her troubles, so we should cast our cares upon him, for he careth for us.

2. There are none so poor and insignificant that Jesus will despise them and treat them as dogs. He is the world's Savior.

3. As this woman did not allow the disciples of Jesus to discourage her from gaining her reward, so we must not let unsympathetic people keep us from our reward which comes to all who manifest their faith in the Lord.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

On what do our accomplishments depend?

What discouragements did this woman overcome?

What is taught about persistence in prayer?

To what degree was her request fulfilled?

How may we sometimes limit God in the amount of his blessings we enjoy?

What lessons do we learn from this woman's experience?

#### Introduction

On what condition has God always blessed people?

Has God ever allowed people to manifest their faith in their own way? Illustrate.

When God specifies the manner of manifesting faith, may we choose another way?

Has God left us to our own way to manifest our faith in Jesus?

#### Place and Plight of the Woman

Where had Jesus been laboring before the events of our lesson?

What activities on the part of the people illustrate their interest in Jesus?

What do you know of Tyre and Sidon?

What distinction did Phoenicia enjoy with reference to the visits of Jesus?

What was the desire of Jesus concerning publicity in this place?

What evidence do we have that his presence was publicized?

#### The Woman Argues Her Case

Why was this woman called a Greek?

Why was she called a "Canaanitish woman" and a "Syrophoenician"?

How did the woman address Jesus? and what does this indicate with reference to her knowledge concerning Jesus?

What proof can you give for the reality of demon possession in the time of Jesus?

How did Jesus classify the Jews and Gentiles?

Why did Jesus classify this woman as a "dog" and not as a "sheep"?

What was the woman's reaction to this classification?

#### The Woman Is Blessed

How did this woman manifest her faith in Jesus?

Did Jesus ever marvel at the faith of the Jews?

Cite another Gentile at whose faith Jesus marvelled.

Why should we manifest greater faith than those who have not obeyed the gospel?

Did this woman believe her daughter healed before she reached home?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson III—January 20, 1957

### MARY AND MARTHA

#### Lesson Text

Luke 10: 38-42

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about

much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art

anxious and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."* (Luke 10: 42.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 14: 3-9.

### Daily Bible Readings

January 14. M.....	Friends of Jesus (John 11: 1-6)
January 15. T.....	Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11: 17-44)
January 16. W.....	To Be a Friend of Jesus (John 15: 10-17)
January 17. T.....	Faithful Women (1 Tim. 5: 14)
January 18. F.....	Women and the Gospel (Phil. 4: 3)
January 19. S.....	Anxiety and Worry Forbidden (Matt. 6: 25-43)
January 20. S.....	At the Home of Simon (John 12: 1-8)

TIME.—A. D. 28.

PLACE.—Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Mary, and Martha.

### Golden Text Explained

**1. Freedom of choice.** (a) Eve made her choice. Man was created with the freedom and the right to choose between good and evil. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden had the ability to choose between right and wrong. Eve chose to do wrong instead of right. God's word was the standard of right; she chose to disobey that word, to depart from the standard which was set before her, and without any compulsion whatever, she chose to do wrong, (b) Jesus made his choice. Jesus had the ability to discern between that which was right or wrong and the freedom to choose whether he would do right or wrong. If he was not free to do wrong, his temptation and his overcoming temptation is no example for us. The fact that he could have made the wrong choice but was determined to choose the right makes his action an example for us to follow, (c) We are forced to choose. Though we are not forced to choose to do right or forced to choose to do wrong, yet we are forced to make a choice. We say that we are free to choose, but we are not free to refrain from making a choice. We must either choose the right or the wrong. We can follow Eve in making the choice to do wrong, or we can follow Jesus in making the choice to do right, but we are not free to refrain from making a choice

at all. Some people love to think that though they have not chosen Jesus, they can congratulate themselves in the fact that they have not chosen the devil. But they have not the liberty to refrain from choosing. We are forced by the very circumstances to choose one or the other.

2. **The good part,** (a) Ability to discern. In order to choose the good in preference to the evil, one must have the ability to discern between good and evil. We have this ability in varying degrees. Some are able to make fine distinctions between good and evil, while others are not capable of making such fine distinctions. Our ability to discern between good and evil depends on our knowledge of God's word. The more we study his word the greater will be our ability to discern between good and evil. When we study God's word, we think the thoughts of God, and thinking his thoughts, we develop his attitude toward things. So, if one has studied long and earnestly the word of God and developed the attitude of God toward good and evil, he will be able to discern between good and evil and his choice will be easier, (b) Courageous decision. Not only must one be able to discern between good and evil, but if he is going to follow that which is good, he must have the courage to decide that he will do good in-

stead of evil. Many times, this decision requires a great amount of courage. Difficulties involved, sacrifices entailed, and the scorn and ridicule of the world which must be borne will determine how much courage is required to make the decision to do right, (c) Persevering in spite of criticism. Mary chose the good part in spite of the criticism and complaints of her sister Martha. And many times today we must choose the good part in spite of the criticism of our friends and of the world. But to brave the criticism and to pay the price of self-denial and sacrifice is eminently worthwhile because of the rewards that come to those who choose the good part.

3. Permanent privilege, (a) Jesus endorsed Mary's choice. Jesus said the good part which Mary had chosen would not be taken away from her. That was her permanent privilege; the Lord would not deny her of that

which was good in order that she might be driven to do something less profitable. And so we today have the privilege of choosing the good, and the Lord will not deny us that privilege but will encourage us and multiply the opportunities for the exercise of this privilege, (b) Jesus recommends it to us. Jesus not only endorsed Mary's choice, but he recommended that choice to her sister Martha. And by way of example, that good part is recommended to all of us. Certainly the Lord will encourage all of us to make the right choice and in continuing to exercise that choice, (c) Our obligation and encouragement. Since Jesus endorsed Mary's choice and recommended it to Martha, it becomes our obligation. Not only does it become our obligation, but we receive encouragement to make that good choice because of the fact that Jesus endorsed it and recommended it to Martha.

## Introduction

This family in Bethany consisting of Lazarus and his two sisters had a place in the heart and life of Jesus that few if any other families had. It is true that Jesus loved all people, but special mention of his love of certain individuals is made in very few cases. It is said that he loved the apostle John, and it is said that he loved Lazarus and Martha and Mary. (John 11: 5.) For two reasons some people have supposed that Lazarus was the rich young ruler who came to Jesus asking what he must do to have eternal life. In the first place, there is some evidence that this family was wealthy. Martha entertained in her home and entertained to a point which Jesus

criticized mildly. Furthermore, Mary poured a pound of ointment of pure nard, very expensive, on Jesus at the supper given just six days before the Passover. (John 12: 3.) These two considerations would suggest that the family had quite some wealth. The next thing that leads some to believe that Lazarus was the rich young ruler is the fact that it is said that Jesus loved the rich young ruler. (Mark 10: 21.) And it is also said that Jesus loved Lazarus. (John 11: 5, 36.) Since these are among the few cases where special mention of the love of Jesus for individuals is made, there is the possibility of the identity of the two persons.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Hospitality Extended to Jesus

(Luke 10: 38)

*He entered into a certain village.*

From this story it would be impossible for us to identify this village, but when John tells us of the death and resurrection of Lazarus he identifies the village for us in these words: "Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha." (John 11:

1.) Bethany is said to be "nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off."

(John 11: 18.) One author says of Bethany that it was "a village which, scanty as are the notices of it contained in scripture, is more intimately associated in our minds than perhaps any other place with the most familiar acts and scenes of the last days of the life of Christ. It was at Bethany that he raised Lazarus from the dead, and from Bethany that he commenced his 'triumphal entry' into Jerusalem. It was his nightly resting place during the time

immediately preceding his passion; and here, at the house of Martha and Mary and of Simon the leper, we are permitted to view him, more nearly than elsewhere, in the circle of his domestic life." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

*Martha received him into her house.* We know but very little about Martha. The information which we have in our lesson text, that which is given in the story concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, and that which is contained in the story of the feast in the house of Simon the leper is about all the information we have on this woman. Since she is spoken of as receiving Jesus in her house, some have concluded that she was a widow and that Mary and Lazarus were younger than she and lived with her in her home. This conclusion is somewhat strengthened by the fact that Martha had charge of the preparation and serving of the food. Others say that Martha was the wife of Simon the leper. They reach this conclusion from the fact that it seems to be in the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary that a feast was made for Jesus and where Mary anointed Jesus with the ointment of pure nard. (John 12: 1-8.) But Mark distinctly says that this feast was given Jesus and that Jesus was thus anointed in the home of Simon the leper. (Mark 14: 3-9.) But regardless of her financial standing or her station in life, she showed hospitality to our Lord. There is an interesting contrast here between Martha showing hospitality to the Lord and the innkeeper in Bethlehem who had no room for the Lord. Christian hospitality is rapidly becoming a lost art. There are many more like the innkeeper who have no room for the Lord in the person of his disciples than there are Marthas who are willing and anxious to serve the Lord. Some seem not to care for the opportunity of entertaining angels unawares. (Heb. 13: 2.) They are not afraid to refuse hospitality to people on the ground that they might be refusing to show hospitality to the Lord in the person of his disciples. (Matt. 25: 37ff.)

## II. A Problem Brought to Jesus

(Luke 10: 39, 40)

*She had a sister called Mary.* Some have pictured these two women as

having entirely different interests and tastes. They have pictured Martha as the worldly-minded woman and Mary as the spiritually-minded woman. This is not quite fair to Martha. They both loved Jesus, but they had different ways of manifesting that love. It is true that Jesus commended Mary for the way she showed her love and interest, but he did not severely rebuke Martha for the manner in which she showed her interest in and love for the Lord. While it is true that Mary had attained to a degree of appreciation of the Lord and his work to which Martha had not attained, it is not true that Martha is a representative of that great crowd of worldly-minded women who know little about the Lord and who care nothing for improving their opportunities to learn more of him and his ways. Martha was not the kind of woman who would prefer to go to a picture show rather than spend her time in studying her Bible or worshiping God.

*Who also sat at the Lord's feet.* Mary sat at the Lord's feet that she might hear his word. Sitting at the feet of a teacher was the common way of saying that one was a disciple of the teacher and wished to learn of his teachings. Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. This simply means that he was a disciple of Gamaliel and that he attended Gamaliel's words.

*Martha was cumbered about much serving.* There is a certain amount of work which must be done in order to entertain guests in one's home. Hospitality incurs a certain amount of physical labor. However, it seems that Martha was doing more than was necessary on this occasion to entertain her guests in such fashion as they expected. The word which is translated "cumbered" may as correctly be translated by the word "distracted." The word represents a person as being drawn one way by this interest and another way by that interest. Though she was mistaken as to the amount of serving which she should do on that occasion, she cannot be charged with any lack of love for the Lord or a lack of interest in him and his work.

*Lord, dost thou not care?* Martha came to Jesus asking if he did not care that she was left alone to serve while Mary sat at his feet. There

seems to be a veiled accusation here on the part of Martha that Jesus was holding Mary for his entertainment instead of excusing her that she might assist Martha in preparing the food. At least Martha accuses the Lord of not caring that she is left alone to do all the work. Martha implies that there is an inequality here of privilege; Mary is enjoying a privilege at Martha's expense. And it occurred to Martha that if Jesus properly cared for her welfare, he would not allow Mary to enjoy this privilege which Martha felt she could not enjoy. This reminds us of a man who came to Jesus with a similar problem. (Luke 12: 13ff.) A man came asking Jesus to command his brother to divide the family inheritance with him, but Jesus insisted that he was not "a judge or a divider" over people. It was not the business of the Lord to settle family disputes.

### III. Answer and Recommendation of Jesus (Luke 10: 41, 42)

*Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things.* In verse 40 we are told that Martha was "cumbered about much serving," while here we have the words "anxious and troubled about many things." So, we conclude that the words "anxious and troubled" are a comment on the meaning of the word "cumbered" of verse 40. This is a very fine picture of many church members today. They are "anxious and troubled about many things." And the things about which many church members today are anxious and troubled are of no more importance than the things about which Martha was anxious and troubled. We let the cares of business, of entertainment, and of housekeeping keep us from giving proper attention to spiritual things. Young people allow the business of getting an education to so cumber them that they are not able to give the time and thought and effort to the Lord which they are obligated to give. Many people who attend church regularly on Sunday morning are never seen on Sunday night or Wednesday night. The reason is they are anxious and troubled about many worldly things—things of little importance as compared to spiritual things in which they ought to be interested. Many

women do not have time to attend a weekday Bible class and to work with other women visiting the sick and mending clothes for the poor. Why do they not have the time for these things? The answer is simply that they are anxious and troubled about a lot of things which are of little importance compared with the work they should do for the Lord. Many men do not have time to attend the Bible study Sunday morning. They barely can get to the period of worship at eleven o'clock. Why do they not have time for the Bible class? They are anxious and troubled about their business affairs. They must go to the office or shop for an hour or two Sunday morning. These business cares weigh too heavily upon them; they are anxious and troubled about them to the extent that they are robbed of that edification and encouragement which they need to grow spiritually.

*But one thing is needful.* There are two different interpretations of this statement represented by Albert Barnes and Adam Clarke. The student will do well to read the extensive comments of these two men. According to one interpretation, Jesus meant to say to Martha that only one dish was necessary for her visitors, but that she was cumbered with the preparation and serving of many dishes when only one was necessary. The other interpretation is that though there are many things which may occupy one's time and efforts, things which are good in themselves, yet there is but one thing that is actually necessary, and that one essential is piety, or godliness. But regardless of which interpretation is correct, the practical lesson which we gain from this verse is about the same. If Jesus meant that Martha should not cumber herself with the preparation with many dishes or courses, but be satisfied with one which would provide the essential bodily requirements, the practical lesson would be that we should cut the temporal provisions for our physical welfare to a minimum in order that we might be able to do as much as possible for the Lord. And if Jesus meant to say that there are many things which are good in themselves which may occupy our interest and efforts but that becoming a Christian and living a Christian life is the only

one thing absolutely needful, the practical lesson we should derive from it is that we should give as little time and thought and effort to the material necessities of life in order that we might give the most possible time and effort and attention to the spiritual affairs of life.

*Mary hath chosen the good part.* Mary seemed to have caught a clearer vision of the purpose of our Lord and to have cultivated a greater appreciation for his teaching than Martha had cultivated. Mary had reached that point where she could cut to the minimum, or neglect entirely for the time being, the necessities for the physical man in order that she might enjoy to the fullest the food for the spiritual man. Jesus called this good in preference to giving time and thought and effort to providing for the physical man.

There are many today who make abundant provision for the physical welfare of themselves and their families who make but little provision for the spiritual welfare of themselves and their families. They would be classed with Martha who would give more time to preparation for the physical man than she would for the spiritual man.

*Which shall not be taken away from her.* Jesus does not contend here that he has no responsibility for settling this problem which Martha brought to him. In fact, he rather suggests that he does accept a responsibility for solving the problem and that he solves it in Mary's favor. She had made a wiser choice than had Martha on this occasion, and this privilege of exercising her choice was not to be taken away from her.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Our interest in the necessities of life may rob us of spiritual growth.

2. We value the necessities of life too highly when we allow them to prevent our spiritual growth.

3. "Piety is the chief ornament in a female. It sweetens every other virtue; adorns every other grace; gives new loveliness to the tenderness, mildness, and grace of the fe-

male character. Nothing is more lovely than a female sitting at the feet of the meek and lowly Jesus, like Mary; . . . the most lovely female is she who has most of the spirit of Jesus; the least amiable, she who neglects her soul—who is proud, gay, thoughtless, envious, and unlike the meek and lowly Redeemer." (Albert Barnes.)

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What choice did Eve have with reference to right and wrong?

Can you show that Jesus had the same choice?

Do we have the right to refrain from making a choice between good and evil?

What ability must one have to make the choice between good and evil?

On what does one's ability to discern between good and evil depend?

What quality of character is necessary in order that one make the decision to do right?

What must one usually brave in order to continue to do right?

What was Mary's permanent privilege?

Why does Mary's action become an example for us to follow?

#### Introduction

What is said of the attitude of Jesus toward Lazarus and his sisters?

With what character is Lazarus identified by some?

For what two reasons is the identity argued?

What evidence is there that Lazarus and his sisters were wealthy?

#### Hospitality Extended to Jesus

In what city did Mary and Martha live?

How far was this city from Jerusalem?

For what is the city best known to us?

What leads some to think Martha was the wife of Simon the leper?

What Christian quality did Martha manifest?

What can you say of the practice of hospitality today?

#### A Problem Brought to Jesus

Can you defend Martha against the charge of worldly-mindedness?

How did each of the women seek to show her love for Jesus?

What veiled accusation did Martha make?

Would Martha have spoken as she did if she had not wished to sit at Jesus' feet, too?

Show how Jesus taught that he was not a judge in family affairs.

#### Answer and Recommendation of Jesus

What is meant by "cumbered with much serving"?

Illustrate how people in various walks of life may be anxious and troubled about many things.

What did Jesus mean when he said "but one thing is needful"?

What was the "good part" which Mary had chosen? and why was it good?  
Can you show how provision for the spiritual man may be neglected in order to make needless provision for the physical man?

Which course of action did Jesus recommend for his disciples, that of Mary or of Martha?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson IV—January 27, 1957

### ZACCHAEUS

#### Lesson Text

Luke 19: 1-10

1 And he entered and was passing through Jer-i-cho.

2 And behold, a man called by name Zac-chae'-us; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Je'-sus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Je'-sus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zac-chae'-us, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zac-chae'-us stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.

9 And Je'-sus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"To-day is salvation come to this house"* (Luke 19: 9.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 18: 35-43.

#### Daily Bible Readings

January 21. M.....Jesus in Jericho (Luke 18: 35-43)  
January 22. T.....A Penitent Publican (Luke 18: 9-14)  
January 23. W.....Sycamore Trees Abundant (1 Kings 10: 27,29)  
January 24. T.....Fourfold Restitution (Ex. 22: 1)  
January 25. F.....Jesus Our Savior (Matt. 1: 21)  
January 26. S.....Jesus, Friend of Sinners (Luke 19: 1-10)  
January 27. S.....Jesus and Sinners (Luke 15)

TIME.—A. D. 29.

PLACE.—Near Jericho.

PERSONS.—Jesus and Zacchaeus.

#### Golden Text Explained

1. Present salvation, (a) Offered today. The word "today" is used in the scripture in connection with salvation to suggest that salvation is a present possibility and a urgent need for everyone. The Holy Spirit urges us to "exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day;

Test any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3: 13.) (b) Foolish to delay. Since all men have sinned and are unprepared for heaven, and since no one has a lease on life or any assurance that his life will be indefinitely prolonged,

man is extremely foolish to delay gaining and enjoying that salvation which God has so graciously provided for him. Jesus pictured the man who heard his sayings and did them not as the foolish man; while the one who hears his sayings and doeth them, he likened unto the wise man. (c) Good intentions have no power to save. Someone has said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions never carried out, while the road to heaven is paved with the same good intentions carried out.

2. **Salvation described,** (a) From the practice of sin. Salvation saves one from the practice of sin in that it causes one to cease as nearly as he possibly can the practice of sin. And the goodness and mercy of God so abundantly manifested in his willingness to forgive us our sins tends to cause us to love God and appreciate his goodness so that we will have a greater desire to refrain from sin. Hence, salvation from sin means ceasing the practice of sin out of appreciation for God's goodness in forgiving us the sins of the past, (b) From the pollution of sin. Sin is .. a defiling, polluting thing. No one can engage in sin without becoming impure, unclean in heart and life. God used leprosy to illustrate in the lives of his people the defiling effect of sin. The fact that the blood of Jesus is said to cleanse us from all sin is an indication of the polluting effects of sin. If sin were not defiling and polluting in its effect, there would be no need for the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. In his vision John saw an innumerable host in heaven who had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7: 14.) The very fact that their robes had been washed and made white in the blood of Jesus is proof of the polluting and defiling effect of sin. If sin had had no defiling influence, there would have been no necessity for their robes to be washed in the blood of the lamb, (c) From the penalty of sin. Salvation offered to us today consists not only in saving us from the practice and pollution of sin, but it saves us from the penalty of sin. And the penalty of sin is death. Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6: 23.) And again he said, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye

must die." (Rom. 8: 13.) And we learn that the death which we die as the penalty for our sins is not physical death, for all men must experience physical death. But the death which is the penalty for sin is the second death which is to be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21: 8.) Realizing that the salvation offered us today saves us from the practice, the pollution, and the penalty for sin, we are not surprised to hear the Holy Spirit speak of this as "so great a salvation." (Heb. 2: 3a.)

3. **Salvation blesses the home,** (a) House versus individual. Our text says that Jesus told Zacchaeus that salvation had **come** to his house. The salvation was enjoyed by Zacchaeus, but the blessing would not end there. It would through him extend to other members of the family, (b) Home reached through the father. Jesus expected Zacchaeus to do that which is the duty of every father to his family. It was said of Abraham, "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18: 19.) (c) Each saved person is a blessing to the home. If one is a true believer in the "Lord and has an active faith which puts into practice the things he has learned from God's word, he will be a blessing to his home. Even a child can be a blessing by leading other members of the family to study the Bible and to obey the gospel. Children have often influenced their parents to become Christians. How much more then can the parent influence the children in the home?

## Introduction

The Roman Empire did not use our system of collecting taxes. A man or a corporation would guarantee the government a certain amount of money from a certain province. This amount was all the taxes the government received from that province. Then this man or corporation would appoint a chief publican in that province, who in turn would appoint ordinary publicans or tax collectors. The chief publican had to raise an

amount sufficient to pay his superior and to satisfy his demands for his personal income, and then the publicans under him were expected to raise the amount which the chief publican needed and an amount sufficient for their personal incomes. This system encouraged avarice, greed, and oppression. "All this was enough to bring the class into ill favor everywhere. In Judea and Galilee there were special circum-



stances of aggravation. The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all made matters worse. The scribes who discussed the question (Matt. 22: 15) for the most part answered it in the negative. The followers of Judas of Galilee had made this the special grievance against which they rose. In addition to their other faults, accordingly, the publicans of the New Testament were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, willing tools of the oppressor. They were classed with

sinner (Matt. 9: 11; 11: 19), with harlots (Matt. 21: 31, 32), with the heathen (Matt. 18: 17). In Galilee they consisted probably of the least reputable members of the fisherman and peasant class. Left to themselves, men of decent lives holding aloof from them, their only friends or companions were found among those who like themselves were outcasts from the world's law. Scribes and people alike hated them as priests and peasants in Ireland have hated the Roman Catholic who took service in collecting tithes or evicting tenants." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Desires to See Jesus (Luke 19: 1-4)

*Was passing through Jericho.* Jesus was with a great crowd of people who were traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. It was the custom of Galileans to come down on the east side of the Jordan River opposite Jericho, cross the river there, and go on up to Jerusalem. When returning from Jerusalem to Galilee, they would be more likely to travel on the west side of the Jordan River. The enmity and hostility of the Samaritans prevented their coming down on the west side of the river, but did not prevent their returning on that side of the river. This is seen in the fact that Jesus and his disciples went through Samaria on their way to Galilee. (John 4.)

*A man called by name Zacchaeus.* The family of Zacchaeus was a numerous family, even in the days of Ezra. (Ezra 2: 9; Neh. 7: 14.) In these places the form of the word is Zac-cai, but we are told by scholars that this is the same family name. From this we would gather that Zacchaeus was a Jew, but we are not left to this alone, for Jesus calls him "a son of Abraham."

*He was a chief publican.* The term "chief publican" would be applied to those who collected taxes over a large area, perhaps a province, and who had deputy publicans under them. This chief publican would be responsible to the person or corporation who in turn was responsible to the Roman Empire for a certain amount of taxes to be gathered from this province. A d m

Clarke suggests that Zacchaeus could have been classed as "chief publican" because he may have been "the most respectable and honorable man among that class at Jericho."

*And he was rich.* Publicans as a class were wealthy. They had little restraint from the government in fixing the amount of income they could derive from their occupation. Adam Clarke says that the Roman laws demanded that the publicans restore four-fold what they had taken through oppression, but the government seems not to have been vigilant in its efforts to detect fraud and oppression and hence, the publicans generally were wealthy.

*He sought to see Jesus.* Obviously, Zacchaeus had some knowledge of Jesus and his power to work miracles. It is probable that he had heard of the blind receiving their sight as Jesus was entering Jericho. (Luke 18: 35ff.) The fact that Zacchaeus desired to see Jesus is an indication of either his character or his curiosity. From what he said when he finally met the Lord, we prefer to believe that his desire to see Jesus was an indication of his character. And it may be said by way of application that those today who have no desire, no interest in becoming acquainted with Jesus are lacking in character. This is not intended to throw suspicion on anyone's moral integrity, but simply to suggest that such a one is lacking in appreciation of the goodness of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

*Climbed up into a sycomore tree.* Zacchaeus was short of stature. What

he lacked in stature, however, he made up for in character. Physical defects are not always a curse. In this instance, a physical defect proved to be a blessing to Zacchaeus. Had he been of average height or taller, he would not have felt the necessity of climbing into this tree, and so could very well have been lost in the crowd of the average and escaped the notice of the Lord. His lack of average stature caused him to make an unusual demonstration of his desire to see Jesus, and consequently, brought him the blessing of the attention of Jesus.

## II. His Desire More Than Filled

(Luke 19: 5-7)

*Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down.* Whether Jesus relied on his superhuman knowledge, or whether he had prior acquaintance with this little man we have no way of knowing, but certainly Zacchaeus must have felt proud to hear his name called by the Lord and to be invited to come down into his presence. He expected only to see the Lord from his vantage point, but his expectation and desire were more than filled when the Lord invited him to come down into his immediate presence. The fact that Jesus told Zacchaeus to make haste to come down may indicate a hesitancy on the part of the man, and this hesitancy would be chargeable to the attitude which Zacchaeus knew the followers of Jesus had toward him on account of his business connections. But the fact that Jesus tells him to make haste to come down would be encouraging to Zacchaeus because it would suggest to him that Jesus did not share the attitude of the average Jew toward one in his occupation.

*Today I must abide at thy house.*

If the desire of Zacchaeus was more than filled when Jesus invited him to come down from the tree, surely his desire is more than filled when he learns that Jesus wishes to abide in his house. This probably means that Jesus intended to spend the night in this rich man's home. But the experience of Zacchaeus is not an unusual experience, for all of us have received from the Lord more than we had any right to expect, and certainly more than we deserve. Paul speaks of him as one "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all

that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph. 3: 20.)

*And received him joyfully.* This statement is made with reference to the way Zacchaeus received Jesus. This obviously refers to the way Zacchaeus received Jesus into his home. His coming down out of the tree would not indicate his reception of Jesus, but rather the fact that Jesus received him. But when Jesus went home with him and the publican received him into his home, he did so with great joy. Is there one among us today so bereft of the sense of what is right and proper that he would not joyfully receive Jesus into his home? Yet there are many who indicate by their rejection of Jesus as their Friend and Savior that they would not be willing to receive him into their homes.

*They all murmured.* This is said of the crowd of people who accompanied Jesus on this trip from Jericho to Jerusalem. This, of course, would be the attitude of the average Jew toward a tax collector. They expressed their ill feelings by saying, "He is gone to lodge with a man that is a sinner." They used the word "sinner" in the same sense in which they would use the word "heathen." Publicans and sinners, or heathen, were classed together. (Luke 15: 1.) This is the case of a man's being judged because of the class in which he was found. This is the type of judging which Jesus condemned. (Matt. 7: 1ff.) The fact that the people said Jesus had "gone into lodge" with Zacchaeus supports the statement made above that Jesus intended to spend the night in this rich man's home.

## III. Salvation Comes to His House

(Luke 19: 8-10)

*The half of my goods I give to the poor.* Commentators are divided on what the idea is which Zacchaeus means to convey by this language. Does it mean that it has been his practice in the past to give half his goods to the poor? Or does he mean to say that by the goodness of Jesus toward him he is converted from his sinful ways of wrongfully exacting money from people and that henceforth he will give one-half his goods to feed the poor? Albert Barnes says, "It may be understood rather

as a purpose which he then formed under the teaching of Christ." However, Adam Clarke inclines to the idea that this had been the practice of Zacchaeus for some time past. Zacchaeus continues his statement, saying that, "If I have wrongfully exacted ought from any man, I restore fourfold." Barnes uses this statement to prove that Zacchaeus is stating his future policy. He argues that a man who would intentionally take things that did not belong to him would not immediately restore four-fold that which he had wrongfully taken. We might with equal propriety say that a man who was in the habit of taking money through false accusation would not likely give half of it to feed the poor. There is another and a stronger argument which favors the idea that Zacchaeus was stating his practice and policy for some time past. If Zacchaeus had gained the bulk of his wealth through false accusation and oppression as Barnes and others seem to think, and he now proposes to give half of his wealth to the poor, how could he restore four-fold the bulk of that wealth which he had gotten by sinful means? This writer is strongly inclined to think that Zacchaeus was stating the policy on which he had conducted his business affairs in the past. It was his policy to give half of his profits to the poor, while he cared for himself and his family on the other half. And it was his policy to restore four-fold that which had been wrongfully exacted. Necessarily that which was wrongfully exacted had to be a minor part of his income. One could not possibly restore four-fold that which was wrongfully exacted if the major portion of his income consisted of such ill-gotten wealth. In fact, the portion of ill-gotten wealth would have to be less than one-fourth of his entire income or he would be unable

to restore four-fold that which was wrongfully exacted. Again, the tense of the verbs here used, "I give" and "I restore," suggest that this is a statement of his usual policy and not a resolution for the future. If this had been a statement of his resolution for the future, he would have used verbs in the future tense.

*Today is salvation come to this house.* Some take this as proof that Zacchaeus was making a statement of future policy, rather than of the way he had lived in the past, but Zacchaeus did not claim perfection. He could have been unfaithful to his covenant with God in many ways. He may not have received the message as preached by John the Baptist, or Jesus and his disciples. There are any number of ways in which he could have been a sinner in need of salvation in spite of the fact that he gave half his income to the poor and restored four-fold that which had been wrongfully exacted. His contact with Jesus was certainly a turning point in his life, and his determination to turn from his sins and to accept Jesus as the Messiah would be sufficient cause for Jesus to say that salvation had come to his house.

*The Son of man came to seek and to save.* Jesus announced the purpose of his coming into this world—to seek and to save that which was lost. This was said in justification of his attitude and action with reference to Zacchaeus. The people murmured that he had gone to lodge with a man who was a sinner, so Jesus responded that Zacchaeus afforded him an opportunity to do that for which he came into the world. (1) All of us should be glad that Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost, for all of us must be so classified. (2) If we ever expect to become like our Lord, we must be busily engaged in seeking and saving the lost.

### Lessons to Learn

1. As Zacchaeus made unusual efforts to see Jesus, so we should be willing to spend time and effort to learn more of Jesus.

2. Zacchaeus turned wholly to the Lord because Jesus wished to lodge in his home. Jesus wishes to abide in our hearts, and we should show

our gratitude by turning wholly to him.

3. Are you willing to stand before the judgment bar of God without one soul to your credit? If everyone would seek and save one this year, the number of the saved would be

doubled. Then if next year everyone would seek and save one, the number would be doubled again.

Think how quickly the whole world could be converted to Christ if only each one would seek and save one.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the memory verse.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What does the word "today" in our lesson suggest?

Why are people foolish to delay securing their salvation?

What is said of good intentions?

In what sense are we saved from the practice of sin?

Can you show that sin defiles and pollutes the soul?

What is the penalty for sin?

In what sense can salvation come to a home?

#### Introduction

What system of collection of taxes did the Roman Empire use?

What ungodly qualities did this system encourage in men?

How were the publicans of the New Testament times regarded?

With what class of people did this throw the publicans?

#### Desires to See Jesus

For what reason was Jesus travelling at the time of our lesson?

Why come down the east side of Jordan to reach Jerusalem?

What do you know of the family of Zacchaeus in times past?

Why was he called a "chief publican"?

Why were publicans usually wealthy?

Why infer that Zacchaeus had some previous knowledge of Jesus?

What is indicated concerning the character of anyone who has no interest in Jesus?

What do you know of his stature? and was this a handicap or a blessing?

#### His Desire More Than Filled

How was the desire of Zacchaeus more than filled?

What evidence do we have that Jesus spent the night with Zacchaeus?

How did Zacchaeus receive Jesus into his home?

How did the people feel toward Jesus for going home with Zacchaeus?

In what kind of judgment did the people engage?

#### Salvation Comes to His House

What evidence do you see that Zacchaeus made a practice of giving half his goods to the poor and restoring four-fold what was taken wrongfully?

Or, can you give proof that he intended this as his policy in the future?

If the major portion of his wealth was ill-gotten, how could he restore four-fold?

What is meant by salvation coming to his house that day?

For what purpose did Jesus say he came into the world?

Why did he make this statement at this time?

Why should we be glad Jesus came to seek and save the lost?

What must we do for the lost in order to be like Jesus?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson V—February 3, 1957

### THE MAN BORN BLIND

#### Lesson Text

##### John 9: 1-11

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rab'-bi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?

3 Je'-sus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Si-lo'-am (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am *he*.

10 They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered, The man that is called Je'-sus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Si-lo'-am, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight.

Golden Text.—*"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."*  
(John 9: 25b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 9: 13-34.

## Daily Bible Readings

January 28.	M. Two Blind Men Healed (Matt. 9: 27-30)
January 29. T.....	Bartimaeus Healed (Mark 10: 46-52)
January 30.	W. A Man of Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22-26)
January 31. T.....	The Blindness of Jacob (Gen. 48: 8-11)
February 1. F.....	Isaac's Blindness (Gen. 27: 1-4)
February 2. S.....	Spiritual Blindness (2 Cor. 4: 3-6)
February 3.	S. Blind Man and the Pharisees (John 9: 13-34)

TIME.—A. D. 29.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the blind man.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Confessing Christ in face of danger.** (a) Penalty for confessing Christ. "For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." (John 9: 22b.) "Among the Jews there were two grades of excommunication; the one for lighter offenses, of which they mentioned twenty-four causes; the other for greater offenses. The first excluded a man for thirty days from the privilege of entering a synagogue, and from coming nearer to his wife or friends than four cubits. The other was a solemn exclusion forever from the worship of the synagogue and ended with awful malediction and curses, and an exclusion from all intercourse from the people. This was called *the curse*, and so thoroughly excluded the person from all communion whatever with his countrymen, that they were not allowed to sell to him anything even the necessities of life. (Buxtorf.) It is probable that this latter punishment was what they intended to inflict if anyone confessed that Jesus was the Messiah; and it was the fear of this terrible punishment that deterred his parents from expressing their opinion." (Albert Barnes.) (b) Parents lack courage. When the Jews wished to learn from whom this blind man had received his sight, they asked his parents for the information, but the parents lacked the courage of their child, so they simply said, "He is of age; ask him." (John 9: 23.) (c) Courage born of knowledge and gratitude. The one who had been born blind was not afraid of the penalty which the Jews had in their power to in-

flict. His courage came from the fact that he knew what had happened to him and his gratitude for such a wonderful blessing. Obviously, he believed that a person who was able to give sight to a man born blind was able to take care of him if the Jews should inflict their penalty. And so, with this confidence in the one who gave him his sight and in the fact that he knew he was greatly blessed, he was willing to confess openly that the one who healed him was of God.

2. **Faith versus prejudice.** (a) Beholding the impossible. If someone had asked this blind man a few hours previous to this experience if one born blind could possibly receive his sight, he would have given a decidedly negative reply. For he himself said, "Since the world began it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind." (John 9: 32.) But this man lived not only to behold, but to experience that which had hitherto been considered absolutely impossible. Doing that which to ordinary human beings is impossible is the acid test of a man's power. There are men who go about the country now claiming the power to heal people of their diseases, but they never try to give sight to one born blind. They never attempt to give a new set of natural teeth to replace the plates furnished by a dentist; they never attempt anything which is considered humanly impossible. In this, they tacitly confess that they are not genuine, that they actually do not have power of God to heal, (b) Fellowship with God demonstrated. In the sight of this blind man, Jesus had demonstrated his fellowship with God, for the man

said, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." (John 9: 33.) This reminds us of the statement of Nicodemus who declared that no man could do the work Jesus was doing except God be with him. (John 3: 1ff.) (c) Prejudice rests on willful ignorance. The Jews closed their eyes to reason and refused to consider the evidence of the fellowship of Jesus with God. They said, "We know that God hath spoken unto Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is." (John 9: 29.) They refused to consider the fact that Jesus had done something which had always been considered humanly impossible. The blind man to whom sight had recently been given taunted them with this statement: "Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes." (John 9: 30.)

3. Characteristics exhibited. (a) Courage. This man exhibited a brand of courage which is not too often found, and which was not to be found in his parents. He was willing to endure the penalty of ex-

communication and be denied the privileges of worship in the synagogue in order that he might confess that which he believed to be true,

(b) Gratitude. This man was grateful to him who had given him his sight. It would have been the basest sort of ingratitude for him to have taken the position taken by his parents. But instead of denying the power of the one who healed him, and instead of robbing that one of the honor and glory that rightfully belonged to him, he not only mustered the courage to say what he ought to say, but to show the gratitude which he felt in his heart for his blessing, (c) Loyalty. He was loyal to Jesus, though he had not seen Jesus and did not at that time know who he was. (John 9: 35ff.) Since he had received a great blessing from someone, he felt that he was so indebted to that one that he should plead for the rights of the one who had blessed him. In this he manifested loyalty to one who had befriended him.

## Introduction

"Blindness is extremely common in the east from many causes; e. g. the quantities of dust and sand pulverized by the sun's intense heat; the perpetual glare of light; the contrast of the heat with the cold sea-air on the coast where blindness is specially prevalent; the dews at night while they sleep on the roofs; small-pox, old age, and so forth; and perhaps more than all the Mohammedan fatalism which leads to a neglect of the proper remedies in time. One traveler mentions four thousand blind men in Cairo, and Volney

reckons that one in every five were blind, besides others with sore eyes. . . . Blind beggars figure repeatedly in the New Testament (Matt. 12: 22), and 'opening the eyes of the blind' is mentioned in prophecy as a peculiar attribute of the Messiah." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) The law of Moses took notice of the blind and gave them protection in that it said, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before t he blind." (Lev. 19: 14.) "Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way." (Deut. 27: 18.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Works of God Made Manifest

(John 9: 1-3)

*And as he passed by.* Some commentators think that the events of chapter 8 transpired on Friday, but that the events of chapter 9, including our lesson text, transpired on Saturday, or the sabbath. Of the latter opinion, there can be no doubt, for John tells us, "Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." (John 9: 14.) But whether the events of chapter 9 transpired immediately fol-

lowing the events of chapter 8 is open to argument.

*Rabbi, who sinned?* The disciples asked Jesus whose sin caused this man to be born blind. This indicates that the disciples shared a view which was common at that time among Jews and especially many Gentile nations. They held the theory of the transmigration of souls. According to this theory, people are born into this life afflicted as punishment for sins committed in a life prior to this one. They also held

the theory common in their day that suffering and affliction of all kinds are the consequences of sin. They seemed not to have learned the lesson in the Book of Job that suffering sometimes is allowed to come upon man for his own good. God allowed Satan to afflict Job grievously, not because of any sins Job had committed, but in order to develop his character and to teach the lesson that suffering may be helpful to us. So Jesus told his disciples that this man's blindness was not the result of his own sin or the sin of his parents. Lightfoot cites examples of men in the day of our Lord who believed that an unborn infant was capable of sin, and Adam Clarke says that Asiatics believed the doctrine of the transmigration of souls and that they had worked out the penalties which were inflicted for certain sins. It was their opinion that blindness was inflicted on people at birth because in the prior life they had killed their mothers.

*Neither did this man sin, nor his parents.* Jesus does not mean to affirm that this man and his parents had attained to sinless perfection, but he affirmed that this man's blindness did not come upon him in consequence of any sin committed by the man or by his parents. Jesus did not take the time, or perhaps did not think it sufficiently important, to disprove the false doctrine of transmigration of souls, but his statement can be used as proof that there is suffering in the world which is not the consequence of any sin. Jesus did not mean to teach that people never suffer in this life for their sins, but he did certainly teach that people may suffer afflictions for other reasons than as a consequence of their sin.

*That the works of God should be made manifest.* Jesus said the reason this man was born blind was that God might manifest his works in him. Jesus taught that in the providence of God this man was allowed to be born blind in order that there might be opportunities for Jesus to show the power and the mercy and the goodness of God. This should suggest to us a probable reason why demons were allowed to inhabit human bodies during the time of our Lord and not today. The presence of demons in human bodies in the

time of our Lord gave Jesus an opportunity to demonstrate his power and authority over evil spirits and to manifest the goodness and kindness of God in his dealings with humanity.

## II. Jesus Works with the Blind (John 9: 4-7)

*We must work the works of him that sent me.* Though this was the sabbath, and Jesus knew that the Jews would persecute him for doing such work on the sabbath, he deliberately healed the blind man to emphasize the truth that he must work the works of God who had sent him. A prior experience of Jesus had taught him that the Jews considered such activity on the sabbath sinful. (Mark 3: 1-6.) If every follower of Christ on earth today could realize thus keenly the obligation to do the work of God, the church would be an invincible and irresistible force in the world for good.

*The night cometh.* The word "day" of our text refers to the lifetime of Jesus, and the word "night" refers to his death. He simply meant to say that while God gives us life we can work for him, but when God takes that life from us and the night of death overtakes us, we can no longer work for God. This should impress each one of us with the necessity for doing all we can while we have life and the opportunity to work for God. This certainly teaches us that man will not be given a second chance; there will not be an opportunity after death to make up for the neglect and failures of this life.

*I am the light of the world.* Jesus realized his relationship to the world and said that while he was in the world, he was the light of the world. As the sun gives light, which makes work possible for humanity, so Jesus claims to be that spiritual light that guides and makes possible the spiritual activities of humanity. Surely he must have been divine, or he could not have made such a statement as this. No human being today can claim to be the light of the world. It is true that Jesus said his disciples were the salt of the earth and the light of the world, but no one individual can claim that he is the light of the whole world. Hence, we take this as proof of the divinity of Jesus

and the fact that Jesus realized that he was divine and here asserted it.

*And anointed his eyes with clay.* When Jesus had finished his statement about his relationship to the world, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and then anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. There are several possible reasons given by commentators why Jesus made clay and anointed the man's eyes. Two that seem most probable are (1) that this helped the blind man's faith. Being blind, he could not see Jesus nor see any activity on the part of Jesus, but through the anointing of his eyes with this clay, he would have a physical connection with Jesus which might help him to exercise faith in the Lord. (2) Another probable reason is that Jesus knew the Jews considered such activity on the sabbath as sinful, and he wished to demonstrate his disbelief of the correctness of their human traditions relative to the keeping of the sabbath.

*Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.* We can be more certain of the purpose of this command which Jesus gave the blind man. Obviously, this was a test of the man's faith in the ability of the Lord to give him his sight. As Naaman's faith and submission to the Lord were tested in the command to go and dip seven times in the Jordan, so this man's faith was tested by the command to wash in the pool of Siloam. It is needless to say that had he washed in any other pool he would not have received the blessing. His submission to the command demonstrated his faith; a failure to submit to the command would be a demonstration of a lack of faith. The blessing comes to those who demonstrate their faith. John tells us that when he had complied with the command to wash in the pool of Siloam he was able to see. The question might be raised whether the clay had any power to restore sight, or whether the water had any efficacy to give sight to the blind. Certainly no one would seriously contend that either the clay or the water had any power to give sight. But yet, these things were used in connection with the giving of sight to the blind. And so many people today refuse to be baptized because they can see no connection between baptism and the

forgiveness of sin as a result. There is as much connection between baptism and the remission of sin as there was a connection between washing in the pool of Siloam and the receiving of sight. The same Lord that commanded the blind to wash in the pool commands us to be baptized, and the same Lord that gave sight to the blind on condition of his obedience promises to forgive our sins on condition of our obedience.

### III. The Blind Man Identified (John 9: 8-10)

*Is not this he that sat and begged?*

This is the question which the neighbors asked of one another when they saw the man enjoying his eyesight. This indicates the blind man was well known; he had neighbors who knew him and knew that he had been born blind. Jesus did not select some man wholly unknown to the people of the community in order to cover up a lack of his ability to do real cures. Some faith healers of this modern day are careful to select people with maladies which are not of a serious nature and which may go away because of psychological reasons, or they sometimes bring with them people unknown to the community in which the cures are performed. But Jesus and his apostles selected cases well known to the community and such cases as, in many instances, were thought impossible of cure.

*He said, I am he.* As is the usual thing, people were divided in their opinions as to the identity of the man. Some of them said, "This is the man who was born blind and who sat and begged for alms," while others said, "He looks like that man." But the man himself was willing to confess his identity. Such a confession might bring suffering in the form of persecution by the officials of the synagogue. But regardless of the suffering which might come to him on account of his confession, he frankly and positively identified himself as the one who had formerly been blind and was compelled to beg.

*How then were thine eyes opened?*

This is the question which the people of the community asked the man. This was the obvious question to ask, and there is no criticism of the people who asked the question. And the man gave him the only answer he knew to give, that a man named Je-



sus made clay and anointed his eyes, and then told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And in a very

simple, straightforward way, the man simply said, "I went a way and washed, and I received sight."

### Lessons to Learn

1. God's power and wisdom are seen in his plans to display his attributes and in the working out of those plans. God set in motion some of the elements of this event twenty or thirty years before it transpired. He saw that this man was born blind, that he lived in a community where he would come in contact with Jesus, and that he had such instruction and experiences as would enable him to exercise the faith necessary to be healed.

2. Jesus set us an example of working while we have time and opportunity. He also set us the example of realizing keenly the responsibilities which we have during the day of work. And he taught us that we must not depend on a chance after death to make up for the mistakes of this life.

3. The blind man set us an example of confessing the Lord in spite of the dangers attendant thereto.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What had the Jews agreed to do to any man who confessed Christ?

Describe the two grades of excommunication among the Jews.

How did the blind man differ from his parents in the matter of courage?

Of what was the blind man's courage born?

What was so unusual about opening the eyes of a man born blind?

Contrast this miracle of Jesus with the efforts of modern miracle workers.

What did such a miracle prove with reference to Jesus?

Explain the meaning of the statement with which the blind man taunted the Jews.

Discuss the three characteristics exhibited by the blind man.

#### Introduction

What is said of the prevalence of blindness in the east?

Name some causes of blindness in the east.

What mention is made of blindness in prophecies concerning the Messiah?

What did the law of Moses teach to protect the blind?

#### Works of God Made Manifest

On what day did the events of our lesson transpire?

Name two false doctrines implied in the question which the disciples asked.

Explain the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

Can you disprove the doctrine that all suffering here is the consequence of our sins?

What reason did Jesus give that this man was born blind?

What does this suggest as a reason why demons inhabited human bodies at that time?

#### Jesus Works With the Blind

What did Jesus say about the necessity of works?

What is the meaning of the words "night" and "day" in our text?

What does this teach with reference to a chance after death?

What statement did Jesus make which proves his divinity?

Discuss two probable reasons why Jesus anointed the man's eyes with clay.

Why was the man told to wash in the pool of Siloam?

Can you use this incident to show the necessity of being baptized for remission of sins?

#### The Blind Man Identified

Can you show that this man was well known in the community where the healing occurred?

How could this fact contribute to the effectiveness of the miracle?

In what way did the man show his courage and appreciation?

Did the man attribute his cure to Jesus? the clay? or the water?

Can we correctly say the man was cured because of his obedience to Jesus?

Is it correct to say that water played a part in his cure?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VI—February 10, 1957

## DORCAS

## Lesson Text

## Acts 9: 36-43

36 Now there was at Jop'-pa a certain disciple named Tab'-i-tha, which by interpretation is called Dor'-cas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38 And as Lyd'-da was nigh unto Jop'-pa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.

39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him

weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dor'-cas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tab-i-tha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

42 And it became known throughout all Jop'-pa: and many believed on the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Jop'-pa with one Si'-mon a tanner.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"A worthy woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies"*(Prov. 31: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 9: 32-35.

## Daily Bible Readings

February	4. M.....	Events in Joppa (Acts 10: 11-17)
February	5. T.....	Source of Peter's Power (Acts 4: 8-12)
February	6. W.....	Purpose of Miracles (Mark 16: 13-20)
February	7. T.....	Pure Religion (James 1: 26, 27)
February	8. F.....	Example of Christ (Matt. 20: 20-27)
February	9. S.....	Faithful Women (1 Tim. 5: 5-15)
February	10. S.....	A Worthy Woman (Prov. 31: 10-31)

TIME.—A. D. 37.

PLACES.—Joppa and Lydda.

PERSONS.—Peter, Dorcas, and the disciples.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. Worthy woman and her husband.** (a) He trusts her. Of the worthy woman, Solomon said, "The heart of her husband trusteth in her." (Prov. 31: 11a.) And again, she is described as "a woman that feareth Jehovah." (Prov. 31: 30.) In our New Testament language, we would say that she is a genuine Christian who has respect for her husband, a high standard of morals, and who is loyal and faithful to the Lord at all times. A woman of this character deserves the confidence of her husband, and if her husband is what he ought to be, she will enjoy his confidence at all times under all circumstances, (b) He is enriched

by her. Solomon further says, "And he shall have no lack of gain. She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life . . . She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." (Prov. 30: 11b, 12, 16.) The worthy woman is described as being economical and conservative and she is thrifty and businesslike in that she provides for herself and her family through her business activities. In these and other ways she does her husband good all the days of her life, (c) He praises her. "Her husband also, and he praiseth her, saying, Many daughters have done e worthily, but thou excellest them

all." (Prov. 31: 28b, 29.) A man who is blessed with the kind of woman which is described here as the "worthy woman" would be an ingrate if he did not appreciate her for what she is and what she can do for him. And so, Solomon pictures the worthy woman's husband as giving due praise to her for her character and activities.

**2. Worthy woman and her children.** (a) She provides for them. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth food to her household. . . . She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet. . . . She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." (Prov. 31: 15, 21, 27.) Throughout the Bible we are taught that parents are to provide for their children, and those who refuse to do so are worse than unbelievers. (1 Tim. 5: 8.) Certainly no woman could be looked upon as "a worthy woman" who did not have sufficient love for her children to provide for them to the best of her ability, (b) She is kind to them. Solomon said of the worthy woman, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and the law of kindness is on her tongue." (Prov. 31: 26.) Kindness is one of the characteristics that distinguishes Christianity from many heathen religions. Those religions do not bind kindness upon their adherents, but no one can be Christlike without being kind, not only to his own family, but even to those who are his enemies, (c) They call her blessed. Solomon says, "Her children rise up and call her blessed." (Prov. 31: 28.) This indicates (1) that the worthy woman would instruct her children to have proper respect for their parents. (2) This also suggests that she has lived a life before them such as is worthy of

their praise. Parents can hardly live an ungodly life and keep it a secret from their children. This is especially true of the mother since she is in so much closer contact with the children than is the father, and if a woman's children "rise up and call her blessed," we may be rather sure that she is worthy of such praise.

**3. Worthy woman and the community.** (a) She cares for the poor. Solomon says of this woman, "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." (Prov. 31: 20.) No woman can expect to be called worthy whose interest does not reach beyond her own household, especially when the poor are plentiful in the community. (b) Honored through her husband. Solomon says that "her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." (Prov. 31: 23.) Though the man may be honored in his own right, yet since this scripture is devoted to the description of the worthy woman, we understand this passage to suggest that her husband is honored because of his connection with such a wife, (c) Her works praise her in the gates. Solomon tells us that "grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates." (Prov. 31: 31.) A woman who develops the character here described and does the work here attributed to her will certainly have sufficient fruit of her hands to bring praise to her from all who are acquainted with her. It should be the desire and intention of every Christian young woman to develop such character and to engage in such work as will enable people to say of her, "She was a worthy woman."

## Introduction

Since our golden text concerns the worthy woman, and since it is used in connection with this lesson on Dorcas, we naturally get the connection that Dorcas is considered a worthy woman. It will be interesting to see how many of the characteristics of the worthy woman we can find in Dorcas. (1) The worthy woman is pictured to us as one who was not idle; she used her time to good advantage. And from what we

learn of Dorcas in our lesson text, we are impressed with the fact that she was not one to spend her time in idleness. All of us know the danger of idleness. Paul teaches us that those who are idle learn to go about from house to house and engage in gossip. (1 Tim. 5: 11ff.) So, one who does not use her time well spends a lot of time in idleness and would not be a worthy woman. (2) The worthy woman is presented to

us as one who has regard for the needy and who spends quite some time in providing for the needs of the unfortunate. And so we find Dorcas spending some time and effort in the care of those who were in need. When she died, it is said that the widows stood about holding the coats and the garments which Dorcas made for them while she was with them. A woman who is interested only in herself, or in her own household, and whose interests do not reach out into the community would not be considered a worthy woman. (3) Solomon

tells us that the works of the worthy woman will praise her in the gates. By this we understand that the community will know of the goodness of the woman through the works she performed. And so, the widows stood about Dorcas holding the coats she had made, and we see this good woman being praised by her works. And the woman who when she leaves this world cannot leave behind her some good works, not only in her home but in the community, cannot be looked upon as a worthy woman.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Death of a Worthy Woman (Acts

9: 36-39)

*Now there was at Joppa.* The town of Joppa is on the Mediterranean Sea coast. It has been a seaport for Jerusalem. However, on account of the harbor not being as good as that of other seacoast towns, it was never as prominent nor used as regularly by shipping companies as Caesarea and other cities farther north. The modern name for the city is Jaffa.

*A certain disciple named Tabitha.* The word "Tabitha" is an Aramaic word which means "female gazelle." We are told that "it is still customary in the east to give the names of beautiful animals to young women. The comparison of fine eyes to those of the antelope is continually occurring in the writings of the Arabic and Persian poets." (Adam Clarke.)

*By interpretation is called Dorcas.* There is no proof that this woman wore both names. Luke tells us that her name was Tabitha and then adds that this by interpretation is called Dorcas. The word "Dorcas" is a Greek word which has the same meaning as the Aramaic word "Tabitha." However, it was quite customary for people to have both a Jewish and a Greek name, and it is possible that this woman was called by both names depending on whether she was addressed by a Jew or a Greek.

*Full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.* To be full of good works is to fill one's time and consume one's energy in the doing of good works. Contrast this kind of character with that which Paul describes as one who has "waxed wanton against Christ . . . And withal

they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." (1 Tim. 5: 11-13.) And again, Paul speaks of "silly woman laden with sins, led away by divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3: 6, 7.) Christian women should be afraid to be idle; there is so much danger of apostasy in idleness and there is so great a demand for useful work in the community through proper church channels that women cannot afford to live in idleness.

*She fell sick, and died.* Even the saintliest person is not exempt from the experience we call death. It is appointed unto men once to die and no one can be so good or so pure as to be exempt from that experience. In fact, we should not look upon death as a terror. The psalmist said, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints." (Psalm 116: 15.) And Paul looked upon death not as a horrible experience, but as something to be desired to free him from this world of sin, sorrow and suffering, and as a gateway into the presence of Jesus and the joys of heaven. (Phil. 1: 21ff.)

*Lydda was nigh unto Joppa.* Lydda is mentioned as the place where Peter was working at the time. Only a short time before the death of Dorcas Peter had cured Aeneas of his palsy. Lydda was about nine miles southeast of Joppa and situated in a very fertile section of the country.

*Delay not to come on unto us.* This is the message which the disciples at Joppa sent to Peter at Lydda. The question has been raised by some

whether Dorcas was already dead before this message was sent to Peter. So far as is known, no apostle had raised anyone from the dead before this time. Did these disciples send for Peter in the hope that he would raise Dorcas from the dead? Or did they send for him simply that they might have an apostle as a source of comfort and consolation on the passing of one whom they loved? Did Peter go with the intention of raising her from the dead? Or did this idea occur to him after he arrived? From the reading of verses 37 and 38, it seems fairly clear that Dorcas died before this committee was sent to bring Peter to Joppa, but whether they thought Peter could raise her from the dead, and whether Peter intended to do such when he left Lydda are questions which we cannot answer.

*All the widows stood by him weeping.* The mention of widows here raises other questions which we shall not be able to answer. Was Dorcas a widow? No mention is made of any other member of her family. She may or may not have been a widow. The fact that she made garments for the widows is not conclusive proof that she was not one of that number, for it is said that she made these garments "while she was with them." She was with the widows. Whether she was one of their number, or whether this refers to her living in the community but departed from them when she died is another question which is difficult to answer. But as has already been suggested in this lesson, the garments which she left behind were silent testimony to her goodness and kindness while she lived among the needy.

## II. Dorcas Raised from the Dead

(Acts 9: 40-43)

*Peter, put them all forth.* Peter was taken to an upper chamber where the body of Dorcas had been washed and laid out to await the arrival of Peter. Peter followed the custom of his Lord by putting the crowd out of the room and being there with the body without the distracting influence of the crowd. When Jesus would raise the ruler's daughter from the dead, he put the crowd forth from the room and took the damsel by her hand and gave her life again. (Matt. 9: 25.)

*Kneeled down, and prayed.* Peter assumed the most reverent and humbling posture for prayer. Did Peter pray to know God's will in the matter on this occasion? Did he pray to know whether he should attempt to raise this woman from the dead? Or did he pray for the faith and the courage and power to undertake to raise her from the dead? Again, we must admit our inability to answer these questions. But immediately following his prayer, we are told that he turned to the body and asked the woman to arise.

*She opened her eyes.* It must have been a thrilling experience to Peter to bring life back into this body. Surely there are none today but who would thrill to have the power to raise people from the dead, or to be used as an instrument in the hands of God to raise the dead to life again. And yet, we have a greater privilege than that; we may be used as instruments in the hands of God for giving spiritual life to the dead. And since spiritual life is of much greater value than physical life, we may be used for a much greater work than Peter was used to accomplish on this occasion. How much would you give for the power to be able to speak to the dead and see their eyes open and give them back to their friends? Paul teaches us that we have the opportunity to serve God to "open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26: 18.) This has to do with the opening of the eyes that are blinded by ignorance and prejudice and sin. Peter opened the eyes of the dead physical body. We have the privilege of teaching the gospel to people that we may open their spiritual eyes. Peter was used to raise this woman from the dead and give her back to her friends and to their intimate association, but we have the privilege of being used of God to raise from spiritual death those who are in sin and give them back to the fellowship and communion of God.

*And many believed on the Lord.* When Peter had raised Tabitha from the dead, he called the saints and the widows and presented Tabitha to them alive. There was great re-

joining in that this one had been brought back for a few more years of work and Christian fellowship. But the result of this miracle is expressed in these words, that many believed on the Lord. The working of miracles was not primarily for the alleviation of human suffering. Their primary purpose was for the confirmation of the word of God. "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." (Mark 16: 20.) And we are told that this great salvation was first spoken through the Lord, and then "was confirmed unto us by them that heard; 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: 3, 4.) These miracles

served to prove the truth of the message spoken by the inspired preachers. Since that message has been confirmed, there is no longer need for miraculous powers. We can determine the truth or falsity of a message by comparing that message with what we read in the Bible. If the message is taught in the Bible, it is true and confirmed by the miracles which the apostles and prophets wrought. But if the message is not to be found in the Bible, it is false and we should refuse to believe and obey it.

### *He abode many days in Joppa.*

This is said with reference to Peter, and this leads us up to the time when Peter was instructed by the Lord to leave Joppa and go to Caesarea nearly two days' journey north of Joppa to preach the gospel to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Worthy women are not the result of chance. Much thought, effort, and self-denial must be put forth to cultivate and possess such a fine character.

2. Every young woman should memorize the characteristics of the worthy woman and do her best to incorporate these qualities in her own character. No young woman should be satisfied to be counted by her friends and acquaintances as any-

thing less than a worthy Christian woman.

3. Both men and women should be sure to leave behind them evidences of extensive labors in Christ. If when we leave this world, it is not better by our having lived, we will have been failures. If our acquaintances do not feel grieved and do not feel that they have lost a valuable friend, our lives will have been spent in vain.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

What two things does a husband do for the worthy wife?

What does the worthy woman do for her husband?

What two things does the worthy woman do for her children?

What do her children do for the worthy mother?

Name two things this suggests with reference to the worthy woman.

What does the worthy woman do for her community?

What does the community do for her?

### Introduction

Show that Dorcas was a worthy woman in the matter of using her time well.

Was Dorcas a worthy woman in her attitude toward the poor?

Can you show that the neighbors of Dorcas considered her a worthy woman?

Do the women of this class have the qualities of the worthy woman?

### Death of a Worthy Woman

In what city did Dorcas live?

What was her real name? and what is its meaning?

Of what was she said to be full?

What does Paul say of women who are not full of good works?

Why is idleness sinful?

How did David look upon death? and Paul?

Where was Peter when Dorcas died?

Did the friends of Dorcas send for Peter that he might raise her from the dead?

Was Dorcas a widow? or was she simply a friend to widows?

What evidence did the widows offer in proof of the Christian character of Dorcas?

### Dorcas Raised from the Dead

Why did Peter put the people out of the room before raising Dorcas?

How did Peter show humility and reverence before God?

What greater privilege do we have than raising the dead?

Do you enjoy that privilege as often as you would enjoy the privilege of raising the dead if you had that power?

What was the result of this miracle worked by Peter?

What was the primary purpose of miracles?

Can you prove that the power to work miracles is no longer needed?  
How can we determine the truth or falsity of a doctrine today?

How long did Peter stay in Joppa? and why did he leave?  
What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VII—February 17, 1957

### JOHN MARK

#### Lesson Text

Acts 15: 35-41; Col. 4: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 11

35 But Paul and Bar'-na-bas tar-ied in An'-ti-och, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 And after some days Paul said unto Bar'-na-bas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they fare.

37 And Bar'-na-bas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pam-phy'l'-i-a, and went not with them to the work.

39 And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Bar'-na-bas

took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cy'-prus:

40 But Paul chose Si'-las, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.

41 And he went through Syr'-i-a and Ci-li'-ci-a, c o n f i r m i n g the churches.

10 Ar-is-tar'-chus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, the cousin of Bar'-na-bas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him).

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"* (Psalm 133: 1.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Acts 15: 30-35.

#### Daily Bible Readings

February 11. M.....Dissension in the Church (Acts 15: 1-5)  
February 12. T.....Peter's Address (Acts 15: 6-11)  
February 13. W.....James' Speech (Acts 15: 12-21)  
February 14. T.....The Decision (Acts 15: 22-29)  
February 15. F.....Mary and John Mark (Acts 12: 1-19)  
February 16. S.....Barnabas and Mark (Col. 4: 10-12)  
February 17. S.....Barnabas, Son of Exhortation (Acts 4: 36, 37)

**TIME.**—For Acts A. D. 53; for Colossians A. D. 63; for Second Timothy A. D. 68.

**PLACES.**—Jerusalem and Rome.

**PERSONS.**—Paul, Barnabas, and Mark.

#### Golden Text Explained

1. **Unity.** Of speech. Our text tells us that it is both a good and a pleasant thing for brethren to dwell together in unity, and Paul tells us something of the unity which the Lord wants among his people in our time. He says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor.

1: 10.) The first thing Paul suggested to this strife-torn church was that they establish and enjoy unity of speech. To do this, it would be necessary for them all to speak the same thing. And in order for them to speak the same thing, it would be necessary for them to follow a pattern. The apostle Peter provides that pattern in these words, "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4: 11a.) In order for one to speak as the

oracles of God, three things are necessary. (1) That one must have a knowledge of God's word. No man can speak as the oracles of God without knowing what the word of God teaches. (2) That one must be satisfied to say only what the word of God says without adding anything thereto. John tells us that the plagues that are written in the book will be added to those who dare to add to the words of God. (Rev. 22: 18, 19.) (3) One must be satisfied with what God has said and not take away from the word of God. The Old Testament sometimes expressed this as "neither turning to the right hand nor the left." (Josh. 1: 7.) And there is an interesting statement from the wise man on this matter. "Every word of God is tried: . . . Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Prov. 30: 6.) (b) Of organization. Unity consists not only of unity of speech, but Christian unity includes also unity of organization. Paul said that there were to be no divisions among the people of the church at Corinth. The word "divisions" is from the word from which we get *schisms* and denotes division within rather than divisions outside of the church. This is unity of organization or better bodily unity among God's people. This is the unity for which our Savior prayed when he said, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (John 17: 20, 21.) Here again we see a distinction made between the body of believers who were all to be united in one and the world which was looking on that body. Jesus prayed that the body of believers might be one so that the world might believe that God sent Jesus, (c) Of mind and judgment.

Unity of mind refers to their thinking, while the unity of judgment refers to their action. Mind suggests the inward state, and judgment the expression of that inward state in their actions. Paul wished them to think the same things so that they might act in the same ways.

2. **Unity is good.** (a) For the church. Unity is good for the church in that it leaves the church members at peace with one another and peace is always better than division and war. It is also good for the church in that peace affords a fertile soil and a good situation for the growth of the church, (b) For the community. The unity of the church is good for the community because a peaceful church can serve and bless the community, while a church torn by strife and division will be a curse to the community. (c) For God. The unity of God's people is good for God in that he is honored and glorified by a peaceful church, but is misrepresented and dishonored by a church torn by strife and division. It is also good for God in that a peaceful church will bring people of the community to a knowledge of God and bring them to obedience to the gospel of God.

3. **Unity is pleasant,** (a) Helps us to love each other. People who live together in unity are more likely to love and appreciate one another than those who are living together in strife and contention, so we should pray and work for the unity which the Lord desires in order that we may love each other and serve each other, (b) Makes church work easier. Churches that are torn by strife and contention use all their time and energy in their fighting one another; they have little time or energy left for doing the work of the Lord. And a church which must do good in spite of strife and division has a much harder job than one whose work is helped and made easier by the peace and love of the brethren that exist.

## Introduction

"John was the Jewish name, and Mark, a name of frequent use amongst the Romans, was adopted afterwards, and gradually superseded the other. The places in the New Testament enable us to trace the process. The John Mark of Acts 12: 12, 25 and the John of Acts 13: 5, 13

becomes Mark only in Acts 15: 39; Col. 4: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 11; Phile. 24. The change of John to Mark is analogous to that of Saul to Paul; and we cannot doubt that the disuse of the Jewish name in favor of the other is intentional, and has reference to the putting away of his former life, and



entrance upon a new ministry. No inconsistency arises from the accounts of his ministering to two apostles. The desertion of Paul may have been prompted by a wish to rejoin Peter and the apostles engaged in preaching in Palestine, though partly from a disinclination to a perilous and doubtful journey. There is nothing strange in the character

of a warm, impulsive young man, drawn almost equally to the two great teachers of the faith, Paul and Peter. Had mere cowardice been the cause of his withdrawal, Barnabas would not so soon after have chosen him for another journey, nor would he have accepted the *choice*." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Paul and Barnabas Separate Over

**Mark** (Acts 15: 35-41)

**Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch.** This division of our lesson text follows closely the Jerusalem conference and the return of Paul and others from Jerusalem to Antioch. It is said that Judas and Silas, who were prophets, went along with Paul and others to Antioch, and "exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them." And after they had spent some time in Antioch, these two prophets, Judas and Silas, were dismissed from the brethren in Antioch. We hear nothing more of Judas, but Silas must have remained in the area of Antioch because some time later Paul chose Silas to go with him on a missionary journey. But our text tells us that both Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch and spent their time teaching and preaching the word of the Lord.

**Let us return now and visit the brethren.** This is a suggestion which Paul made to Barnabas. We are told that this suggestion was made "after some days" from the time mentioned in the verses above. How long Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch following their return from the Jerusalem conference is difficult to determine, but when they had somewhat satisfied the church in Antioch with their presence and their teaching, they were ready to take leave and visit the churches which they established on their first missionary journey. These churches were located in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These cities lay to the northwest of Antioch in the country which we now call Turkey. This suggests Paul's constant care for the churches which he established. He was not one to establish a church and then leave it to "sink or swim, survive or perish." Many times he left one of his associates

with a church newly established, while he went to other cities to establish other churches, but he often spoke of his anxiety for the churches which he had established. (2 Cor. 11: 28.)

**Barnabas was minded to take with them John.** Luke, the writer of this record, is careful to tell us that this John was also called Mark, so we have no doubt as to the individual under consideration.

**But Paul thought not good.** Paul thought that it was not good to take a young man who, on the former journey, turned back and refused to go with them to the work. This reminds us of the incident when Paul and Barnabas were leaving Cyprus going northward into the continent. For some reason, John Mark turned back and returned to Jerusalem. (Acts 13: 13, 14.) Various guesses have been made by commentators as to why Mark turned back on this first journey. Some think they were traversing a dangerous section of country, and Mark was afraid to continue the journey. Others think that he preferred to return to Jerusalem to work with Peter, rather than to work with Paul. The fact that he was afterwards associated with Peter in gospel work tends to lend this guess some probability. But whatever Mark's reason was for turning back, we know that it did not seem sufficient to Paul, for Paul thought not good "to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work."

**There arose a sharp contention.** Some have supposed Paul and Barnabas became angry and had an ugly fuss as to whether they would take John Mark with them. This is surely a mistake. We can hardly conceive of these two good men losing sight of the fact that they were Christians. They had worked to-

gether too long and loved each other too deeply for them to be ugly toward each other, or for them to have malice in their hearts over this matter. The Greek word here translated "sharp contention" does not imply an ugly temper. (Heb. 10: 24.) Barnabas had sufficient reasons for taking Mark; Paul had logical reasons for not embarrassing the cause through a weak and unstable representative. There were strong, positive statements of their feelings and intentions in the matter. Their positions were irreconcilable, so they parted and chose other partners for their work.

**Barnabas took Mark with him.** Barnabas was a great lover of men. He understood men better than the average person. It was Barnabas who saw something good in Saul of Tarsus. When Saul had been converted and returned to Jerusalem, he wished to be associated with the disciples, but they were afraid of him, did not believe that he was a disciple. "But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus." (Acts 9: 27.) So great was the confidence of the church in Barnabas, and so great was the influence of Barnabas upon other men that he was able to have Paul accepted by the church. It was this same attitude which caused Barnabas to wish to give John Mark a second chance. It is true that Mark had failed on one occasion; Barnabas did not deny his failure, but Barnabas was willing to give Mark a chance where Paul seemed unwilling to give a failing young man a chance to make good. Our text tells us that Barnabas took Mark and they sailed away to Cyprus where they did work for the Lord. This was the home country of Barnabas. We are told that he was "a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race." (Acts 4: 36b.)

**Paul chose Silas, and went forth.** Here we have the mention of Silas again. He was one of the two prophets who accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem back to Antioch with the decrees of the Jerusalem conference. (Acts 15: 22, 31.) Silas is another name for Silvanus, the associate of Paul in Thes-

salonica. (1 Thess. 1: 1; 2 Thess. 1: 1.)

**Being commended by the brethren.** Paul and Silas were commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord as they set forth on their journey. Some students have thought that the fact that Paul and Silas are said to have been commended by the brethren, while Barnabas and Mark are not mentioned as having been commended to the grace of the Lord is proof that the brethren at Antioch sided with Paul in his contention with Barnabas. There seems to be no good foundation for such a conclusion as this. There was no principle of right and wrong involved in the contention between Paul and Barnabas; there was no doctrine of the gospel involved in that contention. Consequently, there was no reason for the church to take sides with Paul against Barnabas. There is one interesting thing that comes out of this trouble. Whereas there had been but one missionary team composed of Paul and Barnabas, there now are two teams, one consisting of Barnabas and Mark, the other of Paul and Silas. Though good came from the contention, we must not conclude that the contention between those two good men was a good thing. Churches are sometimes multiplied today on account of irreconcilable personalities, but the strife and division which results from two personalities being unable to cooperate is not good.

**He went through Syria and Silicia.** Syria was the country lying around Antioch. Antioch was the principal city of Syria and was a radiating center for the gospel. Silicia was the province in which Tarsus was the principal city, and where Paul was born and reared. However, they did not stop with Syria; they pushed on toward the northwest and after visiting the churches of Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, they pushed on to Troas where they saw the vision of the man pleading with them to come to Macedonia and help.

## II. Mark Related to Others (Col. 4:

10)

**Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.** The King James Version tells us that Mark was the nephew of Barnabas. His relation to Barnabas may be one

explanation why Barnabas was so intent upon giving him a second chance. Paul would not feel the interest in one who was not related to him which Barnabas would naturally feel for his blood relative. If the King James Version is right in saying that Mark was the son of the sister of Barnabas, this would throw light on another New Testament character. We read that Mary who lived in Jerusalem and whose house was used as a meeting place for the disciples was the mother of John whose surname was Mark. (Acts 12: 12.) So, Mary may have been the sister of Barnabas. Peter is usually credited with the conversion of John Mark. At any rate, Peter speaks of Mark as his son in the gospel. (1 Pet. 5: 13.)

**Touching whom ye received commandments.** We have no way of knowing when or how the church at Colossae had received commandments from Paul concerning Mark, but from this verse we learn that Paul did give the church at Colossae certain commandments touching Mark and their attitude toward him and their reception of him. And Paul continues to say that if Mark goes to Colossae, the brethren are to receive him. This may suggest that the church at Colossae knew of the contention of Paul and Barnabas over taking John Mark and knew that Paul refused to allow Mark to go on the second missionary journey. It is probable that Paul feared that the church at Colossae might not give Mark the reception they ought to give a gospel preacher if they thought that Paul still felt toward him as he felt when he refused to take Mark with him. So Paul instructs the church

at Colossae to be sure to receive Mark as becometh a church of God's people receiving a preacher of the gospel.

### III. Mark a Useful Minister (2 Tim. 4: 11)

**He is useful to me for ministering.** In the New Testament there are three Greek words translated by our word "minister." The first, *leitourgos*, means a subordinate public administrator, whether civil or sacerdotal. It is applied to a ruler (Rom. 13: 6); it is used of Christ (Heb. 8: 2); and of Paul in his relation to Christ (Rom. 15: 16). The second word, *diakonos*, is the word from which we get our word "deacon" and is used in a general sense of any who serve. Paul and Apollos were deacons in this sense. (1 Cor. 3: 5.) Even Christ is spoken of as a deacon in this sense. (Rom. 15: 8; Gal. 2: 17.) Then it is used in the special sense of one who has certain qualifications for serving in the church. (1 Tim. 3: 8-13.) Mark is spoken of here as being useful in ministering to Paul. This word, *diakonos*, is used in this statement with reference to Mark. The third word, *hupoetees*, is the term used to describe the work of Mark and his relation to those he served in Acts 13: 5. The word literally means **an under-rower**. It contains the idea of actual and personal attendance upon a superior. It was used of the attendant in the synagogue (Luke 4: 20) whose duty it was to take care of the building, "produce and replace the books employed in the service, and generally to wait on the officiating priests or teacher."

### Lessons to Learn

1. Good men cannot always agree in matters of judgment, but they can always be Christian in their attitude toward one another and in settlement of their differences in matters of judgment.

2. Mark came from good stock; his background was good; and though he stumbled for reasons which did not seem good to Paul, yet he had the

courage and the determination to come back and make good.

3. Paul acknowledged Mark's success in his efforts to come back and make good in that he invited him to serve with him in the gospel. And he not only invited him to serve, but spoke of him as one who was useful in ministering to him.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

Name three types of unity Paul demanded of the church at Corinth,

How can we have unity of speech?

What three things are necessary to speak as the oracles of God?  
 How does the Old Testament forbid adding to or taking from the word of God?  
 What is meant by unity of organization?  
 Can you prove that Jesus prayed for unity of organization?  
 Can you distinguish between unity of mind and unity of judgment?  
 Why is unity good for the church? for the community? and for God?  
 Why does unity help church people to love one another?  
 How does unity make church work easier?

#### Introduction

From what source did this man get his name "John"? and "Mark"?  
 At what time was "John" dropped and only "Mark" begun to be used?  
 What other New Testament character experienced such a change in name?  
 What probable reasons are given why Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas?

#### Paul and Barnabas Separated Over Mark

Who returned from the Jerusalem conference with Paul and Barnabas?  
 What suggestion did Paul make to Barnabas?  
 What request did Barnabas make with reference to Mark?  
 What churches did Paul propose to visit? and who established them?

Why did Paul oppose taking Mark on a second journey?  
 Discuss some probable reasons why Mark turned back on the first journey.  
 Did Paul and Barnabas cease to be friends on account of this incident?  
 Relate how Barnabas assisted Paul on a former occasion.  
 Whom did Paul choose to go with him on his second missionary journey?  
 Where was Syria? what is its principal city? where was Cilicia? and its principal city?

#### Mark Related to Others

How was Mark related to Barnabas?  
 Who was Mark's mother? and where did she live?  
 How was Mark related to Peter?  
 Concerning whom did the church at Colossae receive commandments from Paul?  
 Way did Paul urge the church there to receive Mark kindly?

#### Mark a Useful Minister

How many Greek words are translated by our word "minister"?  
 Discuss their meanings and use in the New Testament.  
 To whom did Mark minister?  
 What evidence do we have that Mark made good as a helper of apostles?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VIII—February 24, 1957

## PRISCILLA AND AQUILA

### Lesson Text

Acts 18: 1-3, 24-28; Rom. 16: 3-5

1 After these things he departed from Ath'-ens, and came to Cor'-inth.

2 And he found a certain Jew named Aq'-ui-la, a man of Pon'-tus by race, lately come from It'-a-ly, with his wife Pris-cil'-la, because Clau'-di-us had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them;

3 And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers.

24 Now a certain Jew named A-pol'-los, an Al-ex-an'-dri-an by race, an eloquent man, came to Eph'-e-sus; and he was mighty in the scriptures.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Je'-sus, knowing only the baptism of John:

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Pris-

cil'-la and Aq'-ui-la heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately.

27 And when he was minded to pass over into A-cha'-ia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace;

28 For he powerfully confuted the Jews, *and that* publicly, showing by the scriptures that Je'-sus was the Christ.

3 Salute Pris'-ca and Aq'-ui-la my fellow-workers in Christ Je'-sus,

4 Who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gen'-tiles:

5 And *salute* the church that is in their house. Salute Ep-ae-ne'-tus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of A'-si-a unto Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If any will not work, neither let him eat."*  
3: 10.)

(2 Thess.

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Phil. 4: 1-3.

## Daily Bible Readings

February 18.	M. Idleness Condemned (2 Thess. 3: 6-14)
February 19. T. ....	Work with Hands (Eph. 4: 25-32)
February 20. W. ....	Labor Ordained (Gen. 3: 17-21)
February 21. T. ....	Jehovah Finished His Labor (Gen. 2: 1-3)
February 22. F. ....	Work Commanded (1 Thess. 4: 11, 12)
February 23. S. ....	Paul's Final Salutation (2 Tim. 4: 19-22)
February 24. S. ....	Church in One's House (Col. 4: 15)

TIME.—For Acts A. D. 50; for Romans A. D. 60.

PLACES.—Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

PERSONS.—Priscilla, Aquila, Paul, and Apollos.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Idleness is sinful.** (a) Not Christlike. One can hardly be more unlike Christ than is the sluggard. Jesus said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." (John 5: 17.) And again he said, "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is yet day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:

4.) And again Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4: 34.) Since Jesus worked and did so many works and taught so many lessons that if they had all been recorded, the world could not contain the books, one who is lazy and continues in unjustified idleness, that one is not like Christ, (b) Idleness may cause one to be worse than an unbeliever. Paul taught that people are to support their children and says, "If any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Tim. 5: 8.) Paul would not say this about a man who through poor health or other providential hindrance was unable to care for his family, so we conclude that this statement is made with reference to those who are too lazy or from other causes too sorry to take care of their own family, (c) Idleness is contrary to good example. Paul said, "Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. in all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak." (Acts 20: 34, 35a.) And then again to the church at Thessalonica Paul wrote, "Neither did we eat bread for nought at **any** man's hand, but in labor and travail,

working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us." (2 Thess. 3: 8, 9.) No one can live a life of idleness and say that he is following the example set by the apostle Paul.

2. **Results of idleness,** (a) Poverty. The wise man had much to say about the idle and the sluggard. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter; therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing . . . Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." (Prov. 20: 4, 13.) And the wise man tells the sluggard to go to the ant and consider her ways and be wise. He pictures the sluggard as saying, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," and then says, "So shall thy poverty come as a robber, and thy want as an armed man." (Prov. 6: 6-11.) (b) Hunger. Again Solomon tells us, "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and the idle soul shall suffer hunger." The idea of poverty and hunger go together; the lazy, idle person, the sluggard, will come both to hunger and poverty, (c) Laziness versus labor. Putting two verses together, we have a contrast between the hard worker and the lazy man. "He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand . . . but he that gathereth by labor shall have increase." (Prov. 10: 4a; 13: 11b.) The student will do well to read the book of Proverbs and underline the verses which deal with this particular subject.

3. **Paul's teaching on work.** (a) Paul commanded people to work. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat . . . Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." (2 Thess. 3: 9-12.) (b) Those who refuse to work are classed as the disorderly. Paul says that there were some in Thessalonica who walked disorderly "that work not at all; but are busybodies." So, an idle person is walking disorderly in the sight of God. (c) Again Paul said to this same church,

"But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, even as we charged you; that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and have need of nothing." (1 Thess. 4: 10b-12.) From this we learn that to work is one way to walk becomingly before the Lord and before those who are not members of the church. And from other places we have learned that the man who refuses to work is not walking becomingly, but has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

## Introduction

"The name is Prisca in 2 Tim. 4: 19 and in Rom. 16: 3 as well as 1 Cor. 16: 19. Such variation in a Roman name is by no means unusual. We find that the name of the wife is placed before that of the husband in Rom. 16: 3; 2 Tim. 4: 19 and according to some versions Acts 18: 26. It is only in Acts 18: 2 and 1 Cor. 16: 19 that Aquila has unequivocally the first place. Hence, we should be disposed to conclude that Priscilla was the more energetic character of the

two; and it is particularly to be noted that she took part, not only in her husband's exercise of hospitality, but likewise in the theological instruction of Apollos. Yet we observe that the husband and wife are always mentioned together. In fact, we may say that Priscilla is the example of what the married woman may do, for the general service of the church, in conjunction with home duties." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Paul Meets Priscilla and Aquila

(Acts 18: 1-3)

*After these things he departed from Athens.* In the preceding chapter, Luke tells us of Paul's visit to Athens. It was there that he preached to the philosophers and was heard until he spoke of the resurrection of the dead. At that point they excused themselves and took leave of Paul. Paul did not remain in Athens very long. In fact, we do not know that he established a church there; we are simply told that certain men clave to him and believed. Two names are given—that of Dionysius, a judge in the Athenian court, and a woman named Damaris.

*And came to Corinth.* Corinth was about forty-five miles east of Athens. The old city of Corinth was destroyed nearly 150 years before Christ, but was rebuilt by Julius Caesar. The city was so situated as to enjoy the commerce of both the Ionian and the Aegean Seas, so it was a very prosperous city; it was also a very wicked city. To Corinthianize a person was

equal to saying that person had been made immoral. The people of Athens were "very religious" (Acts 17: 22b), yet Paul had little success in that city and may have failed to establish the church. The people of Corinth were very wicked and immoral, and he established a great church there. People of superior education sometimes fail to realize their need of God and of a savior from sin as much as people who are steeped in sin and immorality.

*He found a certain Jew named Aquila.* Since Aquila is referred to as "a certain Jew," some have taken this to mean that Aquila and his wife were not Christians when Paul found them at Corinth. But he is probably mentioned as being a Jew to account for his coming from Rome to Corinth as is mentioned in the latter part of this verse. There is no way of knowing whether Priscilla and Aquila were Christians when Paul met them, or whether Paul converted them while working with them. Aquila is said to have

been a man of Pontus by race, and it is interesting to note that there were Jews in Pontus because Peter's first letter was addressed to those of the dispersion in Pontus and other provinces in Asia Minor. (1 Pet. 1:

I.) It is also a matter of interest to know that a man named Aquila translated the Old Testament into Greek about A. D. 130 and was said to be a Jew from Pontus. (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.* It is perhaps impossible for us to know exactly why Claudius commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. Josephus makes no mention of this act on the part of Claudius. One historian, Suetonius, tells of a man named Chrestus causing disturbances which caused Claudius to banish all Jews from Rome. Some think that the word Chrestus is a mistake for the Latin form of Christ, which would be Christus, and that Claudius banished the Jews on account of their belief in and expectation of Christ. Others think that unbelieving Jews attacked the Christian Jews because of their faith in Christ, and that on account of such disturbances Claudius banished all Jews from Rome.

*By their trade they were tent-makers.* Luke tells us that when Paul went to Corinth he found Aquila and Priscilla and abode with them and worked with them. Both Paul and his new-found friends were tentmakers. In the time of Paul, every boy was taught a trade. The Jews had a proverb among them to the effect that "the father who neglected to teach his son a trade taught him to be a thief." Paul did not see that manual labor was inconsistent with preaching the gospel, nor did he think that manual labor was beneath the dignity of a gospel preacher. If working with his hands was not beneath the dignity of an apostle of Jesus Christ, certainly a preacher today must not think manual labor beneath his dignity.

## II. Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos (Acts 18: 24-28)

*Now a certain Jew named Apollos.* Apollos was a native of Alexandria, Egypt, a city destined to be the scene of the labors of such men as Origen, Clement, and such gnostic leaders as Cerinthus, Basilides, and

Valentinus. He also at a later time labored at Corinth, and was held in such high esteem that some of the people said they were of Apollos. And Paul speaks of Apollos as a fellow worker in God's vineyard and as one who watered following the planting done by Paul. (1 Cor. 3: 4-9.) Luke tells us that Apollos was an eloquent man and was mighty in the scriptures. From this we conclude that he had a wide knowledge of Old Testament scriptures, and that he could use these scriptures with telling effect on his audiences.

*This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord.* Apollos had been taught either by John the Baptist or a disciple of John, and he had undoubtedly received the baptism as administered by John, but his instruction "in the way of the Lord" was limited to that which occurred before the death of Christ. Apollos obviously knew nothing of the death of Christ, his resurrection and ascension, and the events of Pentecost.

*Knowing only the baptism of John.* This statement limits the knowledge of Apollos concerning Jesus. It also indicates that he knew nothing of the great commission and the baptism into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit authorized by that commission. Prof. H. B. Hackett, a Baptist scholar of note, points out the fact that no mention is made of Apollos' being baptized by Aquila, but he concludes from the fact that the people at Ephesus who received John's baptism and were baptized again by Paul is proof that Apollos did the same. (Acts 19: 1-8.) But what he forgot is that Apollos most probably received his baptism before the death of Christ, and while the baptism of John was still valid, whereas the people of Ephesus received their baptism after the death of Christ and when that baptism was no longer valid. If Apollos received John's baptism before the death of Christ, that baptism was valid and accepted as obedience to God and he was prepared for citizenship in the kingdom when it was established. But the people of Ephesus received John's baptism after the death of Christ when that baptism was no longer valid, was not counted as obedience to God, and did not either prepare them for citizenship in the

kingdom, or bring them from without to within the kingdom of Christ.

*Expounded unto him the way of God more accurately.* This is said of Priscilla and Aquila after they had heard Apollos preaching the gospel. Apollos, knowing only the baptism of John, would not preach the gospel as the great commission authorized it; so Priscilla and Aquila having been taught the gospel under the great commission, took Apollos to one side and taught him more accurately the gospel of Christ. The fact that Priscilla is mentioned in verse 26 before her husband Aquila has led scholars to believe that she took the lead in instructing Apollos in the gospel. Many Christian women are better qualified to teach by reason of the fact that they have a greater knowledge and more ability to impart that knowledge than their husbands. This seems to have been the case with Priscilla, and the fact that she took the lead in teaching Apollos does not mean that she was out of her place. But had she arisen in the audience to dispute the matter with Apollos, she would have been out of her place as a Christian woman and would have violated Christian principles. (1 Cor. 14: 34, 35; 1 Tim. 2: 12-14.)

*When he was minded to pass over into Achaia.* Apollos moved on from Ephesus to Achaia. Achaia is the province in which Corinth was the principal city, so Apollos went from Ephesus to Corinth where he watered the planting done by Paul.

*He helped them much.* When Apollos reached Corinth, he helped greatly those who had believed on the Lord through the grace of God. Believing through the grace of God simply means that it was through the grace of God that the gospel was preached to them so that they might believe.

*He powerfully confuted the Jews.* Apollos was not one to have religious peace at any price; he was not willing to condone false doctrines or to compromise the truth in order to have peace. He confuted, or convicted them. One authority says, "Implying that he met the opposing arguments in turn and brought them down to the ground." (W. E. Vine.)

### III. Paul Salutes Prisca and Aquila

(Rom. 16: 3-5)

*Salute Prisca and Aquila.* This is Paul's letter to Rome. Obviously, Prisca, or Priscilla, and Aquila were back in Rome at the time Paul wrote this letter. These two people traveled over much territory. We find them in Corinth, but we are told that they came from Rome to that city. Then when Paul left Corinth to go to Ephesus, these two accompanied him. (Acts 18: 18.) And then a few years later when Paul writes to Rome, we find them back in that city.

*My fellow workers in Christ Jesus.* Paul salutes them as his fellow workers. There is no indication that Aquila left his trade as tentmaker to become a preacher, so Paul speaks of a common laborer as his fellow laborer in Christ Jesus. There is no distinction made in Christ between manual labor and the white collar workers, much less a distinction between the manual laborer and the clergy.

*For my life laid down their own necks.* We do not know when or where these people risked their lives to save the apostle. He was in great danger at Corinth during a Jewish insurrection (Acts 18: 12), and in great danger again at Ephesus when a tumult was raised by Demetrius and the silversmiths (Acts 19: 23). In either of these situations, Paul could have been exposed to danger and these people could have risked their lives to save him from that danger. However, these are only guesses suggested by various commentators and may not be near the truth. But for this service which they rendered Paul, not only the apostle himself but also all the churches of the Gentiles gave thanks. From this we may conclude that their willingness to lay down their own necks for Paul bore fruit in saving him for further service to Gentile churches.

*Salute the church that is in their house.* This indicates the faithfulness of this couple to the Lord. When church buildings were scarce, they were willing to make room for the meetings of the saints in their home. Priscilla was not afraid her ability as a housekeeper would be criticized by the women who came to worship,



nor was she afraid of the added work it would put on her to receive the church into their house for its wor-

ship. Christian women today could learn a good lesson from Priscilla in these matters.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Paul went into Corinth without financial backing. He labored with his own hands and established a great church. Until we have the spirit of self-denial and sacrifice which will make us willing to do the same thing, we can hope to accomplish but little so far as evangelizing the whole world is concerned. Financial backing is good, but not essential to evangelizing the world.

2. We are to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Priscilla and

Aquila exemplified such wisdom in their handling of Apollos. Had they challenged him publicly on his preaching, they might never have reached him with the truth.

3. True friendship shows itself in sacrifice for our friends. Priscilla and Aquila proved their friendship for Paul when they willingly laid down their necks, or exposed themselves to the danger of losing their lives, in order to save Paul from death.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What can you say of the example Jesus set us concerning work?

How may idleness cause one to be worse than an unbeliever?

How did Paul set us a good example in this matter?

What does Solomon say about idleness and poverty?

What does he say of idleness and hunger?

How does Solomon contrast the hard worker and the lazy man?

How did Paul classify those who will not work?

What penalty did Paul command for those who will not work?

What is Paul's description of a becoming walk?

#### Introduction

Give two forms of the name of the wife of Aquila.

Why is the wife's name mentioned first in most references?

Of what is Priscilla a good example?

What is said of her hospitality?

#### Paul Meets Priscilla and Aquila

Where did Paul preach just before he went to Corinth? and with what success?

What do you know of the location and moral conditions of Corinth?

What do you know of Aquila's background?

Why had Aquila and Priscilla left Rome?

What circumstance led to Paul's making their acquaintance?

What do we learn from this about Paul's attitude toward manual labor?

#### Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos

Of what city was Apollos a native?

Can you name other religious leaders who lived there at a later time?

What is said of the ability of Apollos to handle the scriptures?

By what was the teaching of Apollos limited?

Why were the Ephesians baptized again, but Apollos was not?

Since Apollos knew only the baptism of John, with what great facts of the gospel was he not acquainted?

What part did Priscilla take in teaching Apollos?

If she had done this in the public assembly, what principles would she have violated?

Where did Apollos go when he left Ephesus?

What information do we have concerning his work in Corinth?

What is meant by "confuting" one's opponents?

#### Paul Salutes Prisca and Aquila

Can you trace Priscilla and Aquila in their travels from Rome back to Rome?

What is suggested in the fact that Paul called them his fellow-laborers?

What personal service had they rendered Paul?

How had this proved a blessing to the Gentile churches?

What indicated the faithfulness of this couple?

What proof do we have of their hospitality?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson IX—March 3, 1957

## EPAPHRODITUS

## Lesson Text

Phil. 2: 25 ©30; 4: 18-20

25 But I counted it necessary to send to you E-paph-ro-di'-tus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need;

26 Since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick:

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the

Lord with all joy; and hold such in honor:

30 Because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.

18 But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from E-paph-ro-di'-tus the things *that came* from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Je'-sus.

20 Now unto our God and Father *be* the glory for ever and ever. A-men'.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Ye sent once and again unto my need."* (Phil. 4: 16a.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 4: 1-17.

## Daily Bible Readings

February 25. M..... Paul's Regard for the Philippians (Phil. 1: 3-11)  
February 26. T..... Paul's First Labors in Philippi (Acts 16: 11-15)  
February 27. W..... Imprisonment in Philippi (Acts 16: 16-40)  
February 28. T..... Fellowship with Paul (Phil. 4: 10-20)  
March 1. F..... Bearing One Another's Burdens (Gal. 6: 1-5)  
March 2. S..... Paul's Concern for the Philippians (Phil. 2: 12-23)  
March 3. S..... Paul Admonishes the Philippians (Phil. 2: 1-10)

TIME.—A. D. 63.

PLACES.—Philippi and Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul, Epaphroditus, and the saints in Philippi.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **A worthy church supports a preacher.** (a) From the first day. Paul said he gave thanks to God for every remembrance he had of the brethren at Philippi and made supplication for them with great joy, "for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now." (Phil. 1: 5.) Since the very first day the church was established in Philippi, the brethren had been mindful of Paul's needs and had made contributions toward filling those needs. The first act of which we have any record is the hospitality of Lydia who as soon as she was converted insisted that Paul and his helpers stay in her home. (Acts 16: 14-16.) (b) In Thessalonica. When

Paul through persecution was forced to leave Philippi, he went to Thessalonica. (Acts 17: 1ff.) And he says that even in Thessalonica the brethren at Philippi continued to send contributions to him. (Phil. 4: 16.)

(c) In Rome. The occasion for the writing of this letter to the church at Philippi was the coming of Epaphroditus with a contribution of money and supplies for the apostle. And Paul said, "I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." (Phil. 4: 18.)

2. **A worthy preacher receives support.** (a) Paul founded the church

in Philippi. The very fact that Paul sacrificed to establish the church in Philippi would make him appear in the sight of the Philippian church as a brother worthy of their confidence and their support. They never ceased to be grateful to him for his self-sacrifice in taking the gospel to them, and as it is the duty of the taught to support the teacher (Gal. 6: 6), so the Philippian church always felt it their duty to support Paul, (b) Paul worked to support himself. In Acts 20: 34, 35 and 2 Thess. 3: 9-11, we have statements from the apostle Paul to the effect that he worked at his trade of tentmaker to support himself and those who were associated with him in gospel work. A man who was willing to work with his hands to support himself and others is certainly worthy of the support of churches, (c) Paul continued his interest in the church. Paul continued to be interested in all the churches he established, and as evidence of his interest in the church at Philippi, he wrote them that he hoped to send Timothy to them that he might know of their state and that Timothy might serve them in the furtherance of the gospel there. (Phil. 2: 19-24.)

3. Blessings promised. (a) It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20: 35.) This is one statement

which our Lord made while on earth which is not recorded in any of the four gospels, but Paul preserves the statement for us, and the church at Philippi qualified for the extra blessedness which the giver enjoys which is not enjoyed by the receiver, (b) The giver has fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel. Sometimes preachers report their meetings and the results thereof as if the preachers were entirely responsible for all the good done; but this is not the case. Those who have fellowship with the preacher and make it possible for him to do the preaching are counted as fellow-workers in the gospel. Paul spoke of the church at Philippi as having "fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel" because they had contributed to his need. (Phil. 1: 5.) (c) The giver is a partaker of the grace of God. After giving thanks to God for the fellowship of the church at Philippi, Paul said, "I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace." (Phil. 1: 7.) To be a partaker of grace is simply to share in the rewards which come through the grace of God. So the giver shares with the preacher in the rewards for the saving of souls.

## Introduction

There is an argument among scholars as to whether Epaphras (Col. 1: 7) and Epaphroditus are the same person. The main argument for their identity is the fact that the name Epaphras is an abbreviated form of the name Epaphroditus. But Professor Hackett argues against the identity on the ground that Epaphras belonged to Colossae (Col. 4: 12), and was a messenger of the church at

Colossae (Col. 4: 12), and was a fellow prisoner with Paul in Rome (Phile. 24). While we see that Epaphroditus was a member of the church at Philippi and was a messenger of the Philippian church to Paul in Rome and was not imprisoned in Rome with Paul but was sent by Paul after a long illness from Rome to Philippi. (Phil. 2: 27ff.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Epaphroditus a Church Messenger

(Phil. 2: 25-30)

*I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus.* This statement introduces the subject of our lesson about whom we have no further information than is afforded in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. But a number of things are said about him which enable us to form a good conception of his character. First,

Paul calls him "a brother." This signifies their spiritual relationship. Epaphroditus was a member of God's family, the church, and was therefore a brother in Christ. As spiritual things are more lasting and of greater value than are the temporal things of life, so the spiritual relationship is more lasting and should be more highly prized than the physical or human relationships of life. Next,

Paul refers to Epaphroditus as his "fellow-worker." This denotes that Paul and Epaphroditus were spending their energies in the same great cause. They were working under the same Master and laboring for the same prize. In the third place, Paul speaks of Epaphroditus as his "fellow-soldier." This would denote that Epaphroditus was enduring the same hardships and incurring the same dangers as was the apostle Paul. They were obedient to the same Captain and expected to enjoy together the victories of the campaign in which they were jointly engaged. Then in the fourth place, Paul speaks of Epaphroditus as the "messenger and minister" of the church at Philippi. The word "messenger" is from the same Greek word that we get the word "apostle" from. Epaphroditus was the apostle of the church at Philippi; he was one sent by the church to accomplish a work for the church. He was not an apostle in the sense in which Paul was an apostle. Paul was the apostle of Jesus Christ, sent by Jesus to accomplish his purposes, while Epaphroditus was the apostle of the church sent by the church to accomplish a work for the church. But not only was he an apostle, one sent by the church, but he was a minister of the church. The Greek word which is here translated "minister" "has to do with the fulfillment of an office, the discharge of a function, something of a representative character." (W. E. Vine.) But since this, is the word used in connection with the ministry of priests, it is thought that Paul "regarded the alms of the Philippians as an offering to God, ministered by Epaphroditus." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Ye had heard that he was sick.* This caused Epaphroditus no little concern. Word had gone back to Philippi concerning his illness, and Epaphroditus was afraid the church would be in anxiety and even sorrow with reference to his welfare. This made his stay in Rome more difficult and caused Paul to appreciate the sacrifice made by Epaphroditus.

*But God had mercy on him.* Paul admits that Epaphroditus was sick, even nigh unto death. There are two things for our consideration here. (1) Though Epaphroditus was very ill, and both Paul and the church at Philippi were concerned greatly

about his welfare, there is no indication that Paul healed the illness. There is no doubt that Paul had the ability to heal the sick when such would serve to confirm the preaching of the gospel, but since there was no occasion to confirm the truth of the gospel, Paul either could not or simply did not exercise his healing power in the behalf of Epaphroditus. This is proof that the power to heal miraculously was not used by apostles for the alleviation of human suffering only. As further proof of this, Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick. (2 Tim. 4: 20.) (2) Paul says that God had mercy on both Epaphroditus and Paul himself in that he healed Epaphroditus. No doubt prayers were offered in behalf of Epaphroditus, and so we have here a case of sickness being healed in answer to prayers and as evidence of the mercy of God on those involved. This is in harmony with the teaching of other passages of scripture. (James 5: 14ff.)

*I have sent him therefore the more diligently.* As soon as Epaphroditus was able to make the journey back to Philippi, Paul sent him in order that the church at Philippi might be comforted by a knowledge of his recovery.

*Receive him therefore in the Lord.* Epaphroditus had so conducted himself that the church at Philippi could receive him with great joy. Next, he had so conducted himself that he was worthy to be held in high honor, and as an explanation of why they were to receive him in great joy and hold him in high honor, Paul says, "For the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me." In serving the church at Philippi, Epaphroditus had exposed himself to dangers and had borne those dangers courageously and without murmuring, and because of this he was worthy to be received by them and to be held in honor. Preachers today, or others, are worthy of high honor when they make sacrifices for the Lord and especially when they endanger their health or their lives.

## II. Epaphroditus Filled Paul's Need (Phil. 4: 18-20)

*I have all things, and abound.* This is a part of Paul's expression of ap-

preciation to the church at Philippi for their remembrance of him in his want, and for their willingness to fill that want. In verse 10 he said, "I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity." It seems that some time had elapsed since the last contribution was sent from Philippi to Paul, but that lapse of time had not been on account of their lack of attention and thought for him, but simply because they had not had opportunity to send to him. Next, he says that he abounds in the necessities of life because of the things they sent to him. And Paul tells them that he had learned a secret "both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and be in want." (Phil. 4: 12.) This seems to be a great secret to many people; they know how to abound, but they do not know how to be in want. Paul could be just as serene and calm and devoted to the Lord when he was in want of daily bread as when he was filled with the necessities of life.

*An odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable.* In verse 17 Paul spoke of their gift as a fruit, but here he changes the figure and speaks of it as a sacrifice. As a fruit it was the result of the Holy Spirit's working in them the likeness of Christ. As a sacrifice, it was a gift to the Lord in the person of one who was in need and in prison. (Matt. 25: 40.) Our gifts to the needy are spoken of as sacrifices offered to God. "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. 13: 16.) If we could keep in mind that our gifts to people in need are sacrifices to God, we would give more and would get greater joy from our giving.

*My God shall supply every need of yours.* Paul assures the church at Philippi that God will not forget their gift, but that he will supply their needs. He told the church at Corinth that "God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work." (2 Cor. 9: 8.) We should

notice also that God's supply of our need is not according to that which we deserve but "according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." In proof that God can supply every need which we have, Paul says that he "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph. 3: 20.) If people could fully realize God's ability to bless them and God's willingness to bless them on condition that they give liberally to those who are in need and for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of souls, surely more people would be more liberal in their contributions. Our difficulty is not that we do not have the ability to make great contributions, but that we do not have faith in the promises of God to reward us for liberal contributions. People just naturally do things which they genuinely believe will bring them comfort and prosperity. If everyone could be fully convinced that God is both able and willing to reward them abundantly above all they are able to ask or think, they would act in harmony with their faith in these promises and would give liberally.

*Unto our God and Father be the glory.* Though Paul appreciated the gift from the church at Philippi and gave them due praise and thanks for their gift, he recognized this as the work of God in them and said that the glory for all the good done was to be given to God. Whatever we do that is good and helpful to others is the work of God in us and through us. We are entitled to none of the glory ourselves, but are to give all the glory to God for accomplishing such things in and through us. But we do learn from this lesson that God can be glorified in the lives of erring, faltering human beings. Epaphroditus was not a perfect man, and yet his work was such as glorified God. The Philippian church was not composed of perfect human beings, but in spite of their imperfections the work which they did contributed to the glory of God. We should take courage from this and be moved to do good works, not that we may gain a great name, but that God may be glorified.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Doing the work of the Lord is much more important than life itself. Epaphroditus endangered his life to serve the Lord. And this reminds us of Paul's attitude as expressed in Acts 20: 22-24; 21: 13.

2. People who have such attitudes are worthy of high honor from the brethren and will be richly rewarded by the Lord. This being true, such an attitude is worthy of continuous, diligent cultivation.

3. Our good deeds are accepted by the Lord as acceptable sacrifices, an odor of sweet smell. This suggests that God was pleased with the odor of the sacrifices which ascended to him during the Jewish dispensation, and that as he took note of those sacrifices so he takes note of the good deeds we do, and they have the same effect on him as the smell of those ancient sacrifices.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

For what act of the church at Philippi did Paul continually give thanks?

What fellowship did the church have with him from the first day of its existence?

To what distant city did the church send several times for the support of Paul?

To what foreign city did they send to support Paul?

Who was the messenger of the church to take this support to Paul?

What had Paul done for the church at Philippi which put them under obligation to him?

How did Paul show his continued interest in the church at Philippi?

Why is it more blessed to give than to receive?

In what does the giver have fellowship with the preacher?

### Introduction

Where did Epaphras live? and Epaphroditus?

Why have some scholars thought these names refer to the same person?

Can you give reasons why these names do not refer to the same man?

### Epaphroditus a Church Messenger

What term does Paul use to signify the spiritual relationship between him and Epaphroditus?

What term denotes that they were spending their energies in the same great cause?

What word does Paul use to show they were suffering the same dangers and hardships?

What word suggests that Epaphroditus was the apostle of the church at Philippi?

Does this term give Epaphroditus equal rank in authority with Paul?

What is the meaning and implication of the word "minister" in this text?

What unfortunate experience did Epaphroditus have in Rome?

Why did not Paul heal him miraculously?

What other fellow-worker did Paul leave sick?

Is there any indication that God healed Epaphroditus in answer to prayer?

What did Paul ask the Philippian church to do to honor Epaphroditus?

### Epaphroditus Filled Paul's Needs

What indicates that it had been some time since Paul had received a gift from Philippi?

What was the cause of this delay?

What secret had Paul learned? When Paul spoke of their gift as a fruit, whose work was it?

When he spoke of it as a sacrifice, to whom was it offered?

What blessing will the church receive on account of this gift to Paul?

What does Paul say of God's ability to supply our every need?

What is the measure of God's blessings to us?

What lesson must we learn in order to become liberal givers?

To what extent should we share with God the glory for such good works?

What should be our purpose in doing such good works?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson X—March 10, 1957

## TYCHICUS

### Lesson Text

Eph. 6: 21, 22; Col. 4: 7-9; 2 Tim. 4: 12; Tit. 3: 12

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tych'i-cus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for

this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.

7 All my affairs shall Tych'i-cus make known unto you, the beloved

brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:

8 Whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts;

9 Together with O-nes'-i-mus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known

unto you all things that *are done* here.

12 But Tych'-i-cus I sent to Eph'-e-sus.

12 When I shall send Ar'-te-mas unto thee, or Tych'-i-cus, give diligence to come unto me to Ni-cop'-o-lis: for there I have determined to winter.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shall be a good minister of Christ Jesus."* (1 Tim. 4: 6a.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—2 Tim. 4: 9-18.

Daily Bible Readings

- March 4. M..... Work of an Evangelist (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
- March 5. T..... The Things of Sound Doctrine (Tit. 2: 1-8)
- March 6. W..... A Good Minister (1 Tim. 4: 6-16)
- March 7. T..... Warning Regarding False Teachers (1 Tim. 4: 15)
- March 8. F..... Charge to the Rich (1 Tim. 4: 17-19)
- March 9. S..... The Good Fight of Faith (1 Tim. 6: 11-16)
- March 10. S..... Tychicus, Companion of Paul (Acts 20: 1-6)

TIME.—A. D. 63 for Ephesians and Colossians; A. D. 67 for Titus; and A. D. 68 for Timothy.  
PLACES.—Rome for Ephesians, Colossians, and Second Timothy; Macedonia for Titus.  
PERSONS.—Paul and Tychicus.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Definition of terms,** (a) Brethren. When Paul speaks of putting the "brethren" in mind of certain teaching, he has a certain group of people in mind. Jesus gives us some idea of who constitute this group when someone came with the message that his mother and his brethren wished to see him. He raised the question, "Who are my brethren?" And then, "he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12: 48-50.) According to this, those who obey the will of the Father in heaven are the brothers and sisters of Christ. Hence, when Paul told Timothy to put the brethren in mind of certain things, he meant for Timothy to teach those who had obeyed the gospel and who were living in obedience to the gospel the things which the children of God ought to know and practice. (b) Put in mind. The Greek word here translated "put in mind" is not the same word which is used in other places to mean to "bring to remembrance." Preachers are often told

in the New Testament to bring certain things to the remembrance of their hearers, as in 2 Tim. 2: 14; Tit. 3: 1; and Jude 5. But in our text, the Greek word is different and has a different meaning. The word literally means "to place under." And when Prisca and Aquila are said to have "laid down their own necks" for Paul (Rom. 16: 14), this Greek word is used. In this place it has the idea of laying down certain truths or principles of the gospel. (Pulpit Commentary.) So, Paul is telling Timothy that if he will lay down certain doctrines or truths for the brethren, he will be a good minister. (c) Minister. The word "minister" comes from the word from which we get our English word "deacon," and it means "a servant, attendant, minister, deacon." (W. E. Vine.) Brethren in our generation are cultivating the bad habit of using this word "minister" to refer to the preacher who serves the church in the capacity of a preacher and teacher from house to house. He is certainly a minister of the congregation because he serves the congregation in this capacity, but it is a mistake to refer to him as "the

minister" of the church as distinguished from others who serve the congregation.

## 2. What a good minister will do.

(a) Study. Paul continues in the same verse as our text to say that this good minister is "nourished in the words of the faith." One cannot be nourished in the words of the faith without studying; hence, Paul continues to tell Timothy to "give heed to reading . . . take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4: 13-16.) The one who would thus serve the congregation as a teacher must spend much time in study, (b) Teach. If the man who serves the congregation as its teacher is going to "lay down principles" for the learning and practice of the brethren, he must needs be a good teacher. He must be one who is apt to teach, (c) Exercise himself unto godliness. Paul continues in this same context to tell Timothy that bodily exercise

is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, and exhorts him to "exercise thyself to godliness."

3. **What a good minister will not do.** (a) Exercise himself in worldliness. The man who teaches a congregation must set a good example; otherwise he will be as "sounding brass and clanging symbol." (1 Cor. 13: 1.) (b) Receive profane and old wives' fables. Paul cautions Timothy that he is to be nourished in the words of the faith and of good doctrine, and to "refuse profane and old wives' fables." (1 Tim. 4: 7.) (c) Compromise truth for advantage. A good minister never compromises the truth for any cause. There is the temptation with some to compromise truth for sake of social advantage. Others are tempted to compromise the truth for sake of financial advantage, while others may be tempted to compromise the truth to hold their jobs. But the good minister never compromises the truth for personal advantage of any kind.

## Introduction

Paul had a number of good men associated with him from time to time in gospel work. Very likely they were associated with him for the purpose of studying under him. Especially is that true of the younger men. Among those men associated with Paul who are best known are Barnabas, Mark, Timothy, Titus, Silas, and Luke. Then among those not so well known are Tychicus, Trophimus, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Erastus, Gaius, Demas, and Aquila. Then there are a number of women who are spoken of as being his fellow-workers. Priscilla would deserve first mention perhaps, and then at Philippi there were Euodia and Syntyche who are spoken of as laboring with him in the gospel. (Phil. 4: 2, 3.) Then in Rom. 16: 3ff. there are a number of names,

both of men and women, who were associated with Paul from time to time in one way or another. Among them are some women—Tryphaena and Tryphosa, and Persis who is said to "have labored much in the Lord." There are also a number of people mentioned in this passage whom Paul calls his kinsmen as well as his fellow prisoners. It must have been a wonderful thing to have the privilege of associating with the apostle Paul. The next best thing is to read and study constantly his writings. We may not have the privilege of personal association with Paul, but we can certainly enjoy the privilege of reading his writings. To fail to do so is to show a lack of appreciation for a great man and an inspired teacher of God's word.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Tychicus, The Beloved and Faithful (Eph. 6: 21, 22)

*That ye also may know of my affairs.* Paul had mentioned the fact that he was in prison, and this would cause the brethren at Ephesus to desire to know of his welfare. Hence,

Paul takes measures to see that they

have the information which they would desire.

*The beloved brother.* Paul speaks of Tychicus as the beloved brother. Undoubtedly, Tychicus had endeared himself to Paul in many ways by the service which he rendered to Paul and by the faithful sacrificial



service which he had rendered to the Lord. From Paul's attitude toward Mark when that young man turned back and refused to go on the field of work, we know that Paul would not speak of Tychicus as "the beloved brother" unless Tychicus had proved himself worthy of Paul's love and confidence. So, this term of endearment is an indication of the character of Tychicus.

**And faithful minister in the Lord.** Tychicus was not only a brother beloved to Paul, but he was recognized by this old soldier of the cross as a faithful minister (servant) of the Lord. As indicated in the treatment of the Golden Text, a good minister is one who studies the word of God, who teaches that word faithfully without compromise, and who exercises himself continually unto godliness. Since Paul calls Tychicus a faithful minister, we gather that Tychicus busied himself in studying, teaching, and exercising himself unto godliness.

**Whom I have sent unto you.** Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus that the brethren in Ephesus might know of his welfare. From Acts 20: 4 we learn that Tychicus was a native of Asia. Ephesus being the principal city of Asia, we conclude that Paul was sending Tychicus from Rome back to his home province among his own countrymen to bear a letter of instruction as well as a personal message of the welfare of the writer of that letter. In the case of Epaphroditus we have proof that he was sent by the church at Philippi to Rome with money and provisions for Paul, and was sent back to Philippi with a letter and a personal message of Paul's welfare. However, we do not have in the case of Tychicus proof that the church at Ephesus sent him as messenger to visit Paul in the prison at Rome.

**For this very purpose.** Though Paul uses the word "purpose" in the singular, he actually mentions two separate purposes for sending Tychicus to Ephesus. (1) That the church at Ephesus might know Paul's state. They were interested in his welfare and would be happy to know that he was permitted to dwell in his own hired house during at least two years of the time he was in prison at Rome. (Acts 28: 30.) (2) The second purpose for which Paul sent

Tychicus was that he might comfort the hearts of the brethren at Ephesus. Bringing a message of Paul's welfare would be a comfort to the brethren. This may have included Paul's opinion that the charges against him were not sufficient to cause him to be put to death in this first imprisonment, and this would bring comfort to the hearts of the brethren at Ephesus. And Paul would want them to know that his imprisonment was not a hindrance to the spread of the gospel, but that in reality it was serving to speed up the spread of the gospel as he wrote the church at Philippi. (Phil. 1: 12ff.)

## II. Tychicus, a Fellow-Servant (Col. 4: 7-9)

**All my affairs.** Where Paul told the Ephesians that Tychicus would make known his state, he tells the Colossian church that Tychicus would make known all his affairs. This is simply to say that Tychicus was the bearer of a message concerning Paul's personal welfare in order that he might bring comfort to the brethren not only at Ephesus, but also at Colossae. And incidentally, we find that Tychicus was not only to bear the letter to the Ephesians and give them a personal message from Paul, but he was also to bear the letter along with Onesimus to the church at Colossae, and to take to them a personal message for the apostle. Since both Ephesus and Colossae are places in Asia, these letters could be borne by the same messengers and it would not be impossible for these messengers to deliver personal messages for the apostle in person.

**And fellow-servant in the Lord.** Whereas Paul simply referred to Tychicus as "the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord" when he wrote to the Ephesians, we find him saying not only that he is a beloved brother and faithful minister, but that he was also a fellow-servant in the Lord. There is a noticeable note of humility here in Paul's language. Undoubtedly Tychicus as well as Timothy, Titus, and others, was younger than Paul and considered himself a student or disciple of the great apostle. Yet, Paul speaks of him as a fellow-servant. The term "fellow" would suggest equality. Paul looked upon these

young men as his equals in reference to their work for the Lord. Undoubtedly Paul recognized his superior authority as an apostle and perhaps his experience enabled him to think of himself as a more efficient teacher and preacher of the gospel, but in spite of his superior authority and his longer experience and his greater wisdom, he still was humble enough to refer to these younger men as his fellow-servants. One time John Mark is referred to as an "attendant" to Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 13: 5.) Preachers would do well to follow the example of Paul when speaking of those associated with them in gospel work and refer to them as their "fellow-servants in the Lord" rather than as their "assistant ministers."

**Together with Onesimus.** Onesimus was the slave who ran away from Philemon and found Paul in Home. Paul converted him and sent him back to Philemon. Onesimus was to accompany Tychicus on the journey from Rome to Asia. Whether Tychicus was entrusted with the deliverance of Onesimus has been argued, but there is no foundation in Paul's writing for the idea that Tychicus had any authority whatsoever over Onesimus on the return trip.

**The faithful and beloved brother.** Paul refers to Onesimus as both faithful and beloved, and when he wrote the former master of Onesimus Paul said that he was "no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." (Phile. 16.)

### III. Tychicus, Paul's Messenger (2

Tim. 4: 12; Tit. 3: 12)

**Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.** The first mention we have of Tychicus in the New Testament is in Acts 20:

4. Here he is mentioned along with a number of others as being associated with Paul on the trip from Macedonia to Jerusalem. Many scholars think that Tychicus was the third person in the group sent by Paul to the church in Corinth to

make up beforehand their afore-promised bounty. In 2 Cor. 8: 23 Titus is mentioned as being the leading person in that group, and in addition to Titus, "our brethren" are mentioned as messengers of the churches. Tychicus and Trophimus are usually considered most likely to be the two who accompanied Titus on that mission. Whether Tychicus accompanied Paul and his company on to Jerusalem is not known, but Trophimus did accompany him there and was seen with him on the streets, and the Jews who were Paul's enemies supposed Paul had taken Trophimus into the temple. (Acts 21: 29.) We hear next of Tychicus when he is being sent with Onesimus from Rome to Asia bearing the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. There is good reason to believe that Paul was set free, and that perhaps he made his desired trip to Spain and came back through the Mediterranean visiting Crete and Ephesus. But he was soon imprisoned again, and we find Tychicus with him in Rome during this second imprisonment. In fact, this verse of our text suggests that Paul had just sent Tychicus from Rome to Ephesus. The second letter to Timothy was written during Paul's second imprisonment, and from that imprisonment Paul said he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

**When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus.** This is the only mention of Artemas in the New Testament. From this we know that Paul was considering sending Artemas to Crete to be with Titus, but the reason for sending him is unknown. Furthermore, we know that this letter to Titus was written before Second Timothy. Here Paul says he is considering sending either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete, but in our text of 2 Tim. 4: 12 we learn that Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus. We may safely conclude that he must have sent Artemas to assist Titus in Crete. Paul's sending these men to these various places has given rise to arguments over episcopal authority, but space does not allow either the statement or refutation of these false doctrines.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Paul loved men whether saved or lost, but he had an unusually great love for those young men who

labored with him in the gospel.

2. Paul's humility is seen in his consideration of the standing of these

helpers in this work. He did not look upon them merely as assistants or his personal servants, but he considered them to be his fellow-laborers in the gospel.

3. Paul's concern for the churches

is seen in his sending men to teach them until they were able to develop local men who were able to carry on the work of teaching and training others.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

Who are the brethren in this text?

What is meant by putting brethren in mind of certain things?

What is the meaning of the word "minister" in this text?

Is it wise to use this word to apply exclusively to the preacher?

What is said of the preacher's need for study?

Can one who is not apt to teach be a good minister?

What is meant by exercising oneself in godliness?

What should be the preacher's attitude toward worldliness?

What should he do with old wives' fables?

What is said of the preacher and compromise?

### Introduction

Why did young men associate themselves with Paul?

Name some of the best known fellow-workers of Paul.

Name some who are not so well known.

How many women can you name who worked with Paul?

Since we cannot be associated with Paul, what is the next best thing?

Tychicus, the Beloved and Faithful

Why did Paul send Tychicus to Ephesus?

What endearing term does Paul use to refer to Tychicus?

What does this indicate with reference to the character of Tychicus?

Since Paul calls Tychicus, "a faithful minister," what does this indicate with reference to the character and work of Tychicus?

What was the home province of Tychicus?

Discuss the two purposes for which Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

Tychicus, a Fellow-Servant

Of what other letter was Tychicus the bearer?

What new term does Paul use in this text to refer to Tychicus?

Can you show how this term shows Paul's humility?

To whom does Paul set a good example in this matter?

Who accompanied Tychicus on the journey back to Asia?

What terms does Paul use when referring to this former slave?

Tychicus, Paul's Messenger

Where is Tychicus first mentioned in the New Testament?

On what mission was Tychicus probably sent with Titus?

What two men did Paul have in mind from whom to choose a helper of Titus in Crete?

Where was Tychicus sent at this time?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XI—March 17, 1957

### DEMAS

#### Lesson Text

Col. 4: 12-14; Phile. 23, 24; 2 Tim. 4: 9, 10

12 Ep'-a-phras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Je'-sus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in La-od-i-ce'-a, and for them in Hi-e-rap'-o-lis.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and De'-mas salute you.

23 Ep'-a-phras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Je'-sus, saluteth thee;

24 And so do Mark, Ar-is-tar-chus, De'-mas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

9 Give diligence to come shortly unto me:

10 For De'-mas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thes-sa-lo-ni-ca; Cres'-cens to Ga-la'-ti-a, Ti'-tus to Dal-ma'-ti-a.

Golden Text.—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 4: 10-17.

## Daily Bible Readings

March 11. M.....	The Passing World (1 John 2: 16, 17)
March 12. T.....	Come Out from the World (2 Cor. 6: 14-18)
March 13. W.....	Love of World Enmity Toward God (James 4: 1-10)
March 14. T.....	Wisdom of the World (1 Cor. 1: 18-25)
March 15. F.....	Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5: 19-21)
March 16. S.....	This World Shall End (2 Pet. 3: 8-13)
March 17. S.....	Works of Devil Destroyed (1 John 3: 8-10)

TIME.—For Colossians and Philemon, A. D. 63; for Second Timothy, A. D.

68.

PLACE.—Home.

PERSONS.—Paul and Demas.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Love not the world,** (a) What the world is not. The Greek word in our text which is translated by our word "world" is *kosmos*. A number of English words are used to translate this one Greek word, and the things suggested by these various translations will suggest a number of things which were not in the mind of the Holy Spirit when he directed John to tell us that **we** should not love the world. Thayer tells us that the first meaning of this Greek word is "an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order." Certainly we are not forbidden to love an apt and harmonious arrangement of things. We are not forbidden to love good order. In the next, place, we are told that this word means "ornament, decoration, adornment." The Greek word is translated by our word adornment in

1 Pet. 3: 3. There is no sin in being interested in adorning our bodies. One might go to the extreme and thus sin, but taking care for good order and arrangement of one's clothes so as to adorn oneself attractively is not in itself sinful. In the next place, the word means "the universe." Certainly the Lord does not intend to tell us that we should not love the universe, or that it would be sinful in us to love the universe. Next, the word is used to mean "the earth." There is certainly no sin in loving the earth on which we live and from which we derive much of our food. And next, the word is sometimes used to mean "the inhabitants of the world." When we are told that God so loved the world, we are to understand that it was not the earth which he loved, nor the universe, but the inhabitants of the world. Certainly John does not mean to teach us that it is sinful for us to love the inhabitants of the world.

And next, the word is used to mean "the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ." Jesus said the world hated him. (John 7: 7.) And yet Jesus loved the world, the mass of ungodly people who hated him and destroyed him. It is not therefore sinful for us to love the world in the sense of the multitude of ungodly people, (b) What the world is. The next definition given by Thayer for the Greek word *kosmos* is that which the Holy Spirit forbids us to love. It is "worldly affairs; the aggregate of earthly things; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which, although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God, and are obstacles to the cause of Christ." This is the world which John tells us we must not love; this is the world which if a man love, the love of the Father is not in him. (c) Things in the world. For an explanation of the things that are in the world which we are forbidden to love, the reader should read verse 16 where John says, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The things that appeal to the flesh and the things that through the eyes may seduce one from God and the things that appeal to our pride are those things in the world which we are forbidden to love.

2. **Why not love the world,** (a)

Excludes the love of God. Our text tells us that if a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. This is simply to say that one cannot love the world and God at the same time. Jesus made a similar statement when he said, "Ye cannot

serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6: 24b.) (b) Makes one incapable of loving God. The object of one's love has an effect on his character. A man who loves evil will have an evil character, and so one who loves the world which is evil, which is opposite in its nature to God, is like the world and therefore unable to love and appreciate that which is like God. (c) The world is unworthy of our love. John tells us, "The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof." (1 John 2: 17.) Since the world is unlike God in its nature, and is to pass away with all other things temporal, it is not worthy of our love, especially when we have the opportunity to love God and things heavenly and eternal.

3. Examples, (a) Balaam. This man is a good example of one who loved the world and the things of the world. Peter tells us that he "loved the hire of wrongdoing." (2 Pet. 2: 15b.) He loved money so much that he would have been willing to bring a great curse upon the people of Israel. It is true that the people of Israel had never done him any wrong; he had no hatred for them. Yet his great love for money would have made him willing to bring a curse upon them in order that he might satisfy his desire for wealth, (b) Felix. Felix was also a lover of

money, for he kept Paul in prison thinking that he would be able to get a bribe from Paul to secure his freedom. (Acts 24: 26, 27.) But Felix is also an example of one who loved other things of the world. He loved honor and fame and position and sinful indulgence in the lusts of his flesh. When Paul reasoned with him of righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified but was not willing to give up these things of the world which he loved and enjoyed so much. He was willing to go on in the enjoyment of these things and hope for a convenient season to lay them aside and exercise the self-control that Paul suggested and live righteously in view of the coming judgment, (c) Diotrephes. So far as we know, this man was not a lover of money, nor did he indulge excessively in the lusts of the flesh, but he loved to have the preeminence among church members. (3 John 9.) His love of preeminence caused him to say things he should not have said and to have an attitude toward brethren which he should not have had. (3 John 10.) Those who love preeminence, who think too highly of themselves, and expect other people to think as highly of them are not able to treat others better than themselves as Paul tells us Christians should do.

## Introduction

In this quarter we are studying some minor characters of the New Testament. Sometimes people are minor characters because they have little ability; others are minor characters because their opportunities in life are limited by their environment. Then there are others who are minor characters, not because they do not have ability to be great characters in the service of God, but because they are too lazy and indifferent to the real values of life to put forth the effort to become important characters in their environment. Some men have had to be content with the role of a minor character, not because of the lack of ability on their part, but because of a lack of wisdom. Somewhere in life they made one fatal mis-step which made it impossible for them ever to regain the confidence of people sufficiently to become a major influence in the lives of many people. But we can hardly

class Demas in either of these groups of men. It is true that he made a mis-step, but it was not that type which happens in a moment of time and is of such nature that it cannot be corrected. Demas made a wrong decision and was content to abide by that decision. If it had been due to a moment's wrong thinking, he could have reversed his decision, and this fatal line would never have been penned by the apostle Paul. But Demas made his decision and manifested his choice of the world to that of the spiritual things of life, and so far as we know, he stayed with that decision. His act is all the more reprehensible because it was not due to the heat of passion, nor was it of such nature that it could not have been changed had he so desired. But his act was the more reprehensible because his course in life could have been changed, and he refused to do it.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Demas, the Fellow-Worker (Col.

4: 12-14; Phile. 23, 24)

*Epaphras, who is one of you.* Our text seems to help us to appreciate Demas by associating him with other fellow-laborers of Paul. Epaphras was a member of the church at Colossae as is indicated by the phrase "who is one of you." Furthermore, Paul speaks of him as a "servant of Christ Jesus" and commends him for the fact that he "always strives for you in his prayers."

*Luke, the beloved physician.* Here is another one of Paul's fellow-workers in the gospel, and one who was faithful to Paul until the very end of life. He is the man who must have simply closed his office door and left his practice in Troas to go with Paul into Macedonia in answer to the call of the man who said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

*And Demas salute you.* Here the character of our lesson is introduced along with Epaphras and Luke, the beloved physician. At this time Demas was a faithful and loyal helper of the apostle Paul. There is no indication that he had any less ability than either Epaphras or Luke. Certainly there is no indication that he was any less loyal, faithful, and zealous than these two characters. This only goes to show that an individual may make a zealous start only to be tempted and to fall from the path of duty and of holiness and to become so involved and entangled in the world and the affairs of the world that he is willing to forsake the Lord and his post of duty.

*So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.* Here in Paul's letter to Philemon are named a number of other fellow-workers of the apostle Paul. Among them are Mark and Aristarchus. Of the latter we know very little, but of Mark we have considerable information. He, too, made a mistake on one occasion when he turned back and refused to go on to the work in the face of dangers and hardships. (Acts 13: 13ff.) There is this much in common between Mark and Demas. Both made a great mistake; neither of them had sufficient justification for their mistake. The apostle Paul blamed Mark for his lack of steadfastness and refused to allow him to go on the second missionary journey on account of

this weakness. But this was not Mark's permanent choice, for he went with Barnabas immediately on a missionary journey. And he did so well that he regained the respect of Paul and Paul acknowledged it by telling Timothy to bring Mark with him because of his usefulness to Paul in ministering. (2 Tim. 4: 11.) We have no indication that Demas ever changed his mind about the things of the world, and tradition tells us that he did not. However, tradition is not sufficiently well founded to attach much importance to it, but we do know that he did not change his course in time to regain the confidence and respect of the apostle Paul.

### II. Demas, the Deserter (2 Tim. 4:

9, 10)

*Demas forsook me.* There has been division of opinion as to what Paul meant by the statement that Demas forsook him. Did Paul mean that Demas apostatized, that he fell from grace? Did he turn back and refuse to live the Christian life any longer? Or did Paul simply mean to say that Demas left him there in prison? Demas was a helper, a fellow-laborer, and he left because the work was hard and dull and dangerous. Mark forsook Paul on the first missionary journey, yet there is no indication that Mark apostatized from the faith. Now does Paul mean to say that Demas left him in the same way in which Mark left him on that first missionary journey? It may not be possible for us to arrive at a sure answer to this question.

*Having loved this present world.* The meaning of this statement which is given as a reason why Demas forsook Paul may help us to arrive at an answer to the question raised above. Adam Clarke gives a rather impossible answer to the question as to what is meant by loving this present world. He says that Demas preferred Judaism to Christianity. His idea is that when Paul uses the term "the world" he refers to the system of religion known as Judaism. And he follows with this remark: "It was now become doubly dangerous to be a Christian; and those who had not religion enough to enable them to burn, or in any other way to expose life for it, took refuge in that religion (Judaism) which was exposed

to no persecution. This is a light in which the conduct of Demas may be viewed." An old commentator by the name of Chrysostom explained this statement by saying Demas "chose to luxuriate at home." And a modern commentator remarks on this that "if that was so, he did only what most Christian people are doing now. He still believed in Jesus as the Savior of sinners, and hoped to be accepted for his sake; he purposed to abstain from the things forbidden by the law; and, this done, he thought himself at liberty to seek and enjoy the full measure of worldly goods which he was able to obtain. In other words, he wished to lead a Christian life, but with the least possible quantity of self-denial. He wished, in the selfish acceptance of the phrase, to make the best of both worlds. His Christian ideal was a negative one, and consisted in not breaking the gospel commandments, rather than in laboriously doing, or being, anything great or good." (T. M. Herbert—Biblical Illustrator.) Another commentator of note says that the Greek in the passage suggests nothing more than the fact that Demas "desired to remain in this world, rather than to go to the other.

... But there is no reason why Demas should be held up as an example of a worldly man. That he desired to live longer; that he was unwilling to remain and risk the loss of life, is indeed clear. That Paul was pained by his departure, and that he felt lonely and sad, is quite apparent; but I see no evidence that Demas was influenced by what is commonly called *worldly* feelings, or that he was led to this course by the desire of wealth, or fame, or pleasure." (Albert Barnes.)

From what the scriptures have to say about Demas, and from the comments of those whom we have cited, there are a number of things which can be said about Demas which may tend to clarify our understanding of this matter, (a) There is no indication that Demas was afraid of work. He was not lazy; there was a time when Paul referred to him as a fellow-worker along with Mark and Luke and others, (b) There is no indication that Demas was incapable of doing the work that needed to be done, or that being incapable he became discouraged and wanted to get into a work that he was more capa-

ble of doing, (c) There is certainly no indication that he was immoral or had any inclinations in that direction. Paul's statement that he "loved this present world" does not by any stretch of the imagination include immorality, at least not necessarily so. (d) Neither is there any indication that Demas was avaricious, or covetous. He was not money mad. There is no indication that he left Paul because he wanted to get himself a good job and make money to provide for his present and future financial welfare. (e) Rather, it seems that Demas loved this life; he loved life in this world; he wanted to continue to live. There was every indication that if he remained with Paul in Rome he would be accused of being a Christian, and would himself also be put to death. Paul was imprisoned this time, not because of the old accusations brought against him back in Judaea by the Jews who were his enemies when he was in prison in Caesarea. Paul was in prison this second time simply and solely because he was a Christian; he was a member of a religious order which was not registered with the emperor, and therefore was guilty of practicing an illegal religion. Demas was in the same classification; he was also an illegal religionist, and he was as worthy of death for this violation of the law of the emperor as was Paul. Consequently, his desire to live and to escape death led him to desert Paul in the hour of need that he might go where the danger would be less. Now the question arises, does this love of life and the desertion of his post of duty in the time of Paul's need constitute apostasy? Does this love of the world in the sense that he wished to continue to live in this world constitute a denial of Christ and a departure from the fellowship of Christ to such an extent that Demas was lost? Only God is able to judge in this matter. There is not sufficient scriptural ground for us to be sure that this action on the part of Demas constituted an apostasy from Christ so as to cause him to be lost. Nor would this writer affirm that Demas did no wrong, nor would he affirm that leaving Paul because of his love for this present world was not a sin such as to cause him to be lost. We simply do not have sufficient knowledge to judge whether he was lost or not.

## Lessons to Learn

1. The world has a powerful influence upon all of us. We should, therefore, pray to be delivered from all its seducing influences.

2. No man is able to live a holy life by his own wisdom and strength. All must be guided by the word of

God and must depend on strength from God even to do that.

3. Worldliness comes to us in so many different forms and some of them so seemingly innocent that we must be on our guard and pray for wisdom to cope with the enemy.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

What does our text not forbid us to love?

Define and discuss the word "world" as used in our text.

What are the things in the world mentioned in our text?

Why does the love of the world exclude the love of God from our hearts?

Why does the love of the world make one incapable of loving God?

Why is the world unworthy of our love?

In what way did Balaam love the world?

On what part of the world did Felix place his affection?

How did Diotrephes violate this commandment in our text?

### Introduction

Name and discuss at least three things which make minor characters of people.

Why is Demas classed as a minor character?

What makes the choice of Demas reprehensible?

### Demas, the Fellow-Worker

What is said in our text about Epaphras?

What does our text tell us about Luke?

What does the association of Demas with these characters lead us to think of him?

What do Mark and Demas have in common?

Why do we respect Mark more than we do Demas?

### Demas, the Deserter

What do you think of the comments of Clarke and Herbert on this part of our text?

What do you know of the willingness of Demas to work?

What is said of the ability of Demas to do his work?

Is there any indication that Demas was inclined to immorality?

Do you think Demas was a lover of money?

Do you think Demas left Paul that he might indulge in any lusts of the flesh?

To what danger was Demas exposed as long as he continued to stay with Paul?

What, then, is the meaning of "having loved this present world"?

Do you have sufficient evidence to judge whether Demas was lost for this choice?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XII—March 24, 1957

## ONESIMUS

### Lesson Text

Phile. 8-20

8 Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Je'sus:

10 I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, O-nes'-i-mus,

11 Who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart:

13 Whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14 But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will.

15 For perhaps he was therefore parted *from thee* for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever;

16 No longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself.

18 But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth *thee* aught, put that to mine account;

19 I Paul write it with mine own



hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say”* (Phile. 21.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phile. 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

- March 18. M.....Instructions to Servants (Eph. 6: 5-7)
- March 19. T.....Instructions to Masters (Eph. 6: 9; Col. 4: 1)
- March 20. W.....Servants to Be in Subjection (1 Pet. 2: 18-25)
- March 21. T.....Suffering for Righteousness' Sake (1 Pet. 3: 13-17)
- March 22. F.....Subjection to Ordinances of Man (1 Pet. 2: 13-17)
- March 23. S.....Hope Set on Future (1 Pet. 1: 13-23)
- March 24. S.....Ready unto Every Good Work (Tit. 3: 1-8)

TIME.—A. D. 63.  
PLACE.—Colossae and Rome.  
PERSONS.—Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus.

Golden Text Explained

1. **Paul's attitude,** (a) Confidence in a brother. Paul expressed great confidence in Philemon's willingness to do the right thing. This was a wise approach for one who expected to make a difficult request of the man to whom he was writing. If Paul had approached Philemon in the attitude of one who doubted Philemon's willingness to do the right thing, he likely would not have succeeded in gaining that which he requested. But we must not think that this approach on the part of the apostle Paul was merely good policy. Undoubtedly Paul spoke the feelings of his heart when he said he was confident that Philemon would do what Paul was requesting and even more than that. Since Philemon lived at Colossae, some have wondered how Paul had such a knowledge of him as would permit him to exercise this much confidence in him, but we must remember that Paul stayed in Ephesus which was not far from Colossae for more than two years, and that during that time all Asia heard the word. (Acts 19: 10.) So it is easy to conclude that while Paul was at Ephesus he visited in Colossae and had sufficient association with Philemon to know how this brother would respond to such a request as he was about to make, (b) Expecting the best of others. People who expect little or nothing of others and allow their expectations to be known usually get just about what they expect from them. If we expect good of others, they are more likely to do good than they would

be if we suggest to them that we expect evil of them. An old commentator once said, "He that judgeth lewdly of another by mere suspicion or supposition is commonly lewd himself, for such as are wicked do think others as wicked as themselves; and such that are hypocrites themselves are most forward to tax others of hypocrisy. Seeing therefore to be charitably minded is both a property of love and a fruit of righteousness, it followeth that we ought to hope the best of all our brethren." (c) Flowers for the living. All of us prefer to have our flowers while we are living rather than get them after we are dead. And Paul gives Philemon flowers in this text while he lived. He expresses his confidence in Philemon's willingness to do right and even beyond that which might justly be expected of him.

2. **Philemon's attitude,** (a) Obedient. Paul expresses his confidence in Philemon's obedience, and we may be sure that Philemon measured up to Paul's expectations. That being true, we may conclude that Philemon was obedient to the wish of Paul, (b) Respectful of his spiritual adviser. From one statement in our lesson text which we shall later study, we conclude that Paul converted Philemon. This being true, Philemon was Paul's son in the gospel. Being his father in the gospel, Paul felt that he had a right to expect Philemon to give a measure of respectful consideration for the things which he had to say, and from the context we judge that Philemon did have

great respect for Paul and for his advice and that he granted the request which Paul made of him on this occasion, (c) Willing to go the second mile. Jesus taught what has been called the doctrine of the second mile in Matt. 5: 38-42. The reader will do well to turn and read that paragraph of the sermon on the mount. Philemon was asked by Paul to go the second mile with his slave, Onesimus. Not only was Philemon requested to allow Onesimus to come back to him, but he was asked to receive him not simply as a slave but as a brother beloved in the Lord. Receiving Onesimus back without punishment would certainly have been going the first mile with him, but receiving him back as a brother in Christ and giving him such concessions and considerations as that relationship demanded would be going the second mile with an unprofitable servant.

### 3. How Onesimus was affected,

(a) Paul's interest in him. We cannot be sure when Paul became acquainted with Onesimus. There is some probability that he was in the home of Philemon at Colossae and that Onesimus observed Paul and may have had some conversation with him in the home. At least this is suggested in the fact that when Onesimus ran away from Philemon he found Paul in prison at Home. He would hardly have found Paul had he not been looking for him, and he

would certainly not have looked for Paul if he had not known something of Paul. So Paul's interest in a slave made it possible for him to have the opportunity of converting that slave to Christ, (b) Good qualities suggested. There are some good qualities in Onesimus implied in the lesson for today. He appreciated Paul and wanted to learn from him that which Paul could teach. Another quality was that Paul had confidence in the honesty and integrity of Onesimus. He believed that Onesimus would keep his word to return from Rome to Colossae to the service of Philemon. There would be many opportunities for one to change his mind and go to some other place rather than go all the way from Rome back to Colossae. But the fact that Paul had confidence in Onesimus to return to Philemon suggests that this slave was worthy of this confidence, (c) Obligated to Philemon. Undoubtedly Paul taught Onesimus that he was obligated to Philemon. There had been some wrong done, and Onesimus was obligated to make right this wrong which he had done Philemon. And we are safe in concluding that Paul taught Philemon to be in subjection to Onesimus provided that Onesimus' refused to grant Paul's request to set him free. Paul did not forbid Christians owning and working slaves; he did teach them to regard them as brethren in the Lord and to be kind and considerate of them.

## Introduction

"This epistle has one peculiar feature—its *aesthetical character*—which distinguishes it from all the other epistles. It has been admired deservedly as a model of delicacy and skill in the department of composition to which it belongs. The writer had peculiar difficulties to overcome. He was the common friend of the parties at variance. He must conciliate a man who supposed that he had good reason to be offended. He must command the offender, and yet neither deny nor aggravate the imputed fault. He must assert the new ideas of Christian equality in the face of a system which hardly recognized the humanity of the enslaved. He could have placed the question on the ground of his own personal rights,

and yet must waive them in order to secure an act of spontaneous kindness. His success must be a triumph of love, and nothing be demanded for the sake of the justice which could have acclaimed everything. He limits his request to a forgiveness of the alleged wrong, and a restoration to favor and the enjoyment of future sympathy and affection, and yet would so guard his words as to leave scope for all the generosity which benevolence might prompt towards one whose condition admitted of so much alleviation. These are contraries not easy to harmonize; but Paul, it is confessed, has shown a degree of self-denial and a tact in dealing with them, which in being equal to the occasion could hardly be greater." (H. B. Hackett.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Paul Pleads for a Slave (Phile.

8-11)

*Though I have all boldness in Christ.* Paul's use of the phrase "in Christ" here has the same meaning that the phrase "speaking in the Spirit" has in 1 Cor. 12: 3. It means to speak as moved by Christ, or to speak by the authority of Christ. So Paul reminds Philemon that he is perfectly free to use his authority as an apostle of Christ to command (enjoin) that Philemon set Onesimus free, or at least receive Philemon back and treat him as a beloved brother in Christ. Such action Paul speaks of as "that which is befitting."

*Yet for love's sake I rather beseech.* Paul preferred that the response of Philemon should be on the basis of personal attachment and affection rather than on the basis of authority. All three of the men involved—Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus—would profit by this response being on the basis of love rather than on the basis of authority. Paul would have added proof of the great love that Philemon had for him. Philemon would have the opportunity of exercising his own will in the matter rather than being driven to do something by the authority of Christ exercised through the apostle. And Onesimus could feel more secure in his new relationship with Philemon if the latter's response was on the basis of love rather than on the basis of authority.

### *Paul the aged, and now a prisoner.*

Paul bases his appeal for this personal response on two things. (1) His age. It is impossible to know Paul's age at the time of the writing of this letter, but he views himself as an old man and makes a request on the ground of his age. "The argument here is, that we feel that it is proper, so far as we can, to grant the request of an old man. Paul thus felt that it was reasonable to suppose that Philemon would not refuse to gratify the wishes of an aged servant of Christ, who had spent the vigor of his life in the service of their common Master. It should be a very strong case when we refuse to gratify the wishes of an aged Christian in anything, especially if he has rendered important services to the church and the world." (Barnes.) (2) A prisoner in the behalf of

Christ. Paul was not a prisoner because of any violation of the law of the land, but he was a prisoner because he believed in Christ and preached the gospel of Christ. Philemon loved Jesus Christ and served him and would therefore be expected to have great respect for a servant of Christ who was in prison for the sake of Christ. So Paul beseeches Philemon on the basis of his suffering for Christ that Philemon do Paul a favor.

*I beseech thee for my child.* Paul refers to Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, as his own child. Of course, he means his child, or son, in the gospel, for immediately Paul says, "I have begotten in my bonds." This lets us know that Onesimus was not a Christian when he left Philemon. •This also indicates that Paul converted Onesimus when the slave reached Rome. If the reader will try to put himself in the place of Philemon and read this letter as Philemon must have read it, Paul's approach to this delicate subject of receiving Onesimus back will appear to advantage. In the first place, Paul lets Philemon know that he regards Onesimus as his child. Next, he is to be regarded as the child of Paul's old age. And third, Onesimus is to be regarded as Paul's prison-born child. The fact that Paul mentions his age and the fact that Onesimus had been converted, and that he sustained the relationship of a son to a father with Paul, and that he was the fruit of Paul's prison labors are calculated to move Philemon to read the name Onesimus with more consideration. It has been pointed out by Greek students that the name "Onesimus" is reserved for the last word in this verse so that Philemon will be prepared by these considerations to read that name with more understanding and sympathy.

*Who once was unprofitable to thee.* After mentioning the things which could be set down to the credit of Onesimus, Paul mentions the thing that was to his disadvantage. Onesimus had been unprofitable to Philemon. Perhaps there had been a period before his escape from Philemon when he was not a satisfied and thus not a profitable servant. But certainly since the time he left Philemon until the time he returned

he had been unprofitable to Philemon. But now conditions have been reversed. Instead of his being unprofitable to Philemon, he is profitable both to Philemon and Paul. Becoming a Christian had made Onesimus profitable to both of them. Becoming a Christian does things for all of us. It changes the unprofitable to the profitable character; it changes the useless into useful characters.

## II. An Unprofitable Slave Becomes a Brother Beloved (Phile. 12-16)

*Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person.* Paul speaks of sending Onesimus back to Philemon in person and speaks also of this being equal to sending Paul's heart to Philemon. Paul refers to Onesimus as "my very heart." This simply means that Paul wanted Philemon to know how dearly he loved Onesimus. Onesimus was the dearest object of Paul's affections. This was said in order to insure Philemon's affectionate response toward Onesimus. It indicates that Paul expected Philemon to accept Onesimus as he would accept Paul.

*Whom I would fain have kept me.* Paul says that he would gladly have kept Onesimus with him in Home. As Onesimus had been profitable to Philemon at one time, so he would have been profitable to Paul. He would have been a good minister or servant to Paul while he was in prison. And next, Paul suggests that by keeping Onesimus with him, Philemon could in the person of his slave, render a service to Paul. Paul felt free in saying that he was sure Philemon would be glad to render such a service in person and therefore, felt that he would be as willing to render that service in the person of his slave.

*But without thy mind I would do nothing.* Paul says that without the consent of Philemon he would not dare keep his slave, though he could well use his services. This is an expression of affectionate consideration for the rights and welfare of Philemon. This is expected to cultivate the further good will and affection of Philemon to such an extent that he will the more easily and gladly acquiesce to Paul's pressure and grant the request that he is making in behalf of Onesimus. As reasons why Paul would not keep

Onesimus without Philemon's consent, one source gives the following.

(1) Because grave penalties were denounced by Roman law upon those who received or retained fugitive slaves. (2) That he might not seem to keep back something which was due to Philemon, perhaps to his injury. (3) Because Onesimus himself chose to go back so that he might show conclusively that he had not embraced the Christian religion that he might withdraw himself from the power of his lawful master. (4) That the gospel might not be by this means slandered as if under the pretext of it slaves might withdraw themselves with impunity from their masters. (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season.* Paul suggests that it is possible that Onesimus was parted from Philemon in order that he might be saved. This indicates that Paul believed in the providence of God. He suggests that it was in God's providence that Onesimus ran away, and that his running away from Philemon was that which made it possible for him to be converted by the apostle Paul. The word "perhaps" suggests that Paul was not sure in his own mind whether Onesimus left Philemon in the providence of God, or whether God's providence had nothing to do with his leaving. We learn from this that it is possible for the providence of God to cause a slave to leave his master and come in contact with a gospel teacher who could convert him. We also learn that Paul's inspiration did not settle this question in his own mind.

*More than a servant, a brother beloved.* Onesimus left Philemon as a servant and nothing more, but Onesimus was returning to Philemon as a servant and something infinitely more—a beloved brother in Christ. From this statement it would be obvious to Philemon that Paul expected him to treat Onesimus differently than he formerly treated him. While Onesimus was nothing more than a slave, he deserved no better treatment than a slave. But since he is infinitely more than a slave now, he deserves much better treatment than a slave would receive. In the flesh Onesimus was still a slave, but in the Lord he was a brother. And since our treatment of a brother of

the Lord is counted as our treatment of the Lord himself, Philemon is faced with the problem as to whether he would hold the Lord in slavery or whether he would release him. If he would hold the Lord in slavery, then he would be consistent to hold Onesimus as a slave; but if he should find himself in possession of the Lord as a slave, and would immediately free him, then he was obligated to free Onesimus.

### III. Philemon's Debt to Paul (Phile.

17-20)

*If then thou countest me a partner.* Paul tells Philemon that if he views Paul as a partner, he should view Onesimus as his partner. This indicates that Paul expects Philemon to treat Onesimus as he would treat the apostle. If Philemon would bold Paul as a slave, then he could consistently hold Onesimus as nothing more than a slave. But if Philemon would not hold his father in the gospel as a slave, he could not any longer be consistent to hold Onesimus as a slave and treat him as that and that alone.

*If he hath wronged thee at all.* Some have conjectured that Onesimus stole money from Philemon, but there is no basis for this conjecture. The fact that Onesimus had left Philemon and had been some time out of service would be sufficient to

justify Paul in saying that he had wronged Philemon.

*Put that to mine account.* Paul is saying that he loves Onesimus so much that he is willing to pay whatever damages his lack of service has occasioned. He is willing for the wrongs of Onesimus to be charged to his account.

*I will repay it.* Paul is willing to repay Philemon for all the damages that Onesimus has done. Then he continues by suggesting that Philemon owes Paul more than he will ever be able to pay, and that regardless of how much Onesimus may owe Philemon, Philemon's debt to Paul is much greater. This is a strong suggestion to Philemon that he should forget the wrongs Onesimus has done in order to show appreciation of what Paul has meant to him.

*Let me have joy of thee in the Lord.* This is Paul's final request with reference to Onesimus. The word "Onesimus" means help or profit, and it is from the same root word which in this verse is translated "joy." This seems to be a play on words as if Paul said, "I would like to keep Onesimus (help, profit) but prefer to send him back to his master in order that his master may give me joy (help, profit) in the knowledge of proper treatment of my son in the gospel."

### Lessons to Learn

1. The gospel is for all—slaves and freeborn, rich and poor, black and white. All are equally entitled to hear the gospel and be saved.

2. Paul followed his Lord in his willingness to teach and love slaves as well as the freeborn, the rich and poor, the famous and those who are

unknown; Paul made no distinctions in his service to humanity.

3. One can never pay his teacher for the knowledge of the truth that brings freedom from sin. No wonder Paul said, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things."

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

Discuss the wisdom of Paul's approach to Philemon.

How do you account for Paul's acquaintance with Philemon at Colossae?

Is it true that one's character may be judged by what he commonly expects of others?

What is usually meant by the expression "flowers for the living"?

What qualities of Philemon's character are suggested by our text?

What is meant by going the second mile with others?

How can you account for the fact that Onesimus located Paul in Rome?

What good qualities in the character of Onesimus are suggested by our text?

What do you learn from our text about Paul's position on the subject of slavery?

#### Introduction

For what has the epistle of Philemon been admired by literary critics?

What delicate problem does Paul have in composing this epistle?

Could he have succeeded so admirably without inspiration?

To what does Paul limit his request? but leaves room for what?

### Paul Pleads for a Slave

What is the meaning of the phrase "in Christ"?

What did Paul have authority to command of Philemon?

Can you show how Paul, Philemon and Onesimus would each benefit if Philemon responded for love's sake rather than in compliance to an apostolic demand?

On what two things does Paul base his appeal to Philemon?

Can you prove that Paul converted Onesimus while in prison?

What facts are mentioned by Paul to bring pressure on Philemon to grant his request?

In what way was Onesimus unprofitable to Philemon?

What change did becoming a Christian make in the relation of Onesimus to Philemon?

### An Unprofitable Slave Becomes a Brother Beloved

How does Paul express his affection for Onesimus?

### Why did Paul wish to keep Onesimus with

How does Paul express his affectionate consideration for Philemon's rights?

Discuss four reasons why Paul would not keep Onesimus without Philemon's consent.

Can you show that our text implies God's providence over his people?

What grave problem did the conversion of Onesimus place before Philemon?

### Philemon's Debt to Paul

How did Paul imply that Philemon could not consistently hold Onesimus a slave any more than he could hold Paul as a slave?

In what way had Onesimus wronged Philemon?

What did Paul propose to do about that wrong?

How did Paul imply that the debt might be settled?

What was Paul's last request of Philemon? and what did it imply?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XIII—March 31, 1957

### JUDE

#### Lesson Text

#### Jude 1-4, 17-24

1 Jude, a servant of Je'-sus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Je'-sus Christ:

2 Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in privily, *even* they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Je'-sus Christ.

17 But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Je'-sus Christ;

18 That they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Je'-sus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And on some have mercy, who are in doubt;

23 And some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jude 5-16.

### Daily Bible Readings

March 25. M.....Jude, Brother of James (Jude 1, 2)

March 26. T.....James, Brother of the Lord (Gal. 1: 18, 19)

March 27. W.....Brothers of Jesus (Matt. 13: 54-58)

March 28. T..... Brothers Did Not Believe (John 7: 1-9)  
 March 29. F..... Jesus' Brothers Attend a Feast (John 7: 10-13)  
 March 30. S..... A Christian Home (Col. 3: 12-25)  
 March 31. S..... Parents of Jude (Matt. 1: 18-25)

Time.—A. D. 66.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jude and those to whom he addressed his epistle.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Contend.** (a) Meaning of the term. One Greek word here is translated by our words "contend earnestly." Paul uses the same word minus the prepositional prefix in 1 Cor. 9: 25 where it is translated "striveth." The word presents the picture of a man contending or striving earnestly with all his powers to protect and maintain his title to the championship in some athletic sport. Another authority says that the word suggests the picture of a soldier to whom a certain piece of ground has been allotted and he is expected to defend that piece of ground against the use or abuse by an enemy. As the soldier strives earnestly to hold that ground allotted to him, so Jude suggests that we are to contend or strive earnestly to maintain that faith which has been deposited with us. (b) Teach all truth. To contend for the faith means that we are to contend for all of the faith which has been delivered. No one can seriously claim that he has obeyed this commandment who is unwilling to preach all the truth. If there is any one commandment which we do not believe and which we refuse to obey and to teach others to obey, we cannot say that we are contending for the faith. (c) Oppose all error. If we are to contend for the faith, we cannot allow error to creep in and adulterate the deposit of truth which we have. To allow one error to go unexposed and unopposed is to fail in our duty to contend or to strive earnestly for the faith.

2. **The faith,** (a) Meaning of the term. The word "faith" is used in the New Testament to mean different things. Paul tells us, "Faith cometh of hearing." (Rom. 10: 17.) This means that which we believe. Again, Paul tells us, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14: 23b.) Here the word "faith" means persuasion or conviction as to whether a thing is right or wrong. But the word "faith" in our text means nei-

ther of these things. It has the same meaning in our text which it has in Gal. 3: 23ff. There the word faith simply means the gospel, the truth as revealed by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Paul speaks of faith coming, and that since faith has come we are no longer under a tutor. So when Jude tells us to contend earnestly for the faith, he simply means that we are to contend for the truth, or the gospel which has been revealed by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. (b) Revealed after the law. Paul tells us that "before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3: 23, 24.) Here we learn first that this faith is something revealed, and second we learn that it was revealed after the law. This means that the faith was revealed after the law was abrogated or taken away. (Col. 2: 14.) (c) Purpose of the faith. Paul tells us that no one could be justified by the law. (Gal. 3: 11.) And again he teaches us that after the law was taken away, the faith was revealed "that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3: 24b.)

3. **Once for all delivered.** (a) Meaning of the term. The term "once for all" does not mean that the faith was once revealed for all mankind, but rather that the faith was once revealed for all time to come. "The meaning is that the truth is delivered for all time; it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, amended, or modified. As it now stands it is a perfect, adequate, complete, and inviolable deposit of truth, providing the means with which to confute the gainsayer, and resist the advocates of false doctrine. This deposit of truth was infallibly delivered, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1: 11; 2 Pet. 1: 21), and no part of it is superfluous

or unnecessary." (Woods.) (b) No modern revelations. If the faith has been once for all delivered, it follows that modern revelations are religious hoaxes foisted on our generation. The Mormons, Adventists, Christian Scientists, Catholics, and others who claim modern day revelations must either deny the truth of this statement by Jude or cease to advocate the idea that they receive revelations from God. (c) Revelation completed. Paul tells us that every scripture is

inspired of God "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 17.) And Peter tells us that God has "granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Pet. 1: 3b.) And John pronounces a curse on any who will add to this book and says that God will take away from a man his part to the tree of life if he takes anything away from the words of the book of prophecy. (Rev. 22: 18, 19.)

## Introduction

There has never been much doubt as to the genuineness of the epistle of Jude. By "genuineness" we mean that the epistle was written by the man whose name it bears, not by someone assuming his name in order to give his writings apostolic authority. Some recent critics have tried to prove that it was written during the second century to combat some gnostic heresies known to be taught at that time. But the majority of scholars have always agreed that the epistle was written by the man whose name it bears. However, the right of this epistle to a place in the canon of the New Testament has been more difficult to determine. The Syrians translated the Bible in the latter part of the second or first part of the third century, and they did

not include Jude in this translation. Their version is called the Peshito, and is to the Syrians what the King James Version is to the English speaking world. However, this does not prove that the epistle of Jude was not inspired. Another list of books called the Muratorian Canon made in about A. D. 170 contained both the epistles of James and Jude. And such writers as Clement of Alexandria (about A. D. 190), Tertullian of Carthage (about A. D. 200), and Origen (about A. D. 230) all speak of the epistle as having been written by Jude. And Eusebius speaks of the epistle of Jude as being one of the "seven catholic epistles" which were "publicly used in most of the churches."

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jude Warns Against False Teachers (Jude 1-4)

*Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ.* In this first verse we learn three things about the writer and the letter which he wrote. First, we learn that the letter was written by a man named Jude. The next thing we learn is that this man was a bondservant, a slave of Jesus Christ. And the third thing we learn is that he was the brother of James. The writer's name is one common among the Jews. It takes the form either of Jude, Judas, or Judah in the Bible. The James mentioned here is the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1: 19), and who was for so long a prominent leader in the church in Jerusalem. Both James and Jude are mentioned by Matthew as being brethren of the Lord and sons of Mary. (Matt. 13: 54, 55.) Neither James nor Jude refer to themselves as being brothers of the Lord. Each one refers to himself as

"a servant of Jesus Christ." It is generally thought that a sense of humility and an effort to exalt the spiritual relationship above the physical caused them to refrain from referring to their family relationship to Jesus Christ.

To *them that are called . . . beloved . . . and kept.* This epistle is not addressed to any individual or local congregation, but is a general epistle to be read by all alike. However, it is generally supposed that Jude had in mind Jewish Christians when he wrote. He addresses himself to the called. We are said to have been "called through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 14.) And Paul reminds Timothy that it was God "who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." (2 Tim. 1: 9.) But those who have



responded to God's call are loved of God, and Paul speaks of us as "beloved children." (Eph. 5: 1.) And John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God." (1 John 3: 1.) And the third thing Jude says about those to whom he writes is that they are kept for Jesus Christ. This reminds us of Peter's statement that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet. 1: 4, 5.)

To *write unto you of our common salvation*. Jude says that he was diligent to write concerning a salvation that was common to all. The word "common" is from a word which means that which belongs to several, or that which is in contrast to one's own, that which belongs to the generality as distinct from what is peculiar to a few. Hence, we see that the salvation which we have in Christ is not peculiar either to Jews or Gentiles, nor is it peculiar to any one race or color, but it is common to all regardless of race, color, distinction by wealth or social or political prominence.

*Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith*. Jude says that while he was thinking of writing on the subject of the common salvation, he was constrained to exhort his readers to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. The faith on which this common salvation rests was being threatened by its enemies, and so his readers needed to be on their guard that they might protect the faith which had been delivered to them.

*For there are certain men crept in privily*. Jude refers to the enemies of the faith as men who would take advantage of secrecy and of craftiness that they might bring in their false teachings to accomplish their purposes.

*Who were of old written of beforehand*. Jude indicates that we should not be surprised that these men came in privily to bring false doctrines, for they were written of beforehand. Jude does not tell us who the writers were that spoke of these men, but the expression would almost necessitate a reference to Old Testament writers. Some have thought because of a reference made to Enoch (verse 14) that

Jude referred to something written by this prophet. The conclusion is not too well founded. Of these men who crept in privily, Jude says three things. (1) They were ungodly men. By this he means they had no piety or reverence for things sacred or for God. (2) They turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. By the grace of God Jude means our salvation which is by the grace of God. And by turning this grace into lasciviousness, Jude means using their relationship with God to attain their lascivious ends. The word "lasciviousness" means "licentiousness, absence of moral restraint, indecency and wantonness." (3) They denied their only Master and Lord. To deny Jesus as Master meant to refuse to allow him to reign in their lives or to control their thoughts and desires and activities. And anyone who would use his relationship with the Lord to attain to his lascivious ends and purposes would certainly be living such life as to deny Christ the right to rule in his heart and life.

## II. Jude Describes the Mockers (Jude 17-19)

*Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles*. Jude is not alone in advising us to remember the words spoken by the apostles, for Peter said that he wrote both of his epistles "that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles." (2 Pet. 3: 2.) We should remember these words (1) because they were spoken by apostles; (2) because the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit; (3) and because these words are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

*In the last time there shall be mockers*. The specific thing which Jude wants his readers to remember as said by the apostles is that at the last time there would be mockers. The phrase "in the last time" must refer to the time in which Jude lived, for he warns his readers against mockers who were to come in the last time, and since his readers lived in the time in which he wrote, it follows that the last time referred to the age or dispensation in which his readers lived. The word "mockers"

is to be taken of those who scoffed and ridiculed the Lord and the teaching of his apostles. Peter throws some light on this by saying "that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3: 3, 4.)

**These are they who make separations.** In describing these mockers, Jude says three things. (1) They make separations. This means that they were makers of sects. They divided the church. Some brethren today would do well to give this passage careful consideration. People who emphasize one thought or one principle above all others to make a hobby of it and separate a group of brethren from all others in the church to support and help them emphasize that particular doctrine might be included among those who are condemned by Jude. (2) They are sensual. The word translated "sensual" is from a Greek word which means that which pertains to the natural or the physical. "Here relating perhaps more especially to the mind, a wisdom in accordance with, or springing from the corrupt desires and affections." (W. E. Vine.) The meaning seems to be that they have reverted back to the flesh, that all their desires and emotions are dictated and controlled by the lower, base, natural passions. (3) They do not have the Spirit. Certainly the Holy Spirit would not find a congenial dwelling place in men of this type, and if the Spirit had ever had its dwelling in them, it would have departed when they descended to the base plane of living which is here described.

### III. Jude Exhorts the Brethren (Jude 20-24)

**Building up yourselves.** In contrast to the mockers of the last time, Jude exhorts the brethren to build themselves on their holy faith. He views faith as a foundation on which they are to build their characters. This building suggests growth into the likeness of Christ.

**Praying in the Holy Spirit.** To pray in the Spirit is akin to "speaking in the Spirit of God." (1 Cor.

12: 3.) To pray in the Spirit would be to pray in harmony with the teaching and direction of the Holy Spirit.

### **Keep yourselves in the love of God.**

Jude makes this the duty and responsibility of each Christian. We must keep ourselves in the love of God. This, of course, does not mean that we can of our own strength or wisdom keep ourselves in the love of God, but it does imply that there is something for us to do in order to continue to enjoy the love of God. 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.) God has promised to love and abide in all those who keep his commandments. In order to keep ourselves in God's love, we must be obedient to God.

### **Looking for the mercy of our Lord.**

We are exhorted to expect mercy of the Lord unto eternal life. This simply means that we will depend not on our own goodness to gain eternal life, but rather upon the mercy of the Lord. Paul prayed that one of his friends would find mercy of the Lord in the day of judgment. (2 Tim. 1: 18.)

**And on some have mercy.** Jude refers to these who are lost, or are about to be lost, and our work with them in an effort to save them. With some of them we should deal mercifully, tenderly, cautiously; but others are to be dealt with swiftly and without taking so much consideration. Jude views these last as almost in the fire of destruction, and we are to snatch them as it were out of this fire of punishment which is about to come upon them for their sins. Of course, all this must be conditioned upon the willingness of these people to be saved from their errors.

### **On some have mercy with fear.**

This is a third class which Jude mentions. We are to have mercy on them, and yet there is a certain fear which we should exercise and in which we should deal with this class of characters. Jude also suggests that their garments are spotted with the filthiness of the flesh. This may account for his use of the word "fear" in this connection. Through our efforts to save them, there was the possibility of becoming contaminated by their garments of sinfulness.

*Unto him that is able to guard you.* This is a beautiful ascription of praise to God through Jesus Christ. Some have mistakenly thought this ascription of praise was to Jesus Christ our Lord, but verse 25 shows it to be to God "through Jesus Christ our Lord." In this ascription of praise he is said (1) to be able to guard us from stumbling. This simply means that he is able to keep us from falling. This does not mean that

it is impossible for us to fall and be lost, but that God is able to keep the faithful from falling. (2) He is able to set us before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy. This simply means that he is able not only to keep us from stumbling while here, but he is able to consummate our salvation and bring us into his glorious presence in the eternal world. However, he will not do this in spite of our wishes.

### Lessons to Learn

1. False teachers have always plagued the church and made it difficult for honest people to be sure what they must do to be saved and how to worship and serve God faithfully.

2. All false teachers, whether honest or dishonest, rob people of eternal life and fail themselves to inherit eternal life. Hence, the importance of knowing the will of the

Lord and teaching it correctly to others.

3. The most important duty of any Christian is to keep himself in the love of God. To do this we must obey God. So, the most important thing in life is to know the will of God and to be sure that we do the will of God faithfully unto the end.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What picture is suggested by the words "contend earnestly"?

How much of revealed truth is included in this command?

What does this statement imply as to our attitude toward error?

What does the word "faith" in our text mean?

What other meanings does the word have in the New Testament?

What is said as to the time when the faith was revealed?

What is the purpose of the revelation of this faith?

What does the term "once for all" in our text mean?

What modern religious sects claim to receive new revelations of truth?

Can you prove that the Bible contains all God's will?

#### Introduction

What is meant by the genuineness of an epistle?

Has the right of this epistle to a place in the canon been disputed?

What great translation of the New Testament did not include this epistle?

What great early church leaders accepted this epistle as inspired?

What evidence do we have that the churches generally accepted this epistle?

#### Jude Warns Against False Teachers

What three things about Jude do we learn from the first verse?

What other forms of Jude's name do you know?

How was Jude related to James? and to the Lord?

How does one become the called of God?

What does Jude mean when he says we are kept for Jesus Christ?

What is the common salvation? and why common?

What circumstance made it necessary for Jude to write brethren to contend for the faith?

Name and discuss three things said about these enemies.

From what source did Jude learn what was written about these enemies?

#### Jude Describes the Mockers

Whose words does Jude admonish us to remember?

Why should we remember the words of the apostles?

What is the meaning of the word "mockers"?

Can you prove that Jude and his first readers lived in "the last time"?

What is meant by "separations" in our text?

Can you describe the sensual character?

What is the attitude of the Holy Spirit toward such characters?

#### Jude Exhorts the Brethren

What is the foundation on which we build up ourselves?

What is meant by praying in the Holy Spirit?

How can we keep ourselves in the love of God?

By which rule do you prefer to be judged, justice or mercy?

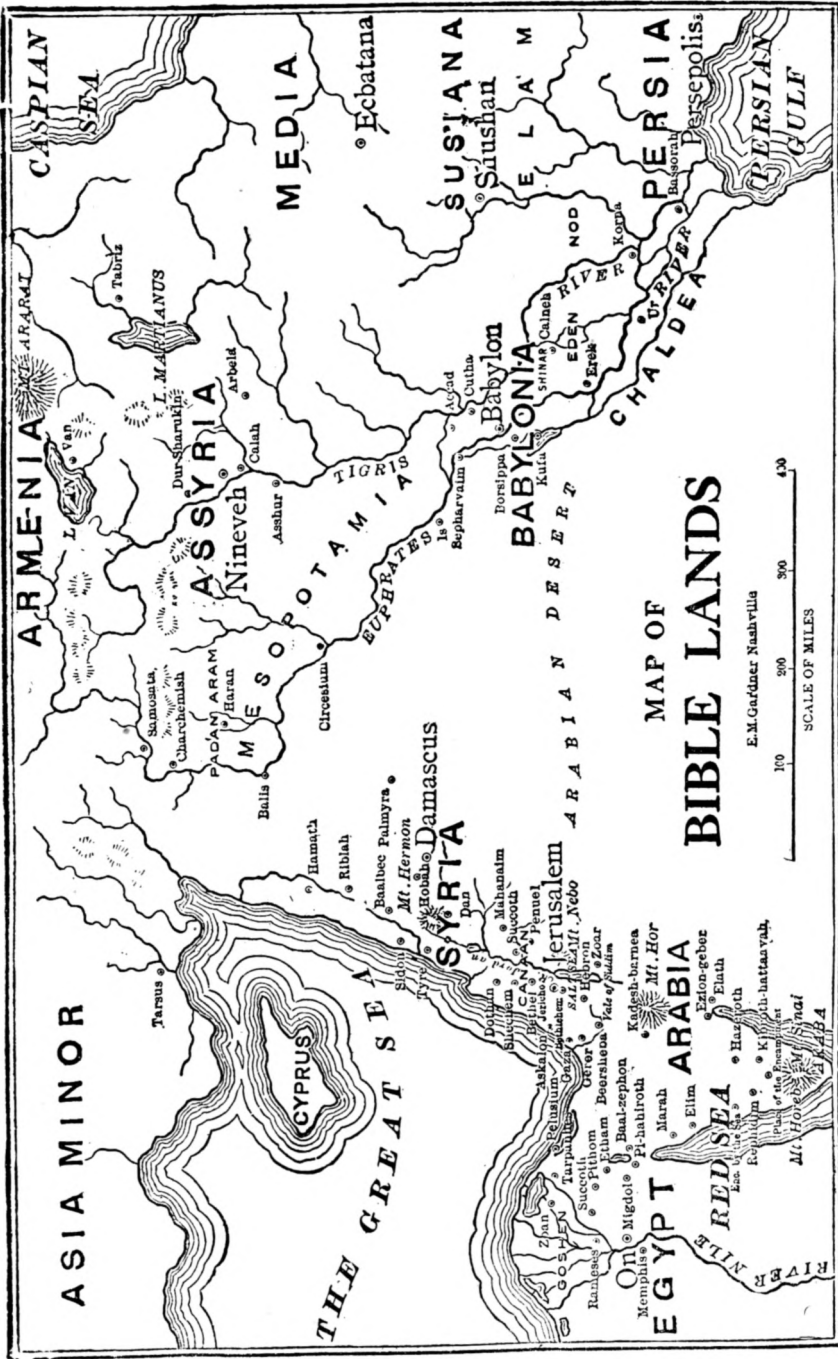
How are we to deal with people in our efforts to save them?

What is said of a third class which we are to try to save?

Is it possible for us to put ourselves in danger trying to save them?

What does Jude say God is able to do? and will he do it in spite of our wishes?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?



## SECOND QUARTER

### THE MAJOR PROPHETS

**AIM:** To learn historical details of the period in which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel prophesied, catch a vision of the holy zeal by which they were motivated, and drink deeply of the spirit of devotion which ever characterized them in the service of Jehovah.

#### Lesson I—April 7, 1957

### THE VISION OF ISAIAH TO JUDAH

#### Lesson Text

Isa. 1: 1-9, 16-20

1 The vision of I-sa'-iah the son of A'-moz, which he saw concerning Ju'-dah and Je-ru'-sa-lem, in the days of Uz-zi'-ah, Jo'-tham, A'-haz, and Hez-e-ki'-ah, kings of Ju'-dah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Je-ho'-vah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; *but* Is'-ra-el doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Je-ho'-vah, they have despised the Holy One of Is'-ra-el, they are estranged *and gone* backward.

5 Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil.

7 Your country is desolate; your

cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zi'-on is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except Je-ho'-vah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sod'-om, we should have been like unto Go-mor-rah.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Je-ho'-vah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Je-ho'-vah hath spoken it.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“*Learn to do well*” (Isa. 1: 17a.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Isa. 1: 10-15.

#### Daily Bible Readings

April 1. M.....	Formalism Condemned (Isa. 1: 11-17)
April 2. T.....	Corruption of Judah (Isa. 1: 21-23)
April 3. W.....	A Prophecy of the Church (Isa. 2: 1-5)
April 4. T.....	Idolatrous Israel (Isa. 2: 12-22)
April 5. F.....	Evil Rulers (Isa. 3: 1-12)
April 6. S.....	Parable of the Vineyard (Isa. 5: 1-7)
April 7. S.....	An Ensign to the Nations (Isa. 5: 26-30)

**TIME.**—760 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Jerusalem.

**PERSONS.**—Isaiah and the people of Judah.

## Golden Text Explained

1. Learning. (a) Learning implies a teacher. Sometimes people learn by experience, and so we call experience a teacher. Though we might learn some things of a physical and temporal import without a teacher, it still remains a fact that all we learn of spiritual and heavenly matters must come from a teacher. These things must be revealed to us, and we must have revelation from God to teach us the things that are spiritual. When Jehovah told his people to learn to do well, he was simply saying that they should listen to his teaching through his appointed prophets, (b) Learning implies a willingness on the part of people. When God told his people to learn to do well, he simply meant for them to be willing to listen to the prophet and to be guided by what that prophet had to say. One may listen attentively to what a teacher has to say and yet never learn anything from that teacher. The spirit of willingness must be there if the hearer would learn. Jesus speaks of people willing to know the will of the Father. (John 7: 17.) He also speaks of people hungering and thirsting after righteousness. (Matt. 5: 6.) (c) Learning demands confidence in and respect for the teacher. No one can learn who does not have confidence in his teacher, nor will we learn much unless we respect that teacher as knowing more than we know. So when God told Judah to learn to do well, he meant that they should have confidence in the prophet as their teacher and respect him as one who spoke for God.

2. Doing well, (a) Doing is the result of learning. This is especially true with reference to spiritual knowledge. One does not do the things that please God by chance; we do not by nature do the things that please God. Doing the things that please God is certainly the result of learning of God and his wishes, (b) Doing well is the result of learning from God. God requires nothing of

us but that which is good, and when we have learned of God and put into practice that which we learn we are doing good. (c) Doing well involves a change. No man is so pure and sinless but that following the instructions of God will cause him to change his way of life. This was especially true in the days of Isaiah. Our lesson text describes the spiritual condition of the people in that day, and we may see at a glance that doing well would involve a drastic change in their lives. They would simply have to do an about-face in order to do well.

3. **Lessons implied,** (a) Man is unable to direct his course. A later prophet said, "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10: 23.) If man could do the will of God instinctively, there would be no necessity for his learning to do well. Again, if God did not care what man does, there would be no necessity for man's learning to do well. Or, if man through his own wisdom and philosophy could determine what is the best course in life, there would be no need for man to learn from God how to do well, (b) God is solicitous for our welfare. If God did not care whether we do well or evil, he would certainly not have bothered the prophets to try to teach man; he would not have caused them to suffer persecution and hardships in order to teach man to do well. There is every indication that God through all the ages has been very solicitous for the welfare of man. (c) God is willing to forgive man and give him another chance. If God were not willing to forgive, he would not have called upon backsliding Israel to cease to do evil and to learn to do well. The fact that God has manifested his willingness all through the ages to forgive is certainly most encouraging to all of us and the basis of our hope for eternal life with him.

## Introduction

1. Isaiah and his family. The word Isaiah means "the salvation of Jehovah." Isaiah's father's name was Amoz and is not to be confused with that of the prophet Amos. According

to Jewish tradition, Amoz was the brother of King Amaziah. However, it is possible that a study of the dates involved would render this very improbable. Isaiah had a wife and two

sons. (Isa. 7: 3; 8: 1-4.) Isaiah was known for his earnestness and his boldness. He was not afraid to deliver God's message to the kings, even when they were hostile toward him. He denounced their injustice and oppression, their covetousness, sensuality, and pride in no uncertain terms, but he did not allow his courage to rob him of his tenderness and compassion toward those who were in sin. He could love the sinner and do everything in his power for him without compromising and encouraging the sin. He hated sin and wept bitterly and refused to be comforted when he thought upon the condition of the people of God as a result of their sin. Though he was fervently patriotic, yet he could sympathize with

the nations round about because of the calamities and the sufferings that were to come upon them on account of their sins.

2. Dates. Isaiah began his prophetic work in the last year of the reign of King Uzziah, which was 758 B.C. If Isaiah was twenty years old when he began his work, he would have been born in 778 B.C. He lived through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the sum of sixty-one years. How long his work extended into the reign of Manasseh we have no way of knowing, but all scholars are agreed on the tradition of the Jews that Isaiah must have been sawn asunder by Manasseh. The chronology which we follow gives the writing of the book between 760 and 712 B.C.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. God's Charges Against Judah (Isa. 1: 1-4)

*The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz.* A vision is that which is seen. The vision may be natural or miraculous. The visions of these prophets were miraculous, and the prophets were called seers because they related their visions. (1 Sam. 9: 9.) "In these visions, the objects probably were made to pass before the mind of the prophet as a *picture* in which the various events were delineated with more or less distinctness, and the prophecies were spoken, or recorded, as the visions appeared to the observer." (Barnes.)

*Which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.* We cannot be positive that Isaiah lived in Jerusalem, but we do know that he lived in Judah and that his prophecies concern Judah and not Israel. Judah was the southern kingdom with Jerusalem as the center, and Israel was the northern kingdom with Samaria as its capital. Samaria had not yet been captured in Isaiah's time, but he received and delivered no message concerning the affairs and destinies of Israel. According to this verse, Isaiah's prophetic work was done during the reigns of four kings—Uzziah, otherwise known as Azariah who reigned fifty-two years. Isaiah began his work in the last year of Uzziah's reign. The next is Jotham who reigned sixteen years. Following him was Ahaz who also

reigned sixteen years. Then comes Hezekiah who reigned twenty-nine years.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. Isaiah calls upon both heaven and earth to listen to what Jehovah has to say. Jehovah's complaint is that he has nourished and brought up children, and these children have rebelled against him. It is a universally recognized principle that children, or dependents, are to be in subjection to their parents. That being true, Jehovah had a right to expect his people to be submissive to him; they were his children, his offspring, and they were dependent upon him. Though humanity does not always recognize its dependence upon Jehovah, yet if Jehovah were to withdraw his provident care from the human race, it would be immediately destroyed.

*The ox knoweth his owner.* Isaiah selects the slowest and the dumbest of the domesticated animals with which to compare rebellious people of Judah in order that he may show to best advantage their foolishness and stupidity in rebelling against God. The ox recognizes his owner, and the ass knows where his food comes from and is submissive to that owner, but Israel does not recognize the source of his blessings and rebels against him on whom he must depend. Those of our days who think it wise to live independently of God should give this passage careful con-

sideration. God says they are not as wise as the ox and the ass.

**Ah sinful nation.** Notice the terms Jehovah uses to characterize that nation that refuses to be submissive to God. He speaks of them as "sinful nation" and "people laden with iniquity" and "seed of evil-doers" and finally as "children that deal corruptly."

**They have despised the holy one of Israel.** God characterizes them as evil doers because they have forsaken Jehovah and despised the holy one. The word *despised* is a rather strong term. Many people today deny that they despise God; yet they love the world and the things of the world more than they love God and heavenly things. To the extent that one loves the world and worldly things more than he loves God and heavenly things, to that extent he despises Jehovah. And that one who despises Jehovah is "estranged and gone backward."

## II. God Laments Their Condition

(Isa. 1: 5-9)

**Why will ye be still stricken?** The prophet takes for granted that the people realize their suffering. He asks them why they will continue to suffer. This implies that if they continue in their sins and rebellion against God; if they continue to despise the holy one, they will continue to suffer as they are at the present time.

**From the sole of the foot even unto the head.** The prophet likens the people of Judah to an individual. He said the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. There is no soundness in the body, but there are "wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes." After picturing Judah as a man covered with wounds and bruises and fresh stripes from head to foot, he adds that there has been no attempt to heal the wounds or cure the diseases. This indicates that Judah was in poor spiritual and moral condition and did not seem to care enough for that condition to try to remedy it.

**Your country is desolate.** The reign of Uzziah was fairly prosperous, and so commentators have had trouble with this statement. It is maintained that the prophet could not be describing a condition of the land during the reign of Uzziah be-

cause it was a prosperous reign. But it must be remembered that the land was ravaged during the reigns of Jehoash and Amaziah. The kings of Syria and Israel both came and ravaged the land. (2 Kings 14: 8-14; 2 Chron. 24: 25.) The word *strangers* in verse 7 has led some to think that the desolation mentioned is not that which was brought on by the northern kingdom, but the expression "heirs overthrown by strangers" seems to indicate that the desolation brought on was as complete and terrible as if it had been brought on by strangers. If the visions of Isaiah are dealt with chronologically, we will have to refer the desolation of this text to that brought on by the Israelites under Amaziah, but if Isaiah did not give us his visions in chronological order, this desolation might be that which occurred in the time of Ahaz.

**And the daughter of Zion is left.** Zion is one of the hills on which Jerusalem is built, but in many instances, as here, it refers to the whole city. The precarious and temporary position of Jerusalem is pictured to us under three figures of speech. The first is "a booth in a vineyard." A booth was needed during the ripening of the grapes and the gathering of the fruit, but was then left to decay. The next figure is "a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." The cucumber season was longer than that of the grapes, and consequently, the building that housed the watchers and workers would be a little more permanent, but even it was left uncared for when the season of cucumbers was ended. The third figure of speech is that of "a besieged city." Zion was as one left to decay, left exposed to the elements about it; it was as a city already under siege.

**Except Jehovah of hosts.** The prophet goes on to say that if Jehovah of hosts had not left us a small remnant, we should already have been like Sodom or like Gomorrah, the cities of the plain in the days of Abraham which were overthrown for their wickedness. He is saying that Jerusalem still stands, not because of the righteousness of the people, nor of the wisdom of the rulers of the people, nor of the strength of their armies, but Jerusalem still stands as a monument to the mercy and the long suffering of Jehovah.



### III. God Invites Them to Reform

(Isa. 1: 16-20)

**Wash you, make you clean.** This exhortation comes with great force, since the prophet has described the nation as being sick and wounded and bruised from head to foot, and since in the preceding verse he has described them as having their hands full of blood. The Jews would understand the terms of this exhortation because of their constant use of water in their ceremonial cleansings. They would understand Jehovah to be telling them to repent and to cleanse their hearts and lives of the sin and ungodliness in them. This is emphasized in the words that follow, "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil."

**Seek justice, relieve the oppressed.** That which Jehovah commanded was both negative and positive. He had told them to put away their evil and cease to do evil, and then on the positive, he wants them to learn to do well, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, and plead for the widows. This indicates that God was interested in more than ceremonial precision in the lives of his people. Their everyday, moral standards must be brought up to a higher level than that of the nations round about them. Many times today people think that if they keep the outward commandments and ordinances of the church, they will be acceptable to the Lord regardless of what their moral standards may be. There are some who have believed and have been baptized for the remission of their sins, and they attend church at least one time a week, but their standards of moral purity in their business and recreational activities are not as high as the average person of the world, and certainly not as high as many pious, denominational people. They seem to think they are acceptable to God and on their way to heaven simply because they have observed those commandments of the Lord that have to do with the outward ceremonies of religion. But, though God is interested in our conforming to the ceremonial

demands of the law, he is just as interested in our conforming to the moral standards of righteousness. God still expects his people to seek justice in that they deal justly with those with whom they associate. He still expects them to relieve the oppressed in that they will not be overbearing, unkind, and inconsiderate of those who are dependent upon them. He still expects his people to judge the fatherless in that they will deal kindly with them, and that they will plead the cause of the widow and visit her in her afflictions.

**Come now, and let us reason together.** This is the language of Jehovah to his erring people. He would bring them as it were into court, and he would reason the case with them. He would put his side of the matter up for consideration, for argument and debate with the belief that he could make his case stand up. And as an inducement to make the people see matters in his way, God promises that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This simply suggests that because they have done evil and have been as one bruised and wounded and sick, yet if they will learn to do well, seek justice, judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow, they shall be as clean as if they had never sinned.

**If ye be willing and obedient.** Jehovah puts before them the necessity of making a choice and of reaping according to that choice. If they will be willing and obedient, they will eat of the fat of the land. But if they refuse and rebel against Jehovah, they were to be devoured with the sword. God puts before each and every one of us today such a proposition. If we are willing to be humble and submissive and obedient to God's word, we shall have his protection here and his blessing for all eternity. But if we refuse to be submissive to him here and live according to our own desires, we shall be deprived of his presence and blessings here in this life and will be condemned to spend eternity in hell.

### Lessons to Learn

1. God speaks to his people. God has always spoken to his people in an effort to direct them in the ways of righteousness.

2. God yearns for his people. God's love for the people in spite of their sins is exhibited here in the fact that though they were as one sick

from head to foot and covered with wounds and bruises and fresh stripes, he still loves them enough to beg them to turn from their sin and to do that which is right. God looked upon them as his people, and his heart yearned for them to live as his people ought to live.

3. God warns his people. His love for his people caused him to point out the consequence of their ungodliness, and so he warned them that in spite of his great love for them and his willingness to forgive them, they would be utterly destroyed if they persisted in their ungodliness.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Discuss the aim of the lessons of this quarter.

#### Golden Text Explained

State and discuss two things which the learning process implies.

What attitude toward the teacher does learning demand from the student?

What is our only source of learning to do well spiritually?

What does learning to do well involve in all men?

Why must man learn spiritual living from some outside source?

Can you give concrete evidence that God has always been solicitous for man's welfare?

What evidence can you give of God's willingness to forgive man?

Why is this willingness on God's part a source of encouragement to us?

#### Introduction

What does the word Isaiah mean?

What do you know of Isaiah's father? wife and sons?

For what is Isaiah best known?

What was his attitude toward the Gentile nations around Israel?

When did Isaiah begin his prophetic work?

During the reigns of what kings did he prophesy?

How did he die? and during the reign of what king?

#### God's Charges Against Judah

What is a vision? and what is a seer?

To what particular people was Isaiah's message directed?

According to what universal principle did Jehovah claim obedience from Judah?

How did Isaiah teach the foolishness and stupidity of rebelling against God?

Name several terms Isaiah used to describe the people of Judah.

What is meant by despising Jehovah?

#### God Laments Their Condition

How long did the prophet imply that Judah would continue to suffer?

How did Isaiah describe their spiritual and moral condition?

What kings ravaged the land of Judah prior to Uzziah's reign?

Name and discuss three figures of speech used to describe the precarious condition of Judah.

Had it not been for God's mercy, in what condition would Judah have been?

#### God Invites Them to Reform

What duty did the command to wash put upon the people?

What positive commandment did Isaiah give the people of Judah?

Is it necessary for people to conform to the ceremonial requirement of the gospel?

Why is such ceremonial conformance not enough?

What challenge did God give the people to show the justness of their ways?

What promise did he make on condition they reformed?

What threat did he make if they continued to rebel?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson II—April 14, 1957

### ISAIAH'S CALL

#### Lesson Text

##### Isa. 6: 1-13

1 In the year that king Uz-zî-ah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.

2 Above him stood the ser'-a-phim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Je'-ho'-vah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Je'-ho'-vah of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the ser'-a-phim unto me, having a live coal in his

hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.

9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,

and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed.

11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste,

12 And Je-ho'-vah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land.

13 And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory"* (Isa. 6: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 7: 10-17.

## Daily Bible Readings

April 8. M.....	Vision of Isaiah (Isa. 1: 1-9)
April 9. T.....	Isaiah's Message to Ahaz (Isa. 7: 10-17)
April 10. W.....	Jehovah Speaks to Isaiah (Isa. 8: 5-15)
April 11. T.....	Isaiah Warns of Familiar Spirits (Isa. 8: 19-22)
April 12. F.....	Isaiah Prophecies of Christ (Isa. 9: 1-7)
April 13. S.....	Isaiah's Prophecy Concerning Assyria (Isa. 10: 5-14)
April 14. S.....	Isaiah Bids the People to Reason (Isa. 1: 18-23)

TIME.—759 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Isaiah and Jehovah.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. The holiness of Jehovah, (a)

Holiness defined. "By holiness, in the blessed God, we mean that essential rectitude of his nature whereby he takes infinite delight and pleasure in that which is pure and holy, and hates, with a perfect hatred, everything that is morally evil. We consider holiness as essential, or absolutely necessary to the very being and existence of God. We can have no right conception of God without holiness. A god without holiness would be like a god without power, or a god without wisdom; it would be a monster, not a god." (Burder.) From this we conclude that perfect holiness consists of two things: (1) an infinite delight in everything that is pure and good. That is the positive, constructive side of holiness. (2) An infinite hatred for everything that is evil and impure. This is the negative side of holiness. Many of us are content to think of ourselves as being holy if we refrain from that which

is evil and impure, but God's holiness consists not only of refraining from evil but in the love of everything that is good and pure, (b) God's holiness stated. "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I, Jehovah, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be mine." (Lev. 20: 26.) "And my holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel; neither will I suffer my holy name to be profaned any more: and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel." (Ezek. 39: 7.) And the four living creatures in heaven are continually saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." (Rev. 4: 8b.) In this connection, the reader should also examine Matt. 5: 48; Luke 1: 49; James 1: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16. (c) God's holiness manifested. (1) First, his holiness is manifested in his hatred for sin. The fact that God visited a flood upon

the world of the ungodly is a manifestation of his hatred for sin. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah on account of their wickedness also manifests his hatred for sin, and the captivity of Israel on account of their sin is an indication of his holiness. And the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira is another manifestation of God's holiness, his hatred for sin.

(2) In the second place, God's holiness is manifested in his approval of righteousness. The fact that only the pure in heart shall see God is proof of his approval of righteousness. We are taught that only those who are sanctified and who are undefiled will be permitted to enter heaven. (Heb. 12: 14; Rev. 3: 4.) This is a manifestation of God's holiness in that he approves only that which is righteous.

2. The glory of Jehovah, (a) In nature. Our text says that the whole earth is full of the glory of Jehovah, and David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." (Psalm 19: 1.) And again David said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars,

which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him." (Psalm 8: 3, 4.) No one can watch the twinkling stars at night or behold the budding trees and the unfolding flowers in the spring without being impressed with the glory of God. (b) In the realm of grace. Nowhere does the holiness and the glory of God become more obvious than in the realm of grace. When man had sinned and was worthy only to be punished eternally for those sins, God in his love, goodness, mercy, and grace gave his only begotten Son to die the shameful death on Calvary that we might be redeemed from our sins, purified from the defilement of our sins, be justified from the guilt of sin, and finally to be glorified in heaven to spend eternity in bliss. These things are such a marvelous exhibition of the glory and wisdom of God that good men stand in awe and bow in reverence while beholding them, and even the angels of glory are anxious to look into them. (Eph. 3: 10; 1 Pet. 1: 12b.)

## Introduction

The student should know something of the social life, the moral conditions under which Isaiah was compelled to do his work. If the student will read the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of Isaiah, he will find that the rich devoured the poor, those in authority oppressed the poor and the needy. He will find also that Isaiah condemned the women for their wanton ways, their pride, and their lack of attention to spiritual matters and their duties in the home, while giving attention to making a

good appearance and standing high in society. Isaiah also condemns drunkenness among the people, and he emphasizes that they are going into captivity because of their lack of knowledge of God. And so great was their lack of knowledge that they had reached the point where they could call evil good, and good evil. Hosea was a contemporary prophet with Isaiah, and the student will learn the social and moral conditions of Israel, the northern kingdom, by reading the book of Hosea.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. A Vision of Jehovah (Isa. 6: 1-4)

*In the year that King Uzziah died.* This expression is usually taken by commentators to refer to a time after the death of Uzziah, but in the same year that he died. This suggests that the prophecies which precede this one were uttered before the death of Uzziah. This being true, the call which is here described is not the first call which God gave Isaiah. Albert Barnes tells us that most of the Jewish commentators accept this statement as having reference to the time when Uzziah was smitten with

leprosy and not to the time of his actual death. (2 Chron. 26: 19, 20.)

*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne.* In the third verse, the Lord is referred to as "Jehovah of hosts." But in John 12: 37-41 we learn that Isaiah saw the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no contradiction in these statements because many times when Jehovah is spoken of as manifesting himself to people of Old Testament times, we learn from New Testament passages that it was the second person of the Godhead who was so manifested. The language of Psalm 102:

25-27 is addressed to Jehovah, but in Heb. 1: 10-12 we learn that it is applied to Jesus Christ.

**His train filled the temple.** The word train refers to his robe or skirts in which he was dressed. From the use of the word temple, it is impossible to determine whether Isaiah saw this vision from the temple at Jerusalem, or whether he intends that we shall consider his vision being directed to heaven and seeing the train of Jehovah fill the temple, or palace, of God on high. "It is remarkable that Isaiah attempts no representation of Jehovah himself. He mentions his robes; the throne; the seraphim; but mentions no form or appearance of God himself. In this there is great sublimity. There is enough mentioned to fill the mind with awe; there is enough concealed to impress as deeply with a sense of the divine majesty." (Barnes.)

**Above him stood the seraphim.** The word seraphim means "fiery ones." They were angelic beings and seemed to differ from the ordinary order of angels, but of this we cannot be sure. Isaiah does not mention the number of winged beings he saw, but Ezekiel and John mention the number as four. (Ezek. 1: 5; Rev. 4: 8.) The winged creatures of Isaiah and John had six wings, but those of Ezekiel had only four. What the six wings represent we may not know, but the general idea is that of rapid flight in doing the service of God. "But, in the divine presence, the wings were applied to a different use. One pair veiled the seraph's head from the intolerable effulgence of the divine glory; another concealed the feet, soiled in their various ministrations, and unmeet for the all-pure presence; the third pair alone sustained the seraph in mid-air as he hovered in readiness to depart on any errand on which Jehovah might send him." (Pulpit Commentary.) Another author suggests that the covering of the face and feet suggest reverence and humility, while the other pair of wings denotes obedience of the angels to Jehovah.

**Holy, holy, holy.** The repetition of the word holy is significant. One author says that this means the zeal and fervency of the angels in praising God; next, the pleasure they take in contemplating the holiness of God; next, the superlative excellency of

God's holiness above that of the purest creatures. God is holy; Christ, holy, originally, perfectly, and eternally holy, but creatures are holy only because God makes them so, and their holiness is relative while the holiness of God is absolute. And last, he suggests that the repetition of the word holy may refer to the three persons of the Godhead—the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew Henry.)

## II. Effect of the Vision on Isaiah

(Isa. 6: 5-8)

**Woe is me! for I am undone.** Isaiah realized that he was an unclean man living in the midst of an unclean people and was unprepared and utterly unworthy to be in the presence of Jehovah. Peter voiced a similar feeling when he said to Jesus, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5: 8.) The word "undone" literally means to cut off or destroy. Isaiah felt that he was doomed to destruction because he had seen the Lord. This idea was common among the Jews and likely was taken from the statement which God made to Moses when he said, "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live." (Ex. 33: 20.) Some have difficulty in reconciling Isaiah's statement here with that in John 1: 18 where we read that no man has seen God at any time. But Isaiah did not see the full manifestation of the glory of God; Jehovah is said to be invisible. (Col. 1: 15.) Paul tells us that he is dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man has seen, nor can see. (1 Tim. 6: 16.) Isaiah actually saw the seraphim and made some attempt to describe their appearance, but the fact that he made no effort to describe the appearance of Jehovah may suggest that he did not actually see the form of God, but only a symbol of his presence.

**Then flew one of the seraphim unto me.** This seraphim took a live coal of fire from off the altar and touched Isaiah's mouth with it, and said, "This hast touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." This should suggest at least three lessons to us. (1) That man, defiled by his sin, is unfit and unworthy to serve and worship God; he is unfit to carry the message of God to others. (2) That only God

can cleanse us from these sins and make us fit to serve him. (3) That men who have been cleansed by the power of God should not allow their past to keep them from serving God. Saul of Tarsus is a good example of this. Though he had persecuted the church of God, had made havoc of it, and laid it waste in days gone by, God cleansed him, forgave him of his sins, and made him a fit vessel to bear the name of God and the message of salvation to the kings, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel.

**And I heard the voice of the Lord.** Isaiah represents the Lord as asking, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Notice the change in the number of persons. In the first question, we have the word "I," and in the second statement of the question we have the word "us." The Lord thus represents himself as being both singular and plural. We cannot account for this on any other ground than the plurality of the Godhead.

**Here am I; send me.** This is the language of Isaiah in response to Jehovah's question. Isaiah was grateful to God for this glorious vision and for his cleansing from sin. In expression of his gratitude for the goodness and glory of God granted to him, he would undertake the mission which the Lord was anxious to find someone to perform. All of us should have the attitude that Isaiah had. We should be willing to undertake any service which needs to be rendered to God. God is able to make us able to do his will. God does not expect us to do any service that we are unable to perform, but since God gives the ability to do that which he expects us to do, we are all the more unjustified in our lack of willingness to serve him.

### III. Jehovah Commissions Isaiah

(Isa. 6: 9-13)

**Go, and tell this people.** This is the language of the Lord, Jehovah, whom Isaiah saw on the throne high and lifted up, and yet Paul says in Acts 28: 25ff. that this is the language of the Holy Spirit. If one reads only Isaiah's account of this vision, he might get the idea that Isaiah saw the first person of the Godhead only, and that this first person of the Godhead commissioned Isaiah to take a message to the people. But we have already seen that John said that Isaiah saw the second person of the

Godhead. (John 12: 37-41.) Now we learn that Paul says that the Holy Spirit uttered the words which Isaiah attributed to Jehovah. There is no contradiction in these statements, but simply proof of the unity of the three persons of the Godhead. A statement made by one may be attributed to either of the three or to all three together. When Isaiah says he saw Jehovah, it is equally correct to say that he saw the second person of the Godhead; and when Isaiah says he heard Jehovah speak, it is equally correct to say that he heard the Holy Spirit speak.

**Hear ye indeed, but understand not.** By a superficial reading, one might think that Jehovah was sending Isaiah to the people in order to harden their hearts. One might think that Jehovah did not want the people to turn again and be healed. But the truth is that God, in his great mercy, was willing to send his message in spite of the fact that he knew the message would be rejected. And he knew that, in rejecting the message, the people's hearts would be hardened. However, there are at least three blessings to come from the service Isaiah was commissioned to do. (1) He would issue a national warning. The preaching of Isaiah would warn the people against further sin and rebellion against God in an effort to save the nation from complete apostasy. (2) Some individuals would profit by Isaiah's preaching. The nation itself would not profit from the preaching, but would go on in sin to be destroyed, but some individuals would hear the preaching, turn from their sins and receive individual blessings. (3) The preaching of Isaiah would serve as an example to posterity. Jesus quoted this passage in Matt. 13, and Paul in Acts 28, to warn their hearers lest they commit the same sin that the hearers of Isaiah committed. "Thus, though rebellious, Israel might not be blessed by Isaiah's teaching; they might, by their example, waken a wholesome fear in their posterity, and cause it to avoid a like sin." (McGarvey.)

**Lord, how long?** Whether Isaiah wished to know how long he was to preach this message or how long the nation could continue in sin without being destroyed is difficult to determine. Perhaps Isaiah wished to

know the answer to both these questions.

*And he answered.* Jehovah answered the question Isaiah raised by saying that Isaiah was to preach or that the Jews would continue in their rebellion until the cities of Judah were laid waste and without inhabitants, and until Jehovah had removed them far away into distant lands. This, of course, refers to the captivity that was imminent. The Assyrian

king had already made known his intention toward Israel, the northern kingdom. It was only a matter of a very few years until the northern kingdom would be carried into captivity on account of their rebellion against God. If God would so deal with that portion of his people, certainly Judah, guilty of every sin of which Israel was guilty, could not expect to remain in the land.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Knowledge of God has a humbling effect upon man. Anyone who has a good understanding of God will be humble. Those who are proud and have an exalted opinion of themselves know little or nothing about God.

2. Isaiah's response to the vision should be characteristic of all of us. When we have really seen God as revealed in Jesus Christ, we will be

ready with Isaiah to say, "Here am I; send me." We will be ready to be used by the Lord for whatever work he has made us able to perform.

3. God will punish the disobedient. Though in his mercy and longsuffering he continues the preaching of the gospel, he will still punish those whom he loves enough to send the gospel to.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of holiness?

Which part of holiness receives less emphasis today?

Can you quote certain scriptures to prove the holiness of God?

Cite certain instances of God's holiness manifested as hatred for sin.

How is God's holiness manifested as approval of righteousness?

How is God's glory manifested in nature?

What is the supreme manifestation of God's glory in the realm of grace?

#### Introduction

What does Isaiah say about the rich and poor of his day?

What did Isaiah say about the women of Judah?

Why was Judah going into captivity?

What minor prophet wrote of moral conditions in Israel at this same time?

#### A Vision of Jehovah

In what year did Isaiah see the vision of Jehovah? Was this his first call?

According to the apostle John, whom did Isaiah see in this vision?

Can you describe the scene as Isaiah saw it?

Why is no effort made to describe the appearance of Jehovah himself?

What does the word "seraphim" mean?

Can you describe the appearance of the seraphim?

What were the seraphim saying? and what is the meaning?

#### Effect of the Vision on Isaiah

Why did Isaiah feel that he was undone? and the meaning of undone?

If God is invisible, how could Isaiah see him?

How was Isaiah cleansed to bear the message of Jehovah?

Discuss three lessons suggested by this cleansing of Isaiah.

Why does Jehovah use both singular and plural pronouns when speaking of himself?

What was Isaiah's response to Jehovah's question?

Why are we able to do all that God expects us to do?

#### Jehovah Commissions Isaiah

To what person of the Godhead does Paul attribute this language?

What do you learn from this about the unity of the Godhead?

What message did Jehovah give Isaiah for the people of Judah?

Did God send this message for the purpose of hardening the hearts of the people?

State and discuss three blessings which came from the work Isaiah was told to do.

How long was this message to be preached and the people to continue in sin?

What was the condition of the kingdom of Israel at this time?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson III—April 21, 1957

## PEACEFUL REIGN OF THE MESSIAH

## Lesson Text

## Isa. 11: 1-10

1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jes'-se, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Je-ho'-vah.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Je-ho'-vah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears;

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Je-ho'-vah, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jes'-se, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."* (Isa. 11: 9.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Isa. 11: 11-16.

## Daily Bible Readings

April 15.	M.	.....	Learn War No More (Isa. 2: 1-5)
April 16.	T.	.....	Christ's Kingdom Not of the World (John 18: 36)
April 17.	W.	.....	Love Our Enemies (Matt. 5: 38-48)
April 18.	T.	.....	Vengeance Belongs to the Lord (Rom. 12: 19, 20)
April 19.	F.	.....	Peacemakers Blessed (Matt. 5: 1-12)
April 20.	S.	.....	The Golden Rule (Matt. 6: 7-12)
April 21.	S.	.....	Example of Christ (1 Pet. 2: 20-25)

**TIME.**—713 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Jerusalem.

**PERSONS.**—Isaiah and the people of Judah.

## Golden Text Explained

## 1. Messiah's holy mountain. (a)

This is a Messianic prophecy. We are not left to judge on our own whether this prophecy of Isaiah was intended to point to the Messiah, for Paul quotes the tenth verse of our lesson text in Rom. 15: 12 and applies it to Jesus Christ as the fulfillment. If the student will read Jer. 23: 5, he will find the Messiah predicted as a righteous branch out of David.

Then again, in Jer. 33: 14-17 he will find the prophet predicting, "a branch of righteousness to grow up unto David" who shall execute righteousness and justice in the land. And furthermore, this branch of righteousness was to be called "Jehovah our righteousness." Then if he will read Zech. 6: 12, 13, he will find mention of this same branch that is to grow up and build the temple of Je-



hovah. "And he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Then coming into the New Testament, we find Paul referring to Jesus as the seed of David, the son of Jesse, and that this was according to a promise that God made to David to bring unto Israel a Savior. (Acts 13: 21-23.) And then in 1 Cor. 1: 30 and 2 Cor. 5: 21, we find him referred to as "our righteousness." Putting these passages together, we easily identify this as a Messianic prophecy.

(b) God's holy mountain is his church. Our text says that there will be nothing to hurt or destroy in his holy mountain. If the student will read Isa. 2: 1-4, he will there find the promise of the establishment of Jehovah's house in the top of the mountains. This is admittedly a promise to build the church. The word mountain is used here to represent government, so when Isaiah said that there would be nothing to hurt or destroy in God's holy mountain, he had reference to that government over which the Messiah would reign.

(c) Jesus is to be the ruler in this mountain. From Zechariah we learn that the man whose name is the Branch is to be the ruler and that he is to be a priest upon his throne. This describes Jesus Christ as being a ruler and a priest at the same time.

## 2. Distinguishing characteristics.

(a) Not of a period of time. Our text, along with other passages such as Isa. 35: 3-10, has been understood by some to predict that a time will come when the whole world will be at peace. There are some who affirm that the kingdom has not yet been established because they believe that universal peace is to be a characteristic of the times in which the kingdom is to exist. But they make the mistake of thinking that these passages refer to a *period of time* instead of the *citizens* of the kingdom.

(b) Character of those who belong to Christ. Instead of these texts predicting a period of time when the world will enjoy universal peace,

these passages describe the character of those who accept the Messiah as their ruler. When Isaiah said that no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast, and that there would not be anyone to hurt or destroy, he was describing the character of those who have been converted to Christ. (c) Perfection versus growth. Neither should we expect the subjects of Messiah's kingdom to be perfect at the beginning. We do not come into this life perfect specimens either physically or mentally; we grow into maturity. So, in Messiah's kingdom, which is likened unto a family, we are born into this relationship as babes in Christ, and from this condition we grow toward maturity or perfection. So, if some in the kingdom do not meet all the requirements of Isaiah's description, we simply must remember that they are in the proper relationship and in the process of growing into those characteristics.

## 3. Messiah's government promoted by knowledge.

(a) We become subjects through knowledge. Jesus told his disciples to go make disciples of all the nations, then teach them to observe all he commanded. Here we have a program of teaching to bring people into Messiah's government, and then another program of teaching to perfect them. The apostle Peter teaches us that we escape the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord. (2 Pet. 2: 20ff.) (b) We are all to be taught of God. This is one distinguishing characteristic of those in the kingdom. Under the old Jewish covenant, people were born by natural birth into that covenant and had to be taught to know God. But under the new covenant they are all taught of God before they enter into that covenant relationship, and so in the new covenant they are not to be taught to know the Lord. (Heb. 8: 11.)

(c) We are to grow in knowledge. Peter commands us to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 3: 18.)

## Introduction

Since our lesson text today is a Messianic prophecy, it will be worth our while to study a few reasons why these prophecies were given. (1) These prophecies served to show the Jews why God dealt with them as he

dealt with no other nation. If there had not been an obvious reason for God's dealings with the Jews as a favored people, they would have become even more selfish and exclusive than they were. Those who under-

stood why God dealt with them as he dealt with no other nation realized that the Jew was not a superior people and worthy of unusual favor from God. (2) These Messianic prophecies served to tie the Jewish people to God more closely. They reminded the Jews that they were in the world for a purpose and that they were working with God for the accomplishment of that purpose—the bringing into the world the Messiah

and his kingdom. (3) These Messianic predictions were a means of generating and developing genuine piety and true devotion to God. (4) These Messianic promises served to help people accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah. When they studied the prophecies and then observed in Jesus the fulfillment of these promises, they were led to believe in him as one sent from God.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Messiah Will Come (Isa. 11: 1-5)

**A shoot out of the stock of Jesse.** This suggests that the tree would be destroyed and nothing but a stock left. The prophet continues that there shall come a branch out of the roots of Jesse that shall bear fruit, and this, too, suggests that the tree will be destroyed and only the roots left. But out of this stock, and out of this root, there shall come forth a branch that shall bear fruit. It was not too difficult for a man of Isaiah's ability and opportunity to foresee the destruction of the house of David, but it certainly was impossible for him to see more than seven hundred years in the future and predict that this house would rise again.

**The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him.** Isaiah again predicts that the Holy Spirit would come upon him. (Isa. 61: 1ff.) Jesus read this prophecy in the synagogue at Nazareth and taught that it applied to himself. (Luke 4: 16.) In fulfillment of this prophecy, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism. (Matt. 3: 16.) He remained upon him during all his life, enabling him to do the things which he did, even to the offering of his body on Calvary. (Heb. 9: 14.) This Spirit is described by three pairs of graces mentioned in our text. (1) Wisdom and understanding, by which is meant intellectual and moral apprehension, or the ability to perceive moral and abstract truth. (2) Counsel and might, or the power to originate and to carry out thoughts into actions. (3) Knowledge and fear of Jehovah, or acquaintance with the true will of God combined with the determination to carry out that will to the full extent. (Pulpit Commentary.)

**His delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah.** Jesus often said that he came into the world to do the will of his Father. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4: 34.)

**He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes.** It is said that Jesus did not need to know what was in the heart of man because he knew already without being told. He did not judge by appearance, but by his ability to read the hearts of people. He often answered people by the thoughts of their hearts and not by their words. (Mark 2: 8.)

**With righteousness shall he judge the poor.** This chapter describes the character of the reign of the Messiah. He should be known as one who would preach the gospel to the poor, one who would heal the sick, who would give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and even raise the dead to life again. (Isa. 35: 5ff.; Luke 7: 22, 23.)

**He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth.** This refers to the judgments and commandments of Jesus Christ. His word is quick and powerful, and it has the power to save the believer and to condemn the unbeliever. "The discriminating preaching; the pungent discourses; the authoritative commands of the Lord Jesus when on earth showed, and his judicial decisions in the day of judgment will show, the manner of the fulfillment of the prediction." (Barnes.)

**Righteousness shall be the girdle.** This verse contains two words descriptive of Messiah's reign. These words are righteousness and faithfulness, or justice and truth. These characteristics were ever to be with him and to be descriptive of his rule over people.

## II. The Character of Messiah's Subjects (Isa. 11: 6-9)

### *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.*

A number of beasts of prey are represented as living in peace with the mild and harmless beasts, and even with children. Certainly the prophet did not mean that the coming of the Messiah would change the nature of wild, ravenous beasts, but he simply means that the natures of men will be so changed by the influence of Messiah's reign that whereas they were sinful and destructive they will become righteous and peaceful. Some explain the passage as meaning that the ferocious beasts represent the men of the world, especially those in governmental authority, and that the influence of Messiah will be such on them that they will allow the lambs and children, who represent subjects of the Messiah, to live in peace and security in the world. It is true that the reign of the Messiah has had an influence on government, causing governments to cease the persecution of Christians, but this seems not to be the primary idea in the mind of Isaiah. He is rather saying that Messiah's reign will change those who have the characteristics of ferocious beasts into the mild, harmless type. In other words, he is describing the nature of those converted to the Messiah rather than the nature of the world toward those under Messiah's reign. A kindred passage says, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isa. 2: 4.) Here again, we must interpret the passage to mean that people of one nation who become Messiah's subjects will not take up the sword against people of another nation who are Messiah's subjects.

### *They shall not hurt nor destroy.*

This cannot refer to Messiah's influence upon nations as such. If we should give the passage that interpretation, we would have to deny the power of the Messiah to do that which the prophet said he would do, for certainly Christ has not had that influence on nations at this time. During our generation the whole world practically has been plunged into two destructive wars, and at present there seems to be but little between the world and another war.

But it is true that as rapidly as individuals in these various nations accept the Messiah and become subject to his rule, they cease to learn war and turn their thoughts toward peace. This being true, the efforts of all those who hate war and love peace should be turned toward the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ that all men might become subjects of the Prince of Peace and learn war no more.

### *The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah.*

This must not be taken to mean that as soon as the Messiah comes and establishes his kingdom that the whole earth will be flooded with the knowledge of God and remain that way throughout all generations. The knowledge of God did reach every nation under heaven in Paul's day. (Col. 1: 23.) But that does not necessarily mean that every individual on earth in that day knew the Messiah in the sense of being saved by him. Nor does it mean that every generation since that time has taken the gospel to the whole world. But it does suggest that the purpose of the Messiah is to flood the earth with the knowledge of God, and it should be the business and the consuming passion of all Messiah's subjects today to see to it that the gospel of Christ covers the earth as the waters of the earth cover the sea.

## III. Extent of Messiah's Reign (Isa.

11: 10, 11)

*And it shall come to pass in that day.* The day referred to is that day when the root of Jesse appears. This refers to the "shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots."

*Standeth for an ensign of the people.* There are three things said that shall come to pass in that day. The first is that this root of Jesse shall be an ensign for the people. The word "ensign" means a sign or a flag; it might represent a national flag, but in this it simply suggests that around which people rally and to which they profess loyalty. This root of Jesse is to be that around which people gather and to which they give their loyalty.

*Unto him shall the nations seek.* The word "nations" refers to the Gentiles. Isaiah was not so narrow and nationally selfish that he could not see beyond the Jewish people and

nation. He looked forward to a day when the Gentiles would rejoice in the Messiah for whom he looked. This may very well be taken as proof of the inspiration of this passage, for no loyal, patriotic Jew of Isaiah's time would have predicted that the Gentiles would be received into Messiah's kingdom. Amos looked forward to the time of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David as a sign of the right of the Gentiles to have part in the reign of the Messiah. James looked upon the establishment of the church as the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David and rejoiced that the Gentiles were admitted into the church, the kingdom of the Messiah. (Acts 15: 14-18.) Paul teaches us that the Gentiles were included in the promise God made to Abraham to bless all nations through his seed. (Eph. 3: 4-7.)

*His resting place shall be glorious.* This is the third thing the prophet said would come to pass when the root of Jesse springs up; he would have a glorious resting place. Undoubtedly this refers to his kingdom or the church which the Messiah established. It would be a place of rest from sin and from troubled conscience; it would be a place of rest

from the dread of the consequence of our sin and would finally prepare us for and lead us to that glorious eternal rest prepared for all Messiah's faithful subjects.

*The Lord will set his hand ... to recover the remnant of his people.* This takes in the Jews. Verse 10 said the Gentiles would be in the reign of Messiah, and now this verse says the Jews will be in the reign of Messiah. To interpret this to mean that the Lord will gather his Jews back to Palestine would be out of harmony with the general meaning of the passage. The prophet is looking forward to the time of Messiah and to a spiritual reign instead of a temporal reign in Palestine. Paul presents the church as that one body composed of both Jews and Gentiles under the headship of Christ. (Eph. 2: 14ff.; Col. 1: 19ff.) Since Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would rule over both Jews and Gentiles and Paul tells of the church, or kingdom, composed of both Jews and Gentiles under the headship of Christ, we must conclude that the church is that kingdom which Isaiah predicted would be composed of the Jews and Gentiles who would rally around the ensign of Messiah.

### Lessons to Learn

1. We should be encouraged to know the character of the Messiah as pictured by Isaiah. We can learn from the New Testament that Jesus of Nazareth was such a character, and in him we see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. And by the correspondence of the prediction and his character, we may know that he is the Messiah.

2. We must strive to cultivate that character which Isaiah said the subjects of Messiah's kingdom would

have. If we cultivate that character, we may be assured that we are members of his kingdom, but if we have not that character, we may be sure that we are not citizens in Messiah's kingdom.

3. We should rejoice that we are members of a world-wide kingdom. If we do not have this world-wide view, we may rest assured that we are no part of that kingdom of the Messiah.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What is a Messianic prophecy?

How do we know our text is from a Messianic prophecy?

What is God's holy mountain?

What did Isaiah say of the church?

Does our text refer to a period of universal peace among nations?

What did Isaiah say of the character of people in Messiah's kingdom?

Can you give scriptural proof that we become children of God through knowledge?

What is said to be essential to our growth in Christ?

Introduction

What is the value of these Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament?

What do you know of Jewish national exclusiveness?

For what special purpose did God use the Jews?

How do the Messianic prophecies help people today to believe in Jesus as the Messiah?

The Messiah Will Come

What figure of speech is used to refer to the Messiah?

What two things did Isaiah have the ability to foresee?

What did Isaiah say would rest upon the Messiah? and when fulfilled?

What three pairs of graces are used to describe the Holy Spirit?

In what did Isaiah say the Messiah would delight?

What is said of the Messiah's power to judge?

What would be the attitude of Messiah toward the poor?

What two words are used to describe Messiah's reign?

#### The Character of Messiah's Subjects

Did Isaiah predict that the Messiah would change the nature of wild beasts?

Did Isaiah predict that Messiah would so influence rulers that they would not persecute the people of God?

What does the kindred passage in Isa. 2:4 teach?

What is the effect of Messiah's reign on the hearts of individuals?

What is said of the spread of the knowledge of Jehovah?

What should be the efforts of Messiah's subjects to bring about this condition?

#### Extent of Messiah's Reign

What is an ensign? and what is the ensign here mentioned?

Who are the "nations" in this text?

Why is Isaiah's attitude toward Gentiles a proof of his inspiration?

Can you put the prophecy of Amos and the teaching of James together and prove that the church is the reign of Messiah predicted?

What is Messiah's resting place mentioned? and what is said of it?

Who are the "remnant of his people" mentioned in this text?

Does this passage teach that God will gather the Jews back to Palestine?

Can you show that the church is Messiah's reign over both Jews and Gentiles?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson IV—April 28, 1957

# THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

### Lesson Text

Isa. 53: 1-12

1 Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Je-ho'-vah been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Je-ho'-vah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; 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.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who *among them* considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*?

9 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased Je-h6'-vah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Je-ho'-vah shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

GOLDEN TEXT. — "*He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*" (Isa. 53: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING. — Isa. 52: 1-10.

### Daily Bible Readings

April 22. M.....	Offering of the Blood of Christ (Heb. 9: 11-14)
April 23. T.....	Christ Bore Our Sins (Heb. 9: 23-28)
April 24. W.....	The Offering of Christ (Heb. 10: 1-14)
April 25.	T. We Enter by the Blood of Jesus (Heb. 10: 19-25)
April 26.	F. The Blood of the Covenant (Heb. 10: 26-31)
April 27. S.....	Christ Saves to the Uttermost (Heb. 7: 18-28)
April 28. S.....	Christ an Example of Suffering (1 Pet. 4: 12-18)

TIME. — 712 B.C.

PLACE. — JERUSALEM.

PERSONS. — Isaiah and the Messiah.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Jewish expectations,** (a) Born of great and noble family. The Jews expected their Messiah to be born of the seed of David. When Jesus asked them whose son the Messiah was, they answered that he was the son of David. (Matt. 22: 42.) They expected David's family to retain the throne and that the Messiah would be the descendant of David who would be heir to the throne. Hence, they expected him to be born in circumstances and conditions of wealth and splendor, (b) Fair and of beautiful countenance. That the physical appearance of their men of importance appealed to the Jews is seen in the fact that Moses is said to have been exceeding fair at the time of his birth. (Acts 7: 20.) And the writer of Hebrews tells us that he was a goodly child. (Heb. 11: 23.) Of David's appearance at the time he was anointed by Samuel we read, "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." (1 Sam. 16: 12.) If these things appealed to the Jews with reference to David, certainly they would also appeal with reference to the son of David, their Messiah and Deliverer, (c) Make a show of pomp and power. The Jews expected their Messiah to establish a temporal kingdom whose capital would be Jerusalem; they expected him to overthrow the Roman Empire, release the Jews from the bondage of Rome, gather all the Jews of the earth back into their own land, and from that as a center to rule the world. And they tried to take him by force and make him a king in order to accomplish these things. (John 6: 15.)

2. **Jewish disappointment,** (a) His humble birth. Instead of being born in circumstances of wealth and splendor, Jesus was born into a home of poverty and in the despised city of Nazareth, (b) His humble associates. Jesus did not associate himself with the high and mighty in Jerusalem. He chose as his associates fishermen, tax collectors, and men of other humble walks of life. Not only that, but he associated with publicans and sinners, worked among them, preached to them, and said that many of them would go into the kingdom before the notables of Jerusalem. In the eyes of the Jewish hierarchy, such attitudes and activities as characterized Jesus of Nazareth could not possibly belong to the Messiah for whom they looked, (c) His heavenly kingdom. The Jews expected the Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom, use carnal weapons to throw off the yoke of Rome, and dispense physical, carnal rewards. But Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world, that it did not come by observation and display, but that it was within the hearts of people. (d) He claimed equality with God. The Jews expected their Messiah to be an ordinary human being. Upon this ordinary man they expected God to send the Spirit of the Messiah. The word Messiah simply means anointed. They believed that God would anoint an ordinary human being to be their deliverer. Jesus claimed to be equal with God; this the Jews accepted as blasphemy. They could not understand how he could be both the Son of God and the son of David. (Matt. 22: 42-46.)

3. **Jesus suffered the consequences.**

(a) He was despised. He came to his own, and they that were his own received him not. (John 1: 11.) He was hated by the Jews because he said their works were evil. (John 7: 7.) He exposed their human traditions and condemned them as being contrary to the will of God. (Mark 7: 1ff.) Because he did not measure up to the Jews' expectation concerning their Messiah, and because he exposed their false teachings and unscriptural practices, he was despised by the majority of the Jews, (b) He was rejected. He offered himself to his people as their Messiah and through his miracles offered sufficient evidence of the truth of his claim. (John 15: 22-24.) Some of the people who saw his works asked if the Messiah would do any greater works than these when he should come, indicating that they thought that the

works which Jesus did were sufficient to prove his claim to be the Messiah. (John 7: 27ff.) His final and complete rejection came in his trial before the Jews when they accused him of blasphemy and condemned him to death on that account. (Mark 14: 61-65.) (c) He sorrowed. Our text calls him a man of sorrow, and he sorrowed because he was rejected by the people he came to save. He sorrowed because of the sorrow and suffering of his people; he wept over the city of Jerusalem when it had finally and completely rejected him. (Matt. 23: 37.) He sorrowed because his people were lost in sin, and not only the Jewish people but all the people of the world lost in sin. And he sorrowed because of the hardness of heart of the people who should have received him and loved him.

## Introduction

We are dealing with one of the greatest prophecies in all the Bible. If Isaiah wrote this chapter, and if Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the predictions of the chapter, the orthodox Jew should accept Jesus as his Messiah. He should give up his ideas and his longings for a temporal kingdom and receive Jesus as his Messiah and the church as the spiritual kingdom the Messiah came to establish. And if Isaiah wrote this chapter and Jesus is the fulfillment of the predictions of this chapter, the modern infidel and unbelievers of all stripes should accept the Bible as the in-

spired word of God. Surely no uninspired man could predict in such detail the character and work of a man so many years in advance. And if Isaiah wrote this chapter by inspiration, there is no room to doubt that all the rest of the book of Isaiah is inspired. And if the book of Isaiah is inspired, there is no cause to believe that any other part of the Bible is not inspired. And if the Bible is inspired, men ought to cease their unbelief, accept the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament and described in the New Testament.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Messiah and His Message Rejected

(Isa. 53: 1-3)

*Who hath believed our message?*

Whether Isaiah was asking if his message would be received by the people of his time, or whether the message of the Messiah would be received by the people of his time is difficult to determine. We know that people generally did not receive the Messiah's message, and it is most probable that the people of Isaiah's time did not understand this prophecy. In the tenth verse of the preceding chapter, Isaiah tells us that "Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations." But whether Isaiah intended this to refer to his time or to the time of the

Messiah is difficult to determine. Certainly in the works of Jesus Christ the arm, or omnipotence of God, was clearly revealed. However, many of the people in his day closed their eyes to the fact that his works were accomplished through the power of God, hence did not see the arm of Jehovah revealed in his works.

*He grew up before him as a tender plant.* In this the prophet means to say that Jesus the Messiah grew up before God as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. The tenderness here refers to the seeming weakness of Jesus as compared to the might of the political and military authorities of his day. The

word "root" refers to Jesus the Messiah and the words "dry ground" refer to the environment and circumstances out of which the Messiah came. As a root or shoot growing out of dry ground has little likelihood of growing into anything pretentious, so the Messiah would come out of circumstances and environment which to human judgment would make it seem impossible for him to accomplish that which was predicted of the Messiah.

*He hath no form nor comeliness.* The prophet passes from the environment out of which the Messiah would come to the appearance of the Messiah. There was to be nothing in the physical appearance of the Messiah that would attract people to him. He was to attract people and cause them to believe, not by any physical appearance he might have, but by his work and his teaching.

*He was despised, and rejected of men.* Instead of his being received and praised by everybody, he was to be despised and rejected. And on account of this rejection, he was to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Instead of the people turning to him as they would be expected to turn to their Messiah, they were to hide their faces from him and esteem him not.

## II. Purpose of Messiah's Suffering

(Isa. 53: 4-6)

*He hath borne our griefs.* The word "borne" means to lift up and carry away. If there is any difference between the meanings of the words "griefs" and "sorrows," it would be that griefs has reference to our bodily ailments, and sorrows to mental suffering. The word "griefs" has a reference to bodily suffering as is seen by the word "sicknesses" in the margin. Isaiah predicted that he would bear our griefs and sorrows, but did not indicate how that was to be done. The fact that he healed all sorts of diseases while here on earth would be at least a partial fulfillment of this prediction, and the fact that he will in answer to prayer heal such diseases as it is the will of God should be healed, and that he gives us the strength and courage to bear our diseases would also be in fulfillment of this prediction. Some have taken this scripture to mean that the heal-

ing of the body is, like the forgiveness of sin, a result of the work of atonement through the suffering of Christ on the cross, and that as we preach the forgiveness of sins through the suffering of Christ, so we ought to carry on a ministry of healing people's bodies through the atonement which Jesus made on the cross. However, it should be noticed that the prophet does not connect the bearing of our griefs and sorrows with the suffering of Christ on the cross as he connects the forgiveness of our sins with that suffering. Healing of the body is nowhere said to be the result of the suffering of Jesus on the cross, but the forgiveness of our sins is said to be the result of that suffering.

*We did esteem him smitten, stricken of God.* The prophet puts himself in the place along with those who beheld the suffering of Christ on Calvary. We should remember that this is a vision and Isaiah sees the incidents in the life of Christ pass before him in review in this vision. And so he speaks of himself as seeing these things as they happened to the Messiah. He says that we esteemed him stricken and smitten of God. They considered him as suffering the due reward of his deeds.

*But he was wounded for our transgressions.* Though the people thought he was stricken and smitten of God, the truth is that he was wounded for our transgressions. The word "for" in the Septuagint is the translation of a Greek preposition which means "on account of." So, the prophet said that the Messiah was wounded on account of our transgressions.

*The chastisement of our peace was upon him.* Those who sin are to be chastised, and this chastisement is for the purpose of correcting the sinner. But in our case, the chastisement due our sins is eternal punishment, from which, of course, we could not possibly recover; so the Messiah takes our place in suffering in order that we might enjoy the peace that would come as a result of that chastisement.

*All we like sheep have gone astray.* The prophet views humanity as sheep without a shepherd, and each one going his own way. The word "all" suggests that all humanity is under consideration. To go astray means to do wrong, to sin; so all have



sinned. In order to save all mankind, Jehovah laid on the Messiah the iniquity of us all. This simply means that Jehovah treated the Messiah as if he were guilty of the sins of all mankind, and the suffering which he endured was sufficient to atone for the sins of all mankind.

### III. How Messiah Endured Sufferings (Isa. 53: 7-9)

*He was oppressed.* "He was subjected to pains and sorrows which were hard to be ' borne, and which are usually accompanied with expressions of impatience and lamentations. . . . That he was perfectly quiet, meek, submissive, patient. He did not open his mouth to complain to God on account of the great sorrows which he had appointed to him; nor to God on account of his being ill treated by man." (Barnes.) The meek, quiet, unresisting lamb is used as a figure to represent our Lord who was led meekly and quietly to his death.

*By oppression and judgment he was taken away.* This verse is considered by commentators to be a very difficult verse. There are some phases that are difficult and the use of some words unusual, but the practical sense of the verse is rather clear and obvious. He was taken away, that is, he lost his life through oppression and judgment or condemnation. And then the word "generation" is perhaps the most difficult word in the verse. One of the best and most reliable of the old Hebrew scholars translates it thus: "The men of his generation." Giving the word this meaning, we have this thought: who among the men of his generation considered that he was crucified for the transgressions of the people. Since he was taken away by oppression and judgment, the men of that generation would seem to be justified in thinking that he died on account of his own sins, but those who believed in him as the Son of God and understood by faith the purpose of his mission in the world would know that he met his death willingly and in order to secure the remission of sins.

*They made his grave with the wicked.* Being crucified between two thieves, Jesus would naturally be expected to be buried with the thieves, but Isaiah saw in the vision that in spite of the fact that he was cruci-

fied, and contrary to the general practice of burying them together, he was buried in a rich man's tomb. This is a detail of the prophecy which an uninspired man could not possibly have foretold. It was so contrary to the natural order of things that it becomes an outstanding proof of the inspiration of the prophet. Since Jesus was condemned as a criminal and crucified between two thieves, the most natural thing would be that his body should be disposed of along with the thieves. But Isaiah was permitted to see into the future and recorded the fact that in spite of his death like a criminal and with criminals, he would be buried in a rich man's tomb.

*Although he had done no violence.* All through this prophecy the innocence of the Messiah is maintained. On the one hand we see him suffering as if he were a criminal, but on the other hand we have over and over affirmations of his innocence.

### IV. Result of Messiah's Sufferings (Isa. 53: 10-12)

*It pleased Jehovah to bruise him.* Jehovah is spoken of as doing that which was a part of his plan and purpose. Peter says that Christ was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. (Acts 2: 23.)

*When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.* By this we know that the offering of God's Son for the sins of the world was a part of the eternal purpose of God. Jehovah is here spoken of as making the soul of the Messiah an offering for sin. And too, this expression "offering for sin" means that the death of Jesus was more than the death of a martyr for his cause. His death was to make propitiation. (Heb. 2: 17.) And Paul tells us that God set forth Jesus to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show God's righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God . . . that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 3: 25, 26.) These verses simply tell us that God gave his Son to suffer in our place, and God is willing to accept the sufferings of the Messiah in lieu of our penalty for sin. If we had to suffer the penalty for our own sins, we would be eter-

nally destroyed; but God graciously accepts the suffering of Jesus in place of our penalty. This makes it possible for God to forgive us of our sins without being unjust. God cannot forgive sins for which an atonement has not been made.

*He shall see his seed.* The seed here is a spiritual seed, spiritual posterity. On account of his death for our sins, a spiritual posterity was made possible.

*He shall prolong his days.* The Jews thought any man greatly blessed if he had a great posterity and lived to a ripe, old age. So, one of the blessings of the Messiah was that he would see his seed, that is, his spiritual posterity, and that his days should be prolonged. However, if he died for our sins, the question would be raised as to how his days were prolonged. This implies the resurrection. So, Isaiah not only saw the death of the suffering Messiah, but he also saw his resurrection and the prolonging of his days following the resurrection.

*He shall see the travail of his soul.* Messiah is spoken of as seeing the results or the fruit of his suffering, and as being satisfied with the result of his suffering. And, one of the results of this suffering is said to be the justification of many. The fact that many are justified through his death brings joy and satisfaction to him and makes him feel that his suffering was well worth while.

*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great.* This verse suggests the picture of a conquering prince who enjoys the spoils of war. Messiah is pictured as waging war against the powers of sin. He overcomes them and enjoys the rewards or the spoils of victory.

*And made intercession for the transgressors.* There are some who would limit this to the prayer of Jesus in behalf of those who crucified him. This is too limited and restricted. This refers to his work as our advocate and intercessor at the right hand of the Father.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Faith was required in those who saw Jesus the same as it is required of those who live in this generation. His coming was contrary to their expectations; his teaching was different from that which they expected, and his appearance was not such as to convince them that he was the Messiah. They had to accept him by faith.

2. If the Messiah had not come, we would still be sheep without a shep-

herd. We should rejoice in the love of God and the goodness of our Lord who offers to be our shepherd, to feed and lead us into safety and finally eternal life.

3. He was treated like a sinner in order to save sinners. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5: 21.)

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

In what conditions and surroundings did the Jews expect their Messiah to be born?

What did they expect with reference to his countenance?

What did the Jews expect with reference to the kingdom of Messiah?

How did Jesus appeal to the Jews as to his birth and associates?

Why were the Jews disappointed in Jesus with reference to his kingdom?

What action in Jesus did the Jews consider to be blasphemy?

Can you show that he was despised? rejected? and a man of sorrows?

What was the main cause of his sorrows?

### Introduction

What can orthodox Jews do with this Messianic prophecy?

What must be the attitude of infidels toward this chapter?

Why is this chapter a powerful weapon against all types of unbelievers?

### Messiah and His Message Rejected

What did Isaiah predict with reference to the people's response to Messiah's message?

What is meant by Jehovah baring his holy arm in the sight of the nations?

What did Isaiah mean by saying Messiah would grow up as a tender root out of dry ground?

By what was the Messiah to attract people to himself?

### Purpose of Messiah's Suffering

What did Jesus do when he bore our griefs?

What is the difference between our griefs and our sorrows?

How does Jesus bear our griefs? is this included in the atonement?

According to Isaiah, why did the people think Messiah suffered?

What was God's purpose for his sufferings?

What is the chastisement due us on account of our sins?

What figure of speech did Isaiah use to picture the sinfulness of humanity?

#### How Messiah Endured Sufferings

What animal did Isaiah use to show the quiet, patient submissiveness of Messiah?

Through what did Isaiah say Messiah would lose his life?

What did Isaiah say the men of his generation would think of the purpose of his death?

What should have been the usual disposition of the body of Jesus?

What weight do these details have in proof of the inspiration of Isaiah?

Concerning the character of Messiah, what does Isaiah hold forth continually?

#### Result of Messiah's Sufferings

How did Jehovah bruise the Messiah?

What is meant by making the Messiah's soul an offering for sin?

In lieu of what, does God accept the suffering of Christ in our behalf?

What is the seed of the Messiah?

In what language does Isaiah predict the resurrection of Jesus?

What are the results of the sufferings which Messiah was to see?

Who are the transgressors for whom Messiah makes intercession?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson V—May 5, 1957

### AN OFFER OF MERCY

#### Lesson Text

##### Isa. 55: 1-11

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Je-ho'-vah thy God, and for the Holy One of Is'-ra-el; for he hath glorified thee.

6 Seek ye Je-ho'-vah while he may

be found; call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Je-ho'-vah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Je-ho'-vah.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

**Golden Text.**—*"Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near"* (Isa. 55: 6.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Isa. 55: 12, 13.

#### Daily Bible Readings

April 29. M.....The Lord of Great Mercy (Psalm 103: 1-11)  
 April 30. T.....His Mercy Shall Not Depart (2 Sam. 7: 1-15)  
 May 1. W.....Goodness and Mercy to Follow (Psalm 23: 1-6)  
 May 2. T.....Do Justly and Love Mercy (Mic. 6: 1-8)

May 3. F. .... God Rich in Mercy (Eph. 2: 1-10)  
 May 4. S. .... Gentiles Obtained Mercy (1 Pet. 2: 1-10)  
 May 5. S. .... The Sure Mercies of David (Isa. 55: 1-3)

TIME.—712 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Isaiah and the people of Judah.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Seek ye Jehovah,** (a) Seeking shows interest. From one point of view, the Lord is seeking to save that which was lost. (Luke 19: 10.) And the Lord pictured himself as a shepherd who goes out to search for his sheep that are lost. (Luke 15: 1ff.) Yet from another point of view, there is something that the lost must do. People who are lost must realize their lost condition before they are ready to be found and to be saved by the Lord. They must be willing to turn from their lost condition and accept that salvation which the Lord has to offer. Jesus teaches that we must hunger and thirst after righteousness if we would expect to be filled. (Matt. 5: 6.) And again, he teaches us that we should seek if we expect to find. (Matt. 7: 7.) While the Lord seeks to create this interest in our hearts, this hungering and thirsting after him and his righteousness, yet he will not force it upon us. And if a person never cultivates this interest in things heavenly and spiritual, he will never be in position to be found and saved by the Lord, (b) Where we should seek. There are those who think they will find God in nature. All the satisfaction which their soul craves they claim to find in the beauties of nature. There are others who seek satisfaction for their souls in philosophy, while others try to find satisfaction in pleasure. But God has not been revealed in these things; we must find God in God's own revelation. This revelation is recorded and preserved for us in the Bible. Hence, if we expect to find God and come to an understanding of the person and character and work of God, we must study the revelation of God. Nor will one find God in this revelation if he is determined to find discrepancies and contradictions in this revelation. One must come to the book with an open mind and a mind willing to receive truth as he finds it there revealed, (c) We must seek according to God's terms. One who seeks with the idea of do-

ing what he pleases, or of rejecting what displeases him, will not find God in the revelation of God.

2. **While he may be found,** (a) In the days of our youth. The wise man tells us to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. (Eccles. 12: 1.) Youth is a formative period when people are more inclined to be religious minded, and it is a time when they have greater faith and less skepticism. Records show that the great majority of people who profess religion of any kind do so before they are twenty years of age. (b) Difficulties of old age. The wise man continues after saying we should remember our Creator in the days of our youth lest there come a time when we shall say we have no pleasure in these things. Business obligations and worries connected with our business and home life tend to consume our time and mental energies, and we have little time to think about seeking after God. Furthermore, habits of life are established by the time we are in middle life, and it is difficult for one to break those established habits of unconcern for spiritual things and to put in their place a deep and vital concern for spiritual things and to give time to spiritual things that has ordinarily been given to the things of the world, (c) Before the evil days come. The wise man encourages us to remember our Creator before the evil days come. This most certainly refers to the time of death, and those who do not find Jehovah before death will certainly have no opportunity to find him after death. Hence, the necessity for seeking Jehovah while he may be found, and since he may be found most easily and readily in the days of our youth, that is the time when all men ought to seek him.

3. **Call upon Jehovah,** (a) Calling involves turning. If someone is calling you to attract your attention, that one has turned toward you, and that individual who is calling on God

most certainly must be turned toward God. God would not listen to one call upon him while that one's back is to the Lord and he is going in the direction of Satan, (b) Calling involves prayer. Saul of Tarsus was told to arise and be baptized "calling on his name." (Acts 22: 16.) This calling on the name of the Lord was most certainly a prayer to God for salvation. While prayer is not all there is included in calling on the

Lord for salvation, yet it most certainly is included in that, (c) Calling involves obedience. The Lord will not listen to our prayer if we are disobedient to him. Jesus teaches us that there is no need to call on him unless we are willing to do the things he commands. (Luke 6: 46.) Saul of Tarsus would have been inconsistent to call on the Lord for salvation while refusing to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins.

## Introduction

There are those who believe that the Book of Isaiah was written by two men, one seven centuries before Christ and the other at a much later date. This theory is without foundation and is most certainly untrue. The object of the theory is to place some of the writings late enough to account for the mention of certain things as a matter of history instead of a matter of prophecy. If the things the prophet foretold can be shown to have occurred in harmony with the prophecies, all must admit that the man who wrote the book was inspired. But if these critics can show that part of the book was written late enough to account for the

mention of certain things as history, instead of matters of prophecy, they have gained their point. However, no one has dared to set the date of the writing of these prophetic portions of the book as late as the time of Christ and the apostles. We have the Septuagint, the Hebrew Old Testament translated into Greek in 280 B. C., which contains the Book of Isaiah as it appears in our Bible today. This is proof that all of Isaiah was written at least three centuries before the time of the fulfillment of some of the prophecies. Hence, we must confess that Isaiah was written by inspiration.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. All Are Invited (Isa. 55: 1-3)

Ho, *everyone that thirsteth*. This is addressed to "everyone that thirsteth." And the invitation is to come and buy and eat, to buy wine and milk without money and without price. Certainly this is simply the prophet's poetical way of inviting people to come and partake of the blessings of the Messiah and of his kingdom. It also suggests the freeness of this—that it cannot be bought with money, but that it can be had simply for the taking. But we want you to notice that the invitation is to "everyone." Since all humanity thirsts or longs for salvation and eternal life, and since everyone that thirsts is invited, it follows that all humanity is invited to enjoy eternal life. But surely God would not invite all humanity when he had fore-ordained that a portion of humanity would be lost. Hence, we consider this passage as proof of God's willingness to save any and all who will respond to his invitation.

*Wherefore do you spend money for*

*that which is not bread?* Men spend millions for pleasure, and yet the longings of the soul are not satisfied. They spend years of time and effort in philosophy, and yet the deeper longings of the soul are not satisfied. The heathen bows down to the idols which he has made with his hands, but there is no genuine satisfaction to the longings of the soul. And many people are trying to find satisfaction in man-made ways of worship and service to God in our own country, but yet doubts arise to perplex and torment them because they cannot be sure that these things are satisfactory to God. Only those who seek God in his appointed way, and who can give a "thus-saith-the-Lord" for the things they teach and practice in their worship and service to God can have the genuine and lasting satisfaction. These are the things which the prophet describes as that which is good and that which is fatness to the soul.

*Incline your ear, and come unto me.* Those who find God and come

unto him and God's appointed way have the assurance that they shall live. But those who spend their time and effort for that which is not genuine, that which is not the spiritual food for the soul, have not the assurance that they shall live.

**And I will make an everlasting covenant with you.** This covenant is one to be made with all who will accept Jehovah's invitation. This is not a covenant to be made with old Israel after the flesh, but a covenant to be made with the subjects of Messiah. And this covenant is described as "the sure mercies of David." God made a covenant with David and all who accept this invitation of Jehovah to become subjects of the Messiah would be in this covenant which God made with David. This covenant may be found in 2 Sam. 7: 12ff.; Psalm 89: 2-4, and we find Peter referring to this covenant as a promise that God swore to David he would fulfill by raising up Christ and setting him on his throne. (Acts 2: 29ff.) Hence, we conclude that the covenant of which Jesus Christ is the mediator is that "everlasting covenant" or the "sure mercies of David" to which the prophet here refers.

## II. A Leader Appointed (Isa. 55: 4, 5)

**I have given him for a witness.** Commentators are divided on the question as to whom the prophet had in mind by the word "him" in this verse. Some claim that the word refers to David while others claim that the prophet had the Messiah in mind. Undoubtedly the latter is right. David could not have been appointed as a witness to the people in the time of Isaiah, or at any time subsequent to that. Peter reminds us that David "both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day." (Acts 2: 29.) The name David is given to the Messiah in a number of Messianic prophecies. (Ezek. 34: 23, 24; Jer. 30: 9; Hos. 3: 5.) The prophet said that the Messiah to come would be a witness to the people, and we find Jesus in fulfillment to this being a witness. A witness is one who gives testimony. Jesus gave witness or testimony to the fact that he was sent from the Father, and that he did the works of the Father. (John 8: 18.) The works which he did also bore witness to the

fact that he was from the Father, for no one could do the works he did except the Father be with him. And again, he said that he came into the world that he should bear witness unto the truth. (John 8: 37.) So, we find Jesus of Nazareth fulfilling the demands of this prophecy concerning the Messiah. And again, the prophet said that he was to be a leader and commander to the people. Certainly, no one ever could or can fulfill the requirements of this prophecy to a greater degree than Jesus has fulfilled them. He was a leader during his lifetime. He gathered a number of his disciples and apostles around him, and was worthy of the confidence which they put in him as their teacher and leader. He has been a leader of men and of nations from that time to the present. He has been able to command people without the promise of great wealth or without the use of carnal arms to enforce his commandments. People have been obedient to him without the hope of carnal reward or without the fear of punishment. Millions of people have been willing to follow his commandments for no other reason than that they loved him for what he has done for them, and for the joy of the hope of living with him in the world to come.

**Thou shalt call a nation.** Here it is said that the one referred to would call a nation. This is proof that the pronoun "him" in the preceding verse could not refer to David, for certainly David would not be in position to call a nation that he did not know. Nor would other nations turn to him and run to him for blessing. But Jesus as Messiah has called a nation which he formerly did not know, or which formerly was not his own. The Jewish nation was considered the people of God until the time of Messiah, but since that time no one nation has been known as God's people. And the calling of a nation which he had not known refers to the calling of the Gentiles. The prophet continues to say that nations which knew him not would run unto him. That, of course, is fulfilled in the Gentile nations' turning to him for salvation. The word "run" suggests the eagerness with which these Gentile nations would turn to him. This we see fulfilled in the eagerness of the Gentile to receive the

gospel of Christ when it had been rejected by the Jews. We have an example of this in Paul's experiences at Antioch of Pisidia. There he preached the gospel to the Jews first, and when they blasphemed and persecuted him he said he would turn to the Gentiles. "And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts 13: 45-48.) Paul had a similar experience in Home when he preached the gospel to representatives of the Jews in that city. When they disbelieved, he said, "Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear." (Acts 28: 28.)

*Because of Jehovah thy God.* This turning of the nations to the Messiah was to be on account of the goodness and mercy of Jehovah. The Messiah was to testify of the goodness of Jehovah and to manifest in his person the wisdom, power, and goodness of Jehovah. And because he thus manifested God in his life and in his teaching, these nations were to turn unto him.

### III. Reasons for Seeking Jehovah

(Isa. 55: 6-11)

*Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found.* Here we have the invitation to seek Jehovah and to call upon him, and the exhortation also to the wicked to forsake his wicked ways and the unrighteous man to turn from his thoughts. This suggests the necessity of repentance in the lives of every one of us. No one can live in his own ways, follow his own inclinations and satisfy the desires and lusts of his flesh and be acceptable to God. We must turn from our own ways and our own thoughts to seek and find Jehovah.

*He will have mercy upon him.* This is one of the reasons suggested why people should seek Jehovah, and this mercy of Jehovah will manifest itself in its willingness to pardon the sinner abundantly. This, of course, is the sinner's only hope of salvation. If God is not willing to pardon, there is no hope for humanity. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; there is none that does righteousness in the absolute sense; there is none that doeth good. Since all have sinned, and since sin destroys

all eternally, it follows that none can be saved unless God is willing to pardon. Hence, we all have cause for great rejoicing that God is described as one who will abundantly pardon.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts.* We must recognize the fact that we do not by nature think the thoughts of God. We are not by birth capable of living in such way as to please God. Nor can we through our own learning find God and the way to worship and serve God. This is somewhat humiliating and embarrassing to men who take pride in their own wisdom, and for this reason many of the wise and mighty refuse to turn to God. They simply refuse to acknowledge that they are incapable of saving themselves; they refuse to admit that the way they think and the way they live is such as to unfit them for heaven. But Jehovah affirms that his ways and thoughts are as far above the ways and thoughts of men as the heavens are higher than the earth. This affirms that the purity and the wisdom of Jehovah are so far above those of men that all men must turn from their own thoughts and their own ways and accept the ways and the thoughts of God.

*For as the rain cometh down.* In this statement we have an illustration. The rain coming down does not return thither without accomplishing the purpose for which it was sent. The purpose of the rain is to make the barren ground fertile and fruitful. The earth must have moisture before it can produce vegetation.

*So shall my word be.* The word is to the heart of people what the rain and the snow are to the dry earth. And as the rain and snow do not return without first accomplishing the purposes of God who sent them, so his word does not return to him without accomplishing the purpose for which he sent it. We make a mistake in thinking that the gospel can be preached without having any effect whatsoever upon people. The preaching of the gospel always has its result. If people believe it and are submissive to it, it will result in their salvation. If they do not believe it or are not submissive to it, it will result in a hardening of their hearts and finally to their

condemnation. So the word of God is sent forth to accomplish the purposes of God. In the hearts and lives of believing penitents, his purpose is salvation, but in the hearts and lives of the unbelieving and the rebellious,

his purpose is that of damnation. Our lesson text closes with this solemn declaration: "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

### Lessons to Learn

1. God's goodness to all men is emphasized in our lesson today, and Gentiles should be exceedingly glad that God is good to all nations, for there was a time when the Jews were considered to be the only people of God.

2. God's ways are higher than our ways; his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. The standard of God has always been above that of the world. If the church today lives by the standards of the world, it will

not live as pure and wholesome a life as God expects it to live.

3. Studying God's word is fraught with great responsibility and danger, but refusing to study his word is even more dangerous. When we study we must be submissive to his word. If we rebel we shall be lost. But we cannot evade this responsibility by refusing to study, for refusing to study will be self-imposed ignorance of God's will which will damn our souls.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

Show how we seek the Lord and the Lord seeks us.

Where can we reasonably expect to find God revealed to us?

According to what rules must one seek God?

In what period of life is God most easily found?

What difficulties do men have in old age in seeking God?

What are the evil days of our text?

Name and discuss three things involved in calling upon God.

#### Introduction

Why do some scholars try to prove that the book of Isaiah was written by two men?

What is the Septuagint? and the date of its translation?

How does this date help us in proving the inspiration of Isaiah?

#### All Are Invited

What two things are suggested in Jehovah's invitation?

What does this suggest with reference to God's willingness to save all humanity?

How may one "spend his money for that which is not bread"?

With whom is this everlasting covenant made?

What are the "sure mercies of David" mentioned in the text?

What did Peter say about this covenant God made with David?

#### A Leader Appointed

Whom did Jehovah give for a witness and a leader?

How did Jesus bear witness? and to what did he witness?

Can you show how he fulfilled the prediction to be a leader of nations?

What nation did Messiah call which had not been known, recognized as his?

What does the word "run" in this text suggest? and give illustration.

Why were the nations to turn to Jehovah?

#### Reasons for Seeking Jehovah

What does God's invitation to seek him make necessary in all of us?

What does God promise to all who seek him? and why should we rejoice in this promise?

What does God say about his thoughts compared to man's thoughts?

What effect does this usually have on the worldly wise?

How does the prophet show that the word of God always accomplishes its purpose?

What two purposes can the word of God accomplish in man?

What determines whether this purpose shall be beneficial or destructive?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?



## Lesson VI—May 12, 1957

## JEREMIAH THE PROPHET

## Lesson Text

## Jer. 1: 1-10

1 The words of Jer-e-mi'-ah the son of Hil-ki'-ah, of the priests that were in An'-a-thoth in the land of Ben'-ja-min:

2 To whom the word of Je-ho'-vah came in the days of Jo-si'-ah the son of A'-mon, king of Ju'-dah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

3 It came also in the days of Je-hoi'-a-kim the son of Jo-si'-ah, king of Ju'-dah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zed-e-ki'-ah, the son of Jo-si'-ah, king of Ju'-dah, unto the carrying away of Je-ru'-sa-lem captive in the fifth month.

4 Now the word of Je-ho'-vah came unto me, saying,

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou earnest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a

prophet unto the nations.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord Je-ho'-vah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child.

7 But Je-ho'-vah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Je-ho'-vah.

9 Then Je-ho'-vah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Je-ho'-vah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth:

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

**Golden Text.**—*"Whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak."* (Jer. 1: 7b.)

**Devotional Heading.**—Jer. 1: 11-19.

## Daily Bible Readings

May 6. M.....	Jeremiah a Mighty Man (1 Chron. 12: 1-4)
May 7. T.....	Jeremiah's Warning (Jer. 26: 1-7)
May 8. W. . . . .	The Babylonian Crisis (Jer. 26: 8-16)
May 9. T.....	Jeremiah's Sorrow for Josiah (2 Chron. 35: 20-25)
May 10. F.....	Jeremiah Speaks for God (Jer. 14: 1-8)
May 11. S.....	The People Gather Against Jeremiah (Jer. 26: 1-9)
May 12. S.....	Jeremiah's Prophecy (Matt. 2: 16-23)

**TIME.**—629 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Jerusalem.

**PERSONS.**—Jeremiah and the people of Judah.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. God's right to command.** (a) He is our creator. Paul argues that the creature is to be in subjection to the creator. (Rom. 9: 20.) And Isaiah represents Jehovah as claiming allegiance from and promising blessings to Israel on the ground that he was their creator. (Isa. 43: 1; 44: 21.) So God had the right to command Jeremiah to speak whatsoever he would give him, and we today as God's creatures have no right to speak as authoritative in religion anything other than that which God has given us. (b) His superior wisdom. God's right to command us to

speak whatever he wills is based upon his superior wisdom. He is infinitely wise, and his ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than ours. Consequently, he has the right to command us what to speak, (c) The people who hear what we speak are his. Since the message which God wishes us to deliver is to be heard and obeyed by his people, Jehovah has the right to determine what they shall hear. God promises blessings upon certain conditions. His creatures have the right to know the conditions set by Jehovah in or-

der that they may obtain these blessings.

2. **God has spoken.** (a) To the fathers in the Old Testament. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers ... by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." (Heb. 1: 1, 2.) From this verse we learn the most simple and natural division of the Bible. God in olden time spoke unto the fathers by the prophets. By "olden time" we mean the time before the death of Christ, and by the "prophets" is meant those men who spoke as God gave them utterance through the Holy Spirit. The message which the Holy Spirit gave those prophets to deliver to the fathers is recorded and preserved for us in the book we call the Old Testament, (b) God hath in these last days spoken unto us through his Son. The Son taught his apostles and prophets things which he wanted them to transmit to succeeding generations. He was not willing to leave them on their own, but sent them the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance all the things he had taught them, to show them things to come, and to guide them into all truth. This promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2: 1-4.) These apostles laid their hands on other men and imparted the gift of prophecy so they could speak unto edification, exhortation, and consolation as the Spirit moved them. (1 Cor. 1: 1-4.) The words which these apostles and prophets spoke are recorded and preserved for us in that portion of the Bible we call the New Testament, (c) The Holy Spirit inspired both the Old Testament and

the New Testament. Peter says that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1: 21.) And Paul demanded that people accept that which he wrote because he wrote the commandments of the Lord and he affirmed that he did so by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 7: 40; 14: 37.) And the apostle John represents his writings as being the words of the Spirit which the churches are to hear. (Rev. 3: 6.) And he pronounced a curse upon any who will add to or take away from those words. (Rev. 22: 18, 19.)

3. **Revelation is complete.** (a) No new revelations are needed. Jude tells us that the faith has been once for all revealed to the saints. (Jude 3.) And if the apostles taught us not to add to or take from the revelations made through them, we may be sure that they had given us all that was needed, (b) The apostle Paul teaches us that we are completely furnished unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) And Peter assures us that God has granted us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through a knowledge of the things which have been revealed to us through the apostles as they were moved by the Spirit. (2 Pet. 1: 3.) Hence, no new revelations are needed, (c) Conclusion. If God has completely revealed his will concerning us, we must conclude two things. First, that in the Bible is included all that God wills for us to do in our work and worship. Second, anything -which is not included in the Bible is no part of the will of God for us. Hence, we are limited to God's revelation of himself in the Bible; we are limited in our work and worship to those things which are revealed by the Lord through his inspired apostles and prophets.

## Introduction

Jeremiah has been called "the weeping prophet." He lived at a time when the Lord's prophet was the most unpopular person in the nation. He was not allowed to marry and have a family as other men because of the sorrows and persecutions which would come to him and because of him on a family. (Jer. 16: 2ff.) In this same chapter we learn that he was not allowed to weep with those who were weeping, nor was he

allowed to go into the house of feasting and sit with them and enjoy a feast. The prophecies which he was required to utter made him appear to be unpatriotic, and at times, a traitor to his own government. When sentiment was running high in Jerusalem to make an alliance with the king of Egypt for protection against the Chaldeans, Jeremiah was required to advise the king and his people to reject the proffered aid of

Egypt and to submit themselves to the Chaldeans. His enemies laughed him to scorn, persecuted him in every way possible, and punished him by putting him in an abandoned cistern. At times, he cried in anguish, wondering if he had been deceived to utter wrong predictions and occasionally he would resolve to utter

no more prophecy. Then the word of the Lord would burn within him as a fire, and soon he would be rebuking the people for their sins and predicting their utter destruction. So bitter was his lot that he cursed the day he was born and cursed the man who brought his father the news of his birth.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Times of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:

1-3)

*The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah.* Some have thought that this Hilkiah was the high priest who in the time of Josiah found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. (2 Kings 22: 8ff.) Against this, however, have been urged these facts. (1) That the name is too common to be a ground of identification; (2) that the manner in which this Hilkiah is mentioned is inconsistent with the notion of his having been the high priest of Israel; (3) that neither does Jeremiah himself allude to his parentage, nor do his enemies; (4) that the priests who lived at Anathoth were of the house of Ithamar (1 Kings 2: 26; 1 Chron. 24:3) while the high priests from Zadok downward were of the line of Eleazar (see Smith's Bible Dictionary for further argument). It is very probable that Jeremiah means that he was born in Anathoth and that he grew up in that city which was given to the priests. The city was about three miles north of Jerusalem. The boundary line between the territory of Judah and that of Benjamin ran either through or just north of the city of Jerusalem. Hence, the city of Anathoth was well over the boundary line in the land of Benjamin. But since the tribe of Benjamin was associated with the tribe of Judah in the building and maintenance of the southern kingdom, Jeremiah was a prophet in the southern kingdom.

*In the days of Josiah the son of Amon.* Josiah was the son of Amon and the grandson of Manasseh who was perhaps the most wicked king of all the kings of Judah. Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign in 641 B. C. So, we conclude that he must have been born in 649 B. C. It has been estimated that Jeremiah was about twenty years of age when he began to prophesy. If this supposition is

near the truth, Josiah and Jeremiah were about the same age.

*It came also in the days of Jehoia-kim.* Josiah was killed in battle at Megiddo and his son Jehoahaz was put on the throne in his place, but this king was evil in the sight of the Lord and reigned only three months. Then, the Pharaoh of Egypt then in power made Eliakim, another son of Josiah, king in Jerusalem, and this king's name was changed to Jehoia-kim.

*Unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah.* Following Jehoia-kim, his son Jehoiachin was made king in Jerusalem, and he reigned a little more than three months. At this time the king of Babylon made a raid on Jerusalem and took the king and his family, but he left on the throne a man named Mattaniah and changed his name to Zedekiah. He was the son of Josiah and a half-brother of Jehoia-kim. In the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Babylon came again and destroyed the city and carried the people into captivity. If one will read the record of these kings in Second Kings and Second Chronicles, he will see what uncertain and trying times Jeremiah had in which to perform his work.

### II. Jeremiah Called (Jer. 1: 4-7)

*Before I formed thee.* In this verse Jeremiah tells us that he was sanctified before he was born. The word "sanctified" here is not to be given the sense we give it in the New Testament. Certainly he was not sanctified in the sense in which people today are sanctified. The word "sanctification" denotes that process by which the Holy Spirit through the use of his word brings us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In this verse it is to be given its primary meaning of "setting apart to a holy service." This reminds us somewhat of Paul's statement with reference to his call. He said, "But when it

was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles." (Gal. 1: 15, 16.) Again, Paul does not use the word "sanctify," although the idea is contained in the word "separated." It was simply in the purpose of God, even before Paul's birth, that Paul was to preach the gospel unto the Gentiles, so it was in the purpose of God that Jeremiah was to be a prophet.

*I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.* Jeremiah's work of prophecy was not to be limited to the nation of Judah, nor of Judah and Israel, though Israel was in captivity shortly after Jeremiah began his work. His work was to be extended to cover the fate and fortunes of many nations. If the reader will begin with chapter 46 of Jeremiah and read, he will find a number of nations to which Jeremiah addressed his messages.

*I know not how to speak.* Jeremiah made excuses. He reminds us somewhat of Moses when the Lord appeared to him and gave him the responsibility for delivering the children of Israel. And Solomon made this same excuse when he was made king over Israel, saying that he was but a little child and did not know how to come in or go out. (1 Kings 3: 7.) However, Solomon was about twenty years of age when he made that statement, so this does not necessarily tell us anything about the age of Jeremiah. Jeremiah simply meant to say that he was inexperienced and incapable of accepting such a fearful responsibility as handling the word of God. It would be good for all teachers of God's word, and especially young preachers, to remember that handling the word of God is a fearful responsibility and that we ought to be swift to hear and slow to speak. "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." (James 3: 1.)

*Say not, I am a child.* This is the language of Jehovah in answer to Jeremiah. Then Jehovah explained why Jeremiah should not say that he was a child and thus evade his responsibility, for Jehovah said, "For to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall com-

mand thee thou shalt speak." Jehovah knew of Jeremiah's inexperience and inability to know what ought to be said or to say it in the way it should be said. Jehovah did not expect Jeremiah to go on his own and to know what to say in any and all circumstances, but Jehovah would be with him, would send him where he wanted him to go, and would tell him what he wanted said. All Jeremiah was required to do was to be willing to go wherever Jehovah sent him and to be willing to say whatever Jehovah gave him to say, and then be willing to suffer the consequences for saying that which Jehovah gave him.

### III. Jeremiah Encouraged (Jer. 1: 8-10)

*Be not afraid because of them.* As a reason why Jeremiah was not to be afraid of the people to whom God would send him, Jehovah said to him, "I am with thee to deliver thee." Jehovah did not say, "I am with you to keep you from suffering persecution." This reminds us of Paul's experience with the thorn in his flesh. God gave him the thorn to keep him from becoming proud and haughty. Paul prayed that it might be removed. God refused to remove the thorn, but told him he would give him grace sufficient to bear it. So, Jehovah told Jeremiah to go and speak whatever was given him and be not afraid of what people would do, not because he would not suffer but because Jehovah would be with him to keep him.

*Then Jehovah put forth his hand.* Jehovah put forth his hand to touch the mouth of Jeremiah, and when he touched it, he said, "I have put my words in thy mouth." This reminds us of Isaiah's experience when one of the seraphim, having a live coal of fire in his hands, came to Isaiah and touched his mouth and said, "This hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin forgiven." In Isaiah's case, the touching of the coal of fire to his lips symbolized his purification that he might be in condition to preach the word of Jehovah. But in Jeremiah's case, the touching of his mouth was a symbol of his preparation, his readiness to preach whatever word Jehovah would give to him. This verse does not prove that Jeremiah had authority over the kings of the earth, much less does it prove that

priests today have a right to exercise authority over kings and governors of the earth. But because Jeremiah was the spokesman for God, that which he said was binding on kings and governors. In that sense, the apostles sit on thrones, judging the people of God. (Luke 22: 30.)

To *pluck up and to break down*. Jehovah speaks of Jeremiah having the authority to pluck up and to break down. This, of course, is figurative language. When God commissioned Isaiah to deliver a message to a nation, he spoke of Isaiah doing whatever was promised or threatened to that nation. Isaiah was told to

make the heart of the people fat, to make their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes, but, of course, Isaiah did not do that except as the message which God gave him to deliver to the people had that effect on the people. So, Jeremiah did not pluck up and break down except as the message which God gave him to deliver brought about such results in their lives. It is suggested here that Jeremiah's work was more destructive than it was constructive because there are four verbs used to describe his destructive work and only two to describe his constructive work.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Jeremiah is an example of a man who gave his whole life to God. In contrast with this, think of someone who has given his whole life to Satan. In whose place would you rather be in the judgment?

2. Jeremiah is an example of becoming humility. He felt his inability to act as a spokesman for God. When he realized it was the will of

God to do so, however, he did not hesitate.

3. God plucks and breaks down nations that disobey, but God builds and plants nations that obey him. The same may be said for individuals and for communities. Those who obey God are happy, and those who disobey God come to grief.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

State and discuss three reasons why God has a right to command what his prophets speak.

What is the most simple and natural division of the Bible?

How does God now speak through his Son?

Can you give scriptural proof that both testaments were written by inspiration?

Can you prove that no new revelations are needed?

What two conclusions are reached from the study of this text?

#### Introduction

What has Jeremiah been called?

What do you know of his family life?

What do you know of his relationship with his government?

What do you know of his persecutions?

Why did he curse the day he was born?

#### The Times of Jeremiah

Who was the father of Jeremiah?

Discuss four reasons why his father was not the high priest in the time of Josiah.

Where did Jeremiah live? and where was the city?

What do you know of Josiah's ancestors? and how did he die?

How long did Jehoiaikim reign? and why?

Who was Zedekiah? and what happened to end his reign?

#### Jeremiah Called

When was Jeremiah sanctified for his work?

What is the meaning of the word "sanctify"?

What did Paul say of his separation to gospel preaching?

To whom was Jeremiah appointed as a prophet?

What excuse did Jeremiah make? and why?

What is said of our responsibility in handling the word of God today?

How did Jehovah answer Jeremiah's excuse?

#### Jeremiah Encouraged

Why was Jeremiah not to be afraid of the people to whom God would send him?

Did God promise to keep Jeremiah from persecution?

How do the experiences of Jeremiah and Paul compare?

Compare the experiences of Jeremiah and Isaiah being prepared for their work.

Did God give Jeremiah authority over the kings of the nations?

What is meant by plucking up and breaking down?

Was Jeremiah's work more constructive or destructive?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VII—May 19, 1957

## JEREMIAH'S TRIAL

## Lesson Text

Jer. 26: 7-19

7 And the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jer-e-mi'-ah speaking these words in the house of Je-ho'-vah.

8 And it came to pass, when Jer-e-mi'-ah had made an end of speaking all that Je-ho'-vah had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Je-ho'-vah, saying, This house shall be like Shi'-loh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people were gathered unto Jer-e-mi'-ah in the house of Je-ho'-vah.

10 And when the princes of Ju'-dah heard these things, they came up from the king's house unto the house of Je-ho'-vah; and they sat in the entry of the new gate of Je-ho'-vah's house.

11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

12 Then spake Jer-e-mi'-ah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, Je-ho'-vah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

13 Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Je-ho'-vah your God; and Je-ho'-

vah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

14 But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes.

15 Only know ye for certain that, if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth Je-ho'-vah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Je-ho'-vah our God.

17 Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,

18 Mi'-c a h the Mo'-rash-tite prophesied in the days of Hez-e-ki'-ah king of Ju'-dah; and he spake to all the people of Ju'-dah, saying, Thus saith Je-ho'-vah of hosts: Zi'-on shall be plowed as a field, and Je-ru'-sa-lem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

19 Did Hez-e-ki'-ah king of Ju'-dah and all Ju'-dah put him to death? did he not fear Je-ho'-vah, and entreat the favor of Je-ho'-vah, and Je-ho'-vah repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus should we commit great evil against our own souls.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you."* (Jer. 26: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 26: 1-6.

## Daily Bible Readings

May 13. M.....	God a Rock of Refuge (Psalm 94: 12-23)
May 14. T.....	Refuge Under His Wings (Psalm 57: 1-5)
May 15. W.....	Trust in Jehovah (Psalm 31: 1-14)
May 16. T.....	A Place of Refuge (Isa. 4: 1-6)
May 17. F.....	God a Sanctuary (Ezek. 11: 14-21)
May 18. S.....	Jehovah Is About His People (Psalm 125: 1-5)
May 19. S.....	Lord Delivers the Faithful (Psalm 37: 3-40)

TIME.—610 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jeremiah, the princes, and the people of Judah.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Amend your ways,** (a) Involves confession of wrongs. Before one can amend his ways, he must come to a realization that he is wrong, and this realization will lead him to confess his wrong. He will make a confession if to no one but God. If he has wronged others, of course, he will feel the necessity of confessing to those whom he has sinned against. The confession of wrong must be as public as the wrongdoing, (b) This involves admission that others are right. When one is called upon to cease to do wrong and change his ways, he must admit that others have done right and he has done wrong. And when he amends his ways, he will then be in fellowship with those who are doing right. One of the most difficult things about repentance is the fact that we must confess that we have been wrong, and that others have been right and we henceforth wish to do as they do. Very few people find it easy to admit that they have been wrong, that others have been right, that they wish to mend their ways and become like other people, (c) This implies dependence on others. When people point out our wrongs and exhort us to cease to do wrong and do the right as they see it, we are in some measure dependent upon them. Very few people enjoy being dependent upon others, and fewer still find it easy to acknowledge this dependence on others.

2. **Obey the voice of Jehovah,** (a) As a Father he deserves to be obeyed. "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is mine honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name." (Mal. 1: 6.) (b) Obedience is the best course for all. God determines what to command us to do and what to forbid us to do, not simply because he wishes to be the boss of our lives,

but because the things he commands us to do are best for us, and the things he forbids us to do are not good for us. The history of God's dealings with humanity from the time of Adam to the present is filled with the proof of this statement that obedience is the best course for all to follow. Those who obey the Lord are happy; those who disobey the Lord come to grief, (c) Unity and strength are gained by obedience. If all people would obey the Lord, there would be the unity for which Jesus prayed. That unity exists among all who are living in obedience to the Lord's commands, and this unity lends strength, so if all would take Jeremiah's advice and "obey the voice of Jehovah," there would be unity and strength among the friends of God sufficient to overcome all the enemies of God.

3. **Jehovah will repent,** (a) Jehovah is unchangeable. "For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." (Mal. 3: 6.) How can God be unchangeable and yet repent? Repentance with God is not caused by his being convicted of wrongdoing or of mistakes followed by a determination to do better. With God repentance simply means a change in his course of dealing with people. The student should read Gen. 6: 6; Ex. 32: 12-14; 1 Sam. 15: 11, 35 for examples of God's repentance, (b) God is unchangeable in his determination to bless the righteous and to punish the wicked. If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and becomes wicked, God must change his course from blessing to punishment for that particular individual. This change in his course of action toward that individual is made necessary because of his unchangeable intention to bless the righteous and punish the wicked. The student should read Ezek. 33: 10-16 for a clear statement of this principle.

## Introduction

Since our lesson is about incidents in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim (Jer. 26: 1), it will be well for us to see some of the conditions during his reign. Josiah had just been killed in a battle with Egypt. The king of Egypt put Jehoiakim under necessity to pay a hundred tal-

ents of silver and one talent of gold annually and this was so heavy that it was necessary to use extreme means to collect the taxes. But the nation not only had that expense; Jehoiakim set about to build costly palaces and to repair and strengthen his fortresses. He used not only

forced Canaanite labor, but even enslaved his own people and worked them to death in this building program. One authority says, "He built his city with blood, and his citadel with iniquity." Jehoiakim had no respect for prophets. He cut with his penknife the scroll of Jeremiah and burned it in the fire. He killed Urijah because of his prophecies and would have killed Jeremiah if he had been able to do so. Though Josiah had destroyed the altars and places of worship of the heathen gods, under Jehoiakim altars were again

erected on every green hill. The animals of Egypt were worshiped amidst clouds of incense in the very temple area, and Ezekiel says that in his vision he saw men standing in the most sacred spot of the temple itself worshipping the rising sun. "The valley of Hinnom again resounded with the wails and savage drumbeating, and dissonant trumpet blasts of Moloch worship, and parents once more sought to propitiate the grisly idol by offering to it their eldest, often their only son." (Geikie.).

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jeremiah Seized and Condemned

(Jer. 26: 7-11)

*All the people heard Jeremiah speaking.* This refers to what Jeremiah said as he received it from Jehovah. Jehovah had given a special command to Jeremiah with reference to what he was to say. We have these words, "All the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word. It may be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way; that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings." But the most shocking statement of all, and the one that brought the wrath of the people upon Jeremiah, was this: "Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." The Jews believed that God would not allow the capture of the city of Jerusalem because that city in a peculiar way belonged to Jehovah and certainly they believed that Jehovah would not allow the temple to be destroyed because of its sacredness and the fact that Jehovah dwelt therein.

*All the people laid hold on him.* The people were led by the priests and the prophets in their attack upon Jeremiah. Jeremiah seems to have been alone as a prophet on this occasion. There were many prophets, but they were time servers, and they uttered prophecies which they professed to receive from Jehovah, but which they invented in order to gain favor of the king and princes. Since Jeremiah was of a priestly family, and we are told here that the priests turned against him, we must conclude that some of his own tribe, if

not his own family, turned against him at this time.

*Thou shalt surely die.* This is the sentence pronounced upon Jeremiah by this mob of priests and prophets. Of course, they did not have authority to execute this sentence, but this was their decision and their recommendation to the authorities, and they would use all their influence to bring it to pass. This sentence was pronounced upon him because he had dared to say that the city and the temple would be destroyed.

*This house shall be like Shiloh.* This is the thing that struck deepest into the hearts of these people. This is the statement to which they objected most. Shiloh was the resting place for the tabernacle and the gathering place of the people, and the place where Jehovah met and spoke with his people for a long time after their entrance into the land of Canaan. (Judges 18: 31; 1 Sam. 3: 21.) Jeremiah's statement implies that if God once met with his people and was worshiped by them in Shiloh, and that place of worship was destroyed or no longer used, so Jerusalem and the temple could be destroyed in spite of the fact that Jerusalem was the city of the Lord, and the temple the place where he was worshiped.

*The princes of Judah heard these things.* It is difficult to know just to whom the word "princes" refers. There are about sixteen different Hebrew words in the Old Testament translated by our word "prince." Sometimes the word simply means the heads of the families of the various tribes. Sometimes it is used of the male members of the royal fam-



ily, especially the brothers of the king. Again, Jeremiah speaks of the princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem as being different men. (Jer. 34: 19.) Young's *Analytical Concordance* defines the Hebrew word used in that passage as well as in our text to mean "head, official, captain." About all we can know for certain about them is they were men of authority. The priests and prophets were in subjection to them. The priests and prophets brought Jeremiah to these princes with an accusation and demanded a sentence of death, but the princes heard Jeremiah and were convinced by his testimony that he was not worthy of death, so they refused to pass the sentence of death upon him.

## II. Jeremiah Makes His Defense (Jer. 26: 12-15)

*Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes.* Jeremiah would undoubtedly have suffered the same fate which Stephen suffered in this same vicinity many years later had Jeremiah not had the privilege of speaking before the princes.

*Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house.* Jeremiah insists that the words which he has spoken against that house and the city were not his own, but they were the words Jehovah gave him to speak. Jeremiah convinced the princes that he was not speaking his own sentiments or giving expression to his own desire, but that he was simply serving as the mouthpiece of Jehovah. Though the other prophets claimed to be mouthpieces for Jehovah, Jeremiah had established a reputation for being honest and as having been used of God to reveal the truth on former occasions, so these princes were inclined to listen to him.

*Now therefore amend your ways and your doings.* Jeremiah shows a brand of courage that other prophets of his day were unable to command. He not only spoke the word of Jehovah against Jerusalem and the temple in the presence of priests and prophets, but he would stand face to face with men in places of authority and tell them that they must repent of their sins, turn from their wicked ways, and begin to do right.

*And Jehovah will repent.* Jeremiah was privileged to give a promise along with the prediction of doom.

If the people would correct their ways and change their course of living in harmony with the demands of God, their city and temple would be spared. As late as the last days of Zedekiah, Jeremiah could still promise that if the king and the people would submit themselves to the king of Babylon, the city would not be burned with fire. (Jer. 38: 17ff.) However, this did not relieve the people of suffering for their sins. Jehovah said, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind would not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth." (Jer. 15: 1ff.) From this we see that Jehovah would not repent himself of the evil that he would visit upon the people because of their sins, but he would repent himself of the destruction which he had threatened to bring upon the city and the temple, provided the people would amend their ways and obey the voice of Jehovah.

*I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes.* This is the language of Jeremiah to the princes of Judah. His speech is rather touching, and it was very effective. He was willing to leave himself in their hands; he preferred to be in their hands to being in the hands of the priests and the prophets. Yet, he reminded the princes that "if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof." Jeremiah reminds us of the apostles who, when threatened with imprisonment, said they must obey God rather than men. He also reminds us of Paul who said, "For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21: 13.)

## III. Jeremiah Saved by the Princes (Jer. 26: 16-19)

*This man is not worthy of death.* This is the decision of the princes after they had heard Jeremiah's defense. Jeremiah had convinced these princes that he had spoken in the name of Jehovah their God. They seemed to have left some respect for Jehovah and for his word. They would at least preserve the life of a man who was speaking for Jehovah.

*Then rose up certain of the elders of the land.* These elders were heads

of families and respected because of their age and experience and position. We read of them as far back as the time of Moses, and on down through the years. (Ex. 3: 16; 2 Sam. 19: 11; 1 Kings 8: 1.) They continued to be heard of from the time of the exile to the time of Christ. (Ezek. 14: 1; Ezra 5: 5; Mark 14: 43; Acts 4: 5.)

***Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah.*** These elders called the attention of the princes, the priests, and the people to the fact that Micah, one hundred years before their day, prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the people did not destroy him. Micah's word will give us a good picture of the blind confidence the people had in the safety of Jerusalem. "They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." (Mic. 3: 10-12.)

***Did he not fear Jehovah?*** After reciting the incident concerning Micah and Hezekiah, the elders put the

question to the people. "Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? did he not fear Jehovah, and entreat the favor of Jehovah, and Jehovah repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them?" An affirmation is here put in the form of a question. These elders affirmed that Hezekiah not only refused to put Micah to death, but he profited by Micah's rebuke and feared God and entreated the favor of Jehovah upon Micah. Furthermore, these elders remind the priests and the people that when Hezekiah profited by the prophecy of Micah, Jehovah repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against the Jews. Their point is twofold; first, that instead of putting Jeremiah to death they ought to thank him for bringing to them the words of Jehovah. Second, if Jehovah repented him of the evil which he intended in the days of Hezekiah, surely Jehovah will again repent of the evil which he would bring upon the city at this time if the people would cease their wicked ways. The princes and the elders prevailed in this discussion, and Jeremiah's life was saved. However, they did not convince the priests and false prophets that Jeremiah was worthy to live, so they continued to persecute him as they had opportunity.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Let us not become so sure of our relationship to God that we will feel that he cannot punish us regardless of our unfaithfulness. The Jews thought they would be saved regardless of how they lived. They expected to go to heaven because they were the children of Abraham. We may get the idea that we are going to be saved because we are the church of the Lord, but unless we are faithful God will reject us.

2. Jeremiah was a man of conviction and willing to state those convictions regardless of the cost. The princes of Judah were men open to testimony. They were willing to de-

cide the case on its merits. The priests and false prophets were rabble rousers and willing to put a man to death because he did not agree with their peculiar views. The church today can use men of the first two types, but it has more than its needs of the last class.

3. The elders of the people profited by examples of the past. They cited a case of God's dealing with a prophet of old to determine how they should deal with a prophet in their day. This is a good example how we should use the examples contained in scripture to apply to present-day problems.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

State and discuss two things involved in amending our ways.

Why are these things difficult for the average person to do?

Why are we obligated to obey the voice of Jehovah?  
 What causes God to determine what to command us to do?  
 What two things are gained by obedience?  
 What is said about Jehovah's unchangeableness?  
 How can Jehovah be unchangeable and yet repent?

#### Introduction

What did the king of Egypt demand of Jehoiaikim?  
 What other expense did Jehoiaikim add to the people?  
 How did Jehoiaikim provide laborers for his public works?  
 What was Jehoiaikim's attitude toward prophets?  
 What is said of the worship of God during his reign?

#### Jeremiah Seized and Condemned

What did Jehovah demand of Jeremiah as to faithful proclamation of his word?  
 What statement of Jeremiah was most offensive to the people?  
 What was meant by the temple becoming like Shiloh?  
 Who led the opposition against Jeremiah?  
 What do you know of the meaning of the word "princes"?  
 What did the princes do for Jeremiah on this occasion?

#### Jeremiah Makes His Defense

Before whom did Jeremiah plead his cause?

What New Testament preacher was in similar trouble with the leaders in Jerusalem?  
 On whom did Jeremiah place the responsibility for the words he spoke?  
 Why were the princes inclined to listen to Jeremiah in preference to other prophets?  
 What counsel did Jeremiah give the princes and people?  
 What promise did Jeremiah make if the people would change their ways?  
 What did Jeremiah promise with reference to the city and temple?  
 How did Jehovah express his unalterable determination to punish the people?  
 With what warning did Jeremiah close his appeal to the princes?

#### Jeremiah Saved by the Princes

In what words did the princes announce their decision with reference to Jeremiah?  
 What do you know of the elders of the land?  
 To what prophet did the elders call the attention of the people?  
 What did this prophet predict with reference to Jerusalem?  
 Who was the king to whom Micah's prophecy was made known?  
 What was this king's attitude toward Micah?  
 What two points did these elders press upon the people?  
 What shows the insincerity of the enemies of Jeremiah?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VIII—May 26, 1957

# JEREMIAH IN PRISON

## Lesson Text

### Jer. 37: 11-21

11 And it came to pass that, when the army of the Chal-de'-ans was broken up from Jer-ru'-sa-lem for fear of Pha'-raoh's army,

12 Then Jer-e-mi'-ah went forth out of Jer-ru'-sa-lem to go into the land of Ben'-ja-min, to receive his portion there, in the midst of the people.

13 And when he was in the gate of Ben'-ja-min, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was I-ri-jah, the son of Shel-e-mi'-ah, the son of Han-a-ni'-ah; and he laid hold on Jer-e-mi'-ah the prophet, saying, Thou art falling away to the Chal-de'-ans.

14 Then said Jer-e-mi'-ah, It is false; I am not falling away to the Chal-de'-ans. But he hearkened not to him; so I-ri-jah laid hold on Jer-e-mi'-ah, and brought him to the princes.

15 And the princes were wroth with Jer-e-mi'-ah, and smote him,

and put him in prison in the house of Jon'-a-than the scribe; for they had made that the prison.

16 When Jer-e-mi'-ah was come into the dungeon-house, and into the cells, and Jer-e-mi'-ah had remained there many days;

17 Then Zed-e-ki'-ah the king sent, and fetched him: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from Je-ho'-vah? And Jer-e-mi'-ah said, There is. He said also, Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Bab'-y-lon.

18 Moreover Jer-e-mi'-ah said unto king Zed-e-ki'-ah, Wherein have I sinned against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison?

19 Where now are your prophets that prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Bab'-y-lon shall not come against you, nor against this land?

20 And now hear, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be presented before thee, that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jon'-a-than the scribe, lest I die there.

21 Then Zed-e-ki'-ah the king

commanded, and they committed Jer-e-mi'-ah into the court of the guard; and they gave him daily a loaf of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was spent. Thus Jer-e-mi'-ah remained in the court of the guard.

**Golden Text.**—*"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2 Tim. 3: 12.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Jer. 37: 1-10.

### Daily Bible Readings

May 20. M..... Joseph in Prison (Gen. 39: 1-20)  
 May 21. T..... Zedekiah in Prison (Jer. 52: 1-11)  
 May 22. W..... John the Baptist in Prison (Matt. 14: 1-12)  
 May 23. T..... Apostles Imprisoned (Acts 5: 1-18)  
 May 24. F..... Paul Imprisoned Saints (Acts 26: 1-10)  
 May 25. S..... Peter Put in Prison (Acts 12: 1-4)  
 May 26. S..... Paul Often in Prison (2 Cor. 11: 16-23)

**Time.**—590 B.C.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Jeremiah, the princes, and Zedekiah.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Godly living**, (a) Knowledge of God in Christ. Godly living implies a knowledge of God as revealed in Christ and through his apostles. No one can live a godly life who does not know how Jesus lived; Jesus was the manifestation of God in the flesh and those who live godly lives must know what Jesus thought on moral and religious issues and they must know how Jesus responded to certain situations. And the only way we can know how Jesus lived is by a study of his life. Hence, those who would live godly must be students of the Bible, (b) Godly living implies both a resolve and a desire to live as Jesus lived. Very few people will live as they should live because of the fear of punishment. We must desire to live right if we would expect to be consistent in right living. One may occasionally refrain from doing evil through fear of punishment, or one may for a few months or years refrain from evil because of the fear of punishment; but only a love for Christ and a desire to be like him is a sufficiently strong motive to move one to continue consistent godly living, (c) Godly living implies self-denial and sacrifice. Since Jesus revealed God in his life, and the life of Jesus was filled with self-denial and sacrifice, no one can expect to live a godly life who is not willing to practice self-denial and sacrifice.

2. **In Christ Jesus**, (a) Involves turning from the world. No one can be in Christ and in the world at the same time. If one wishes to live in Christ Jesus, he must make up his mind that he is through with the world, turn his back upon the world, and come into that relationship and fellowship with the people of God who hold themselves aloof from the world, (b) Baptism brings one into Christ. Paul says that we are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) And again Paul says that this baptism which brings us into Christ is a baptism in which we are buried and raised. (Rom. 6: 3, 4.) Since Paul teaches that we are baptized into Christ and that we are buried and raised in baptism, it follows that only those who have been buried with their Lord in baptism and raised therefrom are in Christ Jesus. No one can live a godly life in Christ Jesus until that one has been baptized into Christ Jesus. Hence, there is no such thing as an unbaptized person living a godly life in Christ Jesus, (c) Faithfulness involved. Godly living is faithful living. Those who live godly are not the off-and-on type; they are not those who are hot in the service of God today and lukewarm tomorrow. Godly living consists of faithful service and worship to God.

3. **Shall suffer persecution**, (a) The world hated our Master. When

Jesus was about to send his apostles out to represent him in the world, he said, "A servant is not greater than his Lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also." (John 15: 20.) When people align themselves with a despised leader, they may expect the same treatment from the world which the world has given their leader, (b) We are to be crucified to the world. (Gal. 6: 14.) The word "crucify" here is used to represent not only a manner of death, but the attitude in the minds of the people who inflicted that death. Crucifixion was a shameful and disgraceful means of execution. When one had so outraged the sense of right and decency of a community that they wished to show him the greatest contempt possible, they didn't stone him; they

crucified him. One who allied himself with the crucified person and defended his good name could expect no better treatment than his leader had received. So, in the days of the apostles, Paul spoke of himself and others as being crucified with Christ in the sense that they endured the same feeling of contempt which the world had poured upon Christ, (c) There are different forms of persecution. Today, we in America are guaranteed that no one shall do us bodily harm, but that does not mean that we shall not be persecuted. The world can still slight us, despise us, and spurn us, and Paul tells us that if we live godly lives in Christ, we will suffer persecution. If we are not suffering some degree of persecution, perhaps it is because we are not living as godly lives as we should.

## Introduction

From Ezekiel we learn that there was unrest among the captives in Babylon on the banks of the Chebar, and there was talk of rebellion and attempted return to Jerusalem. From Jeremiah we learn that there was a strong element in Jerusalem, especially among the princes, to make a treaty with Pharaoh of Egypt. In fact, there was a movement afoot to join all the little nations between Egypt and Babylon under the leadership of Egypt to attempt to stay the progress of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. When Nebuchadnezzar learned of this movement, he made a quick march into the land of Syria, sending one army into northern Syria and the other against Jerusalem. He had not been long before Jerusalem when Pharaoh marched from the south against him. Nebuchadnezzar momentarily lifted the siege of Jerusalem to take care of Pharaoh and

his army. It was this lifting of the siege of Jerusalem that inspired the princes of Judah with the hope of permanent deliverance and also caused the false prophets in Jerusalem to wage unrelenting warfare on Jeremiah who had said that the city would be destroyed. The Jews in Jerusalem felt that they were more highly favored of Jehovah than their captive brethren because they still remained in the city, but Jeremiah compared them to two baskets of figs. One basket was filled with good figs, the other with bad figs. Jeremiah said the basket of good figs represented the brethren in captivity who were being saved from the terrible calamities which would come with the destruction of the city. The basket of bad figs represented those who were presently in Jerusalem and would suffer the terrible calamities which would come with the destruction of the city. (Jer. 24: 1-10.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jeremiah Accused and Imprisoned

(Jer. 37: 11-15)

*The army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem.* This refers to the time when Nebuchadnezzar came and besieged Jerusalem. The siege had not much more than begun when Pharaoh of Egypt marched northward with an army. We are told that after the days of

Jehoiachin the king of Egypt came no more out of his land "for the king of Babylon had taken, from the brook of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt." (2 Kings 24: 7.) The king of Egypt did not come into the land of Syria on this occasion, though he did start in that direction. However, he was stopped by Nebuchadnezzar,

and then Nebuchadnezzar returned and resumed his siege of Jerusalem.

**Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem.** When the siege was momentarily lifted, Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem to go into Anathoth, his home town, in the land of Benjamin. We are told that he intended to go to Anathoth to receive his portion there. There has been considerable difference of opinion as to what is meant by this statement. The King James Version says that Jeremiah was going into the land of Benjamin "to separate himself thence in the midst of the people." This seems to agree with the accusation of the princes that Jeremiah was deserting Jerusalem for his personal safety. We know that this translation is not correct because Jeremiah denied that he had any intention of deserting the city. Since Jeremiah was of a priestly family, and the distribution of tithes was made in their home cities, we suppose that Jeremiah was going to Anathoth to receive his portion of the tithes which would be distributed. The siege would last for several months, as Jeremiah knew, and he would need his portion of the tithes on which to subsist during the siege, so he was simply going to Anathoth to receive his portion of the tithes in order that he might live as comfortably as possible during the siege.

**He laid hold on Jeremiah.** When Jeremiah reached the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was standing there. This captain's name was Irijah. Irijah accused Jeremiah saying, "Thou art falling away to the Chaldeans." Jeremiah very bluntly denied this charge saying that it was false. Some have thought that Jeremiah felt he had done all to save the city that he could possibly do, and that there was no need for him to remain in the city and perish in the destruction of the city, but Jeremiah's denial of this accusation of Irijah is proof that he had no intention of deserting the city and falling into the hands of the Chaldeans.

**The princes were wroth with Jeremiah.** These princes had no sympathy with Jeremiah. In our last lesson, we remember that the princes of Judah were sympathetic toward Jeremiah and believed his word in preference to that of the false prophets. However, twenty years

have passed since the events of our last lesson, and the men who were princes at that time were most likely carried into Babylonian captivity during the second raid of the Babylonians on Jerusalem. Jeremiah had no trial, no opportunity to defend himself and prove his innocence. The princes accepted the accusation of Irijah, and after beating Jeremiah, they put him in prison.

## II. Jeremiah Visited by the King

(Jer. 37: 16-19)

**Jeremiah remained there many days.** There was no separate house such as we have today in which to keep prisoners. The judges lived in a part of the house, and prisoners tried and condemned by them were kept either in dungeons under the house or in other rooms of the house. We are told that Jeremiah was imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the scribe. We are told that he remained there many days, but how many we have no way of knowing.

**Then Zedekiah the king sent, and fetched him.** Zedekiah sent secretly for Jeremiah. He was afraid for the princes to know that he was communing with Jeremiah. What kind of character was Zedekiah? "It is evident that Zedekiah was a man not so much bad at heart as weak at will. He was one of those unfortunate characters, frequent in history . . . who find themselves at the head of affairs during a great crisis, without having the strength of character to enable them to do what they know to be right, and whose infirmity becomes moral guilt." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

### **Is there any word from Jehovah?**

This is the language of Zedekiah to Jeremiah. Obviously, Zedekiah had some faith in Jeremiah as a prophet of God. Jeremiah had said that the king of Babylon would return. Other prophets had said that the king would not return. Since Nebuchadnezzar has returned, this tends to give Zedekiah confidence in Jeremiah as God's prophet.

**Thou shalt be delivered.** When the king asked Jeremiah if he has any word from Jehovah, Jeremiah replied that he did. Jeremiah was not one to compromise or hide anything which God wished to be made known. He said bluntly, "Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of

Babylon." Jeremiah constantly advised both the king and the people to put themselves into the hand of the king of Babylon. Even after the siege was renewed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the fate of the city was known to all, Jeremiah promised that if he and the people would surrender, the city would not be burned. (Jer. 38: 17.) But Jeremiah seemingly knew that Zedekiah did not have the courage to do this, so he predicted that the king would be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

*Wherein have I sinned against thee?* This is a question which Jeremiah put to Zedekiah. After giving the king the information he desired with reference to a word from Jehovah, Jeremiah took advantage of his opportunity to better his condition, so he asked Zedekiah wherein he had sinned against him or the people that he should be put in prison. And Jeremiah also reminded Zedekiah of those prophets who said that the king of Babylon should not return and besiege the city. One interesting example of such false prophecy is that of Hananiah who took a yoke which Jeremiah was wearing as the symbol of the yoke of Babylon on the people, and broke it in the sight of the people and predicted that the king of Babylon would be reduced to such weakened circumstances that even the captives then in Babylon would return within two years. Jeremiah replied that Hananiah would not live that long. The student will be interested to read Jer. 28: 1-17 for this interesting story.

### III. Jeremiah Asks a Favor (Jer. 37: 20, 21)

*I pray thee, O my lord the king.* This is not the language of compromise. Jeremiah has shown that he had the courage to speak whatever God gave him to speak, regardless of the punishment that might be brought upon him for doing so. But this is the language of respect which the subject of a king is expected to show to his sovereign. His request was that he be not returned to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest he should die there. Back in verse 16, mention is made of "the dungeon house and into the cells." Hated as Jeremiah was by his enemies, there is little doubt but that Jeremiah was placed in the most uncomfortable

cell or dungeon available. Jeremiah knew that if he stayed there much longer, it would result in his death. So, as any man would do who dreads the hour of final departure, Jeremiah asked the king to use his authority to save him such misery and such lingering death.

*They committed Jeremiah into the court of the guard.* Zedekiah seems to have summoned unusual courage on this occasion and went contrary to the wishes of the princes to whom he capitulated normally and sent Jeremiah to the house of the guard. This certainly was an improvement over the dungeon house, but yet Jeremiah was a prisoner and suffered greatly from it. One authority makes this comment: "The comparative liberty of the prophet brought him, however, into fresh danger. Chained, it may be, to the wall of the court, he had free intercourse with the soldiers and the people, and as nothing would induce him to keep silent as to the issue of the siege, his words spread far and near. That their enemy should thus be more influential than ever infuriated the nobles of the council. It was reported to some of them, among others to Jucal, who had recently visited the prophet from the king, and Pashur, the son of Malchijah, who had been one of the first deputations to him from Zedekiah." (Geikie.) These men brought the accusation that Jeremiah was a traitor and that he was encouraging the people to give up to Nebuchadnezzar by promising them that if they would do so they would live, but threatening them that if they remained in the city they would die by the sword, famine, and pestilence. This infuriates the princes and nobles to demand that Zedekiah allow them to put Jeremiah to death. Zedekiah capitulated again and allowed them to have Jeremiah. They put him in a cistern, which, though it had no water, was a few feet deep in slime, and Jeremiah would have died had it not been for his friend Ebed-Melech. (Jer. 38: 1-13.)

*They gave him daily a loaf of bread.* While Jeremiah was in the court of the guard, the record tells us that he had a loaf of bread out of the baker's street. In that day, the various crafts were located on the same streets. The merchants were on one street, or in one block, the

bakers in another. So, the source of bread is spoken of as being on baker's street. But as suggested above, Jere-

miah's good fortunes did not last long. He was soon in the hands of enemies and facing death again.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Jeremiah was faithful in spite of persecution. Many people will change their course of action if it brings suffering. There is a philosophy that since we cannot reach people who are angry with us, we should not do or say anything that would make them angry. If Jeremiah had followed that philosophy, he would have lived out his normal time, but he also would have been untrue and unfaithful to God and would have been remembered only for his shame. Instead of changing his course in face of persecution, he is remembered as a great, tried and true prophet of God.

2. Jeremiah practiced some of the

principles of Christianity hundreds of years before Christ was born. It is said of Christ that when he was reviled, he reviled not again, and this may truly be said of Jeremiah. His enemies reviled him, and yet he reviled them not.

3. In Zedekiah, we have an example of a weak character under a load of fearful responsibilities. The weakness of his character, however, was his own fault. If we today are too weak in character to bear the burdens and duties and responsibilities that come our way, it is because we have not cultivated that moral courage and stamina that are needed to meet the problems of life.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What knowledge is required in godly living?

How is this knowledge gained?

What two things does godly living require on our part?

What two types of suffering does godly living imply?

What does coming into Christ involve on the part of the sinner?

Can you prove that the unbaptized cannot live godly in Christ?

What is said about faithfulness as being essential to godly living?

What is our most common form of persecution today?

What would you recommend for one who is not suffering any kind or degree or persecution?

#### Introduction

Why did the Chaldeans temporarily lift their siege of Jerusalem?

What did this temporary lifting of the siege do for the enemies of Jeremiah?

Why was Jeremiah arrested?

Why did Jeremiah wish to go to Anathoth?

Of what crime was Jeremiah accused?

Why did not the princes defend Jeremiah this time as they did before?

What punishment did Jeremiah suffer?

#### Jeremiah Visited by the King

How long was Jeremiah imprisoned?

Who sent for Jeremiah? and what do you know of his character?

What event tended to give the king confidence in Jeremiah as a prophet of God?

What did Jeremiah tell the king as to his future?

How did Jeremiah seek to better his own condition?

Do you know the story of the prophet Hananiah?

#### Jeremiah Asks a Favor

Does Jeremiah's request of the king suggest a tendency to compromise?

Why did Jeremiah make this request?

How did Zedekiah show unusual courage to favor Jeremiah?

What fresh danger did Jeremiah's comparative liberty bring upon him?

What liberty did the weakness of Zedekiah allow the enemies of Jeremiah?

What was Jeremiah's food while in the court of the guard?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?



## Lesson IX—June 2, 1957

## JUDAH'S CAPTIVITY

## Lesson Text

Jer. 52: 1-11

1 Zed-e-ki'-ah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Je-ru'-sa-lem: and his mother's name was Ha-mu'-tal the daughter of Jer-e-mi'-ah of Lib'nah.

2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of Je-ho'-vah, according to all that Je-hoi'-a-kim had done.

3 For through the anger of Je-ho'-vah did it come to pass in Je-ru'-sa-lem and Ju'-dah, until he had cast them out from his presence.

And Zed-e-ki'-ah rebelled against the king of Bab'-y-lon.

4 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Neb-u-chad-rez'-zar king of Bab'-y-lon came, he and all his army, against Je-ru'-sa-lem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about.

5 So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zed-e-ki'-ah.

6 In the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no

bread for the people of the land.

7 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chal-de'-ans were against the city round about); and they went toward the Ar'-a-bah.

8 But the army of the Chal-de'-ans pursued after the king, and overtook Zed-e-ki'-ah in the plains of Jer-i-cho; and all his army was scattered from him.

9 Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Bab'-y-lon to Rib'-lah in the land of Ha'-math; and he gave judgment upon him.

10 And the king of Bab'-y-lon slew the sons of Zed-e-ki'-ah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Ju'-dah and Rib'-lah.

11 And he put out the eyes of Zed-e-ki'-ah; and the king of Bab'-y-lon bound him in fetters, and carried him to Bab'-y-lon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

**Golden Text.**—"Ye have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah your God in anything for which he hath sent me unto you." (Jer. 42: 21.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Jer. 39: 1-10.

## Daily Bible Readings

May 27. M..... A Prophecy of Captivity (Jer. 25: 2-11)  
 May 28. T..... The Prophecy Fulfilled (2 Kings 24: 10-17)  
 May 29. W..... Weeping in Babylon (Psalm 137: 1-4)  
 May 30. T..... Reasons for the Captivity (Ezek. 29: 21-24)  
 May 31. F..... Jeremiah's Sorrow for Zion (Jer. 8: 18-22)  
 June 1. S..... Jeremiah Weeps Over Jerusalem (Jer. 4: 14-18)  
 June 2.

S.Sins Con

**Time.**—590-588 B.C.

**Place**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the people.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. Disobedience of Judah,** (a) In government. One of the first great sins of the nation of Israel was their rejection of God as their king and their demand to have a king like the nations round about them. (1 Sam. 8: 4.) Samuel was the last of the judges, and he took their demand for

a king as a personal insult to him, but Jehovah said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." Though God was never pleased with that arrangement, yet he allowed them to have a king. However, many of the national mis-

takes and sins arose because of the change in the form of government.

(b) In worship. Since the people of Israel did not completely destroy the seven nations of Canaan as they were commanded to do, the people who remained in the land continued to worship their idols and thus tempted the people of Israel to do the same. Jehovah said, "Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore is my wrath poured out on this place, and it shall not be quenched." (2 Chron. 34: 25.) From this we see that the people were guilty of idol worship and because of that sin, the wrath of God was brought upon Jerusalem. There was one sin in particular which Jehovah condemned. The people were forbidden to burn their children in sacrifice. (Lev. 18: 21.) And yet, we learn that they actually practiced such. (Jer. 32: 35ff.) Then if the reader will turn to Jer. 7: 30ff., he will find another charge of this sin and of the terrible consequences which followed this sin.

(c) In morals. It would be impossible to list all the sins of which the people were guilty, but there is special mention of enslaving their own brethren. (Jer. 34: 16ff.) Again, they are accused of lying, especially were the prophets accused of telling lies in the name of Jehovah. (Jer. 23: 25.) And then for a longer list of sins, we have this, that they oppressed not only the sojourner, but the fatherless and the widows; they shed innocent blood; they were guilty of stealing, murder, adultery, swearing falsely, and burning incense to other gods. (Jer. 7: 5ff.)

2. **Disobedience against light,** (a) God gave them a law. The people did not sin because they did not know the law against sin, or because they had not been given a law which

defined sin. "I wrote for him the ten thousand things of my law; but they are counted as a strange thing." (Hos. 8: 12.) (b) God provided a system of worship. People need to worship God in order to be reminded of God's goodness and of their obligation to God. Expression of their love of God and their appreciation of his goodness helps them to refrain from sin. So, Israel did not sin because they did not have a system of worship which reminded them of God and of their obligation to God.

(c) God sent teachers and prophets. They did not live in sin because they were not told of the dangers of sin and of the consequences that would follow their sin. "And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, til there was no remedy." (2 Chron. 36: 15, 16.)

### 3. **Consequence of disobedience,**

(a) They broke their covenant with God. God gave them a covenant and pronounced a curse upon the man who would not hear the words of that covenant. Through their sin, they broke that covenant, and God said that he was no longer bound to observe his part of the covenant. (Jer. 11: 4ff.) (b) God looked upon them as a harlot. God viewed himself as being married to his people, but since they worshiped idols, he spoke of them as a harlot. The reader will do well to study Jer. 3: 1ff. and Ezek. 16: 15ff. to see this figure of speech developed. (c) They were sent into captivity. Our lesson text today deals with this final and awful consequence of the disobedience of God's people.

## Introduction

One author gives an interesting description of the siege of Jerusalem. We take statements from his description. "The thud of the battering rams shook the walls day and night; archers made the defense increasingly hard, by constant showers of arrows from high wooden forts; catapults of all sizes hurled stones into the town with a force as deadly as

that of modern bullets, and darts tipped with fire kindled the roofs of houses. Mines were dug under the walls, and attempts to escalate by ladders were renewed at every favorable opportunity. Famine within the walls aided the besiegers without, and it was speedily followed, as is always the case, with an outbreak of pestilence. Food was well known

gone. There had long been no bread. Mothers were, at last, driven to murder and eat their children. The richest citizens wandered about searching for scraps in the dung-hills. Effeminate nobles, whose fairness and personal beauty had been

their pride, were reduced to black-faced ghosts by hunger. To make matters worse, feuds broke out in the city. Some were for surrender, others for holding out to the last, and every street became a battle field." (Geikie.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. A General Statement (Jer. 52: 1-3)

*Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign.* The reader should notice that the writing of Jeremiah ended with the last verse of the preceding chapter where we find this statement: "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah." The author of this last chapter in the book of Jeremiah is unknown; these first three verses are almost exactly taken from 2 Kings 24: 18-20, and there is a similar statement in 2 Chron. 36: 11-13. This last chapter of Jeremiah consists of statements concerning the capture and destruction of the city of Jerusalem and of the deportation of the people of Judah to Babylon. It also tells us something of the fate of the last two kings of Judah. Zedekiah was the son of Josiah, and his mother's name was Hamutal. His parents named him Mattaniah, but for some reason the king of Babylon changed his name to Zedekiah when he placed him on the throne. (2 Kings 24: 17, 18.) This Hamutal is said to be the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. There are eight men mentioned in the Old Testament as wearing the name of Jeremiah, but none of them so far as we know were related to the author of the book we are studying.

*And he did that which was evil.* This is a statement concerning Zedekiah who we are told came to the throne at the age of twenty-one. It should be noticed in this connection that young men came to the throne of Judah in perilous times when men of age and wisdom and experience were needed. This is one of the evils connected with that form of government which the people demanded contrary to the will of God. It is said that the evil of Zedekiah was "according to all that Jehoiakim had done." Jehoiakim was the half-brother of Zedekiah; he was the son of Josiah by Zebudah. One author has this to say about his sins: "His daring impiety in cutting up and

burning the roll containing Jeremiah's prophecy, at the very moment when the national fast was being celebrated, is another specimen of his character, and drew down upon him the sentence, 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David.' His oppression, injustice, covetousness, luxury, and tyranny, are most severely rebuked, and it has been frequently observed, as indicating his thorough selfishness and indifference to the sufferings of his people, that, at a time when the land was so impoverished by the heavy tributes laid upon it by Egypt and Babylon in turn, he should have squandered large sums in building luxurious palaces for himself." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

*For through the anger of Jehovah.* This writer repeats the statement often made that the calamities which befell the Jews came upon them because of their sins which stirred the anger of Jehovah. And in a statement already quoted in this lesson, we learned that because the people of Israel despised God's law and scoffed at his prophets, "the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, til there was no remedy." (2 Chron. 36: 16b.)

*Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.* When conquering kings placed rulers on thrones of conquered countries, they always exacted not only tribute, but an oath of allegiance to the conqueror. This was done in the case of Zedekiah. Ezekiel tells us that the king of Babylon "took of the royal seed, and made a covenant with him; he also brought him under an oath, and took away the mighty of the land; that the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, but that by keeping his covenant it might stand. But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people." (Ezek. 17: 13-15.)

## II. Siege and Capture of Jerusalem

(Jer. 52: 4-7)

**Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came.** This Nebuchadnezzar is said to have been the greatest and most powerful of all the Babylonian kings. He was the son and successor of Nabopolassar who was the founder of the Babylonian empire. The name Nebuchadnezzar means "Nebo is the protector against misfortune." When we first hear of him in the Bible, he is the head of his father's armies. His father died while Nebuchadnezzar was on a campaign in Syria and Egypt. In fact, he was engaged in a battle in Egypt when he received the news of the death of his father. He immediately returned to Babylon to secure the throne to himself. He was accompanied straight across the desert by his light troops, while the main part of his army went around the desert and carried with them many captives, among whom was Daniel with his three friends. This was about 606 B. C. Several years later, about 599 B. C., he returned to Palestine to punish Jehoiachin for his unfaithfulness, and then came the third time because of the rebellion of Zedekiah. One author says of Nebuchadnezzar, "Our remaining notices of Nebuchadnezzar present him as a magnificent prince and beneficent ruler, rather than a warrior; and the great fame which has always attached to his name among the eastern nations depends rather on his buildings and other grand constructions than on any victories or conquests ascribed to him." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

**So the city was besieged.** Our record tells us that the siege of the city began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, in the tenth month and on the tenth day of that month. And then we are told that the city fell in the eleventh year of his reign, the fourth month and the ninth day of the month. This seems to figure one year, six months, and twenty-nine days which the siege lasted. When we are reminded that the city of Jerusalem had only about 20,000 people within its walls at that time, and that Nebuchadnezzar was at the head of the greatest army on earth, we can but wonder how Jerusalem held out that long. The people continued to fight in spite of hunger and famine in the city.

### ***A breach was made in the city.***

The city of Jerusalem was situated on a high hill, and the wall built on the ledge of that hill made the city almost impregnable. It is remarkable that Nebuchadnezzar and his army were unable to enter the city by the gates. The army inside the city was able to guard the gates sufficiently to keep the enemy from entering thereby. A breach was made in the wall, and the army allowed to enter at that place. When the army entered and the cry was made that the enemy was within the walls, Zedekiah and his bodyguard were able to leave the city by a gate on the southeast. Geikie thinks that Zedekiah and his men intended to reach a place south of the Dead Sea which in Deut. 1: 1 is referred to as the Arabah. However, this word "Arabah" refers to the great depression through which the Jordan runs, whether it is north or south of the Dead Sea.

## III. Fate of King Zedekiah (Jer. 52: 8-11)

**The army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king.** We are told that the Chaldeans overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. If he headed for the spot south of the Dead Sea, he was compelled because of the darkness and the rough terrain to change his course and head for the crossing of the Jordan at Jericho. However, word was soon spread in the city that Zedekiah and some of the soldiers had left the city, and the Chaldeans immediately followed and overtook them before they could reach Jericho.

**They took him to the king.** Nebuchadnezzar had established his headquarters in "Riblah in the land of Hamath." There is some difference of opinion just where this place was located. One Riblah is mentioned in Num. 34: 11 as being on the boundary line of the possessions of the tribes of Israel, but it is hardly possible that this Riblah could be said to have been situated in the land of Hamath. Geikie says this place for the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar was about ten days' journey north of Jerusalem.

**The king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah.** This was a part of the punishment which Zedekiah had to suffer for breaking his covenant

which he made with Nebuchadnezzar when he was placed on the throne. Not only did he slay the sons of Zedekiah, but he also slew all the princes of Judah. Here we have the word "princes" used as distinguished from the sons of the king. Hence, we conclude that the "princes" of Judah were men of authority in the government and not simply the sons of the king.

### *He put out the eyes of Zedekiah.*

It was the custom of conquering kings to put a ring through the lips of the vanquished king and to put out his eyes, either with a spear or with a red hot rod. "Then, with a refinement of cruelty, his own sons were put to death before him—the last sight he was ever to behold; for a spear thrust into his eyes, most

probably by Nebuchadnezzar himself, presently blinded him forever. But this was only the beginning of his humiliation. Chained hand and foot, with a ring through his lips as if he were a wild beast, he was put into a cage, and carried off to Babylon, to lie in a dungeon until death put an end to his suffering." (Geikie.) We are told that Jehoiachin who reigned only three months and ten days and was carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon was allowed to eat bread of the king all the days of his life. (2 Chron. 36: 9, 10; Jer. 52: 31-34.) This meant that Jehoiachin was released from prison and allowed to eat with the servants of the king, but we are told that Zedekiah was kept in prison until the day of his death.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Though God is love, he can be angry with the wicked. Many are inclined to say that God is never angry with persons but angry on account of the things these persons do. But God's anger was kindled against the people of Jerusalem because of their sins.

2. Men should keep their covenants though they be in slavery. Zedekiah

covenanted with Nebuchadnezzar to do certain things. He broke his covenant which he made in all solemnity and for this breach of his word, he suffered.

3. It is needless for puny man to fight against that which Almighty God has said will surely come to pass.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

Tell the story of Israel's rebellion in government.

What was one cause of idolatry among the Jews?

Of what one particularly inexcusable sin were they guilty?

Name some of their sins against the moral code.

What is said of their law to guide them in obedience?

Why do people need a system of worship?

And was this need supplied?

Did they have teachers of the law? and what was their attitude toward them?

Why did God feel himself no longer bound to keep his part of the covenant?

What figure is used to picture their relation to God?

### Introduction

How many kinds of weapons can you name which were used against Jerusalem?

What three words picture the condition in Jerusalem during the siege?

To what extent did the famine drive parents?

What is said of the richest citizens?

### A General Statement

What was Zedekiah's original name? and how old was he when he began to reign?

Who was his father? and his mother?

What is said of the writer of the last chapter of Jeremiah?

What was one of the evils of the form of government demanded by the Jews?

Who was Jehoiakim? and what is said of his sins?

What is said of the wrath of Jehovah?

What did Zedekiah promise the king of Babylon? and did he keep his promise?

### Siege and Capture of Jerusalem

What does the word "Nebuchadnezzar" mean?

Where was he when his father died?

Who was taken to Babylon at that time?

How many trips did Nebuchadnezzar make to Palestine and Egypt?

For what was Nebuchadnezzar best known?

How long was Jerusalem besieged before it fell?

How many people in the city when it fell?

How did Nebuchadnezzar finally enter the city?

What effort did Zedekiah make to escape?

### Fate of King Zedekiah

Where was Zedekiah captured?

Where did Nebuchadnezzar establish his headquarters?

What was the last sight Zedekiah ever saw?

How was he made blind? and why?

Can you contrast his treatment with that of Jehoiachin?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson X—June 9, 1957

## EZEKIEL A WATCHMAN

## Lesson Text

## Ezek. 3: 12-21

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed be the glory of Je-ho'-vah from his place.

13 And *I heard* the noise of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, even the noise of a great rushing.

14 So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away; and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; and the hand of Je-ho'-vah was strong upon me.

15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-a'-bib, that dwelt by the river Che'-bar, and to where they dwelt; and I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of Je-ho'-vah came unto me, saying,

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

**Golden Text.**—“*Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.*” (Ezek. 3: 17.)

**Devotional Heading.**—Ezek. 3: 1-11.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thy hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and thou hast delivered thy soul.

## Daily Bible Readings

June 3. M.....	Watchman Protects the King (2 Sam. 18: 24-27)
June 4. T.....	A Sleeping Watchman (Psalm 127: 1-5)
June 5. W.....	Watchman, What of the Night? (Isa. 21: 1-11)
June 6. T.....	Watchman Set Up (Jer. 51: 1-12)
June 7. F.....	Watchman of Ephraim (Hos. 9: 1-8)
June 8. S.....	Blind Watchmen (Isa. 56: 1-10)
June 9. S.....	Watchman Set on the Walls (Isa. 62: 1-6)

**Time.**—595 B.C.

**Place.**—Babylonia.

**Persons.**—Ezekiel and the captives.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **God makes watchmen,** (a) Each one to warn the wicked. In one sense of the term, each Christian is a watchman; we are given the duty of carrying the gospel to the whole world and saving as many as is possible. To the degree that we are obligated to preach the gospel to the

lost, to that degree and in that sense we are watchmen for Jehovah in the interest of those who are lost. A Christian who does not realize his duty in this matter is certainly not developing in the likeness of Christ, and is not doing that for which the Lord came and that which each

Christian is left here to do. (b) The Bible teaches us that we are the keepers of our brothers. In order to avoid his responsibility and the guilt which was about to be pinned upon him, Cain in the long ago raised the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4: 9.) When Paul taught the church at Corinth to refrain from things which would wound the consciences of weak brethren (1 Cor. 8: 9ff.), he taught them that each Christian is his brother's keeper. And when he taught the brethren in Galatia to restore in a spirit of meekness the brother who had been overtaken in a fault, he taught that we are the watchmen for our weak and erring brethren. (Gal. 6: 1.) (c) Elders are to watch for the souls under their care. Paul said that the Holy Spirit had made certain men overseers of the flock. (Acts 20: 28.) An overseer is a watchman. And again we read that elders watch for the souls of their people as those who shall give account in the day of judgment. (Heb. 13: 17.)

## 2. Responsibilities of watchmen.

(a) To God. Every watchman is responsible to God who made him a watchman to do his duty well. Certainly if God expects us to warn the wicked and to be careful for the welfare of weak brethren, we must give account to him for the way we accept this responsibility and discharge our duty. (b) To souls. The watchman is responsible to the souls over which God has made it his duty to watch. Those who watched in cities in times of dangers owed something to the people over whom they watched. And so we today owe a debt to those in whose interest we work. This debt can be discharged only by faithful performance of our duty. (c) To themselves. Every watchman owes it to himself to be

faithful to his duty. Any watchman who is unfaithful will suffer the consequences of his unfaithfulness. So, in the best interests of himself and for his own honor, and happiness, and well-being, he must realize his responsibility and discharge his duty as best he can.

3. **Kinds of watchmen.** (a) Faithful. God speaks of certain watchmen on the walls about Jerusalem, saying, "They shall never hold their peace day nor night." (Isa. 62: 6.) This has no reference to actual watchmen on the walls about the old city of Jerusalem, but this pictures a time under the reign of the Messiah when God's watchmen shall neither sleep nor be careless through the day or through the night. (b) Determined. When Jehovah commissioned Ezekiel as a watchman, he said, "Behold, I have made thy face hard against their faces, and thy forehead hard against their foreheads." (Ezek. 3: 8.) The meaning of this is that God had made Ezekiel a determined watchman, one who would not allow the hatred and the threats of violence by the people whom he watched to deter him from doing his duty. (c) Unfaithful. Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem when the people were indulging in such wickedness that God's anger was being kindled against them, he described the watchmen as men who were blind and without knowledge. He also compared them to dumb dogs that could not bark; they lay down, slumbered, and dreamed when they should have been watching. (Isa. 56: 10, 11.) This is a description of unfaithful watchmen and those who do not do their duties toward the lost, and wayward brethren today may appear in the eyes of God as these unfaithful watchmen in Israel.

## Introduction

We are to study for the next four Sundays about the prophet Ezekiel. The word Ezekiel means "God will strengthen." He was the son of a priest named Buzi, but of his father nothing else is known. Being the son of a priest, Ezekiel would be also a priest unless there were physical disabilities which would render him unfit for the office. Thus, he would combine in himself the office of priest

and prophet for the captives in Babylon. Ezekiel was contemporary with Jeremiah for a few years. Jeremiah did all of his work in the land of Palestine, and Ezekiel lived and labored in the land of the Chaldees. He was carried into captivity at the time of the capture of Jehoiachin, which was some ten or eleven years before the final destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity under Zed-

kiah. By that time, the work of Jeremiah was practically over. Ezekiel mentions the death of his wife (Ezek. 24: 18), but we do not know

whether he had any children. He differs from Jeremiah in that he does not give us as much of his personal history as Jeremiah gives.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Spirit Takes Ezekiel to His Work (Ezek. 3: 12-15)

*Then the Spirit lifted me up.* There is considerable discussion among commentators as to whether the Spirit literally picked up Ezekiel and transported his body from one place to another. Some think that he only transported him in vision. In Ezek. 8: 3, we read of the Spirit lifting him up between earth and heaven and bringing him "in the visions of God" to Jerusalem. And again in 11: 1, we read of his being brought to the east gate of Jehovah's house in Jerusalem. These references are evidently to visions and not a c t u a l bodily transportations. The same may be true of our text. As the prophet started to follow the leading of the Spirit, he heard a noise of the wings of the living creatures and the noise of the wheels which he had seen in his vision. The student should read carefully chapter 1 to learn about the four living creatures and the wheels within wheels which the prophet saw in his vision.

*Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from this place.* This is the language of the living creatures of the vision which the prophet saw. They are giving praise to God for the prophet's readiness and willingness to go wherever the Spirit would take him. This indicates the readiness which heavenly beings have in the willingness of the Lord's servants to do the bidding of their Master.

*And I went in bitterness.* This seems to describe the spirit in which Ezekiel undertook his mission. It describes the attitude which he had toward his people for their sins against Jehovah. Some have suggested that this accounts for the prophet's being allowed to sit in the midst of the people for seven days before he was given his message. His attitude was such that he would not have delivered the message of Jehovah in the spirit in which the Lord wished his message to be delivered. This might serve as warning and admonition to brethren today who speak the word of the Lord. They should speak that word, not in bitter-

ness of spirit, but in kindness and love which will fairly represent the attitude of the Lord toward those who are in sin.

*The hand of Jehovah was strong upon me.* This indicates the presence of God with him and the power of the Lord with him to do and to say what was his duty. This expression is not peculiar to the Old Testament, for in the work of preachers of the gospel we read, "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11: 21.) This simply indicates the presence and blessing of the Lord in the work of those preachers who were working in Antioch of Syria. And though no miraculous power is included, those who believe in the providence of God today may very scripturally say that the hand of the Lord is with them while they are doing the will of the Lord.

*I came to them of the captivity at Tel-a-bib.* This word Tel-a-bib is undoubtedly the name of a community, perhaps a town in which captives were gathered, but Smith's Bible Dictionary says it is made up of words meaning a "corn hill." It is said to be on the banks of the river Chebar. Scholars are somewhat at a loss to locate this river, but it seems that the majority believe that it was a canal connecting two larger rivers and usually referred to as a royal canal, having been dug by Nebuchadnezzar.

### II. Watchman's Duty to the Wicked (Ezek. 3: 16-19)

*It came to pass at the end of seven days.* Ezekiel was among the people at Tel-a-bib for seven days before the Lord gave him a message. We have a similar situation in Job's three friends who sat upon the ground for seven days and seven nights without speaking a word. (Job 2: 13.) But whether Ezekiel sat silently day and night during that period is not stated.

*I have made thee a watchman.* When Jehovah finally spake to Ezekiel, he reminded him that he was in



the position of a watchman for the house of Israel. It would therefore be his duty both to God and to Israel to do that which God commissioned him to do, and to do it as faithfully and effectively as possible. The Lord seems to divide his work into two divisions by the statement that follows. (1) Therefore, hear the word at my mouth. As a watchman for Jehovah, it was necessary for Ezekiel to hear, to listen attentively to all that God had to say to him. (2) And give them warning from me. The second division of the watchman's duty was to transmit to the people that which he received from Jehovah. The transmission was, of course, to be faithful, without addition or subtraction.

***When I shall say unto the wicked.***

The Lord tells Ezekiel first his duty toward those who are classed as wicked. When God says to the wicked that they shall surely die, it is the duty of the prophet to deliver that warning as he received it in order that the wicked may be saved. But if the prophet does not give the warning as a faithful watchman should, the wicked shall die in his iniquity, but his blood shall be required at the hand of the watchman. Two things are suggested here. (1) There is always the possibility of the wicked's turning from his sin and being saved. The statement, "Thou shalt surely die," must be taken as a conditional statement. If the wicked continues in his wickedness, his eternal destruction is certain. But if, at any time during the period of grace, the wicked should turn from his wickedness, God is willing to forgive and save that man. (2) God will hold watchmen responsible for doing their duty. If the prophet warns the wicked, he has delivered himself; but if the prophet does not warn the wicked and the wicked dies in his sins, the blood of the wicked will be required at the hands of the watchman. Since the life is in the blood, the word "blood" simply means the life of the individual. If the watchman carelessly neglects to warn the wicked, this wicked man will lose his life but that life will be required at the watchman's hands. This may have reference to physical life in this text, but certainly the passage has a spiritual meaning too. And those today who are watching

for souls but are careless and indifferent enough to allow those souls to go into perdition without warning them will pay for their carelessness and unconcern by the loss of their lives, and since spiritual things are involved, it can hardly mean any less than the loss of eternal life.

***Thou hast delivered thy soul.*** This expression is used with reference to the watchman who has warned the wicked and the wicked refused to turn from his sinful way and died in his iniquity. Since the watchman warned the wicked of the destruction which was impending, the blood or life of the wicked will not be required at the hands of the watchman. His soul is delivered from the guilt of carelessness and unconcern; he will not be called on to forfeit his life for the life lost in carelessness.

**III. Watchman's Duty to the Righteous (Ezek. 3: 20, 21)**

***When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness.*** The prophet suggests that a righteous man may turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity. Two things are suggested here. (1) It is possible for a righteous man to turn from his righteousness and commit such iniquity as would involve him in death. There are those who maintain that a righteous man cannot turn from his righteousness and be lost, but this passage certainly proves that a righteous man can become a wicked man and be lost. Again, we hear this same prophet say, "When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his righteousness, and commit iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in his iniquity that he hath committed, therein shall he die." (Ezek. 33: 13.) And (2) we are again reminded of the watchman's duty toward his fellow man. It is the duty of each saved person to watch for the safety and well-being of every other Christian.

***And I lay a stumbling block before him.*** This refers to a practice of men watching for an opportunity to lay a rock in the path of an enemy and cause him to fall and injure himself. So, Jehovah represents himself as laying a stumbling block in the way of a righteous man. Some have thought this to be contrary to the nature of God, and that it would be

impossible for God to lay a stumbling block in the path of any righteous man. In the first place, we must remember that in scripture God is spoken of as doing that which he permits others to do, and since God does permit stumbling blocks to be laid in the paths of the righteous, it is perfectly right to say that God does that himself. In the next place, we should remember that this stumbling block in the path of the righteous means no more than a trial. Certainly no one doubts that God does try his people. He brought a severe trial upon Job; he also brought a severe trial upon Peter in that he allowed Peter to be tempted to deny his Master. The thorn in Paul's flesh was a trial, a messenger from Satan to buffet him. God permitted this and refused to remove the thorn, but did assure Paul that God's grace was sufficient to keep him in that trial. (2 Cor. 12: 7ff.)

*He shall die in his sin.* If the watchman does not warn the righteous who has turned from righteousness to iniquity, that man who was formerly a righteous man shall die in his sin. There are those who believe that a saved person cannot so sin as to be lost. If they are made to admit that a child of God can

sin, they take refuge in the thought that God will not allow them to die in that sin. But this passage states clearly the possibility of a righteous man first turning from his righteousness and living in sin; and second, actually dying in that sin. Furthermore, God affirms that if this man turns from his righteousness and dies in his sins, none of his righteous deeds which he hath done in the past shall be remembered. That simply means that if a righteous man turns away from God and lives in sin, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered in the judgment. He will be judged as a wicked man, and not as a righteous man.

### *Thou hast delivered thy soul.*

Again the prophet is warned that if he does not give God's message to this righteous man who has turned to sin, he will be responsible for the death of that man and shall bear his iniquity. But if he is faithful in his duty and warns the man to turn back from his wicked life and turn back to his former righteousness, and the man pays no attention to the warning, the watchman has delivered his soul. But if the man pay attention to the warning, he shall be saved and the watchman will be credited with saving that soul.

## Lessons to Learn

1. God enables and calls every Christian to his work. Certainly there is no miraculous call as in the case of Ezekiel and Isaiah, but nevertheless each one of us is called to do that which he is able to do. We should be willing to respond to the call to duty.

2. As long as there is life, there is the hope that the wicked man will turn from his wickedness. And as surely as he turns from that wicked-

ness and does that which is right, just that surely God will forgive and save him.

3. As long as there is life and temptations, there is the danger and the possibility of righteous people turning from their righteousness and falling into lives of wickedness. So, it behooves each one of us to watch for the welfare of each other, to warn against sin, and to encourage and inspire to right living.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

To what degree is each Christian a watchman for God?

How does Paul teach us that we are keepers of our brethren?

What is said of elders being watchmen over us?

What can you say of the responsibilities of watchmen to God? to others? to themselves?

How is the faithful watchman described?

What is said of the determined watchman?

How is the unfaithful watchman described?

### Introduction

What does the word Ezekiel mean?

Who was Ezekiel's father? and of what tribe was he?

What two offices did Ezekiel perform for the people in Babylon?

How does the time of his labors compare with that of Jeremiah?

### The Spirit Takes Ezekiel to His Work

What is meant by the Spirit lifting Ezekiel up?

What noise did Ezekiel hear? and what do you know of those creatures?

For what did these living creatures give praise?  
 In what spirit did Ezekiel go to his work?  
 How long did Ezekiel wait before the people until God gave him a message?  
 What is meant by the hand of Jehovah being strong upon him?  
 In what city were the captives held? and on what river?

#### Watchman's Duty to the Wicked

What other case do we have of men waiting seven days before speaking their mind?  
 State and discuss two divisions of the watchman's responsibility.  
 What is meant by having the blood of the wicked on the watchman's hands?  
 Can you show that God's warnings to the wicked are conditional?  
 How does this lesson on responsibility of the watchman apply to us?  
 Have we delivered our souls unless we warn all with whom we associate?

#### Watchman's Duty to the Righteous

What proof do we have that a saved person may return to sin and live in it?  
 What is meant by God laying a stumbling block before the righteous?  
 Name some Bible characters who have had such trials.  
 Can you show that a righteous man may turn back to sin and die in that sin?  
 What is said of that man's righteous deeds?  
 Is a person judged by the way his Christian life starts or by the way it ends?  
 What does this suggest with reference to the needs of being faithful until death?  
 What is said of the watchman who does not warn this man who has turned to sin?  
 What is said of the watchman who warns him and turns him back to righteousness?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

### Lesson XI—June 16, 1957

## PARABLE OF THE EAGLES AND THE VINE

### Lesson Text

Ezek. 17: 1-10

1 And the word of Je-ho'-vah came unto me, saying,  
 2 Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Is'-ra-el;  
 3 And say, Thus saith the Lord Je-ho'-vah: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, full of feathers, which had divers colors, came unto Leb'-a-nôn, and took the top of the cedar:  
 4 He cropped off the topmost of the young twigs thereof, and carried it unto a land of traffic; he set it in a city of merchants.  
 5 He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful soil; he placed it beside many waters; he set it as a willow-tree.  
 6 And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

7 There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend its roots toward him, and shot forth its branches toward him, from the beds of its plantation, that he might water it.

8 It was planted in a good soil by many waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

9 Say thou, Thus saith the Lord Je-ho'-vah: Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it may wither; that all its fresh springing leaves may wither? and not by a strong arm or much people can it be raised from the roots thereof.

10 Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the beds where it grew.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter"* (Ezek. 16: 44.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezek. 17: 11-21.

### Daily Bible Readings

June 10. M.	.....Nathan's Parable (2 Sam. 12: 1-8)
June 11. T.	Parable of the Bramble (Judges 9: 7-21)
June 12. W.	Incline Ear to Parables (Psalm 47: 1-4)
June 13. T.	Job Spoke in Parables (Job 27: 1)

June 14. F.

June 15. S.

June 16. S.

Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13: 1-23)

..... Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13: 24-30)

Why Jesus Spoke in Parables (Matt. 13: 10-17)

Time.—594 B.C.

Place.—Babylon for Ezekiel, and Jerusalem for Israel.

Persons—Ezekiel and Israel.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Meaning and use of proverbs.

(a) Meaning. As a definition of the word proverb, we have "a profound maxim; in scriptural use a parable; a truth couched obscurely. 2. A brief epigrammatic saying that is a popular byword; a maxim; adage." (Webster.) "A proverb, then, may be regarded as a short, pithy sentence, containing a complete and valuable thought." (Dungan.) "Next we find it used of those larger pieces in which a single idea is no longer exhausted in a sentence, but forms the germ of a whole, and is worked out into a didactic poem." (McClintock and Strong.) (b) The essence of a parable. Parables may be reduced to proverbs. For instance, the parable in Matt. 24: 32 may be stated, "When the fig tree puts forth leaves, the summer is nigh." And the parable of the good Samaritan may be reduced to the proverb, "To be a good neighbor, is to show kindness." (c) Dark or difficult sayings were sometimes spoken of as proverbs or parables. For example, John 16: 16. (d) Proverbs were used to increase the force of a statement. Under this heading would come "The legs of the lame are unequal." And another, "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off."

### 2. The proverb of our text, (a)

Meaning of the terms. The word "mother" in our text refers to the Hittites, and the word "father" in our text refers to the Amorites. (Ezek. 16: 1-3.) Verse 45 says, "Your mother was a Hittite, and your father an Amorite." This would seem to single out certain members of the Hittite and the Amorite nations, but the nations themselves are meant instead of an individual. And the prophet continues in verse 46 to say

that Israel's elder sister is Samaria, and the youngest sister is Sodom and her daughters. In this statement the cities or nations are plainly described as being sisters, (b) Implications of the statement. This implies that the people of Israel had sunk so low in shame and wickedness that it would be a dishonor to say they were children of Abraham. The Amorite and the Hittite nations were the most wicked of the seven nations of Canaan, so the prophet simply denies that these people could have sprung from the righteous Abraham and infers that their wickedness would imply that they must have sprung from the Amorite and the Hittite. This, of course, is figurative language and used for the purpose of shaming the people of Israel. "This is strong; but the invective of the prophet exceeds it far. It is the essence of degradation to its subject; and shows the Jews to be as base and contemptible as they were abominable and disgusting." (Adam Clarke.) (c) Lessons to us. (1) Parental influence. This old proverb has been used to illustrate the influence of the mother on her daughter. This influence is well known, and mothers should live exemplary lives before their daughters because of the great influence which they have upon them. (2) This suggests the care we should use in selecting our associates. Not only do mothers influence daughters, but our intimate associates influence our characters. (1 Cor. 15: 33.) (3) God will punish even his people when they are wicked. Since God punished the Amorites and the Hittites for their wickedness, and Israel in her wickedness has imitated these heathen nations, it follows that unless God is a respecter of persons, he will punish Israel for her sins.

## Introduction

Since the parables of our lesson deal with the last few kings of Judah, it will be well for us to review them. Josiah was the last king who had a

righteous character, and when he died, Jehoahaz took his place, but reigned only three months. Judah was under the influence of Egypt at

that time, and the king of Egypt deposed him and made Eliakim his brother king in his stead. This king of Egypt changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim, and he reigned eleven years. During Jehoiakim's reign, Judah passed from under the bondage of Egypt to Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim prisoner into Babylon. He placed Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, on the throne. Jehoiachin reigned only three months

and ten days, and he was removed by Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon. And then Nebuchadnezzar put Mattaniah on the throne and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah reigned eleven years and broke his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar and was taken into Babylon. For the details of these matters, the student should read 2 Kings 34 and 2 Chron. 36.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Parable of the First Eagle

(Ezek. 17: 1-6)

**Put forth a riddle.** Webster says a riddle is "an enigma." And he defines an enigma as a form of statement which "hides its meaning under obscure or ambiguous allusions." However, the matters put forth by Ezekiel in this lesson text are called both a riddle and a parable. The term "house of Israel" refers to the kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom, which was referred to as "the kingdom of Israel" was already in captivity at the time Ezekiel wrote this. Hence, he refers to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem as the house of Israel.

**A great eagle with great wings.** This eagle refers to Nebuchadnezzar. He is referred to several times in scripture as flying like an eagle. (Jer. 48: 40; 49: 22; Dan. 7: 4.) The great wings of our text refers to the great expanse of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Daniel said of Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou, O King, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." (Dan. 4: 22.) And the "long pinions" of our text is usually thought to refer to the rapid conquests of Nebuchadnezzar. The pinions are the long feathers on the wing and especially the tip of the wing, and their length contributes to the speed with which a bird can fly.

**Full of feathers, which had divers colors.** The mention of this eagle being full of feathers perhaps suggests the multitude of subjects under the control of Nebuchadnezzar, and the "divers colors" may refer to the various nationalities of people under his reign.

**Came unto Lebanon, and took the top of the cedar.** The word "Lebanon" here is used for Judea, but since

the parable or riddle involves a cedar, the word Lebanon is used. Lebanon, as the student will remember, was the source of the finest cedars. (1 Kings 5: 8, 9.) When the prophet says that Nebuchadnezzar "took the top of a cedar," he refers to the king, and the king at this time was Jehoiachin.

**He cropped off the topmost of the young twigs.** This refers to the princes of Judah and the men of wealth and ability. We are told in 2 Kings that Jehoiachin reigned only three months and ten days, and because he did that which was evil Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and besieged it. Then "Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers. ... He carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land." (2 Kings 24: 12ff.)

**And carried it unto a land of traffic.** Since Nebuchadnezzar carried the king and the best portion of Israel into the land of Chaldea, we would, of course, understand this to refer to Chaldea. And he says that it was set in a city of merchants, and, of course, this would refer to Babylon as the capital of Chaldea. The fact that Babylon was the capital of the empire and also situated as it was with reference to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and the Persian Gulf would all tend to make Babylon a city of merchants.

**He took also of the seed of the land.** This seems to refer to Zedekiah, the king whom Nebuchadnezzar set up in the place of Jehoiachin, and we are told that he planted this seed

in fruitful soil. This fruitful soil was Judea, for it was there that Zedekiah was set up or planted in the place of Jehoiachin who was taken to Babylon.

***He placed it beside many waters.***

The meaning of this is not so clear, though Adam Clarke thinks it refers to Judah's being placed under the protection of Babylon, and that the connection of "many waters" is on account of Babylon's situation being near many waters. But the general picture of the verse is queer; the prophet is painting a picture of a degree of prosperity that is tolerable if not pleasant. He goes on to state that this twig taken from the cedar was set as a willow tree. Willows grow beside streams or bodies of water, and their life is dependent upon much water. This perhaps suggests the dependency of Judah upon Babylon. The general idea of the verse is, then, that when Jehoiachin was taken into captivity, Judah could have maintained a semblance of independence under Zedekiah. They would have been a tributary to Nebuchadnezzar, but they would have maintained their place as a province in the empire and their own ruler, and their living conditions would have been tolerable.

***It grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature.*** This suggests the period of prosperity during the reign of Zedekiah. The "low stature" of this verse suggests the fact that Judah was subject to Nebuchadnezzar, but in spite of this subjection, the nation grew and prospered. Then we are told that the branches of this vine turn toward him, that is, toward Nebuchadnezzar, and the roots thereof were under him. This simply describes a condition of vassalage which Judah owed to Nebuchadnezzar as the king of Babylon. But the fact that it "brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs" suggests a degree of prosperity which was more than the people deserved.

## II. The Parable of the Second Eagle (Ezek.17: 7-10)

***Another great eagle with great wings.*** This refers to Pharaoh-Hophra who was the king of Egypt at that time. He is referred to as having great wings and many feathers which, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, would mean extensive

dominion and numerous subjects under his control. However, we do not find mention of the "long pinions" and "divers colors" suggesting that Pharaoh-Hophra was not as powerful and as swift in his military maneuvers as was Nebuchadnezzar.

***This vine did bend its roots toward him.*** The vine under consideration is Zedekiah and the bending of his roots toward him and the shooting forth of its branches toward him refers to Zedekiah's looking toward Egypt for relief from the oppression of Nebuchadnezzar. During all these years there was a strong party among the princes of Judah demanding that the king make a covenant with Egypt in order to defend them against the Babylonians. At one time an effort was made to bring all the little kingdoms of the Mediterranean into a compact which they hoped would be able to resist the advances of the Chaldeans. Jeremiah, as well as Isaiah before him, advised against such coalition, and Jeremiah also said in no uncertain terms that Judah should form no alliance with Egypt, but that Judah should recognize the power and authority of the king of Babylon. He promised that if they would be faithful to the king of Babylon, the city of Jerusalem would never be destroyed; but that if they resisted the Chaldeans, the city would be destroyed and the people carried into captivity.

***It was planted in a good soil by many waters.*** This again refers to the vine which was used to represent Zedekiah and the people of Judah. Being planted in a good soil, likely suggests their dependence upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was a powerful king and able to take care of them and protect them from any advance of other nations. And the prophet continues to say that the vine was expected to put forth branches and bear fruit. Nebuchadnezzar looked upon Judah as one of the provinces of his great empire, and he expected them to be faithful to their covenant which they had made with him. And the bearing fruit perhaps suggests the tribute which the king would receive from the province of Judah.

***Shall it prosper?*** This is represented as the language of Jehovah. Jehovah raises the question whether this vine will prosper since it was planted by one king, and it is shoot-

ing forth its roots and branches toward another king.

**Shall he not pull up the roots thereof?** By raising the question, Jehovah affirms that Nebuchadnezzar will destroy this vine which he has planted. This simply means that Nebuchadnezzar will come and take Zedekiah captive and his people with him. And the pulling up of the roots and the cutting off of the fruit so that it will wither is perhaps indicative of the complete destruction which Nebuchadnezzar would visit upon Zedekiah and Jerusalem.

**And not by a strong arm or much people.** This clause of the sentence is rather difficult, and commentators are disagreed on its meaning. However, it seems that the prophet is saying that there will be such a destruction of Jerusalem that even a strong arm and much people will be unable to raise it up again. This may refer to Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar would bring about such destruction that even Egypt, if she could be obtained as an ally, would be unable to raise up the nation again.

**Being planted, shall it prosper?** The balance of the chapter in which our text is found enlarges upon the ideas here. Zedekiah was planted by Nebuchadnezzar, and he swore be-

fore Jehovah to be faithful unto Nebuchadnezzar. But he forgot his oath, and he broke his covenant and sought aid from Egypt. God hates the breaking of covenants, and so he gives this as one reason why Zedekiah cannot prosper. In verse 15 he raises the question, "Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? shall he break the covenant and yet escape? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die."

**It shall wither in the beds where it grew.** This is the judgment of Jehovah upon Zedekiah and Jerusalem. Then in the next paragraph of this chapter, the prophet enlarges on it by saying, "Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company help him in the war, when they cast up mounds and build forts, to cut off many persons. For he hath despised the oath by breaking the covenant; and behold, he had given his hand, and yet hath done all these things; he shall not escape." So we see that Zedekiah's dishonesty, as well as his rebellion, had something to do in determining his fate.

## Lessons to Learn

1. God sometimes used Gentile nations to punish his people for their sins. God has never allowed the guilty to go unpunished, and when the guilty was the whole nation, their punishment had to come from other nations.

2. Jehovah expects his people to keep their covenants. One of the sins of the Gentile world was the fact that they were covenant-breakers. (Rom. 1: 31.) And people who do not keep their word of honor to

friends or in business relations dishonor the Lord and bring reproach upon the church.

3. Zedekiah's failure to keep his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar added to his suffering and to the suffering of his people. Jeremiah promised that if Zedekiah would be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar the city of Jerusalem would never be destroyed, but the king's unfaithfulness brought about the complete destruction of the city.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

Discuss the meaning of a proverb.

Give examples of parables being reduced to proverbs.

What dark saying is spoken of as a proverb?

Give examples of proverbs being used to increase the force of a statement.

Who does Ezekiel say is the mother of sinful Israel? and their father?

Who were their sisters?

What lesson does Ezekiel mean to teach by such figurative language?

State and discuss three lessons we should learn from this proverb.

Introduction

Who was the last righteous king in Judah? Can you name the last four kings of Judah?

What two foreign nations influenced these kings?

Who was the king that took them into captivity?

## The Parable of the First Eagle

What is a riddle?  
 Who is the "house of Israel" mentioned in our text?  
 Who was the great eagle? and what were his pinions?  
 What do his feathers represent? and what the divers colors?  
 Why the use of the word "Lebanon"? and what the topmost twigs of the tree?  
 What was the land of traffic? and the city of merchants?  
 How does Ezekiel describe the tolerable condition in which he left Judah?  
 What does the "low stature" of this text mean?  
 What statement suggests the fair degree of prosperity during the reign of Zedekiah?

## The Parable of the Second Eagle

Who was the second great eagle?

What did the first eagle have which the second eagle did not have?  
 What is meant by the roots of the vine being bent toward Pharaoh?  
 How was sentiment divided in Jerusalem as to their ally?  
 What was Jeremiah's position in this matter?  
 What is meant by Judah being planted in good soil? and bearing fruit?  
 Why would Nebuchadnezzar destroy the one he had planted?  
 What did Ezekiel think of the ability of Pharaoh to help Judah?  
 What did God think of Zedekiah for breaking his oath to Nebuchadnezzar?  
 What is meant by withering in the bed where it grew?  
 What is there of interest in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XII—June 23, 1957

## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

## Lesson Text

Ezek. 37: 1-10

1 The hand of Je-ho'-vah was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of Je-ho'-vah, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.

2 And he caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Je-ho'-vah, thou knowest.

4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy over these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Je-ho'-vah.

5 Thus saith the Lord Je-ho'-vah unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.

6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put

breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Je-ho'-vah.

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

8 And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them.

9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Je-ho'-vah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"And my servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them"* (Ezek. 37: 24.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Ezek. 37: 11-14.

## Daily Bible Readings

June 17. M.....	Judah's Unfaithfulness (2 Chron. 16: 1-10)
June 18. T.....	Warning of Jeremiah (Jer. 26: 1-7)
June 19. W.....	People Charged with Sins (Ezek. 16: 1-22)
June 20. T.....	Sins the Lord Would Not Overlook (2 Kings 24: 1-9)
June 21. F.....	Blessings Promised (Ezek. 34: 11-16)
June 22. S.....	Return Prophesied (Jer. 29: 10-14)
June 23. S.....	Spiritual Restoration (Psalm 124)



**Time.**—587 B.C.

**Place.**—In the land of Chaldea.

**Persons.**—Ezekiel and Israel.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. Unity in authority,** (a) David is king. Hundreds of years after David died, three Old Testament prophets spoke of David as being king in the future over Israel. Jeremiah said, "But they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." (Jer. 30: 9.) Jeremiah was trying to comfort the people by a promise of return from captivity. His words assure them of their return, and then go beyond the literal return of captives from Babylon to Jerusalem and speak of a time when the Messiah will come to be their ruler. And Ezekiel spoke of the same return and said, "My servant David" shall be prince among them. And Hosea said, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days." (Hos. 3: 5.) Few, if any, rabid premillennialists take this passage to refer to David the son of Jesse. No one thinks that David will be raised from the dead at some time future to fulfill these prophecies. Hence, they must refer to the Messiah as the Son of David, (b) One shepherd. Ezekiel said, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." (Ezek. 34: 23.) From this we see that the prophets pictured this one called David both as king and shepherd. This denotes unity in authority under the Messiah.

**2. Unity in organization,** (a) One flock. Ezekiel also said, "Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep." (Ezek. 34: 22.) The fact that there was to be one shepherd would imply one flock, but here Jehovah is represented as speaking of having but one flock. This reminds us of the language of our Lord when he said, "And other sheep I have, which are

not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." (John 10: 16.) (b) One king and one shepherd argue unity of organization. If there is but one king, there can be but one kingdom. A kingdom may have many provinces, but no king has many kingdoms. A shepherd has one flock, and he has one fold to protect the flock. Hence, this unity of organization is predicted. When we come into the New Testament, we read of Jesus' being raised from the dead and made to sit at God's right hand. He was made both Lord and Christ; he was made the ruler and king over the kingdom established on the day of Pentecost. He spoke of his kingdom but never of his kingdoms. He called himself the shepherd of the sheep in the one fold; he never spoke of himself as being the shepherd over many folds or flocks of sheep.

**3. Unity in life,** (a) Walk in God's ordinances. Our text says that when David, the Messiah, shall be our king and our shepherd, his people shall walk in God's ordinances. An ordinance is "a prescribed practice or usage, an authoritative decree or direction." (Webster.) To walk in the ordinances of God is to walk according to his authoritative decree or direction, (b) We observe God's statutes. A statute means "something declared as fixed or established, hence: a. a law enacted by the legislative branch of a government, b. An act of a corporation or of its founder intended as a permanent rule." (Webster.) There is little difference between the meaning of the words "ordinance" and "statute." They both refer to the laws of God, and if Messiah's people walk in God's ordinances and observe God's statutes, there will be unity of life or of action. The prayer which Jesus prayed for unity among those who believed on him can be answered by all believers walking in God's ordinances and observing God's statutes.

## Introduction

The prophet Ezekiel sums up some matters which will serve well to introduce our lesson today. First, he gives the reason why Israel went into captivity. He said it was because they defiled their own land by their doings. They were unclean in the sight of the Lord, and because of that uncleanness they were unfit to dwell in the Holy Land. Second, because of their uncleanness, God said he poured out his wrath upon them and scattered them among the nations. (Ezek. 36: 16ff.) When they went into those nations, they profaned the name of Jehovah, not only by the way they lived, but simply because it was known to the nations that they were unfit to dwell in God's holy land. The very fact that they had been scattered from that land and permitted to be taken into captivity was proof of the fact that they were unfit to dwell in it. Third, Jehovah said he would bring them back out of their captivity into their own land. This promise was made as a matter of consolation and encourage-

ment to them with the possibility of keeping them from further sin in order that they might have an opportunity to return. Fourth, Jehovah said he would not bring them back into their land for their sake, but for the sake of his holy name. They were unworthy of the promised return, but the name of Jehovah was involved, and so, to protect his own good name, he would bring them back. Jehovah says, "I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." (Ezek. 36: 22-24.) Fifth, God said that when they were brought back into their land they would remember their evil ways, and on account of their evil, they would loathe themselves. (Ezek. 36: 31.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Ezekiel Prophecies Over Dry Bones

(Ezek. 37: 1-6)

#### *The hand of Jehovah was upon me.*

This is the prophet's usual way of saying that Jehovah was dealing directly with him to make known his message. This expression is found in a number of places. (Ezek. 1: 3; 33: 22; 40: 1.)

*Brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah.* It is difficult to determine the meaning of this statement. It is possible that Ezekiel was brought by the influence of the Spirit to a literal valley in which were the bones of men slain in battle. Or it is possible that Ezekiel was simply given a vision through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in this vision he saw a valley filled with bones. The phrase "in the Spirit" can mean that the Holy Spirit took Ezekiel to such a valley, and it would be equally correct to say that the phrase means that Ezekiel was given a vision through the power of the Spirit, a vision such as Peter saw on the housetop. (Acts 10: 9ff.) But it is not necessary that we settle this matter in order to get the lesson which

the prophet intends for us to get from his words.

*They were very dry.* Ezekiel said that he saw a valley filled with dry bones. He states first that there were many bones in this open valley, and second, he says these bones were very dry. This is intended to describe the condition of Israel in captivity. There were many of them; practically all of God's people had been taken out of their land and settled in a foreign land. And the statement that they were very dry is used to suggest that they had little life or hope of life as a nation again. The fact that the bones were dry would indicate that the bodies had been dead so long that all the meat had been plucked off, or had rotted from the bones. Not only had sufficient time passed for all the meat to be gone, but the bones themselves were dried. This indicates something of the length of time Israel was to be in captivity. They would be there so long that their national life would become completely extinct.

*Can these bones live?* The fact that there was some question as to whether these bones could live again

suggests the same thought as was suggested in the dryness of the bones. And the fact that God raises the question indicates that there may be a human impossibility implied. The prophet does not seek to answer the question; he simply states that the Lord knows whether they can live again. This implies that the condition of Israel was such that human wisdom could not possibly tell whether they would be revived or returned to their land. Only God could know whether they would be returned, and only God could effect their return.

**Prophecy over these bones.** Jehovah instructed Ezekiel to prophesy over the bones in order to give them life. This may indicate that God would use human instrumentality in the bringing of Israel back into their land. And if we give this a spiritual meaning we can easily see the power of God's word in bringing life to the dead, those who are dead in sin. These dry bones are spoken of as hearing the words of Jehovah, (verse

4.) If this may be given a spiritual application, this would prove that those who are dead in sins have the ability to hear and understand the word of Jehovah.

**I will lay sinews upon you.** This is the first phase of the reconstruction or vivification of these bones. The Lord would bring the bones together in their natural order and put the flesh upon them. When this was done, they would be in the condition that Adam was before he was made alive. The second phase of this recovery is expressed in these words: "And put breath in you." As Adam was formed completely before the breath of life was put into him, so these are reformed before the breath of life is put into their nostrils. And as Adam did not live or become a living soul until the breath of life was put into that body which was formed, so these were not to live until the breath of life was given them.

**Ye shall know that I am Jehovah.** This implies that when these bones are brought together and given their flesh and made alive, they shall know that Jehovah was the one who restored them. This may indicate that the restoration of Israel was to be done in such way that Israel would know beyond a doubt that Jehovah restored them to their land. If they

should have maneuvered and executed a rebellion against Babylon and had returned of their own strength, they could have gloried in the fact that they returned and captured their city. But since they did not return in that way, they knew that it was not by their own wisdom, nor by their own power, nor by the weakness of their captors that they were returned. It was through the wisdom and goodness and power of Jehovah that they were restored to their land.

## II. Results of Ezekiel's Prophecy

(Ezek. 37: 7-10)

**There was a noise.** Ezekiel says that he prophesied according to the Lord's direction, and that following this prophecy and as a result of it, there was a noise made by the bones coming together. The fulfillment of the prophecy follows the proclamation of the prophecy. There was first the bringing together of the bones; then there was the placing of the flesh upon them; and third, the breath of life was put within them. And so, Ezekiel says that the bones came together and the sinews were put upon them, and they were covered with the skin "but there was no breath in them."

**Prophecy unto the wind.** The prophet was told to speak to the wind and say, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." The "four winds" denote the places from which Israel was to be gathered. They had been scattered to the four winds of the earth; hence they are to be collected from the four winds of the earth.

**So I prophesied as he commanded me.** Here we have the immediate, faithful response of the prophet. These old prophets were known for their strict obedience to God's word, their willingness to serve him in doing whatever they were commanded to do, and we are given the results of his prophecy. He says when he prophesied, the breath came into them, and they lived, "and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." This suggests something of the number of the bones in this valley. It also suggests that these remains were the remains of any army of men. But whether this is to be

taken as a valley filled literally with bones is not known. If it was a literal valley filled with literal bones,

then we must accept the result and that a literal army of exceeding great numbers came to life.

### Lessons to Learn

1. This scripture points to the restoration of Israel in their own land. Ezekiel lived in Chaldea on the banks of the river Chebar, and his prophetic work was done in that section of the country. It was his work to exhort the people to be content with their lot and to keep themselves free from the idolatry of the people around them, and to wait patiently for a return to their own land. And this vision of the valley of dry bones was one way of instilling in them the belief that they would some day be returned through the power of God to their own land.

2. Many prophecies have both a near and a remote fulfillment. The near, or primary, fulfillment of this prophecy was, of course, the return of Israel to their own land. This was fulfilled under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. But this may have a remote fulfillment, and certainly it can without any harm done to the scripture, be used to represent the establishment of the church. God's dealings with Israel have been used as types and shadows of something better to come, and as God gave life to Israel in the restoration to their own land, so God gave life to spiritual Israel through the preaching of the gospel. And so this may point to the establishment of the church and God's work among spiritual Israel.

3. There is also the thought of the general resurrection suggested by this prophecy concerning the valley of

dry bones. We do not contend that this is a necessary implication of the prophecy. But as God was able to bring those bones together again and put their sinews upon them, put their breath back into them and make them live again, so God can resurrect these bodies and make them live again. It is popular in these modern times for many, and even some among our brethren, to deny the resurrection of the physical body. To deny the resurrection of the body that is buried is to deny the only resurrection of which the Bible speaks, that is, the only general resurrection in the last day of time. The body is the only thing about a human being that dies, and consequently, the only thing that can be resurrected. The soul, the spirit, the inner man, that which is the offspring of God does not die and consequently cannot be resurrected. If there is to be a resurrection at all at the time of the coming of the Lord, it will be the resurrection of the body. It is not contended here that the body will be raised as flesh and bone, but that this flesh and blood and bone body which is buried will be resurrected in whatever form God sees fit to give it. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown a mortal body; it is raised an immortal body. That which is sown or buried is that which is raised, just as much so as the grain which comes up is that grain of corn which was planted.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What three Old Testament prophets speak of a future king as David?

Of what did Jeremiah assure the people in order to comfort them?

What in these expressions denotes unity in authority?

What denotes unity in organization in Messiah's kingdom?

How did Jesus predict this unity in organization?

What is an ordinance? and a statute?

What is meant by walking in God's ordinances?

How can there be unity of life in Messiah's kingdom?

#### Introduction

What reason did Ezekiel give for Judah's captivity?

What did their uncleanness cause God to do?

What promise was made to comfort and console them while in captivity?

For whose sake did God say he would bring them back?

What would be their attitude toward themselves when they returned?

Are we safe from temptation until we have an attitude toward our sins?

#### Ezekiel Prophecies Over Dry Bones

What is meant by the hand of Jehovah being upon the prophet?

How was Ezekiel brought to the valley of dry bones?

State two things said about the bones in this valley.

What does the dryness of these bones suggest?

What is suggested with reference to human inability to make them live?

What is suggested by Ezekiel being told to prophesy over the bones?

Discuss, and illustrate the two phases in the process of making the bones live.

How was Israel to be made to know that Jehovah had restored them to their land?

#### Results of Ezekiel's Prophecy

What noise did Ezekiel hear?

What is suggested here as to the power of God's word spoken by his prophet?

What is the order of the events which occurred in this valley?

What is the meaning of the "four winds" of this text?

What is suggested as to the number of bones in this valley?

How much of this can be taken literally?

#### Lessons to Learn

What is the primary lesson which this text teaches?

What two types of fulfillment may a prophecy have?

What is the primary fulfillment of this prophecy?

What may be the remote fulfillment of this prophecy?

What does this prophecy suggest with reference to the possibility of the resurrection?

What is there about a person which can be resurrected?

Can one believe in a resurrection if he denies that the body will be raised?

### Lesson XIII—June 30, 1957

## JEHOVAH'S GLORIOUS HOUSE

### Lesson Text

Ezek. 43: 1-12

1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east.

2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Is'-ra-el came from the way of the east; and his voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shined with his glory.

3 And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city; and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Che'-bar; and I fell upon my face.

4 And the glory of Je-ho'-vah came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

5 And the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of Je-ho'-vah filled the house.

6 And I heard one speaking unto me cut of the house; and a man stood by me.

7 And he said unto me, Son of man, *this is* the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Is'-ra-el for ever. And the house of Is'-ra-el shall no more defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, and by the dead bodies of their kings *in* their high places;

8 In their setting of their threshold by my threshold, and their door-post beside my door-post, and there was *but* the wall between me and them; and they have defiled my holy name by their abominations which they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.

9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the dead bodies of their kings, far from me; and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

10 Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Is'-ra-el, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern.

11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the egresses thereof, and the entrances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight; that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

12 This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for evermore "*  
(Psalm 93: 5b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezek. 43: 18-27.

### Daily Bible Readings

June 24.	M. The Tabernacle as God's House (1 Sam. 3: 15-18)
June 25. T.....	The Temple as God's House (1 Kings 8: 12-21)
June 26. W.....	God Promised the Church (Isa. 2: 1-5)
June 27. T.....	The Church Is God's House (1 Tim. 3: 15; Heb. 3: 1-6)
June 28.	F. God Dwells Not in Temples Made with Hands (Acts 17: 22-31)
June 29. S.....	God's Eternal House (John 14: 1-7)
June 30. S.....	Who Shall Dwell in God's House? (Psalm 15: 1-5)

TIME.—574 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Ezekiel and Jehovah.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **God is holy,** (a) In his approval of righteousness. The word "holy" is defined to mean "worthy of adoration or veneration . . . spiritually whole; of unimpaired innocence or proved virtue." (Webster.) God is holy in that he is imminently worthy of adoration; he is worthy of all the worship and adoration that is possible for humanity to offer to him. He is also holy in the sense that he is spiritually whole and of unimpaired innocence, and this holiness is manifested in his approval of everything that is right and pure,

(b) His holiness is also manifest in his disapproval of everything that is evil or impure. We say that we can judge the character of a man by the things which he approves and disapproves in his presence, and so we may judge of the character of God by that which he approves and that which he disapproves. He approves of everything that is pure and good and right and just, and he disapproves of everything that is impure and unholy and evil, (c) In his refusal to look upon evil. In speaking of Jehovah, the prophet said, "Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he?" (Hab. 1: 13.) God may behold evil and perverseness in the sense that he knows that such things exist, but he does not look upon such with the idea of entertaining the thought of doing them or of enjoying them in others.

2. **He demands holiness in us.** (a) Because we are to be like him. Jesus

promises that the pure in heart shall see God. (Matt. 5: 8.) And Peter tells us that we are to be holy because God is holy. "But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1: 15, 16.) (b) To represent him correctly. Unholy beings cannot correctly represent a holy being. Jesus could say that people who had seen him had seen the Father because he had correctly represented the Father before people. Paul tells us that we manifest Jesus in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4: 10, 11.) And again he said, "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7: 1.) If we wish to represent the Lord correctly in our lives, we must cleanse ourselves of the defilement of flesh and spirit and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

(c) To be fit to live with him. Paul tells us that Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it "that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 26, 27.) And since we look for the dissolution of all things temporal and earthly, we should be engaged in holy living and godliness, earnestly looking for the time of the coming of our Lord to receive the pure in heart unto himself. (2 Pet. 3: 11-14.)

3. **Holiness is becoming,** (a) In a

wise God. God is infinitely wise and infinitely holy. There must be some connection between his wisdom and his holiness. We conclude that one who is infinitely wise sees the need of infinite holiness, (b) In a wise person. If the infinitely wise God is perfectly holy, it follows that a wise person will make every effort possible to cultivate holiness in his own life. And Jesus teaches us that

it is the foolish man that fails to do so. (c) In a wise church. Holiness is becoming to a church which owns Christ as its head. Christ was perfectly holy, and he wants his church to be holy. The church exhibits wisdom in that it keeps itself free from impurities, but the church that permits sin in its membership exhibits not only weakness but a lack of wisdom.

## Introduction

Beginning in chapter 40, the prophet Ezekiel tells us that he was brought in the visions of God to the land of Israel to a very high mountain and given a vision of the future. He gives us an elaborate description of an imaginary temple; he gives us the measurement of the court, of the temple itself, and of the sanctuary; he gives the measurement of the altars and tells us of the services of the priests and everything that goes with a Jewish temple. One authority says, "It is not a description of a temple that ever was built or ever could be erected at Jerusalem. . . . As such it would certainly be interesting if it could be correctly restored but unfortunately the difficulties of making out a complicated plan from a mere verbal description are very great indeed, and are enhanced in this instance by our imperfect knowledge of the exact

meaning of the Hebrew architectural terms, and it may also be from the prophet describing not what he actually knew, but only what he saw in a vision . . . . Notwithstanding its idea of character, the whole is extremely curious, as showing what were the aspirations of the Jews in this direction and how different they were from those of other nations; and it is interesting here, inasmuch as there can be little doubt but that the arrangements of Herod's temple were in a great measure influenced by the description here given. The outer court, for instance, with its porticos measuring four hundred cubits each way, is an exact counterpart on a smaller scale of the outer court of Ezekiel's temple, and is not found in either Solomon's or Zerubbabel's, and so too, evidently, are several of the internal arrangements." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. God's Glory Enters the Temple

(Ezek. 43: 1-5)

*Afterward he brought me to the gate.* The prophet explains that this gate was the one which looked toward the east. This is the gate from which the glory of Jehovah is said to have left the city on another occasion. (Ezek. 11: 23.) Both the tabernacle and the temple faced the east, hence this would be the front door to which Ezekiel was brought.

*The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.* This "glory of the God of Israel" is the glorious vision which Ezekiel saw and described in chapter 1. He said of its appearance, "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah." (Ezek.

1: 28.) This coming of the glory of God from the east reminded Adam Clarke of the fact that religion came from the east toward the west, that learning also traveled from east to west, and that civilization with its refinements of comforts and luxuries came from the east toward the west. The prophet tells us that the voice of God was "like the sound of many waters." This reminds us that John describes the voice of God as the voice of many waters. (Rev. 1: 15; 14: 2.) And Ezekiel tells us that the earth shone with the glory of God. On another occasion he tells us that "the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah's glory." (Ezek. 10: 4.) We are told that there will be no night in heaven, nor will we need the light of the lamp or the sun, "for the Lord God shall give them light." (Rev. 22: 5.)

*When I came to destroy the city.* Ezekiel speaks of coming to destroy the city because he had been given the responsibility of delivering the message concerning the destruction of the city. But perhaps his reason for mentioning his coming to destroy the city is the return of God to the temple. God once left the temple and gave permission to the enemies of the Jews to destroy the temple, and now the prophet sees in vision a temple restored and God's glory filling it as he had filled the old.

*The glory of Jehovah came into the house.* We have a description of Jehovah's entering and filling the temple of Solomon. "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of Jehovah, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah." (1 Kings 8: 10, 11.)

*And the Spirit took me up.* The prophet had at first been farther removed from the temple area, perhaps on the exceeding high mountains mentioned in the beginning of this division. (Ezek. 40: 2.) Now he is brought in his vision into the inner court of the temple where he could see the glory of Jehovah as it filled the temple.

## II. God Demands a Holy House (Ezek. 43: 6-9)

*And a man stood by me.* The identity of this man has given rise to much speculation, but perhaps the most reasonable supposition is that it was an appearance of God adjusted to human sight. In many instances in the Old Testament, the second person of the Godhead, sometimes referred to as the Angel of Jehovah, took a human appearance as in the case of his appearance to Abraham to talk about the destruction of Sodom and in the experience which Jacob had when he wrestled with one called both a man and an angel. There must be a distinction made here between one called a man and the one whose glory filled the temple. But since this one called a man speaks in his own right things which an ordinary human being could not speak, we prefer this to be an appearance of the second person of the Godhead in form visible to man.

*This is the place of my throne.* This is the language of this man who stood by Ezekiel. He speaks of the temple as the place of his throne and where he would dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. This could apply only to God, so this one called a man must also be viewed as God.

*Israel shall no more defile my holy name.* The prophet looks forward to the time when the glory of God would fill this temple and as a result the people would worship and serve him. One thing that would characterize that time is that the name of Jehovah would no more be defiled by their whoredom. This evidently refers to their idolatrous worship. And the mention of "the dead bodies of their kings in their high places" seems to signify a particular kind of idolatry of which the Jews were sometimes guilty.

*Setting of their threshold by my threshold.* This verse is a further description of how the name of Jehovah was defiled by the impurities of the worship of the Jews. They had set the threshold of their idols so near to the threshold of God's temple that there was little distinction between their places of dwelling. The Jews had gone so far in idolatry that they could set up their idols near the place of worship of Jehovah. Solomon went so far as to build temples to the heathen gods of his wives. These temples were located so near the temple of Jehovah that this verse could very well apply to that abominable practice.

*Wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.* Because of this abominable practice of idolatry, the Lord became angry and consumed the people. "Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore is my wrath poured out upon this place, and it shall not be quenched." (2 Chron. 34: 25.)

*Let them put away their whoredom.* Jehovah makes this a condition of his dwelling in the midst of his people forever. Not only must they put away their idolatrous worship, but again we have mention of the "dead bodies of their kings" as if this were especially abominable in the sight of God. Because God is un-



changeable, he agrees to dwell within us on similar conditions. He says for us to come out from among them that are unclean and have no part with the world and the ungodliness of the world, and he will be to us a father and we will be to him as sons and daughters. And Paul's conclusion is that since we have these promises, we ought to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit and perfect holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 6: 17-7: 1.)

### III. The House and Its Law Shown to Israel (Ezek. 43: 10-12)

*Show the house to the house of Israel.* Ezekiel is commanded to show this new temple which he has described to the house of Israel, and the purpose of showing this house to Israel is "that they may be ashamed of their iniquities." Since God was good enough to show them their future bliss and glory on condition they would put away their sins, Israel should respond by being ashamed of their iniquities and turning away from them.

*If they are ashamed.* Ezekiel is commanded to proceed with caution and in proportion to the response of the people. He was to give them a

picture of the house of God and if this awakened within them feelings of sorrow for their sins and a determination to quit their sins because of the goodness of God, then Ezekiel was to proceed with his showing of the house of God. He was then to make known to them the form of the house and its fashion, the entrances and departures, and all the ordinances and the laws of the house. In fact, if on their first sight of the house, they showed signs of interest and proper sorrow for their sins and intentions of doing right, Ezekiel was to reveal completely the vision God gave him of the temple.

*This is the law of the house.* This statement refers to the holiness which the Lord demands in and around his house. He says, "Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy." It is God's law concerning this temple that his people must respect it and that they must guard its sanctity. They must keep themselves pure from their idolatries, and they must have at all times a proper attitude toward the house in which God dwells and a proper respect for his authority and appreciation for his love and goodness toward them.

### Lessons to Learn

1. God dwells in us only so long as we are holy. Our bodies are temples of God (1 Cor. 6: 19); the Lord is in us except we be reprobate (2 Cor. 13: 5); and the Lord was standing outside of the hearts of the Laodiceans knocking at the door for readmission on the condition they would repent of their sins (Rev. 3: 14ff).

2. We defile God's holy name when we sin. We are so related to God that whatever we do reflects upon

him. If we do right we honor and glorify his name; if we sin we despise and disgrace and dishonor his name.

3. The person who is not ashamed of his sins will never quit them. No one can have the courage and determination to quit sin until he cultivates genuine shame for his sins. Neither can a person have proper respect for God and the life which God demands of us until he is thoroughly ashamed of his sins.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word "holy"? With this definition in mind, why is God holy?

How is the holiness of God manifested?

What is meant when it is said God refuses to look upon evil?

State and discuss three reasons why God demands holiness in us.

What connection is there between the holiness and the wisdom of God?

Why is holiness becoming in us? and in the church?

### Introduction

Where did Ezekiel go in his visions?

What did he see in this vision?

Was a temple ever built according to these measurements?

The building of what temple was influenced by this vision?

God's Glory Enters the Temple

Which direction did the temple face?

From which gate did Jehovah leave and reenter the temple?

What did Ezekiel say of the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah?

What did he say of the sound of the voice of God?

For what purpose did Ezekiel come to the city?  
 Can you describe the entrance of Jehovah into Solomon's temple?

#### God Demands a Holy House

With whom can you identify the "man" who stood by Ezekiel?  
 What is said of the throne of the one standing by Ezekiel?  
 What is meant by "their threshold by my threshold"?  
 What great king built temples to heathen gods?  
 What was the consequence of their idolatry?  
 On what condition did God promise to dwell among them?

What attribute of God impresses us with the necessity of moral purity today?

#### The House and Its Law Shown to Israel

What was Ezekiel commanded to show to Israel?  
 What effect was this showing to have on Israel?  
 On what condition was Ezekiel to continue with a full description of the temple?  
 What was God's law concerning this temple?  
 For what must his people have proper respect?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?



English Miles

Roman Miles

# THIRD QUARTER

## JOHN, AND SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS

*Aim.—To study in detail numerous selections from the writing of John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved " and to drink deeply from the refreshing fountain of truth which so freely flowed from his facile pen.*

Lesson I—July 7, 1957

### JOHN THE APOSTLE

#### Lesson Text

John 19: 25-27; Luke 9: 49-56; Acts 4: 13

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Je'-sus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clo'-pas, and Mary Mag-da-le'-ne.

26 When Je'-sus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.

50 But Je'-sus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you.

51 And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he

should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Je-ru'-sa-lem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Sa-mar'-i-tans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was *as though he were* going to Je-ru'-sa-lem.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them.

56 And they went to another village.

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Je'-sus.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus ." (Rev. 1: 9a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 1: 16-20.

### Daily Bible Readings

July 1. M.....John, Author of an Inspired Book (John 21: 24, 25)  
 July 2. T.....John, Son of Zebedee, and Brother of James (John 21: 2)  
 July 3. W.....John, the Disciple Whom Jesus Loved (John 21: 20-23)  
 July 4. T.....John, a Fisherman (Matt. 4: 18-22)  
 July 5. F.....John, Called to Serve Christ (John 1: 35-42)  
 July 6. S.....John, a "Son of Thunder" (Mark 3: 13-19)  
 July 7. S.....John, Who Cared for the Mother of Jesus (John 19: 23-27)

TIME.—For John and Acts, A.D. 29; for Luke, A.D. 28.

PLACES.—For John and Acts, Jerusalem; for Luke 9: 49-50; Capernaum; for Luke 9: 51-56, Samaria.

PERSONS.—Jesus, John, and other disciples.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **P a r t a k e r** in tribulation, (a) Church being persecuted. John speaks of being a partaker in the tribulation which the churches of

Asia were suffering. This indicates that there was a general persecution in Asia Minor. Whether this persecution was from the government or

from the enemies of the church is impossible for us to determine. We know that the Roman government had persecuted the church some thirty years before this time. Paul had been imprisoned simply because he was a Christian, a member of an illegal religious cult, and his final arrest took place somewhere in this same section of the world. He was either in Macedonia or in western Asia when he was arrested and taken to Rome for his final and fatal imprisonment. (b) John as a great leader of the church in western Asia was banished. It does not appear that others of the church were banished from their homes, but on account of John's prominence and his influence among the churches, he was banished. His banishment would be calculated to throw fear into the members of the church and cause them to be less active in the propagation of the gospel, (c) Suffering promised. Jesus did not promise his disciples an easy time in life. In fact, he promised them the opposite. He said, "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you . . . If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . . But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake." (John 15: 18-21.)

2. **Partaker in the kingdom,** (a) The kingdom identified. In our text John says that he is a brother and a partaker with those to whom he writes in the tribulation, the kingdom, and patience "which are in Jesus." The phrase "in Jesus" is related to the kingdom the same as it is related to the tribulation and the patience. So, this kingdom is the kingdom in Jesus, the kingdom related to Jesus. It is the kingdom over which Jesus is the king. Therefore, the kingdom in our text refers to the kingdom in Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God. It is the kingdom which was predicted by the prophet Daniel; it is the kingdom which John the Baptist said was at hand in his day. It is the kingdom which Jesus and his apostles said was at hand. (Mark 1: 14, 15.) This is the kingdom to which Jesus said he would give his apostles the keys. (Matt. 16:

18-19.) This kingdom is the church of which Jesus is the head, (b) Kingdom in existence. If John was a brother and partaker with the people to whom he wrote in the kingdom which was in Jesus, it follows that that kingdom was in existence at the time John wrote. There are those who claim that Jesus came to establish his kingdom, but the opposition of the Jews caused him to establish the church instead and postpone the establishment of the kingdom until his second coming. This position must be false since John says he was a partaker with others in the kingdom. It is also seen to be false in the fact that Paul said certain ones were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. (Col. 1: 12, 13.) (c) In the world but not of the world. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18: 36.) Though his kingdom is not of this world, it is in this world to carry on his business of saving souls, and to be a partaker in that kingdom would mean to have a part in the work of the kingdom in this world.

3. **Partaker in patience,** (a) Meaning of the word. Patience is defined as "calm and uncomplaining endurance, as under pain, provocation." To be a partaker with others in their patience simply means that John was bearing the hardships of the persecution in the same calm, quiet, undisturbed manner in which they were bearing the same persecution, (b) Patience is developed. Not many people are born with patience; it must be developed. And from our lesson text we will learn that John was not born with much patience. He was a rather impatient and intolerant person at the beginning of his association with Jesus, but during a long life of fellowship and communion with the Lord, John must have developed a wonderful amount of patience. (c) In Jesus. The phrase "in Jesus" means that the tribulation, the kingdom, and the patience are related to Jesus. The tribulation was suffered on account of their relationship to Christ; the kingdom was related to Christ in the

sense that he was the head or king of the kingdom; and the patience was in Jesus in the sense that it was developed through his power and they

were able to manifest such patience because of the teaching and the power which they derived from their relationship with Jesus.

## Introduction

John the apostle was the son of Zebedee. His brother James was killed by Herod. (Acts 12: 1.) John was a fisherman, and he and James were partners with Peter and Andrew. (Matt. 4: 18-21; Luke 5: 10, 11.) We can almost be positive that John was a cousin of Jesus. John tells us, "There were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." (John 19: 25.) Did John name three or four women in this verse? If he named four women, as it seems he did, we can prove that John and Jesus were cousins. If the reader will compare Matt. 27: 56 with Mark 15: 40, he will find that the mother of John, the son of Zebedee, was Salome. Then if the reader will compare John 19: 25 with these two

passages in Matthew and Mark, he will find that the sister of Jesus' mother must have been Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee. If we make "Mary the wife of Clopas" explanatory of the phrase "his mother's sister," we make Mary the wife of Clopas the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. It is most unlikely that two sisters had the same name; hence, we conclude that John was naming four women who stood by the cross. He did not give the name of his mother or the mother of Jesus because of their relationship to him. He does not even give his own name in his record of the gospel. This being true, we conclude that Salome was the sister of the mother of Jesus, and therefore John the cousin of Jesus.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. John, the Intolerant (Luke 9: 49-56)

*Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name.* According to McGarvey, the incident related in verses 49 and 50 took place in Capernaum several weeks before the incidents related in verses 51 to 56. We have no way of knowing who this man was whom John saw casting out demons in the name of Jesus, but we have every right to conclude that John knew that the man was casting out demons. If he was casting out demons in the name or by the authority of Jesus Christ, we may rest assured that he was authorized by the Lord to do so. Both Clarke and Barnes suggest that this man may have been one of the seventy disciples whom Jesus sent out with the power to cast out demons, but according to the best chronology of the events of the life of Christ, and according to the order of Luke's mention of these events, Jesus had not yet sent the seventy on their mission. (Luke 10: 1ff.) These same commentators also suggest that the man may have been a disciple of John the Baptist, but we simply do not know who

the man was nor when he was given authority to cast out demons.

*We forbade him, because he followed not with us.* This incident shows the intolerance of John at this time. John did not forbid the man to cast out demons because such was not a good work. He forbade him simply because he did not belong to the group of workers to which John belonged. This would also indicate some jealousy in John's heart. Jealousy and intolerance go together.

*Forbid him not.* Jesus told John not to forbid the man's casting out demons and gave as his reason, "For he that is not against you is for you." No one is to be refused the privilege of obeying the Lord; no one is to be denied the right to serve the Lord sincerely and in truth. This passage has been used to justify denominationalism. This is an abuse of the passage. If the various groups of denominationalism were actually serving the Lord, it would be wrong for one group to criticize the other or deny the other the right to serve the Lord in its own way, but since the various denominations are characterized by (1) the teaching of false

doctrine; (2) the practice of unscriptural things in their work and worship, it follows that they are not parallel to this case. The man whom John saw was actually casting out demons, doing the work of the Lord. If denominations were actually doing the work of the Lord, it would be wrong to criticize them. But teaching false doctrine and practicing unscriptural things in work and worship are not the work of the Lord, and the Lord has not authorized them to do such. People who teach false doctrine and practice unscriptural things in their work and worship are not for the Lord; they are actually against the Lord.

***Set his face to go to Jerusalem.***

This part of our lesson relates an incident which took place some weeks after John forbade the man to cast out demons, and the incident of this paragraph occurred in Samaria instead of Capernaum.

***They did not receive him.*** We are told that Jesus sent messengers before him into the various villages to make ready for his coming. And when he came into one of these Samaritan villages, the people refused to receive him "because his face was as though he was going to Jerusalem." When Jesus visited with the woman at Jacob's well, he was going from Jerusalem into Galilee. The Samaritans were friendly with the Jews when they were traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee, but they were unfriendly with the Jews when they were going from Galilee to Jerusalem. So, the Samaritans were unfriendly with Jesus on this occasion.

***Wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven?*** James and John were indignant at the Samaritans because of their refusal to receive Jesus. Here again their intolerance is manifested. James and John are called the sons of thunder. (Mark 3: 17.) "Neither the word 'thunder' nor any of its derivatives is found anywhere in the New Testament save in the writings of John, by whom it and its derivatives are used eleven times, a fact which causes Bengel to remark, 'A son of thunder is a fit person for hearing voices of thunder.' " (The Fourfold Gospel.)

**II. John, the Dependable** (John 19: 25-27)

***There were standing by the cross.***

John tells us of the crucifixion of Jesus and of the parting of the garments of the Lord by the soldiers and then tells us of some of the people who were standing by the cross watching Jesus die. John mentions four of the women standing near the cross. Two of them he names; the other two he does not name. The two unnamed women were the mother of Jesus and her sister. We have already found by comparing Matt. 27: 56 and Mark 15: 40 that the sister of the mother of Jesus was Salome the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John. The two women whose names are given are "Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." In commenting on the name Alphaeus, Brother McGarvey says, "This was a very common name. In its Hebrew form it may be pronounced Alphi or Clephi. In its Armenian form it is Chalpai. So in the New Testament we sometimes find it Alphaeus, and again Cleopas, or Clopas." (The Fourfold Gospel.) Mary Magdalene is the woman out of whom seven demons had been cast. (Luke 8: 2), but there is no intimation in the New Testament that she was an immoral woman.

***Jesus therefore saw his mother.***

John tells us that Jesus looked down from the cross and saw his mother standing by "the disciple." John never names himself in his gospel record. He may refer to himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." Or he may, as in this instance, refer to himself simply as "the disciple standing by whom he loved." John manifested not only a great love for Jesus, but a great courage in the face of danger. The other disciples left Jesus alone through the trial, but John stood by him when he was tried before the Jews. (John 18: 15.) There is no mention of John's standing with Jesus during the trial before Pilate and Herod, but there is mention of his standing near the cross with the women who were watching Jesus die.

***Woman, behold, thy son!*** These are the words which Jesus addressed to his mother while she was standing near the cross. The fact that Jesus could speak to them indicates

how near the cross they were standing.

**Behold, thy mother!** These words Jesus addressed to John. This was an indication that Jesus wished John to care for his mother, and John tells us, "From that hour the disciple took her unto his own home." Though Jesus had several brothers in the flesh, he preferred to place his mother in the care of one of his followers rather than have her in the care of unbelievers and enemies to his cause. However, his brothers soon became believers and associated themselves with the disciples, even between the time of the ascension and the day of Pentecost. (Acts 1: 14.) Whether Mary continued to live with John after the brothers became believers, we have no way of knowing.

### III. John, the Courageous (Acts 4: 13)

**They beheld the boldness of Peter and John.** This verse tells us of a time after Pentecost. The disciples, though they had lost their faith when Jesus was crucified, had been begotten unto a new and living faith by the resurrection and were indued with power and courage to do their work for the Lord. (1 Pet. 1: 3ff.) Peter and John had just performed the miracle of causing a lame man to walk. This had attracted great attention and had given the apostles a great hearing in Jerusalem, and the rulers and elders and scribes among the Jews were afraid that all Jerusalem would be converted if something was not done to stop the preaching of the apostles. So, they called Peter

and John before the high priest and others who were kindred of the high priest. (Acts 4: 5, 6.) These men inquired of Peter and John what they had done and what they had taught. The apostles being filled with the Holy Spirit, replied in such manner that the rulers marveled at their ability.

**Unlearned and ignorant men.** The Greek word which is translated "unlearned" means one who has not had the benefit of a formal education, one who was not acquainted with literature. The word which is translated "ignorant" means one who was occupied in a private rather than in a public life. There was every indication that these men were not accustomed to public life, nor were they men of a formal education. However, there was no indication that they were ignorant in the sense in which we use that word today. They had been taught by the master teacher for more than three years, and they were now guided by the Holy Spirit. Certainly they would not give evidence of ignorance of the work they were doing or the matter they were teaching.

**They had been with Jesus.** Their conduct and their teaching gave evidence of the fact that they had been with Jesus. The rulers were impressed with their bearing and their ability to express themselves, and the manner in which they conducted themselves reminded the rulers of Jesus. Every follower of the Lord today should conduct himself in such way as to give evidence of the fact that he has been with Jesus and that he has studied under Jesus.

### Lessons to Learn

1. We should be intolerant of all evil but not of any good. We should encourage the good everywhere and every way we can.

2. We should prove ourselves dependable. Can Jesus depend on you to attend the services of the church regularly? Can he depend on you to accept responsibilities in the church? Can Jesus depend on you to do the right thing in private as

well as in public? In strange places as well as at home? We should cultivate the characteristic of dependability.

3. We should cultivate and manifest courage to say and do what we believe Jesus would do. It is never wrong to do what Jesus would do, but it is always wrong for a person to do what he believes Jesus would not do.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of the lesson.

What is the aim of the lessons for this quarter?

Golden Text Explained

What proof do we have of a general perse-



cution of the church at the time of our lesson?  
 Why was John banished while others were not?  
 What did Jesus promise his followers?  
 In what kingdom was John a partaker with those whom he addressed?  
 What evidence can you give of the existence of that kingdom at this time?  
 What is the relationship of that kingdom with the world?  
 Can you define patience? and how do we acquire patience?  
 What three things are said to be "in Jesus"? and explain the meaning.

#### Introduction

Who was John's father? mother? and brother?  
 What women stood by the cross of Jesus?  
 What evidence can you give that Mary and Salome were sisters?  
 If this be true, how was John related to Jesus?

#### John, the Intolerant

What did John see which displeased him?  
 What did John do about the matter?  
 What two ugly dispositions does John's action reveal?  
 What did Jesus say to John?  
 Can you show why this incident cannot be used to justify denominationalism?  
 In what way were Samaritans inconsistent in their attitude toward the Jews?

What did John wish to do to unfriendly Samaritans?

#### John, the Dependable

How many disciples can you name who stood by the cross as Jesus died?  
 Can you give the names of two women in the group?  
 Why does not John name the other two women?  
 How does John refer to himself?  
 How did John prove his love for the Lord during his trial?  
 How did Jesus manifest his love for and confidence in John?  
 What was the attitude of the brothers of Jesus at the time of his death?

#### John, the Courageous

What do you know of the faith of the apostles following the death of Jesus?  
 What effect did the resurrection of Jesus have on them?  
 What miracle did Peter and John work near the temple?  
 What is the meaning of "unlearned" and "ignorant"?  
 What proof can you give that these men were well qualified for their work of teaching?  
 Whose influence did the rulers see working in these men?  
 How can we give evidence today that we have been with Jesus?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson II—July 14, 1957

# THE WORD BECOMES FLESH

## Lesson Text

### John 1:1-14

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

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

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

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

6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light.

9 There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*And he is before all things, and in him all things consist*" (Col. 1: 17.)

Devotional Reading.—1 John 1: 1-4.

## Daily Bible Readings

July 8.	M.	Visit of the Angel to Mary (Luke 1: 26-37)
July 9.	T.	Visit of an Angel to Joseph (Matt. 1: 18-25)
July 10.	W.....	..... The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-20)
July 11.	T.....	..... Works of Devil to Be Destroyed (Heb. 2: 1-14)
July 12.	F.	Word Became Flesh (John 1: 1-14)
July 13.	S.	Birth of a Virgin (Isa. 7: 1-14)
July 14.	S.....	..... Christ a Servant (Phil. 2: 1-11)

**Time.**—Eternity before creation for verses 1-5; 5 to 30 B.C. for verses 6-14.  
**Place.**—Palestine.

**Persons.**—Jesus and John the Baptist.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. He is before all things, (a) In

order of existence. The word "before" is not here to be taken in the sense of preeminence. It is true that Jesus enjoyed a preeminence above all created things or beings, but that is not the idea which Paul here affirms. Paul affirms that the Son of God existed before all created things. In other words, the Son of God was in existence before any creature had an existence. (b) He is not a creature. If the Son of God existed before all created *things*, it follows that the Son of God was not a created *thing*. In other words, the Son of God is not a creature. If he is not a creature, he must then have had no beginning; he is eternal in his existence. (c) He created all things. The scriptures tell us in several places that Jesus Christ is the creator of all things. In our lesson text, this is affirmed. It is affirmed also in Col. 1: 16 and Heb. 1: 3. But we may reach the same conclusion by a process of reasoning. If the Son of God existed before all created things, it follows that he himself is not a creature. Only the creator can exist before the creature. If the Son of God existed before any creature, it follows that the Son of God must be the creator.

2. In him all things consist, (a) He upholds all things. We are told that he is "upholding all things by the word of his power." (Heb. 1: 3b) (b) Power exerted through his word. In the passage just cited, he is said to uphold all things by the word of his power. That may as correctly read that he upholds all things by his powerful word. The word which was powerful enough to calm the raging sea and to raise to life the dead has sufficient power to uphold the material creation, (c) Relation

of creative and preservative power. We can as easily believe that the universe came into existence by itself as we can believe that the universe continues to preserve itself. The power which was necessary to call the universe into existence is essential to the continued operation of the universe. The doctrine of deism affirms that God created the universe, but that he withdrew from the universe and allows it to preserve itself and run its own affairs. The Bible doctrine, sometimes referred to as theism, holds that the universe was created by the power of God, and that the universe is preserved by that same power. God operates both in creation and in providence.

3. **Attributes of God.** (a) Wisdom. Since the Son of God is here said to have created all things, and is said to preserve all things, we must conclude that he is all-wise. Hence, omniscience is attributed to him. Omniscience is an attribute of God, not of a creature. Nothing less than omniscience could possibly devise such a universe as we know this one to be. (b) Eternity. If the Son of God existed before all created things began to exist, he must have existed before time. That which existed before time is timeless, or eternal. Eternity is an attribute of God and hence one more proof of the divinity of the Son of God. (c) Omnipotence. Certainly nothing less than omnipotence could possibly bring into existence all the material universe. And nothing less than omnipotence could possibly preserve and uphold the material universe. Omnipotence is an attribute of God; no creature can be said to be omnipotent. It is as impossible for a creature to be

omnipotent as it is for a creature to be eternal or to be omniscient. All three of these attributes—omniscience, eternity, and omnipotence—belong to God only. Since the Son of God is spoken of as having these attributes, we must consider

him to be God. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5: 20.)

## Introduction

"And this gospel will stand to the end of time as an unanswerable demonstration that the fisherman who wrote it was under more than a human guidance, and was, according to the promise that he recorded, *guided into all truth*. It will also remain an unanswerable proof that the character which he has described—the character of the Lord Jesus—was real. It is a perfect character. It has not a flaw. How has this happened? The attempt has often been made to draw a perfect character—and as often, in every other instance, failed. How is it, when Homer and Virgil, and the ancient historians, have all failed to describe a perfect character, with the purest models before them, and with all the aid of imagination, that in every instance they have failed? How is it that this has at last been accomplished only by a Jewish fisherman? The difficulty is vastly increased if another idea is borne in mind. John describes one who he believed had a divine nature. It is an attempt to describe God in

human nature, or to show how the divine being acts when united with man, or when appearing in human form, and the description is complete. There is not a word expressed by the Lord Jesus, or an emotion ascribed to him, inconsistent with such a supposition. But this same attempt was often made, and as often failed. Homer and Virgil, and all the ancient poets, have undertaken to show what the gods would be if they came down and conversed with man. And what were they? What were Jupiter and Juno, and Venus, and Mars, and Vulcan? Beings of lust, and envy, and contention, and blood. How has it happened that the only successful account which has been given of the divine nature united with the human, and of living and acting as became such a union, has been given by a Jewish fisherman? How, unless the character was *real*, and the writer under a guidance far superior to the genius of Homer and the imagination of Virgil—the guidance of the Holy Spirit?" (Barnes.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Eternity and Deity of the Word

(John 1: 1-5)

*In the beginning was the Word.* The phrase "in the beginning," is usually taken to refer to the same time as the same phrase in Gen. 1:

1. In that place it can refer to no other time than the creation of the universe. In our text it is affirmed that the Word *was* in the beginning. This denotes his existence before the beginning. This verse does not describe the beginning of the Word; he has no beginning. Since he existed before the beginning of time, he is eternal. The term "Word" is used in this text to refer to the second person of the Godhead, which in his birth became Jesus of Nazareth.

*The Word was with God.* We must note carefully the prepositions in

this verse, as well as the verbs. We are told that the Word was *with* God. When one is with another, there must be two. So, if the Word was with God, the Word is one and God is one. Yet, we must not push this distinction so far as to destroy the unity of God.

*The Word was God.* Here the divinity, the deity, of the Word is emphatically affirmed. Since the Word was God, we must admit his deity; but since the Word is said to have been *with* God, we must admit a distinction of some sort between the Word and God. We cannot admit that the Word and God are two separate beings in a sense which would involve us in polytheism. The apostles believed there is one God. (1 Cor. 8: 6.) Yet, they did not hesitate to say that "the Word was

God." While they believed there is one God and that the Word was God, yet John could say the Word was *with* God. Hence, we must make a distinction in the persons or personalities of the Godhead which allow one to be with another; but yet we must not allow such a distinction between the persons of the Godhead as would force us to believe in polytheism.

*All things were made through him.* Creation is attributed to the Word, the second person of the Godhead. This is true of other writers. (Col. 1: 16; Heb. 1: 3.) Since Moses said that God created the heavens and the earth, and since John says that all things were created by Jesus Christ, we conclude that Jesus Christ is God of Gen. 1: 1. This is not denying that the Father had any part in the creation of the universe. It is usually conceded that the Father planned while the Son executed the plans. But the actual work of creation was accomplished by the second person of the Godhead, and our text says, "Without him was not anything made that hath been made."

*In him was life.* This simply means that this second person of the Godhead, the Word, is the source of life. He is the source of physical life and of spiritual life as well. Jesus said he was the bread of God which "giveth life unto the world." (John 6: 33.) And Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11: 25.) And John said of the Son of God, "This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John 5: 20.) These verses teach us that Jesus is the source of all life—physical, spiritual, and eternal.

*The light shineth in the darkness.* John had just said that the life which is in the Word is the light of men. Now he says this light shineth in the darkness. This simply means that Jesus came into a world of sin and ignorance, and that in order to overcome their ignorance he must become a teacher. And in order to overcome the sin and destroy it, he had to be a sacrifice. So, we find him speaking of himself as the light of the world. And John speaks of him as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

## II. John, a Witness of the Word

(John 1: 6-8)

*There came a man, sent from God.*

John tells us that a man who was sent from God to bear witness of the light was John the Baptist. This tells us (1) that this witness was a man, not God as was the Word. (2) That this man's name was John, and we know that the man named John who bore witness of Christ was John the Baptist. (3) This tells us that John came to bear witness of the light. (4) This also tells us that this man was not himself the light, but only a witness of the light.

*The same came for witness.* When John began his work, many people thought he was the Christ, and when they asked him, "he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed I am not the Christ." (John 1: 20.) Then they asked him if he was Elijah or some other prophet, and he again testified to the fact that he was not the Christ nor "the prophet," but he said simply, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet." (John 1: 23.) And again we read, "And, John bare witness saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven: and it abode upon him. . . . And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 32, 34.) John knew that his position was secondary, that he was inferior to the Messiah. He also knew that the Messiah was to increase but that he would decrease. (John 3: 30.)

## III. The Word Came to His Own

(John 1: 9-14)

*He was in the world.* John repeats what he has said about the Word being the true light, but he adds this Word lights every man, and by this means that he directs every man spiritually. He also affirms that this true light was coming to the world. He came into that world which was made through him, and the world knew him not. The word "world" is used here in slightly different senses. When we are told that he came in the world, the word refers to this environment into which he came. Then he says the world was made through him. Here the word "world" must refer to all things temporal. And next, he says the world knew him not. Here the word "world" must refer to the intelligent beings on earth. Only men would be expected to know or to recognize him, so when

we are told that the world knew him not, we are to understand that the intelligent beings did not recognize him. The people knew him as a great man, a great teacher, and even a great worker of miracles, but they did not recognize him as the Messiah and the Son of God. They did not recognize him as the creator and preserver of all things, nor did they recognize him as their Savior and Judge. Not recognizing him in these relationships, it is truly said that the world did not know him.

**He came unto his own.** The word "own" occurs twice in verse 11, and must be given two different meanings. When it is said that he came unto his own, we are to understand his own country, but when it is said "they that were his own received him not," we are to understand his own people. So from this verse we learn that he came to his own place, country, or things, and when he did so, his own people, the Jews, did not recognize and receive him as the Son of God.

**But as many as received him.** Though the people generally did not recognize and receive him, a few did receive him. And to those who received him in the proper manner, he gave the right to become children of God. It should be noted that one cannot become what he already is. Here we are told that certain ones are given the right to become children of God, and in the following phrase we are told who is given the right to become a child of God. It is said that those who believe on his name are given that right. Since the believer is given the right to become a child of God, and since one cannot become what he already is, we conclude that the believer is not, by virtue of his belief, a child of God. But the believer is given the right to become a child of God. While the believer has the right to become a child of God, he may or may not exercise that right. If he exercises that right by obedience to gospel commandments, he will become a child of God; but if he does not exercise his right by obedience to gospel commandments, that believer will never become a child of God. From this we learn (1) that belief only is not enough to make one

a child of God. (2) We learn that belief only gives a person a right to become a child of God, but that obedience to the commandments of the gospel make the believer the child of God.

**Who were born, not of blood.**

When it is said that the believer becomes a child of God not by blood, we are to understand that we do not become children of God by virtue of our being born of any certain race or individual. The Jews thought they were children of God because they were descendants of Abraham, but being a descendant of Abraham did not make them children of God. Next, he says that they were not born "of the will of the flesh." By this we are to understand that we do not become children of God by the exertions or the wisdom of our own hearts. Becoming a child of God requires something more than human wisdom, ingenuity, skill, and power. Next, he says that to become a child of God one must be born of God. This simply means that the new birth is a birth from above. It does not originate with man or in the wisdom of man; it is heavenly, a spiritual, birth, not an earthly, physical birth.

**The Word became flesh.** The Word which was in the beginning, and which was God, became flesh, a human being, or became incarnate. Paul says that the second person of the Godhead "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." (Phil. 2: 7.) And again, we read, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same." (Heb. 2: 14a.) These expressions simply mean that the second person of the Godhead became a human being.

**We beheld his glory.** His glory was seen in his teaching, his miracles, and his sinless life. Three of his apostles were permitted to see a greater degree of his majesty and glory on the mount of transfiguration. (2 Pet. 1: 16, 17.) And John affirms that the glory which they beheld in him was far beyond that which was ordinary in human beings. It was such as could be seen only in the "only Begotten from the Father."

## Lessons to Learn

1. Since our Lord was with God but gave up his place in heaven to become one of us to save us from sin, we should love and appreciate him enough to obey his commandments in the face of suffering and persecutions which are brought upon us.

2. Since he is our maker, preserver, and light to guide us through a world

of sin, we should respect his power, depend on his might, and follow his directions.

3. If we live for him here, we will be rewarded by being glorified with him in heaven. But if we refuse to live for him here, we will be punished by being banished from his glory into a place of darkness and suffering.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

What is the relationship between Jesus and all created things?

What is the meaning of the word "consist"?

By what power are all created things upheld?

What is the deistic conception of creation and preservation?

What is the theistic conception?

What proof do we have in our text of the omniscience of Jesus?

What is said of his eternity?

What evidence do we have of his omnipotence?

### Introduction

What Greek authors attempted to draw a perfect character?

Why is John's effort more difficult than that attempted by Greek writers?

Can you show the superiority of Jesus over the Greek gods as pictured by Greek writers?

How can you account for the failure of Greek writers and the success of John?

### Eternity and Deity of the Word

What is the meaning of the phrase "in the beginning"?

To whom does the term "Word" refer?

Can you distinguish between the Word and God?

Can you show that the Word was God?

What is polytheism? and can you show

that you are not a polytheist?

What is said of the Word and creation?

What is said of the Word and life?

What is said of the Word and light?

### John, a Witness of the Word

How was John the Baptist related to the Word?

Of what was John to bear witness?

What mistake did people make as to John's identity?

How did the Holy Spirit contribute to John's witness of Christ?

How did John express his secondary position to Christ?

### The Word Came to His Own

Give three meanings of the word "world" as used in our text.

In what sense did the world know Jesus? and in what did they not know him?

Give two meanings of the word "own" in our text.

What right is given to the believer?

How is the believer to exercise that right?

What does this do for the doctrine of salvation by faith only?

To what is our spiritual birth not to be attributed?

What is meant by being born of God?

When and how did the Word become flesh?

What did John say they beheld in the Word made flesh?

In what was the glory of the Word made manifest?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson III—July 21, 1957

## THE NEW BIRTH

### Lesson Text

John 3: 1-10

1 Now there was a man of the Phar'i-sees, named Nic-o-de'-mus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rab'-bi, 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.

3 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic-o-de'-mus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Je'-sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh

is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

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

8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh,

Golden Text.—*"Except one be born into the kingdom of God"* (John 3: 5.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 3: 11-17.

and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nic-o-de-mus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Je-sus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Is-ra-el, and understandest not these things?

*of water and the Spirit, he cannot*

## Daily Bible Readings

July 15. M.

July 16. T.

July 17. W.....

July 18. T.

July 19. F.

July 20. S.

July 21. S.

Born of the Will of God (John 1: 10-18)

Begotten unto a Living Hope (1 Pet. 1: 3-12)

Begotten by the Gospel (1 Cor. 4: 1-15)

Born of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1: 22-25)

Begotten by the Word of Truth (James 1: 12-18)

Through God's Mercy (Titus 3: 1-5)

Newness of Life (Rom. 6: 1-6)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and Nicodemus.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Birth of water and Spirit, (a)

Work of the Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit in the process of the new birth is to beget spiritual life. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8: 11.) Peter says that we are begotten again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God." (1 Pet. 1: 23.) And Paul says the Corinthians were begotten through the gospel. (1 Cor. 4: 15.) And Paul says that the word of God is the sword, or instrument, of the Spirit to accomplish his work. (Eph. 6: 17.) So the Holy Spirit plants the word, the seed of the kingdom, in the heart and begets a new life. This begotten life is then translated by birth, (b) Water in the plan of salvation. That water in our text refers to baptism cannot be successfully denied. Alford says after mentioning the words "water and Spirit," "There can be no doubt, on any honest interpretation of the words. . . . All attempts to get rid of these two plain facts have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped ... all the better and deeper expositors have recognized a coexistence of the two, water and the Spirit." (Alford's Greek Testament.) Paul speaks of the church as having been "cleansed

by the washing of water with the word." (Eph. 5: 26.) The only possible explanation of this is that in becoming members of the church, people are baptized. And again, we read, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water." (Heb. 10: 22.) Our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body is washed in pure water only when we become Christians, when we are baptized into the Lord's church. Hence, we must admit that water has some place in the gospel plan of salvation. According to our text, we are begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of water. Birth does not give life; birth translates life. So, baptism does not beget, or start, life; that is the work of the Holy Spirit. As natural birth translates the life which has already been begotten, so baptism translates the spiritual life which has already been begotten by the Holy Spirit. But, as physical life will cease if it is not translated at the proper time, so spiritual life will cease if not properly translated by obedience in baptism. Hence, one who is brought to belief in the Lord has been begotten by the Spirit; but if that begotten life is not translated by baptism, that life dies because of a failure to be translated.

Faith which is not active in obedience to gospel commandments becomes a dead faith, (c) Necessity of the birth. Jesus emphasized the necessity of this birth of water and the Spirit by saying that one not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter into the kingdom. Salvation is enjoyed in the kingdom. Hence, one who is not born of water and the Spirit is unsaved.

2. **Enter the kingdom,** (a) Kingdom identified. The kingdom of God is the church which Jesus established on earth. Jesus said he would build his church and give the apostles the keys of the kingdom of God. (Matt. 16: 18, 19.) Unless Jesus built two institutions, we must admit that the church is the kingdom. Jesus taught that we take the Lord's supper in the kingdom. (Luke 22: 30.) Paul taught that we take the Lord's supper in the church. (1 Cor. 11: 20~~ff~~.) Unless we take the Lord's supper in two different institutions, we must admit that the kingdom is the church,

(b) We enter the family by birth. Since Jesus used the term "birth of water and the Spirit," we have the suggestion of a family. We enter the physical family by a physical birth; we enter the spiritual family by a spiritual birth. So, this birth of water and the Spirit admits us into the family of God. (c) The church is the family of God. (1 Tim. 3: 14, 15.) Since the church is the family of God, and we enter the family of God by birth of water and the Spirit, it follows that we enter the church by birth of water and the Spirit.

### 3. Practical demonstration. (a)

Spirit convicted people. Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin. (John 16: 8, 9.) On the day of Pentecost that promise was fulfilled. The Spirit came to the apostles and guided them into the preaching of the truth. (Acts 2: 1ff.) The apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance, and when the people heard that preaching, "they were pricked in their heart." (Acts 2: 37.) To be pricked in the heart is to be convicted of sin. So, the Holy Spirit through the words given to the apostles, convicted people of sin. (b) Baptism was commanded. When these people were convicted of their sins, they asked what to do to be saved. Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. (Acts 2: 38.) So, they were begotten 'by the Spirit and were translated from one state to another by being baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) (c) Added to the church. Luke tells us, "They then that received his word were baptized; and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2: 41.) People who were begotten by the Spirit and born of water were added to the church. Here we have a practical demonstration of what Jesus had in mind when he told Nicodemus that unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

## Introduction

Practically all great denominational scholars of past ages have admitted that the word "water" in John 3: 5 refers to Christian baptism. Not all of them believed that baptism is essential to salvation, so they were inconsistent in admitting that water refers to baptism while denying that baptism is essential to salvation. But modern denominational teachers have seen that inconsistency, and they have chosen to deny that the word "water" in the verse has even a remote reference to baptism. No one can admit that birth of water refers to Christian baptism and consistently deny that baptism is essential to becoming a member of the family of God, a citizen in the kingdom of God.

No one can consistently deny that the birth of water refers to baptism, and then explain the use of water in such verses as Eph. 5: 26 and Heb. 10: 22. Paul uses another expression which connects water with the plan of salvation. He said that God saved us "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3: 5b.) One cannot say that the "washing of regeneration" refers to the giving of the Holy Spirit because both the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit are mentioned in this verse. The "washing of regeneration" can refer to nothing other than baptism in which our bodies are washed with pure water.



## Exposition of the Text

### I. Nicodemus Contacts Jesus (John

3: 1, 2)

*There was a man of the Pharisees.* The Pharisees were a sect of the Jews who believed in spirits, angels, and the resurrection, while the Sadducees believed in neither of these. (Acts 23: 6-9.)

*A ruler of the Jews.* Nicodemus is said to have been a ruler of the Jews. This means that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews. This indicates (1) the popularity of Jesus at this time. There was a period in the life of our Lord when he was very popular, not only among the common people, the publicans and sinners, but among the better class of people. They may not have believed in him or accepted him for what he claimed to be, but he was popular among them, and there was little outward hostility and opposition to him. (2) This indicates the interest of men of power and influence in religion. Nicodemus, though burdened with the affairs of his office, realized that he had a soul to save and he wished to know more of his duty to God and how he might maintain a proper relationship with God.

*Came unto him by night.* There are several probable reasons why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. (1) Nicodemus was a busy man, and he may not have had an opportunity to go during the day. (2) Jesus was also a very busy man. Great throngs followed him, and he had little opportunity for private conversation during the day. Realizing this, Nicodemus may have wished to enjoy a private conversation with the Lord, and so came to him by night. (3) It is possible that Nicodemus preferred to come by night to avoid criticism. While the popularity of our Lord at this time would have spared him the criticism of the common people, yet his colleagues in the Sanhedrin would no doubt have criticized him.

*And said unto him, Rabbi.* The use of this term indicates the great respect which Nicodemus had for Jesus. The term means, "my master." For a ruler of the Sanhedrin thus to address a peasant from Nazareth of Galilee who presumed with-

out authority from the Sanhedrin to teach religion, shows how deeply impressed Nicodemus must have been with the teaching and the work of Jesus.

*Thou art a teacher come from God.*

The phrase "come from God" occupies the place of emphasis in the sentence. It is as if Nicodemus said, "Thou art a come-from-God teacher." Nicodemus recognized in this peasant from Galilee a man sent from God, a heaven-sent teacher like the prophets of old.

*No one can do these signs that thou doest.* Nicodemus reached the conclusion that Jesus was a God-sent teacher because of the works which he did to prove that God was with him. When arguing with the Jews, Jesus said, "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5: 36.) The works which Jesus did had accomplished their mission in the heart of Nicodemus. God would not qualify a man who taught error to do such works as Jesus was doing. Therefore, Nicodemus knew that the teaching which Jesus did was right. We may measure miracle workers of today by this same rule. If they teach false doctrine, we know that God does not give them the power to work miracles. If God were to give miraculous power to a false teacher, God would be a party to the work of deceiving people. God cannot be a party to deception; hence God does not empower a false teacher to prove by his works that his teaching is true. Hence, any wonder or magic which a false teacher may work is worked by some power other than that of God.

### II. Necessity of the New Birth (John

3: 3-6)

*Except one be born anew.* In this statement, Jesus made to Nicodemus several suggestions. (1) Jesus answered Nicodemus according to what was in his mind rather than according to the statement he made. Nicodemus commended Jesus by acknowledging that he was a teacher from God. Jesus spoke to him about the new birth as a means of establishing

a relationship with God. Undoubtedly, Nicodemus came to Jesus to talk with him about the kingdom of God and citizenship in that kingdom. So, Jesus went immediately to the subject which Nicodemus had in mind to discuss. (2) It is suggested here that Jesus pays no attention to wealth or prominence or power of the individual whom he addresses. Jesus would have taught a publican that he must be born anew. The principles of Christianity apply to the outcast and to the wealthy alike. Jesus made no concession to Nicodemus on account of his being a member of the supreme court. (3) Jesus wished Nicodemus to count the cost and so taught him at the very beginning that he must submit to the same spiritual birth to which the sinners and publicans were required to submit. Jesus used the word "born" in a figurative sense, but there must be some analogy between the literal, physical birth and the spiritual birth or he would never have used this term. The analogy consists in (a) as one begins to live when physically born, so one begins to live in the spirit realm when he is born anew, (b) As the physical birth establishes for us a new physical relationship, so the spiritual birth establishes for us a new spiritual relationship, (c) The physical birth introduces us to a new environment, and so the spiritual birth introduces us to a new spiritual environment. Our new relationship is seen in that we are no longer children of Satan, but we are children of God. Our new environment is seen in that we are no longer a part of the world, but we have been called out of the world into the family of God.

*How can a man be born when he is old?* Nicodemus did not get the idea of a spiritual experience from the statement of Jesus. He thought Jesus spoke of a new physical birth. He knew that was impossible, so he states that impossibility in order to lead Jesus to explain the meaning of this new birth.

*Except one be born of water and the Spirit.* This is the explanation of the phrase "born anew" of verse

3. The new birth consists of a birth of water and the Spirit. There are some who contend that by birth of water Jesus means the natural birth,

but the fact that birth of "water and the Spirit" explains the phrase "born anew" is proof that the birth of water is a part of being "born anew." Since being "born of water" is a part of being "born anew," it follows that "born of water" cannot refer to the physical birth.

*Cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The necessity of the new birth is seen in the fact that one cannot enter the kingdom of God without the birth of water and the Spirit. One who is not in the kingdom of God is in the kingdom of Satan, and consequently is lost. So, it is just as necessary to be in the kingdom as it is to be saved from the service and destruction of the devil. But since one cannot enter into the kingdom without being born of water and the Spirit, it follows that one cannot be saved from destruction unless and until he is born of water and of the Spirit.

*That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* When Nicodemus suggested the idea of entering his mother's womb and being born the second time, Jesus took occasion to tell him that such a second birth would be of no more value toward his salvation than was the first birth of the flesh. A second fleshly birth could not give him citizenship in the kingdom of God; it could not save him. A spiritual birth is essential to entrance into the spiritual kingdom. Another thought suggested here is that this spiritual birth affects the spirit; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The new man, the offspring of God, is renewed. It has formerly been dead in sin, but by this new birth is made alive unto God.

### III. Nicodemus Slow to Understand

(John 3: 7-10)

*Marvel not.* Nicodemus must have shown that he was perplexed, that he was wondering or marveling at this new teaching of Jesus. Though the experience is called a new birth, Jesus wished Nicodemus to understand that it would not produce any new powers or work any miraculous changes in the individual who experienced it. He then proceeds to illustrate this phase of the matter.

*The wind bloweth where it will.* Some have objected to this translation, and contend that it should read, "The Spirit breathes where it will."

The mistake here is in that Jesus is not illustrating the manner of the new birth, but rather the condition and powers of the one who is born again. Jesus told Nicodemus that he could hear the wind blowing, but did not know from whence it came or where it went. Then he said, "So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." One who, in the case of Nicodemus, had not been born of the Spirit could not tell where the wind came from nor where it went by hearing it. If Jesus had been illustrating the manner of the new birth, he would have said, "So is everyone born that is born of the Spirit." The new birth does not give one miraculous powers to do such works as Jesus was doing. It seems that Nicodemus connected the power to do such work with this new birth which Jesus mentioned. So Jesus explained that the new birth was not intended to give one miraculous powers.

*How can these things be?* This question on the part of Nicodemus indicates that he still did not understand the lesson on the new birth. Undoubtedly he understood the necessity of some experience, but he did not understand what this experience was nor how this birth was to be experienced. It also indicates that Nicodemus was slow to accept that which he did not thoroughly understand. Many people today refuse to accept anything in the realm of religion which they cannot understand. They often and continually accept things in the material realm and in the scientific world that they cannot understand, but they refuse to ac-

cept things in the religious world because they cannot understand them. We do not know how food becomes flesh, bone, and hair and blood. Yet we know that food is turned into these various parts of our body. We do not refuse food because we do not understand how it becomes parts of our body, so we ought not to refuse spiritual experiences because we do not know how they are brought about. This is the old problem of walking by sight rather than by faith. God has so devised the plan of salvation that we must accept much of it by faith. If we wait until we can walk by sight, until we can understand the why and the how of it all, we will never be saved.

### *Art thou a teacher of Israel?*

Brother McGarvey suggests that "Nicodemus should have understood that such a change as Jesus was speaking of would be necessary, for, 1. it was foreshadowed in the Old Testament (Deut. 10: 16; 1 Sam. 10: 9; 16: 13; Psalm 51: 10; Ezek. 18: 31; Jer. 4: 4). 2. John the Baptist suggested the need of some such change when he attacked the Jewish trust in their descent from Abraham." (The Fourfold Gospel.) Though Nicodemus was an educated man and a teacher of Israel, he did not understand the teaching of Jesus. There are many intelligent people in the world today, great teachers in our universities, who fail to understand the simplest commandments in the gospel. Like Nicodemus, they prefer to walk by sight, rather than to walk by faith.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Nicodemus showed more courage than other rulers of the Jews in that he confessed that Jesus was from God. Others were afraid to confess this lest they be put out of the synagogue.

2. Since the new birth brings us into the kingdom and gospel obedience does the same for us, we are bound to conclude that we are born

again, born of water and the Spirit when we obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. We should never be afraid to believe God's word in spite of our inability to understand how it can be accomplished. We must walk by faith, not by sight if we expect to be pleasing to God.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of the new birth?

What does the Holy Spirit use to beget new life?

What part does water play in the process of the new birth?

What comparison can you draw between the natural birth and the spiritual birth?

Can you identify the church with the kingdom?

Can you prove that the church is the family of God?

Can you use the events of Pentecost and show that being added to the church is a practical demonstration of being born of water and the Spirit?

#### Introduction

Can one believe that water in John 3: 5 refers to baptism and be consistent in saying baptism is not essential to salvation? Why?

What is said of water in the plan of salvation in other scriptures?

Can you show that the "washing of regeneration" does not refer to the work of the Spirit?

#### Nicodemus Contacts Jesus

Contrast the beliefs of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Of what Jewish organization was Nicodemus a member?

Why does the coming of Nicodemus indicate the popularity of Jesus?

What does the interest of Nicodemus in religion indicate with reference to his character?

Discuss some probable reasons why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.

How did Nicodemus show great respect for Jesus?

What caused Nicodemus to believe Jesus came from God?

What witness did Jesus have which was greater than John?

How can we test professed modern miracle workers?

#### Necessity of the New Birth

How did Jesus show his omniscience when talking with Nicodemus?

What do we learn here about class distinction?

How did Jesus teach Nicodemus to count the cost?

In what ways can you show an analogy between the physical and the spiritual births?

Can you show that birth of water in verse 5 is a part of the new birth of verse 3?

How does the language of Jesus emphasize the necessity of the new birth?

How did Jesus teach that a second physical birth would be no better than the first?

How did Jesus contrast the physical birth with the spiritual birth?

#### Nicodemus Slow to Understand

How did the teaching of Jesus affect Nicodemus?

How did Jesus teach Nicodemus that the new birth would not give him miraculous powers?

Can you show that we are not justified in rejecting things we do not understand?

How are sight and faith contrasted in this lesson?

What reasons can you give why Nicodemus should have understood this lesson?

Does a university education guarantee the comprehension of spiritual matters?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

### Lesson IV—July 28, 1957

## JESUS AT JACOB'S WELL

### Lesson Text

#### John 4: 9-26

9 The Sa-mar'-i-tan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Sa-mar'-i-tan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Sa-mar'-i-tans.)

10 Je'-sus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Je'-sus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall

never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.

16 Je'-sus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Je'-sus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Je-ru'-sa-lem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman,

believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jeru'-sa-lem, shall ye worship the Father.

22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek

to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'-ah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

26 Je'-sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

GOLDEN TEXT. — "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must wor-ship in spirit and truth." (John 4: 24.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING. — Col. 2: 20-22; Matt. 15: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

July 22. M.....	Early History of Samaria (2 Chron. 10: 1-19)
July 23. T.....	Idolatrous Worship in Samaria (1 Kings 12: 25-33)
July 24. W. ....	Early Conditions in Samaria (2 Kings 17: 19-41)
July 25. T.....	Samaria and Nehemiah (Neh. 4: 1-23)
July 26. ....	F. Attitude of Samaritans Toward Jesus (Luke 9: 51-56)
July 27. S.....	Converts in Samaria (Acts 8: 4-24)
July 28. S.....	Believers in Samaria (John 4: 39-42)

TIME. — A.D. 27.

PLACE. — Jacob's well near Sychar.

PERSONS. — Jesus and a Samaritan woman.

Golden Text Explained

1. **God is a Spirit.** (a) Spirit the opposite of matter. Matter is said to be "physical or corporeal substance," while spirit is said to be "a supernatural, incorporeal being." Matter has such property as is adapted to the sight, feeling, and use of human beings, while spirit is of such nature that it can neither be seen nor felt by human beings, (b) Spirit not devoid of form. Paul tells us that before Jesus left heaven to become a man on earth he existed in the form of God, but that after he came from heaven, he took the form of a servant. (Phil. 2: 6, 7.) This suggests first that God has a form, and second, that before the second person of the Godhead left heaven he existed in that same form as the Father. The Greek word translated "form" is used in only one other place (Mark 16: 12) in the New Testament, and there it refers to the form in which Jesus manifested himself to his disciples. The word denotes that manifestation or appearance which one takes in the eyes, or the sight, of another. A physical form makes a physical appearance; a spiritual form would not make any appearance whatever to physical eyes, but a spiritual form would make an

appearance to spiritual eyes. So, God is manifest not to physical eyes, but to spiritual eyes of those spiritual beings surrounding him. (c) Spirit differs from the human body. When Jesus appeared to his disciples after the resurrection, they supposed they saw a spirit, but Jesus said, "For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." (Luke 24: 39.) Though he took another form and made a different appearance, he was not a spirit; he was still composed of matter visible to human eyes.

2. **Worship God in spirit.** (a) Meaning of the term. To worship in spirit means that we will be sincere and earnest in our worship. It means that the worship shall come from our hearts, that we will put our thoughts into the form of worship. When singing praises to God, we will meditate on the thought suggested by the words which we sing. When praying to God, we will express our heartfelt desires rather than simply repeating by rote certain familiar expressions generally used in prayer. When taking the Lord's supper, we will discern in the loaf the body of our Lord and in the fruit of the vine the blood which he shed for the remission of our sins, (b) Mental dis-

cipline required. In order to worship God in spirit, one must discipline his mind. He must not allow his thoughts to wander from the spiritual to the material affairs of life. One must be able to hold his mind, to concentrate upon the matters at hand rather than allow his mind to rove aimlessly and purposelessly from one thing to another, (c) Danger of failure. Failure to exercise the necessary mental discipline to worship God in spirit leads to formality and ceremonialism. No doubt much of our worship is mere form because we do not exercise the mental discipline necessary to worship God in spirit. We often criticize our religious neighbors for their formalism and ceremonialism in their robed choirs and great musical organizations which entertain their people, but while criticizing them, we may fail to worship God in spirit as much as they fail unless we exercise the mental discipline necessary to put our hearts into the worship.

3. **Worship God in truth,** (a) Meaning of the term. To worship God in truth means that we shall worship him according to the teaching of truth. This means that our worship will be along lines of revealed truth; it means that we must do all that we are taught in the gospel to do in worship to God. And it means that we will refrain from doing anything as an act of worship

which is not taught in the word of God. Jesus tells us that the word of God is truth. (John 17: 17b.) If God's word is truth, and we are to worship God according to truth, it follows that our worship must be taught in the word of God. (b) This requires knowledge. No one can worship God according to truth without a knowledge of the truth. No one can have a knowledge of the truth who does not study the truth. Hence, we see the necessity for studying the truth which is the word of God in order that we may worship God according to the truth revealed, (c) Danger of failure. To fail to worship God in truth would mean that soon everyone would be worshipping God in his own way after his own desires. If we have no guide in the matter of worship, then each one is left free to do what he pleases and how he pleases. This would be to reject the authority of Christ and to proceed under our own authority. Paul teaches us that "whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Col. 3: 17a.) To do a thing in the name of the Lord is to do it by the authority of the Lord. The Lord authorizes us to do things by teaching us to do those things. What the Lord has not taught us to do we are not authorized to do.

## Introduction

Since Samaritans are mentioned in our text, it will be well to notice the origin of this people. They began with the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam. When Rehoboam refused to comply with the wishes of the people, ten tribes pulled off and started what was known as the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam as king, while Rehoboam remained king over two tribes known as the Kingdom of Judah. The next step in the rise of the Samaritan people came when the kingdom of Israel was carried into Assyrian captivity. The Assyrians replaced them with their

own people and intermarriage between these Assyrians and the Jews left in the kingdom of Israel produced a mongrel race which finally came to be known as the Samaritans. They were still in the land when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity and wished to have a part with them in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple, but they were denied this privilege which tended to increase the hostility between the two peoples. This state of affairs continued until the time of our Lord and serves to explain why John tells us that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jesus Gets Attention of a Samaritan (John 4: 9-15)

*The Samaritan woman therefore saith.* Jesus had stopped at Jacob's

well to rest while his disciples had gone into the city of Sychar to buy bread. While they were gone, this woman of Sychar came to the well

for water. Jesus had asked her for a drink. She was surprised that he, being a Jew, would ask of her a drink. This surprise was occasioned by the fact that Jews generally had no dealings with Samaritans. There was a national enmity between the two that forbade any association or social or religious recognition.

**If thou knewest the gift of God.** Jesus had already attracted the attention of the woman by asking her for a drink; he now seeks to attract further attention and to rivet that attention on spiritual matters by speaking of living water which is the gift of God. Two things of interest are suggested here. (1) That the Jew recognizes the right of a Samaritan to living water which is a gift of God. This was an unusual concession for a Jew to make toward a Samaritan. (2) Jesus suggests that he has some connection with this living water. He said to the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." This suggests to the woman that she is talking to one who has such relationship with God that he can give her that living water which is the gift of God.

**Thou hast nothing to draw with.** The woman states that the well is deep and Jesus has no bucket or rope with which to draw the water. This Samaritan, like Nicodemus, found it difficult to enlarge her vision to go beyond the material and grasp the spiritual.

**Art thou greater than our father Jacob?** The woman thinking of material water, thought that Jesus knew of some living water such as a spring nearby. She reminded him of the fact that Jacob dug the well in order to have water in that vicinity. Since he had nothing with which to draw water from the well, and yet promised her living water, she evidently thought that he claimed to know more than Jacob or to be able to do something more than Jacob who had dug the well in order to have water in that place.

**Jesus answered and said.** As Jesus claimed to be greater than Jonah and greater than Solomon (Matt. 12: 41, 42), so he claims to be greater than Jacob. Jacob gave them water which slaked their physical thirst, but the

water which he was able to give would slake their spiritual thirst. And the beautiful thing about this water which Jesus was able to give was that it would not slake the thirst momentarily, but that it would be a continuous thing. Jesus said, "But the water that I shall give him shall become a well of water springing up unto eternal life." There are four things suggested with reference to this water which Jesus promised her. (1) It was abundant; it was a well of water. (2) There was a continuous supply; the water was to be springing up. (3) It was available; the water is said to be in him, not afar off, inaccessible. Rather, it is in the person. (4) It is everlasting; this well does not go dry. Rather, it springs up unto eternal life.

**Sir, give me this water.** This is the response of the Samaritan woman to the offer of our Lord. This denotes (1) that she believed Jesus was able to give her this water. (2) This suggests that Jesus was willing to give her this water. Though he was a Jew and she was a Samaritan, she believed he was willing to disregard the national enmities and differences and give her that water she so much needed.

## II. Jesus Attempts to Convict the Samaritan (John 4: 16-20)

**Go, call thy husband.** We are told that Jesus "needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." (John 2: 25.) Of course, Jesus knew the marital state of this woman before he told her to call her husband. He simply did this to convict her of her sins and make her realize more than she did her need of this water of life which he was able to give to her. Telling her to call her husband made it necessary for her either to play the hypocrite and present the man who was not her husband, but with whom she lived, or simply to tell the truth about her marital condition.

**I have no husband.** The woman did not care to pretend to the extent of bringing the man with whom she lived and claiming him as her husband. Nor did she intend to tell all the truth of her marital condition. She simply denied having a husband. This, of course, was the truth, but it was not all the truth. Many times

we satisfy our consciences by stating a half truth instead of all the truth. This reminds us of Abraham's half truth when he said that Sarah was his sister instead of telling the whole truth that she was also his wife.

*Thou hast had five husbands.* Jesus commended the woman in that she had not lied outright about the matter, but he informs her that he knows her heart and her past life. He reminds her that she has had five husbands. This in itself is enough to suggest that she was not what she ought to be. Of course, it might be possible for an individual to be married five times and be scriptural in each of the relationships, but that is not ordinarily the case. But the loose laws of the Samaritans concerning marriage might have allowed her to be divorced from five men and still retain some degree of respectability. However, Jesus revealed the fact that she was now living with a man to whom she was not married. This would not in any circumstance entitle her to any degree of respectability, either among the Jews or the Samaritans. This was obviously an effort on the part of Jesus to convict this woman of sin and make her realize her need of a savior.

*Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.* When Jesus told her of her past life and her present relationship, she knew immediately that he was no ordinary man. She perceived that he was a prophet; no one could read the past or the present which was not visible without the power of God. And so, like Nicodemus, she knew he could not tell her these things except God be with him. To her, this simply meant he was a prophet.

*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.* As soon as she learned that she was talking to a prophet, she did the most human thing in the world; she started a conversation on a religious subject. She, like her fathers, insisted that Mount Gerizim was the place to worship God, but she knew the Jews contended that Mount Moriah in Jerusalem was the place where men could worship God acceptably. The Jews had the edge on Samaritans in this argument, for it was in Jerusalem where God recorded his name and where he authorized the building of an altar and the offering of sacrifices. But God never authorized the building of a

temple on Mount Gerizim or the offering of sacrifices in his honor at that place.

### III. Jesus Teaches and Reveals Himself (John 4: 21-26)

*Woman, believe me.* Jesus first seeks to teach the woman that the time has come when the place of worship means nothing. Though Jerusalem had been a venerated place of worship for many generations, the time had come when Jerusalem would be no more sacred than Mount Gerizim or any other spot on earth. The place has nothing to do with the acceptability of worship; acceptability depends upon the condition of the heart from which the worship comes and the deeds through which one seeks to express his love and adoration for God.

*Ye worship that which ye know not.* Jesus accused the Samaritans of being ignorant of God and of God's will, and he affirmed that the Jews were intelligent with reference to their worship. They had the Bible which the Samaritans did not have. The Samaritans accepted the Pentateuch, but they rejected all the rest of the Old Testament, and consequently did not know that which the prophets taught about God. On this point Brother McGarvey makes a splendid comment, saying, "We must take the words of Jesus as referring rather to the two religions than to the two peoples. Though as a body the Jews did not know whom they worshipped, and though their teachers were blind leaders of the blind, yet the fault was in their unbelief, and not in the revelation or religion in which they refused to believe. On the contrary, if the Samaritan had believed his religion to the full, it would hardly have been sufficient to enable him to know what he worshipped. Samaria was, in the days of the idolatry of Israel, a chief seat of Baal worship, and in later days it was the home of magicians and sorcerers." (The Fourfold Gospel.)

*For salvation is from the Jews.* In contrasting the Samaritans and the Jews, Jesus continues by saying that salvation is from the Jews. By this he meant (a) that the Jews produced the Old Testament; it did not come from or through the Samaritans, (b) The Jews produced the Messiah; he did not come through Samaritans.



(c) The Jews had been cured of their idolatry and had preserved monotheism in the world which contributed greatly to the world's knowledge of God and their respect for God.

(d) And last, the Jews had in some measure preserved the types of Christianity in the offerings and sacrifices which they made under the law. In these, if not other ways, the statement that salvation is from the Jews is illustrated.

**But the hour cometh.** Jesus used the word "hour" to denote that the time is at hand. The time when God will no longer accept worship simply because it is performed in Jerusalem is just at hand, but instead of accepting worship which is acceptable because of the place where it is offered, God will expect his worshippers to worship in spirit and truth if their worship is accepted. For explanation of worship in spirit and truth, see the treatment of the golden text.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Jesus disregarded racial lines and social standards of his day to save a soul. If we allow race, color, or social standing to keep us from saving souls, we may lose our own souls.

2. Would you like to talk with Jesus about your past as did this Samaritan? We should live every day in such way that we will not be

**I know that Messiah cometh.** When Jesus taught the woman the conditions of acceptable worship, she replied that she expected the Messiah to come, and that when he should come he would explain all these matters over which Jews and Samaritans had argued for centuries. It is implied here that she expected the Messiah and that she, as all other Samaritans, would believe whatever the Messiah had to say about this question over which Jews and Samaritans had argued. Then Jesus revealed himself as clearly to her as he ever revealed himself to anyone. He said, "I that speak unto thee am he." So, Jesus told the woman that he was that Messiah which she was expecting and whose word she would confidently believe. This is simply another effort on his part to lead her to accept his word as the word of God and to believe it and live in harmony with that word.

ashamed to talk with him about our lives.

3. Since salvation is the greatest blessing that can come to the world, and since salvation is from the Jews, it follows that they have made the greatest contribution of any nation on the face of the earth. It seems a pity that the nation which has given salvation to the world should now reject that salvation.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of the lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

Can you define spirit? and show the difference between spirit and matter?

What do you know about the form of God?

What is meant by worshiping God in spirit? and what does this require of us?

What is the danger of failing to worship in spirit?

What is meant by worshiping in truth? and what does this require of us?

What is the danger of failing to worship God in truth?

### Introduction

With what event did the Samaritan people begin?

How many tribes formed the northern kingdom? the southern kingdom?

Of what two peoples were the Samaritans composed?

What did the Samaritans wish to do when the Jews returned from Babylon?

### Jesus Gets Attention of a Samaritan

Near what city did Jesus stop for rest?

How did Jesus get the attention of the Samaritan woman?

What two things did Jesus suggest with reference to this living water?

How did Jesus suggest to the woman that he was greater than Jacob?

State and discuss four points suggested by the well of water of eternal life.

What was the woman's response to the offer of Jesus?

### Jesus Attempts to Convict the Samaritan

What request did Jesus make of the woman? and why did he make this request?

What can you say of the truthfulness of the woman?

Of what sin did Jesus convict the woman?

What did this lead her to believe about Jesus?

What argument did she start when she learned that Jesus was a prophet?

Why were the Jews right about their contention in this argument?

Jesus Teaches and Reveals Himself  
 What lesson did Jesus seek first to teach the woman?  
 Why did Samaritans not know what they worshipped?  
 What did Jesus mean when he said the Jews knew what they worshipped?  
 What four things illustrate the fact that salvation is from the Jews?

How did Jesus teach her that a change in the manner of worship was near at hand?  
 How did the woman express her faith in a coming Messiah?  
 How did Jesus reveal himself as that Messiah?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson V—August 4, 1957

# JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDE

## Lesson Text

John 6: 1-14

1 After these things Je'-sus went away to the other side of the sea of Gal'i-lee, which is *the sea* of Ti-be'-ri-as.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.

3 And Je'-sus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

5 Je'-sus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Si'-mon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?

10 Je'-sus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 Je'-sus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.

12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.

13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten.

14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

**Golden Text.**—"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6: 35.)

**Devotional Reading.**—John 6: 25-40.

## Daily Bible Readings

July 29. M.....Manna in the Wilderness (Ex. 16: 4-12)  
 July 30. T.....Instructions for Gathering the Manna (Ex. 16: 13-30)  
 July 31. W.....A Psalm of God's Care for His People (Psalm 78: 12-29)  
 August 1. T.....Necessities Promised (Matt. 6: 25-34)  
 August 2. F.....Bread from Heaven (John 6: 48-59)  
 August 3. S.....Five Thousand Feed at One Time (Mark 6: 35-44)  
 August 4. S.....Four Thousand Feed at One Time (Mark 8: 1-9)

**Time.**—A.D. 28.

**Place.**—On a mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

**Persons.**—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. I am the bread of life,** (a) The giver of life. Jesus claims the power to give life. He said, "For the bread

of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6: 33.) And then

again, he 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.) And he is said to be the creator of all things whether visible or invisible. (Col. 1: 16.) And in our former lesson we learned that life is in him. (John 1: 4.) And we learn that this simply indicates that he is the source of life, whether physical or spiritual.

(b) The sustainer of life. Not only does Jesus give life, but he sustains life. He said, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." (John 6: 51.)

As natural bread sustains the natural life, so Jesus the spiritual bread sustains spiritual life. His flesh, if received in the sense in which he intends us to receive him, will give and sustain spiritual life. It will fill every need of the soul, (c) Jesus greater than Moses. The people produced Moses who gave their fathers the manna to eat in the wilderness as an example of a prophet and law-giver. Jesus had fed a few thousand people one time, but Moses fed a million people three times a day for forty years. This in the sight of the people made Moses a greater prophet than Jesus, (b) They expected their Messiah to be greater than Moses. Therefore, they could not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, since Moses was greater than Jesus. Jesus meets this argument by saying (1) that it was not Moses who gave their fathers the bread, but it was God who gave them that bread. (John 6: 32.) (2) Their fathers ate bread and died. By this he means that the eating of manna served them only temporarily, but the bread which he would give would give them eternal life. (3) The manna which came to the fathers not only was not from Moses, but it was not Moses himself, but the bread which Jesus will give is bread which

he himself gives, and it is his flesh. On these three points Jesus seeks to found or establish the proof that he is greater than Moses, and therefore, they could believe in him as the Messiah.

## 2. **Spiritual life is conditional,** (a)

One must come to the Lord. Jesus taught that in order for them to have the benefit of the bread which he would give, they must come to him. He said, "He that cometh to me shall not hunger." (b) One must eat the bread which he gives. Jesus does not force bread upon anyone, but says, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." (John 6: 51.)

(c) One must believe in him. The fact that one must believe in Jesus in order to have the benefit of this bread is proof that the spiritual life which is given through this bread from heaven is conditional.

## 3. **Conditions of accepting Jesus,**

(a) Faith. We have just noticed that our text says, "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." Hence, we find that faith is an essential condition of accepting Jesus. The unbeliever cannot accept Jesus and have him as the bread of life, (b) Repentance. One must repent of his sins in order to have the benefit of this bread. The impenitent person will perish. (Luke 13: 3.) (c) Confession. In order to have the benefit of this bread which is from heaven, one must confess his faith in Jesus. Paul said that if we confess Jesus as the Son of God and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved. (Rom. 10: 9.) (d) Baptism. In order for one to be in the proper relationship with Jesus, he must be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28: 19.) In order for one to enjoy this bread which comes down from heaven, he must be in Christ. And Paul tells us that we are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3.)

## Introduction

Several things combined to cause Jesus to wish to get away from the multitude and rest with his disciples. (1) The death of John the Baptist caused the people to think of rebelling against the government. John was a popular preacher and his imprisonment and death caused great

excitement among the people and caused them to make an effort to force Jesus to become their king and lead them to freedom. (2) The effort on the part of the people to cause Jesus to lead an insurrection was another thing which caused Jesus to wish to get away from the multitude.

"Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone." (John 6: 15.) (3) Jesus had sent his apostles on a preaching tour, and they returned about the time of the death of John, and the effort of the people to make Jesus king. (Mark 6: 30, 31.) The stren-

uous labors of these apostles, the excitement concerning the death of John, and the attempt of the people to force Jesus to be their king and lead them to freedom combined to cause Jesus to wish to withdraw with his apostles into a solitary place where they might rest and wait until the excitement was over.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Multitudes Follow Jesus (John 6:

1-4)

*After these things.* The reference to "these things" is not to be taken as referring to the things in chapter

5. The reader will notice that the teaching and events of chapter 5 happened in Jerusalem in connection with a feast of the Jews. (John 5:

1.) This feast was the passover. In verse 4 of our text we learn that another passover feast has come. Therefore, one whole year elapsed between the events of chapter 5 and the events of chapter 6. The death of John and the return of the apostles from their preaching tour are the things immediately preceding the attempt of Jesus to get away from the multitude.

*The other side of the sea of Galilee.*

There is some difficulty in determining where Jesus was when he received the news of the death of John the Baptist, and from which side of the sea of Galilee he sailed to get away from the multitude. However, we know that he had been on a circuit of Galilee, preaching in the various cities. (Mark 6: 6b.) Again, on the morrow after the multitude was fed, they began looking for Jesus, and the record says they "came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found him on the other side of the sea." (John 6: 24, 25a.) If they found him at Capernaum on "the other side of the sea" from where they were fed, it follows that he went from the western side of the sea to the place where he fed the multitude. But since Luke tells us that they "withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida," and a city by this name is known to have been near Capernaum on the western side of the sea of Galilee, it looks as if this might have been the place of the feeding of the multitude. However, Josephus tells us that there was a city named "Bethsaida Julias" situa-

ted on the northeastern extremity of the sea of Galilee. This very probably was the place where Jesus fed the multitude.

*Which is the sea of Tiberias.* The sea of Galilee has a number of names in the Bible, such as Genessaret, and the two names given here. And seven times it is called the sea of Chinnereth in the Old Testament. (Num. 34: 11.) It was given the name of Tiberias in honor of Tiberius Caesar. Herod Antipas also built a city on the western shore of the lake which he named for Tiberius Caesar.

*A great multitude followed him.*

Though Jesus wished to get away from the multitude to be with his apostles, the people see him leave in a boat, and they go by land around the sea and are at the shore when he lands on the other side. (Mark 6: 33, 34.) And this record tells us that when Jesus saw the great multitude waiting for him there, "he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things." Instead of being irritated by his inability to get away from the multitude, Jesus had compassion on them and served them.

*Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.*

The fact that the greatest feast of the Jews was at hand accounts for such multitudes being together. The multitudes gathered and made their journey en masse from Galilee to Jerusalem. Another thing suggested by this statement that the passover was "the feast of the Jews" suggests that John was not writing his narrative especially for Jews, but he was writing this especially for people not acquainted with the feasts of the Jews.

### II. Jesus Raises a Problem (John 6: 5-9)

*Seeing that a great multitude cometh.* John speaks of the people

as being "a great multitude," and Matthew tells us that there "were about five thousand men, besides women and children." (Matt. 14: 21.) Since only the five thousand men are said to have been seated in companies of hundreds and fifties (Mark 6: 39, 40), it is presumed that the women and children stood or were seated apart to themselves according to eastern customs (Pulpit Commentary.)

*Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?* This is the problem which Jesus raised with his disciples. The question is addressed directly to Philip, but it was raised in the hearing of all the disciples and they were all interested in the problem and did what they could to contribute to the solution of the problem. But John adds that Jesus did not ask the question in order to secure information for himself, but rather to see what reaction the disciples would have to the question. John adds that Jesus knew already what he would do about the matter.

*Two hundred shillings worth of bread is not sufficient.* This is the answer of Philip to the question as to where they could buy bread for the multitude to eat. Philip figured that two hundred shillings worth of bread would not be enough to fill the multitude, but only enough to give each one a little. A shilling was a coin worth about seventeen cents in our money. Two hundred shillings would be about thirty-four dollars. That was quite a sum of money in that day and would have purchased a great quantity of bread. It is doubtful if Philip knew where he could get that much money as the treasury of the disciples was never very well filled.

*There is a lad here.* Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, found a boy who had his lunch with him, consisting of five barley loaves and two fishes. "Eastern loaves were thin and small, like good-sized crackers, and, around the sea of Galilee, the salting and preserving of small fish was an especial industry. These fish, therefore, were about the size of sardines. The whole supply, therefore, was no more than enough for one hungry boy. But each loaf had to be divided between a thousand, and each fish between twenty-five hundred men." (The Fourfold Gospel.) And this

estimate did not take into consideration the women and children who were present. Andrew showed that he realized the magnitude of the problem when he said, "But what are these among so many?" He also, like Philip and the other disciples, showed a lack of faith in Jesus to take what they had and feed the multitude.

### III. Jesus Solves the Problem (John 6: 10-14)

*Make the people sit down.* Though John does not mention the fact, both Mark and Luke tell us the people were seated in an orderly fashion. They were seated in companies of hundreds and fifties. This was done in order to save time and to be sure that everyone in the multitude got his portion of food and to impress the reality of the miracle upon the people. If the people had been left to mill around, none of them would have known surely that each one of the multitude was fed. But when they sat down in companies and the food was distributed in an orderly fashion among them, each one could see that every other person received his portion of food. They could also see that there was no hidden supply of food, and thus the reality and magnitude of the miracle would be obvious to each one.

*There was much grass in the place.* This little incidental note contributes much to our faith in the accuracy of the inspired writers. In verse 4 we are told that the feast of passover was at hand. The passover came at the only season of the year when it could truthfully be said that there was an abundance of grass. A little earlier, and the place would have been barren, while a few weeks later than this time, the lack of rain would have made the statement improbable if not impossible.

*Having given thanks, he distributed to them.* Jesus is a good example to us in every way. He gave thanks for his food before he ate. Even on this occasion when he furnished the food himself, he gave thanks to God for the food. Many people eat three times a day and never give thanks to God for their food. They rear their children to eat their daily bread without being thankful to God for it. Some give as an excuse that they are unable to express thanks, but anyone who can thank his friends

for a birthday present can thank God for his food. None is so speechless as to be incapable of thanking God for daily bread if he really desires to give thanks.

*When they were filled.* Andrew said that the five barley loaves and two fishes were not enough to give each one a little, but when those articles of food were brought to Jesus, he made them enough to fill the five thousand men, plus the women and children. This should suggest to us that though we have but little with which to accomplish the Lord's purposes, if we will bring this little which we have and consecrate it to the Lord he can accomplish everything he wills to accomplish through us. Let no one think that he has too little ability to be used by the Lord for the accomplishment of the Lord's purposes.

*Gather up the broken pieces.* Jesus

is said to be the world's greatest economist. He desires that nothing be wasted. The baskets were not large, but they were small hand baskets, sometimes referred to as "wallets" which the Jews carried with them when they traveled.

*The people saw the sign.* Jesus performed this miracle, not primarily to satisfy the people's hunger, but to enable them to exercise faith in him as the Messiah. And when they saw his power demonstrated on this occasion, they said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." This was equal to saying, "Surely this is the Messiah." But their faith was not strong and abiding, for soon they were going back and following no more after him. Soon Jesus was accusing them of following him primarily for the loaves and the fishes and not because of their faith in him as the Messiah.

### Lessons to Learn

1. The fact that one is in a multitude following Jesus does not prove that he is saved. Salvation is a personal matter and depends on individual surrender and obedience to God.

2. There are some people who have much ability, but accomplish little with it. No one can do much lasting good who does not consecrate his

ability to the Lord and allow him to use it in his way for his glory.

3. There are many other people who have little ability, but accomplish much for the Lord. They do this because they bring what little ability they have to the Lord and allow him to use it in his own way and for the accomplishment of his holy purposes.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What is the bread of God?

What does this bread do for those who receive it?

What caused the Jews to think Moses was greater than Jesus?

How did Jesus prove himself to be greater than Moses?

How did Jesus teach that spiritual life is conditional?

State and discuss the four conditions of accepting Jesus.

Introduction

The death of what great man occurred about the time of our lesson?

What pressure did the Jews put on Jesus at this time?

What special work had the apostles been doing before the time of our lesson?

What did this combination of circumstances cause Jesus to plan for himself and apostles?

Multitudes Follow Jesus

What Jewish feast is mentioned in our lesson?

How much time elapses between the fifth and sixth chapters of John?

On which side of the sea of Galilee did Jesus feed the multitude?

How many other names do you know for the sea of Galilee?

What was the attitude of Jesus toward the multitude?

What event accounts for the presence of such a great multitude?

Jesus Raises a Problem

What is said of the number in the multitude which Jesus fed?

What was the estimated cost of food sufficient for the multitude?

How much food would this amount of money provide for each person?

How much food was available for the multitude?

What do you know of the size of loaves? and the fish?

What is suggested with reference to the faith of the apostles?

Jesus Solves the Problem

How did Jesus arrange the people to feed them?

What was the purpose of Jesus in this orderly arrangement?

What statement helps our faith in the accuracy of inspired writers?

What good example did Jesus set for us before he ate?  
What excuse can people give for not expressing thanks at their table?  
What proof do we have that Jesus is an economist?

How can the little we have be made to accomplish the Lord's purposes?  
What effect did this miracle have upon the people?  
What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

Lesson VI—August 11, 1957

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

Lesson Text

John 6: 15-24

15 Je'-sus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

16 And when evening came, his disciples went down unto the sea;

17 And they entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Ca-per'-na-um. And it was now dark, and Je'-sus had not yet come to them.

18 And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 When therefore they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they behold Je'-sus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 They were willing therefore to receive him into the boat: and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going.

22 On the morrow the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, save one, and that Je'-sus entered not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples went away alone

23 (Howbeit there came boats from Ti-be'-ri-as nigh unto the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks):

24 When the multitude therefore saw that Je'-sus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Ca-per'-na-um, seeking Je'-sus.

Golden Text.—*"But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid"*(John

6: 20.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 14: 22-23.

Daily Bible Readings

August 5. M..... Peter and the Sea (Matt. 14: 22-21)  
August 6. T..... Jesus Cheers His Disciples at Sea (Mark 6: 45-50)  
August 7. W..... The Traveler and the Sea (Psalm 107: 23-30)  
August 8. T..... Jonah and the Sea (Jonah 1: 4-15)  
August 9. F..... Paul at Sea (Acts 27: 30-44)  
August 10. S..... When There Shall Be No More Sea (Rev. 21: 1-5)  
August 11. S..... Jesus Taught on the Sea (Matt. 13: 1-9)

Time.—A.D. 28.

Place.—Sea of Galilee.

Persons.—Jesus and his disciples.

Golden Text Explained

1. **It is I.** (a) The ruler of nature. In Heb. 1: 10-12, the Holy Spirit informs us that David was speaking of the Son of God when he spoke of Jehovah in Psalm 102: 25-27. This speaks of the Lord laying the foundation of the earth and of changing them as a garment which has waxed old. But David continues in the next two Psalms to speak of the blessings of Jehovah and of his care over all

his works. Psalm 104 deals especially with Jehovah's care over his works of nature. If David had the Son of God in mind in Psalm 102, we cannot doubt that he had the Son of God in mind in Psalm 104. Hence, we learn that the Son of God is the ruler and keeper of all nature, (b) The keeper of his people. Jesus promises to be with and to bless his people wherever they may be. (Matt. 18:

20; 28: 20.) And Paul assures us that the Lord is faithful and will establish us and guard us from the evil one. (2 Thess. 3: 3.) (c) The one who works all things for our good, Paul tells us that all things work together for good to them that are called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8: 28.) And Paul was sure that his misfortune and imprisonment would turn out to his salvation through the prayers of his brethren and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1: 19.)

2. **Be not afraid.** (a) In times of physical dangers. Since the Lord is the ruler of nature, the keeper of his people, and causes all things to work together for their good, there seems to be no reason for us to be afraid in times of danger. This faith in the Lord and confidence in his ability and willingness to take care of him caused Paul to endure hardships, afflictions, and persecutions without fear. Those who put their trust in the Lord and resign themselves to his keeping are not so much concerned about the dangers around them as they are about keeping themselves in the presence and the love of the Lord. (b) In times of sorrow. Those who, like David, have the Lord for their shepherd need not be afraid even though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. The fact that the Lord does not always grant our petitions in time of danger and sorrow is no reason for us to be afraid. If he does not grant our petitions, it is only because we have asked for things which are not for our good. If we believe he will cause all things to work together for our good, we will pray for the things we believe we need, but will be satisfied

and content with the things which he gives and believe that they are best for us. (c) In time of temptation. We have no need to be afraid<sup>3</sup> in time of temptation, for greater is he who is with us than all those who are against us. We are told that he is able to guard us and to keep us from falling. Hence, we have no reason to be afraid. (Jude 24.)

3. **Blessings for us.** (a) Comfort. Since the Lord is the ruler of nature, the keeper of his people, and one who is able to make all things work together for our good, either in times of physical danger or sorrow, or in times of temptation, we should be comforted by our relationship with him. To know that we are in Christ and recipients of his blessings should comfort us in whatever state we may find ourselves. We are told that the Lord "comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Cor. 1:

4.) (b) Courage. Paul derived courage from the presence of the Lord in Corinth when the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace." (Acts 18: 9.) (c) Appreciation and gratitude. The fact that the Lord can comfort and cheer us, care for us in times of sorrow and danger and temptation, should cause us to appreciate him more than we could possibly appreciate him if we did not receive such blessings from him. And the continual reception and enjoyment of such blessings should cultivate within us a gratitude which will express itself both in words of praise and adoration and in deeds of loving service.

## Introduction

Jesus manifested his power and asserted his authority over various realms while he lived in the world. He did this in order to cause people to believe in him as the Lord and to place their trust in him. (1) He manifested his power in the realm of nature when he turned the water into wine and when he stilled the troubled sea. (2) Jesus manifested his power over the spirit world when he called the spirit of Lazarus back into the body when it had been gone for

four days. (3) Jesus manifested his authority in the realm of evil spirits when he drove them out of the bodies of his people. A special demonstration of his power in this realm was made when he drove the legion of demons out of the man in Decapolis. (4) Jesus asserted his authority in the realm of human affairs when he cleansed the temple and ran out those who were making a house of merchandise out of his Father's house. Of prayer. He also asserted his au-



thority in this realm when he gave commandments to people, and especially when he gave the Great

Commission and told his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature on earth.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. People Attempt to Make Jesus

King (John 6: 15)

*About to come and take him by force, to make him king.* John tells us that when Jesus had fed the five thousand men, plus the women and the children, and had done so by using five barley loaves and two fishes, the people were so impressed with his power that they said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." (John 6: 14.) Believing him to be that prophet who should come into the world, they believed him to be the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament. And believing that the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament would deliver them from their bondage to Home, they wished to make him king immediately so that they would not be required to suffer bondage any longer. They believed that the Messiah would establish an earthly kingdom; they believed that he would restore the kingdom as it existed in the days of David. They knew that God had sworn that of the fruit of the loins of David one would be set on the throne of David. (Acts 2: 30ff.) They believed that Jesus was that son of David, and so they wished to hurry him into the establishment of the kingdom. Furthermore, both John the Baptist and Jesus and their disciples had been preaching all over the land of Palestine that the kingdom promised in the Old Testament was at hand. This meant that the kingdom was about to be established. Since they believed that this kingdom was to be an earthly kingdom, like the kingdom in the days of David, and since they believed the kingdom was to be reigned over by a king, they saw no need for postponing the establishment of the kingdom and the beginning of his reign. So, they decided to take him by force and make him king and force a rebellion against the authority of Home that they might secure their freedom. They reasoned that he who could feed more than five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, and who could perform other miracles such as they had seen him perform, could

destroy all their enemies. Those who hold the doctrine of premillennialism say that Jesus came into the world for the purpose of establishing just such a kingdom as these people tried to force upon him. They contend that the Jews rejected Jesus and that this rejection made it impossible for him to establish an earthly kingdom with Jerusalem as the center and that he postponed the establishment of the kingdom and established the church to serve until such time as he can return a second time and establish his kingdom. If Jesus came with the intention of establishing the very kind of kingdom these people wanted and the kind which they tried to force upon him, why did Jesus postpone the establishment of the kingdom until his second coming? If Jesus had come with the intention of establishing an earthly kingdom, and these people wanted an earthly kingdom, there would have been no reason at all for them to have to force him to be king in such a kingdom. The reason why Jesus would not allow them to force him to be a king in such a kingdom is that he did not come with the intention of establishing an earthly kingdom. They wanted a kingdom of this world, but Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18: 36.)

### II. Jesus Walks on the Water (John 6: 16-21)

*And when evening came.* This refers to the close of that day on which Jesus fed the five thousand men plus the women and children who followed him from the western shore of the sea of Galilee around to the northeastern shore of the sea. And on this evening, the disciples entered into their boat with the intention of going back over the sea unto Capernaum. This is proof that the events of our last lesson did not take place on the western shore of the sea of Galilee. Though Bethsaida is near Capernaum on the western shore of the sea and the feeding of the five thousand is said to have been at Bethsaida, this verse proves that the sea of Galilee was between two towns

of that name. And as we commented in our last lesson, Josephus tells us of Bethsaida Julias which was on the northeastern shore of the sea of Galilee.

*And it was now dark.* The disciples left Jesus late in the evening, and Jesus sent the multitude away. Matthew tells us that Jesus remained behind, not only to send the multitudes away, but to go into the mountain to pray. (Matt. 14: 23.) Jesus set a good example for all of us with reference to prayer. He prayed often and much to his Father. If Jesus, the Son of God with power to work the miracles which he worked, realized the need of prayer, certainly we who have not the power which he had, should realize our great need of prayer. The people who settled this country were praying people; they were God-fearing people, and they had very little crime among them. But there is much crime today. Is it not because people do not fear God? Is not our crime wave directly connected with the fact that people do not pray? Juvenile judges tell us that the boys and girls who get into trouble and come into their courts are boys and girls who never go to Sunday school. This should suggest to us that reading the Bible, praying, and cultivating reverence for God and respect for the authority of Jesus Christ are necessary in the lives of people. The fact that we have forgotten God and that we do not pray often, and that we do not study the Bible regularly is the reason for the crime wave of our generation. Social programs and psychiatric services will not cure the disease of this nation. Only a return to the fear of God and the practice of the religion of Jesus Christ will cure the ills of the world.

*They behold Jesus walking on the sea.* When the disciples had been gone long enough to row twenty-five or thirty furlongs, which is about three or four miles, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. Mark tells us that he acted as if he would pass them by. Brother McGarvey comments that if they were troubled and afraid when they thought they saw a ghost passing by them, they would have been even more afraid if he had walked directly toward them.

*It is I; be not afraid.* They recognized Jesus by his voice when he told them to be not afraid. "If Isaac know the voice of Jacob (Gen. 27: 22), Saul the voice of David (1 Sam. 26: 17), and Rhoda the voice of Peter (Acts 12: 17), much more did the apostles know the voice of the great Master." (The Fourfold Gospel.) Matthew tells us that when Peter recognized the Lord, he requested that the Lord bid him to come to him. And Jesus invited him to come, walking on the water. Peter succeeded as long as he kept his eyes on the Lord, but when he began to look upon the raging of the waves, he began to sink and had to call on the Lord for help.

*Straightway the boat was at the land.* This miracle is expressed in so few words that many people have entirely overlooked it. In these few words we are told that Jesus miraculously transported the boat from the middle of the sea of Galilee to the shore. John tells us that they had already traveled between three and four miles, and we know that that was about half the distance across the sea. The power to transport that boat filled with thirteen men is superhuman power. It is a proof of the omnipotence of Jesus Christ. \*

### III. Jesus Followed by the Multitude (John 6: 22-24)

*On the morrow.* This refers to the day following the feeding of the five thousand men plus the women and children, and the events of this section begin on the same spot where the miracle was performed but end at the synagogue in Capernaum where they found Jesus.

*The multitude that stood on the other side of the sea.* Though Jesus sent the multitude away, they did not go very far. They spent the night in the vicinity of the place where Jesus fed them. With the coming of the light of day, they saw that the boat which the disciples entered the evening before was not at the shore. The people knew that Jesus did not enter the boat with the disciples. They concluded that he must still be in the vicinity. But not being able to find him, nor the boat in which the disciples left, they reasoned that Jesus must have evaded them and must have gone to some other point.

*There came boats from Tiberias.*

The boatmen who worked out of the city of Tiberias saw an opportunity to earn ferry fees by transporting the multitude from the spot where Jesus fed them to whatever place they might choose, so they came with their boats for the purpose of earning money.

*And came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.* When the boatmen from Ti-

berias came, the people asked to be transported back to Capernaum, hoping to find Jesus there. John tells us beyond the limits of our lesson text that the multitude found Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. (John 6: 59.) It was there in the synagogue that Jesus gave them the lesson on the bread of life which we have in our Golden Text.

### Lessons to Learn

1. God's ways are higher than man's ways. Man wanted to make Jesus king of an earthly kingdom for their earthly advantage, but God intended that he should be king of a heavenly kingdom to dispense heavenly blessings.

2. If Jesus could feed thousands with so little, he can provide us with all we need. To worry from fear of

not having the necessities of life is proof of a lack of trust in the Lord's power or his willingness to bless us.

3. As the multitude followed Jesus for loaves and fishes, so we may be guilty of following him for base and selfish reasons. We should follow Jesus to glorify his name and to show our appreciation for what he has done for us.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

According to David, who laid the foundation of the earth?

To whom does the New Testament give credit for this work?

What does the Lord promise to do for his people?

In what times are his people exhorted to be not afraid?

What is said of the Lord's ability to guard us from temptations?

Name and discuss three blessings specified in our lesson.

#### Introduction

How did Jesus manifest his power over nature?

In what way did Jesus prove his authority in the world of spirits?

How did Jesus prove his power over evil spirits?

In what way did Jesus manifest his authority in the realm of human affairs?

#### People Attempt to Make Jesus King

What caused the people to believe Jesus to be the Messiah?

What did the Jews expect the Messiah to do?

What promise had God made to David?

Why did the people see no need for postponing the establishment of the kingdom?

What proof do we have that Jesus never intended to establish an earthly kingdom?

#### Jesus Walks on the Water

What proof do we have in this lesson that the multitude was fed across the sea from Capernaum?

Why did Jesus not get into the boat with his disciples?

What emphasizes our need of prayer to God?

What connection is there between our lack of prayer and the juvenile crime wave?

What unusual sight did the disciples behold?

How did the disciples recognize Jesus?

What unusual experience did Peter have on this occasion?

What miracle did Jesus perform at this time?

#### Jesus Followed by the Multitude

How much territory is covered in the events of our lesson?

Where did the multitude spend the night?

How can you explain the presence of the boats from Tiberias?

Where did the people find Jesus?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VII—August 18, 1957

## JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## Lesson Text

John 10: 1-16

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Je'-sus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Je'-sus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door; by me if any

man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.

12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth *them*:

13 *He fleeth* because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me,

15 Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.

**Golden Text.**—*"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want"* (Psalm 23: 1.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Psalm 23.

## Daily Bible Readings

August 12. M.....Jehovah Feeds His Sheep (Ezek. 34: 11-24)  
 August 13. T.....The Father Gathers the Scattered (Jer. 31: 7-14)  
 August 14. W.....Jehovah, Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80: 1-19)  
 August 15. T.....To Be One Shepherd (Ezek. 37: 24-28)  
 August 16. F.....Grievous Wolves Among the Flock (Acts 20: 28-35)  
 August 17. S.....Flock to Be Fed (Isa. 40: 9-17)  
 August 18. S.....Jesus, Shepherd and Bishop of Our Souls (1 Pet. 2: 18-25)

**Time.**—A.D. 29.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Jesus and the Pharisees.

## Golden Text Explained

1. Our need for a shepherd, (a) Ignorance. The sheep is ignorant of what is good for him. He does not know where to find good pasture, and in those arid sections of Palestine, he did not know where to find water. He did not know how, nor was he able to protect himself against ravenous beasts. His ignorance made

it absolutely necessary for him to have a shepherd over him at all times. So we, like sheep, do not know what is good for us spiritually; we do not know where to find spiritual blessings unless we are guided by the good shepherd. We are as ignorant of our spiritual needs and how to fill those needs as the sheep was

ignorant of what was best for him and how and where he might fill his wants, (b) The sheep was prone to wander and become lost. Jesus made use of this when he gave the parable about the man having a hundred sheep, but lost one and went into the wilderness to find that which was lost. (Luke 15: 3ff.) And again, the apostle Peter says, "For ye were going astray like sheep but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Pet. 2: 25.) But the sheep is no more prone to wander and become lost than we are prone to wander in our own ways and become lost from the spiritual shepherd. (c) Defense. The sheep needed a shepherd because there were many wild beasts and thieves and robbers who would take them from their owner. So, we need a spiritual shepherd to defend us from our spiritual enemies. We can no more care for ourselves spiritually than the sheep could care for himself in a country which abounded in wild animals.

2. **Qualities of shepherds.** (a) Good shepherds. The good shepherd is gentle. Jacob, when returning from the east and having met Esau, spoke of this trait in the shepherd. He told Esau to go on before and he would come with the tender children and the young of the flocks. He said, "If they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die." And then he said, "I will lead on gently, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children. (Gen. 33: 13, 14.) The good shepherd is unselfish; he will lay down his life if necessary for his sheep. The prophet Ezekiel describes the good shepherd as one that seeks out his flock that is scattered and brings them together in his fold and under his protection, one that feeds them upon the moun-

tains and by the water courses. The reader will do well to study Ezekiel's description of the good shepherd. (Ezek. 34: 11-16.) (b) The evil shepherd. In this same chapter of Ezekiel, the prophet describes the evil shepherd. He describes him as one who has his own interests before that of the sheep; who, instead of feeding the sheep, feeds upon the sheep; and who, instead of caring for the sheep, cares for his own interests first. The reader will do well to read the entire description. (Ezek. 34: 1-6.)

3. **The Lord is our shepherd,** (a) Supplies every need. As the good shepherd of the sheep takes care of them and supplies their every need, so David describes Jehovah as supplying our every spiritual need. David represents himself as having no wants, not because of his own wisdom, strength, or ability to supply his own needs, but because Jehovah is his shepherd, (b) Protects from every danger. As the shepherd protects his sheep from danger, even to the point of laying down his life for the sheep, so our Lord protects us from every danger. He laid down his life in order that he might save us from sin. If he loved us enough to do that, surely he will protect us from the dangers that surrounds us and which would endanger our eternal welfare, (c) He knows and loves his sheep. As the shepherd knew each sheep by name and loved the sheep to the points of laying down his life to protect them, so our Lord knows each of us individually and loves each one of us enough to give his life for us. Paul says, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. 2: 19a.) And Paul emphasizes the love of Christ for the individual when he said, "Who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2: 20b.)

## Introduction

"As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. . . . The shepherd called sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know

his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is

armed in order to defend his charge, and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur not unlike that recounted by David, and in these very mountains; for, though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceedingly fierce, prowl about these wild wadies. . . . And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has been known

to put his life in his hands to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars and died among the sheep he was defending." (The Land and the Book—Thomson.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Parable of the Sheepfold (John

10: 1-6)

#### *He that entereth not by the door.*

In this first parable, Jesus is contrasting himself with the Pharisees who were the self-appointed shepherds of the people. The Pharisees had all the marks of the evil shepherd as described in Ezek. 34: 1-6. The door of the sheepfold by which the true shepherd enters is perhaps prophecy. It is dangerous to try to make application of these various parts of a parable where the Lord himself has not made the application. However, Jesus came in fulfillment of prophecies, and he had the qualities which prophecy pointed out in the good shepherd of the sheep. The Pharisees were not fulfilling the prophecies concerning the character of the good shepherd of the sheep.

#### *The same is a thief and a robber.*

Jesus says that one who poses as a shepherd, but who did not come in by the door of the sheepfold is a thief and a robber. A thief is one who takes the property of another by stealth, and a robber who takes the property of another by force or violence. The Pharisees, not having entered by the door of prophecy, were both thieves and robbers. Jesus does not call himself the shepherd in this parable, but when he said, "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep," he implied that he was the shepherd because he had come by the door and was not a thief or a robber.

To *him the porter openeth*. Here again we have another figure in this parable which we may or may not correctly interpret, but since John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus and pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, it seems that Jesus may have referred

to John as the porter. Not all shepherds could afford a porter, so they remained with their sheep in the fold through the night. But shepherds who could afford a porter cared for their sheep during the day and put them in the fold under the care of a porter through the night. When the shepherd returned in the morning, the porter opened the door and admitted the shepherd who led his sheep out for another day of pasture.

#### *When he hath put forth all his own.*

The shepherd returned in the early morning, the porter opened the door for him, and the shepherd called his own sheep and led them out of the fold. We are told that folds were large, unroofed enclosures. The walls were sometimes of rock; other times they consisted only of a thick hedge of thorn bushes. Several shepherds could bed their flocks overnight in one fold. The shepherd entered the fold and called his sheep by name, and they arose and followed him. The shepherd went before them, leading them, never driving his sheep. The object in going before was to show them the safe, smooth, and thornless path to travel. It also enabled the shepherd to guard his sheep from the wild beasts.

#### *A stranger will they not follow.*

Jesus had just said that the sheep know the voice of their shepherd. As stated in the Introduction, sheep actually know the voice of their shepherd and will become disturbed and alarmed by the voice of another man. Our text says that if a stranger calls, the sheep will flee from him. The voice of a stranger was so alarming that, not only did the sheep refuse to follow him, but they actually fled from him.

*But they understood not.* The teaching of this section is directed

against those Pharisees who cast out of their fellowship the man to whom Jesus gave sight. (John 9: 35-41.) The Pharisees asked Jesus if he meant to insinuate that they were blind leaders or shepherds of the people. He gave them this parable and the fact that they did not understand its meaning is proof of their blindness which they denied.

## II. Jesus, the Door of the Sheep

(John 10: 7-10)

*I am the door of the sheep.* This is a separate parable and must not be confused with that in verses 1-6. In this Jesus says he is the door of the sheep, but in the parable of verses 1-6 he says that he entered into the fold by the door. He could not consistently be in one parable both the door and the shepherd who enters through that door. Again, in this second division, Jesus says he is the "door of the sheep" and not the door through which the shepherd entered.

*All that came before me.* Some think Jesus here refers to false Messiahs, but there is no evidence of men coming claiming to be the Messiah. This seems to refer to the scribes and Pharisees who were self-appointed shepherds of the sheep. These self-appointed teachers were not true prophets; they did not have the qualifications of the true prophet. Instead of watching for the interests of the sheep, they were watching for their own interests. Instead of feeding the sheep, they were feeding upon the sheep. And when the sheep were in danger, they, like hirelings, refused to accept their responsibility to protect the sheep.

*By me if any man enter in.* We notice several points for emphasis in this verse. (1) Entering into the fold is conditioned upon each individual's own response. Jesus said, "If any man enter in." One's receiving the blessings of the Lord is conditioned upon his being willing to enter into that place or relationship where those blessings are to be enjoyed. (2) The one entering shall be saved. Salvation is therefore conditioned upon one's entering in by the door which is Jesus. And this salvation is general in its nature, covering all the blessings which Jesus has to offer those who enter. (3) Those who enter by the door "shall go in and out, and shall find pasture."

Because sheep go in the fold for protection through the night and go out at day for feeding, those who enter by the spiritual door are spoken of as going in and out. This is not to be taken to mean that they continually go in and out of Christ, but rather that as the sheep went in for protection and went out for food, so those who enter by the door of Christ shall find protection and spiritual food.

*I came that they may have life.*

In this verse Jesus contrasts the purpose of those self-appointed shepherds with his own purpose. The self-appointed shepherds such as the scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's time came, not for the good of the sheep, but that they might steal and kill and destroy. They held their office not for the good of those whom they served, but their own selfish interests. In contrast with this, Jesus was unselfish and self-sacrificing. He gave his life that the sheep might have their life, and he suffered that they might be abundantly supplied with the things they need. Our Lord does not supply us meagerly with spiritual blessings, but supplies us abundantly with them.

## III. Jesus the Good Shepherd (John

10: 11-16)

*I am the good shepherd.* Here Jesus changes the picture from the door to the shepherd who leads his sheep through that door. No one parable or figure of speech is capable of picturing Jesus in all his varied relationships with his people. So he uses different figures of speech to represent his relationship to his people. In the next few verses he contrasts the good shepherd with the hireling or self-appointed shepherds.

*The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.* This is the first characteristic which Jesus mentions of the good shepherd which is not to be found in the hireling. "The world-ruling spirit blesses itself through the sacrifices of the people; the Christ-spirit blesses the people through the sacrifice of self." (The Fourfold Gospel.) As the good shepherd fought beasts and thieves and occasionally lost his life in protecting his sheep, so Jesus gave his life that he might bless his sheep.

*He that is a hireling.* Jesus says that the hireling leaves the sheep and

flees when the sheep are in danger. And he suggests a reason why they do not sacrifice themselves for the sheep. And that reason is that the sheep do not belong to the hireling. A hireling is a man who is paid wages to do a certain work. The word is often used in a good sense. A man who contracts to do a certain work for a certain amount of pay is a hireling, regardless of how faithful he may be in his work and of how much time and labor he may put into his work. But the word hireling also has a bad sense, being used to describe one who works only for the salary and who refuses to give sufficient time and effort to earn the salary. Gospel preachers have been called hirelings because they receive a stipulated salary from the churches which they serve. They are hirelings in the good sense of that term in that they receive support from the congregation. But they are not necessarily hirelings in the bad sense of that term. If their primary concern is their salary, and they do not give proper time and interest and effort in return for that salary, they are hirelings in the sense in which Jesus uses the term here. When Paul accepted wages from churches (2 Cor. 11: 8), he was not a hireling in the sense in which Jesus uses the term here. So, gospel preachers who accept wages from churches are not necessarily

hirelings in the uncomplimentary sense of that term.

**I know mine own.** This is another characteristic of the good shepherd. He knows his sheep, and they know him. Then Jesus illustrates this knowledge by the knowledge which the Father has of him, and the knowledge which he has of the Father. Of course, our knowledge of Jesus cannot be as extensive as the knowledge which Jesus has of his Father. But it is the same kind of knowledge, being gained through an experimental relationship. We experience the love and goodness of Jesus Christ, and we know his love and goodness toward us because we have experienced it.

**Other sheep I have.** In this verse Jesus tells the Jews that they are not the only sheep of the Lord. He refers to the Gentiles as the other sheep and says that he will bring them, and they will hear his voice. The Gentiles proved to be more eager to hear the voice of the good shepherd than the Jews. The reader will do well to read Rom. 11: 1ff. to see how the Jews rejected the Messiah, and that their rejection served to cause the Gentiles to hear and accept him. Then Jesus said when he has brought these other sheep that "they shall become one flock, one shepherd." This indicates the unity of God's people, whether Jew or Gentile, under the direction of Christ.

### Lessons to Learn

1. The fact that Jesus fulfilled all Old Testament prophecies concerning him assures us that he is the shepherd of God's people. So we may accept him in complete confidence.

2. Jesus is the door, the means of entrance into fellowship and communion with God. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man

can come to the Father except through him.

3. With David we should rejoice that we have the Lord as our shepherd. No one blessing transcends this one, for in it are combined all the services which God renders his people, and all the joys and comforts which they derive from their relationship with God.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

For what three reasons do sheep need shepherds?

Can you make the application and show why we need a spiritual shepherd?

Name and discuss some qualities of the good shepherd.

What are some of the qualities of the evil shepherd?

Why did David say he had no wants?

What did our shepherd do to save us from spiritual dangers?

What is said of our shepherd's knowledge of us?

Parable of the Sheepfold

Can you show that the Pharisees had all the marks of an evil shepherd?

What was the door of the sheepfold?

What is the difference between a thief and a robber?

Why were the Pharisees thieves and robbers?

What was the work of a porter? and who was the porter of this parable?



Can you describe the sheepfolds of our Lord's time?  
 What is the attitude of the sheep toward a stranger?  
 Why was this parable directed against the Pharisees at this time?

#### Jesus, the Door of the Sheep

Can you show that the parable of this division is different from that in verses 1 to 6?  
 What did Jesus say of those who claimed to be shepherds before him?  
 On what is our entrance into the sheep-fold conditioned?  
 What is the promise to those who enter the fold?  
 What blessings are enjoyed by those who enter?  
 Contrast the purposes of Jesus with those self-appointed shepherds.

#### Jesus the Good Shepherd

Why does Jesus use different figures to picture his relationship with his people?  
 What is the first characteristic of the good shepherd?  
 What is a hireling? and are all gospel preachers hirelings in the sense used here?  
 Can you give proof that Paul was a hireling in one sense of that term?  
 In what way does Jesus know his own people?  
 What is said in this lesson about our knowledge of Jesus?  
 Who are the other sheep Jesus mentioned?  
 What is said to indicate the unity of God's people?  
 What was the attitude of the Jews toward this unity with Gentiles?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

### Lesson VIII—August 25, 1957

## JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

### Lesson Text

#### John 11: 1-5, 38-44

1 Now a certain man was sick, Laz'-a-rus of Beth'-a-ny, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Laz'-a-rus was sick.

3 The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 But when Je'-sus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

5 Now Je'-sus loved Martha, and her sister, and Laz'-a-rus.

38 Je'-sus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Je'-sus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by

this time the body decayeth; for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Je'-sus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, If thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Je'-sus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'-a-rus, come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Je'-sus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Golden Text.—*"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again (John 11: 23.)"*

Devotional Reading.—1 Cor. 15: 1-20.

### Daily Bible Readings

August 19. M.  
 August 20. T.  
 August 21. W.  
 August 22. T.  
 August 23. F.  
 August 24. S.  
 August 25. S.

Christ's Resurrection (Matt. 28: 1-10)  
 A General Resurrection (Dan. 12: 1-3; John 5: 28, 29)  
 Assurance of Our Resurrection (Rom. 8: 19-25)  
 A Chapter on the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15)  
 Jesus Will Raise Us Up (John 6: 40-51)  
 Raised at the Coming of Jesus (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)  
 First Day of the Week a Memorial (John 20: 19-23)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACES.—Bethabara and Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. Old Testament doctrines of resurrection,** (a) David. Though the resurrection is not emphasized in the Old Testament, there are frequent references to it, and we know people in time of the Old Testament who did believe in a future resurrection. David spoke of the resurrection when he said, "For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." (Psalm 16: 10.) Though this has its messianic meaning, yet it shows that David knew of the resurrection. Again, he said, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; For he will receive me." (Psalm 49: 15.) (b) The prophets. Isaiah said, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead." (Isa. 26: 19.) And Daniel 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.) It would be difficult to find a clearer statement concerning the resurrection than this one. But again, another prophet says, "I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death. O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destruction?" (Hos. 13: 14.) We know that Hosea was speaking of the future general resurrection because Paul quoted this passage in his famous chapter on the resurrection, saying that when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then the statement of Hosea will be brought to pass. (1 Cor. 15: 54, 55.) And we are told that Old Testament saints suffered torture "that they might obtain a better resurrection." (Heb. 11: 35b.) And the fact that the Pharisees are distinguished from the Sadducees on account of belief in the resurrection proves that people of the Old Testament times did believe in the resurrection.

### **2. Jesus and the resurrection, (a)**

In his teaching, Jesus taught that Moses showed resurrection of the dead when he talked with God at

the burning bush. On that occasion God said he was the Son of the living, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Jesus adds that God is not the God of the dead but of the living. And Jesus offered this as proof of the resurrection. (Luke 20: 37, 38.) (b) By raising the dead. Jesus not only taught that the dead would be raised, but he proved the possibility of their being raised by raising a number of people from the dead during his lifetime. If he could raise a few people during his lifetime, certainly he proves the possibility of all men being raised, (c) By his own resurrection. There is no greater proof of the general resurrection than the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself from the grave. Paul speaks of his resurrection as the "first fruits" of the general resurrection. (1 Cor. 15: 20.) As the first fruits were offered in pledge of the full harvest, so the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's pledge of the resurrection of all the dead.

### **3. Apostles and the resurrection,**

(a) They taught the resurrection. Paul's great chapter on the resurrection (1 Cor. 15) is sufficient to prove that Paul believed in the resurrection. And since the other apostles believed and taught the same as Paul, it follows that they believed and taught the resurrection. Again, Paul taught the resurrection of the righteous dead before the righteous living are caught up to be with the Lord at his second coming. (1 Thess. 4: 14-17.) (b) The apostles comforted people by the resurrection. After Paul had taught the church at Thessalonica concerning the resurrection, he said, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4: 18.) (c) They expected life beyond the grave. Peter said that we have an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. He obviously looked beyond the grave to something better than we have in this life. And then, the apostle Paul said that he had a desire to depart from this life and be with Christ which is very far better. Phil. 1: 23.) Hence, we know that Paul

looked for something better beyond this life. Without the resurrection, there would be no possibility of life beyond the grave. Hence, the fact

that the apostles looked for another and better life beyond death is proof that they believed in and taught the resurrection.

## Introduction

It is interesting to note Martha's conception of the power of Jesus in connection with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. (1) According to Martha, Jesus was limited by distance. She said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." (John 11: 21.) She had sufficient faith in the Lord to believe he could have prevented the death of her brother, but did not have sufficient faith to believe he could raise Lazarus from the dead. (2) According to Martha's conception, Jesus was limited by time. When Jesus told her that her brother would rise again, she replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (John 11: 24.) She had sufficient faith in God to believe

that Lazarus would be raised in the general resurrection at the end of time, but she did not have sufficient faith in Jesus as God manifest in the flesh to raise him from the dead at the present. (3) According to Martha's view, Jesus was limited in the exercise of his power to prayer. She said, "And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee." (John 11: 22.) This indicates that she believed that Jesus had a connection with the Father through which he could secure what he desired. She did not have sufficient faith in him to recognize that the power to raise the dead resided in him, and not merely through answer to his prayer.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Illness of Lazarus for God's Glory

(John 11: 1-5)

*Now a certain man was sick.* In John 10: 40 we learn that Jesus went beyond the Jordan into the place where John at the first was baptizing. There is some uncertainty as to the name of the place where Jesus was at the time he learned of the sickness of Lazarus, but we do know that it was one of the places east of the Jordan. It could have been at Aenon or Bethany, called in some versions Bethabara. But while Jesus was there, news was brought to him that Lazarus who lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha, was sick.

*Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment.* John thought Mary of sufficient importance to identify her by saying that she was the one who anointed the feet of the Lord. This story is found in John 12: 1-8, but for the story of the home life of these sisters, the student should read Luke 10: 38-42.

*He whom thou lovest is sick.* This is the message which Mary and Martha sent to Jesus. Since the message contained no name, how was Jesus to know who was sick? Since the message was sent from Mary and Martha, the Lord would naturally think first of their brother

Lazarus. And since this could be said of but very few people, we would expect Jesus to have put little trouble in determining who was sick. Lazarus and his sisters enjoyed a place in the affections of Jesus which few, if any other people enjoyed.

*This sickness is not unto death.* We have no way of knowing what reply Jesus gave to those who brought him the message concerning the illness of Lazarus. Nor do we know whether he sent any message of comfort or encouragement by these messengers to Martha and Mary. When he said, "This sickness is not unto death," we must not conclude that Jesus thought Lazarus would not die. But he meant to convey the idea that this was not a permanent death, that Lazarus would not "fall a prey to death."

*But for the glory of God.* This illness and death of Lazarus was so timed in the providence of God that God would be glorified. Death was simply a part of the plan to allow Jesus to glorify God by raising Lazarus back to life. This was not the death which is appointed to all men.

*That the Son of God may be glorified thereby.* In the providence of God, it seemed good that Jesus should manifest his power over death. In order that people might believe in

him as the Son of God or God manifested in the flesh. So, in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, not only God would receive glory, but Jesus as the Son of God exercising the power of God would be glorified also. We learned in John 9: 1-4 that in the providence of God a man was allowed to be born blind in order that the works of God might be manifested in him. And now we learn that a man is allowed in the providence of God to die in order that the Son of God might be glorified. These things indicate the foreknowledge of God as well as the power and the goodness of God. Those who fail to appreciate the foreknowledge of God attempt to make God in man's image and to reduce him to little more than a glorified man.

## II. Martha to See the Glory of God

(John 11: 38-40)

*Jesus therefore groaning in himself.* "The word rendered *groaned* here commonly denotes to be angry or indignant, or to reprove severely, denoting violent agitation of mind. Here it also evidently denotes violent agitation—not from anger, but from grief. He saw the sorrow of others and was also moved with sympathy and love. The word *groan* usually, with us, denotes an expression of internal sorrow by a peculiar sound. The word here, however, does not mean that utterance was given to the inward emotion, but that it was deep and agitating, though internal." (Barnes.)

*Now it was a cave.* People used caves, either natural or man-made, for burial places. It will be remembered that Abraham bought a piece of ground in which the cave of Macpelah was situated in order that he might bury his dead out of his sight. (Gen. 23: 3ff.) And we are told that a stone lay against the entrance of the cave. In many instances, these stones were round and flat like a grindstone and rolled in a groove in order to close the entrance and to remove it with ease.

*By this time the body decayeth.* When Jesus asked that the stone be removed from the entrance to the cave, Martha gently objected by saying that since the body had been dead four days, it was now in a state of decay. In this are suggested the following. (1) Martha's lack

of faith. She did not have faith in Jesus and his power to raise Lazarus from the dead at that time. She believed in the future resurrection, but she did not believe in the power of Jesus to raise Lazarus at that time.

(2) There is a faint suggestion here of the effort of some people to direct the affairs of the Lord. She should have had sufficient faith in Jesus and enough respect for his judgment that she would have complied with his will without trying to change his will and direct his actions according to her own will. So there are people today who think the Lord makes unreasonable requests or demands of them, and seeing no sense or reason for doing the things commanded, they do something else which they think will be as acceptable to the Lord. But as Martha was interfering with the accomplishment of the Lord's purposes, so people today make impossible in their lives the accomplishment of the Lord's purposes when they try to direct his efforts in harmony with their reason. (3) The impossibility of any deception on the part of Jesus. Since Lazarus had been dead four days, a sufficient time for decay to set in, there was no possibility that his coming back to life and health could be a resuscitation instead of resurrection. When Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow at Nain, there was the possibility of his enemies making the claim that these were not actually dead and that they were only resuscitated. But since Lazarus had been dead four days, the possibility of any such claim is completely removed.

*Thou shouldst see the glory of God?* Jesus very tenderly reminded Martha that he had said to her that she would believe, she would be permitted to see the glory of God. From this we learn that this resurrection was for the purpose of glorifying God. Jesus did not raise his friend from the dead solely for their comfort and the comfort of their loved ones. The glory of God was the supreme purpose of this resurrection, and not simply a manifestation of his love for Mary and Martha.

## III. God Glorified in Resurrection

(John 11: 41-44)

*And Jesus lifted up his eyes.* Jesus is a wonderful example to us in his prayer life. He never undertook

anything without first praying about it. When he was about to appoint his apostles, he spent the whole night in prayer, and now he prays to God when he is to raise Lazarus from the dead. But it is worthy of note that he did not pray in order that he might have the courage or the strength to raise Lazarus from the dead; it was rather a prayer of thanksgiving.

***1 thank thee that thou heardest me.*** The word "heardest" is in past tense and suggests Jesus had prayed to God with reference to this matter before this time. He now thanks God for having heard him, not only with reference to this but in reference to other things at all times.

***Because of the multitude.*** Jesus says that he is not praying merely for the sake of his communion with the Father, but for the sake of the multitude standing around "that they may believe that thou didst send me." If Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead without this prayer, the people would likely have got the idea that Jesus exercised the power without any reference to or relation with the Father. Though Jesus had such power in himself, being God in the flesh, he did not exercise this power outside of, and without proper consideration for, his union with the Father. He had no desire to glorify himself or exalt himself in the eyes of the people. He wanted his Father to be glorified and so he recognizes his relationship to the Father in this

manner of raising Lazarus from the dead.

***He cried with a loud voice.*** It has been suggested that "ancient magicians and jugglers performed their wonders by whispering and muttering" (Barnes.) Jesus did not have to use a loud voice to be heard either by his heavenly Father or by Lazarus in the grave, but obviously, the loud voice was for the sake of the multitude who stood about.

***He that was dead came forth.*** The resurrection had been accomplished. John the inspired historian said, "He that was dead came forth." Either Lazarus was dead, or the inspired record is to be taken as false. The grave clothes, even to the napkin which was bound around his face and head were still on Lazarus when he came forth from the tomb. Jesus ordered those about him to loose Lazarus from these grave clothes and let him go free. There were too many witnesses to this incident for unbelievers to deny that it happened. And John wrote his record of this event while many who witnessed it were still alive. If no such event occurred, it is unthinkable to believe that John's story would have gone unchallenged. The incident did occur as it is recorded here. If Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead, he can raise from the dead all that sleep in their graves. This is unimpeachable evidence of the divinity of our Lord and unanswerable proof of the general resurrection.

### Lessons to Learn

1. God in his providence set in motion such chains of events in our lives as will make all things work together for our good and his glory. Surely we should find it easy to trust our affairs in the hands of one who is both omniscient and omnipotent.

2. Though we have not seen the glory of God in the resurrection of a man, we have seen his glory in the

coming to life of countless plants in the spring. He who can make the flowers live again year after year can raise us up from the dead to live forever.

3. God is glorified when we die to sin and are raised to walk in the newness of life. But he is dishonored when we turn back from righteousness to walk again in the world of sin.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, places and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What did David say concerning the resurrection?

What statement did Isaiah make concerning the resurrection?

Who made the plainest statement in the

Old Testament on the resurrection?

What did Hosea say, and how do we know he spoke of the resurrection?

What other proof can you give that Old Testament people believed in the resurrection?

What teaching of Jesus can you cite on the resurrection?

How did Jesus demonstrate his belief in the resurrection?

What chapter in the New Testament is noted for its doctrine of the resurrection?  
 What is said of life beyond the grave that proves a resurrection?

#### Introduction

What did Martha say that limited the power of Jesus by distance?  
 How did Martha limit the power of Jesus in time?  
 What shows that Martha thought the power of Jesus was limited to prayer?

#### Illness of Lazarus for God's Glory

Where was Jesus when he received news of the illness of Lazarus?  
 How was the sick man identified to Jesus?  
 What did Jesus mean when he said this sickness was not unto death?  
 What was God's purpose in the death of Lazarus?  
 Can you show how this incident illustrates the foreknowledge of God?

#### Martha to See the Glory of God

Can you describe the inward feelings of Jesus as he approached the tomb?  
 What can you say of the place where Lazarus was buried?

Why did Martha object to opening the tomb?  
 What indicated Martha's lack of faith?  
 What is said of people's efforts to direct the affairs of the Lord?  
 Can you prove the impossibility of deception in the resurrection of Lazarus?  
 What is the difference between a resuscitation and a resurrection?  
 On what condition did Jesus promise Martha she could see the glory of God?  
 What was the glory of God which Jesus promised Martha she would see?

#### God Glorified in Resurrection

What good example did Jesus set for us before raising Lazarus?  
 What indicates that Jesus had already prayed about this matter?  
 Why did Jesus cry with a loud voice when raising Lazarus?  
 What shows that Jesus was primarily interested in the glory of the Father?  
 Can you show why this incident is proof of a general resurrection?  
 What proof can you give that John's record of this incident is reliable?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

### Lesson IX—September 1, 1957

## JESUS TEACHES A LESSON IN HUMILITY

### Lesson Text

#### John 13: 1-15

1 Now before the feast of the pass-over, Je'-sus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Ju'-das Is-car'-i-ot, Si'-mon's son, to betray him,

3 *Je'-sus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God,

4 Riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Si'-mon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Je'-sus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Si'-mon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Je'-sus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant"* (Matt. 23: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 13: 16-20.

## Daily Bible Readings

August	26. M.....	Jesus Teaches the Disciples Humility (Luke 22: 24-30)
August	27. T.....	Son of Man Came to Minister (Matt. 20: 20-28)
August	28. W.....	The Way to Greatness (Matt. 23: 1-12)
August	29. T.....	An Example of Service to Others (Acts 9: 36-43)
August	30. F.....	Christ an Example of Service (Phil. 2: 3-8)
August	31. S.....	Women Who Serve Others (1 Tim. 5: 3-16)
September 1. S.....		Gird Yourselves with Humility (1 Pet. 5: 1-11)

Time.—A.D. 29.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Persons.—Jesus and his disciples.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Christianity discourages pride.

(a) In personal relationships. The wise man tells us, "Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of a lowly spirit with the poor, Than divide the spoil with the proud." (Prov. 16: 18, 19.) And again, "A man's pride shall bring him low; But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor." (Prov. 29: 23.) Jesus taught his disciples that when they were invited to a feast they should not take the most honorable seats, but they should take a lowly position so that the one who invited them might, if they deserved it, invite them up to a place of honor. And then he concluded, "For everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14: 11.) (b) In church organization. In speaking of the places of honor in the kingdom, Jesus told his disciples that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over their subjects, and their great ones exercised authority. "Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20: 25-27.) This forbids such organization in the church as is found in the great denominational bodies, such organizations as exalt some above others and encourage pride, (c) In elders. Paul says that a novice should not be appointed to the eldership "lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. 3: 6.)

### 2. Christianity encourages humility.

(a) Jesus set the example. When Jesus taught his apostles that if they wished to be great in the kingdom of God they should become the servant of all, he gave himself as example, saying, "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.) And in our lesson text today we have a splendid example of Jesus illustrating the principle of humility,

(b) Rewards promised. We are taught that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you." (James 4: 6-10.) In this we find the promise of grace and exaltation to those who cultivate the proper humility. And Peter repeats the promise of such rewards in substantially the same words. (1 Pet. 5: 5-7.) (c) True way to be great. When the apostles were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom, and when James and John had their mother to request that her sons be given the first and second places in the kingdom, Jesus taught them that the way to true greatness lay in service. He said, "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20: 26, 27.) So today those who have ambitions to be great in the kingdom of the Lord should remember that true greatness is characterized by humble service.

3. Cultivation of humility. (a) Timidity verses humility. Some people mistake timidity for humility. To be timid is to be shy, retiring, and shrinking from public notice. The timid can never accomplish much good in the world, but humility is a modest sense of one's insignificance or unworthiness. To have a "modest" sense of one's ability and importance does not include that underestimation which leads one to inactivity, (b) Egotism opposed to humility. Paul forbids egotism when he says one is

"not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith." (Rom. 12: 3.) Egotism is repulsive and hinders one's influence for good, (c) Have the mind of Christ. Paul tells us we are to do "nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than him-

self; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . . and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name." (Phil. 2: 3-9.)

## Introduction

The countries of the east had certain customs which were never brought to the west. For instance, Jesus told his apostles when he sent them out preaching on the limited commission that "whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet." (Matt. 10: 14.) Shaking off the dust of the feet indicated that the one doing so was freeing himself of any defilement which he may have contracted by his association with them, and clearing himself of any further responsibility for them. People of the west have never used this custom, and it has no meaning in our country. Another eastern custom was that of the holy kiss. Paul taught brethren, "Salute one another with a holy kiss." (Rom. 16: 16; 2 Cor. 13: 13.) This is an-

other one of the eastern customs which never did come to the western world. And even eastern countries, we are told, do not now practice the kiss of greeting as they did in the time of Christ and the apostles. So, the washing of feet was a custom peculiar to the eastern world. In the day when people generally wore sandals and traveled on foot along dusty roads, the visitor was shown honor and hospitality by the host's washing his feet. Jesus mildly reproved a Pharisee in whose house he dined for not showing him the common courtesy of the day. (Luke 7: 43.) These eastern customs were not bound upon the church, and those who insist on practicing them make a law where the Lord has not made one, and practice things which have never had any meaning in the west.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. True Greatness and True Humility

in Action (John 13: 1-5)

*Now before the feast of the passover.* When John speaks of "the passover," he refers not simply to the eating of the passover lamb which was killed on the fourteenth day of the month, but to the eating of the passover meal and the week of celebration which followed and was referred to as the feast of unleavened bread. (Ex. 12: 15-20.) And Mark obviously uses the same terms saying, "And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover." (Mark 14: 12.) The day on which the passover was killed was not actually a part of this unleavened bread.

*Jesus knowing that his hour was come.* Some months before, Jesus had told his disciples of his approaching death. (Matt. 16: 21.) And a few days before the events of our lesson Jesus had said, "The hour is

come, that the Son of man should be glorified." (John 12: 23.) The hour to which reference is made is the hour of his death in which he was to glorify his Father.

*Having loved his own.* They were his own (1) by right of creation; (2) by right of preservation; (3) by virtue of a gift from his Father (John 17: 8-10); (4) by right of their submission and consecration of themselves to him.

*That were in the world.* They were in the world, but they were not of the world because he had chosen them out of the world. They were left in the world (1) that they might glorify the Lord and carry on the work which he came to do; (2) that they might save the world through the preaching of the gospel; (3) that they might further cultivate and develop holiness in the likeness of their Lord. We are left in the world though forbidden to be a part



of the world in order that we may accomplish these same things.

*The devil having already put into the heart of Judas.* John tells us that the devil had put into the heart of Judas the desire and intention of betraying Jesus to his enemies. Peter said that Satan had filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 5: 3.) These scriptures suggest to us that Satan has the power of putting evil into our hearts. He has the power of putting the desire and the intention and the motive for doing evil in our hearts. This is all the more reason why we should both watch and pray that we enter not into temptation.

*The Father had given all things into his hands.* Since John is about to tell of the humble act of washing the feet of his disciples, John says in order to emphasize this humility, that Jesus knew certain things which made him great. (1) The Father had given him the authority to establish and manage the affairs of the kingdom of heaven. (2) He had a knowledge of his divine nature. (3) He realized that he was to return to the Father to be exalted to the throne of the kingdom and to be given a name that is above every name in heaven or on earth. Knowing these things of himself, his act of humility is made to appear to better advantage.

*Began to wash the disciples' feet.* John describes in detail the various steps by which Jesus showed his humility. He laid aside his own garments; he took a towel and girded himself. This was the act of a slave. Then he poured water into a basin, not asking one of his disciples to do even this for him. And then, as the lowest step of humility, he began to wash the disciples' feet. His true greatness is described in verse 3, while his true humility is described in verses 4 and 5. There is nothing inconsistent in greatness and humility.

## II. Jesus Deals With Peter (John 13:

6 -11)

*So he cometh to Simon Peter.* Some scholars think that the Greek construction "might denote that several of the disciples, in awestruck wonder, had submitted without a word," and then Jesus came to Simon Peter. But Alford disagrees and thinks the construction suggests that

Jesus approached Peter first and that his conversation about the matter satisfied the other disciples.

*Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*

The order of the words in the Greek sentence emphasize the exaltation of Jesus and the humility of Peter. Peter's only objection to allowing the Lord to wash his feet was prompted by a sense of his unworthiness to receive such a service and an honor from the Son of God.

*What I do thou knowest not now.*

Jesus admitted that his actions were difficult to understand, but he assured Peter and the other disciples that their understanding of his action would be more complete as they continued to grow in the grace and knowledge of their Lord. Some think that Jesus meant he would understand fully when he received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not give them a complete understanding and appreciation of Christianity. It did not enable Peter to understand that the Gentiles were to have a part in the church on equality with the Jews, so we prefer to think that Jesus meant here that the disciples would come to understand more fully the meaning of this example of humility as they grew and developed more and more into the likeness of their Lord.

*Thou shalt never wash my feet.*

Peter was determined in his attitude. He felt that he could not allow the Son of God to wash the feet of a sinner. This was so out of harmony with Peter's conception of what was appropriate that he was determined not to allow the Lord to abase himself to the degree of washing the feet of a sinner.

*If I wash thee not.* Jesus put the matter to Peter in such a way that he could no longer refuse. Jesus said that if Peter refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet, that Peter could have no part with the Lord. Some profess to see in this the deeper meaning of the cleansing from sin in order that a person may have a part in the kingdom with the Lord. This may be suggested to those who understand the necessity for cleansing from sin, but likely Jesus did not intend that Peter should get this meaning from his words. He simply meant to say "If you refuse this manifestation of humble love from

me, if you put your own pride between yourself and me, if you disdain this act of self-surrender, claiming to understand me and our mutual relations better than I, you have no part with me. ... If you refuse to accept it from me, you will then have no part with me in the manifestation of the spirit of self-sacrificing love which I have come to inaugurate." (Pulpit Commentary.)

**Lord, not my feet only.** Characteristic of Peter's impulsive nature, when he saw that his continued fellowship and communion with his Lord depended on acquiescing with the Lord's wishes, he was willing to do more than the Lord required. He was willing for the Lord to wash not only his feet, but his hands, his feet, his whole body.

**He that is bathed.** This language implies that the disciples had bathed before leaving Bethany and only their travel-soiled feet needed washing, but Jesus takes occasion by this to suggest a spiritual condition, for he said, "Ye are clean, but not all." John explains this by saying that Jesus had reference to Judas who Jesus knew would soon betray him.

### III. Disciples Should Imitate Their Master (John 13: 12-15)

**Know ye what I have done to you?** John tells us that when Jesus had completed his task of washing the feet of the disciples and had taken his own garments again, that he sat down and asked them if they knew the meaning of what he had done. It was not enough simply to teach them the principle of humility, nor was it enough to act out that principle. He begins now to connect the example of humility and his teaching on that subject.

**Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord.** These were terms of respect which disciples used to address their teachers. Jesus had only recently forbidden his disciples to call one another such titles. (Matt. 23: 8-11.) But here he says they do well to call him by these titles. This is proof that he considered himself on a different plane from that of his disciples. It

was wrong for them to call one another by such titles, but it was not wrong to call him by these titles.

**Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.** Jesus enforced the obligation of humility by saying that if he, their Lord and Teacher, was willing to condescend and act the part of a servant and wash their feet, they ought to be willing to be humble enough one toward another to wash each other's feet. Some think that Jesus instituted an ordinance of feet washing here as he instituted the Lord's supper on this same night. But (1) there is no evidence in this record that Jesus intended this to be a perpetual ordinance in the church. (2) He did not command his apostles to do *what* he had done to them, but he told them they should do *as I have done* to you; not *what* but *as I have done* to you. (3) Jesus did not institute feet washing; he simply used a custom which was common in that environment to teach them a lesson of humility. In the case of the Lord's supper, he instituted something new. People were not accustomed to taking bread and fruit of the vine as Jesus taught his disciples to use these elements. But in the case of washing their feet, he instituted nothing new; he used an old custom common to all. (4) We have no examples of the early churches practicing the washing of feet. We do have a record of their taking the Lord's supper, but no example of washing feet as an act of public worship.

**I have given you an example.** Disciples are to imitate their masters. Jesus set an example of humility which would tax all their powers to practice. They loved power and position and were scheming and arguing with one another about the first and second places in the kingdom when it should be established. Men of this disposition would find it difficult to follow this example of their Master, and people today have need to give attention to cultivating the willingness and ability to practice humility as Jesus set the example of this occasion.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Humility is a grace that taxes our faith. Jesus said humility is the way to greatness and exaltation; human philosophy says self-assertion

and self-preservation are the ways to greatness and success. We must choose between Jesus and human philosophy.

2. Peter's refusal to allow the Lord to wash his feet, if persisted in, would have been disastrous in him. Some people refuse to allow the Lord to serve them because they feel not the need of his services. Others, like Peter, refuse because of a false conception of their relationship to the Lord. But only those who recognize their dependency on the Lord and who willingly comply with his de-

mands can ever have any part with the Lord in the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

3. Imitation of the Master in humility, as well as other characteristics, is essential to our salvation. A whole lifetime is needed by all to perfect this imitation. Hence, we should begin in youth and devote all the time we have to this essential task.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

How did Solomon discourage pride?

What did Jesus teach to discourage pride in personal relationships?

How did Jesus discourage pride in church organizations?

What is a novice? and why cannot a novice be an elder?

How did Jesus set an example of humility?

What reward is promised to the humble?

What is the way to true greatness?

Can you distinguish between humility and timidity?

How does Paul forbid egotism?

### Introduction

Name some eastern customs which never did come to the west.

What is meant by shaking off the dust of one's feet against a city?

How did Paul tell brethren to salute one another?

What do you know of the custom of washing one another's feet?

### True Greatness and True Humility in Action

To what does John refer when he speaks of the feast of the passover?

What is meant by the coming of the hour of Jesus?

For what four reasons does Jesus have right to claim his disciples?

How can people be in the world and still not be a part of the world?

Give three reasons why we are left in the world.

Can you give proof that the devil has power to put thoughts and motives into our hearts?

What things did Jesus know which make us appreciate his humility?

In what act did Jesus demonstrate his greatness and humility?

### Jesus Deals with Peter

What question did Peter ask Jesus?

Why did Peter object to allowing Jesus to wash his feet?

When did Jesus expect his apostles to understand his humble actions?

How determined was Peter not to allow Jesus to wash his feet?

What did Jesus say was the price for Peter's refusal?

How did Peter express his complete submission to Jesus?

What did Jesus suggest with reference to uncleanness among the apostles?

### Disciples Should Imitate Their Master

What titles did the apostles use when speaking to Jesus?

What did Jesus say of the use of such titles?

Why is it right for us to use them when speaking of Jesus?

Can you show that Jesus did not institute an ordinance of feet-washing?

What disposition in the hearts of the apostles made it difficult for them to follow the example set by Jesus on this occasion?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson X—September 8, 1957

# THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

## Lesson Text

John 15:1-12

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As

the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast

them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and *so* shall ye be my disciples.

9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.

**Golden Text.**—*"Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them"* (Matt. 7: 20.)

**Devotional Reading.**—John 15: 13-17.

### Daily Bible Readings

September 2. M..... Fruits of Righteousness (Phil. 1: 3-11)  
 September 3. T..... Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-26)  
 September 4. W..... Unfruitful Tree Cut Down (Luke 13: 6-9)  
 September 5. T. Barren Fig Tree (Matt. 21: 18-22)  
 September 6. F..... God's People the Vineyard of the Lord (Isa. 5: 1-7)  
 September 7. S..... Fruit Bearing in Old Age (Psalm 92: 6-15)  
 September 8. S..... Fruitfulness of the Righteous (Psalm 1: 1-6)

**Time.**—A.D. 30.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Jesus and his apostles.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Evil fruit,** (a) Filthy language. James speaks of filthy language as being the fruit of the tongue. He said that the tongue is a restless evil which no man can tame. With the tongue he says we bless the Lord and curse men, so that out of the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. And then to show the incongruity of such, he says, "Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet." (James 3: 8-12.) (b) In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught us that hypocrisy is a fruit by which false teachers may be made known. He said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7: 15, 16.) (c) Oppression. Oppression and unrighteousness are spoken of as evil fruits of the people of God who were unfaithful. Isaiah said that God planted a vineyard in a very fruitful hill when he established his people in the land of Palestine. Furthermore, God blessed those people by giving them every advantage and every care that he could in righteousness give them. And in return for

10 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.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

his goodness and mercy and his manifold blessing, God expected his people to bear the fruit of righteousness. But instead of bearing the fruit of righteousness, they bore the fruit of oppression and unrighteousness. And as a consequence of that, God said he would take away the hedge and break down the wall of the vineyard and allow it to be trodden down by the enemies. (Isa. 5: 1-7.)

2. **Good fruit,** (a) Inward. Paul says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." (Gal. 5: 22, 23.) These are dispositions of mind, qualities and characteristics of the soul. And they are spoken of as the fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit. These things put together constitute the fruit (singular) of the Spirit. These are nine different elements which go to make one fruit. If any one element is missing, the fruit is not perfect. Each one of us should examine ourselves diligently daily and prayerfully that we may discern wherein we are failing to bear this fruit of the Spirit, (b) Outward. The apostle Paul said that we are to be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ,

unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil. 1: 11.) The "fruits of righteousness" simply means right doing which is the result of the proper attitudes and dispositions described under the inward fruit. To be filled with the fruit of righteousness means that our time, effort, and energy will all be consumed in doing right, (c) Made possible by union with Christ. There is no possibility of man's bearing the fruit of righteousness or being filled with the fruit of the Spirit without union with Jesus Christ. Hence, the necessity of learning how to become united with Christ and of maintaining that union. We will study more of this in the body of our lesson.

3. **Consequences,** (a) Bearing no fruit. Jesus gave a parable to teach the consequences of refusing to bear

fruit. (Luke 13: 6-9.) He said the owner of the vineyard found a tree which bore no fruit, and he gave the order to cut that tree down so that it would no longer cumber the ground. In Matt. 21: 19, we learn that Jesus pronounced the curse upon the fruitless fig tree, which by the development of leaves professed to have fruit, (b) We are taught the terrible consequences of bearing evil fruit by the illustration of the land which receives the rain and the snow and brings forth thorns and thistles. We are told that "it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. 6: 7, 8.) (c) The result of bearing good fruit is seen in that "ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life." (Rom. 6: 22.)

## Introduction

It is interesting to read the gospel of John and note the many things which Jesus used to illustrate his relationship with God, with humanity, and the service which he performs for humanity. To begin with, he is the Word which was with God in the beginning and which was God. He is that Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us, and he is the light of the world in that he directs us, shows us how we ought to live in this life if we wish to be happy in the world to come. He is also the bread of life and the water of life. By this he meant he was to the soul of man all that bread and water are to the body of mankind. Furthermore, he said he was the way, the truth, and the life. He is the way to live; he is the way to find God and union with him in this life and eternal happiness with him in the world to come. And he said he was

the good shepherd, meaning that he would perform for humanity the offices which a good shepherd performs for his sheep. He will feed, protect, and guide humanity. He not only is the shepherd, but he is the savior of the world, to save man from the power, the pollution, the state, and the final consequence of sin. And he is the Lamb of God, the offering which makes man's salvation possible. He is also the teacher of mankind, the one who made known God to the world, and through the Holy Spirit revealed the word of God to mankind. He is the Messiah, the anointed of God for the purpose of carrying on the work which these other figures of speech teach us it is his duty and privilege to perform. And finally, he is the resurrection and the life. Those united with him in this life will be resurrected by him to an eternal life.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Necessity of Relationship (John 15:

1-4)

*I am the true vine.* Jesus calls himself the "true vine" because the Jews considered themselves as a people to be the vine of the heavenly Father. That picture is used in Isa. 5: 1-7, as has been suggested already. And then again, the psalmist said, "Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt: Thou didst drive out a nation and plantedst it." (Psalm 80: 8.) But as Israel once had the kingdom

and God took it away from them to give it to a people "bringing forth the fruit thereof," so Israel once was the pleasant vine of Jehovah, planted in Jehovah's vineyard. But failing to bring forth the fruit of God, they could no longer be his vine.

*My Father is the husbandman.* The word translated "husbandman" means more than simply the vine dresser; it means the owner of the vineyard and the one who cares for the vine.

*Every branch in me.* Jesus says that the branches in him which bear no fruit, his Father, the husbandman, takes away. Some teachers claim that if a branch is once connected to the vine, it can never be severed therefrom, nor do anything but bear fruit to the glory of God. But this passage clearly indicates that a branch may be in him and bear no fruit. On the other hand, if a branch in Christ the vine bears fruit, the husbandman "cleanseth it" or prunes it in order to cause it to bear more fruit. This indicates that in our faithful service to the Lord we develop greater ability to serve the Lord. The Lord gives us ability only as we prove our trustworthiness to use that ability to his glory. This also suggests that our Lord expects us to be able to bear more fruit after we have been in the vineyard a long time than he expected of us when first we entered the vineyard. However, there are many members of the church who, like the people of Ephesus, leave their first love and bear less fruit the longer they remain in the vineyard. All such branches are exhorted to repent and do their first works lest they suffer the terrible consequences of the barren fruit tree.

*Already ye are clean.* This word "clean" is suggested by the word "cleanseth" in the preceding verse. There we gave the word "cleanseth" the meaning contained in the word "to prune." So, this word will bear the same meaning. These disciples were already pruned, or cleansed, of those dispositions and characteristics which made them unlike the Lord. This cleansing or pruning is not done by outward, visible, miraculous powers, but rather through the power of the word of God. Jesus said they were clean "because of the words which I have spoken unto you." And God continues his work of pruning out of our lives those things which make us unlike Christ by teaching us what we ought to do to be like Christ and what we ought to leave undone in order to be like him.

*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself.* Neither the vine nor the branch can bear fruit of itself. The vine puts out and supports the branch in order that it may bear fruit through the branch. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, since it depends upon the vine for the fruit-

producing strength. But Jesus is concerned only with the branch, and so uses only one side of the illustration and says that the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine. Hence, we see the necessity of our relationship with Christ. If we do not bear fruit, we are cut off and destroyed. But we cannot bear fruit unless we abide in Christ. Therefore, the necessity of abiding in Christ.

## II. Consequences of Relationship

(John 15: 5-8)

*I am the vine, ye are the branches.* Jesus has spoken of branches in him as the vine, but has not so plainly identified them. Here he told his disciples that they were the branches. There are those who claim the various denominations are the branches in the vine, but there were no denominations in the day when Jesus uttered this discourse. He spoke to those in his company and said, "Ye are the branches."

*The same beareth much fruit.* Jesus describes the person who bears fruit to the glory of God. (1) That person must be in Christ. To be in Christ means that we accept Christ as our Lord, our Savior, and that we become united together with him by being baptized into him. (Rom. 6: 3-5.) (2) Christ must abide in that person. Some have difficulty in understanding how one can be in Christ and Christ be in that one. But we must remember that this is a spiritual relationship and not subject to the laws which would govern material things. We dwell in him when we are baptized into our spiritual relationship with him, and he dwells in us in the person of his Spirit, the Holy Spirit. (John 14: 16-18.) Of this one who dwells in Christ and in whom Christ dwells, Jesus says, "The same beareth much fruit."

*If a man abide not in me.* Several things are suggested in this verse.

(1) Jesus further identifies the branches. Here he speaks of a branch as a man. Hence, we are forced to conclude that the branches under consideration are those persons who dwell in Christ. (2) It is implied here that a man may become a branch in Jesus Christ. We are not by nature branches in the vine. No one is born by a natural birth into this branch and vine relationship. (3) It is implied here that a

branch in the vine may cease to bear fruit. (4) It is said here that if a branch in the vine does not bear fruit, it is cut off and cast into the fire. The illustration and its application here are somewhat mixed. Jesus starts the verse by speaking of a man abiding in him, and he ends the verse by speaking of men cutting natural branches off of natural vines and burning them. But the lesson Jesus intended is perfectly clear. This is the consequence of the failure to bear fruit.

*Ask whatsoever ye will.* This is the consequence of fruit-bearing. This is a promise made to that person who abides in Christ and allows the word of Christ to abide in and have its way in his life. Those who allow the word of Christ to direct their lives will bear much fruit and will be rewarded by having their prayers answered. "And 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.) Two things result from this fruit-bearing which is made possible by our abiding in Christ. (1) The heavenly Father is glorified. We should feel exalted in that we sinful creatures are permitted and enabled to do such things as will glorify God. (2) We maintain our discipleship with the Lord. Those who neglect or refuse to bear fruit are cut off and cease to be disciples of the Lord, but those who bear fruit remain his disciples.

### III. How to Maintain Relationship

(John 15: 9-12)

*As the Father hath loved me.* Jesus assures his disciples that he has loved them as the Father had loved him. Certainly they were not as worthy of his love as he was worthy of the Father's love. Since this is true, we should appreciate all the more the love which Christ has for us in spite of our weakness, our waywardness, and failure to do the things he wishes us to do.

*If ye keep my commandments.* After exhorting the disciples to abide or continue in his love, he tells them how this can be done. They are to abide in his love by keeping his commandments. "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth

is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." (1 John 2: 3-6.)

*As I have kept my Father's commandments.* Jesus did not ask anything of his disciples in their relationship to him which he was not willing to do to maintain his relationship with the Father. He told them that he was able to abide in the Father's love because he kept the commandments of the Father, so he expects his disciples to continue to abide in his love by keeping his commandments.

*These things have I spoken.* Jesus tells his disciples the purpose of this discourse he has delivered unto them. That purpose was that his joy might be in them, and their joy might be made full. He was teaching them of their relationship to him, and of their duties to him in order that they might know what he wanted them to do. By doing the things which he taught them, they would cause him to rejoice in them. And by their obedience to his teaching, they would be qualified to receive such blessings as would cause their joy to be made complete. His joy in the Father's love and blessing was perfect because his obedience to the Father's will was perfect. And to the degree which his disciples obey his commandments, to that degree will their joy be made full. Those who get little joy and satisfaction out of their relationship with Jesus Christ are those who have put little obedience and submission to the will of Jesus in their Christianity.

*This is my commandment.* Jesus does not mean that he has but one commandment to give to his disciples, but he does mean that this is an outstanding and comprehensive commandment. This commandment is that they love one another like he loved them. This embraces all our duty to our fellowmen. If we love our fellowmen as Jesus loves us, we certainly will serve them in every way we possibly can, and we will refrain from doing them any harm at all. The student should read in this connection 1 John 2: 7-11; 4: 7-21 for a commentary on the duty that we have to love one another.

## Lessons to Learn

1. The "good moral man" who expects to get to heaven without accepting Christ should study carefully the words of Christ when he said, "Apart from me ye can do nothing."

2. Since one apart from Christ can do nothing, he can bear no fruit. Since those who bear no fruit are burned, the "good moral man" should

be able to determine his destiny if he continues to reject Christ.

3. The idea that the fruitless branch never was in the vine may satisfy the one who holds to the doctrine of "once in grace always in grace," but it makes it seem rather foolish that God would try to cut off the vine a branch which never was in that vine.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

What does James criticize as being the fruit of the tongue?

By what fruit are false teachers made known?

What evil fruit did God accuse his ancient people of bearing?

Name and discuss the nine elements of the fruit of the Spirit.

What is meant by the "fruits of righteousness"?

What relationship makes man capable of bearing the proper fruit?

What is the Lord's attitude toward one in his vineyard who bears no fruit?

What is the consequence of bearing evil fruit?

What is the reward for bearing good fruit?

### Introduction

What is said of Jesus as the Word?

What figures are used to teach us our need of Jesus that we may grow spiritually?

What words are used to teach us our need of Jesus to guide us to eternal life?

What words are used to teach us the good offices he performs for our salvation?

What word is used to teach us that he is appointed of God to serve us in these ways?

### Necessity of Relationship

What is said in our lesson about the use of the word "vine" in the Bible?

What is a husbandman? and who is the husbandman in our lesson?

According to this parable, what is our relation to Christ?

What does the Lord do for branches that bear fruit?

How is the work of pruning, or cleansing, done in our life?

How does this parable teach the necessity of abiding in Christ?

### Consequences of Relationship

How did Jesus identify the branches in himself?

State and discuss two things essential to bearing fruit in the vine?

How can we be in Christ and Christ be in us at the same time?

State and discuss four lessons suggested in verse 6.

What promise is made to those who bear fruit in the vine?

State and discuss two things which are the result of fruit-bearing.

### How to Maintain Relationship

How does Jesus describe his love for his disciples?

How can we abide in the love of Jesus?

What is said of one who says he loves God, but does not obey him?

How did Jesus maintain the proper relationship with his Father?

For what two reasons did Jesus say he had spoken to his disciples?

What determines the degree of joy we get from our relationship to Jesus?

What comprehensive commandment did Jesus give his disciples?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XI—September 15, 1957

# THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## Lesson Text

John 14: 16-18; 16: 7-14

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever,

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beareth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;



10 Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of

truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, *these* shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare *it* unto you.

**Golden Text.**—*"I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you"*(John 14: 18.)

**Devotional Heading.**—Acts 2: 1-4.

## Daily Bible Readings

September 9. M.....Sin Against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12: 31, 32)  
 September 10. T. Spirit Bears Witness (1 John 5: 6, 7)  
 September 11. W. Apostles Baptized in Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 8; 2: 1-4)  
 September 12. T.....Spirit to Confirm the Word (Heb. 2: 1-4)  
 September 13. F.....Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit Ended (1 Cor. 13: 8-13)  
 September 14. S. Holy Men Spoke by the Spirit (2 Pet. 1: 19-21)  
 September 15. S.....Love of God Shed Abroad by the Spirit (Rom. 5: 1-5)

**Time.**—A.D. 30.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Jesus and his apostles.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. I will not leave you desolate.

(a) Meaning of the term. The word "desolate" of our text is from a Greek word which means orphans. One translation reads, "I will not leave you behind as orphans." While Jesus had been with his apostles, he assumed the role of teacher and spiritual guardian, much the same as a father would perform, (b) Having assumed the attitude of a father or spiritual teacher and guardian, if he were to leave them without any provision, they would be as orphans. The idea of his performing the work of a guardian is suggested in the use of language which he directed to them. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." (John 13: 33a.) The Hebrew writer uses this language, "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me. Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also in like manner himself partook of the same." (Heb. 2: 13, 14.) In these verses, Jesus is spoken of as considering all those who are given to him by the Father as his children. (c) Reasons for his presence. During his personal ministry, Jesus taught his apostles many things, but he also said there were many other things they were not able to receive, and that they would need to be guided into all truth. Another reason was that they

would suffer persecution. They would need his presence and encouragement with them when they were called before kings and governors. At such times they would not know how to reply, but he promised that he would be with them and give them the words to say on such occasions. (Matt. 10: 16-19.)

2. **I come unto you.** (a) Not the second coming. This promise could not refer to the second coming because that would not keep them from being desolate during the time they were serving him here on earth, (b) This promise cannot refer to the forty days between his resurrection and his ascension. In the first place, he was with them but a very short time during those forty days, and they were not under persecution nor being called before kings and governors during that time, and hence did not need his teaching and guidance as they would need it following his ascension. (c) Coming of the Holy Spirit. This promise to come to them was fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2: 1-4.)

3. **The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ,** (a) Terms so used. Many people have trouble understanding that the Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit the same as the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit. Peter said that

the Spirit of Christ enabled the prophets to foretell the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. (1 Pet. 1: 11.) Then again he says, "But men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1: 21b.) One time Peter says it was the Holy Spirit that enabled the prophets to foretell events, but in another place he says it was the Spirit of Christ which enabled them to foretell events. There is no contradiction; Peter simply used the term Spirit of Christ to mean the Holy Spirit just like the term Spirit of God refers to the Holy Spirit. But again, Luke tells us that Paul would have gone into the province of Asia to preach, but the Holy Spirit forbade. Then he said Paul would have turned to the right to go into Bithynia, but "the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." (Acts 16: 6, 7.) From these two passages we learn that the Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit. So when the Holy Spirit came to the apostles, the Spirit of

Christ came and the promise of Christ to come unto them was fulfilled. (b) The Father and the Son dwell in us representatively. Paul tells us that "we are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." (Eph. 2: 22.) From this we learn that God the Father dwells in us in the representative of the Holy Spirit and our text shows that Jesus dwells in us in the representative of the Holy Spirit. So the first and second persons of the Godhead do not dwell in us personally, but they dwell in us representatively in the person of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, (c) Christ in all his people. Paul says, "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8: 9b.) From this we learn that if the Spirit of Christ which is the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us we do not belong to Christ. Hence, the Spirit of Christ, or Holy Spirit, dwells in all who belong to Christ by right of redemption.

## Introduction

The Holy Spirit is a divine personality. His personality is seen in the fact that he can be grieved and he can speak. It is also seen in the fact that he knows the things of God and can reveal things in the mind of God. (1 Cor. 2: 10, 11.) And we have proof of his divinity in that he is associated with the Father and the Son by wearing the same name and by our being baptized into that name. (Matt. 28: 19.) When we are baptized into the name of the Father and the Son, we render an act of worshipful obedience to the Father and the Son; so likewise, when we are baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we render an act of worshipful obedience to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Father and the Son. If we render an act of worshipful obedience to one less than God, we are idolatrous; but Jesus commands us to be

baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus would not command us to commit an act of idolatry. So we are forced to conclude that the Holy Spirit is one person of the Godhead. The apostles also teach us that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead and representative of the Godhead, dwells in each Christian. Many have thought that the Holy Spirit dwelt only in the apostles. It is true that he dwelt in the apostles and did things for and through the apostles that he will not do for and through us. But it is also true that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God?" (1 Cor. 6: 19.) From this and other passages we are taught that the Holy Spirit dwells in the children of God. (Rom. 8: 9; Gal. 4: 6; Acts 5: 32.)

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Promise of the Comforter

(John 14: 16-18)

*And I will pray the Father.* Concerning this prayer we have an interesting note on the word "pray." We are told that "*erootan*" is used of an asking which is based on close and intimate fellowship; it is the

word which implies the presentation of wish or the desire from an equal to an equal, while *aitein* represents the prayer or seeking which rises from an inferior to a superior." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*He shall give you another Comforter.* Jesus said that in response to

his request of the Father, God would send these apostles another Comforter. The word "another" suggests that the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles what Christ had been doing for them. He would teach, guide, and counsel them. The word "Comforter" is from the Greek word *paraklesis*. Brother McGarvey tells us that no one English word will fully translate this Greek word. It means literally "one called in," or "called to the side of another." And one authority on words says that it has a "secondary sense of helping, consoling, counseling, or aiding him." Then Jesus adds that the Spirit whom he would send as their Comforter and Helper would be with them forever. His stay with them was temporary, but the Holy Spirit would abide with them forever.

**Even the Spirit of truth.** The Holy Spirit is here called the "Spirit of truth" because he was to reveal the truth, guide the apostles into all truth, was to give them the power to speak the truth without any mixture of human error.

**Whom the world cannot receive.** Some have supposed that Jesus intended to say that the world cannot receive the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit, but this is a mistake, for people must receive that truth before they can become Christians, before they can be saved. (Acts 2: 37-41.) Others interpret this to mean that Jesus says the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. It is true that one does not receive the Holy Spirit until he becomes a child of God (Gal. 4: 6), yet it is doubtful if Jesus meant to teach this idea in this verse. In another verse of our text, Jesus says it was expedient for the apostles that he go away. Jesus was in the flesh and could be arrested and taken before kings and governors; he could be imprisoned, or even put to death. But it would be expedient for the Holy Spirit to be with the apostles because the world could not take the Holy Spirit in the sense of arresting him or putting him in prison. And the reason why the world could not receive, in the sense of take by force, is "for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him." It should be noted that Jesus says that the world (1) beholdeth him not, (2) neither knoweth him. Then speaking of the apostles, he said, "Ye

know him." But Jesus does not say that the apostles beheld him. This lends some strength to the interpretation given the statement that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it beholdeth him not or cannot see him. The apostles could no more see the Holy Spirit than the world, but they did know the Holy Spirit because of the help which they had received and experienced from the Holy Spirit.

**He abideth with you, and shall be in you.** First, Jesus says that the apostles knew the Holy Spirit because he abode with them in the person of Jesus, but Jesus was about to leave and send the Holy Spirit to abide in them. There are those who think that since the Holy Spirit is a person he cannot dwell in more than one person at a time, and give this as proof that the Holy Spirit does not personally dwell in Christians today. But Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit whom he would send would dwell in the apostles. This is proof that the Holy Spirit, though a person, can dwell in more than one human being at a time.

#### **If. The Comforter to Convict the World (John 16: 7-11)**

**It is expedient for you that I go away.** Since Jesus was God clothed in human flesh, it was impossible for him in that form to be omnipresent that he might attend all his people everywhere on the face of the earth. But the Holy Spirit, not limited by human nature, can be omnipresent and lend help and guidance to the people of God on all the face of the earth. Jesus makes it clear that he means that it will be better for the apostles to have the Holy Spirit than to have him personally present with them. He explains the expediency by saying, "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you."

**I will send him unto you.** Jesus had said previous to this that the Holy Spirit would not come until he was glorified. (John 7: 39.) So here he tells his apostles that the Comforter will not come until he is gone from them. It is worthy of notice that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles. Regardless of the purpose for his coming, the Holy Spirit was to be sent to the apostles.

*Will convict the world in respect of sin.* Here Jesus tells of the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit. If we connect this with the preceding statement, we get the idea that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles that the Holy Spirit might convict the world of sin. There are but two ways in which the Holy Spirit can convict a person of sin. One is the direct method of impact of Holy Spirit upon human spirit; the other is the indirect method, the Holy Spirit using such means or instrument as is necessary to accomplish such purpose. If the Lord intended that the Holy Spirit would convict and convert people by the direct method of impact of the Holy Spirit upon human spirit, he undoubtedly would have promised to send the Holy Spirit to the world to be convicted. But since he promised to send the Spirit to the apostles in order that the Spirit might convict the world, it is certainly suggested that indirect method of doing his work will be used.

*Of sin, because they believed not on me.* "Sin, righteousness, and the day of judgment with its reward upon one hand and its punishment upon the other, are three cardinal doctrines of the gospel. The Spirit convinces the world that disbelief in Christ is its fatal sin, for belief in Christ leads to forgiveness, and to the unbelieving there is no forgiveness. The least sin is a sin unto death, and is a sin eternal unless forgiven. The greatest sin, if forgiven, becomes harmless and is as if it had never been. Until the world is convinced of this great truth, it feels no need of a gospel. Again, Christianity teaches that righteousness is prerequisite to the attainment of the presence of God. Without righteousness we can never behold him, nor can we ever hope to stand before him. But this required righteousness was found in Jesus, for he returned to the Father, and abides with the Father, being seen by us no more. The Holy Spirit convinces the world that those who are found in Christ, having his righteousness, shall attain unto the presence of the Father. (Phil. 3: 3-14.) Lastly, the Spirit convinces the world that Jesus is commissioned as its judge. Our Lord's resurrection is the assurance of this fact (Acts 17: 31). The resur-

rection is such an assurance because it is an evidence of the judgment and condemnation of Satan, the head and leader in central rebellion against God, and he that had power to judge the head thereby shows he has power to judge the body." (The Fourfold Gospel.)

### III. The Comforter to Work Through Truth (John 16: 12-14)

*I have yet many things to say unto you.* Jesus could not reveal all the truth to his apostles because they were not in position to receive or understand it. They did not know the nature of his kingdom; they did not understand what he meant when he told them he was to be put to death but that he would rise again and see them. The doctrines of the gospel and the gracious purposes of God could not have been appreciated by them if he had fully explained them. The truth is that the apostles did not come to a full realization of these things on the day when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit did not give them a full understanding and appreciation of gospel truths. They had to grow into appreciation of these things the same as we do. There was a difference between preaching those things plainly as the Spirit gave them utterance and appreciating those things fully.

*He shall guide you into all the truth.* The Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into *all* truth. The apostles and prophets recorded the truth which was revealed to them. Therefore, they recorded *all* truth. Hence, we have in the New Testament *all* of gospel truth. There is no need for present-day revelation, nor the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit to reveal new truth to us. We may study the truth as revealed by the apostles and know *all* the Lord intends for us to do and to be.

*He shall not speak from himself.* The Holy Spirit was not an independent teacher; he was not to speak his own thoughts, but he was to reveal the will of God. His unity with the Father and the Son would guarantee that he would speak none other than the will of the Father. But in order to comfort the apostles, Jesus assured them that the teaching which the Holy Spirit will bring is

that which he himself would give them if he were present with them.

**These shall he speak.** The Holy Spirit was to speak, yet we are told that he was to convict the world. We conclude, therefore, that he was to convict the world through speaking. There are three thoughts which the reader should keep closely connected. (1) The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles. (2) The Holy Spirit was to come to the apostles to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (3) The Holy Spirit was to come speaking in order to accomplish this work. This is positive proof that the Lord did not intend that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin by direct impact of Holy Spirit upon human spirit. It is positive proof that the Holy Spirit was to do his work by the indirect method of using an instrument to accomplish his purposes, and that instrument is the word of God which he was to speak through the apostles. In the second chapter of Acts, we find these same three things emphasized. (1) When the day of Pentecost was come, the Holy Spirit came to the apostles in fulfillment of the promise that they

were to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1: 5, 2: 1-4.) (2) The Holy Spirit came speaking through the apostles, for we are told that when they were all filled with the Holy Spirit they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (3) This speaking was for the purpose of convicting the world of sin. If the student will read Peter's sermon, he will observe the effort to convict the people of the sin of rejecting and crucifying the Lord. And when they heard the things which were spoken, "they were pricked in their heart," which simply means they were convicted of the sin of crucifying the Lord.

**He shall glorify me.** The Holy Spirit was not to come for the purpose of glorifying himself, but was to glorify Jesus. In doing this, he would take the things of the Lord, the ideas, principles, and words, and give them unto the apostles. By revealing saving truth through the apostles and leading men to believe in Christ as the Son of God, and to serve him faithfully in spite of persecution the Holy Spirit would bring untold glory to the Lord.

### Lessons to Learn

1. We are not permitted to have the physical presence of Jesus with us, but we may enjoy continually his spiritual presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. This alone should cause all men to be willing to obey the gospel.

2. One who through reading the gospel is convinced of the sin of unbelief in Jesus today is as much con-

victed of sin by the Holy Spirit as those who were convicted by Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost.

3. Those who are waiting for a miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit in their hearts are waiting for something the people on Pentecost did not get and what the Lord has not promised to anybody in any age of the world.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word desolate?

In what way had Jesus been like a father to his apostles?

Why would the apostles need the abiding presence of Jesus with them?

Can you show that the coming promised in our text is not his second coming?

When was this promise of his coming fulfilled?

Can you prove that the Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit?

How do the Father and the Son dwell in Christians?

How does the manner of the Spirit's indwelling differ from this?

What is said of the necessity of the Spirit's indwelling?

#### Introduction

Can you prove that the Holy Spirit is a person?

Can you show that he is a divine person, a member of the godhead?

What did the Holy Spirit do through the apostles he will not do through us?

Of what is our body said to be the temple?

#### The Promise of the Comforter

Can you show that the prayer of Jesus to his Father was the expression of a desire of an equal to an equal?

Why is the Holy Spirit called a Comforter?

How would his stay with the apostles differ from the stay of Jesus with them?

Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of truth?

What is meant by the world not being able to receive the Holy Spirit?

Why was it expedient for the apostles that Christ go away?  
 How could the apostles know the Holy Spirit?  
 Can you show that the Holy Spirit can "abide with" and "be in" more than one person?

#### The Comforter to Convict the World

Why could Jesus not be omnipresent?  
 Why can the Holy Spirit be with God's people over all the earth at once?  
 What event had to transpire before the Holy Spirit could be sent?  
 Name two possible ways in which the Holy Spirit could convict the world.  
 Why does this promise suggest the indirect method of convicting the world?  
 What is the world's fatal sin for which it needs convicting?  
 Where can we attain the righteousness we must have to meet God in peace?  
 How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of judgment?

#### The Comforter to Work Through Truth

Why could Jesus not reveal all truth to his apostles while he was with them?  
 Can you show that the apostles did not fully understand all truth as soon as they received the Holy Spirit?  
 What proof do we have that all spiritual truth necessary for our salvation is recorded in the Bible?  
 From what source was the Holy Spirit to bring his message to the apostles?  
 State and develop three points in this promise of the Spirit's work of convicting men.  
 Can you show that all three parts of this promise were fulfilled on Pentecost?  
 Can you use this to show that the Holy Spirit does not convict people miraculously?  
 How was the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

### Lesson XII—September 22, 1957

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

### Lesson Text

John 19: 17-30

17 They took Je'-sus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Gol'-go-tha:

18 Where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Je'-sus in the midst.

19 And Pi'-late wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JE'-SUS OF NAZ'-ARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Je'-sus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.

21 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pi'-late, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pi'-late answered, What I have written I have written.

23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Je'-sus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the

scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them,

And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Je'-sus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clo'-pas, and Mary Mag-da-le'-ne.

26 When Je'-sus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home*.

28 After this Je'-sus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

29 There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.

30 When Je'-sus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

Golden Text.—*"And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23: 34.)

Devotional Reading.—John 19: 1-16.

## Daily Bible Readings

September 16. M.....	Jesus Before Annas (John 18: 12-23)
September 17. T.....	Before Caiaphas (Matt. 26: 57-68)
September 18.	W. Before the Jewish Council (Luke 22: 66-71)
September 19.	T. Before Pilate (John 18: 28-38)
September 20.	F. Before Herod (Luke 23: 6-12)
September 21. S.....	Before Pilate Again (Matt. 27: 15-30)
September 22. S.....	Jesus Crucified (Matt. 27: 33-56)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, John, Mary, and other women.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Father, forgive them, (a) The

love of Jesus. This prayer is a demonstration of the love which Jesus had for sinful humanity. In this prayer, we see manifested that love which caused him to leave heaven and come to this world to be despised, rejected, betrayed, and condemned and crucified by humanity. This is our Lord's illustration of his teaching when he said, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." (Matt. 5: 44, 45.) (b) The mercy of God. Surely Jesus would not pray for something which he knew the mercy of God would not grant. Since he prays for the Father to forgive these who have demanded his death and who are actually taking his life from him, we conclude that the mercy of God is sufficient to cover these sins. We should be encouraged by the thought that if the mercy of God is sufficient to forgive these sins, surely God will forgive the sins of which we are guilty today, (c) The power of prayer. In this prayer of Jesus in the behalf of his enemies, we see demonstrated the power of prayer. But even the prayer of our Lord by itself would not gain the forgiveness of the sins of these enemies of Jesus. Their repentance was essential to the forgiveness of their sin.

### 2. The ignorance of man. (a)

Self-imposed. Though Jesus said that these enemies knew not what they were doing, their ignorance was self-imposed. They were not ignorant because they did not have an opportunity to know he was Christ the Son of God. His declarations on this subject, and his works to prove his

statements were sufficient to convince them of his relationship to the Father, but the fact that they closed their eyes and stopped their ears to the evidence which was available is the reason for their ignorance, (b) Excites the Lord's pity and mercy. Even though this ignorance was self-imposed, it still excites the Lord's pity and causes him to have mercy on people. Paul tells us that the Lord had mercy on him because he persecuted the church in ignorance. (1 Tim. 1: 12ff.) The fact that Paul was ignorant of what he was doing did not mean that he had no guilt, but it does mean that the Lord exercised mercy toward him, and so these men who demanded the death of Jesus were ignorant of his relationship with the Father. And though this ignorance was self-imposed, it caused the Lord to have mercy on them, (c) Such ignorance is inexcusable. Since these men were guilty of self-imposed ignorance, they were inexcusable for the deeds done in their ignorance. Even Paul himself was inexcusable for his persecution of the church because he refused to use the opportunities he had for learning the truth about the church.

3. **Lessons for us.** (a) Be as free from ignorance as possible. Ignorance is a curse. Whether that ignorance is self-imposed or not, ignorance is still a curse to humanity. We should therefore make every effort to be as free from ignorance concerning God and our duty to God as possible. The only way to be free from this ignorance is to study God's word, (b) Be thankful for God's mercy. We should be thankful for the mercy of God because all of us stand greatly in need of mercy. We are all ignorant of much of our duty, and of how we should use our opportunities to discharge our responsi-

bilities to God. Were it not for the mercies of God upon us in our ignorance and indifference, all of us would be lost. Hence, we should be thankful to God always for the fact that he is merciful toward us. (c) Be forgiving toward others. Jesus set for us a wonderful example of

forgiving our enemies. Stephen followed this example to the letter. (Acts 7: 60.) It is not impossible for us today to exercise such a forgiving spirit toward those who are our enemies, but it is difficult for us to do so and requires considerable cultivation.

## Introduction

While Jesus was on the cross, he made seven different statements. (1) His first statement is that which is used as our Golden Text. This statement was addressed to God and was a prayer in behalf of those who were his enemies. (2) The second statement is the one made to the penitent thief. "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This also shows his love and mercy for the sinner, but this one was made toward one who had repented, while the former statement was made in behalf of those who were still impenitent. (3) The third statement is addressed to his mother and to John. He said to his mother, "Woman, behold, thy son!" And then he addressed himself to John and said, "Behold, thy mother!" This statement showed his concern for his mother and his confidence and

trust in John. (4) The fourth statement is one made to his Father when he said, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which is being interpreted, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (5) The fifth statement has to do with his own personal feeling. After being on the cross some hours he said, "I thirst." (6) This statement is his triumphant statement. He said, "It is finished." This he said in reference to his work of atonement in the behalf of the sinful world. (7) This last statement is directed to his heavenly Father when he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This is the order in which the statements are believed to have been made. The first three statements were made before the darkness set in, and the last four during the period of darkness.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Jesus Crucified on Golgotha (John 19: 7-22)

*He went out, bearing the cross for himself.* It was customary for the one to be crucified to carry his own cross to the place of execution. The other writers of the gospel tell us that Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the cross of Christ. (Mark 15: 21.) There is no contradiction between these statements. Jesus carried his cross as long as he was able to do so, and when his strength failed, Simon was entering the city and was compelled by the soldiers to bear the cross to the place of execution. In further proof that Jesus was unable to carry his cross all the distance, Mark tells us that "they bring him unto the place Golgotha." (Mark 15: 22.) The Greek word which is translated by our word "bring" is *phero* and means to carry. This word is used thirty-three times in the New Testament and in practically every place the idea of carrying some person or thing is inherent in the word. This word is used when

we are told that John the Baptist's head was brought on a platter to the daughter of Herodias, and when Jesus told his critics to bring him a penny, this word is used. So, we conclude that when Mark said "they bring him unto the place Golgotha," that they actually carried Jesus from the place where he was no longer able to bear the cross unto the place of execution.

*The place of a skull.* Where Jesus was crucified and why the place was named as it is are matters about which no one can be certain. Traditions differ as the exact spot of the crucifixion, and though some modern travelers seem to be determined in their own mind, yet others are as sure with reference to different spots. The exact place is unimportant. We do know, however, that it was outside the city. Our text tells us that the spot was "nigh to the city" and the writer of Hebrews tells us it was "without the gate." (Heb. 13: 12.)

*And Jesus in the midst.* This describes Jesus as being crucified be-



tween two thieves. Matthew tells us that the robbers reproached Jesus (Matt. 27: 44), while Luke tells us that one of the malefactors railed on him and that one of them asked Jesus to remember him when he came in his kingdom. This simply suggests that both of the thieves reproached Jesus for a time, but one of them came to believe in him as the Messiah and to expect him to establish the kingdom in spite of his crucifixion. Realizing this, the thief asked the Savior to remember him when he established his kingdom.

***Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*** This is the writing which Pilate had put on the cross. It was written in three languages, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Hebrew was the sacred language of the Jews and would be understood by all of them. Latin was the official language of the Romans, and Greek was the world language and would be read by all the foreigners in Jerusalem for the feast.

What *I have written I have written.* The Jews objected to the statement which Pilate had written on the cross. They wanted him to change it to read, "He said, I am king of the Jews." But Pilate had found his courage by this time and refused to make any change. This seems to have been Pilate's way of retaliating for the pressure which the Jews brought upon him to crucify Jesus because of his claim to be the Messiah.

## II. Incidents and Persons at the Cross

(John 19: 23-27.)

***The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus.*** Jesus was delivered to four soldiers, one of them a centurion, to be crucified. Pilate must have thought that the danger of insurrection or of mob violence was past since he delivered Jesus to only four soldiers for the work of crucifixion.

***Now the coat was without seam.*** We are told that Roman law allotted the clothing of men executed to the soldiers who did the work. The clothes of these three who were crucified at this time were divided into four parts, and they cast lots to see which soldier would get each part. For some reason, the coat of Jesus was worthy of special mention. This "coat" was an undergarment

which reached from the shoulder to the knees. It was usually made in two pieces which were fastened together on the shoulders, but Josephus says that this garment worn by the high priest was always woven in one piece. There are some who think that Jesus wore the type worn only by high priests to signify his priesthood, but since Jesus could not be a priest on earth and this seamless coat could hardly be a symbol of his spiritual priesthood, the idea seems to be without good foundation.

***That the scripture might be fulfilled.*** But this woven, seamless coat or tunic worn by our Lord served to call attention to another detail of prophecy fulfilled. These soldiers did not cast lots for this garment for the sole reason of fulfilling prophecy. In fact, they did not know at the time they were fulfilling prophecy, but John simply states that this casting of lots for the clothing of our Lord was in fulfillment of a prophecy of the Old Testament.

***There were standing by the cross.*** John names a number of women who followed Jesus and stood near enough the cross for Jesus to recognize and to converse with them. (1) The mother of Jesus. John does not name his mother, nor his mother's sister. It was a rule with John not to name those who were related to him. We would expect the mother of Jesus to stay with him to the end. But in her faithfulness to him we have an unusually strong proof that he was begotten by the Holy Spirit. He was accused of falsifying when he claimed to be the Son of God, begotten by the Father. Mary was the only other human being on earth who was in position to know with absolute certainty whether Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit or by some man. It is unthinkable that Mary would see her son charged with falsifying and suffer death on account of it when she could have told the truth and saved him from such a horrible death. The fact that Mary did not change her story as to the father of her son, in spite of the fact that she knew he would be crucified, is one of the strongest proofs possible of his miraculous conception. (2) His mother's sister. By a comparison of Matt. 27: 56 and Mark 15: 40, this woman is found to be Salome, the wife of Zebedee. (3) Mary the

wife of Clopas. By a comparison of the same passages of scripture, this woman is seen to be the mother of James and Joseph, and the wife of Alphaeus, which is another form of the word Clopas. (4) Mary Magdalene. This is the woman from whom seven demons were driven and whom people have mistakenly thought to be the sinful woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears.

**Woman, behold thy son! . . . behold, thy mother!** These are the statements made to his mother and to John, the writer of this gospel. Though Mary had four other sons, Jesus preferred that she would be in the keeping of John his beloved disciple than to be in the care of her own sons who were unbelievers. Tradition tells us that she lived with John to the day of her death, but since the Bible does not mention Mary after Pentecost, we have no way of knowing whether she continued to live with John or lived with one of her own sons.

### III. Last Words and Death of Jesus

(John 19: 28-30)

**Knowing that all things are now finished.** Jesus retained his mental power to the very end. When he was first nailed to the cross, he was offered wine mingled with gall to drink. But when he had tasted it, he would not drink. This mixture was intended to dull his sense of pain and to relieve him partially of so much suffering. Jesus refused to drink this mixture because it was necessary that he suffer for the sins of the world. He might as well have evaded the cross entirely as to evade the suffering of the cross.

**I thirst.** When Jesus expressed a feeling of thirst, he was given vinegar to drink. This he took because it had no tendency to stupefy or make him insensible of the pain of the cross. John tells us that this was said "that the scripture might be accomplished." There are some who foolishly claim that Jesus studied the prophecies to see what would be expected of the Messiah and that he

studiously set about doing those things which the prophets predicted the Messiah would do. In this way critics seek to account for the fact that he fulfilled so many details of prophecy. But the statement "that the scripture might be accomplished" or fulfilled, does not imply that Jesus did a certain thing or said certain words solely for the purpose of fulfilling prophecy. If these words must be taken to mean such, why is it said that the Roman soldiers cast lots for his clothing "that the scripture might be fulfilled"? Certainly these soldiers had not studied the Jewish prophecies to see what would happen to the Messiah, and certainly they did not plan to cast lots for his clothing for the purpose of fulfilling this prophecy. So, the statement "that the scripture might be fulfilled" does not mean that the person saying a word or doing a deed was intentionally and consciously fulfilling prophecy. But the fact that so many detailed and seemingly insignificant things were predicted with reference to the life of Jesus, and since every one of these was fulfilled as predicted, we have abundant proof of the inspiration of the prophets, as well as unanswerable proof that Jesus is the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke.

**It is finished.** This is the sixth statement of Jesus on the cross, and it signifies that Jesus knew he had finished the work which his Father gave him to do; the work of making atonement for the sins of the world was now finished. The work of propitiation had been accomplished; the ransom for souls held captive by sin had been paid. The offering of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world had been made without the gate. Jesus was now ready to change the scene of his activities; he was now ready to enter into that holy place not made with hands, there to offer his blood in the most holy place and to begin his work of pleading the merits of that shed blood for the forgiveness of the sins of his people.

### Lessons to Learn

1. People are prone to become idolatrous, so it is good that no one knows positively where Jesus was crucified. And it is good that neither the cross on which he died was pre-

served, or that the clothing fell into the hands of his friends. If these things had been preserved, people might have worshiped them.

2. Though Jesus was thoughtful of

his mother and provided for her welfare in his last hour, he did not exalt her above other women or make her a goddess through whom his people may obtain heavenly favors.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

In what words did Jesus demonstrate his love for humanity?

How is the mercy of God suggested in these words?

What is suggested here concerning the power of prayer?

Can you show that the ignorance of the Lord's enemies was self-imposed?

Can you give proof that one is not excused on account of ignorance?

How can we be free from the sins of ignorance?

For what attribute of God should we be especially thankful?

What should this example of the Lord cause us to do?

#### Introduction

How many statements did Jesus utter while on the cross?

How many were made before darkness came? and during the period of darkness?

What statement showed his human love and trust?

What statement was made with reference to his work of atonement?

Which statements showed his great love for sinners?

What was his statement of triumph?

#### Jesus Crucified on Golgotha

What did custom demand concerning carrying the cross to the place of execution?

Who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus?

3. Jesus did not avoid suffering to the full the shame and pain of the cross. Neither should we avoid suffering hardship and persecution which true discipleship brings upon us.

Can you show that Jesus was unable to carry his cross all the distance?

What do you know of the place where Jesus was crucified?

What is said of those who were crucified with Jesus?

What did Pilate have written on the cross of Jesus?

What request did the Jews make of Pilate with reference to the writing?

#### Incidents and Persons at the Cross

How many soldiers did the work of crucifixion?

What is said about the coat which Jesus wore?

Did the soldiers know they were fulfilling prophecy when they cast lots?

Can you name and identify four women standing by the cross?

What proof do we have in this lesson of the miraculous conception of Jesus?

To whom did Jesus commit the care of his mother? and why?

What does tradition say with reference to John's care of Mary?

#### Last Words and Death of Jesus

What did Jesus refuse to drink? and why?

What drink did Jesus accept? and why?

Does the statement "that the scripture might be accomplished" always imply studied and intentional fulfillment of scripture?

Why did the writers of the gospels record so many details of fulfilled prophecies?

To what did Jesus refer when he said, "It is finished"?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XIII—September 29, 1957

# THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

### Lesson Text

#### John 20: 1-18

1 Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Mary Mag-da-le-ne early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.

2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Si'-mon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Je'-sus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb.

4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb;

5 And stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

6 Si'-mon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying,

7 And the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

12 And she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Je'-sus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth

Je'-sus standing, and knew not that it was Je'-sus.

15 Je'-sus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Je'-sus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rab-bo'-ni; which is to say, Teacher.

17 Je'-sus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

18 Mary Mag-da-le'-ne cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and *that* he had said these things unto her.

**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.**—John 20: 19-30.

### Daily Bible Readings

September 23. M.....Prophecy of the Resurrection (Psalm 16)  
 September 24. T.....Jesus Anticipated His Resurrection (Matt. 16: 21-28)  
 September 25. W.....Jesus Has Power Over His Life (John 10: 11-18)  
 September 26. T.....Angels Announce the Resurrection (Matt. 28: 1-10)  
 September 27. F.....Peter Preaches the Resurrection (Acts 2: 22-36)  
 September 28. S.....Jesus Raised for Our Justification (Rom. 4: 16-25)  
 September 29. S.....Christ's Resurrection Proof of Ours (1 Cor. 15: 12-28)

**Time.**—A.D. 30.

**Place.**—Jerusalem.

**Persons.**—Jesus, Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **He is risen,** (a) For our justification. Paul says that Jesus was raised for our justification. (Rom. 4: 25.) We are also taught that his death was for our justification. (Rom. 5: 9.) Since Jesus had to offer in heaven the blood which he shed in his death in order that his work of atonement might be completed, it follows that it was necessary for him to be raised from the dead in order to complete the work of atonement. Hence, we can believe that his resurrection was essential to our justification, (b) To triumph over Satan. We are taught that through death Jesus brought to naught "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2: 14.) In order to complete his victory over Satan, it was necessary for Jesus to go into that realm over

which Satan presided and gain the victory. If he remained in the hands of Satan, he would fail; but if he came back out of that realm victorious over Satan, he had succeeded. Hence, his resurrection is the proof of his overcoming Satan. He expresses it as going into the house of the strong man to bind him. (Matt. 12: 28-30.) (c) To sit on David's throne. Our Lord was promised the throne of his father David. (Luke 1: 32.) Peter said that David, being a prophet and knowing God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins he would set one on his throne, foresaw the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2: 29ff.) Since his kingdom is not of this world, his throne is not to be in this world. Since it was necessary for him to die, it was also necessary for

him to be raised from the dead in order that he might establish that kingdom which was not of this world and sit on that throne which is not in this world.

2. **Come, see.** (a) The evidence of an open tomb. The angel invited the women to come, and see and examine the open, or empty, tomb as evidence of the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. People have been invited ever since to behold the empty tomb as proof that Jesus arose from the dead. No one has been able to explain that empty tomb except by admission that Jesus arose from the grave, (b) The evidence of changed disciples. When Jesus was crucified, the disciples lost hope. They even talked of going back to their fishing, but Peter says that they were begotten again "unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1: 3.) (c) Evidence of the conversion of Saul. No one has been able to give a sensible explanation of the great change that came to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus without admitting that he saw and talked with Jesus. If he saw Jesus on the Damascus road, the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead can no longer be doubted.

3. **Our belief,** (a) Assurance that he is God's Son. Paul tells us that

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1:4.) Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and equal with the Father. He was condemned and crucified because he made this claim. When God raised him from the dead, God endorsed and confirmed as true the claims that Jesus made. If those claims were not true, God would not have endorsed them by raising him from the dead. Hence, we are safe in believing that Jesus is God's Son. (b) Essential to salvation. Paul tells us that if "thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10: 9.) In this we are plainly told that if we wish to be saved we must believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, (c) Assurance of our own resurrection. Paul teaches us that our hope of a resurrection from the grave is based on the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the first fruits and then they that belong to Christ are to be raised at his coming. (1 Cor. 15: 12-15, 20ff.) If God could raise Jesus from the dead, he can raise all of us from the dead. He did raise Jesus from the dead; therefore, we have hope that we shall be raised from the dead at his coming.

## Introduction

Commenting on the explanation made by the Jews for the empty tomb, Adam Clarke says, "This was as absurd as it was false. On the one hand, the terror of the disciples, the smallness of their number (only eleven); and their almost total want of faith; on the other, the great danger of such a bold enterprise, the number of armed men who guarded the tomb, the authority of Pilate and of the Sanhedrin, must render such as imposture as this utterly devoid of credit. . . . Here is a whole heap of absurdities. 1st. Is it likely that so many men would fall asleep, in the open air at once? 2dly. Is it at all probable that a Roman guard should be found off their watch, much less asleep, when it was instant death

according to the Roman military laws, to be found in this state? 3dly. Could they be so sound asleep as not to awake with all the noise as must necessarily be made by removing the great stone, and taking away the body? 4thly. Is it at all likely that these disciples could have had time sufficient to do all this, and to come and return without being perceived by any person? And 5thly, if they were asleep, how could they possibly know that it was the disciples that stole him, or indeed that any person or persons stole him?—For being *asleep*, they could see no person. From their own testimony, therefore, the resurrection may be as fully proved as the theft."

## Exposition of the Text

I. **Peter and John Learn of the Resurrection** (John 20: 1-10)  
*Now on the first day of the week.*

We are told that Mary Magdalene came on the first day of the week to bring spices to the grave. (Luke 24:

1.) We also learn from other accounts that Mary was not alone, that other women came with her. John tells us that it was still dark when these women came to the tomb, while other writers use such expressions as "when the sabbath was past," and "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," and "at early dawn." So we conclude that these women came at that period when it was just light enough to see their way and yet still dark enough to make things obscure. John tells us that when the women arrived, they saw that the stone at the door of the tomb had been taken away. Incidentally, John makes no mention of closing the tomb with a stone, but other accounts do make mention of it. Thus we see how the various accounts fill in the details of the story.

*Cometh to Simon Peter..* As soon as the women found that the stone had been taken away from the tomb, Mary ran to Simon Peter, and "to the other disciple whom Jesus loved." This other disciple was John, the writer of this Gospel. While Mary was going to tell Peter and John that the stone was rolled away, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel, referring to the other women who remained near the tomb. Matthew says that an angel engaged these women in conversation, telling them that Jesus was now alive and not to be found among the dead, and reminded them of his promise to meet the disciples in Galilee. It was to these women and by these two men in dazzling apparel that the language of our golden text was spoken.

*They ran both together.* John tells us that when Mary told them of the stone being rolled from before the tomb that he and Peter both ran toward the tomb. But being younger, John outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first. John says that he stooped down and looked into the tomb, while Peter arrived and ran on into the tomb before John.

*He beholdeth the linen cloths lying.* John takes care to tell us of the good order in which things were seen to be when he entered the tomb. The cloths of linen which were used to wrap the body of Jesus when it was placed in the tomb were lying in orderly fashion, and the napkin which was put upon the head of

Jesus, was rolled up and put in a place by itself. If thieves took the body while Roman soldiers slept outside nearby, they would most certainly not have taken time to take the linen cloths from around the body of Jesus, nor would they have taken the time to roll up in orderly fashion the napkin which was about his face. To the apostle John this was evidence of the fact that Jesus arose from the dead and proof that his body was not stolen away as the Jews would have people believe. That the orderly condition in which the linen cloths and the napkins were found convinced John of the resurrection is proved by this following statement: "Then entered in therefore the other disciples also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed." Since he says that he saw and believed, we must conclude that he saw the things which he mentioned. And the things he mentioned are the orderly condition of the linen cloths and the napkin which was put about the head of Jesus. Since these are the only things mentioned, and John says that the things he saw caused him to believe, we conclude that these are the things which caused John to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Of course, John does not mean to say that this is all the evidence he ever had of the resurrection of Jesus. The appearances of Jesus during the days following confirmed this first belief, but the things John saw in the tomb were sufficient to cause him to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead.

*For as yet they knew not the scripture.* John says that up until the time of entering the tomb he and Peter did not understand the meaning of the scriptures which foretold the resurrection of the Messiah. Neither did they understand Jesus when he told them in plain words that he must "be killed, and the third day be raised up." (Matt. 16: 21b.) When Jesus made that statement, Peter began to rebuke him, telling him that such should never happen to him. But Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling block to me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." But when John saw the evidence of an empty, orderly tomb which forced him to

believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead, hitherto dark, obscure scriptures began to become plain to him. "Here, then, was the first belief and the first believer in the resurrection; and it is important to note that the scripture did not suggest the fact, but the facts illumined the scripture. Psalm 16: 10 and Isa. 53: 10, and many other passages, set forth the resurrection of our Lord; his own words, too, had plainly foretold it, yet among the disciples it was so much beyond all expectation that the prophecies had no meaning until made clear by the event itself. Yet these are the men whom the Jews accused of inventing the story of a resurrection!" (The Fourfold Gospel.)

## II. Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

(John 20: 11-18)

*But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping.* The order of events seems to be the following. Mary, with other women, came at early dawn to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away, and Mary went at once to tell Peter and John. The other women lingered and talked with the angels, but they finished their conversation with the angels and went away before Peter and John arrived. Then Peter and John came; Peter ran in first and John followed him. No doubt, they discussed things hurriedly, and soon left. Then Mary Magdalene following as swiftly as she could, came back to the tomb, but evidently Peter and John left before she arrived this second time. On this second arrival at the tomb she "stopped and looked into the tomb." It seems that she had not taken time to look thus carefully into the tomb on her first arrival, but seeing that the stone had been taken away from the door of tomb, she was alarmed and hurried away to tell the Lord's disciples.

*She beholdeth two angels.* The angels who talked with the other women, presumably these same two angels, stood by the women outside the tomb to talk with them, but now the angels are inside the tomb, one sitting where the feet of Jesus had been, the other sitting where his head lay.

*Woman, why weepest thou?* This is the question which the angels directed to Mary as she looked into the

tomb. She explained that she was weeping because the Lord had been taken away and she did not know where he had been placed. The fact that she was in the tomb of her Lord would likely be sufficient to cause her to weep, but one has suggested that a special reason for her weeping at this time was that she had been "deprived of the poor privilege of embalming the body 'of her Lord which seemed a veritable sorrow's crown of sorrow.'"

*And beholdeth Jesus standing.*

John says that as she thus talked with the angels, she turned herself back and beheld Jesus standing by her. But perhaps on account of her tears she did not recognize him at the moment. Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Still Mary did not recognize the Lord. Undoubtedly he must have used such a tone or expression as she would not readily recognize. If Jesus did not permit his disciples to recognize him immediately (Luke 24: 16), we should not be surprised that he prevented Mary's recognition of him at first sight, and that he did not permit her to recognize his voice at first hearing.

*Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* Jesus used that familiar tone of voice which enabled Mary to recognize him. Immediately she turned herself and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni." This word, John explains, means "teacher." It was one of the titles given to Jewish teachers. This title was given under three forms: (a) *rab*, or master—the lowest degree of honor, (b) *Rabbi*, my master—a title of higher dignity, (c) *Rabboni*, my great master—the master—the most honorable of all. This title, among the Jews, was only given to seven persons, all persons of great eminence. As given by Mary to the Savior, it was at once an expression of her joy, and an acknowledgment of him as her Lord and master. It is not improbable that she, being filled with joy, was about to cast herself at his feet." (Barnes.)

*Touch me not.* This passage has given rise to considerable discussion as to its meaning. Did Jesus mean that he must not be touched by human hands before he ascended to his Father? If this is what he meant, how could he tell Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and see my

hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." (John 20: 27.) Are we to conclude that Jesus ascended to the Father between the time he talked to Mary and the time he talked to Thomas? Such a conclusion is unwarranted and unnecessary. Jesus simply meant that it was more important that Mary go and tell his disciples than it was for her to remain there and satisfy herself that he had actually arisen from the dead. He assured her that he was not yet ascended, that he would be about for some time yet, and that she would have ample opportunity of being certain that he had risen from the dead.

*I ascend unto my Father and your Father.* Jesus did not mean that he was immediately to ascend unto the Father, for it was yet forty days until that ascension. Brother McGarvey points out the fact that since Jesus did not say our Father," but instead said "my Father and your Father," that there is a difference between his relation to God and our relation to God. But regardless of the fact that there is a difference in these relationships, it still remains that his heavenly Father is our heavenly Father, and that the God of Jesus Christ is our God. There is no possibility of human exaltation being expressed in clearer language than this.

### Lessons to Learn

1. We should never cease to rejoice in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. Nor should we ever lose an opportunity to demonstrate our joy in that event. We are given a day in each week in which to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. To fail to celebrate it in God's appointed way is to show a lack of appreciation for that great event.

2. We have more solid evidence of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ than we have of the life of many great men of history and many

great events of history which we accept without question. Since we accept these great men and events of history on less evidence than we have of the resurrection, we certainly should be willing to accept the resurrection as a fact.

3. If one can believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, he can believe any miracle. He who can receive the greatest miracle can accept all of less magnitude. Hence, we are required to accept this miracle as a fact in order to be saved.

### Questions for the Class

What is the lesson topic?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons.

#### Golden Text Explained

Why was the resurrection of Jesus necessary for our justification?

Why was his resurrection necessary to complete his work against Satan?

State and discuss three evidences of the resurrection as suggested in our lesson.

What assurance did God give us that Jesus is his Son?

Can you prove that belief in the resurrection of Jesus is essential to our salvation?

How does the resurrection of Jesus give us hope of being raised from the dead?

#### Introduction

What explanation did the Jews make of the empty tomb?

State and discuss several reasons why this claim is absurd.

What does this suggest with reference to the sincerity of the Jewish leaders?

#### Peter and John Learn of the Resurrection

Discuss the terms used by different writers concerning the time the women came to the tomb.

Who was first at the tomb? and to whom did Mary carry the message of the resurrection?

Who was first to enter the empty tomb?

What did John see in the tomb which caused him to believe in the resurrection of Jesus?

What evidence did the Old Testament afford the disciples of the resurrection of Jesus?

What evidence did Jesus give his disciples that he would rise from the dead?

Did they expect the resurrection on account of this evidence? or did they understand the evidence because they were convinced of the fact of the resurrection?

#### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Can you give the order of events as suggested in our lesson?

What did Mary see in the tomb?

Why did Mary not recognize the voice of Jesus when he first spoke to her?

When Mary recognized Jesus, how did she address him?

Give three titles the Jews used for their teachers and their meanings.

What did Jesus mean when he told Mary not to touch him?

Why did Jesus say "My Father and your Father" instead of "Our Father"?

How does this suggest the exaltation of humanity?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?





## FOURTH QUARTER

### JOHN, AND SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS

AIM.—To study in detail numerous selections from the writings of John, the disciple "whom Jesus loved" and to drink deeply from the refreshing fountain of truth which so freely flowed from his facile pen.

Lesson I—October 6, 1957

### WALKING IN THE LIGHT

#### Lesson Text

#### 1 John 1: 1-10

1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life

2 (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);

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Je'-sus Christ:

4 And these things we write, that our joy may be made full.

5 And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce

unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Je'-sus his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1: 5b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 1: 1-17.

#### Daily

September 30. M.

October 1. T.....

October 2. W.

October 3. T.

October 4. F.

October 5. S.

October 6. S.....

TIME.—A.D. 85-90.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and the saints.

#### Bible Readings

Walking Honestly (Rom. 13: 1-13)

Walking Worthily (Col. 1: 1-10)

Walking in the Light (John 12: 25, 26)

Light in a Dark Place (2 Pet. 1: 19-21)

Walking in Faith (2 Cor. 5: 1-7)

Walking in Wisdom (Col. 4: 1-5)

Walking in Newness of Life (Rom. 6: 1-6)

#### Golden Text Explained

1. **God is light,** (a) Intellectual nature. When John tells us that "God is love," he is describing the moral nature of God, and that statement means more than the simple fact that God loves his creatures. And when the same writer tells us "God is light," he is describing the intellectual nature of God. He is

omniscient, all-wise. There is nothing beyond the knowledge of God: there is nothing too difficult for him to know, nor is there anything so insignificant that it escapes his knowledge. Jesus says he even knows the number of the hairs on our heads. (Luke 12: 7.) If such insignificant things as this cannot escape the

knowledge of God, nothing from the beginning to end can escape his knowledge, (b) Author of light. If John had said, "God is a light," that would have meant that he is one among many lights of the world. If John had said "God is the light," that would have meant that God is the only light in the world, but John said neither of these. He said, "God is light," meaning that God is the source, the author, of all light, physical, moral, and spiritual. The sun and all the luminous bodies of heaven derive their light from God, the author of light, and all the great lights in the moral and spiritual world derive their light from God. (c) Dwells in light. Paul tells us that God dwells in light unapproachable. (1 Tim. 6: 16.) And we are told that in heaven there will be no need for the light of sun or moon "for the Lord God shall give them light." (Rev. 22: 5.)

2. **Light versus darkness,** (a) Knowledge—ignorance. Light has always been used as an emblem to represent knowledge while darkness has been used to represent ignorance. Since God is light, it is suggested that God is all-wise; and since there is no darkness at all in him, we conclude that he is not characterized by ignorance of anything to any degree. He has all knowledge that can be possessed or is of such nature as to be possessed by an intelligent being, (b) Good—evil. Light has been used to represent that which is good and darkness is used to represent that which is evil. He that walks in the light does good, while he that walks in darkness does evil. God is characterized by perfect goodness and in him is no evil at all. (c) Christ—Satan.

The light represents the knowledge and character of Christ, while darkness represents the character and activities of Satan. Christ is the prince of light and life, and Satan is the prince of the powers of darkness. To be delivered from the power of darkness is to be delivered from ignorance and evil and from Satan, and to be translated into the kingdom of God's Son and made to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light is to gain a knowledge of God, live a life that is good, and to have fellowship and communion with Christ.

3. **Lessons for us.** (a) Safety is found in the light. If one is in new territory, walking in darkness, he feels uncertain and unsafe; but if light floods his pathway, he is not uncertain or unsafe even though in strange territory. So there is safety in light and uncertainty and danger in darkness. There is safety in the light of God's word, but there is danger in the darkness of error and human philosophy, (b) We have the right to choose. Men have the right and power to choose between light and darkness. God is light, and we may choose to walk in his light. Satan is darkness, and we have the power to choose to walk in the dark with him. (c) We choose what we appreciate and prefer. Those who walk in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and evil and under the dominion of Satan do so, not because they are compelled to do it, but because they choose to walk there. Those who walk in the light and enjoy the blessings of the knowledge of God and fellowship of Jesus Christ, do so because they appreciate these things and prefer them to the fellowship of Satan.

## Introduction

As we are beginning the study of the epistles of John, the writer recommends that the reader use "A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles," Vol. 7, by Guy N. Woods. This is a splendid commentary and deals with the epistles in more detail than we can possibly deal with them in this Annual Lesson Commentary. It will be a great help, especially to teachers of classes and may be ordered from the Gospel Advocate Company.

This epistle was written by John the apostle, a son of Zebedee and a cousin of our Lord. Polycarp, said to be one of John's pupils, said that John wrote the epistle, and many of the early church fathers attributed this epistle to John. And the earliest translation of the New Testament, called the Peshito, the Syriac version, included this epistle and attributed it to John. John is known to have lived in Ephesus in the latter part of his life, and so the epistle is

said to have been written from Ephesus. The type of material contained in the epistle and the subjects discussed tend to prove that the epis-

tle was written in the latter part of the first century, and so the date is given by scholars anywhere from A.D. 80 to 90.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Evidence Concerning the Word (1

John 1: 1-4)

*That which was from the beginning.* Whether "the beginning" refers to eternity as in Gen. 1: 1 and John 1: 1, or whether it refers to the time the Word became flesh and could be heard and seen and handled by John is a matter on which scholars differ. Barnes inclines to think it refers to the latter. This writer prefers to make it refer to the eternal existence of the Word. John wishes his readers to know that he has heard, seen, and handled that "which was from the beginning," that which existed from all eternity. He was not interested in telling his readers that he had heard, seen, and handled Jesus of Nazareth, but he was intensely interested in convincing his readers that the Word which in the beginning was with God and was God, that Word which became flesh and dwelt among us, that eternal *Logos* is that which became a human being and which John had heard, seen, and handled.

*That which we have heard.* John begins a series of evidences which get stronger with the addition of each one. He first says he *heard* that Word which was in the beginning. Hearing does not imply nearness and intimacy. One may hear from a distance. (2) That which we have seen with our eyes. John progresses from hearing to seeing, but this does not imply the nearness nor intimacy that handling with the hands implies. (3) That which we beheld. Though seeing is included in beholding, there is an additional idea in the idea of beholding. One might see that which he does not care to see, that in which he has no interest; but one does not behold or continue to look upon that in which he has no interest. The Greek word here used suggests the idea of continued looking upon, and the idea of seeing with interest. (4) And which our hands handled. This expression brings the object even nearer than the beholding. One might behold that which is quite a

distance from him, but one does not handle with his hands that which is a great distance from him. Also, handling denotes inspection. These are the sources of John's information concerning the Word of life which was from the beginning. On these things rests John's belief in Jesus Christ. His senses of hearing, seeing, and touching testify to the coming of the Christ, and in addition to that, his sense of perception (beholding) also serves as a source of information and as the ground of his belief in Jesus as the Word made flesh.

*Concerning the Word of life.* The term "Word of life" does not mean a discourse that promises life, or that tends to produce spiritual life. The term refers to a person. One could not handle with his hands a discourse, but John says he handled "the Word of life." So the term is used as John used it in the first verse of his Gospel.

*The life was manifested.* This word which was the life was manifested in his incarnation. The Word was made flesh, and John says that he was that eternal life which was in the beginning with the Father, but which in our time has been manifested to us in the flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

*That ye also may have fellowship with us.* Here John states the purpose of writing this epistle. He declares that he had seen and heard and handled the Word which in the beginning was God, but had been manifested now unto us, and that he declares this unto us that we may have fellowship with him. Then he further describes this fellowship as being a fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. If the purpose of John's writing was to declare his knowledge concerning the Word of life that we might have fellowship with the Father and the Son, it follows that our study of John's writing is essential to our enjoyment of that fellowship with the Father and the Son.

## II. Fellowship and Cleansing in the Light (1 John 1: 5-7)

*And this is the message.* When the Word of life which was from the beginning was manifested in the flesh, he brought a message which John says he heard and now declares to his readers. The gist of that message is "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, and he so fully and completely revealed the Father that he could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14: 9.) In this perfect revelation of God, Jesus claimed to be light and have no darkness at all. He challenged his enemies to convict him of even one sin.

*If we say we have fellowship with him.* To have fellowship with God is to be partners with God, to share the life of God, or to live like God. Since God is light and in him is no darkness, if we have fellowship with him we will be light in the Lord. (Eph. 5: 8.) And we will refrain from doing anything that is characteristic of darkness.

*And walk in darkness.* John supposes an individual who affirms that he has fellowship with God, but at the same time he walks in darkness. John affirms that one who so professes and so walks, utters a lie and is not doing the truth. To walk in darkness is to live contrary to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12.) From this we learn that one who follows Jesus in his teaching and example will not walk in darkness. The one who walks in darkness, therefore, does not follow the life and teaching of Jesus. But a distinction must be kept in mind here. John does not mean to say that the one who professes fellowship with God and occasionally through ignorance and weakness does something wrong, lies and does not tell the truth. If this were the case, none of us could truthfully claim to have fellowship with God. The tense of the Greek verb translated "walk" is such as to indicate a continuing walk. If one professes to have fellowship with God and continues to walk in darkness, contrary to the teaching and example

of Christ, he falsifies concerning his fellowship and does not the truth.

*But if we walk in the light.* Here John supposes another case. If one walks in the light as God is in the light, he has certain blessings. Again, the word "walk" is the present active subjunctive of the Greek verb and means to continue or to keep on walking. Again, we must say that this does not rule out the possibility of an occasional error on account of ignorance or weakness. But it does denote the regular course of life of the individual.

*We have fellowship one with another.* The blessings which come to those who walk in the light are said to be two. (1) We have fellowship one with another. This fellowship is both with God and with the children of God. One cannot have fellowship with God and refuse to have fellowship with the children of God. Nor can one have fellowship with the children of God without being in fellowship with God. (2) The blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. This is the second blessing promised to those who walk in the light. The modernist declares that the blood of Jesus has no more to do with the forgiveness of our sins than the blood of the martyrs, but John declares that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. He does not teach that our contemplation of the suffering of Christ for his cause will result in our living a purer life. He does not say that thinking on the death of Christ will cause us to follow more closely the example of Christ. While such may be true, that is not John's point here. He says that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin. By this he means that we are forgiven our sins on account of the merit of the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.

## III. Confession and Forgiveness of Sins (1 John 1: 8-10)

*If we say that we have no sin.* Some profess to see a difference in meaning between this statement and the statement in verse 10. They try to use this verse 8 to refer to the principle of sin, or what some prefer to call "the Adamic sin" in every child of Adam. But this cannot be since John is talking of the saints who walk in the light, have fellowship with one another, and who have

been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. John simply means to say that none of us can deny that we are sinners. There are some in our generation who profess to have been enabled by the baptism of the Holy Spirit to live without sin. They are certainly included in this statement. John says that those who claim to be without sin, or to live above sin are self-deceived and have no truth in them.

*If we confess our sins.* As proof of the fact that this language is addressed to the children of God, we offer this statement. If this statement were addressed to those who are not the children of God, something more and different from confession would be demanded as the condition of forgiveness. People were commanded to believe the gospel, to repent of their sins, to confess Jesus Christ, and to be baptized for the remission of their sins. In order for the alien sinner to obtain remission of sins, he must confess Jesus as Christ the Lord. (Rom. 10: 9.) But for the erring child of God to obtain remission of sins, he must confess his sins. (James 5: 16.) Since this verse promises forgiveness of sins upon the condition of confession of sins, we conclude that this is addressed to children of God. We must therefore conclude that John means to teach that children of God cannot and do not live above sin. We are also to conclude that these sins of

which we are daily guilty are of such nature that God will forgive us when we confess them to him and ask for forgiveness.

*He is faithful and righteous to forgive.* John assures us of the faithfulness and righteousness of God in forgiving us our sins. The faithfulness of God suggests that he will keep his promises; he can be depended on to do what he has promised to do. The righteousness here refers to the attributes of God and assures us that he will do that which is proper and right and that which is becoming in a being of such nature as he is described in the Bible to be. To forgive is to pardon us of our transgressions. This is an act which takes place in the mind of God. To cleanse us from unrighteousness describes that which takes place within us. To forgive means to treat us as if we had not sinned, to justify us; but to cleanse means to restore us to our former condition spiritually.

*If we say that we have not sinned.* This refers to each of the several activities of one's life. If one affirms that no single activity of his life has been wrong or sinful, he makes God a liar. God has said that all have sinned and that there is none righteous. (Rom. 3: 10.) When one affirms that he has not sinned, he affirms the opposite of what God affirms with reference to each of us.

## Lessons to Learn

1. Certain religious sects denied the reality of the body of Christ, claiming it was an illusion or temporary provision like that of the angels who visited Abraham. John says he handled the body of Christ sufficiently to know its reality.

2. Going beyond the light of God's word denies us the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. Membership in a religious denomination is beyond the light of God's word since that word does not teach us to join de-

nominations. So joining such religious denominations deprives one of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ.

3. Pride leads to a denial of sin, but humility leads to a confession of one's sins. Therefore, pride leads to destruction, but humility leads to salvation. "Humble ourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5: 6.)

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What is said of the intellectual nature of God?

What is said of the relationship between God and light?

State and discuss three contrasts suggested by light and darkness.

Can you show that safety is found only in the light of God's word?

What is said of our right to choose between light and darkness?  
What influences our choice between light and darkness?

#### Introduction

What do you know of the writer of this epistle we are studying?  
What evidence do we have that John the apostle is the author?  
What evidence do we have that this epistle was written from Ephesus?  
What is said about the date of this epistle?

#### Evidence Concerning the Word

To what does "the beginning" refer?  
What series of evidences does John offer for his faith in Jesus?  
Distinguish between hearing, seeing and beholding as pertains to evidence.  
What is demoted by handling? and why is this the best evidence?  
What is the meaning of the term "Word of life"?  
How and when was the Word of life manifested?  
What does John say was his purpose in writing this epistle?  
With whom is this fellowship? and under what conditions may it be enjoyed?

#### Fellowship and Cleansing in the Light

What is the message which the Word of life brought?  
In whom was this message perfectly demonstrated?  
What is implied in our having fellowship with God?  
What is said of those who claim fellowship with God, but walk in darkness?  
What idea is implied in the word "walk"?  
Does walking in the light rule out the possibility of occasional error?  
What blessings are promised those who walk in the light?

#### Confession and Forgiveness of Sins

What is meant by sin in this text?  
What proof do we have in this text that none of us can live without sin?  
On what condition are we promised the forgiveness of our sins?  
On what conditions is the alien sinner promised forgiveness of sins?  
What is meant by God's faithfulness? and his righteousness?  
What is the text of full forgiveness?  
What is the consequence of denying that we have sinned?  
What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson II—October 13, 1957

# JESUS OUR ADVOCATE

### Lesson Text

1 John 2: 1-11

1 My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Je'-sus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

3 And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him:

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

7 Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard.

8 Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Golden Text.—*"To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3: 8b.)

Devotional Reading.—1 John 2: 12-17.

### Daily Bible Readings

October 7. M..... Christ Our Priest (Heb. 9: 11-15)  
October 8. T..... Christ Our Prophet (Acts 3: 22-26)  
October 9. W..... Christ Our King (Isa. 9: 1-6)  
October 10. T..... Christ Our Intercessor (Heb. 7: 18-25)

October 11. F. Christ Our Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5: 1-4)  
 October 12. S. Christ Our Righteousness (Jer. 23: 1-6)  
 October 13. S. Christ Our Savior (1 Tim. 2: 1-3)

TIME.—A.D. 85-90.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and the saints.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Son of God manifested. (a)

Previous existence. The statement of our text implies that the Son of God had a previous existence and that he was manifested here on earth for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. And this agrees with Paul's statement that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." (2 Cor. 8: 9.) Our Lord was never rich in this life. Hence, he must have existed previous to this life on earth, (b) Became flesh. In his gospel, John tells us that the Word was in the beginning with God, but that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1: 1, 2, 14.) The expression "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" and the expression "the Son of God was manifested" both mean exactly the same thing. These are merely different ways to say that the second person of the Godhead left heaven and came to earth to take upon himself our nature that through death he might destroy the devil, (c) Sharer in flesh and blood. Another writer of the New Testament expresses this idea in these words, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2: 14.)

### 2. Purpose of manifestation. (a)

To give his life a ransom. Jesus himself said "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.) From this we conclude that the Son of God knew the purposes of God before he left heaven and that he fully agreed in these purposes and came with the intention of doing his part to work out the purposes of God on earth, (b) Destroy the works of the devil. The devil began his work with humanity when he tempted

Eve. He led her and Adam to sin, and every evil consequence that follows, not only their sin, but every sin that has ever been committed may be looked upon as the work of the devil. Not only sin and its evil consequences are the works of the devil, but the plans and purposes of the devil to rebel against God and to lead humanity in that rebellion against God must be destroyed, (c) Deliver from the fear of death. We are told that Jesus partook of flesh and blood in order that he through death "might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2: 15.) Since death entered the world by sin (Rom. 5: 12), we conclude that death is a work of the devil. Paul says that death is the last enemy that is to be destroyed. (1 Cor. 15: 26.) So Jesus came to destroy death and to deliver from the fear and bondage of death all those held therein.

3. Means used, (a) Spiritual versus carnal. Since this is a spiritual warfare in which our Lord is engaged with the devil, he uses spiritual means to accomplish his purposes instead of carnal means. This being true, Jesus did not establish a temporal, earthly kingdom. He raised no army; he outfitted his people with no carnal weapons and does not intend for them to resort to carnal means to accomplish his purpose on earth. (b) The sword of the Spirit. In his personal encounter with the devil, Jesus used the word of God, and he teaches us that we are to use the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" in doing our work for him. (c) Adapted to our use. The means which our Lord used and intends for us to use in destroying the works of the devil are adapted to our use. First, we are citizens of an earthly government and could not therefore be citizens in another earthly kingdom. Next, we would not be allowed to use car-



nal weapons to accomplish the Lord's purposes, even if such could be done, without being continually in conflict with our earthly government. But since the Lord's kingdom, purposes,

and instruments are, all spiritual in their nature, we can work for the Lord in the accomplishment of his purposes without being in conflict with our earthly government.

## Introduction

Since Jesus is said to be our Advocate with the Father, and since it is the work of the advocate to represent, or plead for one before another, and usually one in place of authority, it is necessary that we guard against some common mistakes. First, we are to guard against the mistake of thinking that God is indifferent toward us and unconcerned about our welfare. The fact that Jesus is our Advocate and pleads for our forgiveness is not to be taken to mean that God is unwilling to forgive or that God must be reconciled to us before he will forgive us. God's love in sending his Son to die

for the sins of the world is sufficient to prove that God is interested in our welfare. The second mistake against which we must guard is in thinking that Jesus does for us what the lawyer usually does for his client in court. The word "advocate" does suggest that he represents us before the Father in heaven, but whereas the lawyer usually seeks to prove the innocence of his client, or if the guilt is admitted, to prove that his client was justified in the deed, Jesus does not seek to prove our innocence or to prove that we were justified in our wrongdoing.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Advocate for the Whole World

(1 John 2: 1, 2)

*My little children.* This is just such an expression as we would expect from one as old as John at the time he wrote this letter to people whom he had converted to the truth and guided for years in their spiritual development. It would express his affection for his readers and serve to explain why he was interested sufficiently in their welfare to write them this epistle of warning and instruction. As parents love their children and express this love by guarding them from danger, as well as instructing them in their growth and development, so John expressed his affection for them and his interest in their spiritual welfare by writing them both warnings and instructions.

*That ye may not sin.* In spite of the fact that John had just said that no one lives without sin, he now tells them that he writes to them that they may not sin. (1) This suggests that though it is the will of God that we live without sin, it is still a fact that none of us lives in sinless perfection. (2) The word of God as written by apostles and prophets serves to strengthen us and to keep us from sinning. God's will is able both to instruct us in all our duties and to prevent us from sinning. If we could

know perfectly his will and know how to make application of it in all the conditions and circumstances of life, we might be able to live a sinless life. But we neither know all of God's will toward us, nor are we capable of perfect application of that which we know. Consequently, we sin through ignorance and weakness.

*We have an Advocate with the Father.* The word "advocate" is the translation of the same Greek word as is used in John 14: 16 where it is translated "Comforter." The word "helper" might serve as a translation in both places. It is suggested in the marginal translation. Jesus is our helper in heaven. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to take his place as the "helper" of the apostles so that he might go back to the Father to be our "helper" in the presence of the Father in heaven. Our Advocate is spoken of here as "the righteous." Only a perfectly righteous person can act as our advocate or helper in heaven before the throne of God. Since Jesus is the only human being who ever lived a perfectly righteous life, he is the only one who can be our Advocate.

*He is the propitiation for our sins.* Jesus is in his person the propitiation for our sins. He himself is that which propitiates God, or appeases,

or renders favorable. These are terms used to define the word with which we are dealing, and yet, they cannot be applied to God as they are often applied to men. "The essential thoughts in regard to him, as applied in this word are, (1) that his will has been disregarded, and his law violated, and that he has reason to be offended with us; (2) that in that condition he cannot, consistently with his perfection, and the good of the universe, treat us as if we had not done it; (3) that it is proper that, in some way, he should show his displeasure at our conduct, either by punishing us, or by something that shall answer the same purpose; and

(4) that the means of propitiation come in here, and accomplish this end, and make it proper that he should treat us as if we had not sinned." (Barnes.) Paul tells us that God set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation in his blood. (Rom. 3: 25.) In the shedding and offering of his blood, Jesus accomplished in the mind and purpose of God what would have been accomplished by our suffering eternal punishment. Those who accept Christ enjoy the propitiating benefit of the death of Christ and have the opportunity of being treated as if they had not sinned against God. Those who reject Christ do not have the propitiating benefit of his blood, and hence, must suffer for their sins as all men would have suffered if Jesus had not died for them.

*Not for ours only.* John denies that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the elect only. He affirms that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Calvin's doctrine of "limited atonement" asserts that Jesus died for the elect only; his doctrine flatly contradicts this statement of inspiration and must, therefore, be rejected.

## II. Tests of Knowledge and Love

(1 John 2: 4-6)

*Hereby we know that we know him.* The test of a genuine, saving knowledge of the Lord is our obedience to him. John says we know that we know him "if we keep his commandments." The Gnostics who were beginning to work in John's day claimed a superior knowledge of God which enabled them to main-

tain their relationship with God in spite of the sin which was in their lives. There were others who simply made a profession of knowing God but denied him in their works. (Titus 1: 16.) And there are many today who claim to know God and who are sincere in their claim, but at the same time, they know there are some commandments of the Lord which they are not willing to obey. These commandments they usually classify as "non-essential." But whether they claim a superior knowledge that allows them to indulge in sin, or whether they are hypocritical in their claims, or simply self-deceived as to their relationship with the Lord, one test is sufficient for all. If a person obeys the Lord, he has a right to claim to know the Lord; but if one lives continually in disobedience to the Lord, he has no right to claim to know God. John very simply and plainly says that the man who claims to know God but does not keep his commandments, "is a liar and the truth is not in him." The word "keep" is present subjunctive and denotes a continual keeping of the commandments. One knows God if and so long as he keeps God's commandments. If he keeps the commandments for a year and then ceases to be obedient, he cannot continue to say he knows God. It should be kept in mind that John refers to the general course of our life and does not mean to affirm that the occasional sin of ignorance or weakness is proof that we do not know God.

*Whoso keepeth his word.* John now affirms that the one who obeys the word of the Lord also loves the Lord. So, obedience becomes not only a test of our knowledge of God, but also a test of our love for God. Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14: 15.) And John said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.) Many times the phrase "love of God" is used to denote God's love for us, but in this verse it means our love for God. Our love for him is "perfected" or matured or made complete by our keeping the word of God.

*Hereby we know that we are in*

*him.* This is the third thing of which obedience is a test. John says we know that we are in him, in a saved relationship with God, if we are obedient to God. So obedience becomes a test of (1) our knowledge of God, (2) our love of God, and (3) our proper relationship with God.

To *walk even as he walked.* John adds a practical observation after announcing this test of our relationship with the Lord. Anyone who claims to be in this proper relationship with God ought to walk as Jesus walked.

### III. Light and Darkness Contrasted

(1 John 2: 7-11)

*No new commandment write I unto you.* John denies that he is writing anything new in the sense of something originated by him. No one could charge him with binding upon them some commandments which the Lord himself did not teach and which were not as old as the gospel. When John said they had heard these things "from the beginning," he did not mean the beginning of time, but rather the beginning of the gospel of Christ. In the last part of this verse 7, John takes care to identify the old commandment of which he wrote, which he said is the word which they had heard.

*A new commandment write I unto you.* John is not referring to something different in verse 8 from that which he mentioned in verse 7, but that which was from one point of view an old commandment, is from another point of view a new commandment. It was old in the sense that it did not originate with John, but that it originated with the Lord who delivered the rest of the commandments of the gospel. It was new, however, both in the sense that each one had to make daily application of it in his own life, and in the degree to which we are obligated by the example of the Lord to love one another. (John 13: 34.)

*Which thing is true in him and in you.* John says that this new commandment is true in the Lord and the people to whom he was writing.

Jesus set the example of following this new commandment, and the people of the Lord follow him in that example. Undoubtedly John has in mind the love which Jesus manifested toward his disciples and commanded them to manifest toward each other. And to the extent that people practiced this new commandment, the darkness of sin and enmity and hatred of one another was passing away, and the true light of brotherly love and respect for the rights of one another was already shining in the world.

*He that saith he is in the light.*

To be in the light is to be in fellowship with God, for God is light. (1 John 1: 5.) If one says that he is in fellowship with God and hates his brother, that one is in darkness. One who is in fellowship with God is also in fellowship with his brother, but one who hates his brother denies his fellowship with his brother, and therefore, cannot be in fellowship with God.

*He that loveth his brother.* The word "loveth" indicates a continuing love. One continues to abide in the light as long as he continues to love his brother, but the moment his love for his brother ceases, that moment he ceases to abide in the light; and the moment his hatred for his brother begins, that moment he begins to walk in the darkness.

*No occasion of stumbling in him.* John affirms that the man who loves his brother has no reason to stumble or to do wrong. One who loves his brother will not be tempted to injure his brother in any way.

*He that hateth his brother.* Three things are affirmed of one who hates his spiritual brother. (1) The one who hates is in spiritual darkness; he is in an improper relationship with God. (2) He walks in darkness. Hatred is an active principle, and walking denotes activity. (3) He knows not whither he goes. Being blinded by the darkness to think he is justified in his hatred, he is going toward destruction but does not realize it.

### Lessons

1. We should rejoice that we have for our mediator between us and God a man (1 Tim. 2: 5) who knows the strength of the temptations and trials

### to Learn

which beset us, who knows our weakness and our proneness to err and how difficult it is to keep on doing right in spite of these things.

2. A lack of regular attendance and a lack of regular prayer habits in our daily lives may be sufficient lack of obedience to put us in the class of those who claim to know and love God, but who are classed by the Lord as those who "lie and do not the truth."

3. Can lack of love for brethren

be classed as hatred? If we hate those for whom we do not care and in whose presence we prefer not to be, many church members are haters of brethren and do not know it. We should cultivate an active love for all regardless of their attitude toward us, or their social and financial condition.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text?

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What proof do we have in our text of the pre-existence of the Son of God?

What expressions are used to convey the idea that the Son of God came to earth?

State and discuss the first purpose of the coming of the Son of God.

What are the works which Jesus came to destroy?

From what did he come to deliver people?

What is the nature of the weapons he uses to accomplish his purposes?

Why must his kingdom and weapons be spiritual to be adapted to our use?

#### Introduction

What word is used to represent Jesus in his work for us in the presence of his Father?

What is the meaning of this word as used in scripture?

State and discuss the first mistake we must avoid in the use of this word?

What does the lawyer as an advocate usually do for his client?

Can you show why Jesus as our Advocate cannot do this for us?

#### Advocate for the Whole World

What term does John use in addressing his readers? and why?

What does John state as the purpose of his writing?

What is implied in this with reference to the power of the word of God in our lives?

For what purpose did Jesus send the Holy Spirit to his apostles?

Why is Jesus the only one who can be our Advocate in heaven?

What is the meaning of propitiation?

What will be the end of all who reject Jesus as their propitiation?

What is meant by "limited atonement"? and can you disprove it?

#### Tests of Knowledge and Love

What is the first test of a saving knowledge of God?

Name some groups that claim to know God, but fail to meet this test.

Can you show that this test permits of occasional error in judgment and weakness?

What is the second thing of which obedience is made the test?

What is the third thing of which obedience is said to be the test?

What is the obligation resting upon all who sustain the proper relationship with God?

#### Light and Darkness Contrasted

In what sense was John's commandment old? and in what sense was it new?

In what way was the love of Jesus new to the world?

What will the practice of this love in our hearts do for the world about us?

What is the condition of one who says he is in the light, but loves not his brother?

What is affirmed of one who hates his brother?

Does a lack of active love constitute hatred as used in this text?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson III—October 20, 1957

# JOHN WRITES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND BROTHERLY LOVE

## Lesson Text

### 1 John 3: 1-12

1 Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.

3 And every one that hath this hope *set* on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him.

7 **My** little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous:

8 He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.

**Golden Text.**—*"He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous"* (1 John 3: 7b.)

**Devotional Reading.**—1 Cor. 13: 1-13.

### Daily Bible Readings

October 14.	M.....	Clothed with Righteousness (2 Cor. 6: 1-7)
October 15.	T.....	Righteousness Exalts Nations (Prov. 14: 27-35)
October 16.	W.....	Sowing Righteousness (Prov. 11: 5-30)
October 17.	T.....	Brotherly Love Commanded (Heb. 13: 1-3)
October 18.	F.....	Brotherly Love Defined (1 John 4: 19-21)
October 19.	S.....	Brotherly Love Fulfills the Law (Rom. 13: 8-10)
October 20.	S.....	Brotherly Love Leads to Obedience (Gal. 5: 13-26)

**Time.**—A.D. 85-90.

**Place.**—Ephesus.

**Persons.**—John and the saints.

### Golden Text Explained

1. **Who is righteous?** (a) Meaning of the term. We have a number of English words which are used to translate various forms of one Greek word. The words "just," "justify," and "justification" are all used to translate various forms of the same Greek word which "right," "righteous," and "righteousness" are used to translate. So the righteous person is the just or justified person. The word "justification" is sometimes used to mean the process by which one becomes a justified or righteous person. And then sometimes it is used to mean the state of approval in which the righteous man stands before God. And sometimes the word "righteousness" means that state of approval before God and at other times it refers to the character of God or man. We must determine from the context the meaning to give these words. But as used in our text, the word "righteous" means one who has been justified and so stands approved before God. (b) Dead to sin. Paul teaches us that the one who has died to sin is justified from sin. (Rom. 6: 7.) Consequently, the

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another:

12 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.

righteous person of our text is one who has died to sin. (c) Baptized into death. Paul also teaches us that we become dead to sin by being buried with our Lord by baptism into this death to sin. (Rom. 6: 3, 4.) One who then wishes to be righteous before God must be buried with the Lord by baptism into death to sin, and he is then justified or made righteous in the sight of God.

2. **The test of the righteous,** (a) Profession not enough. Many profess to be righteous who do not know the meaning of righteousness. Some think that morality exhausts the meaning of righteousness. They think if they are clean in their morals they are righteous people, but righteousness includes more than morality. (b) Superior knowledge insufficient. The Gnostics in the time of John claimed a superior knowledge to the average person, and that on account of this understanding their deeds had nothing to do with their relationship with God. They claimed to be righteous by virtue of this knowledge of God in spite of the fact that there was sin in

their lives, (c) He that doeth righteousness. False claims and pretensions to superior knowledge would not take the place of right doing in the life of the individual. Doing right is the test of one's righteousness, or his state of approval in the sight of God. In this verse John does not teach that one becomes a Christian by doing right. Of course, it is true that people do become Christians by doing right, doing what God commands; but in this verse John is teaching that the Christian will do right, and right doing is a test of whether or not a person is a Christian.

3. **Doing righteousness,** (a) Righteousness defined. As stated above, the word "righteousness" sometimes refers to the state of being approved in the sight of God. But in our text this word refers to the character of a man as manifested in his deeds. John speaks of our doing righteousness. We manifest a righteous character by doing the things that are

right. David said, "All thy commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119: 172.) The man who obeys the commandments of God is doing righteousness, for a righteous character is manifested in the act of doing right. (b) Doing equals continual practice. The tense of the Greek verb used indicates the continual practice of the thing, so that an individual who occasionally does right but whose life is normally out of harmony with the will of God cannot be characterized as a righteous man. Nor should we characterize as unrighteous the man who is normally in a state of justification before God, but occasionally through ignorance or weakness may fail to do right or do something which is wrong. (c) Makes us like Jesus. John tells us that one who continues to do righteousness is a righteous person "even as he is righteous." The word "he" refers to Jesus, so to be a constant doer of righteousness is to be like Jesus.

## Introduction

In this lesson the inspired apostle is dealing with sin and righteousness. He is showing that the continual practice of sin is inconsistent with, and incompatible to union with God, one's love for God, and his love for his fellow-man. The writer shows that it is absolutely impossible for one who continues in the practice of sin to know God, to enjoy communion with God, and to love his fellow-man. The apostle Paul teaches the same lesson by affirming that those who have died to sin do not any longer continue to live therein. As a human being does not continue to live in the physical realm following his physical death, so the person who has died spiritually to sin should not any longer continue to live in or practice sin. The student should read the sixth chapter of Romans and the third chapter of Colossians in con-

nection with the study of this lesson. In the sixth chapter of Romans, Paul views one as a slave. He was formerly the property of, and was in bondage to sin. But he died to sin, and having died to sin, he was not any longer the property of, nor in bondage to sin, but was made free or delivered from that master in order that he might become alive to and in bondage to a new master. In the third chapter of Colossians, Paul has the figure of one bringing himself into the likeness of Jesus Christ. There are things which must be put off in order to conform to the image of Christ, and then there are things which one must put on in order to conform to the image of Christ. The evil, the sinful, must be put off, and the good and holy things must be put on in order for one to bring himself into the image of Christ.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. God's Love and its Influence (1

John 3: 1-3)

*Behold what manner of love.* John calls upon us to behold, to consider and appreciate the marvelous love which God exercised toward us in accepting us into his family as his children. When we think of his per-

fect holiness and his wonderful providence toward us on the one hand, and measure the depravity and utter lack of appreciation of mankind on the other hand, we are made to marvel that God would love humanity at all.

*That we should be called children*

*of God.* This is the thing at which John so marveled. When God calls people his children, we may rest assured that they are actually his children. He would not speak of one as his child whom he had not adopted into his family, or to view it from another picture, God would not claim one as his child who had not been born again. John views this as something that has been "bestowed upon us." This child estate is something which God has given to us; we did not merit this treatment; we did not earn this relationship, and we are not worthy to continue to enjoy this wonderful blessing. This is the manifestation of God's infinite love made possible by the infinite value of the atonement made by Jesus Christ upon the cross.

*The world knoweth us not.* The world does not know us because it did not know Jesus Christ. The word "know" has been taken to mean "approve." But there is obviously the sense of "appreciate" in this use of the word know. The world did not appreciate the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, nor does the world appreciate the life and service of the people of God today. There is a sense in which the world may approve of our living the Christian life, and yet not appreciate the value of it or the reason for it.

*Now are we children of God.* John tells us that we are not merely in a begotten state, waiting for the resurrection for our birth into the state of childhood, but we are now children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8: 17.) But if this relationship with God seems so glorious that we cannot fathom its blessedness or its value, we should be more unspeakably happy in contemplation of our future relationship with the Lord. This is but a foretaste of the eternal blessedness which we will know when once we have died to this realm and have been resurrected to the new life.

*We shall be like him.* That is in brief the blessedness that awaits us after this life. And John attributes our becoming like him to the fact that we shall see him. If when we see him there, we shall become like him, it follows that when we behold him as he is described to us in the

Bible, we shall grow more and more into his likeness.

*Everyone that hath inis hope.* John says that the result of entertaining this hope of being like the Lord is that one will purify himself even as the Lord is pure. The hope of seeing Jesus and becoming like Jesus, and living with Jesus through eternity begets in us the desire to purify ourselves and also gives us the motive for denying ourselves ungodliness and worldly lusts and living soberly, righteously, and godly, even as our Lord so lived.

## II. Sin, Its Origin and End (1 John 3: 4-9)

*Everyone that doeth sin.* John tells us that everyone who continues to practice sin continues in a course of lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. Here we have a simple, workable definition for sin. The word "lawlessness" simply means doing as we please, regardless of what the law demands. One who does that which the law forbids is a lawless person. One who refuses to do what the law demands is a lawless person. In our social world we call a lawless person a criminal, while in the spiritual realm we speak of them as sinners. We may therefore say that one who does as he pleases regardless of what the law of the Lord demands is a religious criminal. This sin, or lawlessness, is the very thing which caused our Lord to come into the world. John says he was manifested, or came into this world, in order to take away such sin. The word "take away" has in it the "idea of a burden or load which is lifted in order that it may not crush him upon whom it rests; and as here, figuratively used, it signifies the lifting and carrying away of sins that they may be upon us no more. Being in the aorist tense, the act is a once-for-all process, in which by one offering the Lord accomplished his purpose henceforth and forever. Implied in the word is the idea of atonement, reconciliation, expiation, and sanctification, all of which the Lord accomplished in his death, though the primary meaning here is the bearing away of sin." (Commentary on First John—Woods.)

*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.* This verse may seem to some

to teach that the individual who abides in Christ does not, and cannot, sin. But to give the verse that interpretation would be to make John contradict his statements in the first chapter, eighth and tenth verses. The lesson is that whoever continues to abide in Christ does not continue to sin. He may occasionally through ignorance or weakness do something wrong or fail to do right, but if he continues to abide in Christ he will not continue to do wrong.

**Whosoever sinneth.** Here we have another instance of the importance of properly translating Greek tenses. The word "sinneth" is in the present tense, which in Greek denotes continuing action. The word "hath not seen" is in the perfect tense and so is the word "knoweth." The perfect tense in Greek denotes action in the past which continues to the present, and the action is unimportant and drops out of sight so that the present influence is the thing stressed. Therefore, to say that whosoever sinneth hath not seen God simply means that whoever continues to live in sin does not see God. Our translators conveyed this idea in the word "knoweth," using the English present instead of the perfect "hath known." So that the verse really teaches that whosoever continues to abide in Christ does not continue to sin, but whosoever continues to sin neither sees nor knows God.

**He that doeth sin is of the devil.** John here indicates the origin of sin. Sin originated with the devil, and whoever lives in sin lives like the devil and is the child of the devil.

**Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin.** The one who is "begotten of God" is the child of God, and John affirms that this child of God "doeth no sin." Here again we have the present tense in Greek which denotes continuous action. The child of God does not continue to live in sin.

**Because his seed abideth in him.** This is stated as the reason why the child of God does not continue to live a life of sin. And in the next phrase we are told that "he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." These statements have been taken to mean that the child of God is incapable of sinning, that he is not held accountable for sin. Some think that

only the inward man, the spirit, becomes a child of God, and only the physical man, the body, commits sin. The first position is not true because John admits that the children of God can sin and they have an Advocate with the Father. The second position is not true because Jesus taught that men can commit adultery in their hearts by entertaining lust therein. The seed mentioned in this verse is the word of God. Seed determines the nature of that which springs from it. The word of God produces in us the nature or likeness of God. One who continually abides in that word and continually holds that word in his heart will continually manifest the nature and likeness of God, and therefore cannot continue to sin. But one may let this word slip from his heart, and to the extent which he allows this word to cease to abide in him, he will lapse into sin. If he completely discards the word from his heart and ceases to abide in it, he will lapse into continual sin. But as long as he holds that word in his heart and partakes of the nature of God from that seed, he cannot continue to live in sin.

### III. The Test of Brotherly Love (1

John 3: 10-12)

**In this are the children of God manifest.** John tells us that we can distinguish between the children of God and the children of the devil. The individual who continues to do unrighteousness is not of God, but is of the devil. But the individual who continues in a course of righteousness is the child of God growing into the likeness of God. Here again we must keep in mind that the occasional good deed on the part of the child of the devil does not characterize him as a child of God, nor does the occasional sin on the part of the child of God characterize him as a child of the devil. John has in mind continual courses of life; the one who continually does good is of God, the one who continually does evil is of the devil.

**Neither he that loveth not his brother.** John now makes love of the brethren a test of one's relationship to God. The one who continually loves the brethren, the children of God, is of God; while the one who



does not love and appreciate the brethren, the children of God, is of the devil. In verse 1, John affirmed that the world does not know the children of God. Failing to know or appreciate the children of God, the world does not love the children of God. The term "brother" in our text refers to the children of God. Jesus said those who do the will of the Father are his brothers, and therefore, the children of God. (Matt. 12: 50.) And John reminded his readers again that he was not teaching them any new commandment with reference to love of the brethren. For he said, "This is the message which ye heard from the beginning." From the very beginning of Christianity, people had been taught to love one another. Jesus manifested the love of God in coming to seek, to serve, and save those who were lost and who were his enemies. And he taught those who would be his disciples that they must love their enemies as well as their brethren in order that they might be like their Father in heaven who sends the rain both on the just and the unjust. (Matt. 5: 44-47.)

*Not as Cain was of the evil one.* John says that we are not to be like Cain who was of Satan and manifested that relationship by slaying

his brother. Murder is not a deed of love, nor does it manifest union with God. On the contrary, it manifests the spirit of hatred and denotes union with the devil who is a murderer and a liar from the beginning. (John 8: 44.)

*Wherefore slew he him?* John raises the question why Cain slew Abel. His answer is that Cain slew Abel because Cain's works were evil and Abel's works were righteous. Abel's works were righteous because they were commanded of God. Cain's offering was evil because it was not commanded by the Lord. We are told that Abel offered his offering by faith. (Heb. 11: 4.) Cain did not offer by faith. To do a thing by faith is to do it in harmony with God's commandments. (Gen. 6: 22.) Cain offered his sacrifice not by faith, but by human wisdom. That which was offered by human wisdom was counted evil in the sight of God, and the offerer was rejected. That which Abel offered by faith was counted righteous by the Lord, and the offerer was accepted and blessed. From this we should learn to walk by faith, doing the things which the Lord has commanded, rather than walking by human wisdom doing those things which the Lord has not commanded.

### Lessons to Learn

1. The most wonderful thing that can ever happen to a person is to be called a child of God, and we do not have to wait until the resurrection to experience that blessed relationship. We should live in such manner as to manifest publicly our joy at being so honored as to be called the children of God.

2. To be a criminal is a shameful thing; to be a religious criminal—a sinner—is even more shameful than being a political criminal. If we can make men feel ashamed to be sinners, we can save them. Making

them ashamed of their sins and of their relationship amounts to conviction for their sins.

3. One can walk by faith and love his brother, but one who does not love the brethren is not walking by faith. One who does not walk by faith is evil in God's sight and will be rejected as was Cain. This emphasizes the necessity for cultivating a love for the brethren in spite of their weaknesses and in spite of the difficulties which we have in learning to love them.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the words "justification" and "righteousness"?

What is the meaning of the word "righteous" in our text?

How and when does one become dead to sin?

What is the connection between becoming dead to sin and being a righteous person?

State and discuss two things which do not constitute righteousness.

Distinguish between doing right to become a Christian and righteousness as a test of whether one is a Christian.

How can we know we are doing righteousness? and what effect will it have on us?

## Introduction

With what is the practice of sin inconsistent?  
 What figure does Paul use in Romans to teach this lesson?  
 What figure does he use in Colossians to teach us the same lesson?  
 What is implied in these figures as to man's responsibility for action in his salvation?

## God's Love and its Influence

What does John ask us to consider and appreciate?  
 What is implied in John's use of the word "bestow"?  
 In what sense does the world not know us? and why?  
 When do we begin to enjoy the blessings peculiar to God's children?  
 When and why shall we be perfectly like Jesus?  
 What effect does hope of this likeness have on us now?

## Sin, Its Origin and End

What is John's definition for sin?  
 For what purpose was Jesus manifested in the world?

What is meant by taking away our sins?  
 Does abiding in Christ make it impossible for one to sin at all?  
 What does John teach with reference to one who continues to live in sin?  
 What does he teach with reference to the origin of sin?  
 What is the seed which abides in the child of God?  
 What effect does this seed have on the life of the child of God?

## The Test of Brotherly Love

How does John distinguish between children of God and children of the devil?  
 Who is the "brother" in our text?  
 Of what does John make love of the brethren a test?  
 What is our greatest example of love of brethren? and love for enemies?  
 Whom does John use to illustrate a lack of love from brethren?  
 Why did Cain slay Abel?  
 Why was Cain's offering rejected? and why was Abel's accepted?  
 What lessons can we learn from these offerings?  
 What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson IV—October 27, 1957

## LOVING IN DEED AND IN TRUTH

## Lesson Text

## 1 John 3: 13-24

13 Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?

18 *My* little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

19 Hereby shall we know that we

are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him:

20 Because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God;

22 And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Je-sus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*He that loveth not abideth in death.*" (1 John 3: 14b.)  
 DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 2: 7-11.

## Daily Bible Readings

October 21. M..... Love Originates in God (1 John 4: 1-6)  
 October 22. T..... Love Covers Faults (Prov. 10: 1-12)  
 October 23. W..... Love Is Evidence of Discipleship (John 13: 34, 35)  
 October 24. T..... Love Is Shed Abroad in Our Hearts (Rom. 5: 1-5)

October 25. F..... Love of Man for Man (John 15: 12-19)  
 October 26. S..... Love for Enemies (Matt. 5: 38-44)  
 October 27. S..... Love Without Hypocrisy (Rom. 12: 9-21)

TIME.—A.D. 85-90.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and the saints.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Love is evidence,** (a) That one is a child of God. John says, "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4: 7.) The expression "begotten of God" simply means that an individual is a child of God. Further, the expression "knoweth God" also implies that the individual is a child of God, and John says that love is the evidence that one is a child of God and that he knows God. While it is true that one must love God in order to become a child of God, this verse teaches that love is an evidence that one is already a child of God. (b) Passed from death to life. Again John says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." (1 John 3: 14a.) This is the statement just preceding our text, and this tells us that love of the brethren, the children of God, is an evidence that we have passed out of death into life. This, of course, is spiritual death and life, (c) That we are disciples. Again it is John who says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13: 34, 35.) Love is not only an evidence that we are the children of God, have passed from death unto life, but it is evidence to the world that we are disciples of Jesus Christ. If we love one another as he loved us, we will be sufficiently different from the world that the world will recognize us as the disciples of Christ.

2. **Objects of love,** (a) God. The first and supreme object of every Christian's love is God. We are taught to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Matt. 22: 37.) If one loves God as we are taught to love him, he will obey all of God's commandments. Jesus taught us that the whole law and the prophets were summed up

in the statement to love God supremely and to love one's neighbor as himself. (Matt. 22: 40.) (b) The church. The church which Jesus loved and for which he shed his blood as the ransom price, is another object of our love. If we love the church as we should, we will (1) attend the services of the church. One who fails to attend faithfully and regularly the public services of the church betrays a lack of love for and interest in the growth and success of the church. (2) The one who loves the church will accept responsibilities in the church. It is difficult to find people who will accept continuous, definite responsibilities in the church. Many people do not wish to be tied down so that they must attend church every Sunday. They want to be free to go elsewhere when they please. But proper love for the church will cause one to be willing to sacrifice sufficiently to carry on his part of the work of the church.

(3) One who loves the church will so live as to honor and magnify the good name of the church in the community. He will refrain from doing anything to bring shame and reproach to the church. (c) The brethren. In this use of the word "brethren," we mean the children of God. And we are taught that one cannot love God without loving God's children. (1 John 4: 20.) Hence, the brethren become an object of love. It is necessary for each one of us to cultivate a love for the brethren in spite of their weaknesses and failures.

3. **Failure to love,** (a) Abides in death. Our text says that one who fails to love abides in death. John used the present tense of the verse in our text so that the meaning is one who continues not to love continues to abide in death. Love of brethren is evidence of spiritual life, but lack of love for the brethren is evidence of spiritual death. (b)

Knows not God. It is John who says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4: 8.) Hence, a failure to love is proof that one does not know God. (c) Guilty of all. One who does not love the brethren does not love God. "If a man say, I love God, and hat-

eth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." (1 John 4: 20.) If one does not love God, he is lost; hence, one who does not love his brother is guilty of failure to love God and has lost all.

## Introduction

The love which we study today is primarily love of the brethren. John tells us that we should love "in deed and in truth." In order to love a person, we must know that person. There is no such thing as loving without knowledge. Knowledge of a person may either draw or repel us. If the individual's character is lovely and lovable, it will be easy to learn to love that person. But if the individual's character is not lovable, it will be difficult to love that person. But whether easy or difficult, we must love the brethren. But since we cannot love the brethren until we know them, and we cannot know them without association with them, it follows that we must have association with the brethren to love them in deed and in truth. In

many large congregations, people do not know each other's names. Many of them do not see one another as much as once a week. And one may sit on one side of the congregation while another sits regularly on another side of the congregation during worship, so they may come and go for a period of years without ever actually meeting and getting acquainted with one another. Love of the brethren as is taught in our lesson is impossible under such circumstances. This lack of love often leads to misunderstandings and sometimes division in the church. It is the responsibility of elders to plan and afford such association among brethren as will enable them to know each other that they may love each other in deed and in truth.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Proof of Brotherly Love (1 John 3: 13-17)

**Marvel not, brethren.** John told his brethren in language somewhat similar to that which Jesus used that they need not be surprised if they are persecuted by the world. Jesus said, "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. ... A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also." (John 15: 18, 20.) The world will hate church members who faithfully live and teach as Jesus did, but it will not hate church members who live like the world and refuse to condemn the world for its evil. (John 7: 7.) The student should read 1 Pet. 4: 1-5 in this connection.

**We know that we have passed out of death into life.** The death of this verse is "death in sin" and not "death to sin." And the life of this passage is "life in Christ" which is the new life of the child of God. So, the statement is equal to saying we know

that we have become children of God because we love the brethren, or the children of God. Love of the brethren did not enable us to pass out of death into life, but it is evidence of the fact that we have passed from death to life. Then we have the statement of our Golden Text, saying that one who does not love continues to abide in death. Members of denominations often take comfort in this verse, saying they know they have passed out of death into life because they love their brethren. But "their brethren" may not be "the brethren" mentioned hereby the apostle. The brethren mentioned here are the children of God. Children of God are those who have obeyed the gospel as revealed by the apostles. A man in a civic organization may love his brother members of the club, but the love of his brother members in that civic club would not be proof that he had passed from death to life. So, the fact that a person loves his brother members of a spurious church does

not prove that he has passed from death to life.

***Whosoever hateth his brother.***

John teaches us that hatred for brethren constitutes murder in the sight of God. This does not mean that hatred is as bad as murder, but it does mean that the individual who hates is as guilty before God as if he had actually murdered. In this entire passage, John speaks of love and hate as if there is no alternative. One must either love or hate. It is true that there must be degrees, both of love and of hate, but one that does not love at all, hates, and one who has hatred in any degree in his heart does not and cannot love. One who does not love, hates; and one who hates is a murderer, and "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." It follows then that one who does not love his brother is lost.

***Hereby know we love.*** John gives the example of Jesus laying down his life for us as an illustration of real love, the love which we are to have for the brethren. A summary of what one writer gives as the teaching of this verse is given. (1) We ought to love the church enough to be willing to die for it. (2) We ought to love the brethren enough to be willing to endanger our lives to aid them in cases of pestilence, plague, danger by fire, flood, or foes.

(3) We should love the truth enough to be willing to sacrifice our lives rather than deny it. (4) We ought to love the cause of Christ enough to be willing to go to foreign lands to "visit distant and barbarous regions, though at eminent risk of our lives, and though with the prospect that we shall never see our country again." (5) We should love the church enough to cause us to "engage heartily and constantly in services of labor and self-sacrifice on its account, until our work being done, exhausted nature shall sink to rest in the grave." (Barnes.)

***Whoso hath this world's goods.*** By way of illustration, John in question form affirms that one who has plenty of this world's goods and sees his brother in need but does not divide his goods with that brother, does not have the love of God abiding in him. He may affirm that he has no feeling of enmity or hatred for that brother in need, but John says he does not have love for his brethren, and since

one can only love or hate his brother, it follows that since he does not love his brother, he hates his brother.

**II. Let Love Be Genuine** (1 John 3: 18-21)

***Let us not love in word.*** Is there a distinction to be made between loving in word and loving in tongue? Most commentators make no distinction. However, John implies a difference in the form of expression used. One may express his love in words and be perfectly sincere at the time, but may be careless in living in harmony with his words and never demonstrate that love. But one who loves only with the tongue is one who expresses affection which he does not feel even temporarily in the heart. To love with the tongue is pure hypocrisy, but to love in word may indicate only a superficial and impractical love which never demonstrates itself in deeds. To love in deed is to be sincere and earnest in our affections and to demonstrate our love in deeds of kindness and service.

***Hereby shall we know.*** Love of the brethren assures us of two things:

(1) that we are of the truth. We may know that we are genuine Christians when we love the brethren in deed and in truth. If our love is superficial, consists only in word at the best, we cannot be sure that we are of the truth. (2) Assure our heart before God. Genuine love of the brethren should give us assurance before God. The sins and failures of our past life may be sufficient to condemn us, and we may have an uneasy conscience with reference to them, but genuine love of the brethren should allay such fears. This love of the brethren is assurance that we have passed out of death into life, and therefore, should calm our fears with reference to the sins of the past. One who genuinely loves the brethren will love God, and he who loves God will confess his sins and make all things right.

***If our heart condemn us.*** The heart here is used to refer to what we usually term our conscience. If our conscience accuses us of loving brethren only with the tongue or in word, we should remember that God is greater than our heart, or conscience, and knows our real feelings better than we. Genuine love of the brethren is evidence that we have

passed from death to life, but if our conscience accuses us of insincere love we should be careful to cultivate a genuine love of the brethren.

*If our heart condemn us not.* If we are positive that our love for the brethren is based upon a knowledge of them and is sincere and genuine, manifested in deeds of service and kindness, we have boldness toward God. Accepting the principle that genuine love of the brethren is evidence that we have passed from death to life, we have boldness in our approach to God because we are positive of this sincerity of our love of the brethren.

### III. Blessings of Obedience (1 John 3: 22-24)

*Whatsoever we ask we receive.* It should be kept in mind that the "we" of this verse are those who have passed from death unto life. This is based on the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 7: 7-12.) Since our heavenly Father is both able and willing to give us that which we need, we can depend on him to do so. However, it must be remembered that receiving the things for which we ask is conditioned by the teaching of other scriptures. We must ask in faith (James 1: 6); we must also ask in harmony with the will of God. Even Jesus prayed not his will be done, but the will of the Father in heaven. And we must be obedient to God for John says we receive that for which we ask "because we keep his commandments and do the things which are pleasing in his sight." One who is not obedient to the Lord is not entitled to claim the right to answers to his prayers. Some people seek their own pleasures and follow their own wills during times of good health and prosperity, and then in times of sickness and adversity, they expect the Lord to hear their prayers and grant their petitions. But people who do not think enough of God to obey him in times of prosperity need not expect God to hear them in times of adversity.

*This is his commandment.* Though the word "commandment" is in the singular, John names two commandments that we must keep if we expect God to hear us. (1) That we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. To believe in the name

of Jesus Christ is to believe all that Jesus taught and all for which he stands. One cannot say that he believes in the name of Jesus Christ and reject any one principle which Jesus taught. Or we may simply put the matter this way: To believe in the name of Jesus Christ is to believe in the person for whom that name stands. We may illustrate it by Matthew's statement of the great commission. He said that we are to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Of course, we cannot be baptized into a name. But we can be baptized into fellowship and communion with the person for whom the name stands. So to believe in the name of Jesus Christ is to have faith in the person for whom that name stands. (2) We are to love one another. This is the second commandment which John names as one which we must obey in order to receive the things for which we pray. The fact that the word "commandment" is in the singular emphasizes the fact that love of the brethren is an expression or demonstration of our belief in Jesus Christ and his teaching. One who does not love his brethren does not believe in Jesus Christ for the same reason that one who refuses to be baptized for the remission of sins does not believe in Jesus Christ. Obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ is demonstration of faith which we have in our hearts, and a lack of obedience is proof of a lack of faith.

*He that keepeth his commandments.* John repeats the thought that obeying the commandments of the Lord is a condition of continual abode in him. If we continue to obey the Lord, we continue to abide in him; but if we cease to obey the Lord, we cease to abide in him.

*Hereby we know.* John says we know that God abides in us "by the Spirit which he gave us." God abides in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 2: 21-22.) But we do not discern his abiding presence by either of the physical senses. We know of his presence only through his teaching, and through the fruit which he bears in us by abiding in us. Obedience to God's commandments is a fruit which the Spirit bears by abiding in us. One who does not obey

the commandments of God has no assurance of God's presence in him. But one who is obedient to the com-

mandments of God is hereby assured of God's presence in the person of the Holy Spirit.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Brotherly love is proof that we have passed from death to life. Caring for those in need is proof of brotherly love, so caring for the needy is proof that we have passed from death to life, and those who refuse to care for the needy have evidence that they continue to abide in death.

2. It is not enough to say we love the needy enough to care for them if others would do this in the right way. Regardless of what others are doing, or how others are caring for

the needy, we must care for those in need to prove that we have passed from death to life.

3. Obedience to God gives us assurance that our prayers will be answered, and that we will continue to enjoy the abiding presence of God in our hearts. If there were no other blessing promised on condition to the obedience to God's commands, his abiding presence in our hearts should be sufficient to inspire us to obey every commandment to the extent of our ability.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What does the expression "begotten of God" mean?

Who has passed from death into life?

Who are the "brethren" in this text?

Who is the primary object of our love? and what are other objects?

Discuss some things we will do if we love the church as we should.

What is said of one who does not love?

Introduction

What is an essential prerequisite of love?

How can we love a person who does not have a lovable disposition?

Name some things which hinder a knowledge of people necessary to love them.

What does a lack of love cause in many congregations?

Proof of Brotherly Love

Of what did Jesus warn his disciples?

Why did the world hate Jesus? and will it hate us for similar reasons?

What is the meaning of "death" in our text?

Of what is love of the brethren evidence?

Is it possible for one neither to love nor hate his brethren?

What is the consequence of hating our brethren?

To what extent did Jesus love us? and to what extent should we love our brethren?

How can we prove we have the love of God abiding in us?

Let Love Be Genuine

What is meant by loving in word? and in tongue? and in truth?

Of what two things does love of the brethren assure us?

How does our heart condemn us?

What do we enjoy if our heart does not condemn us?

How may we cultivate and increase our love for the brethren?

Blessings of Obedience

Who has the promise of receiving what he asks in prayer?

Name other conditions mentioned in scripture we must meet to have our prayers answered.

What two commandments does John mention that we must obey?

Of what is our obedience a demonstration?

On what condition do we continue to abide in Jesus?

How does God dwell in his children?

What is the fruit of the Spirit which abides in us?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson V—November 3, 1957

### WARNINGS CONCERNING FALSE TEACHERS

#### Lesson Text

1 John 2: 18-24; 4: 1-6

18 Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that an'-ti-christ cometh, even now have there arisen many an'-ti-christs; whereby we know that it is the last hour.

19 They went out from us, but

they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.

20 And ye have an anointing from

the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is the liar but he that denieth that Je'-sus is the Christ? This is the an'-ti-christ, *even* he that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.

24 As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father.

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false

**Golden Text.**—*"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves"* (Matt. 7: 15.)

**Devotional Reading.**—1 Tim. 4: 1-16.

prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Je'-sus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not Je'-sus is not of God: and this is the *spirit* of the an'-ti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already.

4 Ye are of God, *my* little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they *as* of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Daily Bible Readings

October 28. M.....	Prophets and Teachers (Acts 13: 1-3)
October 29. T.....	Heretical Teachers (2 Pet. 2: 1-5)
October 30. W.....	Perverted Gospel (Gal. 1: 6-10)
October 31. T.....	Precepts of Men (Matt. 15: 1-9)
November 1. F.....	Turn Aside to Fables (2 Tim. 4: 1-4)
November 2. S.....	Spirits to Be Tried (1 John 4: 1-6)
November 3. S.....	Some Depart from Faith (1 Tim. 4: 1-6)

**Time.**—A.D. 85-90.

**Place.**—Ephesus.

**Persons.**—John and the saints.

Golden Text Explained

1. Beware of false prophets, (a)

Blind leaders. Jesus characterized the Pharisees as blind guides, and he said, "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." (Matt. 15: 14.) So we are to beware of false prophets because they will lead us into the pit of destruction, (b) Bring destructive heresies. Peter warned that as there were false prophets among the people of old, so there shall be false teachers among us "who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Pet. 2: 1.) Destructive heresies is simply another term referring to sects of destruction gathered around a false doctrine. The sense of this statement is that through the medium

of false doctrines, they gather around them parties which are doomed to perdition. This constitutes a reason why we should beware false prophets. (c) Carry away by error. Peter also tells us that those who wrest the scriptures do so to their own destruction, and then he warns us to beware lest "being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness." (2 Pet. 3: 16, 17.) So we learn that false teachers, whether sincere or insincere in their teaching, will lead people to destruction and perdition. We ought, therefore, to beware of them and avoid them.

2. Come in sheep's clothing, (a) Deceitful workers. Paul spoke of false prophets as "deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of



Christ." (2 Cor. 11: 13.) And he said that we should not be surprised that these false prophets should be deceitful workers because they are simply following Satan who "fashioneth himself into an angel of light."

(b) Lovers of money. Paul spoke of "unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers," who overthrow whole houses "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus 1: 10, 11.) So some come in sheep's clothing for the sake of filthy lucre, while others may come in sheep's clothing simply that they may deceive people and lead them away after them, (c) Glory in the flesh. Paul spoke of some who preached the false doctrine of the necessity of being circumcised and keeping the law of Moses in order that they might be saved. But he said even those who preached that false doctrine do not do so because of a love of the Lord and loyalty to the truth, but "that they may glory in your flesh." (Gal. 6: 13b.) By convincing Gentiles that they ought to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, these Jews had succeeded in proselyting others to their cause. They gloried in the number of Gentiles they could proselyte to their cause, and not in the fact that they had honored God and respected the authority of Jesus Christ thereby. Many men argue their particular hobbies, not out of a sense of conviction and loyalty to truth and to God, but simply for personal victory. They, like these enemies of Paul, are glorying in the flesh and not in the truth.

3. **Ravening wolves,** (a) Destructive. Wolves have the destructive

nature, and our Lord says that these false prophets are like ravening wolves. The word "ravening" describes the ferocity with which they do their work of destruction. But as wolves are in their nature destructive, so these false prophets partake of the nature of wolves and are destructive in the spiritual realm, (b) Unconcerned. A wolf can devour a lamb and be totally unconcerned; a wolf may kill an animal too large for him to devour, but he takes that portion which satisfies his hunger and goes away without any concern. So these false prophets are in their nature similar to the wolf. They do their work of destruction in the spiritual realm and are not concerned for the spiritual welfare of those destroyed. They seek satisfaction of their own desires, and the building up of their own reputations without any concern for the spiritual destruction and havoc wrought in the accomplishment of their evil purposes. (c) To be destroyed. Jude describes false teachers who "rail at whatsoever things they know not; and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they to be destroyed." (Jude 10.) Wolves are "creatures without reason" which Jude tells us were not created for the purpose of salvation and have no expectation of life after death. Men who are like wolves in their nature but come in sheep's clothing only to deceive and to satisfy their own lusts and desires live on the same plane as the "creatures without reason," and therefore, need not expect anything better after death than such brute creatures.

## Introduction

Many people have the idea that the false doctrine of a sincere teacher is not destructive. They cannot conceive of a sincere person doing any harm regardless of what he may teach. But the sincerity of the teacher has nothing to do with determining the influence of his teaching or his deeds. The heathen idolater is sincere in his belief and practice. If he should come as a missionary to our country and convert us to idolatry, his sincerity would not save us from the consequences of idolatry. If an insincere

teacher teaches truth, his insincerity does not keep the truth from making the believer free. All of us should rejoice that our salvation does not depend upon our ability to prove the sincerity of the man who led us to believe and obey the truth. If the insincerity of a teacher does not keep the truth from saving the one who obeys, it follows that the sincerity of the false teacher does not keep the false doctrine from damning the soul who believes and obeys it. There are sincere infidels and atheists, but their doctrine will damn the souls

of those who believe and obey it just as surely as that same doctrine will damn the souls of those who believe

and obey it when it is taught by people who do not believe the doctrines of infidelity and atheism.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Warning Against Antichrists (1

John 2: 18-24)

*It is the last hour.* Many have supposed that the apostles expected the immediate return of Christ and the end of the world. But since that did not occur, we conclude that John did not mean such by this statement. If he did mean by this statement that Christ was immediately to appear and the world was to come to an end, he was wrong, as time has proved. And if an inspired apostle could make such a mistake with reference to the second coming of Christ, it is conceivable that he could make such mistakes with reference to any other subject on which he wrote. We cannot concede that any inspired apostle could be mistaken in his teaching. One might as well say that the Holy Spirit could have been mistaken as to the time of the coming of the Lord as to say that an inspired apostle could have been mistaken about it. John simply meant that this is the last dispensation, the dispensation of the Messiah. It would be impossible for antichrists to arise in any other dispensation. Hence, the presence of antichrists was proof that this is the dispensation of the Christ. The word "antichrist" simply means one who usurps the place of Christ, or who is opposed to Christ. John did not use the term "antichrist" to refer to any particular person, for he said there were many antichrists already in the world. But he used that term to refer to a certain spirit which was common in all who opposed Christ. This spirit culminated in, and found its most complete expression in the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, but it would be a mistake to say that John used the term "antichrist" to refer to the Pope of Rome. John's use of the term includes the Pope, but must not be limited to that.

*They went out from us.* The word "they" refers to the antichrists of John's time. He says they went out from the church because they were not of the church. This does not necessarily mean that they were never sincere members of the church.

After becoming members of the church, they proposed ideas and doctrines contrary to the truth, and being different from those with whom they were associated, they went out from them. Paul predicted that some men in the church at Ephesus would do just what John says these antichrists did. (Acts 20: 30.) The fact that they went out from the church does not mean that they were never sincere in their belief, and the fact that John says they went out because they "were not of us" at the time they left does not at all mean that they never were members of the group. It simply means that they were not in heart and mind one of the group at the time they went out.

*Ye have an anointing.* John says that this anointing was from the Holy One, Christ. That with which they were anointed was the Holy Spirit. Christ had sent the Holy Spirit to these people to whom John wrote. This Holy Spirit would teach them all things they needed to know with reference to these antichrists or any other problem which arose in the church so that their safety was assured. To escape the conclusion that every child of God is anointed with the Holy Spirit, some have said that this anointing is a miraculous measure of the Spirit given by the laying on of the hands of apostles. But to limit the "anointing from the Holy One" to those who had received miraculous powers by the laying on of hands of apostles, is to read into this passage something John did not put in the passage. In this verse, John, speaking to all his readers, said they had received an anointing from Christ. And then in verse 27, he says that this anointing taught them concerning all things. It is not necessary to suppose that one had to receive the anointing in order to be taught by the Holy Spirit. The entire group of readers had received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and that Holy Spirit had taught them through those especially qualified to teach the things which they needed to know. Even in the writings of John they were being taught by the

Holy Spirit with which they had been anointed.

**Who is the liar?** . . . John characterizes the antichrist as one who lies about Jesus Christ. Anyone who denies the Father or the Son, or both, is the antichrist. "And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already." (1 John 4: 3.) The orthodox Jews of our day claims to believe in God the Father, but does not believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and the Son of God. John says that anyone who denies the Son forfeits his right to fellowship with the Father.

**Ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father.** This is the promise to those who believed that which they had heard from the beginning. This has reference to what they had heard about Christ from the beginning, and, of course, this was that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, and Savior of the world. And John assures his readers that if they will continue to abide in that belief, they will continue to abide in the fellowship of both the Father and the Son.

## II. How to Detect False Teachers

(1 John 4: 1-3)

**Believe not every spirit.** The word "spirit" in this paragraph refers to teachers and not to immaterial beings. Many teachers claimed to teach as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Some were sincere; others were insincere in this claim. John warned his readers by telling them they should not believe every teacher that came their way.

**Prove the spirits.** The word "prove" means to test these teachers. They were to subject their teachers to a test to determine whether those teachers were of God. The Roman Catholic Church claims infallibility in its teaching. The head of the church resents the members of that church doubting the truth of his teaching and would discipline one who would presume to put that teaching to the test. Instead of John's teaching that the church must accept the doctrines handed down by the teachers, he actually says that the teachers must submit their doctrines to the tests made by the church

to see whether or not they are true. John's readers had two methods of testing the doctrines of teachers.

(1) There were men among them who had the gift of discerning spirits. (1 Cor. 12: 10.) They had this gift by the laying on of the hands of an apostle. This gift enabled the one who possessed it to determine whether a teacher was teaching the truth or false doctrine. (2) The church in John's day could compare the teaching of these prophets with the teaching which they received from inspired apostles. If the teaching agreed with that which they received from men whom they knew to be inspired apostles, they would receive it. If the teaching differed materially from that which they received from inspired apostles, they rejected it. We today do not possess the gift of the discerning of spirits, and so cannot miraculously determine the truth or falsity of a doctrine. But we can compare that which we hear with that which we have received from inspired apostles and prophets, and so can determine whether or not a doctrine is false.

### *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God.*

John does not give a rule by which to judge every doctrine on every conceivable subject. He has under consideration the matter of antichrists, and so he lays down a specific rule by which his readers may determine whether a teacher is for Christ or against Christ. This rule is, "Every spirit, [teacher], that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God." The general rule is to try the spirits by the teaching which they had received. That rule would work on every problem that might arise, but the specific rule dealing with a specific problem concerning antichrist is to learn whether the teacher confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

### *This is the spirit of the antichrist.*

The word "spirit" is in italics which means there is no word in the original for it, and this statement is identical in meaning with the statement, "This is the antichrist" in 1 John 2: 22, for in that place John says he that denies the Father and the Son is the antichrist. And in this place he says that everyone that con-

fesseth not Jesus is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist.

### III. Comfort for God's People (1

John 4: 4-6)

*Ye are of God..* This statement is put over against the statement in verse 3 where John describes the antichrist that confesseth not Jesus. That spirit he says is not of God, but ye are of God. John was writing to people who believed in Jesus as he Messiah, the Son of God, and were willing to confess this belief even though it might mean persecution and death. Being thus willing to confess Jesus as the Son of God, he assures them that they are of God.

*And have overcome them.* The word "them" refers to the antichrists who deny that Jesus is the Son of God. They had put these men to the test and had learned that they were false teachers. Having reached this decision, they refused to have any further fellowship with them, or to receive any more instruction from them. And they had been able to overcome these false teachers because "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." God is the one who dwells in his children while Satan is the one who dwells in false teachers. God is greater than Satan, and is able to give his children the power to overcome Satan. Some reason that if God is able to give his children the power to overcome Satan, no child of God will ever fall into the hands of Satan. It is true that no child of God can be taken away from him; Satan has no power to take God's children

away from him, but God does not force his children to remain faithful to him. God's children leave him, not because the devil has power to steal or snatch them out of God's hand, but simply because God's children become careless, indifferent, lukewarm, and wander away from God.

*They are of the world.* These false teachers, antichrists, are of the world. Being of the world, the people of the world will listen to them, place their confidence in them, and follow them. But John says, "We are of God" and therefore, those who know God and love God will hear us.

*We are of God.* Another contrast is to be noticed in these two verses. The word "they" of verse 5 and the word "we" of verse 6 refer to teachers. They, the teachers of the world, are heard by the world. There is a distinction between "they" and "the world" which heard those teachers. So there is a distinction between "we" and those that "hear us." As the world hears and heeds its teachers, so the people of God hear and heed their teachers. And yet, this must be taken in a limited sense, or it would be useless to preach the gospel to the world in an effort to convert people to the truth. All people who love the truth and wish to be guided by the truth are, in that respect, like the people of God, and consequently will hear the teachers of God; while those who do not love the truth and rebel at being guided by the truth, are in that respect like the world and will listen to the teachers of the world.

### Lessons to Learn

1. There are many antichrists in the world today. Orthodox Jews and all modernists who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ are antichrists, and Paul tells us to beware of them and put them and their doctrines to the test of inspired doctrine.

2. No one can test a doctrine unless he knows the standard by which it is to be tested. Since the teaching contained in the Bible is the standard by which to test all doctrines, it follows that we must study the Bible to be familiar with the

truth. We must examine the scriptures daily to see whether the things we are taught are true.

3. It is comforting to know that we are not left in the world infested with false teachers without a rule by which to know whether we are being taught truth or error. Those who blindly accept the doctrines of their superiors are living far beneath their privileges and their responsibilities, and they may be led into error and perdition.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?  
Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

## Golden Text Explained

What did Jesus say of blind leaders?  
 What are destructive heresies? and what  
 the consequence of believing them?  
 Does the sincerity of the false teacher  
 prevent these consequences?

What is said of deceitful workers?  
 What connection is there between money  
 and deceitful workers?

What is meant by glorying in the flesh?  
 Why are these false teachers compared  
 to ravening wolves?  
 What do these false teachers have in com-  
 mon with the brute creation?

## Introduction

Can the heathen idolater be sincere in  
 his faith?

If he converts us to his idolatry, has he  
 helped or injured us?

Does the sincerity or insincerity of a  
 preacher of truth determine the power  
 of truth?

Does the sincerity or insincerity of a  
 preacher of error determine the effect  
 of error?

## Warning Against Antichrists

What is meant by the last hour?

In what dispensation is it possible for  
 antichrists to appear?

To whom does the word "antichrist" ap-  
 ply?

Is it possible that an antichrist was at  
 one time a true Christian?

From whom had John's readers received  
 an anointing?

With what had they been anointed? and  
 what did this do for them?

What did John call the antichrists?

What promise is made to those who abide  
 in the gospel?

## How to Detect False Teachers

What is the meaning of the word "spirit"  
 in this text?

In what two ways could John's readers  
 prove the spirits?

What denomination refuses to allow its  
 members to prove, or test, its teachers?

By what rule were John's readers to re-  
 cognize antichrists?

Does this rule cover all false doctrines  
 today? why?

## Comfort for God's People

How does John comfort his readers?

Why had his readers been able to over-  
 come the antichrists?

If God is greater than Satan, how is  
 Satan able to get any of God's children?

Why does the world hear false teachers?

What attitude must people have before  
 they will hear and obey the truth?

What is there of interest to you in lessons  
 to learn?

## Lesson VI—November 10, 1957

## GOD IS LOVE

## Lesson Text

## 1 John 4: 7-21

7 Beloved, let us love one another:  
 for love is of God; and every one  
 that loveth is begotten of God, and  
 knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not  
 God; for God is love.

9 Herein was the love of God man-  
 ifested in us, that God hath sent his  
 only begotten Son into the world that  
 we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we  
 loved God, but that he loved us, and  
 sent his Son *to be* the propitiation  
 for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we  
 also ought to love one another.

12 No man hath beheld God at any  
 time: if we love one another, God  
 abideth in us, and his love is per-  
 fected in us:

13 Hereby we know that we abide  
 in him and he in us, because he hath  
 given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have beheld and bear  
 witness that the Father hath sent the  
 Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that  
 Je'sus is the Son of God, God abid-  
 eth in him, and he in God.

16 And we know and have believed  
 the love which God hath in us. God  
 is love; and he that abideth in love  
 abideth in God, and God abideth in  
 him.

17 Herein is love made perfect  
 with us, that we may have boldness  
 in the day of judgment; because as he  
 is, even so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love: but  
 perfect love casteth out fear, because  
 fear hath punishment; and he that  
 feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love, because he first loved  
 us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and  
 hateth his brother, he is a liar: for  
 he that loveth not his brother whom  
 he hath seen, cannot love God whom  
 he hath not seen.

21 And this commandment have  
 we from him, that he who loveth God  
 love his brother also.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"We *love, because he first loved us* (1 John 4: 19.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 3: 14-16.

## Daily Bible Readings

November 4. M.....	Sovereign Love of God (Deut. 7: 1-8)
November 5. T.....	God's Love Passes Knowledge (Eph. 3: 1-19)
November 6. W.....	God's Love Everlasting (Jer. 31: 1-3)
November 7. T.....	God's Love Is Manifested (Luke 19: 1-10)
November 8. F.....	God's Love for the Whole World (John 3: 14-16)
November 9. S.....	What Manner of Love (1 John 3: 1-5)
November 10. S.....	Unfailing Love (Isa. 49: 15, 16)

TIME. — A.D. 85-90.

PLACE. — Ephesus.

PERSONS. — John and the saints.

## Golden Text Explained

**1. God loves us.** (a) Proof of his love. The evidences of God's love are so manifold and abundant that man can never begin to enumerate all of them, and few, if any, of us are conscious of them at any time in our life. We take so many of them for granted because they are the usual good things of life. Even life itself is a manifestation of the love of God. Our good health of mind and body are proofs of God's love for us, and our daily bread, raiment, and shelter are evidences that God loves us. But the greatest manifestation of his love is seen in the gift of his Son to die for our sins to make it possible for us to be saved from our sins and to live with God in heaven, (b) Degree of his love. In this greatest manifestation of God's love we have the greatest degree of love manifested. John tells us, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3: 16.) The adverb "so" is one of degree and tells us that God loved us to that degree that he gave his Son to die the shameful death of the cross in order that we might be saved, (c) Origin of his love. God's love originated within himself. He did not love us because we were worthy of his love, nor did he love us because our lost condition excited his love and pity. God loves us because it is his nature to love; God is love. If God's love for us had depended on our being worthy of that love, he would never have manifested his love in the gift of his Son.

**2. God loved first,** (a) To teach us the value of love. Love is superior to hatred. It is a more valuable quality or characteristic than jealousy, or enmity, or hatred. Love will edify; hatred will destroy. God loved us in order to set us an

example and teach us to appreciate the finer, superior things of life, (b) To show us how to love. Man unaided by the teaching and example of God would not know how to love in the highest sense of that term. Man's love without God's teaching and example would be natural, fleshly love. So God loved us first to show us how to refine and purify our love and make it like his. (c) To love unlovely objects. Man is inclined to love only those who love him; he is inclined to be selfish in his love. But God set us an example of loving those who did not love him. God loved his enemies enough to give his Son to die for them; Jesus loved his enemies enough to die for them and to pray for them as he was dying. From these examples we learn to love those who do not love us, and those whose characters are unlovely in their nature.

**3. We love,** (a) God and all that are his. God's love for us begot within us the desire and the ability to love. So in return for his love, we love him and all that are his. John teaches us that it is impossible for us to love God without loving God's children, (b) To be like God. Jesus tells us to love our enemies and to pray for them that persecute us that we may be like our Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5: 45.) So when we follow the example of God's love for us when we were his enemies, we will cultivate a love, not only for God and all of God's children, but even for our enemies, (c) Proof of our love. The proof of our love is found in our deeds. Someone has said that good deeds are love in action. We show our love for the Lord when we keep his commandments. (John 14: 15.) Paul asked the church at Corinth to show

the proof of its love for the poor by giving money for the relief of the poor. (2 Cor. 8: 24.) If we culti-

vate a love that is like God's love, we will live like God would live if he were in our place.

## Introduction

God is an infinite being. The human mind cannot comprehend the infinite; hence, it is impossible for man to comprehend fully the being and character of God. Inspired writers have made three statements about God which are interesting, and which challenge our study. (1) God is spirit. (John 4: 24.) This is designed to acquaint us with the being of God, or the manner of his existence. To say that God is a spirit means that he is wholly immaterial. There is nothing material or tangible about God. In this mode of existence, he can neither be touched nor seen by the human eye. (2) God is light. (1 John 1: 5.) This statement

deals with the intellectual nature of God. This verse does not say that God is a light like the sun is a light in the universe, but that "God is light." This means that he is the source, not only of the physical light that illumines the material world, but that he is the source of spiritual light, the source of all moral and spiritual intelligence. (3) God is love. (1 John 4: 8.) This deals with the emotional nature of God, and being infinite in all his attributes, God exercises infinite love toward his creatures. And the expressions of this infinite love are infinite in their variations and degrees.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. To Love is to Be Like God (1

John 4: 7-11)

**Let us love one another.** John appeals to his readers to love one another "for love is of God." Those who claim to be of God should love one another because love is of God. This means that it is the nature of God to love and that God is the origin of love. If one claims to be begotten of God, he should manifest the nature of the one by whom he is begotten.

**Everyone that loveth.** John makes two statements with reference to those who have genuine love. (1) He is begotten of God. This does not mean that love is a condition of being begotten of God or becoming a child of God. It is true that one must love God and truth in order to become a child of God, but that is not John's point in this passage. The point here is that genuine love is evidence that one already has been begotten of God. (2) The one who loves knows God. Since genuine love is of the nature of God, one who possesses that love has partaken of the nature of God, and having partaken of the nature of God, he gives forth evidence of his knowledge of God. No one can be a partaker of the nature of God except through a knowledge of God. (2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.)

**He that loveth not.** After stating the proposition in the affirmative, John turns to the negative and says

that one who does not love does not know God. The reader will notice that no object of the verb love is expressed in these verses. This indicates that John meant that children of God are to love everything that God loves. We are to cultivate God-likeness in that we love all that God loves, and the specific application is that if we love like God loves, we will love one another.

**Herein was the love of God manifested.** John now gives an example of the love which God had for us. This example consists of his sending his only begotten Son in the world to die for us that we might live through him. (1) Since the gift of his Son to die for us is a manifestation of God's love, it follows that God loved us before he sent his Son. Therefore, the death of Jesus on the cross was not necessary in order to cause God to love us. (2) Our love for God is excited in us by a consideration of the sacrifice of Christ. This sacrifice manifests to us the love which God has for us, and this love which God manifested toward us moves us to love him in return. (3) We ought, therefore, (a) to think much about the love of God in order that our love for him might grow, in order that our obedience to him might be perfected, (b) We ought to tell sinners the story of God's love as manifested in the sacrifice of Christ in order to beget within them

a love for God that will lead them to obedience.

*Herein is love.* John repeats that the gift of God's Son in our behalf is a manifestation of love in our behalf. He also denies that our state or attitude toward God had anything to do in causing God to send his Son. Only the love which God had for us moved God to send his Son to die for us. The purpose of the coming of God's Son into the world is stated in two different phrases. (1) God sent his Son "that we might live through him." (2) God sent his Son "to be the propitiation for our sins." These are not two different reasons why God sent his Son into the world; they are two expressions of the same reason. The fact that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins makes it possible for us to live through him. See our comment on the word "propitiation" in lesson II of this quarter.

## II. God Abides in Those Who Love

(1 John 4: 12-16)

*No man hath beheld God.* God is spirit; he is immaterial and cannot, therefore, be seen with human eyes. John makes the same statement in his gospel. (John 1: 18.) Since we can neither see nor feel God dwelling in us, we must depend upon other evidences for our assurance. In this text, we have two statements made on which we may rely as proof that God abides in us. (1) The statement of an inspired apostle. John assures us that on certain conditions God does abide in us. If we meet those conditions, we have the assurance of the inspired word of God that God dwells in us. (2) The condition stated in this text for the indwelling of God is our love of one another. If we sincerely love one another, God abides in us.

*His love is perfected in us.* The phrase "his love" is not God's love for us, but our love for one another which he has begotten in us through his teaching and example. And the word "perfected" signifies maturity or completion. The love which we have for one another is not perfect in the sense that it can never increase or grow in strength and purity, but that it is mature, it is like God's love, not in its degree but in its nature.

*We know that we abide in him and he in us.* John says that we have knowledge that we abide in God, and

God abides in us. He further says that we have this knowledge because God has given us his Spirit. This simply states that the knowledge of God's abiding presence in us is furnished by or through the Holy Spirit. Then John goes one step further and says that the Holy Spirit which gives us a knowledge of the abiding presence of God in us has been given unto us. We are not to conclude that the Holy Spirit gives us this knowledge through, or on account of, his dwelling within us, but we are to understand that the Holy Spirit through whom we have this knowledge is that Spirit which God has given to dwell in us. (1 John 3: 24.)

### *We have beheld and bear witness.*

Though John could not see the Father, he could see the Son whom God sent into the world. He not only saw the Son who was sent into the world, but he bore witness that this Son is the Savior of the world. In this passage, John affirms four things with reference to Jesus Christ. (1) He is the only begotten Son of God. (2) He came that we might have life through him. (3) He was sent to be the propitiation for our sins. (4) He is the Savior of the world. And now John affirms "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God." "The Ebonites declared that Jesus was a mere man, the Cerenethians maintained that his body was, for a time, occupied by an *aeon* (or demon) called Christ; the Docetae argued that he only appeared to possess a body, but was, in reality, only a shadowy phantom. The confession, 'Jesus is the Son of God,' was a repudiation of each of these heretical positions, and those who thus acknowledged him confessed (a) his humanity, (b) his deity, (c) his reality. Such a confession, therefore, established the fact that the one making it had not imbibed the poison of these positions, but did indeed accept him for what he is: the divine Son of God." (Commentary on I John—Woods.)

*He that abideth in love.* John affirms two things with reference to the individual that continues to abide in love. (1) That individual abides in God. To abide in God means to continue to have fellowship with God, to be in continual communion with God. (2) God abides in that



person. For God to abide in us simply means that God, or Deity in the person of the Holy Spirit, has been given to the obedient believer and continues to abide in him on the condition that he continues to love.

### III. Perfect Love and its Manifestation (1 John 4: 17-21)

*Herein is love made perfect with us.* The word "herein" refers to that which goes before. John says that we know the love which God hath in us, and that the person who abides in love has fellowship with God because of God's abiding presence in him. And in a knowledge of these things, our love is made mature or complete. He then goes one step further and says that on account of this mature love which we have, we may have boldness even in the day of judgment. In other words, we can approach the judgment bar of God with boldness if we have cultivated and exercised the kind of love which John is here teaching us to possess. This boldness comes to us because "as he is, even so are we in this world." We are bold because we are like the Son of God. If we cultivate and exercise the same kind of love which Jesus manifested here on earth, we will be like him, and being like him, we may go boldly into the judgment.

*There is no fear in love.* The word "fear" is not that holy, reverential fear or awe which should characterize each child of God who realizes his unworthiness in the presence of the infinitely holy God, but it refers to that fear or terror or dread which a slave entertains toward his cruel master. Our love for God and for our fellowman makes it impossible for this type of fear to have a place in our hearts. We should also notice the word "perfect" in this statement. John says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." By "perfect" he does not mean that there is no weakness or imperfection in love. We will never be able to possess and exercise perfect love in the

sense that God exercises perfect love. With reference to God, perfection means that which is infinitely good and faultless. With us, perfection means maturity, being full-grown.

*If a man say, I love God.* John now demands what he has suggested in verses above. He has said, "He that loveth not knoweth not God." And he has said, "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." Now he says that one cannot love God and hate his brother. If any man claims to love God while at the same time he hates his brother, John affirms that that one is a liar. The word "brother" here, as so often in John's writings, refers to the child of God. If one is truly a child of God, he partakes of the nature of God. If we cannot love the nature of God in our brother, we cannot love God from whom that nature was derived. To partake of the nature is to be like God. If we cannot love one who is like God, we cannot love God.

*His brother whom he hath seen.* John reasons from the human point of view in this statement. He reasons that we will be more likely to love one whom we have seen than we will be likely to love one whom we have not seen. Since we have not seen God, but we have seen our brother, it follows that we would be more likely to love our brother than we would to love God. So it follows that if we do not love the brother who is in the image of Christ, whom we have seen and with whom we associate, we cannot love God whom we have not seen and with whom we have had no physical contact or association.

*This commandment have we from him.* The word "him" refers to Jesus Christ, so John affirms that we have a commandment from Jesus Christ to love one another. Jesus taught that the second greatest commandment from God is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. (Matt. 22: 35-40.)

### Lessons to Learn

1. The greatest desire and the highest ambition of the Christian is to be like God. If we love as we are taught in this lesson, we can realize this ambition. And we should not allow anything to hinder us from the

cultivation and the exercise of this love.

2. God has promised to dwell in us, walk in us, and be our God (2 Cor. 6: 16), but he will dwell there only on the condition that we con-

tinue to love as we are taught in this lesson.

3. Perfect, or mature, love is manifested in loving brethren in spite of the fact that they are not always

lovable in their disposition. But they, too, must love us in spite of our disposition. But since we cannot love God unless we love one another, we are obligated to love each other if we wish to go to heaven.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

What can you say of the evidences of God's love for us?

How is the degree of God's love expressed?

What do you know of the reason why God loves us?

State and discuss three things we are taught by God's love for us.

What are the objects of the Christian's love?

What does the practice of such love do for us?

What is the proof of our love?

#### Introduction

Why cannot the human mind fully understand God?

What statement teaches us of the manner of God's existence?

What statement of scripture teaches us of the intellectual nature of God?

What statement acquaints us with the emotional nature of God?

#### To Love is to Be Like God

Why does John exhort us to love one another?

State and discuss two things John says of those who love.

How do we become partakers of the nature of God?

What does John say of those who do not love?

Can you prove that Jesus did not die in order to get God to love us?

What causes us to love God? and what will this love do for us?

Why should we tell sinners about the love of God for them?

Why did God send his Son into the world?

#### God Abides in Those Who Love

Why has no man beheld God?

What assurance do we have that God abides in us?

What is meant by God's love being perfected in us?

What is the source of our knowledge of God's abiding presence in us?

State and discuss four things John affirms with reference to Jesus Christ.

What three things do we acknowledge when we confess Jesus to be God's Son?

What two things does John say of those who abide in love?

#### Perfect Love and its Manifestation

How is our love made perfect, mature?

What will this mature love do for us in the judgment?

Describe two kinds of fear.

What does John say about love and fear?

What does John say of one who claims to love God, but does not love his brother?

Can you show from John's reasoning that we are more likely to love the seen than the unseen?

What commandment do we have from Jesus about our love?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson VII—November 17, 1957

# OVERCOMING THE WORLD

## Lesson Text

### 1 John 5: 1-12

1 Whosoever believeth that Je'-sus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, *even* our faith.

5 And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Je'-sus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Je'-sus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son.

11 And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Rom. 12: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 2: 12-17.

## Daily Bible Readings

November 11. M.....	He Who Overcomes (Rev. 2: 11, 26; 3: 5)
November 12. T.....	Lamb Shall Overcome (Rev. 17: 14-18)
November 13. W.....	Promise to Those Who Overcome (Rev. 2: 7-17)
November 14. T.....	Resist the Devil (1 Pet. 5: 8-10)
November 15. F.....	Way of Escape Provided (1 Cor. 10: 11-13)
November 16. S.....	"It Is Written" (Matt. 4: 1-13)
November 17. S.....	"Redeeming the Time" (Eph. 5: 14-17)

TIME.—A.D. 85-90.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and the saints.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. How to prevent surrender, (a)

Know the enemy. Our text tells us that we should not be overcome of evil, but does not give us detailed instructions how we can keep from being overcome by the evil with which we are continually surrounded. But one of the best ways to prevent being overcome with evil is to know the enemy and the devices he uses to overcome us. Paul indicates that Satan may gain an advantage over us if we are ignorant of his devices. (2 Cor. 2: 11.) It therefore becomes necessary for us to know something about our enemy and how he works to overcome us. These things we can learn by a study of the Bible in which we are told of Satan's effort to overcome men and women of the past. We observe his devices and tactics in his attack upon Adam and Eve. We also observe his tactics in his effort to induce our Lord to sin. By studying his devices and tactics in these operations, we will be enabled to know how he seeks to overcome us. (b) Pray. Jesus taught his disciples to pray that they might be delivered from the evil one. (Matt. 6: 13.) And the apostle Paul taught the brethren at Thessalonica that the Lord is faithful and able to guard them from the evil one. (2 Thess. 3: 3.) We therefore ought to pray earnestly and fervently that the Lord will deliver us from the evil one, and that he will guard us in

times of danger, (c) Resist. James tells us two things that we are to do to prevent our being overcome by Satan. (1) We are to resist the devil, and he will flee from us. (2) We are to draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to us. (James 4: 7, 8.) When we keep near God and resist the devil and ask God for strength to overcome the temptation and use the way provided for our escape, there is no need for our being overcome with evil.

2. Overcome evil, (a) Best defense is strong offense. Our military men say that the best defense against an enemy is a strong offense. We should take the offensive against the evil about us and be busily engaged in overcoming that evil if we would wish to keep from being overcome by that evil, (b) Store the word of God in our hearts. When speaking of the righteous man, David said, "The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide." (Psalm 37: 31.) Again, David said, "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, That I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119: 11.) No one can use the word of God in his fight against evil unless he has that word stored in his heart. To fail to store the word of God in the heart is like the soldier going into battle without a weapon, (c) Purpose in the heart. We are told that Daniel remained true to his convictions because he

purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties. (Dan. 1: 8.) The individual who has no set purpose to be faithful and true to the Lord is not likely to weather strong temptations to sin. A purpose made prior to the temptation is half the battle against the temptation. No one is in condition to overcome temptation who has not a fixed purpose in his heart to resist temptation.

3. **Overcome evil with good,** (a) Do good to all men. Paul teaches us that according as we have opportunity we are to do good to all men. (Gal. 6: 10.) And, in Rom. 12: 17-20, he teaches us that we are not to render evil for evil, nor are we to avenge ourselves, but to feed our enemy if he thirsts and to do good to him if he does evil to us in order that we may by such treatment over-

come the evil in him and save him from that evil. (b) Make people ashamed to speak evil of us. Paul instructed Titus so to conduct himself that those who were of the contrary part might be ashamed because they could find no evil in him to report. (Titus 2: 8.) (c) Go the second mile. Jesus taught that we should not follow the rule which says, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," that we should not resist him that is evil, but rather when smitten on one cheek, turn the other. And if we are by the law compelled to go with a man one mile, we should be willing to go with him two miles. (Matt. 5: 38-42.) When we thus treat our fellowman we make him ashamed that he did us an evil and thus bring him to repent of the wrong which he did us. In this way we will overcome evil with good.

## Introduction

There are three great enemies of the child of God. (1) The flesh. As long as we live in the flesh, we will have to contend with the desires, the inclinations, and the weaknesses of our flesh. The desires of our flesh are so adapted to the world and the things of the world that there is continual danger in our satisfying these desires either in things which in themselves are sinful, or in things which may not be sinful but the degree in which we indulge them becomes sinful. Hence, we must continue to deny ourselves many of the desires of the flesh if we would cultivate holiness in the fear of God. (2) Satan. Satan is the enemy of every child of God. He is contin-

ually on the prowl seeking whom he may devour. He has schemes, devices, and snares by which he hopes to deceive, entrap and destroy every child of God on earth. Having had so much experience in the business of tempting the people of God, he is more than a match for any of us. Our safety lies in our faith in God and our willingness to go to God in times of trial. (3) The world. The word "world" as used in our lesson today refers to the total of all the influences of our environment which tend to wean us away from God and to destroy our spirituality. Satan is the prince in this world, and he works through the world to destroy us.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Overcoming Through Faith (1

John 5: 1-5)

**Whosoever believeth.** Here again we have faith presented as a test of whether one is a child of God rather than being a condition of becoming a child of God. Certainly no one can become a child of God who does not believe in Jesus as the Son of God, but John is teaching that continued belief in Jesus as the Son of God is a test whether one is a child of God. His proposition is that those who have faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God are the children of God, but those who do not have faith

in Jesus as the Son of God are not children of God. Of course, this word "faith" is to be taken in its broadest sense as a living, active, obedient faith. The faith which demons have (James 2: 19), is a dead faith because it is not obedient to God and is not therefore evidence that one is a child of God.

**Whosoever loveth him that begat.** John progresses one step further by saying that whosoever loveth God, loves him also that is begotten of God. This is a continuation of the thought presented in 1 John 4: 20, 21. John's reasoning runs like this.

Whoever believes is begotten of God. Whoever is begotten of God loves God. But one cannot love God without loving the children of God. Therefore, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, loves the children of God. And if we wish to complete the circle of reasoning, we go back to chapter 4, verse 7 and learn that whoever loves is begotten of God and knows God.

**Hereby we know.** But one may raise the question, how can we know that we love the children of God? To this question, John gives us an answer with two parts. (1) When we love God. Our love of God is evidence of our love for the children of God, for we cannot love one without loving the other. (2) When we do God's commandments. One of his commandments is that we love the brethren. (1 John 4: 21; Rom. 12: 9, 10; 1 Pet. 1: 22.) The spirit of complete surrender to the will of God in all matters which is included in obeying his commandments will assure us that we will be willing to obey this command to love the brethren.

**This is the love** of God. John defines the love of God as keeping the commandments of God. Where there is no obedience, there is no love. Obedience to God is the expression of one's love for God. But they are so closely related that where there is no expression there is no love. And John adds that keeping the commandments of God is not a grievous task. The word "grievous" is not to be taken in the sense of difficult, for some of the commandments are very difficult. But even the most difficult commandment is a pleasure to one who loves God. Many people find no pleasure in attending church and in regular periods of worship. These are galling experiences to them. But to people who love God, such spiritual experiences are joyous foretastes of heaven.

**Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world.** John tells us that all who are begotten of God overcome the world. Those who have no faith give evidence that they are not begotten of God; they are a part of the world and are overcome by the world. But those who have that living, obedient faith in Jesus as the Son of God, give evidence that they are the children of God and

are overcoming the world. "Because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." (1 John 4: 4.) Faith is said to be our victory over the world because it is through faith that we maintain our relationship with God who is able to make us stand and to give us the victory over sin.

## II. Witnesses Support our Faith (1

John 5: 6-9)

**This is he that came by water and blood.** Having said that faith in Jesus as the Son of God gives us our victory over the world, John now proceeds to name the witnesses on whom we rely for the evidence to support our faith in Jesus as God's Son. (1) The first witness John introduces is water. He said this Jesus who he affirms to be the Son of God, is the one that came by water. However, he says that he did not come by water only. The word "water" in this passage obviously refers to the baptism of Jesus. John the Baptist said he did not know who the Messiah was except by the means of identification given him, which was the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus when John baptized him. (John 1: 32-34; Matt. 3: 16.) From these we gather (a) that Jesus was introduced into his earthly mission by baptism in water; (b) the Father acknowledged Jesus as his Son while he was being baptized in water; and (c) the Holy Spirit descended upon him at the time of his baptism. Since these three facts are connected with the baptism of Jesus, we conclude that there can be no other meaning to the statement that Jesus came by water than his baptism. (2) John introduces the blood as the second witness. This obviously refers to the death of Jesus in which his blood was shed. Just before Jesus died, he said, "It is finished." By this he meant that his earthly mission which he began at his baptism had been accomplished; his work had been completed. He began his earthly mission in water; he ended it in blood. When John used water and blood, and in that order, as witnesses to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, may we not conclude that he intended to present, not only these two objects and the things they represent, but all the life and teaching

between the baptism and the death of our Lord as evidence that he was the Son of God.

*It is the Spirit that heareth witness.* This is the third witness which John offers to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. The Spirit bears witness because it is truth. From this we are not to conclude that the Holy Spirit and truth are identical, but the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of truth. (John 14: 17.)

*There are three who bear witness.* The fact that John uses the present tense indicates that the Spirit, the water, and the blood continue to bear witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. The Spirit was sent by both the Father and the Son to continue the work which Jesus had inaugurated. If Jesus were not the Son of God, the Holy Spirit would not continue a work begun by him. Hence, the continued work of the Holy Spirit is proof of the truth of the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God. The water continues to bear witness to that truth every time a penitent believer is buried with his Lord by baptism into death to sin. He pictures afresh to the world the submersion of the Son of God to his Father's will, and the fact that the Father acknowledged him to be his Son. The blood continues to witness to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God because God on account of the merits of that blood, forgives his people of their sins. And every time the people of God, forgiven through the blood of Christ, take the Lord's supper, they remind the world of the witness of the blood shed on Calvary. And then John adds that these three agree in their witness to the one central truth of the gospel that Jesus is the Son of God.

*If we receive the witness of men.* John uses a human custom to enforce a spiritual truth. Since we actually do receive the witness of men and act upon that witness, we ought to receive the witness of God. To the extent that God is greater than man, the witness which God gives of his Son is surer and more dependable than the testimony of men.

### III. Results of Belief and Unbelief

(1 John 5: 10-12)

*He that believeth on the Son of God.* John tells us that the believer "hath the witness in him." To what

does the term "the witness" in this statement refer? Since the Holy Spirit is the only one of the three witnesses mentioned above that could possibly dwell in us, some have concluded that the witness mentioned here is the Holy Spirit. But why would John single out one witness and say that one who does not believe that witness makes God a liar? If one rejects the witness of either the water or the blood, does he not as much make God a liar as the one who rejects the witness of the Holy Spirit? The witness of this verse is the sum of the evidence which the Spirit, the water, and the blood give to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. And the believer has this witness "in him" in the sense that he has accepted the testimony of these three witnesses.

*He that believeth not God.* The one who disbelieves the evidence borne by these three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, has made God a liar. These three witnesses are put forth by God for the purpose of establishing the truth of the deity of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the individual who refuses to accept the testimony of these witnesses has, in effect, accused God of using false witnesses, and of giving through them false testimony. Though God bore witness to the sonship of Christ when Jesus was baptized, we must not limit "the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son" to this one statement from heaven. God has offered the three witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and through them has borne witness concerning his Son. The man who refuses to believe in Jesus as the Son of God refuses the witness of God borne through these witnesses.

*The witness is this.* The word "witness" in this statement has the sense of testimony. The sum of the testimony which God has given us concerning his Son is this, that God has given us eternal life in his Son. John tells us, "In him was life." (John 1: 4a.) And Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." (John 11: 25.)

*He that hath the Son hath the life.*

Since Jesus is "the resurrection and the life," it follows that whoever possesses the Son has eternal life. The negative, then, would be true that whoever does not possess the Son does not have eternal life. In these few verses, we find summed up the results of belief and unbelief. He

that believes that Jesus is the Son of God is begotten of God and possesses that life found only in the Son of God. But he that disbelieves in Jesus as the Son of God is not begotten of God and does not possess and enjoy that eternal life which is found in the Son of God.

### Lessons to Learn

1. The faith we have may be dead or alive. If it is disobedient, it is dead. If it is obedient, it is alive and is able to give us the victory over the world.

2. Our faith rests, not on sight or feeling, but on testimony. Three witnesses are enough to establish any truth. The Spirit testifies through the Bible which we have in abundance in our land. The water testifies in every baptism of believers,

and the blood testifies every Lord's day when the children of God commemorate the death and suffering of Jesus Christ. We ought, therefore, to accept this testimony as conclusive.

3. Failure to believe means present condemnation. It denies us fellowship with God, robs us of the hope of eternal life, and dooms us to eternal punishment.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

How can a knowledge of our spiritual enemy help us to overcome evil?

What part does prayer have in overcoming evil?

What two things does James tell us to do to overcome evil?

How can we wage an offensive against evil?

How can we use the word of God in our fight against evil?

Of what value is a purpose in the heart in time of temptation?

What is to be our course of action toward those who do us evil?

How can we make people ashamed to speak evil of us?

What is meant by going the second mile with our enemies?

#### Introduction

Why is the flesh such a dangerous enemy? What must we do to be saved from the flesh?

Why is Satan to be feared as an enemy?

Why is the world an enemy to our souls?

#### Overcoming Through Faith

What does John present as a test of our being children of God?

Can you distinguish between this kind of faith and the faith which demons have?

How does John reason to the conclusion

that all who have been begotten will love the children of God?

State and discuss two reasons why we know we love the children of God?

How does John define the love of God?

What is meant by the commandments of God not being grievous?

What enables the begotten one to overcome the world?

What will be the consequence of ceasing to believe?

#### Witnesses Support our Faith

What is the first witness John introduces? and what is meant by it?

What is the second witness? and to what does it refer?

What is included in the witness of the water and blood?

Name the third witness John introduced and tell of his work in producing faith.

How do these witnesses continue to bear testimony to the sonship of Jesus?

How does John use a human custom to enforce a spiritual truth?

#### Results of Belief and Unbelief

What witness does the believer have in him?

What is the effect of refusing to believe the testimony of these witnesses?

What is the testimony which God has given concerning his Son?

How can one come into possession of eternal life?

Where is this life to be found?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to be learned?

## Lesson VIII—November 24, 1957

## THE SIN UNTO DEATH

## Lesson Text

## 1 John 5: 13-21

13 These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, *even* unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.

16 If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and *God* will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning

this do I say that he should make request.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not.

19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Je-sus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 *My* little children, guard yourselves from idols.

**Golden Text.**—“*All unrighteousness* is *sin*.” (1 John 5: 17a.)  
**Devotional Reading.**—1 John 1: 5-10.

## Daily Bible Readings

November 18. M.....	Sin Defined (1 John 3: 4; 5: 17)
November 19. T.....	Sting of Death (1 Cor. 15: 56-58)
November 20. W.....	Sin Against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12: 31, 32)
November 21. T.....	That Which God Hates (Prov. 15: 1-9)
November 22. F.....	Wages of Sin (Rom. 6: 20-23)
November 23. S.....	Besetting Sin (Heb. 12: 1-4)
November 24. S.....	Development of Sin (James 1: 13-15)

**Time.**—A.D. 85-90.

**Place.**—Ephesus.

**Persons.**—John and the saints.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Unrighteousness.** (a) Defined. The word “unrighteousness” is a compound word composed of the prefix “un” and the word “righteousness.” When the prefix “un” is used before a word, that prefix denotes the lack of a quality which is expressed in the word. So the word “unrighteousness” denotes the lack of the quality of righteousness in that with reference to which it is used. To illustrate, when we use the word “unhappy,” we mean that one is lacking in the quality of happiness. When we say that one is unmerciful, we mean that he is lacking in the quality of mercy. So when we say that a deed is an unrighteous deed, we mean that deed is lacking in the quality of righteousness. A

thing which possesses the quality of righteousness is that which is in harmony with the will of God. David said, “All thy commandments are righteousness.” (Psalm 119: 172.) Those who do the commandments of the Lord are doing righteousness, and those who are living contrary to the commandments of the Lord are doing unrighteousness. And so John is saying in our text that any thought, word, or deed which is contrary to the will of the Lord is sin. (b) Illustrated. When Peter denied his Lord and cursed and swore that he did not even know Jesus, he acted contrary to the will of the Lord, and therefore committed a sin. When Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount of money they received for



their property, they did that which was contrary to the will of the Lord. It was an unrighteous deed, and therefore a sin. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth about a sin which existed there. A young man had taken his father's wife. This was contrary to the teaching of the Lord; it was an unrighteous deed, and therefore a sin.

2. **Sin.** (a) Defined. Our word "sin" is a translation of a Greek word which means "to miss the mark, to veer away from that which is right and good." There is nothing in the word to indicate a reason or motive for missing the mark. So, one may miss the mark through ignorance, weakness, or otherwise, and still the deed will be a sin. (b) Illustrated. When David allowed impure desires to lead him to take another man's wife, he missed the mark; he veered away from that which is right and good. The mark at which David was aiming was righteousness and holiness, but instead, he became involved in unrighteousness and unholiness. He sinned. When Peter was in Antioch, he ate with Jews and Gentiles, making no distinction. Later some brethren from Jerusalem came to Antioch, and Peter, fearing what they might think and say about him, ceased to eat with the uncircumcised and made unrighteous class distinctions. Peter was aiming at the mark of Christlikeness, of brotherly love for those in Christ without distinction based on race, color, or social standards. But through weakness Peter missed

the mark; he failed to hit that at which he aimed. Therefore, he sinned.

3. **Sins classified.** (a) Ignorance. People can sin without being aware of it. They can fail to do that which the Lord commands because they do not know the commandment. Or they can do that which the Lord forbids because they do not know that God has forbidden it. The Jews crucified Jesus in ignorance. (Acts 3: 18.) Paul persecuted the church in ignorance. (1 Tim. 1: 13.) Ignorance does not excuse us; we may be lost on account of the sins of ignorance. (b) Weakness. Those who follow the path of least resistance are guilty of the sin of weakness. Those who know what is right and have some desire to do what is right, but allow their company to lead them in the opposite direction are guilty of the sin of weakness. Peter was guilty of this type of sin when he denied his Lord and when he refused to eat with the Gentiles in Antioch. (c) Rebellion. Those who do wrong, know they are doing wrong, and do not care how God feels about the matter are guilty of the sin of rebellion. Those who sin in weakness know they are doing wrong, but there is a difference in the attitude of the one who sins in weakness and the one who sins in rebellion. There is hope that one who sins in weakness will repent and do better, but there is little hope for one who sins in rebellion ever to repent.

## Introduction

There is another classification of sins which the reader will do well to consider. (1) Sin in the moral realm. The moral standards of the Lord are above the moral standards of the world. One is not necessarily doing right when he does that which his conscience approves, nor is one necessarily doing right because the world at large approves of such conduct. A thing is proper from a moral point of view if it is in harmony with the will of the Lord. If a thing is contrary to the standard set by Jesus Christ, that thing is improper and wrong. (b) There is the possibility of sinning in the realm of doctrine. When one teaches a religious

doctrine, it is either right or wrong. It is scriptural or unscriptural. If that doctrine is taught in the Bible, it is right; if it is not taught in the Bible, it is wrong and sinful. (c) One may sin in the realm of religious practice. The Lord has revealed his will completely with reference to what we do in our worship and service to God. Any practice we may hold which is taught in the gospel is right and any religious practice to which we hold that is not taught in the Bible is wrong and sinful. Singing praises to God as an act of worship is right because we are taught by the Lord to do so, but playing in-

struments of music in praise to God is wrong because the Lord does not teach us to do that. And we should remember that the possibility of sin

is increased when we know that sin in any of these areas may be committed either in ignorance, weakness, or rebellion.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. Assurance in Prayer (1 John 5: 13-15)

*These things have I written unto you.* John states the purpose of the writing of this epistle. And he says that the purpose is "that ye may know that ye have eternal life." He wrote his record of the life of Christ that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing they might have eternal life. (John 20: 30, 31.) Now he writes his epistle to those who already "believe on the name of the Son of God" and assures them that they have eternal life in prospect. Since eternal life is a state into which the righteous go from the judgment (Matt. 25: 46), it follows that we cannot have in actual possession eternal life at this time. But we do have eternal life in the sense that we have been given the Holy Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance (Eph. 1: 13, 14), and that we now entertain the hope of eternal life with the assurance that if we keep on believing on the name of the Son of God, we will come into actual possession of eternal life.

*And this is the boldness which we have.* Since we have eternal life in prospect, we are bold to ask that which is according to his will in the assurance that he will hear and answer our prayers. We cannot always know whether our desires are in harmony with the will of God because the Lord has not told us in detail the things for which we may pray. It is true that there are general principles regulating our prayers and that we may pray in harmony with these principles, but there are many details of life which we will be unable to classify under these principles. Hence, we may not know whether our desires are in harmony with the will of the Lord. But we are assured that the Lord will grant our petitions if they are in harmony with his will. If they are not according to his will, he will withhold them from us, and the proof that these things are withheld from us should satisfy us that they are not

in harmony with the will of the Lord, and we should cease to desire them.

*We know that we have the petitions.* Some have taken this to mean that we receive as soon as we ask and that our faith should accept the prayer as answered whether we can realize it or not. If we do not receive that for which we ask, according to this theory, it is contrary to the will of God and God has answered our prayer by withholding that which we ask. But we pray with reference to many things in the future, and with reference to those things future, we could not say "we have the petitions we have asked of him" at this present time. But we are to ask with a faith that confidently expects God to do that which is for our good and wait for him to grant the petition in his own way at his own time.

### II. Praying for Sinners (1 John 5: 16, 17)

*If any man see his brother sinning.* The words "any man" must refer to men in the class to which John addressed this epistle. Verse 13 tells us that he was writing to people who "believe on the name of the Son of God." And the words "his brother" refer to a brother in Christ, a fellow Christian. John would not teach that a man out of Christ had the right to pray for a sinning brother and expect an answer to his prayer. Nor would John teach that a man in Christ has a right to pray for a man out of Christ and expect that his prayers for the forgiveness of the sins of that man would be answered. The words "see his brother sinning a sin" imply that the sin under consideration is one which a man may observe in his brother. Next, John tells us that there is a sin unto death, and again, there is a sin not unto death. He also tells us that we may pray for the brother observed sinning a sin not unto death, but we may not pray for the brother whom we observe sinning a sin unto death. We therefore conclude not only that

the sin is of such nature that we can observe it in the brother's life, but that we can determine whether that sin is unto death or not unto death.

**God will give him life.** John assures us that if we ask God in prayer to grant life unto the brother whose sin is not unto death, our prayer shall be answered. But, if the sin is unto death, we may not pray for that individual, and if we should pray for his forgiveness, we are assured that God will not hear and answer that prayer. It is well to consider the words "life" and "death" in this passage. Since the wages, consequence, of sin is death, and yet sinners continue to live physically, we conclude that physical death is not the consequence of sin. But we learn that our own sins separate us from God (Isa. 59: 1, 2; Eph. 2: 1ff.), and that the second death which is destruction in the lake of fire and brimstone is the consequence of our sins (Rev. 21: 8). So we conclude that the word "death" in this passage refers not to physical death but to spiritual and eternal death. This being true, the word "life" which is used in apposition to death must be taken to mean spiritual life. And the expression "give him life" simply means the Lord will give remission of sins and salvation from the spiritual and eternal death which is the consequence of sin.

**There is a sin unto death.** John has already told us that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9.) Since the Lord is willing to cleanse us from "all unrighteousness," and all unrighteousness is sin, we conclude that God is willing to forgive us of all sins on the condition that we confess our sins. But if we refuse to confess a sin, we manifest a spirit of pride and rebellion which makes it impossible for God to forgive us of that sin. So we conclude that the sin unto death of this passage is any sin which a person is unwilling to confess. The phrase "unto death" means that which tends or leads to death, and since any sin has that tendency, all sins are unto death if we do not turn from them, confess them, and ask God's forgiveness. The pride and rebellion which cause people to refuse to confess their sins are

the cause of their spiritual death and eternal destruction. The prayers of the righteous in behalf of the proud and rebellious would be of no avail, so John says, "Not concerning this do I say that he should make requests."

### III. Things We Know (1 John 5: 18-21)

**We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not.** Begotten of God simply means to be a child of God. And when John says that the child of God "sinneth not," he does not mean that a child of God is mentally and physically incapable of a single act of unrighteousness. But he means that the child of God cannot follow a settled course of unrighteousness. The tense of the Greek verb implies this continual course of life so that the sense of John's statement is that whosoever is a child of God does not continue to live in sin. John draws a contrast and shows the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil by saying that whosoever continues to abide in God does not continue to live in sin. But whosoever continues in unrighteousness is not of God. (1 John 3: 6-10.)

**Keepeth himself.** We are taught that God is able to guard us from stumbling (Jude 24), that we are guarded by the power of God (1 Pet. 1: 5), that God is able to guard that which we have committed unto him (2 Tim. 1: 12), and that God is able to establish us and guard us from the evil one (2 Thess. 3: 3). And yet John tells us here that the begotten one keepeth himself so that the evil one toucheth him not, and Jude exhorts us to keep ourselves in the love of God. (Jude 21.) James further tells us that pure religion consists not only in visiting the fatherless and widows, but in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. (James 1: 27.) So, in order for one to remain in the proper relationship with God, we conclude that the power of God must be exerted in his behalf to establish, to guard, and to keep him from the evil one. And furthermore, in addition to the power of God being exerted, that we must exert our energies doing all that we are able to do to keep ourselves. We further conclude that the power of God will be exerted in our behalf on

condition that we exert our powers.

We *know that we are of God*. This is the second in the series of things which John says that we as the children of God may know. In a former lesson we learned how we know that we have passed out of death and into life, and that is "because we love the brethren." (1 John 3: 13.) And again, we know that God abides in us and that we abide in him because of the Spirit which he has given to us. (1 John 3: 24; 4: 13.) While we know that we are children of God and have our spiritual life from our union with him, we also know that "the whole world lieth in the evil one." The word "world" here refers to the unconverted mass of humanity who are in bondage to sin. To be "in the evil one" is to be in such relationship with Satan that one is his son and servant. To be "of God" is to be in such relationship with God that we derive our spiritual life from him and that we are his children.

We *know that the Son of God is come*. This is the third in the series of things which John says we know. There were those in his day who

denied that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. But John said that he had seen with his eyes and his hands had handled that life which was with the Father and which was manifested to us and which is the eternal life. (1 John 1: 1-3.)

We *are in him that is true*. To be "in him that is true" is to be in Christ. We are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) Only those who have thus been baptized into Christ can say with John that they know that they are in him that is true.

This *is the true God, and eternal life*. This Son of God, Jesus Christ, John declares to be the true God. The same affirmation may be found elsewhere in the New Testament. (John 1: 1; Rom. 9: 5.)

*Guard yourselves from idols*. John closes his epistle with the exhortation to keep ourselves from idolatry. In our day and in our nation there is little danger that we will bow down to idols made of wood or stone, but the danger is that we may allow material wealth to become an idol and that we shall worship the god mammon.

## Lessons to Learn

1. If our relationship to God is the basis of our assurance that he will answer our prayers, it follows that those who are not in that relationship have no assurance that their prayers will be answered.

2. The necessity for confession of our sins is emphasized by the fact that a sin we refuse to confess is a sin unto death. Neither we nor our brethren need pray for the forgive-

ness of sins we refuse to confess.

3. So many are the evidences, so abundant the assurances, and so great our confidence in the existence of God, the deity of Christ, and our relationship with him, that we can say we *know* these things are true. Only those who accept the Bible as the inspired word of God and live by its teachings can know these things.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

What is the meaning of the word "unrighteousness"?

How can we determine whether an act is righteous or unrighteous?

Give some illustrations to prove your definition of the word.

What is the meaning of "sin" as used in our text?

Give some examples to illustrate your definition.

Define and illustrate three classes of sins.

How can you distinguish between sins of weakness and rebellion?

### Introduction

Give a second classification of sins.

How may we determine whether a thing is morally wrong?

How may we know whether a doctrine is right or wrong?

By what standard are we to measure all our religious practices?

By what is the possibility of sin in our lives increased?

### Assurance in Prayer

For what purpose did John write this chapter?

Why can we not have eternal life in actual possession in this life?

In what sense do we now have eternal life?

On what condition will our petitions be granted?

When should we cease to desire and pray for certain things?

In what sense do we know that we have the things for which we pray?

#### Praying for Sinners

To whom does John grant the privilege of praying for his brother?  
Can you prove that the sin unto death is observable in a man?  
Can we know whether a sin is unto death or not unto death?  
What is the meaning of "life" and "death" in this passage?  
What is meant by "giving life" to the sinning brother?  
What is meant by the sin unto death?  
Why are we not to pray for one guilty of a sin unto death?

#### Things We Know

What does the phrase "begotten of God" mean?

What does John affirm concerning the child of God?  
How does John contrast the child of God and the child of the devil?  
Name three things God is able to do for his children?  
Harmonize what God does for us with what we are commanded to do for ourselves.  
On what condition will God exert his powers in our behalf?  
What does John say we know about ourselves? and about the world?  
What is meant by being in the evil one?  
What is the third thing which John says we know?  
What does John affirm concerning Jesus Christ?  
With what warning does John close his epistle?  
What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

### Lesson IX—December 1, 1957

## JOHN WRITES TO THE ELECT LADY AND HER CHILDREN

### Lesson Text

2 John 1-13

1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth;

2 For the truth's sake which abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever:

3 Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Je'-sus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoice greatly that I have found *certain* of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it.

7 For many deceivers are gone

forth into the world, *even* they that confess not that Je'-sus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the an'-ti-christ.

8 Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your* house, and give him no greeting:

11 For he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write them* with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be made full.

13 The children of thine elect sister salute thee.

**Golden Text.**—*"I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth"* (2 John 4.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Phil. 4: 1-3.

### Daily Bible Readings

November 25. M. .... Paul's Helpers (Phil. 4: 1-3)  
November 26. T. .... Obedient Children (Eph. 6: 1-3)  
November 27. W. .... Duties of Parents to Children (Col. 3: 21)  
November 28. T. .... Dorcas, a Charitable Woman (Acts 9: 36-43)

November 29. F. Lydia, a Convert in Philippi (Acts 16: 14, 15)  
 November 30. S. Christ Appears to Women (Matt. 26: 1-10)  
 December 1. S. .... The Ideal Woman (Prov. 31: 10-31)

TIME.—A.D. 85-90.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and the elect lady and her children.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Things in which to rejoice, (a)

In truth. Paul tells us that the one who has genuine love "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." (1 Cor. 13: 6.) To rejoice in truth is to rejoice in the spread of the truth among men and to rejoice in the victory of truth over error. And John in our text says that he rejoiced that he found certain people "walking in truth." To walk in truth is to walk in harmony with the teaching of the truth, so we ought to rejoice when we find people walking in harmony with the teachings of God. (b) In people who walk in the truth. To rejoice in people who walk in the truth is to find delight in the knowledge that they are living in harmony with the truth and to delight in association with people whose lives are in harmony with the teachings of God. To find more delight and satisfaction in association with people who walk contrary to truth than we find in walking with people who walk in harmony with truth is to betray a lack of appreciation of the truth in our own hearts. (c) In the Lord. Paul teaches us that we should "rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. 4: 4.) To rejoice in the Lord is to find our peace and joy and satisfaction in our spiritual relationships and activities. One who attends worship, or obeys any other commandment of the Lord, simply because he is afraid he will go to hell if he does not do so is not rejoicing in the Lord. Those who find greater delight in worldly pleasures than they find in worshiping and serving God are not rejoicing in the Lord.

### 2. Things over which to weep, (a)

Disregard for the law of God. David said, "Streams of water run down mine eyes, Because they observe not thy law. ... I beheld the treacherous, and was grieved, Because they observe not thy word." (Psalm 119: 136, 158.) If David wept because so many people disregarded the word of the Lord, and he was a man after God's own heart, we would do well

to weep because of the multitudes today who have no regard for the word of God and the authority of Christ, (b) Life of the wicked. Peter tells us that Lot was "sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked." (2 Pet. 2: 7.) From this we learn that righteous people should not find any merriment in the wickedness of the world about them. The wickedness of the wicked is cause for weeping in the righteous rather than their amusement, (c) Sin in the church. When Paul heard of this gross immorality in the church at Corinth, he wept and wrote a letter condemning the sinner and demanding his repentance or expulsion from the fellowship of the church. He says, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears." (2 Cor. 2: 4a.) There is sufficient sin in the average church today to cause the pious people of the church to be anxious and in many cases, to weep.

3. Hope for the future, (a) Children going to church. We can rejoice that so many of our churches over the land are recognizing the importance of reaching the children during their tender years, the formative period of their life, when they can be turned easily toward the truth and righteousness. Our churches in many communities are doing a fine work in their Sunday schools teaching the children, aiding the parents to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, (b) Young people taking part. In many churches, young people are serious in their religion, and are taking active part in the work of the church. They have been properly reared in Christian homes and have been well taught in Sunday schools. Consequently, they are qualified for real service in the church, and they are willing to accept responsibilities and do their part. Not only are young people actually performing a part in the work and worship of the church

today, but they are training for greater service in the kingdom. Churches are realizing the need for training courses in which they study seriously the qualifications and duties of those who would take the lead in worship and service. And these young people are being given an opportunity to put into practice the things they learn in these train-

ing classes and so are actually training for greater service in the future. And as John rejoiced that certain children are walking in the truth, so we can rejoice that thousands of young people are being taught the truth, that they are now walking in the truth, and training for an even greater and closer walk with God in the truth.

## Introduction

The second and third epistles of John, as well as second Peter and Jude, were not admitted to the canon of New Testament scripture as early as many of the other books. Some probable reasons have been assigned for their late acceptance. (1) These letters, especially those of John, were written much later than such books as the gospels and the letters of Paul, and consequently, did not get into circulation as early as others. (2) These letters were private letters addressed to individuals instead of churches and would not have the early and wide circulation enjoyed by letters addressed to churches. Irenaeus, (born A.D. 120, died 202), who was a pupil of Polycarp, who

was a pupil of John, quoted from the second epistle of John and gave him credit for writing it. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 160 to 220) also spoke of John's second epistle. And we are told that Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome all spoke of two short epistles by John, showing that they knew of the existence of these epistles, but also knew that some were inclined to think they were not written by the apostle. However, the internal evidence for John's authorship of this epistle is strong enough that practically the whole of the scholarship of Christendom has accepted it as the writing of the apostle "whom Jesus loved."

## Exposition of the Text

### I. John Salutes a Christian Family

(2 John 1-4)

*The elder, unto the elect lady.* The word "elder" is used in the scripture in two senses. (1) Its official sense. When the apostle Paul and Barnabas had established churches in Asia Minor, they went back over the ground covered and "appointed for them elders in every church." (Acts 14: 23.) In this and other passages, the word has an official connotation.

(2) It is used to denote age. Paul told Timothy, "Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren." (1 Tim. 5: 1.) Here the word "elder" is used in apposition to "younger men." Undoubtedly John used the word in this sense in our text. He was a very aged man, and was writing to younger people giving them counsel and encouragement. The "elect lady" to whom this letter is addressed is probably a woman of John's acquaintance and not a church. John would hardly speak of the church as having children when the church is composed of the people which would

not be referred to by the word "children." But whether the word "lady" is to be taken in the sense of that English word, or whether it is to be taken as Cyria, the English spelling of the Greek word, as the proper name of this woman is uncertain.

*Whom I love in truth.* John speaks of this lady as one whom he loved. Not only did he speak of his love for her, but spoke of his love being in truth, which means sincerity. Being of the elect, she was a child of God, and John could not claim to love God without loving her as the child of God. (1 John 4: 20.) But John was not the only one who loved this elect lady, for he says, "Not I only, but also all they that know the truth." This, of course, must be limited to those, not only who knew the truth, but those who were acquainted with this lady. This statement indicates that this lady was both widely and favorably known. And since we are told that her children walked in truth, we may conclude that she also walked in truth and so deserved to be favorably known.

***For the truth's sake which abideth***

***in us.*** John mentions that the woman was not loved for any physical or worldly attractiveness, but that she was loved for the sake of the truth which found a home in her. She believed the truth, loved the truth, lived by the truth, and defended the truth, and consequently, deserved to be loved by all those who knew and loved the truth. Two things of interest are said with reference to the truth in our text. (1) The truth abode in the Christians. The word "abideth" is in the present tense, and so suggests that it continued to abide in them. The truth had found a home and had settled permanently in them.

(2) "It shall be with us forever." The word of God is not a transient; it is not a temporal thing; it is not like "the grass that withereth," but "the word of the Lord abideth forever."

***Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us.*** Grace is the favor of God toward the sinner; mercy is grace showing itself in beneficent acts; and peace is in the mind of man as the result of God's grace and mercy.

***Thy children walking in truth.***

This woman had sufficient influence on her children to cause them to walk in the same truth which she had accepted and in which she walked. It is most probable that she was a widow, or that her husband was not a Christian, -since no mention is made of him. In either case she deserved all the more credit in that she supported her children and influenced them to walk with God.

**II. Exhortations and Warnings (2**

John 5-8)

***And now I beseech thee.*** The words "and now" suggest a transition from one thing to another. Hence, the salutation and address extends through verse 4 instead of stopping in verse 3 as the American Standard Version indicates. John used the term "beseech" to impress his reader with the urgency of the appeal. He refrained from the use of the word "command" because of his love for his reader and respect for her faithfulness and devotedness to God. That which was on his mind was not a new commandment because it was as old as the gospel. It was the duty of our love one for another. Jesus had taught his disciples that they

were to love one another even as he loved them. He had taught them that this unusual love would be the badge of their discipleship; all men would know they were disciples because of the love which existed among them. Furthermore, it was not a commandment which was simply to be heard and admired for the sake of the philosophy which it suggested, but it was a commandment which should be accepted and one in which those who believed were to walk. Many people today say that they admire the teaching of Christ; they think Jesus of Nazareth was the greatest teacher that ever lived; they admire his philosophy, but they do not live by his teaching. John wished this lady and her children not only to admire the philosophy of this commandment, but he wanted it to direct their lives so that they might become like Christ.

***For many deceivers are gone forth.***

John suggests that the disciples of Jesus will need especially to walk in the commandment to love one another because of the fact that so many deceivers have gone forth into the world denying that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This simply means that they deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God. Their denial of his death, if accepted by the readers of this epistle, would take away from them every reason for loving one another as Jesus loved them. Hence, the warning against the deceivers who deny the deity of Christ. John said, "This is the deceiver and the antichrist." Those who "confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh" are said to be antichrists.

***Look to yourselves.*** To look to ourselves is to be careful to guard our spiritual welfare, and John admonishes us thus to be careful so that we may not lose the things which we have already gained, and that we may receive a full reward for our labors. By the "things which we have wrought" is meant things which these deceivers could take away from Christians. Because deceivers had gone into the world, the reader was to be careful lest she lose the things which the apostles had wrought in her. Whether this refers to the truth which they had taught her and which the deceivers might take away



from her, or whether it refers to her salvation which was due to the work of preaching the gospel done by the apostles and which might be lost by giving heed to the deceivers, is difficult to determine. To lose either one would mean that she lost the other, and hence, we need not bother to distinguish between them.

### III. Treatment of False Teachers (2

John 9-11)

*Whosoever, goeth onward.* To go onward and abide not in the teaching of Christ is to go beyond that which Jesus taught. Some take the term "teaching of Christ" to mean only the doctrine concerning his deity which the deceivers of verse 7 denied. But this is too limited a view of the statement of John. One may as well reject the teaching of the Bible concerning the sinless life of Christ or the moral standards of Christ as to deny the deity of Christ. Furthermore, if we truly accept the doctrine concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, we will accept his teaching on all other subjects, and we will be submissive to his authority, respecting not only that which he has taught, but the silence of Christ with reference to matters on which he did not teach. One who institutes acts of worship and service which Jesus Christ did not teach has gone beyond the teaching of Christ. Making the sign of the cross, the use of "holy water," and the use of instruments of music in Christian worship are examples of going beyond the teaching of Christ.

*Hath not God.* John says the individual who disrespects the authority of Christ enough to go beyond the teaching of Christ has not God. By this he means that such forfeit the right to fellowship and communion with God. The Jews added human traditions to the commandments of the Lord in their day, and as a result, God rejected their worship. (Matt. 15: 7ff.) So when we pervert the gospel today and teach for doctrine the commandments of men, we forfeit our fellowship with God and derive no benefit and gain no blessings from the performance of our acts of worship and service.

*He that abideth in the teaching.* Those who are satisfied with the teaching which Christ has given us and who continue to abide in that

teaching enjoy the fellowship both of the Father and of the Son.

### *And bringeth not this teaching.*

John warns that if one comes to you and brings not this teaching, does not teach what Christ taught, he is not to be received in your house, nor is he to enjoy your greeting. This simply means that the hospitality of our homes is not to be extended to false teachers in such way as to contribute to the spread of their false doctrine. This does not mean that we may not visit socially in their homes and have unbelievers in our homes, or we make it contradict Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 5: 9-13. But it does mean that we cannot extend the hospitality of our homes to teachers of false doctrine when such hospitality would contribute to the spread of their doctrine.

*Partaketh in his evil works.* This is assigned as a reason why the hospitality of our homes cannot be extended to false teachers. The one who extends the hospitality of his home to these teachers becomes a partaker with that teacher in his evil work. We should notice the implication of the term "evil works." If we extend the hospitality of our homes to the false teacher, we help him spread his false doctrine. But John says this is partaking with him in his evil works. We conclude, therefore, that teaching false doctrine is an evil work.

### IV. Conclusion of Epistle (2 John 12: 13)

*Having many things to write.* John indicates that he has much more to communicate to this elect lady, but he did not care to write them with paper and ink. He had hope of visiting with her and speaking face to face with her. The paper of that day was not the refined writing material of our day. It was made of the pith of the papyrus plant, pressed and dried in tablet form. And the ink is said to have been made by "mixing soot and water and thickened with gum."

### *The children of thine elect sister.*

Mention is made of another woman, and obviously, a sister in the flesh to the one which John addressed. We have sufficient information concerning her to know a few things.

(1) The sister of the one to whom John wrote was also one of the elect.

She was a Christian. (2) She had children. She had accepted the responsibility of bearing and rearing children. (3) These children had

sufficiently good rearing to appreciate the acquaintance and company with John the apostle. This indicates that they were Christians.

### Lessons to Learn

1. A Christian family may be the source of a lot of comfort, encouragement, and satisfaction to others. This family to which John wrote obviously meant much to him. Parents should so conduct the affairs of their home that it will make such a contribution to all who come within its range of influence.

2. Deceivers are still in the world. Some deny the deity of Jesus while trying to extol his teaching in the realm of religion and morals. Others

praise him for his philosophy while rejecting his authority in their personal conduct.

3. If we walk by faith, we will never go beyond the teaching of Christ. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.) Since faith comes by hearing the word of God, and we walk by faith, we will walk according to the teachings of God. We will walk when and where God teaches us to walk.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

#### Golden Text Explained

Name and discuss three things in which we ought to rejoice.

Name and discuss three things over which we should weep.

Discuss the necessity for cultivating the ability to rejoice and weep over such things.

Discuss some things which give us reason to hope for the future of the church.

#### Introduction

What is meant by the canon of New Testament scripture?

Give two reasons why John's last two epistles were late being received into the canon.

What early church writers mention John as the writer of these epistles?

What opportunity did Irenaeus have to be acquainted with John's writings?

#### John Salutes a Christian Family

Discuss two meanings of the word "elder" used in our text.

What do you know of the elect lady to whom this letter is addressed?

What is meant by loving in truth?

What evidence do we have that this lady was widely and favorably known?

For the sake of what did John love this lady in truth?

What two things are said about the truth in our text?

What is said of the children of the lady to whom John wrote?

#### Exhortations and Warnings

What indicates John's respect for the faithfulness of the lady addressed?

Contrast admiration for Jesus as a teacher with respect for the authority of Jesus.

Why was there a need for the warning John gave?

What had teachers of truth wrought in this lady?

Was there a possibility of her losing what had been wrought in her?

#### Treatment of False Teachers

What is meant by going beyond the teaching of Christ? and give examples.

What is the consequence of going beyond the teaching of Christ?

What is to be our attitude toward teachers who go beyond the teaching of Christ?

Can you prove that teaching false doctrine is an evil work?

#### Conclusion of Epistle

Why did John not write all he wished to tell the lady?

What do you know of the writing material used in John's day?

What do you know of the elect lady's sister and family?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson X—December 8, 1957

## JOHN WRITES TO GAIUS THE BELOVED

## Lesson Text

## 3 John 1-14

1 The elder unto Ga'ius the beloved, whom I love in truth.

2 Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth.

4 Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal;

6 Who bare witness to thy love before the church: whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God:

7 Because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gen'-tiles.

8 We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth.

9 I wrote somewhat unto the

**Golden Text.**—*"Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God."* (3 John 11.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Gal. 5: 13-25.

## Daily Bible Readings

December 2.	M.	Gaius, a Companion of Paul (Acts 19: 21-29)
December 3.	T.	Gaius, a Man of Derbe (Acts 20: 1-4)
December 4.	W.	.....Gaius, a Corinthian (Rom. 16: 23)
December 5.	T.	Paul Baptized Gaius (1 Cor. 1: 10-17)
December 6.	F.	Should Not Seek Pre-eminence (Rom. 12: 1-21)
December 7.	S.	Should Do Good to All (Matt. 5: 13-16)
December 8.	S.	Hospitality Commanded (Heb. 13: 1-3)

**Time.**—A.D. 85-90.

**Place.**—Ephesus.

**Persons.**—John and Gaius.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Value of imitation.** (a) Instruction. Our text tells us to imitate that which is good. By imitating good men and women, we learn how to be good and to do good. Parents often make use of imitation in the instruction of their children. They encourage their children to imitate them in the matter of doing many things, and through this they

church: but Di-ot'-re-phen, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and casteth *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12 De-me'-tri-us hath the witness of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

13 I had many things to write unto thee, but I am unwilling to write *them* to thee with ink and pen:

14 But I hope shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be unto thee. The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name.

give their children instruction as to how to do many home duties as well as how to live right. Parents should also take advantage of this means of instructing their children by encouraging them to imitate good men and women with whom they are associated. (b) Guidance. We not only need instruction in righteousness, but we need guidance in the

matter of putting into practice the instruction which we receive. When the teacher of mathematics teaches the class a principle, it is good to solve a problem which illustrates the use of that principle. And in the solving of this problem, the teacher sets an example of the use of the principle. The students then imitate the teacher in the use of that principle. By solving that problem and setting the example, the teacher furnishes the guidance necessary to enable the students to imitate him in the use of that principle. And so, with the principles of Christianity, mature people apply the principles of Christianity in their daily living. Those that are not so mature may imitate them and thus follow their guidance in the application of Christian principles, (c) Encouragement. By imitating those who are mature in the Christian life, we receive encouragement to live right ourselves. There is this element of encouragement to the young and immature that if other people can do right, so can we. We never like to think that we are unable or incapable of doing what others can do, and so when we see others resisting temptation and making great sacrifices and self-denials, we are encouraged by their examples to do the same. And thus by imitating them we are encouraged to do good.

2. **Dangers of imitation,** (a) Following bad examples. One danger of imitation is that we may not select properly the examples to follow. One who becomes accustomed to imitating others may thoughtlessly imitate those who are not living right. Hence, we must be careful to distinguish between those who are good men and those who are evil and follow the admonition of our text and imitate only that which is good, (b) Partakers of evil. If we make the mistake of imitating someone who has done wrong, we become partakers with that one in the wrong done. We cannot put all the responsibility on the one whom we imitated. Our text does not command us to imitate others. It says simply to

imitate those who do good and warns us against imitating those who do evil. (c) Consequences. Another danger of imitation is that we may share in the evil consequences of the wrongdoings into which we follow others. As we must bear the responsibility of our wrongdoing in spite of the fact that we imitated others, so we must bear the consequences of our wrongdoing in spite of the fact that we have imitated more mature people in the church.

### 3. **Standard for selecting examples.**

(a) The good is of God. Our text tells us that "He that doeth good is of God." If we wish to enjoy the communion and fellowship with God, we must imitate only those who are good. But we still have the problem of determining who is good and who is evil. In this we are guided by the teaching which we find in the Bible. Those who act in harmony with the teaching found in the Bible are good and may be imitated. Hence, we need to study our Bible and be familiar with its teaching in order to determine whom to imitate.

(b) The evil is of Satan. Our text tells us, "He that doeth evil hath not seen God." If an individual has not seen God, he is of the evil one. We determine whether one is evil by becoming acquainted with the teaching of the Lord. If one does not follow the teaching of the Christ, he is an evil person because he is an enemy of Christ. If we imitate that person who is not submissive to the teaching of Christ, we will follow him into evil and will ourselves be evil.

(c) Eternal destiny in the balance. From the foregoing, we conclude that our eternal happiness depends on whether we imitate the good or the evil. If we imitate the good, we will ourselves do good and will have fellowship with God. But if we imitate that which is evil, we will ourselves be evil and will be associated with Satan in this life and suffer the consequences of such evil life by being banished from the presence of God to spend eternity with the devil and his angels.

## Introduction

Since our Golden Text admonishes apostles and prophets of Jesus Christ us to "imitate that which is good," which we should imitate. (1) John we may suggest some things in the wrote letters to individuals instruct-

ing them in the way of the Lord and encouraging them to resist evil and imitate the good and commending them for the good which they did. We should imitate this example by using the opportunities we have for writing instruction and encouragement to our friends and acquaintances. Many people will not read their Bibles; they are not interested in reading tracts, pamphlets, and periodicals which might be sent to them through the mail or handed to them as we pass them day by day. But there is no one who will throw a personal letter away without reading it. This gives us an opportunity to teach people truth, to admonish them

to do right, and to be used to the salvation of souls and the glory of God. We imitate the apostles by following such an example. (2) Other apostles wrote messages to churches for their instruction, correction, and encouragement. It is entirely possible that these apostles did not know that the messages they wrote would be collected and published in book form as the Old Testament then existed. But out of their love for and interest in the growth of churches, they wrote these messages. We imitate their example when we write and publish messages of instruction and encouragement for the use of churches today.

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. John Salutes Gaius (3 John 1-4)

##### *The elder unto Gaius the beloved.*

John uses the same term with reference to himself in his letter to Gaius which he used in his letter to the elect lady. The word "elder" is not used in its official sense, but to mean that John was an aged man and that he counseled Gaius as a father would counsel his son. This letter is addressed to Gaius, but of his identity we have no certain information. There was a Gaius in Macedonia (Acts 19: 29), a Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20: 4), and a Gaius at Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 14). Commentators often try to identify these names as belonging to the same men, but there is no positive means of identifying all of them. The name was a common Greek name, and an effort at identity of these references would be worthless. This one to whom John writes was a fine Christian character and worthy of the sincere love of the aged apostle.

*I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper.* John sets us a good example in praying for those whom we love. From this we learn that we may pray for the prosperity of our brethren; John prayed that Gaius might prosper financially. Next, lie prayed that Gaius might enjoy good health. And from this we conclude that we should be interested in the physical welfare of our brethren sufficiently to pray for them. Some have suggested that John's prayer for the prosperity and good health of Gaius indicates that Gaius did not enjoy either financial prosperity or physical good health to a great degree.

*Even as thy soul prospereth.* This is the degree to which John wished Gaius to prosper financially and to enjoy good health. This also indicates the degree of prosperity which we may safely enjoy. Whenever our soul health does not measure up to our physical health, and when our spiritual prosperity is not equal to our financial prosperity, we are not in good standing before the Lord. Jesus found a young man whose financial prosperity exceeded his spiritual prosperity, so he commanded him to sell what he had and give to the poor. (Matt. 19: 16ff.) And we may be sure that when our financial prosperity exceeds our spiritual prosperity we are not sacrificing enough financially for the cause of the Lord.

*Brethren came and bare witness unto thy truth.* The tense of the Greek verbs "came" and "bare witness" indicate that brethren were continually coming and bearing witness to the fact that Gaius was walking in the truth. Their continual coming and bearing such witness established in the mind of John the reputation of Gaius in his community.

*Greater joy have I none.* John tells Gaius that he has no greater joy than to have such reports coming continually concerning his children. The fact that John speaks of Gaius as his child indicates that John either converted Gaius or that he had been acquainted with him so long and had instructed him so much that he felt toward him as a father feels toward his son.

## II. John Commends Gaius (3 John 5-8)

*Thou doest a faithful work.* John commends Gaius for his faithfulness in the work he was doing toward brethren and strangers. From what is said in the following verses, we learn that these brethren and strangers were preachers of the gospel who were preaching to the Gentiles without charge. Gaius received them into his home and showed them that hospitality which brethren are obligated to show toward one another. If what is said in verse 2 indicates that Gaius was not very prosperous financially, he deserves commendations because he was making the best use possible of his prosperity. And he may have made considerable sacrifice to extend that hospitality to the brethren. Again, it is possible that John prayed that he might prosper financially simply because he was making such good use of his finances in showing hospitality to strangers. It would certainly be in harmony with the will of God to pray for increased financial prosperity to be enjoyed by a man who was using that prosperity in such fine way.

*Who bare witness to thy love.* These brethren and strangers who had enjoyed the hospitality of Gaius bore witness before the church to his love. This is the witness which John mentioned in verse 3 which was being continually borne to him.

*Set forth on their journey worthily of God.* To "set one forward" on his journey meant to give one substantial aid or assistance on that journey. Paul speaks of having been set forward, or brought forth, on his way by churches. (Acts 15: 3; Rom. 15: 24.) And John requests that Gaius will set forth these men in a way which will be worthy of God. This means that he was to be liberal in his time and money which he spent toward defraying the expenses of these men who were giving their time to the preaching of the gospel.

*For the sake of the Name they went forth.* These "brethren and strangers" were worthy of the assistance of Gaius, for the "sake of the Name" they were going out to preach the gospel. To do a thing for the sake of the Name means to do that for the sake of Christ. The term "the Name" can refer to none

other than the name of Christ for whom Christians were to suffer, the name which they were to wear and the name which they were to glorify. (1 Pet. 4: 15, 16.)

*Taking nothing of the Gentiles.* John says that these preachers went out preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, but they took no remuneration from those to whom they preached. This was the rule followed by the apostle Paul. If missionaries take money from those to whom they preach, they are liable to be accused of being mercenary. They must wait until they have converted people and have developed within them a sense of responsibility toward those who preach the gospel. John commends Gaius for his hospitality toward such and encourages him to continue such hospitality "that we may be fellow-workers for the truth." This teaches us that when we support preachers of the gospel we are fellow-workers with those preachers, and Paul teaches us that when we are their fellow-workers we share with them in the rewards for such labors. (Phil. 1: 5-7.)

## III. Diotrephes Condemned; Demetrius Commended (3 John 9-12)

*But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence.* John mentions the fact that he had written a letter to the church of which Gaius was a member. We are not to suppose that we have all the letters written by apostles. Paul mentions a letter which he wrote to the church at Corinth which has not been preserved. (1 Cor. 5: 9.) In the providence of God, we have such letters written by apostles and inspired prophets as were necessary to furnish us completely unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) But one member of the church named Diotrephes paid no attention to the instruction or directions given in that letter. John describes him as one who "loveth to have the pre-eminence" among members of the church. He was undoubtedly a man of prominence in the church and was in position to exercise considerable influence, but no man has sufficient prominence or wields sufficient influence to justify him in rejecting the authority of an apostle.

*I will bring to remembrance his works.* John had hopes of visiting

the church where Diotrophes was causing trouble, and on occasion of that visit he promised to put Diotrophes in his place. This indicates that though John is known as the "apostle of love," he would not hesitate to use extreme measures if necessary to accomplish the will of God. Those who think that love and discipline do not go together should be advised by John's writing here that they are perfectly consistent with one another.

**Prating against us.** John outlines the sins of Diotrophes. (1) Prating or babbling against John and his authority as an apostle and using wicked words to express his sentiments with reference to John. (2) Diotrophes would not receive the "brethren and strangers" referred to in verse 5. He would not show hospitality to them as Gaius was doing. (3) Diotrophes forbade other members of the church to show such hospitality to these preachers. (4) He cast some out of the church who had shown such hospitality. The fact that he could expel brethren from the membership of the congregation shows that he was a man of prominence and power in the church. It also indicates that he had a following in the church who endorsed his actions. One man, regardless of his position in the church, cannot exercise such power in the church without the backing and endorsement of a considerable portion of the membership. This also indicates that regardless of the character of a man, he can get a following in the church for a time. Such men succeed in their domineering practices only because of the fact that many people are ignorant of their real character and of the teaching of God's word.

**Demetrius hath the witness of all men.** Of the identity of Demetrius we know nothing. Some have sup-

posed that he was a member of the same church as Gaius and that he may have been associated with Gaius in showing hospitality to the preachers who were going to the Gentiles without charge. But Demetrius in opposition to Diotrophes, was one who lived in harmony with truth, and thus had the witness of truth and the witness of all men who loved and lived by the truth.

#### IV. Conclusion of the Epistle (3 John 13, 14)

**I had many things to write unto thee.** John would like to convey many thoughts and lessons to Gaius, but concludes not to do so because of a hope which he had of seeing Gaius in the near future. He may have wished to tell Gaius how he intended to handle the matter of insubordination of Diotrophes, but thought best not to put that in permanent form which could be seen by others and would hold that until he was face to face with Gaius. The fact that he was "unwilling to write them" implies that they were of such nature that he preferred to speak them rather than write them.

**Peace be unto thee.** This is the usual Hebrew form of greeting and parting. Paul uses "grace and peace" adding the Greek form to that of the Hebrew. People who lived as Gaius and Demetrius could enjoy the peace which John prayed might be upon them, but a man who lives as did Diotrophes cannot have that peace. Peace with God comes as a reward to faithful, humble, submissive service to God.

**The friends salute thee.** John was in company with some who were friends to Gaius. These friends sent their salutations, and the fact that John requests Gaius to "salute the friends by name" implies that John was acquainted with and had friends among the people where Gaius lived.

### Lessons to Learn

1. If soul prosperity exceeds material prosperity, we are sure to use our material wealth properly. But if the reverse is true, we are sure to misuse our wealth, sow to the flesh and reap corruption.

2. Hospitality is a lost art or practice. It is true that it was much more necessary in John's day than in ours because of better means of ac-

commodation today, yet we fail to show friendliness and hospitality to strangers who attend church. Most churches can improve along this line.

3. Diotrophes was afflicted with the ambition to rule, and he would realize his ambition or ruin the church. The "rule-or-ruin" spirit not only ruins churches here, but it ruins the rulers in the next world.

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

State and discuss three values of imitation.

Name three dangers in imitation.

How can we determine which examples are to be imitated?

How important is the problem of imitation?

Does this lesson increase our sense of responsibility to our children?

### Introduction

What example in the apostle's association with individuals should we imitate?

Why is a personal letter more effective than a tract or pamphlet?

What example of John in his association with churches may we imitate?

### John Salutes Gaius

How is the word "elder" used in this epistle?

How many New Testament characters do you know by the name of Gaius?

What did John pray that Gaius might enjoy?

What degree of material prosperity can we safely enjoy?

What had John been hearing about Gaius?

What was John's greatest joy?

### John Commends Gaius

For what faithful work did John commend Gaius?

Of what virtue in Gaius did this hospitality bear witness?

What is meant by setting one forward on his journey?

For whose sake did these brethren go forth doing their work?

What indicates that they were not preaching for the love of money?

How may we share with preachers of the gospel in the rewards for service?

### Diotrephes Condemned; Demetrius Commended

What indication do we have that some of John's writings have not been preserved?

What ugly disposition did Diotrephes have?

What threat is implied in John's language with reference to Diotrephes?

Name four sins of which Diotrephes was guilty.

What is indicated with reference to men's ability to get followers?

What is said in commendation of Demetrius?

### Conclusion of the Epistle

Did John write all he wished to tell Gaius? Why?

What is the Greek word of salutation? and the Hebrew?

What indicates that John and Gaius had friends in common?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XI—December 15, 1957

# JESUS APPEARS TO JOHN

## Lesson Text

Rev. 1: 9-20

9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Je'-sus, was in the isle that is called Pat'-mos, for the word of God and the testimony of Je'-sus.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet

11 Saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Eph'-e-sus, and unto Smyr'-na, and unto Per'-ga-mum, and unto Thy-a-ti'-ra, and unto Sar'-dis, and unto Phil-a-del'-phi-a, and unto La-od-i-ce'-a.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the

foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last,

18 And the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Ha'-des.

19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which



are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand,

and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

**Golden Text.**—*"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead."*

*And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not* (Rev. 1: 17a.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Rev. 1: 1-8.

## Daily Bible Readings

December 9. M.....	The Revelation (Rev. 1: 1-3)
December 10. T.....	John's Message to the Seven Churches (Rev. 1: 4-6)
December 11.....	W. Isaiah's Vision of the Lord (Isa. 6: 1-13)
December 12. T.....	Lamb on Mount Zion (Rev. 14: 1-5)
December 13. F.....	The Everlasting Angel (Rev. 14: 6-11)
December 14. S.....	The Throne Scene (Rev. 4: 1-11)
December 15. S.....	The Great Multitude (Rev. 7: 9-17)

**Time.**—A.D. 95.

**Place.**—Patmos.

**Persons.**—John and the seven churches in Asia.

## Golden Text Explained

### 1. Visions of the Lord. (a)

Ezekiel. The first chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy is devoted to a description of a vision which he had. The first part of it is devoted to a description of four living creatures and four wheels. And then above the living creatures there was a firmament, and above the firmament he saw the likeness of a throne and on the likeness of the throne was the likeness of a man. "And I saw as it were glowing metal, as the appearance of fire within it round about, from the appearance of his loins and upward; and from the appearance of his loins and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake." (Ezek. 1: 27, 28.)

(b) Daniel. Daniel describes such visions of the Lord and says that he was "affrighted and fell upon my face . . . and I, Daniel, fainted and was sick certain days." (Dan. 8: 17, 27.) On another occasion he saw one whose "body also was like the beryl, and his face was as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." (Dan. 10: 6.)

(c) Isaiah. Isaiah tells us that he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. . . . Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." (Isa. 6: 1-5.) In all these appearances the glory of the Lord was accommodated to human vision, but even then the vision produced unusual effects upon those who beheld them.

2. **The presence of the Lord.** (a) Gives us courage. In the experiences of these prophets, they were excited when first they beheld the vision of the Lord, but as soon as they knew they were in the presence of the Lord, their fears gave way to calm, quiet courage. And even we who are conscious of the spiritual presence of Jehovah with us in our efforts to serve and worship him are given courage which we could not otherwise possess. (b) Realization of the presence of the Lord with us not only gives us courage, but gives us a strength to bear burdens and trials which we could not bear alone. Like Paul, we can do all things through the Lord who strengthens us. (Phil. 4: 13.) (c) **Humbles us.** These prophets who beheld visions of the Lord were greatly humbled in his presence and fell upon their faces. And so we are humbled by a knowledge of the spiritual presence of God abiding with us. Any individual who

is not greatly humbled by the knowledge of the presence of God with him is not fit to be used by the Lord for the accomplishment of his purposes.

3. **The Lord removes fear,** (a) Of sin. John says that when the Lord appeared to him on Patmos, he said, "Fear not." And so, the Lord's abiding presence with us removes our fear of sin. Sin is our greatest enemy and can ruin our lives here and destroy us in eternity, but the Lord has overcome sin, has conquered Satan in his personal contests with him, and assures us that he has power to keep us from Satan. Hence, we need not fear sin or Satan, (b) Of death. Not only does the Lord remove the fear of sin in our lives, but he removes the fear of death. The writer of Hebrews speaks of Jesus as coming in the flesh to destroy the power of the devil and to "deliver all them

who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2: 15.) All men fear death because they cannot avert death, they cannot conquer death, and they do not know what is beyond death. But those who believe in Jesus Christ need not fear death because their Lord has been in the realm of death and came back and assures us that he can bring us back from the realm of death, (c) Of judgment. The Lord removes our fear of sin, our fear of death, and our fear of judgment. Men have a right to fear judgment, for in judgment all their deeds, both good and bad, will be brought to light. But those who believe in Jesus have no fear of judgment because their Lord who died for them and is now at the right hand of God making intercession for them is to be their judge.

### Introduction

The writer of the book of Revelation calls himself John, but does not identify himself any further. Some have denied that John the apostle is the writer, claiming that "John the presbyter" (elder), a man of Ephesus, was the author of the book. But a great majority of scholars agree that John the apostle is the author of the book. Others have said that the book was written in the environment of the temple in Jerusalem because of some of the imagery used. On this point Barnes argues that it was not possible for the book to have been written in the environment of the temple because "in that place there was but one lamp stand, with its seven sconces; here there were seven separate lamp stands; there were there no 'stars,' and the vestments of the Jewish high priest were not those in which the Savior is represented as appearing. He had no mitre, no ephod, no breastplate, and no censor. The object was not to

represent Christ as a priest, or as superseding the Jewish high priest, but to represent him with costume appropriate to the Son of God—as having been raised from the dead, and received to the glory of heaven. His vestments are neither those of a prophet, a king, nor a priest; not with such garments as the ancient prophets wore, nor with crown and sceptre such as monarchs bear, nor yet with the usual habiliments of a priest. He appeared as the Son of God, irrespective of the offices that he bears, and comes as the glorified head of the church to declare his will in regard to the seven churches of Asia, and to disclose the future for the guidance and comfort of the church at large. The scene appears to be laid at Patmos, and the apostle in the vision of the Savior does not appear to have regarded himself as transferred to any other place."

### Exposition of the Text

#### I. Jesus Comes to John on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1: 9-11)

*I John, your brother and partaker.* Since the letter was addressed to "the seven churches that are in Asia" (verse 4), it follows that John speaks of himself as a brother and partaker with the people in those churches in

certain things. (1) He is their brother and partaker in tribulation. While John was suffering banishment from his home and friends, other members of the church were suffering other forms of persecution. (2) He was their brother and partaker in the kingdom. This indicates that

John and others were citizens in the kingdom of Christ, and that, therefore, the kingdom was in existence. They could not have been actual partakers of the actual blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God unless that kingdom had been in existence. (3) He was their brother and partaker in the patience which is in Jesus. To be a partaker in patience is to endure patiently along with others the trials and tribulations which were heaped upon them.

*In the isle that is called Patmos.* This is one of a number of small islands in the Aegean Sea. It is about six or eight miles long, one mile wide, and about fifteen miles in circumference. It is situated near the sea coast town of Miletus where Paul met and visited with the Ephesian elders. We are told that "no place could have been selected for banishment which would accord better with a design than this. Lonely, desolate, barren, uninhabited, seldom visited, it had all the requisites which could be desired for a place of punishment; and banishment to that place would accomplish all that a persecutor could wish in silencing an apostle, without putting him to death." (Barnes.)

*For the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.* These are reasons which John assigns for his banishment to the isle of Patmos. He was sent there because he insisted on preaching the word of God and because he continued to give testimony to the effect that Jesus was the Son of God, that he was raised from the dead, and that he reigned in heaven.

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* To speak in the Spirit means to speak under the influence of the Spirit, as the Spirit moves one to speak. (1 Cor. 12: 3.) Therefore, to be in the Spirit means to be under the power and influence of the Spirit. But, since John, an inspired apostle, was under the influence of the Spirit at all times, we conclude that he refers here to a special or unusual influence of the Spirit which prepared him for the experiences he was to enjoy that he might properly appreciate them and record them. The term "the Lord's day" can refer to nothing other than the first day of the week. (1) The Greek word translated by our word "Lord's" occurs only here and in 1 Cor. 11: 20

where it is used in connection with the Lord's supper. It means "pertaining to the Lord" or that which is his in a peculiar way. Since the expression "Lord's supper" refers to a supper which pertains to the Lord, or is his in a peculiar way, we conclude that the term "Lord's day" refers to a day which pertains to the Lord in a peculiar way. (2) Writers of antiquity such as the early and later church fathers used the word to refer to the first day of the week, and especially the later writers used it to refer to the first day of the week as opposed to the Jewish sabbath which was the seventh day of the week.

*I heard behind me a great voice.* The word "great" is to be taken in the sense of a loud voice. It was both loud and clear like a trumpet. This is not to indicate that the voice was musical or gave off a musical sound, for he immediately tells us what the voice said. The one speaking indicated (1) that John was to see things revealed to him, (2) that he was to write the things which he saw, (3) that he was to send the message given to him in these visions to the seven churches in Asia.

## II. John's Description of Jesus (Rev. 1: 12-18)

*I saw seven golden candlesticks.* It should be noticed that John did not say he saw a candlestick with seven lights such as was in the old tabernacle, but he saw seven separate candlesticks, so separate from one another that the person who spoke to him seemed to stand among the candlesticks.

*One like unto a son of man.* John says that when he turned to determine from whence the voice came, he saw one standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and this one was like unto a son of man. That this referred to Jesus is clear from the statement made in verse 18 where he says, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." Jesus referred to himself as "the Son of man." (John 3: 14.) Daniel speaks of the ascension of Jesus in which he went to the ancient of days and was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. And in this place, he speaks of him as "one like unto a Son of man." (Dan. 7: 13, 14.)

*Clothed with a garment.* John no-

ticed that this flowing robe with which Jesus was clothed reached down to his feet, and there was also a girdle about his breast. This was usually worn about the loins and was used to hold the long robe in place, as well as to give color to the apparel. This was a golden girdle and the over-all description of this appearance suggests his kingly appearance, rather than that of a high priest.

***His head and his hair were white.***

The description which John gives is certainly not intended to tell us how Jesus looked while on earth, nor can we suppose that this describes his usual appearance in heaven. The appearance of the various parts of the body of Jesus here described is such as to make upon John certain impressions to prepare him for the understanding and appreciation of the visions that were to follow. The white hair is emblematic of purity and "eyes were as a flame of fire" suggesting his omniscience, and ability to discern the secrets of men, while "feet like unto burnished brass" would denote the "stability and permanence" of his person and work. And his voice which was "as the voice of many waters" suggested the majesty and authority of the speaker.

***In his right hand seven stars.***

These seven stars represented the messengers of the seven churches to which he was writing these visions. Then we are told that "out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword." The word of God is said to be the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:

17.) And the word of God is said to be sharper than a two-edged sword. (Heb. 4: 12.) So the two-edged sword proceeding from the mouth of the Lord would be his word. One commentator suggests that though it represents his word, it had reference to the judgment which was to be pronounced upon the nations through his word. Then John noticed the countenance of the Lord which he said "was as the sun shineth in his strength." His face shone with the brightness of the sun at its fullest strength. At his transfiguration, we are told that "his face did shine as the sun, and his garment became white as the light." (Matt. 17: 2.)

***I fell at his feet as one dead.*** John

reacted to this appearance much the same way which the old prophets, mentioned in our golden text, reacted to the appearance of the Divine One. And had not the Lord laid his hand upon him and calmed his fears by speaking to him, John would not soon have recovered his composure. The purpose of the statements of the Lord at this time were to remove John's fear and to identify himself. (1) His first statement was, "Fear not." These words were intended to calm John's fears and to enable him to give attention to that which followed.

(2) "I am the first and the last." This statement identifies him as the eternal one, the one without beginning or ending of days. This statement is used frequently of Jehovah in the Old Testament. (Isa. 41: 4; 44: 6; 48: 12.) (3) Jesus referred to himself as "the living one." This simply denotes that he is the source of all life, both physical and spiritual.

(4) "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." This would identify the speaker as Jesus who died and rose again. (5) "I have the keys of death and hades." This means that he held the power or authority over death and the region of the dead. He had gone into hades and had come therefrom, consequently, had conquered the power of death and hades.

**III. John Commissioned to Write the Seven Churches (Rev. 1: 19, 20)**

***Write therefore the things which***

***thou sawest.*** The things which John saw were divided into three divisions.

(1) The things which he had already seen, (2) the things which are, meaning the present condition of things which were now to be revealed to him, and (3) the things which shall come to pass hereafter, and, of course, John was dependent upon the revelation which the Lord would make to him for the writing of these things.

***The mystery of the seven stars.***

The word "mystery" denotes a thing which one cannot understand without an explanation. It does not mean something which is beyond the possibility of humanity to understand, even when thoroughly explained and revealed. It simply refers to something human beings cannot learn the meaning of by themselves. They are dependent upon revelation for the

understanding of that which is a mystery. John saw seven stars in the hand of the Lord. He would not know the meaning of those seven stars unless the Lord revealed that meaning to him. So the Lord said, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." But we still have a difficulty in determining what the seven angels were. The word "angel" means a messenger, and therefore, they were the seven messengers of the seven churches. But whether these messengers are to be assigned any official position in relation to the churches is a matter of dispute. Denominational commentators say that these seven angels, messengers, were the seven preachers, ministers, "pastors," of the seven churches. Brother John T. Hinds in his commentary on the book says they were probably seven elders, one from each of the seven churches in Asia. The writer of these notes sees no necessity for assigning them any official connection with the churches they represent.

*And the seven golden candlesticks.* Here is another mystery which John would need to have explained. Jesus

was seen standing among the seven golden candlesticks. John would know there was some significance to be attached to these, but would not know what that significance would be without its being revealed. So Jesus said, "The seven candlesticks are the seven churches." The word "seven" is not to be taken to indicate that there were only seven churches in all Asia. Some have taken the word to mean that the church will go through seven different stages from the time of its establishment until the end of the world, and that the church at Ephesus represents the church universal in its first stage. The church at Laodicea represents the church in its carnal stage at the time of the coming of the Lord. This is a fanciful theory and not in harmony with the facts in the case. Furthermore, if the Lord had considered the word "seven" a part of the "mystery" which needed to be revealed along with the stars and candlesticks, undoubtedly he would have revealed its meaning. Since he did not reveal any particular or peculiar meaning to be attached to the word, we will do well to leave it unexplained.

## Lessons to Learn

1. If Jesus were to come to see you on the Lord's day, would you be embarrassed? John was conducting himself in such fashion that day that he was not ashamed for the Lord to come to see him. Do we live during the week in such manner that we would be pleased to see him? Or, if we knew he were coming, would we change our manner of conduct?

2. Words fail to give us an adequate picture of the Lord. One glimpse of him and his approving

smile will more than abundantly repay us for all our trials and sacrifices here on earth.

3. If the Lord were to appear to you as he did to John and tell you to do something, as he told John to write what he saw, would you obey him? Most of us think we would, but Abraham says that we would not if we are not now obeying him as he directs us in his written word. (Luke 16: 31.)

## Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

### Golden Text Explained

What three Old Testament prophets had visions of Jehovah?

Can you find anything in common in these visions?

What effect does the presence of the Lord have upon men?

What benefit do we derive from a realization of his presence with us?

What fears does the Lord remove from us who believe?

What is wrong with a Christian who still fears these things?

### Introduction

What do you know about the writer of Revelation?

Did John attempt to picture Jesus as being a priest? or king?

What evidence do we have that John did this writing on Patmos?

### Jesus Comes to John on the Lord's Day

To whom is the matter of our text addressed?

In what three things was John a partaker with the people to whom he wrote?

What do you know of the place of John's banishment?

For what reason does John say he was banished?

What is meant by being in the Spirit?  
Can you tell why the Lord's day refers  
to the first day of the week?  
What did John hear? and what instruction  
did he receive?

John's Description of Jesus

Among what did John see Jesus standing?  
What does the term "Son of man" mean?  
and how did Daniel use that term?  
Can you describe Jesus as John saw him?  
What were in his right hand?  
What was proceeding out of his mouth?  
What effect did the appearance of Jesus  
have upon John?

Discuss the meaning of five statements  
Jesus made to John at his appearance.

John Commissioned to Write

In what three divisions are these writings  
of John to be classified?  
What is a mystery?  
What were the seven stars? and what do  
you know of these angels?  
What were the seven golden candlesticks?  
Can we be sure there is any special mean-  
ing to be given to the number seven?  
What is there of interest to you in lessons  
to learn?

Lesson XII—December 22, 1957

JOHN'S PICTURE OF WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

Lesson Text

Rev. 7 9-17

9 After these things I saw, and be-  
hold, a great multitude, which no  
man could number, out of every na-  
tion and of *all* tribes and peoples and  
tongues, standing before the throne  
and before the Lamb, arrayed in  
white robes,, and palms in their  
hands;

10 And they cry with a great voice,  
saying,

Salvation unto our God who  
sitteth on the throne, and unto  
the Lamb.

11 And all the angels were stand-  
ing round about the throne, and  
*about* the elders and the four living  
creatures; and they fell before the  
throne on their faces, and worshipped  
God,

12 Saying,  
A-men': Blessing, and glory,  
and wisdom, and thanksgiving,  
and honor, and power, and  
might, *be* unto our God for ever  
and ever. A-men'.

13 And one of the elders answered,  
saying unto me, These that are ar-  
rayed in the white robes, who are  
they, and whence came they?

14 And I say unto him, My Lord,  
thou knowest. And he said to me,  
These are they that come out of the  
great tribulation, and they washed  
their robes, and made them white in  
the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the  
throne of God; and they serve him  
day and night in his temple: and he  
that sitteth on the throne shall spread  
his tabernacle over them.

16 They shall hunger no more,  
neither thirst any more; neither shall  
the sun strike upon them, nor any  
heat:

17 For the Lamb that is in the  
midst of the throne shall be their  
shepherd, and shall guide them unto  
fountains of waters of life: and God  
shall wipe away every tear from their  
eyes.

Golden Text.—*"Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the  
glory and the honor and the power."* (Rev. 4: 11a.)

Devotional Reading.—Rev. 5: 1-14.

Daily Bible Readings

December 16. M. The New Song (Rev. 5: 9-14)  
December 17. T. Worship Before the Throne (Rev. 4: 1-11)  
December 18. W.....Four and Twenty Elders Worship (Rev. 11: 16-19)  
December 19. T. ....The Song of Moses (Rev. 15: 1-8)  
December 20. F. A Picture of Worship (Rev. 19: 1-10)  
December 21. S. John Commanded to Worship God (Rev. 19: 9, 10)  
December 22. S.....John Forbidden to Worship an Angel (Rev. 22: 1-10)

Time.—A.D. 95.

Place.—Patmos.

Persons.—John and the churches of Asia.

## Golden Text Explained

1. **Worthy in character**, (a) Holiness. Our text tells us that God is worthy to receive glory and honor and power, and his holiness is one reason why he is worthy to receive these things from all his creatures. We are told that seraphim are continually in his presence, and that they are saying one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isa. 6: 3.) While here on earth, Jesus Christ in his memorable prayer to the Father, addressed him as "holy Father." (John 17: 11.) And we are told to be holy because he is holy. (1 Pet. 1: 15, 16.) (b) Power. God's power is another reason why he is worthy of our glory, honor, and praise. He revealed himself to Abraham as God Almighty. (Gen. 17: 1.) And John tells us of the great multitudes in heaven who said, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God, the Almighty, reigneth." (Rev. 19: 6b.) (c) Wisdom. God's wisdom is another reason why he is worthy of our honor and glory and praise. David speaks of his omniscience. (Psalm 139: 1ff.) And Paul says, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" (Rom. 11: 33.)

2. **Worthy in works**, (a) Extent. The extent of the works of God make him worthy of our honor and glory and praise. Scientists have explored the universe with their powerful telescopes and are not able yet to find an empty space. All the distance to which these powerful telescopes reach is peopled with the works of the Creator. And when we take into

consideration that the extent of his works reaches from the atom to the largest planet that moves in the heavens, we are made to marvel at the extent of his creation. (b) Operation. When we consider the fact that the great extent of God's works is so related one to another that they move together in more than clock-like precision, we are made to realize more than ever that God is worthy of our honor and praise. (c) Preservation. The power that made all these wonderful works is capable of preserving them in their pristine glory and power. By his powerful word all things were created (Psalm 33: 6, 9), and by his powerful word all things are upheld (Heb. 1: 3).

3. **Worthy in relationships**. (a) Father. Jesus taught his disciples to address God as "our Father who art in heaven." (Matt. 6: 9.) And Paul tells us that there is one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. (Eph. 4: 6.) (b) Savior. God is referred to as our Savior in such passages as 1 Tim. 1: 1; Titus 1: 3; 2: 10; 3: 4. And Jude says, "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and forevermore." (Jude 25.) (c) King. God is also worthy of our honor and glory because he is our king. Paul tells us that at the proper time we shall be shown "who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power eternal. Amen." (1 Tim. 6: 15, 16.)

## Introduction

The seventh chapter of Revelation deals with matters which take place between the opening of the sixth seal and the opening of the seventh seal. Four angels are represented as standing on the four corners of the earth holding four winds of the earth. These winds represent destructive powers, and the angels are represented as holding these destructive powers until a certain work can be accomplished. That work is the determining and the sealing of the servants of God. John relates his

vision concerning the sealing of the children of Israel first. Out of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, twelve thousand are sealed in each tribe, making a total of 144,000 of the children of Israel sealed as the servants of God. Since some of the tribes were several times larger than others, it is hardly probable that the exact number of the saved in each tribe should be the same, so we conclude that a definite number is here given for an indefinite number. The apostle simply wished us

to get the idea that a great multitude of the children of Israel were sealed as the servants of God. In this enumeration of the tribes, Joseph is put for Ephraim, and Dan is omitted. The name of Dan is omitted to retain the number twelve, but since none can suppose that not even one member of the tribe of Dan is to be

among the saved, our conclusion that the 144,000 is a definite number for an indefinite is strengthened. After enumerating those of the children of Israel who were among the sealed and saved, John then turns to a great multitude from all the nations of the earth and this is where our lesson begins.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The Great Multitude Worships

(Rev. 7: 9, 10)

*After these things I saw.* The words "these things" refer to the sealing of the 144,000 out of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The time of the sealing is not indicated in the text, but the order in which the visions occurred is mentioned. John saw the vision of the sealing of the children of Israel before he saw the vision of the sealing of the peoples of the nations.

*A great multitude, which no man could number.* This great multitude is obviously of the Gentile world. He said they were "out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues." Furthermore, we conclude that this multitude was greater in number than the 144,000 of the children of Israel. Those who were sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel could be numbered, but this great multitude from every nation under heaven was such that it could not be numbered. Therefore, we conclude that it is much greater than the total of those from the children of Israel.

*Standing before the throne and before the Lamb.* In Rev. 4: 2ff., John describes the throne and the splendor of him who sat upon the throne. This obviously refers to the Father and not to the Son. And then in Rev. 5: 6ff., John describes the Messiah as the Lamb that had been slain and pictures him as being not on the throne but in the midst of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders who stand around the throne. Christ, the Messiah, is represented as the Lamb (1) because of his innocence, and (2) because he was the Lamb of God offered for the sins of the world.

*Arrayed in white robes.* This great multitude is pictured as arrayed in white robes to denote their purity, their holiness. As light and darkness stand for righteousness and evil,

so white robes signify righteousness and black robes signify evil.

*Palms in their hands.* The palm is a symbol of victory, and the fact they were holding these palms in their hands was indication of their victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

*They cry with a great voice.* A multitude so great that it could not be numbered would be expected to express its feelings in a great voice. This great multitude occupied its time in saying, "Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." The statement "Salvation unto our God" cannot mean they were wishing God to enjoy salvation. It simply means that they were attributing their salvation to God. And every person who has a part in that salvation will certainly be a "sinner saved by grace." And so great will be their joy and their appreciation for that salvation that they will gladly spend their time in ascribing honor and glory and praise to him who was the cause of that salvation. But they will not be forgetful of the Christ who suffered and died for them, so they will also ascribe praise and glory "unto the Lamb." God will be due the praise for conceiving the plan of salvation and his love manifested in the gift of his only begotten Son to die for the sins of the world. The Messiah will be worthy of praise because he was a willing sacrifice and gave up heaven and its joys and became a human being in order that he might die for the sins of the world.

### II. The Angels Worship (Rev. 7: 11, 12)

*All the angels were standing round about the throne.* The number of these angels is said to be "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. 5: 11.) They are said to be "standing around the throne" which denotes (1) their



interest in the things divine, (2) their readiness to serve him who sits on the throne.

**About the elders and the four living creatures.** In Rev. 4: 4, we are told that there were twenty-four of these elders arrayed in white garments with crowns of gold on their heads, and that they were sitting on twenty-four thrones. These twenty-four elders seemed to be representatives of the entire human race, and the fact that they sit on thrones and wear crowns indicates that they represent that portion of the human race who are saved and who will reign with the Lord throughout eternity. And the four living creatures are described in Rev. 4: 6, 7 as being full of eyes before and behind. The first creature was like a lion, the second like a calf. The third had a face as of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. These four living creatures, as well as the twenty-four elders, are continually about the throne to serve and worship God, and their worship is described in Rev. 4: 8-11.

**They fell before the throne.** This is a description of the worship of the innumerable angels that are about the throne and about the elders and four living creatures. These angels fall upon their faces when they worship God. It will be noticed that their ascription of praise begins and ends with the word "Amen." The word is a strong affirmation of the truth to be said or what has been said. It may as properly be used at the beginning of prayer and praise as at the ending. However, we are so in the habit of using the word only at the end of our prayers that we commonly think of it as being used properly only at the end of prayer. To ascribe unto God the blessing is to ascribe praise to him. We cannot bless God, but we can praise God. And the word "glory" in this verse is said to refer to a higher order of praise than to speak of God being glorified on account of his works. And the word "wisdom" is an ascription of omniscience to God. The word "thanksgiving" is an expression of the gratitude of the hearts of those who are making this statement or offering this worship. The word "honor" indicates that those worshipping him esteemed him most

highly. The word "power" and the word "might" are used to ascribe omnipotence or almighty power to God, and the words "forever and ever" convey the idea that these angels wished God thus to be honored and praised without end or interruption.

### III. An Elder Describes the Scene

(Rev. 7:13-17)

**And one of the elders answered.**

The word "answered" is usually used to denote a reply to a question, but in the Bible it is often used when no question is expressed. (See Isa. 65: 24; Dan. 2: 26; Acts 5: 8.) Likely there was a question in John's mind with reference to these who were about the throne, and the elder responded to the question which he knew was in John's mind. And the question which was in John's mind is undoubtedly the question which the elders raised, saying, "These that are arrayed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they?" When the elder raised that question, John replied simply by saying, "My Lord, thou knowest." And then the elder as if without any interruption at all, continues to answer the question he raised.

**These are they.** (1) These are the people who came out of great tribulation. One purpose of the writing of the book of Revelation was to encourage the church during periods of trial and tribulation. And since the elder says that this great, innumerable host of people are those who have come up out of great tribulation, it follows that the book teaches that people can endure persecution; they can overcome their trials and hardships; they can conquer their enemies and be victorious in this great conflict. So the fact that John saw so many who had overcome their opposition would tend to encourage the church in times of persecution. (2) They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They were there because they had been cleansed, purified, made fit for being in the presence of God on account of the shedding of the blood of the Lamb. They were not there primarily because they were worthy to be there, or because they had patiently endured suffering, or because they had been obedient to God's commandments. These things

are conditions which people must meet in order to be in that great number. But the primary reason they were there was the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. No amount of suffering, hardships, and no degree of moral purity which we may attain by our own wisdom and strength can fit us for a place with that great multitude around the throne of God. These things are good and necessary, but without the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, they would be insufficient to fit and prepare us for association with that great throng around the throne. And John emphasizes this very thought when he said, "Therefore are they before the throne of God." Were it not for the blood of the Lamb to cleanse and purify them, they could not possibly be before the throne of God.

*They serve him day and night in his temple.* This is the activity of that innumerable throng; they serve God continually. People who do not relish the service and worship of God here will feel out of place if they are privileged to be in that throng. The truth is that unless we develop enjoyment and appreciation for the service and worship of God while here on earth, we will not be permitted to be in that great throng. And the response of God to the service offered by these blood-bought

servants is expressed in these words, "He that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them," or dwell among them.

*They shall hunger no more.* John begins here to relate the description of the condition of these people as given him by the elder. The things that bring sorrow, suffering, and death here will be unknown there. There will be no hunger, no thirst, and no heat of the sun to cause them to suffer and increase the pangs of their thirst.

*The Lamb that is in the midst.* The elder now tells John of the activity of the Christ who will dwell in the midst of the people. He will be their shepherd and as such will guide them to fountains of waters of life. As the good shepherd here on earth would lead his sheep into green pastures and beside still waters, so the Great Shepherd will lead his people to fountains of living water. As the weary, thirsty desert traveler was filled with joy and gladness at the sight of a fountain in the desert, so these who have come up out of great tribulation will be filled with joy and gladness and satisfaction when they take their places in that great throng in heaven. And God will wipe their tears from their eyes, an indication that the time for sorrow and suffering and weeping is over.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Though the Lord's people are few when compared to the total population of the earth, they will be an innumerable host by the time the world comes to an end. The number who die in infancy added to the number who become like little children throughout all time will be sufficient to justify God's giving his Son to suffer for the sins of the world.

2. To hear the innumerable host of angels sing their praises to God will reward us for all the sufferings of this life. Men spend large sums of money to hear great opera com-

panies sing. How much would you give to hear an innumerable host of angels sing?

3. Heaven is the place where all our holy wishes come true. Have you wished for better government? God will be our king and dwell among us. Have you wished for purer society? The blood-washed throng will be our associates. Have you wished for relief from sorrow and suffering, from hunger and thirst? All our wants, all our needs will be abundantly supplied over there.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

What do you know of the holiness of God?

What is said of God's power? and his

wisdom?

What do you know of the extent of God's works?

What is said of the operation? and the preservation of God's works?

State, and discuss three terms which describe God's relationship with his people.

Can you show why these things make God worthy of our praise?

### Introduction

What are the four angels of this chapter said to be doing?  
How many people from among the Jews are sealed?  
What entire tribe is omitted from this sealing picture?  
Do you think the number 144,000 is to be taken literally? Why?

### The Great Multitude Worships

What order of sealing is mentioned in the text?  
What proof is there that there are more Gentiles than Jews to be sealed?  
Who is pictured as sitting on the throne?  
Where is Christ in this picture? and why is he called the Lamb?  
The white robes are emblems of what?  
What do the palms suggest?  
What does the great multitude say?  
Why will praise be ascribed to God? and to the Lamb?

### The Angels Worship

What is said of the number of the angels?  
How many elders? and whom do they represent?  
What is said of the four living creatures?  
What posture do the angels take when they worship God?  
How is their worship described?

### An Elder Describes the Scene

What question is raised by the elder?  
What is the first statement made about the multitude?  
How had these people been made fit to stand in God's presence?  
Contrast the part of obedience with that of the blood in making them fit to be there.  
How does this great throng occupy their time and ability?  
What is said of the comforts they enjoy?  
What will make the greatest contribution to the joy of this throng?  
What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?

## Lesson XIII—December 29, 1957

# JOHN SEES THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

## Lesson Text

Rev. 21: 1-8; 22-27

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Je-ru-'sa-lem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God:

4 And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true.

6 And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Al'-pha and the O-me-ga, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit

these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.

23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb.

24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.

25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there):

26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it:

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."* (Rev. 21: 5a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 22: 1-5.

### Daily Bible Readings

December 23. M.....	Heaven, God's Dwelling Place (1 Kings 8: 27-30)
December 24. T.....	The Father's House (John 14: 1, 2)
December 25. W.....	Heaven, Home of the Righteous (Psalm 23: 1-6)
December 26. T.....	New Heavens and New Earth (Isa. 65: 7-25)
December 27. F.....	We Look for New Heavens and Earth (1 Pet. 3: 1-13)
December 28. S.....	River of Water of Life (Rev. 22: 1-5)
December 29. S.....	Building in the Heavens (2 Cor. 5: 1-7)

TIME.—A.D. 95.

PLACE.—Patmos.

PERSONS.—John and the seven churches of Asia.

### Golden Text Explained

#### 1. He that sat on the throne, (a)

Jesus on the throne now. Peter said that David being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2: 30, 31.) In this sermon on Pentecost, Peter affirmed that God had fulfilled the promise which he made to David to set the son of David on the throne of David. Another prophet told us that he was to be a priest upon his throne. (Zech. 6: 13.) We are taught that he is our priest now. (Heb. 4: 14-16; 7: 26-28.) Since he was to be a priest on his throne, and he is our priest now, it follows that he is on his throne now. (b) He is to deliver up the kingdom to God. Paul tells us that when the end of the world comes, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15: 24-28.) That Christ will not deliver up the kingdom until the end of time is proved by this statement, "For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." If he is to reign until he has conquered all his enemies, and death is the last enemy to be conquered, and death is to be destroyed by the resurrection, it follows that Christ will reign on his throne until the time of the resurrection, (c) God is their God. When Jesus has delivered up the kingdom to the Father, then the Father will reign over heaven and all that are privileged to be there. When John saw the innumerable host around the throne of God, he was told. "Therefore are

they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." (Rev. 7: 15.) This speaks of God, not the Lamb, as being on the throne and dwelling in the midst of his people in heaven.

2. I make all things new. (a) New heaven and new earth. We do not know as much about the new heaven and the new earth as we could wish to know. Will the new heaven be separated from the new earth as the present heaven and earth are separated? Or does this expression simply mean a new place for God and his people? Since the tabernacle of God is to be with men, he will dwell among them; and since heaven is a term which refers to the dwelling place of God, we would naturally conclude that the new heaven will not be so separated from the new earth. It is most probable that this expression "new heaven and new earth" simply refers to the new situation or new dwelling place of God and his people, (b) New bodies. We are told that those of us who die will be given new bodies, "A building from God, a house not made with hands eternal, in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5: 1.) They will not be new in the sense that there is no connection, no relation with the present body, but this body raised from the dead and made immortal and incorruptible will in a sense be a new body. And those who are alive at the coming of the Lord will not die, but their bodies will be changed into immortal and incorruptible bodies. (1 Cor. 15: 51ff.) (c) New society. In making

all things new, we should not overlook the fact that the society of the redeemed will be a new society. Whereas the redeemed are living among the wicked of this earth, in that new situation there will be no sin, no wickedness; the society will be redeemed, purified, glorified society.

### 3. Conditions of entrance. (a)

New birth. Jesus teaches us that no one can expect to enter the kingdom of God who does not experience the new birth. (John 3: 3, 5.) This, of course, refers only to responsible individuals and does not include those who die in infancy. (b) New creature. Having been born again, we are looked upon as new creatures. And Paul tells us that if any man

is in Christ he is a new creature. (2 Cor. 5: 17.) We are told that during this Christian life we are to put on the new man after putting off the old man. (Col. 3: 10.) (c) New relationship. There are but two spiritual relationships that responsible people can establish and maintain in this life. One is in the "evil one." (1 John 5: 19.) The other is expressed by the phrase "in Christ" in which relationship we are said to be new creatures. (2 Cor. 5: 17.) We enter this new relationship by being baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27.) If one wishes to have a part in the new heaven and the new earth, he must be born again; he must cultivate the new life in the new relationship.

## Introduction

The things which immediately precede the matter contained in our lesson today are (1) the resurrection. Jesus said that the hour cometh in which all that are in the tomb shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5: 28, 29.) And he tells us that this resurrection will be on the last day. (John 6: 40, 44.) If the resurrection is to occur on the last day, there cannot be a thousand years following that day; there can be no more days after the last day. And from Paul we learn that this resurrection on the last day is at the time of the second coming of our Lord. (1 Thess. 4: 14-17.)

(2) The final judgment. Jesus teaches us that at the time of his second coming, all nations will be gathered before him to be judged. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) He also teaches us that following this judgment, the wicked will be sent away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will be taken away into eternal life. John describes this great judgment to us in Rev. 20: 11-15. Here he tells us that those whose names are not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. But those whose names are found written in the book of life will be privileged to enjoy the happiness and the glories of the new heaven and the new earth.

## Exposition of the Text

### I. The New Heaven and New Earth

(Rev. 21: 1-4)

*I saw a new heaven and a new earth.* Peter tells us that this earth on which we live is "stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. . . . And the earth and the works therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet. 3: 7, 10.) Whatever happens to the works which are in this earth will happen to the earth itself. The action is described by the same verb "shall be burned up." There is no doubt but that the "works that are therein" shall be literally destroyed, but since there is but one verb to express the action which

shall be visited upon the earth and the works in it, it follows that the earth is to be literally burned up. So if there is to be a "new earth" separate from the "new heaven," it follows that this new earth must be (1) another planet now in existence made ready for habitation of the saints, or (2) a new creation prepared for their habitation. But the most probable explanation is that the "new heaven and the new earth" is to be taken to mean a new situation prepared for the redeemed. Jesus speaks of it as mansions being prepared in the Father's house. (John 14: 2-4.) John says, "The first heaven and the first earth are passed

away." We know that this "first earth" is passing away because of the sin that is in it. May we not conclude that the fact that Satan and his angels sinned in heaven is a reason why the first heaven is to pass away? And If God's home is heaven, and God is to come down and dwell with his people, may we not say that heaven will be where God is and thus the new heaven and the new earth will simply be the place of God and his people. The information we have on these matters is so brief that none of us can be dogmatic about the meaning of these symbols, figures of speech, and statements about conditions in the next world.

*I saw the holy city.* This city is called the "new Jerusalem" because old Jerusalem was the capital city of the people of God; it was the place where the temple was built, and where God dwelt among his people. This city is in preparation for those who are preparing themselves to live in that city. Jesus speaks of it as preparing mansions for his disciples. The preparation will be as thorough and as appropriate as the preparation of a bride who adorns herself for her husband. Some people have the idea that the church is only espoused to Jesus Christ now, and that the marriage will take place after the judgment. This is taking the figures literally and pressing them too far. Paul represents the church as being now married to Christ and bearing fruit to him. (Rom. 7: 1ff.) In fact, this verse of our text says nothing about a marriage at all, but simply says that this holy city is as thoroughly prepared for the people of God as a bride is prepared for her husband.

*The tabernacle of God is with men.* The tabernacle of God is the dwelling place of God; hence, God is to dwell among his people. Where we now perceive his presence with his people only by faith, we shall then perceive his presence among us by knowledge.

*And death shall be no more.* The absence of death from that heavenly city will mean the absence of everything that follows in the train of death. A number of things are enumerated, such as mourning, crying, pain, tears. These are the things that accompany death and are caused

by death. And since death cannot enter that holy city, it follows that none of these things will be there.

## II. The Overcomers Will Inherit (Rev. 21: 5-8)

*He that sitteth on the throne said.* This is not something to be said in that new heaven and earth; this refers back to the vision which John was seeing. He has already told us that he saw one sitting on the throne and now this one sitting on the throne speaks, saying, "I make all things new." By this he means that his people will have a new place to live where sin can never reach them. They will have a new society, for it will be composed of the redeemed only. They will have a new government, for God shall be their God. This one who sat on the throne also told John to write the things which he was seeing, "For these words are faithful and true." Words which are faithful are dependable, reliable words; and words which are true are sincere and in harmony with that which is truth.

*They are come to pass.* This does not mean that all this preparation for the people of God had already come to pass at the time John saw the vision, but the plan had been made and the assurance that these things would be done rests upon the faithfulness of God and his ability to keep his promises. Thus, we may be assured that by the time the old heaven and earth pass away, all these things will have been accomplished and will be ready for the use of the people of God.

*I am the Alpha and the Omega.* Alpha is the first letter and Omega the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Hence, by this he simply means that he is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Barnes thinks that since the speaker identified himself as "the Alpha and the Omega," this proves the speaker to be Jesus Christ and not the Father, but he admits that verse 7 constitutes a difficulty in the way of this interpretation. But since in our last lesson John spoke of the Father as being seated on the throne and the Lamb, the Messiah, as being one among those around the throne, we see no reason why the one on the throne here should not be the Father. The fact that Jesus in Rev. 1: 8 referred

to himself as the "Alpha and the Omega" needs not force us to make this verse refer to him and not to the Father. This term is equally applicable to both the Father and the Son.

*I will give unto him.* There are three promises made to those who will be in that great company. (1) They will be given to drink of the fountain of the water of life freely. This simply indicates that all their desires of a heavenly nature will be completely satisfied. They will never want for anything that will contribute to their life and happiness. (2) Those in that company will inherit all the things described as being in the new heaven and new earth. Furthermore, the people of this company are described as those who have overcome the enemies they had here on earth. They will have overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; and as a reward they will inherit the things prepared for the faithful. (3) The Father promises to be their God and they shall be his children.

*But for the fearful, and unbelieving.* John now takes a look on the outside of the new heaven and the new earth. And there he sees those who were fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, and liars. None of these characters will be permitted to inherit the new heaven and the new earth, but their place will be in the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." Brimstone is sulphur. Whether the fire and sulphur will be literal; whether the physical elements will be in that spiritual world is of little consequence. The idea is that the wicked will be in a place and condition that will be as unbearable to their resurrected bodies as fire and sulphur are to our physical bodies. The pain will be unbearable; the time will be unlimited; and the place and condition will be inescapable. This second death is eternal and is the consequences of our sins.

### III. Description of the City (Rev. 21: 22-27)

*I saw no temple therein.* The old Jerusalem had its temple which was the dwelling place of God and the center of the interest and affection of the people. But this holy city, the new Jerusalem will not have one small area as the center of attention

and affection, but the whole city itself is a temple. Or, viewed from another point of view, "The Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." God and the Lamb will be the center of interest and affection in that new world, and no one will be any farther removed from them than everyone else.

*The city hath no need of the sun.* We will not be dependent upon the sun, the moon, and the stars for light in that heavenly city, "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." The reader should notice the unity of the Father and the Son in these verses. In verse 22, both the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb constitute the temple of that holy city. And now we see the "glory of God" and "the Lamb" together furnishing the light for that city. And since their light is constant, there will be no night in that city.

*And the nations shall walk.* John tells us that the nations will walk in the light of God and the Lamb. Nations as such are not subjects of salvation, so he must mean that the individuals of the various nations will walk therein. And further, he says the kings shall bring their glory into it. This does not mean that kings as such are worthy of a place in heaven, but those kings who lived according to the demands of the law of the Lord in their time will bring their glory into the city. They will not there be kings, nor will they be treated any differently from the way their subjects will be treated. Perhaps there is the thought of the submission of these kings to God. They will gladly bring their glory and honor into the city and as a tribute to God will gladly lay down their honor and glory in recognition of his superior honor and glory.

*There shall in no wise enter into it.* John assures us that there will not be anything unclean enter this holy city. Neither will there be anything which maketh an abomination or a lie in that city. In verse 8 we are told that the abominable and all liars will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone. Since these characters are to be in that lake of fire, it follows that there will be none in heaven who will make an abomination or a lie. This is simply to assure us that there won't be anything un-

true, disgusting, or unclean in that city.

*They that are written in the Lamb's book of life.* Jesus told his disciples to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. (Luke 10: 20.) And Paul speaks of his fellow-workers "whose names are in the book of life." (Phil. 4: 3.) And we are told

that the church of the firstborn are "enrolled in heaven." (Heb. 12: 23.) And those whose names are not found written in the book of life are to be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20: 15.) So we can understand why John says, Only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life are to have a part in that city.

### Lessons to Learn

1. Those who are "distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked" will be the better prepared to enjoy the association of those who have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These who enjoy such things here as the wicked indulge in will not be in that holy city.

2. People who give way to the temptations of pleasure, convenience, and folly cannot claim to be among the overcomers, but only the overcomers will be in that holy city. We need to realize that we must over-

come our enemies here in order that we may inherit the city prepared for overcomers.

3. If the teaching of the Bible with reference to the punishment of the wicked is not true, how can we believe what it teaches about the happiness of the righteous? If you destroy my faith in the punishment of the wicked, you take away all the foundation for my faith in the rewards of the righteous. The God who promises to reward the righteous threatens to punish the wicked; we must believe both.

### Questions for the Class

What is the topic of the lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give the time, place and persons of this lesson.

Golden Text Explained

Can you prove that Jesus is now on the throne of David?

How long will Jesus reign over his kingdom?

Can you prove that Jesus will reign until the resurrection?

Who is pictured as sitting on the throne in the scene of our text?

What do you know of the new heaven and new earth?

Discuss other things which will be new in heaven.

What are the conditions of entering the new heaven and earth?

What is said of our new relationship here?

Introduction

Can you prove that the good and evil will be raised the same day?

How does the Lord speak of the resurrection day?

Can you prove that the resurrection and judgment will be on the same day?

Who are said to be present at the judgment?

Who will have their part in the lake of fire?

What disposition will be made of the righteous on that day?

The New Heaven and New Earth

What is to happen to the present heaven and earth on the last day?

What is meant by new heaven and new earth?

What is the holy city called? and why?

Why is this city said to be like a bride?

How is God's presence with his people described?

What is said of man's last enemy and its fearful train of helpers?

The Overcomers Will Inherit

What did the one sitting on the throne say?

Name several things about this situation that will be new.

What is meant by words that are faithful? and true?

Who is said to be the Alpha and the Omega? and what does this mean?

What three things does the Father promise his people?

How is the eternal abode of the wicked described?

Description of the City

What did John not see in this holy city?

What is meant by saying God and the Lamb are the temple?

Why does the city not need the sun to shine?

What is said of the nations? and the kings?

What type of things can have no place in that holy city?

What do you know about the Lamb's book of life?

What is there of interest to you in lessons to learn?