

# Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON  
UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS  
FOR THE  
CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1966

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

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## FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL VOLUME

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## PREFACE

The aim of the lessons which are contained in this and other annuals of this series, is to help those who use them to a better understanding of the Word of God, and its application in the daily lives of his people. There are all too many people who go through a form of study, but who do not learn very much about the over-all plan of the Scriptures. To those who sincerely and diligently strive to recognize and follow the plan which the Bible sets forth, find in this great Volume an inexhaustible storehouse of wisdom and knowledge.

This is one of the reasons why those who study with the whole of the Scriptures in mind, should look upon the lessons which they consider week by week, not as mere isolated studies, but rather as a part of the whole; and, with this view in mind, they will want to see a connection between a particular lesson, and the others in the quarter; as well as a relationship between a quarter's lesson and the Bible as a whole.

Thus, the lessons of the first quarter not only are interrelated themselves; they also bear a distinct relationship to the entire scope of the Scriptures; and if one is willing to take the time and make the effort, he will be able to see that practically every principle which is found in the first part of the Bible has an application to the rest of the Volume, including the New Testament. The Genesis lessons, in presenting the "beginnings," foreshadow, or, which is the same thing, give a background, for about every kind of a situation with which the student is confronted throughout the Bible.

The second and third quarters are concerned with "highlights" in the life of Christ. This, of course, is absolutely essential to an understanding of the rest of the New Testament; and so, when we are familiar with these great events in the life of our Lord, we are in position to go on through the history of the early church, and enter into the great work of converting people to Christ, and seeing how they were rooted and grounded in the truth. Jesus suffered much in order to make all of these things possible, and his people, in like manner, must learn to suffer; and if this is done, they will be prepared, not only to sympathize with others; but also to understand the great problems of discipline.

The last quarter deals with the work of God in bringing into being a great nation, and his efforts to lead them into paths of righteousness. These people, to a very great extent, foreshadowed the people of Christ today. There are great principles set forth in these lessons; and we should make every effort to recognize them, and make them applicable in our own lives.

This is the forty-fifth annual volume which the Gospel Advocate Company has published for use by churches of Christ; and it is the twenty-first which has borne the title, *Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons*. Both the author and the publishers sincerely trust that this volume will prove to be helpful to the many thousands of teachers and students who make use of it throughout the year.

THE AUTHOR.

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FIRST QUARTER  
A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

AIM.—To lead the student in a study of the origin of the world and of man, the sin and fall, and the events which led to the establishment of moral, social, and spiritual standards in the race.

Lesson I—January 2, 1966

IN THE BEGINNING—GOD

Lesson Text

Gen. 1: 1-5, 26-31; 2: 1-3

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

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

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

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

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

. . . . .

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

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

28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and

subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food:

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1 And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”  
(Gen. 1: 1.)

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Jan. 1. S.....	God Made the World (Acts 17: 22-31)
Jan. 2. S.....	God's Works Declare His Glory (Psalm 19)

TIME.—From “the beginning” to A.M. 1 (the first year of our world).

PLACE.—Presumably in or near the location of the garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—God, the Word, and the Spirit.

## Introduction

Inasmuch as the chronology of the Bible, insofar as our practical use of it is concerned, is generally reckoned from the birth of Jesus, a few words regarding that question should be said before we begin our study of the first book in the Scriptures. Students who use various commentaries, and other reference works, will notice that different dates are given for the birth of Christ; and this, of course, is confusing, until the matter is better understood. The most common dates which are preferred by modern Bible students are from 7 to 4 B.C. But if the dates are reckoned from the birth of Jesus, why is it that the date of his birth is given anywhere from 7 to 4 B.C., or, indeed, any year B.C., that is, before Christ? The following quotation from *The Concise Bible Dictionary*, included in some editions of the American Standard Version of the Bible, is a brief but satisfactory explanation.

“The date of the birth of Jesus Christ, the central event in the world’s history, was first fixed, in the sixth century A.D., by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman monk, in the year 753 after the building of Rome (A.U.C., *Anno urbis conditoe*). That this was not the exact year of our Lord’s birth has been abundantly proved; but the use of the date all over Christendom is too firmly established to be changed. It is certain from St. Matthew that our Lord was born before the death of Herod the Great (spring of 750 A.U.C.). The Nativity can scarcely be placed later than the autumn of 749 A.U.C. (5-4 B.C.). For the date December 25, there is no direct evidence whatever.”

That which has just been said shows why modern scholars do not accept any date for the birth of Christ, later than 4 B.C.; and some even think that it occurred as early as 7 B.C. Thus, when we say that the events of the lesson now under consideration took place in the year 4004 B.C., we are accepting only one of the several dates which may be correct. But when we say that the events of our present study took place in the year A.M. 1, we are rea-

sonably certain of being correct. The abbreviation “A.M.” is that of *anno mundi* (world), in the year of the world. The three abbreviations regarding dates in the Bible which students of the Bible should keep in mind are (1) A.M., *anno mundi*—in the year of the world; (2) B.C.—before Christ; and (3) A.D., *Anno Domini*—in the year of our Lord.

Those who desire to study the Word of the Lord should make a special effort to acquire a working knowledge of the *Book of Genesis*; not only because it is the first book in the Bible, but chiefly because it is preeminently the book of beginnings. No one can understand the remainder of the Bible, it he is not acquainted with the origin of Biblical history. The relation therefore of the *Book of Genesis* to the rest of the Bible, along with the varied and striking character of its own contents, makes it one of the most prominent books in the Sacred Collection.

We may think of the name of the first book of the Bible as being derived from the opening words. “In the beginning,” or from the contents of the book itself. It is indeed, as already suggested, a book of beginnings. It would be both interesting and profitable, as the class goes through the *Book of Genesis*, as far as we go during this quarter, to keep an account of the various beginnings which are recorded by the inspired penman. For example, we read of the beginning of the material universe in its present form; the beginning of the human race; the beginning of human sin (the devil was a sinner before man was); the beginning of the scheme of human redemption; the beginning of the nations of the earth; the beginning of the Hebrew nation; and the beginning of a life of faith and consecration in God’s service.

When we come to analyze the book of *Genesis*, we may consider it from different points of view, as, for instance, a broad outline of the book may be described as follows: (1) A General History from Adam to Abraham, 1: 1-11: 9; (2) The His-



story of Abraham, 11: 10–25; 18; (3) The History of Isaac and Jacob, 25: 19–36; 43; and (4) The History of Joseph and his brethren, 37: 1–50: 26. But as we take a more detailed look at the Book of Genesis, we may observe that the term “generations” marks several natural divisions. An outline of the book with this idea in mind would be as follows: (1) The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth, 1: 1–2: 3; (2) The Generations of the Heavens and of the Earth, 2: 4–4: 26; (3) The Generations of Adam, 5: 1–6: 8; (4) The Generations of Noah, 6: 9–9: 29; (5) The Generations of the Sons of Noah, 10: 1–11: 9; (6) The Generations of Shem, 11: 10–26; (7) The Generations of Terah, 11: 27–25: 11; (8) The Generations of Ishmael, 25: 12–18; (9) The Generations of Isaac, 25: 19–35: 29; (10) The Generations of Esau, 36: 1–37: 1; and (11) The Generations of Jacob, 37: 2–50: 26.

If the Book of Genesis is studied from the standpoint of its “generations,” it will be seen that its composition is to a great extent a compilation of family documents. It is reasonable to suppose that Moses, who wrote this historical work, evidently made use of the materials which were available, pretty much as Luke did when he wrote the book which bears his name. (See Luke 1: 1-4.) The Book of Genesis has a genealogical character which is due, no doubt, to the author’s intention of tracing the fulfillment of God’s purpose in redemption through the line of the chosen people. These genealogies therefore are an essential part of the Book of Genesis, and they form a consecutive series from Adam to Jacob, with occasional interruptions for the purpose of introducing collateral and connected facts, which are necessary to the full development of the history.

### The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the main text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

### The Text Explained

#### Creation, Destruction and Renovation (Gen. 1: 1-5)

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

The words with which the Bible begins are sublime. They tell us the very first thing which is possible for us to know about the world in which we live. It was created by God in the beginning. We have no means of knowing just how long Jehovah existed, speaking after the manner of men, before his creative voice broke the silence of eternity (cf. Psalm 33: 6-9). The “beginning” in the text now under consideration refers to the beginning of the created

universe; not to the beginning of God. There is no beginning nor ending with him; he is eternal—from everlasting to everlasting.

It is not possible for the mind of man to go any farther back into the distant past, than to the beginning. If we could go back beyond the beginning, we would by that act demonstrate that the beginning is not the beginning. Only God was before the event of creation; and the Bible, which is his inspired revelation to man, does not in any place attempt to prove the fact or truth of God. He is everywhere taken for granted. There must be a First Cause for the existence of the universe; and only the God who is revealed in the Bible can satisfy that demand.

The first verse of the section of the lesson text now under consideration is a complete statement, in and of itself. It simply tells of the origin of the world; and when we read such passages as Isa. 45: 18; Job 38: 4-7, the only logical conclusion we can reach is that the result of God’s creative act was a perfect order. But when we read Gen. 1: 2, the earth,

not the heavens and the earth, but the earth alone, is described as being "waste and void." Isa. 45: 18 plainly says that God created the earth, not a waste, but to be inhabited; and this should be enough to show us that the condition of the earth, which is described in verse 2 of the lesson text, was not its original condition when it was created. We are told by some eminent Hebrew scholars that the term "was" could just as well have been translated "became"; and if that is true, then the passage would read, "And the earth *became* waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The Aramaic rendering of this passage is, "And the earth had become ruined and uninhabited." If that which has just been said is true, then the earth, sometime between its creation and the beginning of time, as we know it, collapsed and "became waste and void," totally unfit therefore for the habitation of the race which Jehovah was about to create. It is possible that this collapse is referred to in Job 9: 5-7.

In the closing part of verse 2, the Spirit of God is represented as moving, or brooding (marginal note), upon the face of the waters. The Spirit of God is his life principle and the divine energy by which he always carries on his diverse activities. (Cf. Job 26: 13; Psalm 104: 30; Luke 1: 34, 25.) In perfecting the scheme of human redemption, God personified his Word, and it appeared in history as Jesus Christ; and he also personified his Spirit, which became the Holy Spirit, whose mission is to bring to fulfillment in human experience the whole meaning of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the Redeemer of the human race. It is in the New Testament that we have the full revelation of the three Persons in the Divine Trinity; God alone is represented as a Person in the Old Testament. But with the entire scope of the Scriptures before us, it is not out of place to say that Jehovah was the great Architect or Designer, and the Source of all things; the Son executed the plans, or actually did the creating; while the Spirit gave form to, organized, animated, and gave laws for the direction of all things.

Verse 3 of the lesson text now before us marks the beginning of the historic period, or the beginning of

time as we know it. The three great events of Gen. 1: 1-3 are (1) the beginning, verse 1; (2) the collapse and subsequent chaotic condition of the earth, verse 2; and (3) the beginning of the renovation of the earth. The entire first chapter of Genesis, beginning with verse 3, is a record of the restoration of the earth, along with the creation of its inhabitants for which and for whom it was made.

The original word for "created" in verse 1 does not occur in the chapter again until we reach verse 21; there is an entirely different original word to describe that which was done in the intervening verses. The first of these original words means to make something which had had no previous existence (cf. Heb. 11: 3); while the second term has reference to renovation or reconstruction. The heavens and the earth were created outright, or out of nothing (cf. Job 26: 7); but after the earth's collapse the reconstruction was with reference to those things which were created in the beginning. And inasmuch as the same original word for "create" is found in verses 21ff., the implication is that animal life and man had likewise not previously existed.

The earth, in its chaotic condition, was completely covered in darkness; and God's first act in the work of restoring the earth was that of commanding the light to come upon the scene, which is described as being good. He then divided the light from the darkness, and called them Day and Night, respectively. The manner in which evening and morning are referred to implies that time, as we know it, was born at high noon.

### The Creation of Man and His Dominion (Gen. 1: 26-31)

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish*

*the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

The great work of reconstructing the earth, and making it a suitable place for the habitation of man, is referred to in Gen. 1: 3-25. It has already been pointed out that the language which Moses used indicates the difference between that which was restored, and that which was created outright, that is, that which was made out of nothing. With this view of the question in mind, it appears fairly certain that animal life did not exist, at least as we know it, prior to the fifth day. Furthermore, there is no reason for thinking that the "six days" of the first chapter of Genesis are anything but twenty-four hour days, as we understand the expression. Sidney Collett has observed that "throughout the whole of Scripture the word day is never used to represent a lengthened period when a numeral is connected with it." Thus, one day, three days, forty days, one hundred and fifty days, always mean a twenty-four hour day, or a fraction thereof.

When God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," the indication is that that great act involved the Father, his Word, and his Spirit. This is a subject beyond the comprehension of finite minds; and the best that any of us can do is to offer a simple illustration. Man, his word, and his spirit are one; but they are also in a sense distinct, the one from the other. A man and his word are not the same, and yet they are inseparably joined together: his word is his means of expressing himself to others. The same is true of his spirit: they are in a sense dis-

tinct, and yet they cannot be separated without bringing an end to life. Man's spirit is the manifestation of his power or energy. Thus, in the case of Jehovah: he is one, but he manifests himself through his Word (means of communication) and his Spirit (power or energy). It has already been pointed out in this lesson that later on, in the economy of God, he personified his Word and his Spirit, making them his Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit, respectively.

If one will stop to examine the grammatical construction of the Hebrew of the first chapter of Genesis, he will find that the word for God is, to employ simple transliteration, *Elohim*, the plural of *Eloah*; but it is used with a singular verb. Robert Milligan thinks that the use of a plural subject with a singular verb is probably due to the Divine effort to guard the readers of the Bible against the extremes of both Polytheism (a plurality of gods) and Unitarianism (a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, of God, his Son, and his Spirit). Others, however, think that "perhaps the plural is best explained as indicating plenitude of might' or exceptional dignity and unlimited greatness. In this One are united all the powers of eternity and infinity."

But what does the Bible mean by saying that man was made in the image of God? It was not in his erect form or physical features. It was not in his intellectual capacity; for the devil and his angels are equal, if not superior, to man in this respect. It was not in his immortality; for man had a beginning, something which is not true of God. It must have been in the moral nature of his soul or spirit, or what may be described as original righteousness.

"Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccl. 7: 29.) Man's restoration from sin, that is, his conversion or return to God, is declared to be a new creation. (See 2 Cor. 5: 17; cf. Eph. 2: 10; Tit. 3: 5; Col. 3: 10; Eph. 4: 24.) Knowledge, righteousness, and holiness of truth, then, must be the grand features of the divine likeness.

Man has been given dominion over the created universe, and was told to

subdue it, that is, dominate the earth. This certainly implies that man should learn all the facts he can regarding the earth, and put them to a good use. (Cf. Job 12: 7-12) The realization of man's great responsibility should certainly humble him. (Cf. Psalm 8: 1-9) If Gen. 1: 29 and 9: 1-3 are read in the light of each other, it appears that man was not permitted to eat flesh as food until after the flood. (Cf. 1 Tim. 4: 1-5.)

### A Complementary Statement Regarding Creation (Gen. 2: 1-3)

*And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.*

This section of the lesson text is not to be regarded as a separate account of creation, but rather as a further statement concerning that which is recorded in the preceding chapter, along with the fact that God did no further work along that line. In other words, all of his work of rehabilitation, together with the creation of animal life and man, was completed in six days; and it was on

the seventh day that Jehovah finished, that is, brought to an end the work which he had created and made.

Our word "sabbath" comes from the term *rested*, which literally means to cease, or a cessation. The writer of Hebrews discusses this original idea of the term sabbath at some length in the fourth chapter of that book. The Lord's people will enter into their joy *after* they have finished, that is, after they have ceased from their labors in this life. Many people seem to find it difficult to think of the term "sabbath" apart from the word *seventh*. Sabbath and seventh are not synonyms; the basic meaning of "sabbath" is, and always has been, *cessation*. The sabbath is an institution of God.

Bible students should make an effort to distinguish between the *principle* of the sabbath, on the one hand, and the *application* of the principle, on the other. When Jesus said that the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath (Mark 2: 27), he was not talking about the application of the principle of the sabbath to the Jewish people, but rather of the *principle* itself. Jesus is the Lord of the principle of the sabbath (Mark 2: 28), and he therefore has the right to tell his people when they should cease from their activities and devote a day to him. (Cf. Rev. 1: 10.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

From what event is the chronology of the Bible reckoned?

Why is it important to learn the facts, as nearly as possible, regarding these matters?

When was Jesus born?

What three important abbreviations regarding Bible dates should we know about?

Give the meaning of each of them.

Why is it important to gain a working knowledge of the Book of Genesis?

How did the first book of the Bible come to be called Genesis?

What are the four principal historical divisions of the Book of Genesis?

Give an outline of the book from the standpoint of "generations."

What reasons can you give for thinking that the writer of Genesis was inspired?

### Creation, Destruction, and Renovation

What is the nature of the opening words of the Book of Genesis?

When did Jehovah create the heavens and the earth?

What "beginning" was that?

Why didn't the writers of the Bible endeavor to prove the existence of God?

What is involved in the first verse of our lesson text for today?

What was the condition of the heavens and the earth when they were created?

What happened to the earth?

What was its condition after its collapse?

What was the first step in its rehabilitation?

Who or what is the Spirit of God?

Where did light come from?

### The Creation of Man and His Dominion

What is the principal difference between "reconstruction" of the earth and its "creation"?

When, apparently, did animal life first appear on the earth?

How long were the days mentioned in Gen. 1? Give reasons for your answer.  
What is implied by the statement, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness?"  
How can we illustrate the idea of the "Trinity?"  
What is the probable reason for using a plural noun (the name of God) with a singular verb?  
What does the Bible mean by saying that man was made in God's image?  
What dominion was given to man?  
What is the meaning of "subdue" the earth?  
What did God give man for food?

A Complementary Statement Regarding Creation  
In what way are the first three verses of chapter 2 related to chapter 1?  
How long was Jehovah engaged in the work of rehabilitating the earth?  
What is the meaning of God's resting on the seventh day?  
What is the basic meaning of the term "sabbath?"  
Why do so many people try to think of *seventh* and *sabbath* as being synonyms?  
What is the difference between the principle of the sabbath and its application?

Lesson II—January 9, 1966  
THE CREATION OF MAN

Lesson Text  
Gen. 2: 7, 8, 18-25

7 And Je-ho'-vah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.  
8 And Je-ho'-vah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.  
. . . . .  
18 And Je-ho'-vah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.  
19 And out of the ground Je-ho'-vah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof.  
20 And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heav-

ens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him.  
21 And Je-ho'-vah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof:  
22 And the rib, which Je-ho'-vah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.  
23 And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.  
24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.  
25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."* (Psalm 139: 14.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 1: 26-28.

Daily Bible Readings

Jan.	3. M.....	Christ in Creation (John 1: 1-11)
Jan.	4. T.....	Creation by Christ (Col. 1: 9-17)
Jan.	5. W.....	Praise to the Creator (Psalm 33: 1-9)
Jan.	6. T.....	Gifts from God (Psalm 1-4: 10-24)
Jan.	7. F.....	Marvels of Creation (Job 40: 15-24)
Jan.	8. S.....	Man in the Image of God (Gen. 1: 26, 27)
Jan.	9. S.....	Let God be Praised (Psalm 148)

TIME.—A.M. 1 (the first year of the world); or 4004 B.C.  
PLACE.—Probably in or near the location of the garden of Eden.  
PERSONS.—Jehovah, Adam, and Eve.

## Introduction

The following words had a place in our lesson last week: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1: 26, 27.) If we will now turn to the eighth Psalm and read it carefully, we shall see that David extols the dignity of man along with the glory of God. The entire psalm reads as follows: "O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who has set thy glory upon the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength, because of thine adversaries, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. 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? For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

The writer of Hebrews made a part of this psalm applicable to Jesus. but that was not its original purpose. It is a picture of God's mindfulness of mankind, that is, the human race, and what he has done for them. The writer of Hebrews lists three particulars in which God has done this, namely, (1) "Thou made him a little lower than the angels"—his rank or position among the created things; (2) "Thou

crownedst him with glory and honor"—the royal dignity which man enjoys, especially that part of the race which is loyal to God's purpose; and, (3) "And didst set him over the works of thy hands"—the sphere of his responsibilities. The writer of Hebrews continues: "Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to him. But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Read Heb. 2: 5-10.)

The fact that all things are not yet subjected to man is significant, both for this lesson, and the ones which are to follow; and it should make us appreciate more the words found in Eccl. 7: 29, namely, "Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Two of the items in man's supremacy, quoted above, have been realized; but the language quoted from Hebrews shows that the third will only be realized in Christ. (Cf. Rom. 8: 18-22; Eph. 1: 10.) As Paul views the matter in Ephesians, God's eternal purpose is to gather into one body the whole created universe, and thereby restore harmony, both between the creatures themselves, and between them and himself as their Creator—all to be accomplished through Christ. If man could only realize something of God's exalted plan for him, and what it has cost Jehovah to make the ultimate goal for his creature possible, we would all have a greater determination to do our best to be faithful to him.

## The Golden Text

*"I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"*

The psalm from which this text is taken has been called "the crown of

all the psalms;" and it sets forth that which theology speaks of as "the doctrine of the Divine Omniscience." There is, perhaps, no clearer state-

ment, or a greater one, of God's intimate knowledge of man, then the one which is found in the first part of the psalm from which the golden text is taken. "O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit: or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou didst form my inward parts: thou didst cover me in my mother's womb." (Psalm 139: 1-13.)

It was against this background that David uttered the words of the golden text: "I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." And it is certain that people today, and especially those who profess to be the Lord's people, would be doing the same thing, if they, like the sweet singer of Israel, would dwell upon the fact that they came from the hand of God, and are ever in his presence. When Paul spoke to the Athenian philosophers,

he said, "And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man." (Acts 17: 26-29.)

If we will continually think of God as our Maker, then we, like David and Paul, will have a higher conception of both Jehovah and ourselves. God's creative work reached its climax in the making of man. Henry Giles thinks that "man is greater than a world—than systems of worlds; there is more mystery in the union of soul with the body, than in the creation of a universe." But be that as it may, we know that Jesus says that the life of man is worth more than the world. "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" (Matt. 16: 26.) In speaking of man, Carlyle says, "He is of the earth, but his thoughts are with the stars. Mean and petty his wants and desires; yet they serve a soul exalted with grand, glorious aims,—with immortal longings,—with thoughts which sweep the heavens, and wander through eternity. A pigmy standing on the outward crest of this small planet, his far-reaching spirit stretches outward to the infinite, and there alone finds rest."

### The Text Explained

Man's Dual Nature and  
His First Home  
(Gen. 2: 7-8)

*And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

There are three words used in the

first two chapters of Genesis to indicate that which God did with reference to the creation and reconstruction of the world and that which is in it, namely, "create"—*bara*, "make"—*asah*, and "form"—*yatsar*. The first term is used primarily with reference to the instantaneous creation of something which had no previous existence whatsoever. The second term is used to account for the production of everything except

the original creation. This is to say that the world was created, and later on the earth "became" waste and void. At the beginning of time as we know it, Jehovah reconstructed (*asah*) the earth which he had originally created (*bara*). "And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created (*bara*) and made (*asah*)." (Gen. 2: 3.) The first word, let it be repeated, has reference to original creation (Gen. 1: 1, 21), while the second describes that which belonged to the renovation or reconstruction, as stated and explained in the intervening verses, that is verses 3-20.

The Hebrew *yatsar*, from which we have "formed" in the section of the lesson text now under consideration, literally means, as Strong has it, to squeeze into shape; and it appears that the two terms make (*asah*) and form (*yatsar*) are employed more or less as synonyms. Both *asah* and *yatsar* are used to describe the work of a potter. (Cf. Jer. 18: 3, 4; Isa. 29: 16, respectively.) The idea in the passage now under consideration is that of Jehovah taking some of the dust of the earth, that is, the earth which he created in the beginning, and "squeezing" it into the shape of a body of a man, just as the potter would take some clay and fashion it into an image, according to his desire. But God did not stop there; he breathed into the nostrils of the body which he had made the "breath of life," and it became a breathing or living creature. The original term for life in the passage now before us is plural; and that may imply that when God breathed into the body which he had made the breath of "lives," he by that act made man a physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual being. (Cf. Luke 2: 52.) At any rate, this is enough to show us that man belongs to two worlds. (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 45-49.) And in the words of Longfellow,

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!—  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem.  
Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

—A Psalm of Life.

The exact location of the garden of Eden is not known, although it appears that the general area of its location is indicated by the names of the rivers which flowed out of it. "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. The name of the first is Pishon: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth in front of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates." (Gen. 2: 10-14.) The marginal reading for Hiddekel is Tigris. Both the Tigris and the Euphrates are well known to Bible students. The location of the other two is lost to history.

The word "garden" is of Persian origin, and the original term is rendered *paradise* in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. We have no way of knowing how large the garden was, but we are told that it was "eastward, in Eden," that is in the district or region of Eden. If we could be certain that the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are approximately where they were in Old Testament geography, then we could safely assume that the general area of the garden of Eden was in the section north of their conjunction, or what was formerly called Armenia, but which is now divided among the Soviet Union, Turkey, and Iran. The latter country was formerly called Persia. But wherever the garden of Eden was located, it was unsurpassed in beauty, and was an ideal home for the first human pair in the days of their innocence; and its imagery continued through Old Testament history to represent "glory and greatness" (Ezek. 31: 18), and the paradisiacal society which the prophets promised a redeemed people (Isa. 51: 3; Ezek. 36: 35; Joel 2: 3). There is no mention of Eden anywhere in the New Testament.

#### Man's Natural Loneliness (Gen. 2: 18-20)

And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.



*And out of the ground Jehovah formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him.*

One of the principal lessons which we should learn from this section of the lesson text, is that man is separate and distinct from the brute creation. Adam was alone, so far as any companionship was concerned; there was nothing in creation which was "meet," that is, suitable or answering to his needs. This was God's appraisal of the situation; and it was only by the creative hand of Jehovah that the need could be met. It should be observed that God said, "I," not *we*, will make a help meet for him. (Cf. Gen. 1: 26.) Jehovah God is one. (See Deut. 6: 4, 5; Mark 12: 29.)

The sacred historian next gave a recapitulation of the events of creation, as set forth in chapter 1; and then said that every living creature was brought before the man, to see what he would call them. These lower creatures were actually made on the day before man's creation; but the writer was not discussing the order of creation here, but was giving the background for the creation of woman. Some Bible students are of the opinion that one of the reasons for bringing the lower creation of living things before man, was to make him conscious of his own needs. Milligan thinks that Adam was divinely enabled to give names to all living creatures; but whether he was inspired or not, it is plain to see that his ability to give names to all of them was proof that he was above and apart from them. There are many scriptural references to man's exalted position in the universe; and some one has suggested that it is not altogether speculative to try to imagine the direction which this lordship would have taken, if Adam and Eve had not betrayed the trust which Jehovah had placed in them. (Cf. Isa. 11: 6-9; Heb. 2: 5-10; Rom. 8: 18-23.) If all the birds and animals came before Adam with their mates, that no doubt would im-

press him with the fact that there was no such provision made for him.

### The Creation of Woman and the Institution of Marriage (Gen. 2: 21-25)

*And Jehovah caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

If one reads this narrative without taking into consideration the fact of the instantaneous creation of all things, he might be led to think that the time required for the transaction would be comparable to the time required by a surgeon for a similar operation. It is entirely probable that the whole process of woman's creation was miraculous, with no time element involved. The marginal reading for "made" in verse twenty-two, of the passage just quoted, is *builded he into*. The word is from the Hebrew *banah*, and that is its literal meaning. As *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* notes, "The hand that had molded clay into the material for the body of man took a part of the living body of man and builded it into the woman." Matthew Henry has observed that "the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." When Adam awoke, he doubtless beheld his bride in all of her virgin beauty and loveliness; and he called her *Issah* (Woman), because she was taken out of *Ish* (Man). The marginal reading gives these two Hebrew words from which we have Man and Woman.

The original word which is here translated "rib" occurs in the Old

Testament more than forty times, and out of that number it is rendered "rib" only twice. It is translated "side" nineteen times. Hebrew scholars tell us that it could have very well had that rendering here; and Adam's statement, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," seems to confirm the idea, that is, that the woman was not fashioned from a mere piece of bone—a bare rib. (Cf. Job 18: 12, where the same original word is found.) In other words, both the bone and the flesh were used in making the woman. God could have, of course, made the woman from the dust of the earth, just as he did Adam; but if that had been done, she would have appeared to him as a distinct being, with no natural relation to him. But since Jehovah made her out of a part of the man himself, he immediately saw that she was directly related to him, that is, of the same flesh and bone as himself; and that would at once "ensure his affection, and excite his esteem."

The creation of woman and the institution of marriage are inseparably joined together in the sacred narrative, thereby making marriage the world's first institution; and it was celebrated for the first time before God, himself being the sole Witness, Guest, and Minister. And what it was then, it still is: for marriage has never fallen, but is what of Paradise lives over, continued still by God, to soothe the troubles and comfort the sorrows of our broken state. The following New Testament scriptures fully confirm the fact that marriage, as it was originally or-

dained, is of perpetual duration. (See Matt. 19: 3-6; Eph. 5: 22-33; Heb. 13: 4.) In the words of Edmund Burke, "The Christian religion, by confining marriage to pairs, and rendering the relation indissoluble, has by these two things done more toward the peace, happiness, settlement, and civilization of the world, than by any other part in this whole scheme of divine wisdom."

George Eliot, in speaking of the divine arrangement regarding marriage, says, "What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting." Samuel Johnson notes that "marriage is the strictest tie of perpetual friendship, and there can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity, and he must expect to be wretched, who pays to beauty, riches, or politeness that regard which only virtue and piety can claim." And in the words of Timothy Dwight, "The institution of marriage keeps the moral world in being, and secures it from an untimely dissolution. Without it, natural affection and amiableness would not exist, domestic education would become extinct, industry and economy be unknown, and man would be left to the precarious existence of the savage. But for this institution, learning and refinement would expire, government sink into the gulf of anarchy; and religion, hunted from the earth, would hasten back to her native heavens."

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What place does man hold in the creation of Jehovah?

In what way did David speak of the glory of God and the dignity of man?

What use did the writer of Hebrews make of the words of the psalmist?

What is implied by saying that all things are not yet subjected to man?

How should mankind be affected by thinking of God's exalted plan for the race?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did David speak the words of this text?

In what way has this psalm been described?

What is said regarding Jehovah's intimate knowledge of man?

Why don't we, as a rule, feel and speak of our race as David did?

What did Paul say about God's purpose in making the nations of the earth?

Why is man so great in God's sight?

Discuss Carlyle's words regarding him.

### Man's Dual Nature and His First Home

How is the work of God in creation and reconstruction indicated in the first two chapters of Genesis?

Discuss the three words in question, that is, their English equivalents.

In what way did Jehovah go about making man?

Show that he is a dual being.  
 What may be suggested by the plural of *life*, that is, "lives?"  
 How do we know that man belongs to two worlds?  
 In what way did Longfellow sum up the situation?  
 Where was the garden of Eden probably located? Give reasons for your answer.

#### Man's Natural Loneliness

What is one of the principal lessons which we should learn from this portion of the lesson text?  
 What was the inspired writer's purpose in recounting the work of creating animal life?  
 What was Adam asked to do regarding the birds and animals and why?  
 What would have happened if man had been true to God's trust in him?

#### The Creation of Woman and the Institution of Marriage

Describe the process of woman's creation.  
 What is the significance of the marginal reading of "made" in verse 22?  
 Compare the creation of the man and the woman.  
 What is the apparent significance of taking the material for woman out of Adam's side?  
 What did Adam call her and why?  
 What is the literal meaning of the original word for "rib?"  
 What lesson should we probably learn from this?  
 Why make the woman from man rather than from the dust of the ground?  
 What can you say regarding the institution of marriage?  
 How do we know that it is God's will for it to continue throughout the dispensation?

### Lesson III—January 16, 1966

## MAN S SIN AND FALL

### Lesson Text

#### Gen. 3: 1-12

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

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

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

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

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

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

her husband with her, and he did eat.

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

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

9 And Je-ho'-vah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18: 4.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 1.

### Daily Bible Readings

Jan. 10. M.....	The Beginning of Sin (Gen. 3: 1-6)
Jan. 11. T.....	Origin of Sin in Man (James 1: 12-18)
Jan. 12. W.....	Sins of Covetousness (1 Tim. 6: 1-10)
Jan. 13. T.....	Satan Tempts Jesus (Matt. 4: 1-11)
Jan. 14. F.....	Christ Our Helper (Heb. 2: 13-18)
Jan. 15. S.....	First Recorded Sin in the Church (Acts 5: 1-11)
Jan. 16. S.....	Overcoming Evil (Rom. 12: 19-21)

TIME.—A.M. 1 (the first year of the world), or soon thereafter, or 4004

B.C.

PLACE.—The garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Adam, and Eve.

## Introduction

With our lesson for today, the writer of the Book of Genesis begins the sad story of how sin entered into the human heart. We do not know when sin first had its origin in the universe, for the simple reason that we do not know when the being who became the devil first sinned. We know that Jehovah made all things perfect, including the personality we now call Satan; but at some time prior to the beginning of time, as we know it, the angel who apparently became the evil one lifted up himself against God, and was cast down from his exalted place. (Cf. 1 Tim. 3: 6.) At any rate, the devil was a sinner at the time of the lesson for today; and it was he who inspired the serpent to lead the woman into rebellion against Jehovah. (Cf. John 8: 44.) Both the being who became the devil and the human race were endowed with the freedom of choice; and it is for this cause that they are all responsible before God for the decisions they make. And the terrible situation in which people find themselves today, along with the manner in which it came about, has been well stated by D. R. Davies in his book, *Down Peacock's Feathers*:

"Now in history we have to face the fact . . . that the human race through the individuals composing it, has willed itself out of the subordinate relation to God, with the fatal result that every individual becomes his own centre . . . Since we are all alike in wanting to be our own centre, we are irrevocably divided from one another. United in Sin, we become disunited in every thing else. This is the brilliant mess in which humanity finds itself, especially the progressive civilized humanity of today." This is the centre, that is, the

individual centre, from which every man must turn, if he is to be a dedicated follower of Christ. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself [that is, his centre], and take up his cross, and follow me [that is, the divine centre]." (Matt. 16: 24.) It was with reference to this subject that Jesus delivered his remarks in John 8: 21-58.

When we consider the facts which have just been presented, it is easy for us to see that sin is the greatest problem with which we are confronted today. There are other great problems, of course, but they all grow out of the problem of sin. If we can do something to solve the problem of sin, we will by that effort also do much to clear up other problems. The Bible reveals all that we need to know about sin and its solution; and if we are willing to follow its teaching, we can overcome all the difficulties which stand in the way of our salvation. If we will try to understand the story of the fall of man, we can the more easily know something of his restoration to life. The steps in man's degeneration are (1) unbelief, (2) disobedience, (3) guilt, (4) banishment from God, and (5) death. This is the way that sin came into the world, so far as the human race is concerned; and it is still the way that sin is perpetuated until this day. Man simply listened to an alien influence, and thereby set up his own will against the will and way of God. The only way that *degeneration* can be overcome is by *regeneration*, and this means that the way back to God is by the latter course, namely. (1) belief. (2) obedience. (3) forgiveness. (4) fellowship with God. and (5) eternal life.

## The Golden Text

"*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" The words just quoted are taken from a statement God made to Ezekiel. "The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying. What mean ye, that ye use this proverb

concerning the land of Israel, saying. The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18: 1-4.) This is one of the great statements of the Bible regarding individual responsibility; and it should cause every thoughtful person to stop and think. It is true that people can and often must suffer the consequences of the sins of others; but, in the final analysis, each person will have to answer for his own sins.

This is precisely the lesson which Paul teaches in the New Testament. "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. *For each man shall bear his own burden.*" (Gal. 6: 1-5.) It is true that Paul's statement here is not limited to sin, as that term is generally understood; but the principle is the same; and every individual will, in the end, have to answer for his own life, and not for the life of another, unless, of course, he has had a part in leading him into sin.

Adam and Eve were responsible

for sin in the human race, that is, they were responsible for the beginning of sin. If they had remained faithful to God, their offspring would have had a better chance against temptation; but when the fountain head was corrupted, the stream could never be pure again, without divine assistance. This is another way of saying that because of the transgression of the first man and woman in the garden of Eden, the human race inherited a fallen nature and a proneness to sin; and that has made it impossible for any man, in and of himself, to live above sin. Paul, in writing to the Romans, said, "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." (Rom. 5: 12.) And then through the remainder of the chapter the apostle goes on to show that what we lost in Adam we gained in Christ; and this means that we are not responsible for our inheritance from the first man, but for our personal yielding to sin. Christ has made forgiveness possible, and God himself has solemnly promised that his children will never have more than they can bear. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13.) Therefore, if we will recognize our own responsibility and do our best, we shall always have the assurance of divine help; but if not, then we will have no one to blame but ourselves for our lost condition.

## The Text Explained

### The Tempter at Work

(Gen. 3: 1-5)

*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.*

There does not appear to be any

reason for thinking that the serpent, as he came to Eve in the garden, was in the form in which such creatures are today. In fact, it is fair to assume from Gen. 3: 14 that the serpent was originally an upright animal. At any rate, he posed no threat of fear to the woman; for the scene now before us took place before the dread of any of the creatures under the rule of man had been realized. The serpent had the power of speech, or so it seems, and he talked freely with Eve. He is described as being more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made, and that indicates that he was cunning, crafty, and artful. Satan is nowhere mentioned by name in this entire narrative, but it is certain that he was the real tempter. (Cf. John 8: 44; Rev. 12: 9; 2 Cor. 11:

14.) It seems fair from the passages just cited, and other truths of the Bible, to assume that Satan chose the serpent as the instrument of temptation because of his peculiar fitness for the test. His wily, insidious character would especially qualify him for the work which Satan wanted accomplished.

Keeping in mind the nature of the serpent's character, it is easy to see why he did not come at once to the point and make it plain to the woman just what he was attempting to do. Instead of talking plainly, the serpent insinuated and sought to raise doubts in her mind. His real aim was to deceive her. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 14; Heb. 3: 13.) His method of deceit was to distort the meaning of Jehovah's prohibition, and then hold up the twisted meaning to ridicule. He even went so far as to feign surprise that God would issue such a prohibition in the first place. He then went on to destroy faith in the heart of the woman by sowing in her mind doubt and suspicion, and by presenting false pictures of Jehovah, especially with reference to his motives. It was a deliberate attempt to reflect unfavorably upon the character of God and destroy faith in his righteous judgment. The sure foundation of moral conduct will always collapse, when faith is destroyed; and it is only a short step from unbelief to sin and disgrace.

The woman was innocent, guileless, and unsuspecting; and she was certainly no match for the insidious tempter. She should never have talked with him, but then she had no example to guide her. Jesus had a similar experience, and he has showed us how to meet all such temptations, that is, by stating that which God has said, and remaining true to it. Eve told the serpent that which God had said, but she allowed him to deceive her into thinking that it was not necessary to obey him. This is enough to show us that the woman understood her duty. But when she entered into a controversy with the seducer, he immediately grew bolder, and advanced more powerful arguments. He insinuated that man wanted to be on an equal with his Creator, but that God had deliberately kept him from that desire by the command which he had given. He then went on to charge Je-

hovah with selfishness and a malicious falsehood, and represented him as being envious and unwilling for his creatures to have something which would make them like their omniscient Creator.

In telling Eve that she and her husband would not surely die if they ate the forbidden fruit, the serpent, inspired by the devil, spoke his first bold lie. God had said that they would die if they ate the fruit of the tree in question, but Satan said that such was not the truth. Satan's purpose was to raise doubts in the mind of the woman, and to make her suspicious of God himself. Jesus, in commenting on the question now before us, said of the devil, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof." (John 8: 44.) The serpent that managed such adroit persuasion did not limit his activities to the garden of Eden; he still plies his trade today by implying that we can often know better what to do than God does.

#### When Sin Became a Reality (Gen. 3: 6-8)

*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.*

The entrance of sin into the human race is one of the most important and far-reaching events in the history of the world. Every sorrow and pain, and every death, both physical and eternal, can be traced directly to this first sin. (Read Rom. 5: 12-21.) Every bloody sacrifice throughout the Old Testament period was a vivid testimony to the fact of sin; and it required the offering of the immaculate Son of God himself

to make possible the salvation of those who were held within its bondage. "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.)

The verbs of verse 6 clearly and vividly tell the story of the fall of mankind. "The woman *saw . . . took . . . did eat . . . gave . . . did eat.*" It is easy to see that something happened in the thinking of the woman. As she continued to look upon the fruit, it gradually took on new significance. It appealed to her eye, to her taste, and to her desire for wisdom. The apostle John, many years later, said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2: 15-17.) Eve believed that the fruit which she saw would satisfy all her desires, which in her sight were good; and she took the bold and forbidden step. The agent of the devil had succeeded in his mission to deceive the woman and to lead her astray; and his services were no longer needed. Eve could do the rest, and it appears that she did so immediately: for "she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

We sometimes hear people complain that it is unreasonable that so much misery and despair should descend to all future generations, from so little an act as the eating of an apple, or some other fruit. But such an attitude shows a complete misunderstanding of the whole situation now before us. It was not simply the eating of some kind of fruit which did the damage, but the rebellion against God. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17; cf. Heb. 2:1-3.) The eating of the fruit was only the manifestation of the state of the heart. Truly Satan, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled Eve, and through it slew her. (See Rom. 7: 11.) That is still the manner in which the devil works; for he has

found occasion to deceive and slay countless millions of others by the same method. He simply takes a command of God which is applicable to people today, deceives them into thinking that it is not necessary for them to obey it, and his nefarious work is done; he can leave the rest to the people in question: for he knows that all disobedience will be punished. (Cf. 2 Cor. 10: 6; Matt. 7: 21-23; Mark 16: 15,16; Gal. 1: 6-9.)

The serpent had painted a rosy picture for Eve, but it was not a true-to-fact picture; for when the first human pair had disobeyed God, their situation was completely changed. They were no longer innocent, but were plagued by fear and a guilty conscience. Shame caused them to blush, and they could no longer enjoy the presence and fellowship of their Creator. A terrible loneliness overwhelmed them, and the inevitable miseries of remorse would be their daily lot the rest of their lives. It is significant that it was the "voice" of Jehovah which they heard *walking* in the garden in the cool of the day; for God has no form which can either be seen or heard by human beings. (Cf. Deut. 4: 12.)

#### Freedom of Choice Carries with it Responsibility (Gen. 3: 9-12)

*And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked: and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said. The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

Man was made in the image of God; and because he was originally like God (cf. Eccl. 7: 29), God loved him with an everlasting love (cf. Jer. 31: 3; John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8), and was not willing to give him up to the evil one. And it was and is for that reason that mankind has always and always will hear the voice of God calling to him, especially as long as there is hope for his salvation. The entire Bible is a picture of

God calling to his people. It matters not how far away they may wander, and how hard they may try to hide themselves from Jehovah, the Divine voice can reach them, if only they are willing to respond. Jesus, before he left his disciples to return to his Father, authorized that the gospel message be proclaimed to every creature under heaven. (Cf. Mark 16: 15; Col. 1: 23.)

No sooner had Adam and Eve sinned than they felt the sense of their guilt; and being conscious of their wrongdoing, they were filled with shame and fear. These are always the fruits of sin. The divine trait within them, known as conscience, was at work, and their sin was finding them out. (Cf. Num. 32: 23.) It is still the nature of people who sin, as a rule, not to want their wrongdoing exposed to the light of truth and righteousness. This is especially true of people who are not trying to do right. Jesus says, "And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." (John 3: 19-21.) But what many people fail to realize, is the truth that nothing can be concealed from the light of the Lord. (Cf. Heb. 4: 12-13.) There are only two ways of covering sin, namely, a wrong way and a right way, one seemingly and one real. (Cf. Prov. 28: 13; Psalm 85: 2; Rom. 4: 6, 7.)

The two questions which Jehovah asked Adam (verse 11) were intended to bring man to a sense of his guilt; and to make him realize that nothing can be hidden from God. This is one of the far-reaching truths of the Bible. "Whither shall I

go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night; even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." (Psalm 139: 7-12.) If this truth could bring comfort to a good man like David, what terrors must it hold for the man who tries to conceal his sins from God!

Some Bible students think that Adam's reply to God's questions were, in effect, an effort to blame Jehovah for his sin. According to this view, Adam was simply saying that he would not have done wrong, if Eve had not been with him; and since God gave her to him, Jehovah was responsible for that which she caused him to do. But the view just referred to does not necessarily follow from Adam's remarks. It is possible that all he meant to say was that the woman gave him the fruit and he ate it. Paul seems to imply that Adam's act in eating the fruit was deliberately performed, after Eve was deceived into disobeying Jehovah. "And Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression." (1 Tim. 2: 14; cf. 2 Cor. 11: 3.) There is, of course, no way for us to be certain regarding Adam's motive on the occasion now under consideration. It is possible that after seeing what his wife had done, he simply wanted to share her fate with her. But it does appear quite certain that Adam did, to some extent, place the responsibility for his action on his wife. (Cf. Gen. 3: 13.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

When did sin first enter the universe?  
What was the inspiration behind the first sin of mankind?  
Why was it possible for man to sin in the first place?  
Why is the human race in such a terrible situation today?

What must always be done before man can get back to God?  
Discuss the greatness of the problem of sin.  
Why is it true that all other problems are related to sin?  
What are the steps in man's fall and in his return to God?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?



What great lesson do they teach?  
 What are some of the significant facts regarding our responsibility?  
 Why is it apparently so easy for human beings to sin?

#### The Tempter at Work

In what form did the serpent probably appear to Eve?  
 What was meant by saying that it was more subtle than any beast of the field?  
 Who evidently inspired the serpent for the work which it did?  
 Discuss the plan which the serpent used in deceiving the woman.  
 Why didn't it speak plainly to the woman?  
 What was the serpent's first aim?  
 Why is it so important to change one's faith?  
 Why was the woman such an easy prey for the serpent's deception?  
 What was Eve's first great mistake?  
 How did the serpent react to Eve's reply regarding the eating of the fruit of the trees?

#### When Sin Became a Reality

What has been the result of the coming of sin into the world?

Show how the verbs of verse 6 tell the story of the fall of mankind.  
 How comprehensive does John say that the love of the world is?  
 Why wasn't it necessary for the serpent to tempt the man after the woman succumbed?  
 Was the punishment for their sin unreasonable? Give reasons for your answer.  
 In what way does the principle of the temptation and the fall still work today?  
 What realization came to the couple when they fell?

#### Freedom of Choice Carries with It Responsibility

In what way did Jehovah react to the fall of the first human pair?  
 By what motive was he actuated?  
 Why will sinful humanity always hear the voice of Jehovah?  
 Why did Adam and Eve try to hide themselves from Jehovah?  
 Why do people still try to do the same thing?  
 How only can sins be successfully covered?  
 What was the significance of Jehovah's questions in verse 11?  
 What did Adam mean by his reply?

### Lesson IV—January 23, 1966

## CONSEQUENCES OF MAN'S SIN

### Lesson Text

Gen. 3: 14-24

14 And Je-ho'-vah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

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

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

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

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20 And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21 And Je-ho'-vah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.

22 And Je-ho'-vah God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—

23 Therefore Je-ho'-vah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 5: 12-21.

## Daily Bible Readings

Jan. 17. M.....	Effect of Sin (Gen. 3: 1-6)
Jan. 18. T.....	Universality of Sin (Rom. 3: 7-15)
Jan. 19. W.....	Consequence of Sin (Josh. 7: 16-26)
Jan. 20. T.....	Sins of the Flesh (Gal. 5: 1-13)
Jan. 21. F.....	Sin Revealed by the Law (Rom. 7: 7-13)
Jan. 22. S.....	Blood Cleanses from Sin (1 John 1: 1-8)
Jan. 23. S.....	Christ An Offering for Sin (Isa. 53: 1-12)

TIME.—A.M. 1 (the first year of the world), or soon thereafter, or 4004

B.C.

PLACE.—The garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Adam, and Eve.

## Introduction

It was pointed out in the lesson which immediately precedes this one that the greatest problem which affects people today is that of sin. There are other great problems, of course, but they all grow out of the problem of sin; and when we have solved the problem of sin, we shall have gone a long way toward the solution of other problems too. The Bible contains all the information which we need regarding the problem of sin and its solution; and when we learn that which the word of the Lord contains and follow its instruction, we shall be able to deal with any situation which sin may bring before us. This is not to say that it is easy for any one to deal with the problem of sin; for that is not true. Any one who will consider that which the Lord himself had to do about the problem will fully understand that it will never be possible for us to free ourselves completely from the terrible consequences of sin.

Sin is, essentially, as Luther points out, a departure from God. The most prominent New Testament word for sin is *hamartia* which, as Barclay notes, describes the state of sin rather than a definite act. It is from this state or condition that the definite acts of sin usually come. The present infinitive of the verb *hamartanō* (*hamartanein*) literally means to miss the mark, or to fail to be and to do that which God expects of us. That was exactly what happened to Adam and Eve, as we saw in the previous lesson. It was necessary, of course, for them to commit the definite act of sin before they were in a state of sin; but when once the state or condition has been established, it is from that that the acts of sin usually proceed. And, in the

words of J. A. Broadus, "all the sin that has darkened human life and saddened human history began in believing a falsehood."

While forgiveness is possible for any sin which has been repented of, it is forever true that even God himself does not always remove the consequences of sin. This can be seen by considering the consequences of the sin of the first human pair, as well as by the common experience of mankind. E. H. Chapin says that "the worst effect of sin is within, and is manifest not in poverty, and pain, and bodily defacement, but in the discrowned faculties, the unworthy love, the low ideal, the brutalized and enslaved spirit." Robert South notes that "the wages that sin bargains for with the sinner, are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages it pays him, are death, torment, and destruction. To understand the falsehood and deceit of sin, we must compare its promises and payments together." In the language of Sir Walter Scott, "Guilt, though it may attain temporal splendor, can never confer real happiness. The evident consequences of our crimes long survive their commission, and, like the ghosts of the murdered, forever haunt the steps of the malefactor." The question of the consequences of sin is expressed by Hezekiah Butterworth in this way:

I walked through the woodland  
meadows,  
Where sweet the thrushes sing;  
And I found on a bed of mosses  
A bird with a broken wing.  
I healed its wound, and each morn-  
ing  
It sang its old sweet strain,  
But the bird with the broken pinion  
Never soared as high again.

I found a young life broken  
 By sin's seductive art;  
 And, touched with a Christ-like pity,  
 I took him to my heart.  
 He lived with a noble purpose  
 And struggled not in vain;  
 But the life that sin had stricken  
 Never soared as high again.

But the bird with the broken pinion  
 Kept another from the snare;  
 And the life that sin had stricken  
 Raised another from despair.  
 Each loss has its compensation,  
 There is healing for every pain;  
 But the bird with a broken pinion  
 Never soars as high again.

### The Golden Text

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The words of this text are found in the midst of Paul's great argument regarding the resurrection of the dead. The immediate context reads as follows: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15: 20-22.) The words have in them a ring of assurance, as the apostle seeks to show that Christ will counteract the death which resulted from Adam's sin. Or, to express the same thing in another way, we shall gain in Christ all that we lost in Adam. This is what Paul says in Rom. 5: 12-21, which is the devotional reading for today.

The subject of a resurrection from the dead is strictly a Bible subject, insofar as its origin is concerned; for no one apart from God ever caused a dead person to live again. The term "resurrection" literally means to come forth from the dead, a return from death to life; and that would be impossible if a death did not occur. While it is true that the conception of a resurrection was not thoroughly developed in the Old Testament, and the literal coming forth of the body from the dead is not frequently referred to in that part of the inspired record, the idea is there; and some of the most comforting

words on the subject, words which are often used today, were spoken by men of great antiquity. (See Job 14: 13-15; 19: 25-27; cf. Heb. 11: 17-19.)

But when we come to the New Testament, the theme of the resurrection of the body, including that of Christ, is given more space than any other one fundamental Christian truth, with the possible exception of the death of Jesus. Christ seldom spoke of his approaching death without including a prediction of his resurrection within three days; and as an indication of his own power over death, he brought back to life three people who had died. It was in connection with the resurrection of Lazarus that Jesus uttered his famous words regarding the significance of that term. (See John 11: 21-26.) It appears that Martha had never realized that the resurrection had a spiritual bearing; she merely thought of it as a distant mysterious event, as a mere matter of destiny, like that of birth and death. Jesus declared that he, and not some far away event, is the resurrection, and the life. Life is the larger and inclusive idea, and resurrection is involved in life as an incident made necessary by the temporary and apparent triumph of physical death. This view of the subject brings the resurrection of the dead closer to every child of God, since Christ takes it out of time, vitalizes it, and puts it into the category of faith.

### The Text Explained

The Conflict of the Ages  
 (Gen. 3: 14, 15)

*And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between*

*thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Both Adam and Eve endeavored to shift the responsibility for their sin to another, but the serpent had no one to blame for its part in the deadliest of all crimes which had been perpetrated. The agent of the devil

must bear its sin forever. And in pronouncing the curse upon the serpent, Jehovah singled out the originator and instigator of the temptation for special condemnation and degradation. Whatever may have been the bodily posture of the serpent before the crime was committed, he was from that day and onward compelled to crawl in the dust and even feed on it. He must slither his way in disgrace, and be hated of mankind in all walks of life. He would be regarded as the symbol of the degradation of the one who had caused man, who was created in the image of God, to fall from his high and holy estate. As long as the world continues the serpent will be identified with the enemy of all mankind.

The statement made in verse 15 is known as the earliest gospel. The metaphor is that of a man crushing the head of a serpent with his heel, while the serpent fastens his fangs in the man's heel. The crushing of the head is more disastrous than the bruising of the heel; and therein is found the *good news* that "the seed of the woman," who is Christ, will trample Satan under his feet, and gain a complete victory over him, although he will be wounded in the struggle. While the primary reference is to the great conflict between Christ and the evil one, the teaching of the Bible makes it clear that every man must personally enter the fray, if final victory is to come to him. It is true that Christ accomplished the victory in a special sense; but it is also true that there remains a continuous spiritual struggle between man and the forces of evil which are for ever tempting him to sin.

The conflict between Christ and Satan began when the latter tempted the Son of God in the wilderness, following his baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist. (See Matt. 4: 1-11; Luke 4: 1-13; cf. Heb. 4: 14-16.) The story of that struggle is told in such passages as Matt. 12: 22-29; and during the progress of that conflict Luke reports, "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." (Luke 10: 17, 18.) The victory over Satan was

at that time in progress, and Christ foresaw his downfall.

And then in his final public discourse before going to the cross, Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." (John 12: 27-33.)

The reference in the passage just quoted was to the great crisis (the Greek word for "judgment" is *krisis*) in the conflict between Christ and Satan. The death of Christ, which was soon to occur, would be the occasion of deciding who the victor would be. (Read again Gen. 3: 15.) The crucifixion would at first appear to end the claim of Christ for universal power and authority, but the resurrection would be only three days away! The death and resurrection of Christ broke the power of Satan (cf. Heb. 2: 14-15), and will eventually result in his final overthrow. And then just a little later, and while talking to his disciples for the last time before his death, Jesus said,

"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. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believed not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." (John 16: 7-11.) The expression "hath been judged" means *has been condemned*. The prince of this world is, of course, the devil. (Cf. 2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2: 2.) And then after

the Lord's death and resurrection, Paul said, "And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. 2: 13-15; cf. Eph. 4: 8.) Christ indeed gained the victory over Satan, and has bound the latter, so that he can operate only as the Lord permits it.

### The Lot of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3: 16-21)

*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.*

In pronouncing the curse upon the woman, Jehovah predicted for her two things, namely, pain in the incidents which are essential to the bearing of children, and subjection to her husband; or, which is the same thing, the subjection of womankind to mankind. Paul refers to these situations, somewhat in detail, in 1 Tim. 2: 11-15; 1 Cor. 11: 2-16. (Cf. 1 Cor. 14: 33, 34.) In commenting on 1 Cor. 11: 8, 9, Albert Barnes says, "This is a simple statement of what is expressed in Genesis. The woman was made for the

comfort and happiness of the man. Not to be a slave, but a help-meet; not to be regarded as inferior nature and rank, but to be his friend, to divide his sorrows, and to multiply and extend his joys; yet still to be in a station subordinate to him. He is to be the head: the ruler; the presider in the family circle; and she was created to aid him in his duties, to comfort him in his afflictions, to partake with him of his pleasures. Her rank is therefore honorable, though it is subordinate. It is, in some respects, the more honorable because it is subordinate; and as her happiness is dependent on him, she has the higher claim to his protection and his tender care. The whole of Paul's idea here is, that her situation and rank as subordinate should be recognized by her at all times, and that in his presence it was proper that she should wear the usual symbol of modesty and subordination, the veil."

But there would also be suffering and hardships for the man who, for the first time in the Sacred Record, was called "Adam" (cf. Gen. 2: 20, marginal note). The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, observes that "physical hardship, painful toil, disappointing vexations, and hard struggle were appointed as the lot of the man, who was definitely adjudged a guilty sinner. Formerly the earth had yielded its produce easily and freely to man, in great abundance. Adam had only to 'dress' the garden (2: 15) in order to enjoy its luscious fruits. But now God pronounced a special curse on the ground. Henceforth it would yield its grains and fruits reluctantly. Man would have to work hard cultivating the soil to make it produce life's necessities. And he would have to wrestle with troublesome thorns and weeds not previously in evidence. Drudgery, difficulties, and weariness would be his daily lot. For Adam, as well as for Eve, sin exacted a heavy toll." (Cf. Rom. 8: 18-25.)

Adam at first called the name of his wife "Woman [Hebrew, *Isshah*, marginal note], because she was taken out of Man [Hebrew, *Ish*, marginal note]." (Gen. 2: 23.) Here, for the first time, Adam called his wife's name Eve, "because she was the mother of all living." This name was most appropriate, since all life originated from the first human pair—

Adam being the father, and Eve being the mother. One might suppose that Adam, when he first heard the pronouncement of death, because of the sin of the woman and the man, would think that his wife was the mother of death, rather than of life; but being possessed of a better hope, with reference to things to come, he thought of life rather than of death, Jamieson thinks that the prophetic reference was pre-eminently to Christ, and all who live by him (cf. John 1: 4); and he adds, "Thus a whole history was comprised within the folds of a single word, and the name Eve would, in the early ages of the world, preserve amongst the people of God the blessed hope of a Redeemer." It was also at this time that the first human pair began to wear permanent clothing, which had been made especially for them.

### The Closing of the Garden of Eden

(Gen. 3: 22-24)

*And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which*

*turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

Speaking after the manner of men, Jehovah, realizing that which man had done, took the necessary steps to see to it that his creature, who had been made in his likeness, would not perpetuate himself in his sinful condition—"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." Thus, it was with loving care that Jehovah took the necessary steps to keep Adam and Eve away from the fruit which, if they should eat it, would make them immortal, and thereby perpetuate them in the terrible condition into which their sin had brought them.

Paradise was lost by the first human pair, but, as we have already seen, steps were immediately taken to see to it that those who will to do so may one day regain it. That is the story of the Bible itself. In the first part of the Book we read about the closed garden; but in the last part of the inspired Volume we are told about an open city, the grandeurs of which are beyond the ability of human beings to conceive. It is a long, but profitable, journey through the Bible, but every thoughtful person should be vitally interested in that which lies between the closed garden of Genesis, and the open city of Revelation. The story of that journey is the story of human redemption, and that which Jesus did in perfecting that plan is the central theme of the story.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Why is the problem of sin so great?

In what way are the consequences of sin related to the problem of sin?

What is the essential meaning of sin?

Why can't the consequences of sin be removed in this life?

What are some of the worst effects of sin?

Compare the promises of sin with the wages which are actually paid.

Discuss the significance of the consequences of sin.

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Paul write the words of this text?

How do we gain in Christ that which was lost in Adam?

Why is the subject of the resurrection pre-eminently a Bible subject?

Show something of how the subject of the resurrection is developed through the Bible.

### The Conflict of the Ages

Why did Adam and Eve endeavor to shift the responsibility for their sin?

Why didn't God ask the serpent what he had done, as he did the man and the woman?

What was the curse which was pronounced upon the serpent?

What special idea is set forth in verse 15 of this section of the lesson text?

When did the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent begin?

Tell something about its progress.

In what way did the conflict end, and in what sense is Christ the victor?

The Lot of Adam and Eve

What two things did Jehovah predict in pronouncing the curse upon the woman?  
What does Paul say about each of them?  
What was the nature of the curse which was pronounced upon the man?  
What reference does Paul make to it?  
Why did Adam call his wife's name Eve?  
To what did he probably refer in speaking of her as the mother of all living?  
Why did Jehovah make garments for the couple to wear?  
Does this have any significance for our day? Give reasons for your answer.

The Closing of the Garden of Eden

Why did Jehovah close the garden to Adam and Eve?  
What arrangements did he make to keep them out of it?  
Why didn't God want them to eat the fruit of the tree of life?  
How would the fruit of that tree perpetuate their sinful condition?  
What are the essential facts in the drama of paradise lost and paradise regained?  
Where do we learn about these things?  
What effect should all of this have on Bible readers?

Lesson V—January 30, 1966

THE FIRST MURDER

Lesson Text

Gen. 4: 1-15

1 And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Je-ho'-vah.  
2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.  
3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Je-ho'-vah.  
4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Je-ho'-vah had respect unto Abel and to his offering:  
5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.  
6 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?  
7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it.  
8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?  
10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.  
11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;  
12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.  
13 And Cain said unto Je-ho'-vah, My punishment is greater than I can bear.  
14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me.  
15 And Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Je-ho'-vah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother.” (1 John 3: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 4: 16-26.

Daily Bible Readings

- Jan. 24. M..... Abel's Faith (Heb. 11: 1-6)
- Jan. 25. T..... Cain's Hatred (1 John 3: 10-17)
- Jan. 26. W..... Offering of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4: 1-12)
- Jan. 27. T..... Acceptable Sacrifices (Psalm 51: 12-19)
- Jan. 28. F..... Unacceptable Sacrifices (Isa. 1: 10-17)
- Jan. 29. S..... Abel, a Righteous Man (Matt. 23: 29-36)
- Jan. 30. S..... Way of Cain Condemned (Jude 6-16)

TIME.—Probably about 129 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 3875 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably near the location of the garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Cain, and Abel.

### Introduction

Life is one of the most precious possessions which God has given to man; and he who takes it away from him, not only deprives him of that which is his by divine right, but also does something which can in no true sense benefit the aggressor. It is true, of course, that the one who takes the life of another may think that he has satisfied his desire for vengeance; but he either forgets or ignores the fact that God is the right-ful Avenger. If any one feels that a wrong has been committed which should be punished by death, the matter should be placed in the hands of the courts of justice; but if the person who has been wronged is convinced that the courts cannot or will not see to it that the proper punishment is meted out, then he should leave the matter in the hands of the Lord. There is no sin of any kind which will be overlooked by the great Judge of all the earth. (Cf. Heb. 2: 1-3.)

But most murders are committed by people who do not profess to follow the teaching of the Scriptures. This, however, does not lessen their responsibility in the sight of Almighty God. He is the God of all the earth, and he will certainly deal with those who are in rebellion against him. Murder has been the practice of mankind since soon after the fall in the garden of Eden, notwithstanding the fact that God has severely punished the perpetrator of the crime and given laws which, if heeded, will make it certain that no one will ever take the life of another person. After the flood had destroyed the world in which the first murder was committed, Jehovah said to Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9: 6.) This is a statute of the moral law, and it has never been abrogated. Every subsequent law which has ever been enacted by divine lawgivers, or by responsible human governments, can be traced back to this basic principle.

It should be remembered, however, that the actual and literal taking of

the life of another is not the only way in which a person may be guilty of murder. The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day had so warped the teaching of Moses on the subject of murder, as to make such a crime a relatively minor violation of the law of the Old Testament. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." (Matt. 5: 21.) "Thou shalt not kill" was the prohibition given by Moses; while the words, "and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment," was their gloss or commentary on the issue. The word "judgment," as they used the term, did not refer to the judgment of the Lord at the last day, but rather to the municipal court, called the *judgment*, which was authorized by the law of Moses. (See Deut. 16: 18; cf. 2 Chron. 19: 4-11.)

The municipal judges were sometimes called The Council of Seven, in the cities of Palestine, as distinguished from the supreme court, the Sanhedrin, which had its seat in Jerusalem. (Cf. Josephus, Ant. 4: 8, 14; Wars 2: 20, 5.)

In commenting on that which the scribes and Pharisees taught, Jesus said, "But I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council [that is, the Sanhedrin]; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." (Matt. 5: 22.) In speaking these words, Jesus makes it plain that if one never thinks and speaks evil against his brother, he will never be guilty of murdering him. (Cf. Matt. 5: 27, 28.) Thus, in the eyes of the Lord, heart murder is just as sinful as hand murder; for heart murder is potential hand murder. This is precisely what John says about the matter. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3: 15.) It was in keeping with this kind of teaching that Tryon Edwards



said, "To murder character is as truly a crime as to murder the body;

the tongue of the slanderer is brother to the dagger of the assassin."

## The Golden Text

*"Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother."* The words just quoted are a part of a fuller statement made by John, as he wrote of righteousness and brotherly love. "My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: 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. Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. 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. For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3: 7-12.)

Any one who will read and study the passage just quoted carefully will be able to see that conduct on the part of the individual clearly demonstrates who his spiritual father is. It is wholly impossible for one to do the works of one master, while at the same time remaining loyal to the other. This truth is taught over and over again in the New Testament. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to

one, and despise the other." (Matt. 6: 24a.) This is the statement of a general principle, which Jesus applied to God and mammon. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6: 24b.) The apostle Paul also taught this same truth, as may be seen by reading Rom. 6: 16-20.

That which has been said is enough to show that Cain did not murder his brother Abel by accident. His action was in keeping with the service which he was rendering to his master, the evil one. In one of his controversies with the unbelieving Jews of his day, Jesus said, "Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God." (John 8: 41-47.)

## The Text Explained

The Story of Cain and Abel

(Gen. 4: 1-8)

*And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah. And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the*

*firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it. And Cain told Abel his brother.*

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

Cain and Abel were the first two children who were born into this world; and the peculiar construction of the original language which tells of their birth has led some Hebrew scholars to conclude that the two boys in question were twins. Adam Clarke says, "From the very face of this account it appears evident that Cain and Abel were twins. In most cases where a subject of this kind is introduced in the Holy Scriptures, and the successive births of children of the same parents are noted, the acts of conceiving and bringing forth are mentioned in reference to each child; here it is *not* said that she *conceived* and brought forth Abel, but simply she *added to bring forth Abel his brother*; that is, as I understand it, Cain was the first-born, and Abel, his twin brother, came next."

We have no way of knowing for certain just when the births of Cain and Abel took place, but we are certain that it was after the expulsion of their parents from the garden of Eden. The history which is contained in the Book of Genesis is very brief. It was approximately twenty-five hundred years from Adam to Moses, and that entire period is covered in the fifty chapters of the book we are now considering. When John wrote his gospel record, he selected for the record only a very few of the things which Christ said and did (see John 20: 30, 31; 21: 25); and it appears that Moses followed the same principle in writing the history of the period of the patriarchs. His object seems to have been to record those things which would be most helpful as a background for a fuller development of the facts concerning the chosen people whose history comes next in order. This probably accounts for the lack of information regarding the amount of time which elapsed between events, the origin of sacrifices and offerings, and many other questions concerning which we would have an interest.

The third chapter of Genesis gives the origin of sin, while chapter 4 tells something of its progress. Sin was first seen in individuals; but as time went on, it also appeared in families. Chapter 4, like the three

preceding chapters of the book now under consideration, is full of *beginnings*. Here we have the first birth, the first motherhood, the first family, the first offerings on the altar, the first murder, the first martyrdom, and the first indication of human development and progress. We cannot give too much attention to a careful study of the Book of Genesis, if we would have an accurate understanding of the rest of the Bible.

We learn from Gen. 2 that Adam was a gardener, and here we are informed that his two sons were a farmer and a shepherd, respectively. God ordained work from the beginning (cf. Gen. 2: 15), and it is well for us to remember that work was one of the pleasures of Paradise, and even today we cannot be happy without some kind of occupation. William Cowper assures us that

Absence of occupation is not true rest;

A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.

Thomas Carlyle, who knew the meaning of work, once said, "There is a perennial nobleness and even a sacredness in work." Thus, early in the history of the world, mankind was led to see something of the necessity and dignity of work as being essential to human life and progress. Work is one of the perpetual blessings which God has provided for his people. The forces and factors which bless men always come from their labors; and the things which we prize most are the things which come to us as a result of our efforts. And so, in the words of Longfellow,

Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

From the text now before us, it appears that in due course of time, or at the time of this lesson, Cain and Abel brought offerings to Jehovah. Jehovah had respect to Abel and to his offering, but he did not respect either Cain or his offering. There was, of course, some fundamental reason for this; and it is to our interest to try to discover what it was. Thus, early in the history of the Bible we are taught that not all worship is acceptable to the Lord. (Cf. John 4: 24.) Jehovah's attitude toward Abel and his offering is

plainly set forth in the New Testament: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11: 4.) Two things should be observed here, namely, (1) Abel's offering was by faith, and (2) it is described as "gifts" (plural).

And now, in contrast to Abel and his offering, why were Cain and his offering rejected? The answer which is usually given is that Cain substituted the fruit of the ground for a lamb; but if one will only stop and consider the facts in the case, he will soon see that there is no solid foundation, scriptural or otherwise, for that conclusion. The record says, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." The adverb "also" means, according to Webster, "in addition; as well; besides, too." This, of course, implies that Abel, too, brought, of the fruit of the ground; but that in addition to, or besides that, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof. This idea seems to be confirmed by the writer of Hebrews, where he mentions "gifts."

In the expression "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," the phrase "a more excellent" is the translation of a single Greek word—*pleiona*, (*pleiōn*), the comparative degree of the adjective *polus*, the primary meaning of which is *much*. The comparative of the English "much" is *more*, and that appears to be the idea which is expressed by the writer of Hebrews, in the passage now under consideration. In other words, Abel believed that which Jehovah said regarding the offerings, and he brought *all* that God commanded; whereas, Cain, depending upon his own reason about the matter, was content to do less than Jehovah required. It is for that reason that Cain is today known as the father of religious rationalism—he simply substituted his reason for God's commandment. His conclusion was that it is not necessary for one to do all that which the word of God

requires of him, and his example is still being followed today.

Verse 7 of the section of the lesson text now under consideration is rendered in the Septuagint Version in these words: "Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not rightly divided it? be still, to thee shall be his submission, and thou shalt rule over him." Thus, instead of saying that Cain substituted the fruit of the ground for a lamb, it seems more in keeping with the facts in the case to say that he offered only a part of that which Jehovah commanded; and then became angry because God did not approve his action.

The original term for "sin" in the expression "sin coucheth at the door" means, according to Adam Clarke, a sin-offering (see also Young's Concordance, *in loco*; and he thinks that God graciously reminded Cain that that which he had failed to offer, namely, the lamb, was at hand, and that he still had the opportunity to offer it. This view is possible, according to the Old Testament meaning of the original word for "coucheth"; but there is another view which appears more in keeping with the setting now before us. Sin is pictured in its lair at the door (Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*). In the words of *The Wycliffe Bible*, "Close upon that heartening promise [of over-coming sin], Jehovah uttered a stiff warning, urging the sinner to control his temper and beware lest a crouching beast [sin] spring upon him and devour him. The danger was real. The deadly beast was even at that moment ready to overpower him. God's word demanded instant action and strong effort to repulse the would-be conqueror. Cain must not let these boiling thoughts and impulses drive him to ruinous behavior. God made his strong appeal to Cain's *will*. The will had to be thrown into the struggle to make victory over sin complete. It was up to Cain to conquer sin in himself, to control rather than be controlled. The moment of destiny was upon him. It was not too late for him to choose the way of God." But alas! Cain yielded to the evil one, instead of returning to his great Benefactor, and became the first human murder-

er. (Cf. Luke 15: 11-20; 1 John 3: 12.)

### The Curse Pronounced upon Cain (Gen. 4: 9-12)

*And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.*

God's question was evidently meant to impress upon Cain a sense of his responsibility to his fellow man. Responsibility for others is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible, but, in spite of its prominence, the sin of social irresponsibility is one of the most common sins of our day. Men and women on every hand, even the most religious, are apparently indifferent to the great duties which relate to their fellow men. The Bible is filled with examples of this sin, as well as with ways of overcoming it. Every person who is at all interested in serving the Lord should be vitally interested in this phase of our study; for no one can fulfil the law of Christ, while shunning his responsibility to his fellow man. (Cf. Gal. 6: 1, 2; Acts 20: 26, 27.)

When Cain failed to offer the sacrifice which God commanded, Jehovah dealt kindly with him, and exhorted him to fulfil his duty; but when murder was committed something had to be done which Divine

Justice could not overlook, nor patiently endure. Cain had to answer for a specific crime, and had to bear the punishment which God alone is able to administer. Murder then, and indeed still is, an overt act; but it now can be committed by our thoughts and attitudes. (Cf. 1 John 3: 15.)

### Cain's Reaction and Jehovah's Reply (Gen. 4: 13-15)

*And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me. And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.*

This is a terrible picture of the lot of the sinner—his guilt, his punishment and the consequences of his sin; but it appears that Cain was far more concerned with the consequences, than he was with his guilt. He was no longer able to obtain a living from farming, and was not permitted to live in the vicinity of his family. Furthermore, he was in constant fear of death. The expression "whosoever findeth me will slay me" implies that the descendants of Adam and Eve were probably more numerous than the record states. We do not know what mark Jehovah placed upon Cain to prevent others from killing him, but that appears to have prolonged the consequences of his sin.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What are some of the things which make murder so sinful?  
What attitude should all people take toward people whom they consider worthy of death?  
What is certain to happen to all murderers?  
On what kind of foundation are all laws against murder based?  
How else, besides taking of life, may murder be committed?  
Why is this true?

Discuss the teaching of Jesus with respect to "heart murder."

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text written?  
In what way is spiritual fatherhood demonstrated?  
Why did Cain murder Abel?  
What happens to people when they do not allow the word of the Lord free course in their hearts?

### The Story of Cain and Abel

Why do some Bible students think that Cain and Abel were twins?

Why are details probably so few in the Book of Genesis?  
 In what way are the third and fourth chapters of Genesis related?  
 Why is a study of the Book of Genesis so important?  
 Why is work so essential to one's happiness and well-being?  
 Why was the offering of Abel accepted and that of Cain rejected?  
 Discuss the respective attitudes of the two brothers.  
 What appears to have been the real difference between the two offerings?  
 What effect has the example of Cain had on succeeding generations?  
 What exhortation did Jehovah give to Cain following his sin?  
 What great responsibility did Cain have at that time?  
 What was his final decision?

The Curse Pronounced upon Cain

What question did Jehovah ask Cain, and

what was its apparent purpose?  
 Why is every person responsible for his fellow men?  
 Why is social irresponsibility so widespread in our day?  
 Why should every child of God be interested in this question?  
 Why did Jehovah punish Cain so severely for the murder of his brother?  
 What great lesson should "heart murderers" learn from this?

Cain's Reaction and Jehovah's Reply

How did Cain respond to the announcement of his punishment?

Where, apparently, were his thoughts largely centered?

Why was this true?

Discuss the details of his punishment.

Whom did Cain think might want to kill him?

Why was Cain marked?

What did the mark probably imply?

## Lesson VI—February 6, 1966

# GREAT WICKEDNESS IN THE EARTH

## Lesson Text

Gen. 6: 1-13

1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose.

3 And Je-ho'-vah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh; yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.

4 The Neph'-i-lim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

5 And Je-ho'-vah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented Je-ho'-vah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And Je-ho'-vah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of Je-ho'-vah.

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT. — "By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his notice." (Heb. 11: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING. — Gen. 6: 14-22.

## Daily Bible Readings

Jan. 31. M..... Wickedness in Noah's Day (Gen. 6: 1-5)  
 Feb. 1. T..... Disregard of God's Judgments (Luke 17: 22-37)  
 Feb. 2. W..... Conditions Before Judgment (Isa. 1: 2-9)

Feb. 3. T.....	Warnings (Heb. 10: 26-31)
Feb. 4. F.....	Acknowledging God's Judgments (Psalm 90: 1-11)
Feb. 5. S.....	A Type of Things to Come (1 Pet. 3: 18-22)
Feb. 6. S.....	God's Promise to Noah (Gen. 8: 20-22)

TIME.—1536 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 2468 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably in the general vicinity of the east.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Noah, and the latter's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

## Introduction

It is well to keep in mind the fact that some fourteen hundred years intervened between our last lesson and this one; and that the entire period is covered by the inspired historian in forty-three verses—Gen. 4: 16-5: 32. Our last lesson recorded the fact that Cain was driven out from the presence of Jehovah, because of his impenitent and rebellious attitude. The true worship of God was seriously affected by the death of Abel; and it was not until the birth of Seth that new forces were set in motion which restored it to its rightful place. Thus, instead of true devotion to Jehovah perishing with the passing of Abel, it reached a new development in the descendants of Seth. However, it is well to keep in mind the fact that in the records of the posterity of Cain and Seth we are able to see the manifestation of two different types of humanity, which run throughout the remainder of the Bible.

The chief characteristic of the descendants of Cain is that of irreligion. (Cf. Gen. 4: 16-24.) It is a noticeable fact, as already indicated, that the inspired record regarding Cain shows no trace of the influence of God's mercy upon him, and no indication of penitence on his part. He remained both godless and reckless; and if we may judge from other portions of the Scriptures (for example, Rom. 1: 18-32; 2 Tim. 3: 1-4, 13), he must have continued his wayward journey from the pathway of righteousness. There is no such thing as a fixed position with reference to one's moral and spiritual relationship; he will either get better or worse. The sacrifice which Cain offered prior to the murder of Abel showed that while he recognized Jehovah as the God of providence, he

gave no indication of the need for his divine favor. There was no trace of real homage in his heart, nor of any thought of sin and salvation in his offering. We are not surprised therefore to see him increase in wickedness, so far as his posterity was concerned.

Although it was a godless line, the descendants of Cain were enterprising. They were devoted to the arts of civilization, to building cities, to manufacturing various articles, and to worldly comfort and success in the pursuit of earthly goods. Beginning with the founder of this line, we have the names of six outstanding men, the last being Lamech, in whom the brutal spirit of Cain reached new heights. Lamech not only committed revengeful murder, but introduced the practice of polygamy, that is, so far as the record is concerned. It is worthy of note that when the emphasis is placed on the material things of this life, less attention is given to the spiritual. (Cf. Matt. 6: 33; 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10, 17-19.)

But when we look at the descendants of Seth, there is a different story to tell. (See Gen. 4: 25-5: 32.) It was his race that gave renewed emphasis to true religion, and became the channel through which redemption was finally made possible. (Cf. Luke 3: 23-38.) It is among the descendants of Seth that we see such men as Enoch, who walked with God, and Noah, who was chosen to build the ark, by means of which the righteous were saved, and to perpetuate the race after the flood. It was also in the record of this family that the first intimation of prayer to God is found. "Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah." (Gen. 4: 26b.)

## The Golden Text

*"By faith Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house. The full*

statement of the context of this passage is as follows: "By faith Noah,

being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." The purpose of the writer of Hebrews, in the chapter from which the golden text is taken, was to give a clear definition of the meaning of faith; and he accomplished that purpose by stating the composition of faith, so far as its "ingredients" are concerned, namely, *conviction* that God is, that is, that he exists, and *confidence*, that is, trust, in him. (See Heb. 11: 1, 6.) There is no genuine faith in the absence of these two elements, and it is certain that no one can please God without them. When one is really convinced that Jehovah really does exist, and is confident that he will do exactly as he has promised, it is then that one can truly say that he believes in God.

One has only to read the record regarding Noah, in order to see that that was precisely his attitude toward the Lord. In his commentary on *The Letter to the Hebrews*, William Barclay translates the passage now under consideration in the following words: "It was by faith that Noah, when he had been informed by God about things that were still unseen, reverently accepted the message and built an ark to preserve his household in safety. Through that

faith he passed judgment on the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is the result of faith." God revealed to Noah his attitude toward the sinful world, and explained to him that which he proposed to do about it, all of which Noah firmly believed; and he showed his supreme confidence in Jehovah by doing exactly as he had been commanded to do.

If one will read that which the New Testament says regarding Noah's salvation, he will learn that it was ascribed to three things, namely, his faith, the ark, and the water of the flood. (See Heb. 11: 7; 1 Pet. 3: 20, 21.) This is enough to show that his salvation was not the result of faith alone. Having believed God's message to him, he was moved with godly fear, to the extent that he did exactly what he was told to do; and it was the result of this "obedience of faith" that God saved him. (Cf. Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26.) No thoughtful person would think for a moment that Noah would have been saved, if he had refused, or even neglected, to build the ark, and otherwise do as he had been commanded. And one may search the entire Bible through, but he will not find revealed therein any other principle upon which men have been or may be saved. Each individual must believe God, and then do that which he is commanded to do. (Cf. Heb. 5: 8, 9; Mark 16: 15, 16; Matt. 28: 20; Acts. 2: 42.)

### The Text Explained

The Union of the Streams and  
the Corruption of the Race

(Gen. 6:1-4)

*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: Vet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.*

Taking the whole passage just quoted into consideration, the multiplication of men on the face of the ground apparently does not refer to a general increase of the world's population as a whole, but rather to the increase in the population of the descendants of Cain. This is especially true if, as many Bible students think, the "sons of God" were the descendants of Seth, while the "daughters of men" were the descendants of Cain. We have already seen, in the preceding chapters, the lines of human beings who came from these two brothers; and now we are to observe the two lines as they are merged into one. The *sons of God* could not have been angels. (Cf. Matt. 22: 30.)

In saying that the women in ques-

tion were the daughters of men, the idea seems to be that they were estranged from God. They are not described as being gentle, or meek, or loving, but as being "fair," that is, their physical appearance was attractive. It is altogether possible that their manner of life, being accustomed as they were to the finer arts of living, enabled them to develop a sensuous nature which would supply them with the means of great enchantments; so that they presented to the eye that most perilous of temptations—beauty and grace, while at the same time concealing heartlessness, cruelty, and ungodliness. Both the "daughters of men" and Sarai, Abram's wife, were described as being "fair" (Cf. Gen. 12: 10-14); but two different Hebrew words are used to indicate the impression which was made by them.

Thus, the descendants of Seth—"the sons of God"—were captivated by those beautiful women; and being infatuated by their personal charms, and blinded by passion to all the fatal consequences of such alliances, they "took them wives of all that they chose." This language not only states that they married these women; it also suggests that they became polygamists. One man was not satisfied to take one woman, but took as many as he wanted. This was a surrender to the spirit of the flesh, and resulted in two fatal sins, namely, (1) the sons of God turned their backs upon him; and (2) they became guilty of a marriage relationship which was contrary to his original plan for the race. (See Gen. 2: 24; cf. Matt. 19: 1-9.)

It is altogether possible that the "sons of God" did not realize all that was involved in thus marrying the "daughters of men"; and therein lay the great danger. It sometimes happens, even now, when such unions are contemplated that the one who is in covenant relationship with God feels that possibly he can win the other to a better life by the alliance; but in most instances, as is usually the case when compromises are made with evil, the result is the other way. People should learn that they cannot expect God to bless them, as he wants to do, when he is forsaken.

In saying that his Spirit would not always strive with sinful humanity

(see marginal note), he evidently meant that he would not continue to endeavor, through his Spirit, to turn them from their wicked ways. This is precisely what is meant by the unpardonable sin—wicked people will in time reach the point of no return. The "striving" was evidently done by such preachers as Enoch (Jude 14, 15) and Noah (2 Pet. 2: 5). The one hundred and twenty years apparently constituted the period of respite which was granted the sinners of that day. Jehovah simply announced that he would give the people that much time in which to repent and turn to him. Or, to state the same thing in another way, he determined to cease pleading with the corrupt and sinful race, and abandon them to destruction; but in his mercy he would give them a definite time in which to get right with him.

The manner in which the Nephilim (the original term occurs only here and in Num. 13: 33) are introduced clearly implies that they were already on the earth, before the sons of God began to marry the daughters of men; and that they were therefore distinct from the fruits of those marriages. The "Nephilim," a transliteration of the Hebrew term, are usually thought of as giants, that is, men of abnormal height and size; but that is not necessarily true. There are other Hebrew words for "giant," in the commonly accepted meaning of that term, namely, *Rephaim* and *Anakim*. (Cf. Deut. 2: 10, 20, 21; 3: 11; Josh. 11: 22; 1 Sam. 17: 4-7.) The Nephilim, on the other hand, judging from the history and meaning of the word, were characterized, not so much for their great physical size, but rather as men of violence and overbearing; men who plundered the weak and the defenseless: marauding nomads. They were what Young and Strong call "fellers," that is, bullies or tyrants. (Cf. Job 16: 14, where another Hebrew word is used—gibbor: a mighty man or a strong man. See marginal note.)

The apparent reason for mentioning the Nephilim was for the purpose of showing something of the result of the intermarriages now under consideration. Thus, instead of elevating the daughters of men, the offsprings of these unholy alliances pro-



duced a situation which was in every way comparable to that of the Nephilim, who were already engaged in their nefarious work. Jamieson notes that "the mixed marriages that became so frequent produced a vast increase of violent and lawless characters like the Nephilim—persons of reckless ferocity and audacious impiety, who spread devastation and carnage far and wide, and by the terror which their name inspired, obtained such lasting notoriety that in subsequent ages of ignorance and idolatry they were exalted by different nations, under various names, into demigods of pagan mythology." It was following the mixed marriages and their demoralizing results that the entire human race became so corrupt, that only a single family was found who were acceptable to Jehovah. (Cf. Ezek. 14: 14, 20.)

### The Wickedness of Men and the Judgment of God (Gen. 6: 5-8)

*And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.*

The corruption of the world at the time of this lesson was not only practically universal; it was also colossal. The men of that period were not content merely with performing wicked deeds; the very thoughts from which their action sprang were only evil continually. This means that all was corrupt from within, and all was unrighteous without. This terrible condition can be watched only by Paul's description of the Gentile world in Rom. 1: 18-32. There was a pitiable contrast between that which God saw in the antediluvian age and that which he saw when he had finished his work of creation. (See Gen. 1: 31.)

The tragic and sorrowful effect which the terrible condition of the

antediluvians had upon Jehovah is expressed in these words: "And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." These are startling words, and it does not seem to be out of place to speak of them as expressing Divine Sorrow. The term which is usually employed to describe this condition is "anthropomorphic" or "anthropomorphism," from two Greek words, namely, *anthropos*, man; and *morphe*, form, the idea being that human form and feelings are ascribed to God. The use of anthropomorphic language is our highest and best means of expression regarding the attitude of Jehovah. Just as we adapt ourselves to the understanding and conceptions of a child, in an effort to get him to understand us, and use language which he can grasp; so the Bible employs anthropomorphic language, when it becomes necessary to bridge the great chasm between the infinite and the finite.

There is nothing in the use of anthropomorphic language which implies that Jehovah is mutable. His immutability is shown, not in always doing the same things, but in always acting on the same principles. He always rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. There is never any change in him in this respect. Jehovah does not repent as man does (cf. 1 Sam. 15: 29; Num. 23: 19); and neither does he change (Mal. 3: 6; James 1: 17). But in language which finite beings can understand, the passage now before us describes God as about to alter his procedure toward the human race which he had created. This, of course, was due to the fact that man himself had changed; and that made a change on God's part necessary.

It should be observed here that the Destroyer is identified with the Creator; or, to express the same thing in another way, God said that he would destroy the man whom he had created. This threatened punishment was not for just a portion of the race, but for all; only the righteous were excepted. This terrible punishment was necessary in order to vindicate the Divine character and government. In the usual course of Providence, the lower creation is frequently involved in the destructive calamities which befall

men, such as pestilence, fire, floods, etc; and in order to demonstrate the intensity of the Divine wrath in the case now before us, the beasts, creeping things, and birds of the heavens would share in the sweeping punishment which awaited the wicked. (Cf. Rom. 8: 18-22.)

In saying, "But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah," we have presented to us the divine contrast. Destruction had been decreed for the entire human race, but mankind would not be annihilated. God's mercy would lead him to save those who trusted in him, just as his justice would cause him to punish the wicked. "For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly..." (See 2 Pet. 2: 4-9.)

The term "favor" means *grace*; or, to state the same thing in another way, grace is unmerited favor. Such a blessing is always given without compensation, and there is nothing which the one needing the favor can do to earn or deserve it. (Cf. Eph. 2: 8, 9; Tit. 3: 5.) When the text we are now considering says that Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah, the meaning is that he was found acceptable to God. This does not imply that Noah was entirely without fault, being as he was a human being; but it does signify that his heart was right, and that his life was such as to make him worthy to be favored of Jehovah. This great patriarch, in contrast with his contemporaries, did not deserve to be lost.

### Noah and His Sons in the Time Of Crisis

(Gen. 6: 9-13)

*These are the generations of Noah.  
Noah was a righteous man, and*

*perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.*

It was pointed out in an earlier lesson in this series that the Book of Genesis is made up of several "generations," and that an analysis of the book can be made under the various headings of these generations. This means, of course, that a new section of the book begins at this point. In saying that Noah was "righteous" and "perfect," the inspired writer did not mean that he was righteous and perfect in the absolute sense of those terms. He was righteous in the sense that God regarded him as such, because he kept his commandments (Cf. Psalm 119: 172; Matt. 3: 15; Rom. 4: 1-8); and he was perfect (blameless, margin) in that he was not blameworthy. Noah walked with God, and that was the reason for his commendable character. The expression "walked with God" was applied only to Enoch and Noah, among the antediluvians; and it denotes a habitual practice. The sons of Noah are usually listed as Shem, Ham, and Japheth; but it appears from Gen. 9: 24; 10: 21 that the order of their births were Shem, Japheth, and Ham. The fact that they, along with their parents and their wives were saved in the ark, indicates that they were also righteous.

*And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. This was a terrible decree; but there is another terrible day coming, and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Read Heb. 10: 25-31.)*

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

What indications do we have that the record of Genesis is brief?

What general conditions followed the

death of Abel and the banishment of Cain?

When and how did a change for the better come?

What two manifestations were seen among the descendants of Cain and Seth?

What were their chief characteristics, respectively?

Discuss some of the principal features of the two lines of descendants.

## The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text written?  
 What are the ingredients of faith? Give reasons for your answer.  
 In what way did Noah give evidence of his faith?  
 What lesson is there in this for us today?

## The Union of the Streams and the Corruption of the Race

What men, apparently, were beginning to multiply upon the face of the ground?  
 Who were the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men"? Give reasons for your answer.  
 What, seemingly, were the general characteristics of the daughters of men?  
 What grave mistakes did the sons of God make with reference to them?  
 What vital lesson is there in this for us?  
 What did God mean by saying that his Spirit would not always strive with wicked humanity?  
 In what way did his Spirit strive with men?  
 What was suggested by the one hundred and twenty year period?  
 Who were the Nephilim? Give reasons for your answer.  
 Why, apparently, were they mentioned here?

## The Wickedness of Men and the Judgment of God

What was the general condition of wickedness during the time of this lesson?  
 What effect did all of this have on Jehovah?  
 In what sense did God repent? Give reasons for your answer.  
 Discuss the meaning and use of anthropomorphic language?  
 What was the terrible decree which Jehovah announced?  
 What exception was made and why?  
 What hope did this bring?  
 What is the meaning of Noah's finding favor in the eyes of Jehovah?

## Noah and His Sons in the Time of Crisis

What is one of the principal features of the general make-up of the Book of Genesis?  
 In what sense was Noah righteous and perfect in his generation?  
 In what way may we become righteous and perfect today?  
 What did it mean for Noah to walk with God?  
 How many people followed that same path during the antediluvian period?  
 Who were the sons of Noah?  
 What does their salvation in the ark imply?

## Lesson VII—February 13, 1966

## THE FLOOD

## Lesson Text

## Gen. 7: 11-24

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Ja'pheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

14 They, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort.

15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life.

16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him: and Je-ho'-vah shut him in.

17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters in-

creased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.

18 And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died.

23 And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was

left, and they that were with him in 24 And the waters prevailed upon the ark. the earth a hundred and fifty days.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."* (Gen. 6: 22.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Gen. 7: 1-10.

### Daily Bible Readings

Feb. 7. M.....	Extent of the Flood (Gen. 7: 13-24)
Feb. 8. T.....	The Covenant of the Rainbow (Gen. 9: 8-17)
Feb. 9. W.....	Noah, a Man of Faith (Heb. 11: 1-7)
Feb. 10. T.....	Noah Leaves the Ark (Gen. 8: 13-22)
Feb. 11. F.....	Noah, a Preacher of Righteousness (1 Pet. 2: 1-5)
Feb. 12. S.....	Salvation of Noah (2 Pet. 2: 1-5)
Feb. 13. S.....	A Commission to Noah and His Sons (Gen. 9: 1-11)

**TIME.**—1656 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 2348 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Probably in the general vicinity of the east.

**PERSONS.**—Noah, his three sons, and their wives.

### Introduction

The preceding chapters in the Genesis narrative tell of the conditions which existed, and for which God brought upon the earth the mighty flood, about which we are to study in this lesson. This was the judgment of Jehovah because of sin, and we must keep in mind the truth that it was sent by him. It was not a great cataclysm which resulted from natural causes, but was a deliberate act of God for the destruction of the world which was steeped in sin. But, as is always the case, the righteous found favor in God's sight, and were delivered from the fate of the wicked.

There is no inspired description of the horrors of the flood, but we can well imagine some of the results which were seen when the waters began to cover the earth. In the first place, the people doubtless had scoffed at the preaching of Noah, and it is certain that they made no preparation to escape the impending doom of the flood. But now that the mighty deluge had become a grim reality, we can see and hear them crying out for mercy, while they made desperate efforts to keep above the rising waters. However, there was nothing which could deliver them from the destruction which Jehovah had decreed. Unforgiven sin can never escape the just punishment of God. Defeat and death therefore are seen on every hand, and soon there is an awful stillness and desolation. Not a sound of life could be heard anywhere outside the ark, but only the low moaning of the surging waters.

This terrible catastrophe is made to foreshadow another and greater destruction of the world; and we are told that practically the same conditions will prevail then, as were present when the flood came. People will still be mocking and refusing to believe the divine warnings which God, in mercy, is giving to the wicked. (Cf. Heb. 10: 25-31.) Peter declares that both of his letters which have come down to us, were written to stir up the sincere minds of the righteous, by putting them in remembrance of the things which had been taught them. Here is his statement in full regarding these matters:

"This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, 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 creation. For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then

was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being

reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3: 1-7; cf. 2: 1-5; Matt. 24: 37-39; Luke 17: 26, 27.)

### The Golden Text

*"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."* The direct reference here is to Noah's reaction to the instruction which Jehovah gave him regarding the building of the ark; and it will help us to appreciate the significance of the passage now before us, if we will read the entire context, which is as follows:

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

One of the reasons for quoting the context of the passage now under consideration, is to point out a living Principle which should always be kept in mind, and which should al-

ways have precedence in our relationships with the Lord. We learn from all parts of the Bible that only the obedient can please Jehovah; and another equally important truth is this, God always tells people what he wants them to do, and he then expects them to act accordingly. For example, in the very beginning of time, Jehovah said to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve both understood the will of the Lord regarding that matter, but the woman allowed herself to be deceived into disobeying God, while Adam apparently deliberately disobeyed the commandment which was given to him. But in either case, through deception or through wilful disobedience, God's will was disregarded and they were alienated from the Lord. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 13, 14.)

The principles which have just been mentioned are emphasized over and over throughout the entire Bible. In writing to the Romans, perhaps the greatest statement regarding the question of salvation by faith which is on record, Paul says, "For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me." (Rom. 7: 11.) The meaning of this passage is forcefully illustrated by the events which led Eve into sin. The tempter was bent on alienating her from God, and, needing an occasion, he chose the very commandment which God had given to her and her husband. It was through, or by means of, the commandment itself that the serpent beguiled Eve; and through it slew her. God, of course, did the punishing; but it was because of that which sin had done. This principle is still in operation today, as may be seen when Satan entices people to act contrary to God's will. (Cf. baptism, for example. Sin selects the command, deceives people into thinking that they can be saved without obey-

ing it, and succeeds in slaying them.) This is enough to show how important it is to see to it that we

do all that which God commands, even as Noah did. That is the only way that will lead to salvation.

## The Text Explained

The Time of the Flood and its  
Reality

(Gen. 7: 11,12)

*In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.*

It is relatively easy to determine the chronology of the Bible, up to this point, that is, from Adam to the flood. (See Gen. 5.) There are some Bible students who think that this method of computing time, up to the flood, cannot be depended upon; because we do not know whether the next of kin of the person named was a son, grandson, or even farther away; as was sometimes the case in the genealogical tables of Matthew 1 and Luke 3. However, if one will stop to think, it will not be difficult for him to see that Moses, in Genesis 5, not only mentions each individual, but also gives the number of years between each of them (except in the case of Noah who was the last one) and the next of kin, whether the latter was son, grandson, or great-grandson. Thus, it was one thousand and fifty-six years from Adam to Noah; and when we add to that number the age of Noah (six hundred years) at the time of the flood, it will be seen that it was sixteen hundred and fifty-six years from Adam to the flood. This kind of computation is not possible in the genealogical tables of Jesus; for the simple reason that the ages of the people in question were not given.

The sources of the waters of the flood are explained to be, (1) the fountains of the great deep, which were broken up; and (2) the opening of the windows of heaven. The "great deep" apparently was either the oceans, as we know them, or the subterranean water supply or both. *The Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver, and Briggs; and *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, think that the reference was to the subterranean wa-

ters. The latter work comments, thusly: "Enormous reservoirs of water were stored under the earth. This mighty collection of waters was called *tehom*, 'the great deep' (cf. Gen. 1; 2). These subterranean waters, confined by creative power on the second day of creation, were unleashed to pour forth in volume and in violence defying description. It was not an ordinary flood, but a giant tidal wave that broke suddenly upon a startled populace. *Baqa* [were broken up] indicates a terrestrial convulsion that split asunder every restraining barrier that had existed. It was a tumultuous breaking loose of indescribable destruction. Man cannot imagine the fury and the destructive might of the display of God's power to destroy sinful beings. The complete corruption of men was far worse than any of us can imagine. The destruction was necessary."

The windows of heaven were opened in pretty much the same manner in which we speak of a cloudburst, the idea being that torrential rains fell for the entire period of forty days and forty nights. We would think that even a few days of steady precipitation would be disastrous; but when it came to a continuous downpour of excessive amounts of rain, together with the overflowing of the heaving water reservoirs of the earth for a period of one and a third months, the result was cataclysmic. Not only was that portion of the earth where people normally lived covered with water, but all the high mountains which were under the whole heavens were likewise engulfed, as we shall see further on in this lesson.

The Closing: of the Ark of Safety  
(Gen. 7: 13-16)

*In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creep-*

*ing thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him: and Jehovah shut him in.*

The work of creation, as set forth in Gen. 1, is described as being good; but when sin entered into the human family, corruption was the inevitable result. Not only were the people themselves placed under a curse; the same fate befell the lower creation, as may be seen by reading the third chapter of Genesis and such scriptures as Rom. 8; 18-22. The purpose of the flood was to destroy all forms of life, that is, all in which was the breadth of life; and to make possible a new beginning. Originally, God ordained that reproduction depended upon seed, and that decree was not altered when a new start was necessary. This process was made certain by the preservation of all forms of animal life in the ark. It was in this way that God's work of creation was protected and introduced into the new world following the flood.

There are some people who may wonder about the size of the ark which was built by Noah. It is probably correct to say that it is doubtful if any human being can ever be certain that he has the right answer to this question. This conclusion is principally due to the fact that no one can be absolutely certain regarding the length of the Biblical cubit. It is variously estimated to have been anywhere from a little over eighteen inches to twenty-two and a half inches, as our measurements go. In his book, *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*, Harry Rimmer says, "The ark was a ship of gigantic size. To be conservative, we will take as a potential cubit the measurement advocated by the famous scientist and archaeologist, William Matthew Petrie. He, being one of the foremost Egyptologists who ever lived, is entitled to speak with some authority, and he says the oldest standard cubit is twenty-two and a half inches. According to this basis, the ark was a tremendous and commodious boat. Five hundred and sixty-two feet and six inches long; ninety-three feet and six inches

wide; fifty-three feet and three inches high. Built with a flat bottom, square on both ends and straight up the sides, there was no waste space in bow or stern, and it had the tremendous carrying capacity of a little over two million, nine hundred fifty-eight thousand cubic feet! (2,958,000 cubic feet.) This is a tremendous cargo capacity. To put it in modern terms, it would take a train of almost one thousand freight cars to carry this enormous load, or to provide this amount of cubic space!" (Page 210.)

The record of the ark and the flood are accepted by faith by all people who believe that the Bible is from God; and so, we do not question that which the inspired record says regarding them. The ark was the means of saving that which God wanted saved from the old world. And in the same way God perfected a plan by which he can save the righteous from the wickedness of this present world; and that plan is through Christ. (Cf. 1 Pet. 3: 18-22.) In verses 20 and 21 of the passage just cited, Peter says, "That aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The passage just quoted makes it plain that the waters of the flood were a type of the waters of baptism. The waters of the flood were used of God to bear the ark from the sinful world which was destroyed, and brought it safely to the new world. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the ark was separated from the old and brought to the new through, that is, by means of, water; and in the same manner, that is, "after a true likeness," baptism is used of the Lord to separate those who are being saved from the wickedness of the past, and introduces them into the sphere of righteousness where they can serve the Lord as it is written. This is precisely the same thought which is

contained in the teaching of Christ regarding the new birth. (See John 3: 3-5.) Those who are born again are introduced into a sphere, namely, the church of the Lord, where they can grow and develop and serve as God has ordained that they should.

Jehovah exercised patience with the people of Noah's time while the ark was being prepared; but there came a time when the opportunity to enter the ark was over. The Lord himself closed the door, and that not only meant that those on the inside were safe; it also meant that no others could enter. That same principle is being and will be repeated in this age of the world. Any one who desires may enter God's spiritual ark of salvation now; but the time will come when this opportunity, too, will be over. It is true now, as it was in the days of the antediluvian period, that God's Spirit will not always strive with man. "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2); and so, "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4: 7). In the words of John Greenleaf Whittier, Of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: It might have been.

### The Extent and Duration of the Flood (Gen. 7: 17-24)

*And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the*

*heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.*

Bible students have long wondered whether or not the entire face of the globe, in the absolute sense of the expression, was covered by the waters of the flood, or whether only that portion of the earth which was then inhabited was affected. This, however, is not an important question, so far as believers are concerned. The language which is used, if taken literally, would indicate a complete covering; but the submergence of only the part where people then lived would satisfy the demands of the Scriptures, and would also account for the universal tradition of a flood.

In commenting on this section of the lesson text, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* says, "While God's chosen ones nestled safely in the ark, the waters continued to increase and to take over the earth. The verb *gābar* indicates mastery, subjection, and prevailing power. Relentlessly the waters took control and continued to be in command until the high mountains were completely submerged. Again, the majesty, might, and compelling purpose of the Almighty became increasingly apparent. The divine purpose was being worked out in all the earth. God's will was being accomplished."

The people who were left on the outside of the ark were not there because they had to be there. They had deliberately chosen their lot. They did as they pleased, "until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not till the flood came, and took them all away"; and then Matthew adds, "So shall be the coming of the Son of man." (See Matt. 24: 38, 39.) In the words of Isaac Errett, "Nor was this true in Noah's time only. It is still true. We are surrounded with perils. A sword suspended by a single hair hangs over every head. There is not a day nor an hour when dangers do not lurk in our path that may involve us in instant death and seal our fate for ever. Yet we close our hearts against all these considerations, and live as though we never were to die—scheming and toiling and sinning,



in utter disregard of every voice of conscience, every lesson of history, every warning that comes from the daily experiences of life, and every admonition of the word of God.

There is something terrible in the suddenness with which the final calamity always bursts upon the unbelieving." (*Evenings with the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 76.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Briefly discuss the conditions which brought on the flood.

In what way did the flood come about?

What was the probable reaction of the people of the world toward the mighty deluge?

Why was the flood inevitable and what did it foreshadow?

Discuss Peter's remarks concerning these things.

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Moses write the words of this text?

What principle is involved in this context?

Who only of responsible people can be acceptable to Jehovah?

Show how the devil uses the very commands of God to deceive the unsuspecting.

What great lesson should we all learn from the truth just stated?

How can people make sure that they are not being deceived?

### The Time of the Flood and Its Reality

What do we know about the chronology of the Bible up to the time of the flood?

What were the sources of the waters of the flood?

What is meant by the "fountains of the great deep" and the "windows of heaven"?

How did each of these sources supply the needed waters?

How long did it rain?

### The Closing of the Ark of Safety

Who and what were the occupants of the ark?

Why were two of all living creatures preserved?

What was the approximate size of the ark?

What is the attitude of all who believe the Bible regarding the ark?

What analogy to the ark and the flood does Peter set forth?

Discuss the likeness of the waters of the flood to those of baptism.

In what way was God's patience seen with reference to the antediluvians?

What lesson is there in all of this for us?

Discuss the significance of Jehovah's closing the entrance to the ark.

What will be some of the saddest words ever spoken?

### The Extent and Duration of the Flood

What appears to have been the extent of the waters of the flood?

What was the extent of its destruction?

What must have been the feelings of the people who were not in the ark?

What was the real reason for their not going in with Noah and his family?

What comparison did Jesus make regarding their attitude?

How can people be so indifferent to the dangers about them with these facts before them?

What does the Bible teach regarding the suddenness of calamity which comes upon unbelievers?

How long did the waters of the flood cover the earth?

## Lesson VIII—February 20, 1966

# SALVATION OF NOAH AND HIS FAMILY

## Lesson Text

Gen. 8: 13-22

13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried.

14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry.

15 And God spake unto Noah, saying,

16 Go forth from the ark, thou,

and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both birds, and cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him;

19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatsoever

moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.

22 And Noah builded an altar unto Je-ho'-vah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.

21 And Je-ho'-vah smelled the sweet savor; and Je-ho'-vah said in his heart, I will not again curse the

ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.

22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—“Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (1 Pet. 3: 20.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Gen. 8: 1-12.

### Daily Bible Readings

Feb. 14. M.....	Blessings of Obedience (Psalm 91: 1-6)
Feb. 15. T.....	Christ, Our Example (1 Pet. 2: 21-25)
Feb. 16. W.....	Christ Did God's Will (Heb. 10: 1-7)
Feb. 17. T.....	Salvation to the Obedient (Heb. 5: 8, 9)
Feb. 18. F.....	Warning to the Disobedient (2 Thess. 1: 1-9)
Feb. 19. S.....	Obedience and Prosperity (Deut. 30: 6-10)
Feb. 20. S.....	Noah Among the Great (Ezek. 14: 12-20)

**TIME.**—1657 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 2347 B.C.

**PLACE.**—In the vicinity of the mountains of Ararat.

**PERSONS.**—Jehovah, Noah, and his family.

### Introduction

Salvation has been one of the dominant words in Bible history since the fall of the first human pair in the garden of Eden. We gather from the words of Jehovah in Gen. 3: 15 that one of his first acts in connection with that tragic event was to devise a plan whereby the human race could be saved. The words of the passage just referred to are, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” The words were addressed to the serpent which, with the inspiration of Satan, had deceived the woman, and had succeeded in plunging the head of the race into sin and alienation from God. The great conflict between the two “seeds” took place during the earthly ministry of Christ, and resulted in the destruction of the works of the devil, so far as God's people are concerned. (Cf. 1 John 3: 7, 8; Matt. 12: 22-29; John 12: 27-31; 16: 7-11; Col. 3: 15; Eph. 4: 8; Heb. 2: 14, 15.) Rev. 20: 1-3 teaches that Satan is bound during the Christian dispensation.

Satan, to be sure, still has power to tempt the people of the Lord; but if they are willing to put their trust in the Lord, while doing their best to learn his will and serve him, the

devil will not be able to affect adversely their relationship with the Lord. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; Rom. 8: 31-39.) Salvation is the aim of Jehovah, and there is no power in hell which can defeat him in this respect. This should be of great encouragement to God's people at all times. But they must not forget that they, too, have a responsibility. God never saves any one against his will. In writing to his beloved Philippians, Paul said, “Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3: 12.) Christ did his part, and Paul knew that he would also have to do his. (Cf. Eph. 6: 10-20.)

Our lesson for today is concerned primarily with the salvation of Noah and his family. It was pointed out in the preceding lessons that he faithfully complied with Jehovah's commandments, and any thoughtful person knows that there was no other way for him and those of his household to have the Lord's favor. No person has ever been saved on any other basis. The writer of Hebrews says, “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear,

prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Heb. 11: 7.) The principle of salvation is stated by Jesus in these words: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall

enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21.) Thus, in any age of the world, God's will to the people of that period must be done. (Cf. John 6: 44, 45; Rom. 1: 16, 17; Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 4: 12.)

### The Golden Text

*"Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water."* A few remarks were made regarding this passage in the preceding lesson, and it is hoped that they will be helpful to a further discussion of the subject here. The full statement of the immediate context of the passage now under consideration is, "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which he also went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Pet. 3: 18-22.)

With the Old Testament record of the flood before us, we are able to see certain facts as they were related to the salvation of Noah and his family, namely, (1) they were in the ark; (2) the waters of the flood came; (3) the wicked were destroyed by means of those waters; (4) the ark was kept aloft by the same waters; and (5) these waters also made it possible for the inhabitants of the ark to be delivered into the new world. The analogy which Peter draws in the passage quoted above is between the waters of the flood and baptism. The salvation of Noah and his family was a material or physical deliverance, while the salvation brought about by baptism is spiritual. In commenting on this analogy, Alford says, "The *antitype* to that water on which the ark float-

ed, saving its inmates, is the water of baptism; but as ours is a spiritual, not a material rescue, so the *antitype* is not a washing of our flesh by that water,—the form in which it is applied to us, as the bearing up their ark was the form in which their water was applied to them,—but a far nobler thing, the clearness and purity of our inner consciousness toward God: and this saving power of the water of baptism in our case is by virtue of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, into whose death and resurrection we are baptized." (Cf. Rom. 6: 3-5.)

The reason that baptism has such an important place in our salvation is because God has made it a part of the scheme of redemption. Just before returning to the Father, Jesus said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16; cf. John 12: 48-50.) Baptism is an overt act of obedience, which is required to demonstrate one's faith. (Cf. Heb. 5: 8, 9.) God has always required that his people give some outward evidence of their faith. (See Num. 21: 4-9; Josh. 6: 1-21; 2 Kings 5: 1-19; John 9: 1-7.) But whatever the act of obedience may be, in this case baptism, it must be in consequence of the will and word of the Lord. This idea is forcefully illustrated by the apostle Paul in speaking of the church: "That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." (Eph. 5: 26; cf. Acts 22: 16; Tit. 3: 5.) The original term from which we have "word" in the passage just quoted is *rēma* which, according to some Bible students, is equivalent to the gospel (cf. Eph. 6: 17), with special reference to the promise made in Mark 16: 16. (See Thayer, in loco.) Bengel calls Paul's argument

here "a remarkable testimony for baptism, Tit. 3: 5. *By the word*—Baptism has a purifying power through the word, John 15: 3."

*Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. II*, p. 415. Cf. Rom. 10: 8.) Augustine avers. "Take away the word, and what is the water but water?"

## The Text Explained

### The Return to Dry Land

(Gen. 8: 13, 14)

*And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried. And in the second month, on the seventh and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry.*

It appears from this section of the lesson text that Noah and his family went out of the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month of the six hundred and first year of the patriarch's life. In commenting on this section of the lesson text, Adam Clarke says, "From this it appears that Noah was in the ark a *complete solar year, or three hundred and sixty-five days*; for he entered the ark on the seventeenth day of the second month, in the *six hundredth year* of his life, chapter 7: 11, 13, and continued in it till the twenty-seventh day of the second month, in the *six hundredth and first year* of his life, as we see above. The months of the ancient Hebrews were lunar; the first *six* consisted of *thirty* days each, the latter *six* of *twenty-nine*; the whole twelve months making *three hundred and fifty-four* days: add to this *eleven days*, (for though he entered the ark the preceding year on the *seventeenth* day of the second month, he did not come out till the *twenty-seventh* of the same month in the following year,) which make exactly *three hundred and sixty-five days*, the period of a complete solar revolution; . . ."

The original word for "covering" in verse 13 is *mikseh*, and it means, according to Strong, covering or weather-boarding. It is altogether probable that the reference was to the side-covering, since it would be from such a position that Noah could get a view of the surface of the earth. If he had been looking through the top of the ark, and especially from its position upon the mountains of Ararat (verse 4), it

would have been difficult for him to have seen the "face of the ground." But from whatever part of the ark the covering was removed, it is reasonable to assume that only enough of it was taken away, as to make it possible for Noah to observe the condition of the earth. It should also be observed that it was almost two months later—one month and twenty-seven days—before any effort was made to leave the ark. Noah entered the ark at God's command, and he left by the same authority. In all things it could be truly said of him, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

### The Command to Go Forth From the Ark

(Gen. 8: 15-19)

*And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both birds, and cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatsoever moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.*

It is well to note that the occupants of the ark came forth, at the command of God, "after their families," which implies an orderly departure. God has always been, still is, and always will be, a God of order; and he certainly expects the same attitude to characterize his people. (Cf. 1 Cor. 14: 40.) The antediluvians did not believe the preaching of Noah regarding the forthcoming flood, and it is not reasonable to suppose that any of them assisted Noah and his sons in getting together all the animals, birds, creeping things, etc., and properly placing them in the ark; and it is

therefore not unreasonable to assume that they were aided in their efforts, to some degree at least, by the miraculous power of Jehovah. And if that is true, the same assistance no doubt was given in getting everything out of the ark, in the same orderly fashion.

At any rate, all the people and all the lower creation were soon on dry ground again, and the great work of repopulating the earth was immediately under way. It has previously been observed in these studies that the original population of the earth was by miracle; but God ordained that the work would be continued by the natural process of descent from parents, whether human, animal, bird, or other such life was and is involved. The wickedness of man has frequently caused God to change his purposes and plans for his people, nothing has ever caused him to alter his basic purpose and plan regarding the perpetuation of the universe as such.

Jehovah never makes any experiments, as we understand that term; and he never repents as man does. "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent." (1 Sam. 15: 29.) He is therefore never frustrated by anything which men can do. It follows, then, that when the Bible speaks of God as repenting or being grieved, it is only by a figure (anthropomorphism), in condescension to man's imperfections. God's own nature is the constitution of the universe, according to which all things were created and perpetuated, and all divine laws enacted. It follows therefore that the principles which underlie whatever laws which he ordains and gives to govern the universe are as immutable as the nature of God, and as enduring as his eternal throne. It was often necessary, throughout Bible history, for God to change his laws, that is, his statutes, for his people; but he has never changed his principles for anything. (Note: *principle* is the fundamental basis or that which determines the nature of anything, while *law*, in its ideal, is the statement of a principle of right in mandatory form by competent authority with adequate penalty for disobedience. *Law* is the medium through which a *principle* is

applied. *Law* is enacted and can be repealed, while *principle* is eternal and remains immutable. (See *English Synonyms, Antonyms, and Prepositions*, by James C. Fernald, p 315f.)

Man was originally made in God's likeness, and it was Jehovah's purpose that man should live with him for ever. However, man was a free moral agent, with the power of choice; and since he chose to yield to the tempter, the result was alienation from his Maker. But this did not cause God to cease to love man and plan for his salvation. He saved all the righteous from among the antediluvians; and that may be regarded as a kind of preview of the eternal salvation of the race, when the end of the world comes. Jehovah could not be the God that he is, while at the same time refusing, or even neglecting, to make every possible effort for the salvation of all men. The principle which actuates God in this respect was forcefully expressed in his words addressed to the rebellious people of the northern kingdom: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together." (Hos. 11: 8; cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3,4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.)

#### Noah's Sacrifice and Jehovah's Gracious Promise (Gen. 8: 20-22)

*And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

It is interesting to observe that this is the first time that the term "altar" appears in the Bible, although it is very probable that Cain, Abel, and other antediluvians also

made use of the altar in their worship to Jehovah. Robert Jamieson points out that there is something exceedingly beautiful and interesting to know that the first care of this devout patriarch was to return thanks to God for the signal instance of mercy and goodness which he and his family had experienced. During the age of the patriarchs the head of a family acted as priest; and as this solemn act of devotion on the part of Noah for himself and his small household, as Dr. Jamieson further notes, was designed to be a full expression of his and their religious feelings—an acknowledgment of demerit and profession of repentance, faith in the great propitiation, and thanksgiving for temporal as well as spiritual mercies—every kind of clean animal and bird was included in the sacrificial offering that was required to give completeness to the ritual design. The sacrifice was both expiatory and to express thanks. It is observable that the sacrifice was offered, not to God (*Elohim*), the Creator and Judge, but to the Lord (*Jehovah*), the God of grace, who, by the instructions given to Noah, had himself provided the materials for the offering, as may be seen by reading Gen. 7: 1-5. *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Vol. I, p. 104.)

In saying that Jehovah smelled the sweet savor, the idea is that he was well pleased with the offering which Noah had made. In the words of Adam Clarke, "That is, he was well pleased with this religious act, performed in obedience to his own appointment, and in faith of the promised Saviour. That this sacrifice prefigured that which was offered by our blessed Redeemer in behalf of the world, is sufficiently evident from the words of St. Paul, Eph. 5: 2: *Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor*; where the words *osmēn euōdias* of the apostle are the very words used by the Septuagint in this place."

The fact that Jehovah has promised never to destroy the earth again by a flood is, of course, a gracious promise; but it does not imply that he either regretted the former destruction, or that he would be more

tolerant of future generations. He recognizes that man's moral condition will not, generally speaking, improve, since the imaginations of his heart is evil from his youth. God has other means of destroying a corrupted earth, as Peter makes plain in the New Testament. "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, since the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3: 1-7.)

The expression "while the earth remaineth" implies that the earth will not last for ever, but the promise is that while it does continue, the normal course of nature, according to the broad outlines which are set forth in the passage, shall not be interrupted to the extent that it shall cease. This does not imply that there will never be any variations which will permit limited famines, relatively minor changes in the seasons, et cetera; but it does indicate that the over-all arrangement which was ordained by Jehovah will continue along the general lines which are set forth in the passage now under consideration.

It is a historical fact that the unfaithfulness of the Lord's people has been punished by prolonged droughts and crop-failures; and it is altogether possible that many changes in the usual weather map have been largely influenced, if not actually brought about by the experiments which have been and are

being made in aerial regions and outer space. (Cf. Lev. 26: 3-20; Mal. 3: 7-12.) And while it is true that distressing times may come, the faithful child of God can find encouragement in the fact that the Lord will never forsake him, so long as he does his best to be pleasing unto him. (Cf. Matt. 6: 25-34; Phil. 4: 19.)

It is interesting to observe that the Hebrew word for "cease" is *shabath*, the literal meaning of which is, "keep sabbath." The same original term is also found in the following passages: "And the manna ceased [*shabath*—kept sabbath] on the morrow, after they had eaten of the

produce of the land." (Josh. 5: 12.) "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath [*shabath*] unto Jehovah." (Lev. 25: 2.) The following verses show that they were to *cease* to sow the land and prune the vineyards for one year, after having done so for six years. When people observed the sabbath of the Old Testament, they *ceased* from their activities, and devoted the day to the Lord. (Cf. Isa. 58: 13, 14.) Or, to state the same thing in another way, the sabbath always required a cessation.

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Discuss the place of salvation in the Scriptures.  
In what way did Jehovah first show his interest in the subject?  
What great contest did this involve and how did it terminate?  
Wherein is the power of Satan limited, insofar as God's people are concerned?  
What great responsibility do Christians have in this respect?  
What was the basis for the salvation of Noah?  
What is the over-all principle of salvation for the present age?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstance were the words of this text written?  
What analogy did Peter present from the Old Testament record?  
Discuss the antitype which is involved in baptism.  
Why is baptism so important in the Lord's plan of salvation?

#### The Return to Dry Land

How long did Noah and his family remain in the ark? Give reasons for your answer.  
How was it possible for Noah to see that the land was again dry?  
In what way did the patriarch further demonstrate his faith in Jehovah?

#### Command to Go Forth from the Ark

Discuss the order of the departure from the ark.  
What aid did Noah probably have with

reference to the lower creation in the ark?  
What command did Jehovah give for the repopulation of the earth?  
Why not employ the miraculous again?  
What has always been Jehovah's attitude toward his work?  
Why doesn't he repent, as man does?  
What place do *principles* have in his economy?  
What is the difference between principles and law, that is, statutes?  
How has Jehovah always demonstrated his interest in the salvation of man?  
Why can't he be indifferent to the lost of the human race?  
In what way did he express the principle which actuated him toward the Israelites?

#### Noah's Sacrifice and Jehovah's Gracious Promise

Under what circumstances was the "altar," as such, first mentioned in the Bible?  
Why did Noah offer the sacrifice at this time?  
To whom was the offering made and why?  
Why offer so many different beasts and birds?  
How did he come to have them?  
In what way did Jehovah indicate his attitude toward the sacrifices?  
What gracious promise did he make at this time?  
How did he express himself regarding the human race?  
Under what circumstances will the earth next be destroyed?  
What is involved in the Lord's promise regarding the earth in the meantime?  
What is the meaning of the expression "shall not cease?"

## Lesson IX—February 27, 1966

## JEHOVAH'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

## Lesson Text

Gen. 9: 8-17

8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

10 And with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.

11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud,

15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Golden Text.—*"Noah . . . a preacher of righteousness.* (2 Pet. 2: 5.)  
Devotional Reading.—Gen. 9: 1-7.

## Daily Bible Readings

Feb. 21. M. . . . . Jehovah's Covenant with Noah (Gen. 9: 8-17)  
Feb. 22. T. . . . . Jehovah's Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17: 1-8)  
Feb. 23. W. . . . . Jehovah's Covenant with David (Psalm 89: 3-18)  
Feb. 24. T. . . . . The New Covenant (Heb. 8: 6-13)  
Feb. 25. F. . . . . A Covenant with Israel (Ex. 6: 1-4)  
Feb. 26. S. . . . . Apostles Ministers of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3: 1-6)  
Feb. 27. S. . . . . An Everlasting Covenant (Psalm 105: 1-10)

TIME.—1657 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 2347 B.C.

PLACE.—Presumably upon or near the mountains of Ararat.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Noah, and the latter's three sons.

## Introduction

The record of the great flood is recorded in the seventh chapter of Genesis, as we have already seen; and we can well imagine the effect it had on those who survived its terrible onslaughts, as well as on those of the future who would hear about it. We are told that "the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and

the mountains were covered." (Gen. 7: 18-20.) We are also told that this continued for one hundred and fifty days, or about five months. (See Gen. 7: 24.) The destruction of the earth and its inhabitants was complete. (Read Gen. 7: 21-24.)

The entire eighth chapter of Genesis tells of the manner in which the waters gradually left the earth, and of Noah's efforts to learn whether or not they had abated. We also learn from this chapter that Noah and his family were in the ark exactly one year, that is, one solar year. And we can well imagine the feeling which



characterized these righteous people as they looked out upon the new world; and we are not surprised to read of the offering which Noah made, and of the gracious promise which Jehovah made in response to it. Although the following verses were a part of the lesson text for last week's lesson, it will be good for us to refresh our minds by reading them again. "And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (Gen. 8: 20-22.)

It appears from the opening verses of chapter 9, the chapter from which the lesson text for today is taken, that the flesh of animals and birds,

or, as verse 3 has it, "every moving thing that liveth," was for the first time given human beings for food. They were, however, strictly forbidden to eat blood, since it was the life of the creature from which it was taken. And it was at that time that Jehovah announced the law regarding the shedding of human blood, whether by man or beast. "And surely your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9: 5, 6.)

Jehovah then said to Noah, and to his three sons, "And you, be ye fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein." (Gen. 9: 7.) With this kind of a background before us, we are better prepared to study the lesson regarding the covenant which God made with Noah, his sons, and every living creature.

### The Golden Text

"Noah ... a preacher of righteousness." The marginal reading for "a preacher" is a *herald*, which is to say that Noah was a herald of righteousness. We learn from many Parts of the Bible that righteousness and God's commandments are inseparable. "When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean these testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah our God hath commanded you? then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and Jehovah showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes; and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath

commanded us." (Deut. 6: 20-25; cf. Psalm 119: 172; Matt. 3: 15.)

This should be enough to show us that any one can be righteous, only by doing that which God has commanded him. Or, to say the same thing in another way, when any person does that which the Lord requires of him, it shall be righteousness unto him. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, because he proclaimed that which Jehovah told him to preach, which included the message regarding the ark and the flood. It is obvious to any thoughtful person today that no one in this age of the world could be a preacher of righteousness, by proclaiming the message which Jehovah commanded Noah. And if it is true with respect to that ancient herald of righteousness, it is also true of any system of religious truth which is not directly commanded of those who endeavor to keep it.

The Jews of Paul's day made the fatal mistake of trying to become righteous by observing that which had been nailed to the cross of Christ (cf. Col. 2: 14), as may be

seen by reading Rom. 10: 1-4. "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of

God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." This same apostle tells us where God's righteousness for people of this age is revealed (see Rom. 1: 16, 17); and it is only by doing that which is commanded in the gospel that any one today can be righteous, or can be correctly called a preacher of righteousness.

## The Text Explained

### The Covenant Which God Made with AH Flesh

(Gen. 9: 8-11)

*And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him., saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth.*

At this point, following the **flood**, Noah took his place as the new head or representative of the human race. The old order had been completely destroyed, and a new beginning was being made. Jehovah saw to it that this new beginning was filled with hope, and was guaranteed his perpetual blessings that is, insofar as the danger of another universal deluge was concerned. This was the reason behind the giving of a new charter of pledges to Noah and his family, containing, as we shall see, a brief and simple, yet majestic code of fundamental laws for the guidance of all future generations. The **sin** of the past had been punished, and Jehovah was now ready to bless **and** guide the people through whom the earth was again to be populated **and** ruled.

We are not to understand that it was necessary for God to bind himself by a covenant, in order to make sure that he would do his part regarding the promises that he was at that time making; but he was willing to show weak and frail humanity that he would meet them on the level of human transactions, and give the necessary pledges and tokens to assure them that they could, with

complete confidence, commit their ways to him. (Cf. Prov. 3: 5, 6.) The philosophy of covenants between God and man is clearly stated in Heb. 6: 16-18, namely, "For men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."

There is, however, another thing which we should keep in mind regarding covenants between God and man, and that is when such covenants are made they are not to be understood and being mere bargains between equals. Jehovah is always the superior party, and he never fails to dictate the terms of whatever agreements are involved; while man is always the inferior party, and he must accept the terms of the covenants, if they are to be binding. But God does condescend to bind himself to keep the promises which he has made—a gracious adaptation to the weakness and wants of man—, so that man may have some tangible assurances on which to rest his faith. Covenants, as a whole, fall into two classes, namely, conditional and unconditional; but in the case now before us, it is easy to see that the covenant which Jehovah made with Noah and his family belongs to the unconditional category.

It should be observed that Jehovah included "every living **creature** that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the **earth** with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth." This is a remarkable statement, and it is deeply significant. The Scrip-

tures teach us that the smallest of God's creatures are the objects of his watchful care. Not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without the attention of our Father. (Cf. Matt. 10: 29.) The passage now before us is a classic example of how Jehovah feels toward the animal creation: they are mentioned specifically in the terms of the covenant which we are now considering. Jehovah is high and mighty, but he "humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth." (See Psalm 113: 4-6.) No one who believes the Bible and who fears Jehovah can be unkind to the dumb creation.

We can well imagine that Noah and his family prayed earnestly to God that they would never again be subjected to another flood. Josephus, in fact, says that Noah accompanied his sacrifices with such a prayer; and if that is true, the words of the covenant of this lesson may have been spoken in answer to that prayer. (See *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, chapter 3, paragraph 7.) Noah and his family were thus assured that nature would move on in the same peaceful order, as before the flood, and that if extraordinary amounts of rain shall fall at any time in the future, the inhabitants of the earth could know that they were not being sent to punish the inhabitants of the world.

### The Visible Sign of the Covenant

(Gen. 9: 12, 13)

*And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.*

This first question which is usually asked in this connection is, "Was this the first rainbow?" But inasmuch as the rainbow is a natural Phenomenon, being produced upon the cloud by the sun's rays shining through the raindrops, there is no reason for thinking that the rainbow of this lesson was the first of its kind. The original word for "set," in the expression "I do set my bow

in the cloud," is the Hebrew *nathan*. This term is found in other Old Testament passages, and if we compare some of them with the passage now before us, it will be relatively easy to see in what sense Jehovah "set" his bow in the cloud. The following are some of the passages just referred to:

"And Jehovah said unto Joseph, See, I have set [*nathan*] thee over all the land of Egypt." (Gen. 41: 41.) Any thoughtful person knows that Joseph existed before he was made the ruler over Egypt. Pharaoh simply designated him for that purpose. When the people of Israel rebelled against Jehovah, following the return of the spies from the land of Canaan, we read, "And they said one to another, Let us make [*nathan*] a captain, and let us return into Egypt." (Num. 14: 4.) Their idea was to appoint one of their own number as their captain, and let him lead them back to the place of their bondage. Nehemiah, in reporting a prayer of the Levites in which they acknowledged the sins of the people, has this, "And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them, but hardened their neck, and in their rebellion appointed [*nathan*] a captain to return to their bondage." (Neh. 9: 17a.) With this definition of the term "set" before us, it is obvious that Jehovah designated or appointed the rainbow to be the token or sign of the covenant which he was making with Noah, his family, and all the living creatures of the earth.

Although science has enabled us to understand something of the origin and nature of the rainbow, it still remains as surprising as any magic and lovelier than any deliberate art. It is hardly possible for any thoughtful person to behold its radiant grace, and not be inclined to believe that it is the work of a Mind which is careful for beauty and benevolence; for no wild and savage power, bent upon destruction, could or would want to draw forward and exalt our human spirits by such a scene of unearthly beauty. No wonder that Wordsworth could exclaim, "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky;" and in the words of Mrs. Sarah J. Hale,

O beautiful rainbow;—all woven of light!

There's not in thy tissue one shadow of night;

Heaven surely is open when thou dost appear,

And, bending above thee, the angels draw near,

And sing,—“The rainbow! the rainbow!

The smile of God is here.”

Robert Jamieson points out that “no external sign could have been chosen for this purpose more suitable, from its natural properties, than the rainbow; for its elevated position renders it visible to all; and it never appears but when there is a gentle rain with the sun shining—which kind of rain is never known to do any harm, but much good. Moreover, ‘its rundle or part which should look toward the object aimed at, is always from the earth, showing thereby that it does not aim at men. And it has no string, which shows that the master will not shoot; so that a bow unbent, or without a string, is a proper symbol of peace and friendship.’ In fine, its appointment as a sign seems to intimate that, as the rainbow is a necessary effect of sunshine in rain, and must continue such as long as the sun and atmosphere endure, so surely shall this earth be preserved from destruction by water; and its preservation shall be as necessary an effect of God’s promise as the rainbow is of the shining of the sun in a shower of rain.” (*Commentary on Genesis, in loco.* Cf. also Adam Clarke, *in loco.*)

### God’s Promise to Look upon the Rainbow

(Gen. 9: 14-17)

*And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between*

*me and all flesh that is upon the earth.*

The opening verse of this section of the lesson text seems to imply, as some one has observed, that “there is never a rain without a rainbow being visible if we could only get to the right spot to see it, but God is always above the clouds and he always sees it.” There is never a cloud between God and the rainbow, or, which is the same thing, there is never anything to prevent his seeing the sign of the covenant which he made with Noah, his family, and all of his living creatures. This is not always true of us; in fact, the clouds hide the rainbow from us much, if not most, of the time. However, we still have the word of God to the effect that the rainbow is there, when a rain-cloud is in evidence; and we can always trust Jehovah that he sees it and that he will never fail to keep the terms of his covenant.

It is no doubt true that God expects his people to look upon the rainbow, and remember his pledge to them; but it is with reference to Jehovah’s use of the token of the covenant that the Scriptures speak particularly. One could hardly think that Noah and his family could ever forget the horrors of the flood, or God’s gracious promise to them; but they and those who would descend from them were only human, and when life would become normal again and they would settle down to ordinary interest and daily occupations, the thoughts of the flood would go to the back of their minds, so to speak, as the waters had receded from the earth. That is characteristic of human minds. The fears, pains, anxieties, and tribulations of yesterday leave their scars; but when life becomes commonplace again, they are largely forgotten. It is easy to imagine that disaster may strike us at anytime. We seldom stop to think that we are always in danger of sickness, accident, death, and a hundred familiar things which we generally take for granted. The rainbow in the clouds may not always make a very good impression upon our minds; but the thing which counts for most is the meaning which it has for God. He will never forget.

Read again Jehovah’s words in

verse 16: "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." The rainbow which is spread across the heavens is something upon which God can look; and when he does gaze upon it, he always remembers what it means and keeps his word. We should not therefore become weary of the repetition which is made in the text regarding Jehovah's use of the rainbow. The meaning which it has for him is much more important than the meaning which it has for us; and what is true of the rainbow is also true of the other promises which he has made. (Cf. 2 Cor. 1: 20.) When a rainbow is arched in the clouds, it stirs our souls when we consider that God Almighty himself is also looking at the same bow, and that he is remembering that which he said in the long ago when he made the covenant with Noah and his sons.

All of the blessings which come to us in the course of nature are blessings which grow out of the covenant of which the rainbow is a token or symbol, and they are not conditioned on anything which men may or may not do. Jehovah makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and he sends rain upon the just and upon the unjust. (See Matt: 5: 45.) Human beings may, and often do, go astray, but Jehovah never leaves himself without witness, in that he does good and gives to all of us rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. (Cf. Acts. 14: 17.) All of this is the direct testimony of the faithfulness of God, who never forgets his Promise.

But in addition to the material blessings which come to us as a direct result of the covenant which God made with Noah and his sons, there are also some deep realities

which we should not overlook. For example, when we look intelligently upon the rainbow as the token of that covenant, we are led to *believe*, that is, trust or have confidence in God. (Cf. Heb. 11: 6.) Then there is *hope* for the days ahead. (See Rom. 8: 24.) And last, but in nowise least, there is *love*. (Cf. 1 John 4: 19.) These traits are principles of living; and no one can please God without them. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 13.)

Although the literal rainbow received the designation we have been considering many centuries ago, we must constantly keep the fact before us that we are still enjoying the blessings of the covenant for which it stands. But since we are also living under a new covenant, the covenant of the New Testament, it is not out of place to suggest a figurative use of the rainbow for us. That phenomenon was made to stand for God's faithfulness, and it still does, especially with reference to the preservation of the earth from the waters of a universal flood; but it also may well symbolize God's trustworthiness with respect to us in every dark experience of life. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

The greatness of God's grace to us is seen in the fact that he remembers that which we so often forget—that he sees in the rainbow that for which we seldom think to look. He has provided for our every need; and we may be assured that as he looks upon the rainbow, he will always remember that which he promised to his people. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28, 31-39.) And when this life is over and we are safe on the other side, it may be that we shall be permitted to behold what deep waters and what mortal dangers God brought us through, without our even suspecting that which could have been happening to us every day of our lives, all because he was looking upon the "rainbow" and remembering that which he promised to us.

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

How must Noah and his family have felt about the flood when they were again on dry land?

Describe the extent of the waters of the flood once again.

What are the principal facts which are contained in Gen. 8?

What assurance did Jehovah give his people in the closing paragraph of that chapter?

What apparently new arrangement did God make at that time with reference to food?

What law did he also announce at this time regarding blood?

## The Golden Text

In what sense was Noah a preacher of righteousness?  
 What is righteousness, and how may one become righteous?  
 How do we know what righteousness is for any given age?  
 Show what it means to be righteous in our day.

## The Covenant Which God Made with All Flesh

What new position did Noah occupy after the flood?  
 What did Jehovah first do with reference to the new beginning which was then being made?

What is a covenant and why was God willing to make one with his people?  
 What great encouragement do people get from God's covenants?  
 Discuss the two classes into which Jehovah's covenants fall.  
 Who and what were included in the covenant of this lesson?  
 What should always be our attitude toward the dumb creation?  
 What else did Noah probably do when he made his offerings following the flood?

## The Visible Sign of the Covenant

Give reasons for thinking that this was, or was not, the first rainbow.  
 What are some of the impressions the sight of the rainbow makes on those who see it?  
 Why is the rainbow such a fitting symbol for the covenant for which it stands?

## God's Promise to Look upon the Rainbow

How often does a rainbow appear?  
 Why is it possible for God to see every such bow?  
 What specific pledge did Jehovah make with reference to the rainbow?  
 Why do people so often forget the significance of the bow in the clouds?  
 What lesson do we get from this regarding all of God's promises to his people?  
 What effect does man's forgetfulness have on the faithfulness of Jehovah?  
 What are some of the spiritual blessings which come to us as a result of God's rainbow?  
 What great effect should all of this have on us?  
 In what way is the greatness of God's grace manifested in this respect?

## Lesson X—March 6, 1966

## THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES

## Lesson Text

Gen. 11: 1-9

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

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shi'-nar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Keep back thy' servant also from presumptuous sins."*  
 (Psalm 19: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 10: 1-32.

## Daily Bible Readings

Feb. 28. M.....God and the Nations (Dan. 4: 19-27)  
 March 1. T.....The Bounds of Nations (Acts 17: 22-31)  
 March 2. W.....Foolish Opposition (Psalm 53)  
 March 3. T.....Duty of Nations (Psalm 67)  
 March 4. F.....Power of Jehovah (Psalm 97)

March 5. S.....Blessing from Jehovah (Psalm 127)  
 March 6. S.....Jehovah Versus Idols (Psalm 115)

TIME.—Probably about 1757. that is, that year of the world; or 2247 B.C.  
 PLACE.—A plain in the land of Shinar, the lowlands surrounding Babylon.  
 PERSONS.—Jehovah and the people of that place.

### Introduction

It is well, from time to time in these studies, to call attention to some fundamental principles of Bible study; for after all that is what we are supposed to be doing, namely, endeavoring to learn something about that which Jehovah has seen fit to reveal to men. One of the first things which any one should do when attempting to learn the truth regarding any passage of scripture, is to inquire regarding the writer and those to whom the message was addressed, if indeed there is any information available on those subjects; and then try to ascertain something about the circumstances under which the writing was done. We are mainly concerned just here about the setting of this portion of the Book of Genesis.

This setting can best be seen by regarding the first verse of chapter 11 as a direct continuation of 9: 18, 19; and so, with this in mind, the two passages read as follows: "And the sons of Noah, that went forth from the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah: and of these was the whole earth overspread . . . And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." The narrative regarding the people of the earth then continues from this point. This simply means that the intervening verses, including the entire tenth chapter, form a kind of parenthetical statement regarding Noah, his sons, and their descendants, along with some things which apparently happened after the events of the present lesson, that is, after the confusion of tongues. (Cf. Gen. 10: 21-31; 11: 10-25.)

The shame and prophecy of Noah (Gen. 9: 20-27) were evidently recorded in order to give a kind of background to the subsequent history of the various peoples of the earth, who later descended from his three sons. Or, to state the same

thing in another way, Noah became intoxicated from the fruits of his labors, and was found inside his tent naked and helpless under the power of sin. The two different attitudes which were manifested toward their father by his sons led Noah, in the spirit of prophecy, to pronounce upon their descendants the punishments and rewards which the spirit and deeds of their fathers merited. These prophecies were fulfilled in a remarkable way, as may be seen by reading the subsequent history.

According to the chronology which is generally followed in these studies, about one hundred years elapsed between the flood and the events of today's lesson. The careful reader will observe that chapter 10 not only covers all of that century, but apparently goes beyond it. Bible students are not agreed as to what division is referred to in Gen. 10:25, but some are of the opinion that our lesson for today gives the account of that division and how it was accomplished. Others think that possibly the reference was to the division into continents and islands. But whatever the division was, it took place in the days of Peleg who was born about one hundred years after the flood, or at the time of our lesson for today. Chapter 10 closes with these words: "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." Moses did not write the Book of Genesis until after about twenty-five hundred years of the world's history had passed, and his purpose was evidently not to give a detailed account of all nations as such, but rather to give the setting for, and the background of, the chosen family of Abraham. This will explain why we have only fragmentary information regarding the world as a whole. But we do see that all nations came from the same family, and are therefore blood relatives. (See Acts 17: 26-28; 1 Chron. 1.)

## The Golden Text

*"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."* It appears that David, the author of the words just quoted, regarded presumptuous sins as the great transgression, as may be seen by reading the entire verse from which the golden text is taken, namely, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be clear from great transgression." Warnings regarding presumptuous sins are scattered throughout the entire Bible. A presumptuous sin is one which is committed proudly, defiantly, wilfully, and obstinately. Moses frequently warned Israel regarding such an attitude, and so do the writers of the New Testament. Consider the following passages:

"But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand [presumptuously, King James Version], whether he be home-born, or a sojourner, the same blasphemeth Jehovah; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of Jehovah, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." (Num. 15: 30, 31.) It should be observed just here that, according to this passage, it is possible for one to blaspheme the Lord by his action, without the necessity of uttering vicious speech. The high handed sinner is described as one who despises, that is, sets at nought the word of the Lord and breaks his commandments. "And the man that

doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do not more presumptuously." (Deut. 17: 12, 13.)

The same principle of course, is applicable among the Lord's people today. Jehovah's rule of conduct for his people has been established (cf. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; 2 Pet. 1: 3); and no one is at liberty to disregard anything the Lord has ordained. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." (James 2: 10.) The term "stumble" means to sin against, that is, to set aside one law. When that is done, one might as well go ahead and violate all the other requirements. When one deliberately acts in this manner, he does as he pleases; and as long as he maintains that kind of an attitude, he cannot be pleasing to the Lord. When preachers and elders are doing that which the Lord has ordained for them, those who reject their teaching are sinning against the Lord. (Cf. Luke 10: 16; 1 Thess. 4: 8; John 12: 48-50.) In Heb. 10: 25, the inspired writer warned against forsaking the assembly, and then goes on in verses 26-31 to show the meaning and consequences of wilful sin. It is, indeed, a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

## The Text Explained

### When All Men Spake a Single Language

(Gen. 11: 1, 2)

*And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.*

Literally speaking, if we follow the suggestions in the marginal notes, we would say that all the people of the earth were of one lip and spoke a single language. Referring again to the last verse of chapter 10, where the division of the people was spoken of as having already taken place, we naturally infer that the

writer's purpose in verse 1 of the lesson text now under consideration was to call attention to the original status of the people, before telling how the difference in locality and the various languages came to be. After Noah and his family came out of the ark, the sacred historian says that "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. 9: 1.) This implies that Jehovah intended for the people to inhabit the various sections of the earth, and not to remain in a single locality.

We have no means of knowing just what the one language was



which all of the people spoke. Adam Clarke says that "it is generally supposed, that after the confusion mentioned in this chapter, the Hebrew language remained in the family of Heber. The proper names, and their significations given in the Scripture, seem incontestable evidences that the Hebrew language was the original language of the earth—the language in which God spake to man, and in which he gave the revelation of his will to Moses and the prophets." Dr. Clarke then quotes Mr. Ainsworth as saying that the language just referred to was used for one thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven years, till the birth of Peleg, the son of Heber and the building of the tower of Babel, one hundred years after the flood. Or, which is the same thing, till the time of this lesson. This could very well have been true; but it is also true that Moses may have adopted another language for his record; for it is hardly reasonable to suppose that the great law-giver used the Hebrew language which was employed by Ezra and the other members of the Great Synagogue to give us our present-day Hebrew Old Testament. We speak the English language, but it is not the English of Chaucer and other early English writers.

The marginal reading for "east" is in the east, and that is probably correct. The whole section of that country is referred to in the Bible as the east. We have already seen in these studies that the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, and it is fair to suppose that Noah and his family came out of the ark where it landed. Ararat is in Armenia. It would be natural for the people to come down the mountain slopes, and cultivate the more fertile valleys; and as they did so, they doubtless traveled farther on, as their needs and desires arose, especially as their number increased. It is also probable that they were nomadic in their nature, and if so, that would also account for their travels.

The journeys of the people we are now considering brought them to a plain in the land of Shinar, later known as Babylonia (the modern Iraq); and they dwelt there. Gen. 10: 10 mentions four cities of Shinar—Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and

Calneh—; and implies that they were built by Nimrod. The Bible does not tell us exactly who the people were who made this journey; but it is fair to gather from the text that they were from all three of the sons of Noah, that is, before the division came. "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as *they* journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and *they* dwelt there." If we consider the reference to Shinar in the tenth chapter of Genesis alone, that would suggest the descendants of Ham; but that record apparently referred to later events.

### The Men of the Earth Assert Themselves

(Gen. 11: 3, 4)

*And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*

This is the first direct case of unbelief among the people, after the flood, that is, this is the first such record we have. As time went on, they apparently got further and further away from Jehovah; and they were ready at this point to solve their own problems in their own way. This should be an impressive lesson to us. God has promised to bless his people, if they will trust him; but when they decide to go in their own way, and map their own strategy, they are bound to fail.

These people had evidently learned the art of brick-making, and had discovered the use of bitumen or asphalt for the purpose of holding them together. (Cf. Gen. 14: 10.) So far as we know, this was the first time that the idea of a universal empire, with a mighty city as its capital, was proposed. "And the beginning of this [that is, Nimrod's] kingdom was Babel." (Gen. 10: 10.) This apparently, was the same Babel as the one of this lesson; and it may have been the forerunner of Babylon. Dr. William Smith says concerning the proposal now before us, "In the

blindness of their pride, they fancied that, when thus banded together, they might defy God himself and defeat his wise design of dispersing them over the earth. . . God saw the danger of their scheme, and willed that no such power should be established. The attempt has since been made thrice on that very spot, by Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Alexander. It has been repeated in the empire of the Romans, and in its attempted revival by Charlemagne and Napoleon; but in each case God has come down and confounded the scheme." (*History of the Bible*, p. 47.)

The twofold motive which the people assigned for building the city and the tower were (1) make them a name; and (2) to keep them from being scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. This however, did not please God, as we shall see further on. Bible students are not agreed as to their exact purpose in wanting the tower. Some think that it was for idol worship, some for the study of astronomy, while others think that they wanted it for a kind of landmark to enable any who might be lost to find their way back home. Josephus says that the whole scheme was based on unbelief in God, and thinks that Nimrod wanted to be in position to be revenged on God, if he should decide to bring another flood upon the earth; "for he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach; and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!" (Ant. 1: 4, 2.)

### The Divine Reaction

(Gen. 11: 5-9)

*And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do: and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do. Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city. Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because Je-*

*hovah did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did Jehovah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

The statement that Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower is another example of the anthropomorphic language which is often found in the Book of Genesis. God is represented as feeling and acting like a man. The description of his attitude here is both striking and simple—"Jehovah came down to see." Man in his arrogance was attempting to go up, while Jehovah in his judgment comes down. It is well to keep before us the fact of Divine scrutiny and examination; Jehovah is never indifferent regarding the attitude which his people manifest toward him. The result of God's examination of the proposed city and tower was that God anticipated that which the people meant to do, and restrained them.

It appears that the multitude which had assembled in the plain of Shinar formed an organized society, and began to lay the foundation for one universal empire. Unity in councils gave them power; and this was augmented by their ability to communicate their ideas easily and freely in a language which was everywhere understood. Bold and daring men might, under these circumstances, attempt anything which might enter their minds. What they were hoping to accomplish at the time of this lesson would only be a beginning of their wickedness. It was necessary therefore that Jehovah deal with the problem in hand summarily. The means by which their designs were thwarted was a confusion of tongues. The natural and obvious meaning of this expression is that by some extraordinary act of Divine providence, their common speech was so changed as to make it impossible for them to understand one another.

In the statement, "Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech," the use of the plural is similar to that in Gen. 1: 26. The idea is not that of more than one person, that is, to the Trinity, as some allege, but rather to the majesty and attributes of God himself. If a plurality of persons were involved,

then the verbs would also be plural. (Cf. Gen. 18: 21.)

The inspired record does not give any of the specific details of the confusion of the speech of the people in the plain of Shinar, that is, we are not told in just what the confusion consisted, nor what part, if any, of the original language the various groups carried away with them in their dispersion. Dr. Smith observes that it seems to be implied that some of the most striking differences which mark the various families of languages were then suddenly brought about by the immediate act of God, and that the builders separated because they could no longer understand each other; but he observes that it does not follow that languages, as they exist now, were formed then.

Bible students and linguists are not agreed regarding all the questions which arise in connection with the great event of the confusing of the tongues; but it is worthy of note that both history and archaeology bear clear testimony to the fact that there was indeed a confounding of the languages. Lange's commentary quotes one scholar as saying that "comparative philology would have been compelled to set forth as a postulate the supposition of some such division of languages in Asia, especially on the ground of the relation of the Egyptian language to the Shemitic, even if the Bible had not assured us of the truth of this great historical event. It is truly wonderful, that something so purely historical, something so conformable to reason, is here related to us out of the oldest primeval period, and which now, for the first time, through the new science of philology, has become capable of being historically and philosophically explained." (Bunsen.)

The city which the men of this lesson began to build was called Babel, because of the confusion of tongues; and it apparently later became the great city of Babylon. Thus the memorial of their confusion remained in the city which they attempted to build; and from the time

of this lesson, and forward, Babel and Babylon occupy a definite, and to some extent a prominent, place in the inspired record: until at length it will be finally and completely overthrown, as the last writer of the New Testament so vividly sets forth. (See the closing chapters of the Book of Revelation.)

It has already been pointed out in this lesson that it was evidently Jehovah's purpose for the people to occupy the whole earth, and the facts which we have been considering in this lesson seem to indicate the method by which he brought that condition to pass. But this separation from each other does not mean that it was necessary for the people to be divided in their relationship to God.

In discussing the question of the blessedness of true unity, W. H. Griffith Thomas has this to say: "There are three pictures in God's word which ought always to be considered together. The confusing of tongues in Genesis 11; the real unity amid diversities of tongues as the result of the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2; and the magnificent picture of 'all nations, and kindreds, and tongues' in Revelation 7 as they stand before the throne. With the Babel of earth we set in contrast the Jerusalem that is above. To the city of man we oppose the city of God. True unity if always primarily the result of an organization, and only secondarily of an organization. It is based upon God and upon spiritual life in him. 'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.'" (Eph. 4: 4-6.)

Life without God is always in constant danger of disaster and destruction. That has been demonstrated in the Bible time and time again. "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm 127: 1.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Show why we should take advantage of considering the principles of Bible

study from time to time in these lessons.

What application of some of these fundamental principles do we have in this lesson?

Discuss the place and purpose of the tenth chapter of Genesis.

How do all of these facts aid in a better understanding of the present lesson?

#### The Golden Text

What are presumptuous sins?

In what way are presumptuous sins related to blasphemy?

Point out some ways in which people may be guilty of presumptuous sins.

#### When All Men Spoke a Single Language

What was the purpose of Moses in referring to the fact of a single language?

What was the Lord's plan for the people with reference to the various parts of the earth?

What is known about the original language of the earth? Give reasons for your answer.

Where did the family of Noah probably settle, following the flood?

Where was the "east" and to what place did the people journey?

Locate the general area of the plain of Shinar.

#### The Men of the Earth Assert Themselves

What was the basic reason for the people's wanting to build a city and a tower?

What important lesson should we learn from this?

What kind of material did the people in Shinar have for building purposes?

Why did the people of that day think that they could succeed in the undertaking?

What other efforts were made later on along the same line?

What motives prompted their action?

Who may have been the leader in the desire to build the city and the tower?

#### The Divine Reaction

In what sense did Jehovah come down to see the city and the tower?

Show the contrast between God and man in this respect.

What was the result of the Lord's examination on this occasion?

What was the Divine motive behind the confusion of tongues?

In what way was this probably brought about?

What are we to understand with reference to the use of the plural pronoun in verse 7?

What corroborative testimony is available with reference to the confusion of tongues?

What name was given to the city which the people attempted to build and why?

What apparently was its later name?

Give some of the facts regarding the place of Babylon in Bible history.

How could the people of our lesson maintain unity while being divided in the earth?

## Lesson XI—March 13, 1966

# THE BEGINNING OF THE HEBREW NATION

## Lesson Text

### Gen. 12: 1-9

1 Now Je-ho'-vah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram went, as Je-ho'-vah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Ha'-ran.

5 And Abram took Sa'-rai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had

gotten in Ha'-ran; and they went forth to go into the land of Ca'-naan; and into the land of Ca'-naan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of She'-chem, unto the oak of Mó'-reh. And the Ca'-naan-ite was then in the land.

7 And Je-ho'-vah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Je-ho'-vah, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Beth'-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth'-el on the west, and A'-i on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Je-ho'-vah, and called upon the name of Je-ho'-vah.

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"She counted him faithful who had promised."* (Heb. 11: 11.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 4: 16-25.

## Daily Bible Readings

March 7. M.....	Call of Abram (Gen. 12: 1-5)
March 8. T.....	Abram Goes to Canaan (Gen. 12: 6-9)
March 9. W.....	God's Promise to Abram (Gen. 13: 14-18)
March 10. T.....	Stones Unto Abram (John 8: 33-39)
March 11. F.....	Faithful Children of Abram (Gal. 3: 3-9)
March 12. S.....	How Abram Was Justified (Rom. 3: 20-26)
March 13. S.....	Triumph of Faith (Heb. 11: 17-19)

TIME.—2083 A.M., that is, the year of the world; or 1921 B.C.

PLACE.—Haran and Canaan.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Abram, Sarai, Lot, and Abram's servants.

## Introduction

The second grand division of the Book of Genesis, if we look at the record from the standpoint of its principal characters and the evident purpose of the book, namely to give an account of the chosen people, begins with Gen. 11: 10 and ends with Gen. 25: 18. This section is largely devoted to the story of Abraham; and it is easy to see that with this portion of the history, the Book of Genesis takes a new and very distinct turn. The first division of the book, Gen. 1: 1-11: 9, dealt with the human race as a whole; but the division which we are now entering places the emphasis on the principal individual, and his family or descendants. We should always keep in mind the fact that the aim of the inspired writer was to trace the central facts of human redemption, rather than to write a general history of mankind.

Following the fall in the garden of Eden, Jehovah promised that the redemption of the human race would be brought about through the seed of the woman (see Gen. 3: 15); and the fulfillment of that promise is the chief work which is described throughout the Scriptures. The earlier part of the Bible shows the need for redemption; and now we are to see something of the method by which God accomplished his purpose

and redeemed the lost through one man, his family, and his nation. This is the reason why the history of Abraham is so important. The call of this patriarch was the most significant religious event, since the fall of man in the garden of Eden; and it may be considered as a new beginning point for genuine religion.

We have already seen something of the terrible wickedness of the race, following the defection of Adam and Cain, wickedness which was so great as to cause Jehovah to destroy the whole human race, with the exception of one man and his immediate family; and then following the new start after the flood, it was not long until rebellion was again the dominant factor in human life. Jehovah, however, had promised not to destroy the earth again by a flood; and so, in order to preserve truth and purity among men, he chose Abram and deposited with him his truth and the hopes of the race, until the coming of the promised Redeemer. God also selected as the home of this chosen family the land of Canaan, which was the geographical center of the ancient world (see map); and any revelation which would be made there would soon be known to all the other peoples of the earth.

## The Golden Text

*"She accounted him faithful who had promised."* The words which serve as this part of our lesson for today are taken from the great chapter on faith, which is found in the

Book of Hebrews. The writer of that document had just spoke of the importance of faith in these words: "Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense

of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.

For yet a very little while,

He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.

But my righteous one shall live by faith:

And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul." (Heb. 10: 35-39.)

With this estimate of faith before him, the writer of Hebrews proceeds to set before his readers a clear and comprehensive meaning of faith, both from the standpoint of a definition and by way of example. He begins by saying, "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." (Heb. 11: 1.) This verse, along with the next two verses of the chapter, is rendered by Phillips in these words: "Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for; it means being certain of things we cannot see. It was this kind of faith that won their reputation for the saints of old. And it is after all only by faith that our minds accept as fact that the whole scheme of time and space was created by God's command—that the world which we can see has come into being through principles that are invisible."

Abraham and Sarah were both past the age for becoming parents of children at the time that Jehovah revealed to them that a son would be born to them within a year (see Gen. 17: 21); but in keeping with

the principle of faith which the writer had just defined, we are told, "By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was passed age, since she counted him faithful who had promised: wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the seashore, innumerable." (Heb. 11: 11, 12.) In commenting further on the magnitude of the faith which was displayed by Abraham, and which was evidently shared by Sarah, Paul says:

"For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written. A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb: yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Rom. 4: 16-21.)

## The Text Explained

### The Motive for Abraham's Adventure

(Gen. 12: 1-3)

*Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*

It may correctly be said that the

glory of human history is to be found in the contributions which its pioneers have made. Our own country can never forget that which was made possible by the adventurous spirit of Columbus, the colonists at Jamestown, and the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock and braved a bitter New England winter. And then, after the eastern seaboard had been settled, it was the pioneering spirit which pushed the western borders of the newly formed country all the way to the Pacific Ocean, and beyond. But as great as those adventures were, they do not compare,

in value to the human race, to the one which is before us in this lesson today. Abraham was, in the true sense of the term, a pioneer of the first magnitude; but the quality which made him great was not the mere fact that he was an adventurer, but rather that he was an adventurer who was impelled by the greatest of all motives, namely, the word of Jehovah God.

We should remember that the movement of the great men of Old Testament history were directed by God himself. We have already seen that when Noah emerged from the great flood which had destroyed all life upon the earth, that it was given to him and to his family the privilege of making a new start, both physically and religiously, in the world into which they had entered. Noah's son Shem was the one who was chosen to prorogate the true religion, in that his descendants were to be missionaries to other peoples of the earth; and it fell to the lot of Abraham, who descended from the line of Shem, to assume the greatest responsibility of receiving and passing on to his offspring the divine revelation, which was to shape the destiny of things to come.

The call which came to Abram at the time of this lesson took place in Haran. His original home was in Ur of the Chaldees, and it was in that place that Jehovah first appeared to Abram, and started him on the long journey which ultimately took him and his family to the land of Canaan. It is fair to assume from Josh. 24: 2 that Abram's fathers were idol worshippers, and that was evidently the reason why Jehovah commanded him to leave that environment. The first part of Acts 7 should also be read in connection with the text now before us. Some Bible students have supposed that Jehovah intended for Abram to leave his father Terah in Ur, but in the absence of a direct statement to that effect, we cannot be sure about that. At any rate, Abram left the land of his nativity, and the first stop for any length of time was in Haran, several hundred miles to the northwest of Ur.

After the death of Terah in Haran, the call of the lesson now before us came to Abram, and he apparently left all of his father's family, and obeyed the voice of Jehovah. It ap-

pears fair to assume that the immediate family of Terah made the journey from Ur to Haran; for some twenty-five years later, Nahor, the brother of Abram, was living in the vicinity of Haran. Their other brother Haran, the father of Lot, died in Ur before any of them left that place. (See Gen. 11: 27-32; 24: 1-10.) Leaving the other members of his father's family may have been what Jehovah meant for Abram to do, when he said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee." Abram may have felt responsible for Lot, and may have even taken him into his family, after the deaths of Lot's father and grandfather; and that could account for his going with Abram.

The first part of the promise which Jehovah made to Abram at this time was fulfilled in the nation of fleshly Israel; but when the promise was first made, nothing could have been more improbable; because "Sarai was barren; she had no child." (See Gen. 11: 30.) Yet, in the providence of God, numerous posterity issued forth from this couple; and when we take into consideration Hagar, we have the Jews, the Edomites, and the Arabs, not to mention the Midianites and others, who owe their origin to Abraham. But it was with particular reference to the Jews that the promise of the lesson text was made to Abram. No other fleshly nation has ever exercised so great an influence on the moral and religious interests of the world, as did the nation of Israel during the Old Testament period.

The many special tokens of divine favor, both temporal and spiritual, which are recorded in the personal history of Abraham, bear eloquent testimony to the fulfillment of God's promise to bless that patriarch. No other man has been distinguished by so many high honors, as has Abraham; and this, of course, is proof that his name was made great. He is the only man whom Jehovah called his friend. (Cf. Isa. 41: 8; 2 Chron. 20: 7; James 2: 23.) He was revered by the Jews as the founder of their race; he is looked upon by Christians as the father of the faithful; he is honored by the Arabs as their progenitor; and, while of no special sig-

nificance, if there is anything moral in the religion of the Moslems, it is traceable to the precepts and example of Abraham. The things just mentioned will give some idea of the extensive fame of the great man about whom we are studying today. All true religious blessings owe their origin, in some measure, to Abraham.

The section of the lesson text now under consideration also teaches that Jehovah promised to deal with others, in keeping with the manner in which they dealt with, or deal with, Abraham and his people. J. W. McGarvey observed that the principle of this promise has even held true in modern times. God, of course, shows no favor to the Jews, above any one else, when it comes to the matter of salvation (cf. Acts 10: 34, 35); but the history of the world shows in a remarkable manner that no nation has prospered for long, while persecuting the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob; and in a similar manner, those countries which have been kind to the Jews have themselves been and are high in the scale of nations. And, too, it is worthy of notice that those who bless Abraham are referred to in the plural; while the opposite is in the singular "Them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee." If there is any significance in this, it is probably in this, namely, that the majority of mankind would bless, while only a relatively small number would curse.

The clause "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" has direct reference to Christ and the salvation which he provides. "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." (Acts 3: 25, 26.) "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. . . . Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed.

He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3: 7, 8, 16.)

### The Journey Continued

Gen. 12: 4, 5)

*So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

While the Bible does not say so in so many words, many Bible students think that the sojourn in Haran was about five years. It has already been noted that Terah passed away during Abram's stay there; and now Jehovah commanded him to resume the journey to the land of promise. It is well to observe that "Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him." When this statement is read in the light of Gen. 24: 7 and Heb. 11: 8, it does not seem that any one is justified in saying that Abram did not fully obey Jehovah, when Terah and Lot accompanied him. There does not appear to be any hint that Jehovah was displeased with him.

We are plainly told here that Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran for Canaan. This date and those given in the closing part of chapter 11 have led some Bible students to become confused regarding the ages of Terah and Abram. "And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor. and Haran." (Gen. 11: 26.) "And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." (Gen. 11: 32.) Abram, as we have already seen, was seventy-five years old when he was commanded to resume his journey to Canaan. The whole trouble starts when the assumption is made that Abram was the oldest of Terah's sons, because he is mentioned first. We know that he was not the oldest, but probably the youngest, since one of them was born when Terah was only seventy years old. He was two hundred and five years old when he died; and inasmuch as Abram was



only seventy-five years old at that time, it follows that Terah was one hundred and thirty years old when Abram was born. There were sixty years between the births of the oldest and the youngest sons of Terah, and since the wife of Nahor was the daughter of his brother Haran (Gen. 11: 29), it is reasonable to suppose that Haran was older than Nahor. The order in which sons are named does not always indicate the order of their ages. (Cf. the sons of Noah, Gen. 5: 32; 7: 11; 11: 10; 9: 24; 10: 21, margin.) Prominence rather than age was given priority in naming the sons of Noah and Terah.

The people who made up Abram's household must have made up a fairly large caravan, as they made their way toward Canaan (cf. Gen. 14: 14), and it must have been an impressive sight to watch this great crowd of people and animals move along the way, first across the fords of the Euphrates river, and then on down into Syria, probably stopping in Damascus where the child who later became his trusted servant may have been born. (Cf. Gen. 15: 2.) Abram and his household had, by the commandment of Jehovah, set out for Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

#### Abram in the Land of Canaan (Gen. 12: 6-9)

*And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.*

Abram and his company probably entered the land of Canaan, and passed on through the great plain of Esdraelon, before descending into the pastoral valley between mount Gerizim and mount Ebal, described by some as the most beautiful part of Palestine. This is the section where Jacob first stopped, after returning to Canaan from Paddan-

aram; and where he bought the parcel of ground which he gave to Joseph, and wherein was Jacob's well. (See Gen. 33: 18-20; John 4: 5, 6.) The "oak of Moreh" was probably a grove of oak trees, whose inviting shade caused Abram to select it for a camping place. It has been suggested that "Moreh" may have been the name of an influential native chief, similar to Mamre. (Cf. Gen. 13: 18; 14: 13.) The land at the time of Abram's entrance was occupied by the Canaanite.

We are not told in what way Jehovah appeared to Abram, but it is worthy of notice that he was the first man to whom the Bible says that God appeared. The promise of the land as an inheritance was not to Abram personally (Acts 7: 2, 5), but with a view to future ages. His descendants were to occupy it for centuries as a peculiar and separated people (Num. 23: 9), and there sow the seed of divine knowledge for the benefit of all mankind. The strategic location of the land of Canaan should never be lost sight of; it was, in Bible times, as already observed, in the center of the world's population.

It is worthy of note that wherever Abram stopped, there he builded an altar unto Jehovah. Adam Clarke observes that "where Abram has a tent, there God must have an Altar, as he well knows there is no safety but under the Divine protection. How few who build houses ever think on the propriety and necessity of building an altar to their Maker! The house in which the worship of God is not established cannot be considered as under the Divine protection." The whereabouts of Abram, while in the land of Canaan, can easily be ascertained by the smoke from the altars which he erected unto Jehovah. By this solemn act of devotion, that grand old patriarch made an open profession of his religion, established the worship of the true God, and declared his faith in the promises which Jehovah had made to him.

The marginal reading for the "South" is Negeb, the southern part of the land of Judaea. It is now in the state of Israel, and has recently been in the news, as that part of the country which the people of that country are attempting to water,

which is being diverted from the sea of Galilee and the river Jordan. It separates the central part of ancient Palestine from Egypt. By a series of "steps," or slightly inclined slopes, the land drops from the Judean highlands to the Arabian desert. The ridges run east and west in such a way as to make a series of natural barriers against traffic in a northerly or southerly direction. The term

"South" is frequently found in the Old Testament. (Cf. Gen. 13: 1, 3; 20: 1; 24: 62.) It appears that Abram's first journey through Canaan was for the purpose of acquainting himself with the country; and it was probably made within a relatively short time. The usual route to the southern border of the land was not through, but west and south of the Negeb.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons

### Introduction

How is the section of Genesis we are now entering related to the book as a whole?

What was Moses' purpose in writing the history?

How does the life of Abraham fit into the promises of God?

What was the apparent reason for selecting the land of Canaan as the home of his people?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text written?

What is the basic meaning of faith?

Show in what way Abraham and Sarah demonstrated their faith in the promises of Jehovah.

### The Motive for Abram's Adventure

Discuss the contribution which pioneers or adventurers make to the country they serve.

What can you say of Abraham in this respect, along with the motive which actuated him?

Discuss the manner in which Jehovah directed the movements of Old Testament history.

Where did the call to Abram of this lesson take place and how did he come to be there?

What specific directions did God give to him at this time?

What great promises were made to him when the call to go into Canaan came?

Discuss the greatness of Abraham.

What peoples owe their origin to him?

How is he regarded by various peoples today?

What effect is seen today in God's promise to him?

What was the ultimate aim of the promise to bless the world through him?

### The Journey Continued

How long did Abram probably remain in

#### Haran?

What was the probable order of the births of Terah's sons? Give reasons for your answer.

Give some estimate of the probable size of Abram's household at the time of this lesson.

What was their probable route from Haran to Canaan?

### Abram in the Land of Canaan

Tell something of the probable way they traveled in the land itself.

What was Jehovah's purpose in placing the people of Abraham in this location?

Why did Abram always build an altar where he pitched his tent?

What lesson should we get from his example?

What is one way to trace the movements of Abram in the land of Canaan?

What great things are implied from his devotion at the altar?

What and where was "the South," toward which Abram journeyed?

Tell something about that section of the country.

What efforts have recently been made to improve it?

What was Abram's probable purpose in going through the land the first time?

## Lesson XII—March 20, 1966

## ABRAM AND LOT

### Lesson Text

Gen. 13: 1-18

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

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

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

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

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

5 And Lot also, who went with

Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

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

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

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren.

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

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

11 So Lot chose him all the Plain

of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

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

13 Now the men of Sod'-om were wicked and sinners against Je-ho'-vah exceedingly.

14 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Abram after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward:

15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered.

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it.

18 And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mam'-re, which are in He'-bron, and built there an altar unto Je-ho'-vah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren” (Gen. 13: 8.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 12: 10-20.

## Daily Bible Readings

March 14. M.....	Abram, a Generous Man (Gen. 13: 5-13)
March 15. T.....	The Portion of Abram (Gen. 13: 14-18)
March 16. W.....	Rescue of Lot (Gen. 14: 5-16)
March 17. T.....	Lots Relation to Abram (Gen. 11: 24-32)
March 18. F.....	Lot and Sodom (Gen. 19: 12-28)
March 19. S.....	Lot, a Righteous Man (2 Pet. 2: 1-11)
March 20. S.....	“Remember Lot's Wife” (Luke 17: 22-37)

TIME.—Probably about 2086 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 1918 B.C.

PLACE.—Bethel, in Canaan; and Sodom, in the Plain of the Jordan.

PERSONS.—Abram and Lot.

## Introduction

The closing verse of last week's lesson says, “And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South,” that is the Negeb. A famine developed in the land; and inasmuch as Abram was headed, more or less, in the direction of Egypt, he evidently decided to go on to that country, in order to escape the ravages of the famine. There is no indication that

he had any word from the Lord regarding that move, and it is fair to

assume that the fellowship between himself and Jehovah was greatly weakened, if not entirely broken while the patriarch was in a foreign land. (Cf. Elimelech and Naomi under similar circumstances, as set forth in the Book of Ruth.) When Jehovah leads a person into a given situation, either directly as in the case of Abram, or by his providence as in our day, he is amply able to take care of him, if he will only re-

main faithful to him. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28; Heb. 13: 5, 6.)

When Abram and his household reached Egypt, it apparently was not long before he found himself involved in situations which could have cost him his beloved wife Sarai, if Jehovah had not intervened. The story of that incident is set forth in the devotional reading for today. It is good to know that the Lord does not always forsake his people, when they, for all practical purposes, forsake him. Egypt at the time Abram went there was perhaps the most powerful country in the world, and what would Pharaoh, the ruler of the nation, think of an unimportant wanderer who had made his way into the rich land of the Nile? It did not take Abram long to anticipate that which might happen; and it may have been an even shorter time before he saw his beautiful wife taken from his side, and escorted into the palace of the Pharaoh. It is not difficult for one to imagine the feelings of the man who had left his God-given home, for even a temporary sojourn among an alien people.

The story of Abram's experience in Egypt has a place in the Book of Genesis, and it is another demonstration of the truth that the writer of

the history selected from among the many available incidents of human interest those occurrences which show how great Jehovah is. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the writer's aim was to emphasize the fact that the essential drama is divine rather than human. Jehovah, let it be repeated, had a purpose for Abram; and regardless of what Abram might do, God's purpose for him would not fail. This is the powerful testimony of the inspired narrative now under consideration, and it is the same kind of evidence which is seen throughout the history of the Old Testament. It is in the confidence of such a faith that the people of God can move ahead in their service for him, in spite of the unfavorable circumstances which may be around them. This is the spirit which James Russell Lowell endeavored to emphasize when he wrote *The Present Crisis*:

Careless seems the great Avenger;  
history's pages but record

One death-grapple in the darkness  
'twixt old systems and the Word;  
Truth forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne,—  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
and, behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
keeping watch above his own.

## The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the main text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

## The Text Explained

Abram and Lot Resettle in the  
Land of Canaan  
(Gen. 13: 1-7)

*And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot was with him, into the South. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the South even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah. And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great,*

*so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land.*

It is not difficult to imagine something of the feelings which filled the heart of Abram, as his caravan slowly wound its way back into the land which Jehovah had promised to him. It is inspiring to observe that, although possessed of great wealth, Abram returned to the last altar which he had erected so far as the record goes, before going into a foreign land; and there "called on the name of Jehovah." We read of no such altar or prayer in Egypt; and, as already intimated and in the light of the inspired narrative, Abram ap-

pears to have been out of communion with Jehovah, while he was away from the land into which he had led him. Abram had been concerned with the circumstances which were about him, rather than with his trust in Jehovah. He apparently saw only the famine, while thinking less of his need for faithfulness to God. (Cf. Matt. 14: 22-30.)

We do not know how much of his immense wealth Abram may have obtained in the land of the Pharaohs (cf. Gen. 20: 1-18); but it is thought by some Bible students that he may have obtained Hagar as a servant for Sarai while they were in Egypt; for the Bible says that she was an Egyptian. (See. Gen. 16: 1; cf. 12: 16.) It is interesting to observe that the lesson before us today presents the first instance in the Bible which involved the problem of wealth in the life of a child of God. And since what has just been said is true, it is probably a good time to ask the question, What do the Scriptures teach regarding the possession of riches by the Lord's people? This lesson can be made valuable to us today, only in proportion to our willingness to listen to that which the Bible says on the subject.

The over-all teaching of the Word of the Lord on the question of material possessions does not appear to indicate that it is wrong for a child of God to be wealthy, provided the riches have been honorably obtained and are regarded, in the true sense of the term, as belonging to God; and are being used in a manner which is pleasing to him. However, no thoughtful person will deny the fact that the possession of riches greatly increases the responsibility of a child of God, and can easily result in sin, if he does not hold firmly to the scripture teaching of Christian stewardship. (Cf. Luke 16: 1-13.) This kind of attitude and practice will keep one in God's favor; and when the blessings of Jehovah rest upon that which we do, the result is gratifying: for "it maketh rich." This is especially true with regard to material wealth.

Riches from God are without the sorrow of ill-gotten gain. When people are governed by the principles of righteousness, they can always trust God to bless their efforts and multiply their gain. But if they allow the

god of this world to furnish the motives for the acquisition and use of their wealth, sin and sorrow will be the result. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6: 24.) In one of his letters to Timothy, Paul gives the true Christian philosophy with reference to wealth, in these words: "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." (1 Tim. 6: 17-19.)

We do not know just how long Abram remained in Egypt, or what other experiences he may have had while he sojourned there; but it is good to know that when he did return to the land into which Jehovah led him, he apparently did not stop until he reached the altar where he could again engage in the simple worship of his earlier days in the land of Canaan. Abram had no doubt learned that Jehovah was essential to his every step, and that nothing is profitable apart from him. And so, this great man must have returned to his homeland with a deepened idea of the meaning of God, and a clearer idea of the need for simple, absolute, and continuous trust in him. Abram was doubtless better prepared to deal with the vexing problem which was soon to confront him.

The great wealth of both Abram and Lot made it impossible for the two households to dwell together in peace. Large areas of pastureland would be needed for the livestock, and it is altogether probable that the herdsmen of the respective owners were anxious to see to it that they had the best which was available. And too, the presence of the Canaanites and the Perizzites would also complicate the situation, if they also had cattle and other animals to feed. Abram realized that something would have to be done. He must

have known something of the effect which strife would have, and evidently knew that if it continued for long that it would eventually involve both him and Lot. Furthermore, he doubtless was aware of the danger which would almost certainly come to them, if these strangers were allowed to learn of the strife which had arisen. Therefore, both the honor of God and their own welfare demanded that the strife not be allowed to continue. This should be a valuable lesson to us today, alike with reference to personal, family, and congregational differences.

### A Generous Offer and a Selfish Choice

(Gen. 13: 8-13)

*And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar.*

*So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. And Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly.*

Abram, who had befriended Lot, and who had made it possible for him to be in the land of Canaan, waived his right to tell his kinsman what to do, and begged that there be no strife between them. As already indicated, he doubtless knew that strife, if allowed to continue, would spread to the extent that both of them would almost certainly be involved in it; and he urged therefore that the dispute be settled at once. The motive which Abram advanced for getting the matter adjusted was that they were brethren. They were of the same family, worshipped the same God in the same way, and

were enjoying the same blessings which he provided for them. Why, then, should they permit strife to exist between their servants, and which would eventually be between them, if immediate steps for its settlement were not taken? There are many strife-torn congregations and alienated brethren today who could be enjoying peace, if they would but recognize the example of Abram, and manifest the same generous spirit which characterized him. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 24-26.)

The conduct of Abram on this occasion was not only the kind which will make for peace; it was also generous and condescending to an extraordinary degree. His faith thoroughly sustained him in this emergency. He had doubtless learned from his experience in Egypt that no one needs to descend to deceit, in order to obtain that which is best for him. The true child of God can afford to be magnanimous, as indeed he should be; for God has promised to bless him. When it comes to the place that strife is unavoidable in a given situation, then let the situation be changed at once; for no secular gain can compensate for the loss of peace. (Cf. Matt. 5: 9; Heb. 12: 14.)

Abram therefore, feeling sure that Jehovah would keep his promises, called on Lot to take his choice of the land which was before them, and to leave him in peace, since it seemed impossible for them to continue to live together as they had in the past. This magnanimous proposal of Abram exemplified in the starlight age of the world many of the principles which are enjoined upon us, who are living in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. For example, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 33.) "Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." (Phil. 2: 3, 4.)

As we think of the relationship which had existed between Abram and Lot since they left Ur of the Chaldees some years before, and meditate upon the experiences which had characterized them, both in Canaan and in the land of Egypt, we

naturally would expect better things of Lot. The highmindedness of Abram should have been met with equal magnanimity on the part of Lot; but it does not always follow that generosity meets its own likeness in others. The selfish sometimes even take advantage of such a characteristic, call it weakness, and fall to lower depths in its presence. This was a crucial moment in the life of Lot, and he was unequal to the occasion; his character was supremely tested, and the result has been for ever stamped upon the pages of history.

The place where Abram and Lot were living at the time of their separation was between Bethel and Ai, and they could therefore look westward upon the rugged hills of Judaea, and then eastward upon the fertile plains of the Jordan. The contrast must have been impressive, sufficiently so to sway the judgment of Lot, and bring him under the power of selfishness. The description of the land which has been described as the "Plain of the Jordan," or, as the margin has it, the *Circle of the Jordan*, has apparently been somewhat obscured by the rendering of the text, as we have it. Adam Clarke quotes a version which puts it this way: "But before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it was, as thou goest to Zoar, well watered, like the garden of the Lord, and like the land of Egypt." This is to say that the Jordan watered the plain about it, just as the four neighboring rivers watered the garden of Eden (Gen. 2: 10), and the Nile overflowed the land of Egypt. Zoar was a town east of the Jordan, which could hardly be seen from the place where Abram and Lot Were at that time. (See map.)

The reason why Lot failed to meet Abram's generosity with equal highmindedness is obvious; the world had taken possession of his heart. Egypt, which apparently had been a discipline to Abram, had evidently been a temptation to Lot. His imagination while he was there had seemingly been inflamed by the sight of wealth, beyond a mere dream. His soul had been taken captive by the desire to become rich; and now the opportunity had come to him to satisfy that desire. There is no won-

der that Jesus taught his disciples to pray that they not be led into temptation. These Old Testament lessons should mean more to us today, than the mere review of ancient history. They can teach us some wonderful lessons, if we will only manifest the desire to learn them.

Abram relied upon the righteousness of God, and remained where Jehovah had led him; but Lot, influenced by the ways of the world, moved on closer and closer to wickedness. The material blessings which he sought were soon to be accompanied by moral blight. It is easy for us to see the mistakes of Lot, but it is not so easy for us to see that his actions have many moral counterparts. There are professed Christians today who often choose their homes in localities, simply for the scenery, social advantages, and other material considerations; without once inquiring about the spiritual opportunities which they must have, if they are to please God. The result which usually follows such attitudes is the loss of children to worldliness and polite indifference.

Lot could not have been wholly ignorant of the reputation of Sodom, or if he was, he could easily have inquired about the place before making his decision to go there to live. But, with his outlook on life, he was in no mood for anything like that. Worldly advantages were uppermost in his mind, and he had no disposition to minimize them. He saw the fertile plain of the Jordan, and the magnificent opportunities for material increase which it afforded; and he, accordingly, conveniently overlooked the character of the inhabitants of the city where he would live. In other words, he had a keen eye for material interests, but a rather dim vision regarding his spiritual needs. Peter tells us that these things later became the means of trying his soul. "And delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds)." (2 Pet. 2: 7, 8.) Lot's case was a demonstration of the truth that men must reap that which they sow. (Cf. Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

## The Reward of the Righteous (Gen. 13: 14-18)

*And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it. And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah.*

It is, of course, impossible for us to know the thoughts which passed through the mind of Abram, after Lot left him; and especially after he chose Sodom for his future home. There is no reason to think that Abram had any doubt in his own mind regarding the proposal which he had made to his nephew, that is, in giving him the opportunity to make his own choice; but looking at the matter from the human point of view, it sometimes happens, after a great moral decision has been made, that the one responsible for it is tempted to review the events leading up to it, and to ask himself, Did I do the right thing about it?

But whatever may have been the thoughts of Abram, following Lot's departure from him, Jehovah came to him with divine assurance and blessed compensation. Lot had fixed his eyes in only one direction, but Jehovah bade Abram look in all directions. This implies that the prospects of Abram were not only wider than those of Lot, but infinitely more gracious; for the word of the Lord was behind them.

It is evident from Acts 7: 5 that the promise to give the land of Canaan to Abram, was meant in the sense that his seed, and not Abram personally, would possess it. And furthermore, it is apparent from the Scriptures that their continual possession of the land as an inheritance was conditioned upon their faithfulness. (See Deut. 30: 17, 18; Jos. 23: 16; 1 Kings 9: 6, 7; 2 Kings 21: 8.) When God makes a promise, it will be fulfilled, according to the terms and conditions of the promise; and we accordingly, as we study the Bible, will have the opportunity of seeing Abraham's seed enter the land of promise, although they refused to enter when they were first urged to do so. (See Deut. 1: 19-26.)

We can get a great lesson from the moving of the tents of Lot and Abram: the one moved his to a place of wickedness, while the other relocated his in a city which proved to be a great blessing to him.

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

Why did Abram and his household go to Egypt?  
What was involved in such a venture?  
What happened to him and his wife while they were in the land of the Pharaohs?  
What are some of the lessons which Abram must have learned by his experience in Egypt?  
What was Jehovah doing with reference to Abram all this time?  
What was the writer's over-all purpose in writing the Book of Genesis?  
What important lesson should we learn from all of this?  
What great promise has Jehovah always made regarding his people?

### Abram and Lot Resettle in the Land of Canaan

What must have been the feelings of Abram as he made his way back to Canaan?

What was the first thing which he did after reaching the land in which he was to live?  
What is said regarding the great wealth of Abram?  
What is the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the Lord's people and riches?  
What great responsibility comes with material possessions?  
How should Christians regard their wealth?  
What important lesson does Jesus teach with reference to money?  
Discuss the Christian philosophy of wealth, as set forth by Paul.  
How did Abram probably evaluate Egypt and Canaan, so far as he was concerned?  
What great problem soon arose which demanded his attention?  
Why did Abram consider this a serious problem?

### A Generous Offer and a Selfish Choice

In what way did Abram demonstrate his greatness on the occasion now before us?



What motive did he suggest to Lot for settling the strife which had arisen?  
 Why was it essential that it be settled promptly?  
 What lesson should we learn from this for our day?  
 What great principles did Abram exemplify?  
 What should Christians try to do when strife seems unavoidable, that is, in the affairs of life?  
 Why did Abram and Lot act so differently?  
 Why was Lot so interested in the land which he chose?  
 What are some of the mistakes which Lot

made and how are they repeated by people today?

#### The Reward of the Righteous

How must Abram have felt when he saw what Lot did with reference to his offer?  
 What great blessing came to Abram after Lot's departure?  
 In what way was he reassured by Jehovah?  
 What lesson should we learn from this?  
 In what sense did Jehovah give the land of Canaan to Abram?  
 What was Abram's next move?

### Lesson XIII—March 27, 1966

## JEHOVAH'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

### Lesson Text

Gen. 15: 1-15

1 After these things the word of Je-ho'-vah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram said, O Lord Je-ho'-vah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is E-li-e'-zer of Da-mas'-cus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And, behold, the word of Je-ho'-vah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in Je-ho'-vah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.

7 And he said unto him, I am Je-ho'-vah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chal'-dees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, O Lord Je-ho'-vah,

whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And he said unto him, Take me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other: but the birds divided he not.

11 And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

Golden Text.—*"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth"* (Gen. 14: 19.)

Devotional Reading.—Gen. 15: 16-21.

### Daily Bible Readings

March 21. M.....God's Covenant with Noah (Gen. 6: 1-18)  
 March 22. T.....God's Covenant with Abram (Gen. 15: 7-18)  
 March 23. W.....God's Covenant with Isaac (Gen. 17: 19—21)  
 March 24. T.....God's Covenant with Jacob (Gen. 28: 13-15)

March 25. F.....God's Covenant with Israel (Ex. 6: 1-4)  
 March 26. S.....God's Covenant with David (2 Sam. 23: 1-5)  
 March 27. S.....A Better Covenant (Heb. 8: 6-13)

TIME.—Probably about 2093 A.M., that is, that year of the world; or 1911 B.C.

PLACE.—Presumably at the oaks of Mamre.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and Abram.

## Introduction

Chapter fourteen of Genesis, the chapter which comes between this lesson and the last one should be read, in order to get a better understanding of the setting of the lesson now before us. Some years after Lot was established in Sodom, war broke out between several kings of that and other areas, which resulted in the capture of Lot, along with the other inhabitants of his home city. Abram was informed of this, and he immediately got his own three hundred and eighteen servants ready; and then in company with his three confederates, Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner, he pursued the captors as far as Dan, which was in the northern part of the country. After the slaughter of the leader of the victorious army, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, which was east of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, and those allied with him, he rescued Lot and others, along with their goods, and returned them to their homes.

It is fair to assume that Abram returned to his home by the oaks of Mamre, in Hebron, after his rescue of Lot and the meeting with the king of Sodom and Melchizedek; but his expedition against the kings whom he slaughtered brought about a new, and altogether different situation in his life. He had become a

power to be reckoned with, and could conceivably be brought into conflict with other kings and peoples. He may have felt somewhat like Elijah did, after his eventful and critical day on mount Carmel. (See 1 Kings 19: 1-14.) Times of spiritual reaction, in fact, are not uncommon among the people of God, as any thoughtful observer knows, both from the testimony of the Scriptures and his own experience.

It appears therefore that Jehovah, speaking after the manner of men, knowing the feelings of Abram after the return to his home, moved quickly to reassure him, as we shall see when we come to the lesson text itself. The manifestation of Jehovah to Abram on the occasion of this lesson is the fifth out of a series of nine; but with this one, there is a new feature introduced, namely, "the word of Jehovah came" unto Abram. This, according to the text, was in the form of a vision. It appears that prior to this experience Jehovah had spoken to Abram directly, or at least through an intermediary. The reason for this vision, as already indicated, was to encourage Abram. This is in keeping with the thought suggested in last week's lesson, to the effect that God is always keeping watch over his own.

## The Golden Text

*"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth"* These words were spoken by Melchizedek, as may be seen from the fuller statement of the context. "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shaveh (the same is the King's Vale). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and

earth: and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all." (Gen. 14: 17-20.)

There is very little in the Bible regarding Melchizedek, but the writer of Hebrews gives some additional information about him, which adds to our interest in him. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King

of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils." (Heb. 7: 1-4.) Melchizedek, was, as the writer of Hebrews points out, a type of Christ; and he was, as such, greater than Abraham, and consequently, greater than the Levitical priesthood.

A priest is one who stands between God and man, and is particularly man's spokesman to God. It was a part of his duty to bless, that is, to speak well; and in the case now before us, Melchizedek blessed

both Abram and God, that is, spoke good to Abram, and he spoke good of Jehovah. We do not know, of course, the exact phraseology which he employed, if more was said than is here recorded; but we do have the form of words which Aaron and his sons were to use for such purposes. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel: ye shall say unto them,

Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee:

Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." (Num. 6: 22-27.)

## The Text Explained

### Jehovah's Gracious Promise to Abram

(Gen. 15: 1-6)

*After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seeds: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.*

The situation which furnished the occasion for the onslaught against the invading kings, was not of Abram's own making or choosing; but it brought before him an obligation for action which, when he discharged it, created enmity in the hearts of others toward him. He was no longer, so far as they were concerned, the peaceful man who had come to dwell among the people of

Canaan. Rather, he was a man to be watched, and to be made the target of the assaults of those who did not understand his purposes and motives. This is also an illustration of what it means to live in a sinful world and try to be loyal and faithful to the principles of righteousness. Any one who attempts to live for God is bound to incur the wrath of the wicked (cf. 2 Tim. 3: 12), which means that he will be the constant target of their unholy deeds.

Many a gospel preacher, elder in the church, and other faithful members of the body of Christ, have frequently found themselves in the disfavor of other professed followers of Christ, all because they have dared to attack the enemy of truth and righteousness, and make possible the escape of those who have been made the victims of falsehood and deception. But whatever may be the nature of the struggle which the servant of the Lord may be involved in, it often happens that he needs reassurance which only the Lord can give. Jehovah supplied this for Abram by means of a vision; but what he does for his people today is just as real: it comes through his word which can never fail. He himself has said, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." (See Heb. 13: 5; cf. Deut. 31: 6; Josh. 1: 5-9.)

When Jehovah spoke to Abram as

he did on the occasion now before us, it may have caused the patriarch to recall the promise which had been made to him, when he was told to leave his father's house and go into Canaan. (See Gen. 12: 1-3.) And with that in mind, he was made to wonder in what the blessing he was to receive was to consist. Abram was getting up in years, with little or no prospects of becoming the father of a child of his own; and it appears that he had arranged for one of his servants to be his heir. Nothing further is known of Eliezer. We do not even know why he was spoken of as "Eliezer of Damascus." Abram said that he was born in his house, which evidently means that at least his mother was a servant of Abram. It is possible that Eliezer was born in Damascus, during the journey of Abram and his caravan from Haran to Canaan.

But Jehovah was quick to assure Abram that Eliezer would not be his heir, but one who would be of his own flesh and blood would have that honor. He then assured the patriarch that it would be as impossible to number his descendants through this promised heir, as it would be to count the stars of heaven. It was true that it had been some years since Jehovah had made the original promise of an heir to Abram, but even he had to be taught that when God makes a promise, it will be fulfilled. (Cf. 2 Cor. 1: 20.) Although Abram did not understand just how the promise would be fulfilled, he, nevertheless believed that which Jehovah said; and that faith was reckoned, that is, accounted, as righteousness. Adam Clarke calls this one of the most important passages in the whole of the Old Testament; and when we consider the use which Paul and James make of it, it is probably true that he is correct about it. The word "believed" is used in the sense of trust; and the practical meaning is that Abram leaned upon the arm of Jehovah so completely, as it were, as to enable God to lead him progressively into the acceptance of any—and everything he said to him. (Read Rom. 4; James 2: 21-23.)

It is interesting to observe that the term "righteousness" occurs in the Scriptures here for the first time.

The practical meaning of the word, as it was applied to Abram, and to others in similar situations, is that God ascribed, or imputed to him, a state or condition of character which was acceptable to him. This was not the result of any meritorious work which Abram did, but was due to his faith, or confidence, which he manifested in God. This kind of faith enabled Abram to believe anything which Jehovah said, regardless of the circumstances under which it was spoken; and which caused him to endeavor to do anything which God commanded him, regardless of the cost or difficulty in doing it. This is the only possible way in which any one can be righteous today; his righteousness must be *imputed*, not earned. No one was ever saved by faith only; he must (1) believe that which God says to him, and (2) obey that which he is commanded. (Cf. James 2: 14-26; Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26; Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

#### The Basis of and the Preparation for the Covenant (Gen. 15: 7-11)

*And he said unto him, I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the others but the birds divided he not. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.*

The entire statement which has just been quoted may be looked upon as the basis of and the preparation for the covenant which Jehovah was about to make with Abram. The first observance we should make is with reference to the fact that it grew out of the character and revelation of Jehovah; or, to state the same thing in another way, the covenant was the result of the unchanging and unchangeable nature of God, and that which he had already said to and done for Abram. It was pointed out in a previous lesson that Jehovah had a purpose in mind, when he brought

Abram out of the land of his nativity; and now that purpose is about to issue forth in a covenant. Jehovah is Sovereign over the entire earth, both with reference to individuals and nations; and it is, of course, within his power to deal with any or all of them according to his will. Jehovah therefore could and would make a covenant with Abram.

Abram's question, "O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" did not imply a lack of faith on his part, as may be seen by reading again verse 6. He merely desired information regarding its confirmation. There is a vast difference between asking for information, and asking out of doubt, as may be seen in the attitudes manifested by Zacharias (Luke 1: 18-20) and Mary (Luke 1: 34-38). When one has the proper attitude toward a question, further information, if it is the Lord's will to give it, will strengthen his faith; and this was true of Abram.

All of the animals and the birds which Jehovah commanded Abram to take for him were the kind which were later used in the sacrifices under the law of Moses. We have no way of knowing just what kind of a sign Abram expected Jehovah to give him, which would show him that he was to inherit the land; but it came in the form of preparation for a sacrifice, as we shall see further on in this study. Three year old animals would be in their prime, and therefore best suited for sacrificial purposes; or at least that is the general opinion of this specification. Adam Clarke cites a statement from a Jewish rabbi which compares the three animals to the idolatrous nations, while Israel was likened to the birds. (Cf. Psalm 22: 12, 13; Dan. 8: 20, 21; Song of Solomon 2: 14.)

The dividing of the animals, but not the birds, signified, according to the authority cited by Clarke, that the heathen nations would be divided and exterminated, while the Israelites would abide forever: This interpretation is, of course, possible, but it appears more probable, in the light of the Scriptures themselves, that Abram was simply following the established order of making a covenant, that is, Jehovah instructed him to follow the usual course in

such transactions. This may be seen by reading the following passage: "And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, that have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before me, when they cut the calf in twain and passed between the parts thereof; the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, that passed between the parts of the calf; I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life; and their dead bodies shall be for food unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the earth." (Jer. 34: 18-20.)

It has been thought that the birds of prey which attempted to descend upon the carcasses of the sacrificial animals and birds which Abram had prepared were symbols of the affliction of Abram's descendants, particularly in Egypt. If this is true, then their being driven away probably foreshadowed the delay in the affliction, or possibly their deliverance from it. It could, of course, mean nothing more than that the birds of prey were not allowed to pollute or devour that which had been consecrated to Jehovah.

#### A Grim Prediction and Some Gracious Promises (Gen. 15: 12-15)

*And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.*

The sleep which fell upon Abram at the time of this lesson was probably the same kind of sleep which came to Adam when Eve was made (Gen. 2: 21), since the same original word is used in both instances. Nothing is said regarding the reason for Abram's sleep, but it is fair to suppose that it was intended to shut him in from the things of sense, and

thereby enable him to be concerned wholly with the things involved in the covenant which Jehovah was making with him that day. The "horror of great darkness" apparently prefigured the affliction which his people would suffer in the land of Egypt. The experience which came to Abram on this occasion came "when the sun was going down," and since he was called on to "number the stars, if thou be able to number them," seemingly that same day, it is fair to assume that the latter scene took place early that morning, while it was yet dark and the stars were still shining.

Abram, on the occasion now before us, was given specific information regarding his people for four hundred years. Their privation would be characterized by exile, bondage, and affliction; but at the end of the specified period, the nation which had enslaved and afflicted them would itself be judged of God, and the children of Abram would leave the country with great substance. All of this was literally fulfilled in the land of Egypt, as may be seen by reading the first part of the Book of Exodus. It was evidently from the gold, silver, and other materials which the Egyptians gave the Israelites on the night of the latter's departure from the land of the Pharaohs, that the tabernacle was built at Sinai. The Israelites may have had some of that material already; but it is hardly probable that they had all of it.

The expression "four hundred years" was apparently used as a round number for "four hundred and thirty years." (See Acts 7: 6; cf. Ex. 12: 40; Gal. 3: 17.) Israel, of course, was not in Egypt for the entire period of four hundred years, since it was only four hundred and thirty years from the time the promise was given to Abram to the giving of the law, which took place after the exodus. Some Bible students date the period of the suffering of Abram's descendants from the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael. (See Gen. 21: 9; Gal. 4: 29.) Our English version of the Bible says, "Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years" (Ex. 12: 40); whereas, the Septuagint, that is, the

Greek Version of the Old Testament, says, "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years." Therefore, when we consult the genealogical tables of Genesis and Exodus, it will be easy to see that the four hundred and thirty years covered both periods, that is, the time that was spent in Canaan, and the time which was spent in Egypt. (Read again Gal. 3: 17.) The entire period from the time of the promise to Abram (Gen. 12: 1-3) to the giving of the law, which took place a short time after the children of Israel left the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

The closing verse of the lesson text for today, "But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; and thou shalt be buried in a good old age," is the first intimation that Abram himself would not personally inherit the land of promise as his inheritance; and it is also the first time that death is spoken of as going to one's fathers. It should be observed that going to one's fathers, or being gathered to one's people, is not an expression synonymous with being buried. Abram was buried in the cave of Machpelah, but none of his ancestors had been interred there. The reunion with his fathers was in the intermediate state of the dead, rather than in the tomb. If Abram's "fathers" were his immediate ancestors, then Terah renounced the gods which he served beyond the River (cf. Josh. 24: 14, 15), in favor of Jehovah; for we know that Abram when he left this world, went into the realm of the redeemed. (See Luke 13: 28; 20: 37, 38.) A reunion in Hades can take place in only *one* side of the great gulf, which divides the righteous from the wicked. (See Luke 16: 26.) Abraham was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died. "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, a hundred threescore and fifteen years. And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people." (Gen. 25: 7, 8.)

## Questions for Discussion

What Is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Give a summary of the facts between this lesson and the last one.

Where, apparently, was Abram at the time of this lesson?

What must have been his general feeling at that time?

What, seemingly, was Jehovah's purpose in appearing to him on that occasion?

What was peculiar about that manifestation?

### The Golden Text

Who spoke the words of this text and under what circumstance?

What do we know about Melchizedek?

What was the function of a priest?

In what sense did he bless both Abram and Jehovah?

What formula were the priests under the law of Moses authorized to use?

### Jehovah's Gracious Promise to Abram

Why was Abram in need of assurance at the time of this lesson?

What lesson do we learn from this regarding the meaning of living in a sinful world?

What encouragement s h o u l d gospel preachers, godly elders, and other faithful members of the church receive from this incident?

What promise has the Lord made to all such people?

Why did Abram ask about an heir at the time of the vision now under consideration?

Who was Eliezer of Damascus?

What do we learn from this incident regarding Jehovah and his promises?

How did Abram react to the Lord's assurance and how did Jehovah regard him?

What is the meaning of "righteousness" and in what sense did it apply to Abram?

What does this kind of faith always enable the one who has it to do?

How only can one come into possession of this kind of righteousness?

### The Basis of and the Preparation for the Covenant

Why must there be a basis of and preparation for a covenant?

Why was a covenant needed at the time of this lesson?

What was Abram told to do?

How do we know that Abram's question regarding the inheritance was not due to a lack of faith?

What was the probable reason for dressing and dividing the animals?

What, if anything, was signified by the birds of prey?

### A Grim Prediction and Some Gracious Promises

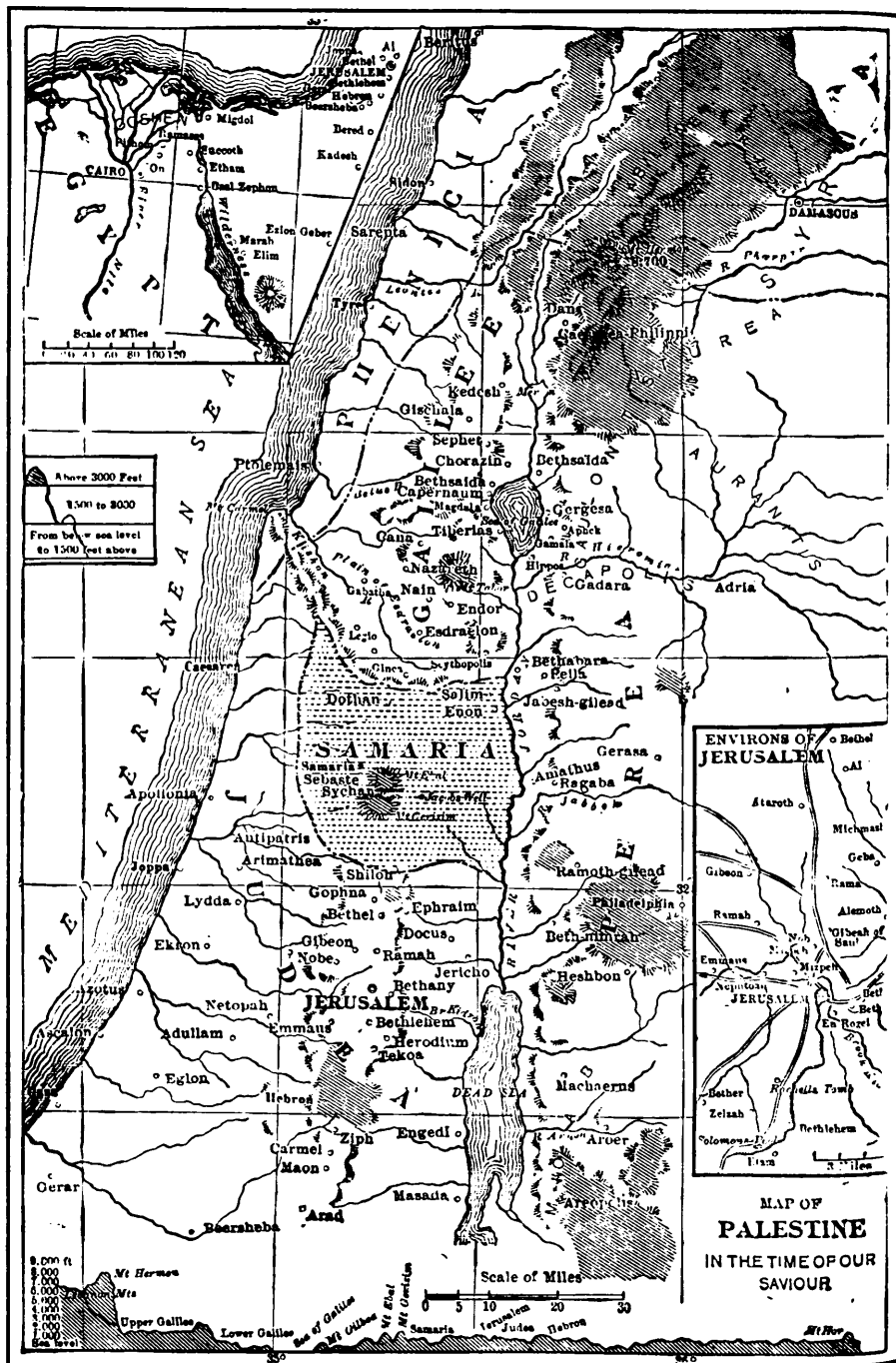
What must have been the nature of the sleep which fell upon Abram and its purpose?

Why the vision of the horror of great darkness?

What specific information was Abram given regarding his people?

What was included in the four hundred year period?

What gracious promise did Jehovah make to Abram at this time?





## SECOND QUARTER STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

### (First Half of a Six-Month Course)

*Aim: To study, in detail, outstanding events in the earthly life of our Lord, and from the lessons thus learned to imbibe the spirit of Christianity, that the principles which he taught may find expression in our lives today.*

#### Lesson I—April 3, 1966

### THE INFANCY OF JESUS

#### Lesson Text

Matt. 2: 13-23

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appear-eth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into E'-gypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Her'-od will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into E'-gypt;

15 And was there until the death of Her'-od: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of E'-gypt did I call my son.

16 Then Her'-od, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Beth'-le-hem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jer-e-mi'-ah the Prophet, saying,

18 A voice was heard in Ra'-mah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Ra'-chel weeping for her chil-  
dren;

And she would not be comforted,  
because they are not.

19 But when Her'-od was dead, be-  
hold, an angel of the Lord appear-  
eth in a dream to Joseph in E'-gypt,  
saying,

20 Arise and take the young child  
and his mother, and go into the land  
of Is'-ra-el: for they are dead that  
sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose and took the  
young child and his mother, and came  
into the land of Is'-ra-el.

22 But when he heard that Ar-  
che-la'-us was reigning over Ju-  
dae'-a in the room of his father Her'-  
od, he was afraid to go thither; and  
being warned of God in a dream, he  
withdrew into the parts of Gal'-i-lee,

23 And came and dwelt in a city  
called Naz'-a-reth; that it might be  
fulfilled which was spoken through  
the prophets, that he should be called  
a Naz'-a-rene'.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."* (Matt. 1: 21.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 2: 1-13.

#### Daily Bible Readings

March 28. M.....	Visit of an Angel (Matt. 1: 18-25)
March 29. T.....	The Infant King (Matt. 2: 1-12)
March 30. W.....	Flight Into Egypt (Matt. 2: 13-18)
March 31. T.....	Return to Nazareth (Matt. 2: 19-23)
April 1. F.....	Child of Prophecy (Gal. 4: 1-7)
April 2. S.....	King of Peace (Isa. 11: 1-9)
April 3. S.....	Son of David (Matt. 22: 41-46)

TIME.—Probably between 7 and 4 B.C.

PLACE.—Bethlehem, somewhere in Egypt, and Nazareth.

PERSONS.—The Wisemen, Herod, an angel, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

## Introduction

Jesus was both the central and the greatest person who ever lived upon the earth, and yet, it is a fact that very little is known of the first thirty of his thirty-three and a half years here among men. The Bible, of course, is the only authentic book which contains information about our Lord; but after one has read everything which it says about him, he will still know very little about the childhood, youth, and early manhood of Jesus. Mark and John say absolutely nothing about the first thirty years of his life; and one can read all that Matthew and Luke say about the infancy and childhood of Jesus in less than thirty minutes. Matthew devotes one chapter, the chapter from which the text for this lesson is taken, to the visit of the Wisemen, the flight into Egypt, and the return to Nazareth, where the family of Jesus made its home. Beyond that, Matthew says nothing about the life of Jesus for the next thirty years.

Luke, in like manner, has only one chapter which relates to the early life of Jesus. He gives the circumstances surrounding his birth, including the reason why that event took place in Bethlehem in Judaea, rather than in Nazareth, which was the home town of Joseph. Luke devotes only one verse to the circumcision and naming of the babe when he was eight days old; and that is followed by his presentation in the temple, where the usual sacrifice which the law of Moses required for the firstborn of every family was offered. (See Lev. 12: 1-8; cf. Ex. 13: 2, 12.) It was while Joseph and Mary, along with Jesus, were in the temple that they met and heard the words of Simeon and Anna. "And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." (See Luke 2: 1-39.) The only information which we have regarding Jesus for the next twelve years is contained in these words: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2: 40.) Verses forty-one through fifty-one of the second chapter of Luke tell of the visit of Jesus and his parents to

Jerusalem for the feast of the passover, of his being lost for three days, his experience in the temple, and their return to Nazareth. The chapter closes with these words: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2: 52.)

If one should read either Matthew's or Luke's account alone, he would fail to get the full picture of that which happened in the early days of Jesus. For example, one would gather from Matthew that the Wisemen from the east came almost immediately after the birth of Jesus; and in a similar manner, if one should read Luke alone he would get the impression that Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth immediately after the presentation in the temple. Any one who is familiar with the gospel narratives is aware of the fact that it was never the intention of any one of the four writers to record all of the events in the life of Jesus in their chronological order. Each writer had a definite purpose before him, and he simply selected such incidents and teaching in the life of our Lord which would accomplish the purpose, and wrote accordingly. Someone has said that the gospel records agree in giving us, not one unbroken history, but a succession of short narratives, like a succession of pictures in which a painter represents a complete history.

It takes all that is said in Matt. 2 and Luke 2 to complete the picture of the infancy of Jesus; and it is obvious that neither writer recorded all the events which took place. However, if both chapters are considered together, and in the light of the known facts, it is fairly easy to reconstruct the happenings of that period in the life of Jesus in chronological order. Here is the full picture: (1) the birth of Jesus, Luke 2: 1-7; (2) the shepherds and the angels, Luke 2: 8-20; (3) the circumcision and the naming of Jesus, Luke 2: 21; (4) the presentation in the temple and the homage of Simeon and Anna, Luke 2: 22-38; (5) the visit and departure of the Wisemen, Matt. 2: 1-12; (6) the flight into

Egypt and the slaughter of the innocent children, Matt. 2: 13-18; and

(7) the return from Egypt to Nazareth, Matt. 2: 19-23; Luke 2: 39.

## The Golden Text

*"And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."* In every home, the naming of a newly born babe is an event of deep and peculiar interest and significance. It is the first permanent acknowledgement that a new personality has begun to live; and it is there that prayers and hopes for the future have their basis. But in the homes of pious Jews, during Bible times, such an occurrence was more impressive still; for the names which they bestowed usually had distinctive meanings. The name which was given was intended to tell something about the individual, either some memorial fact connected with his birth, or some purpose which it was hoped he would accomplish in the future. (Cf. Moses, Ex. 2: 10; John the Baptist, Luke 1: 13-17.)

The naming of Jesus, however, was not left to human judgment or desire; he was named before he was born by the angel who appeared to Joseph. The name which the angel gave means "Salvation of Jehovah," or "Jehovah is the Saviour." Jesus in Greek is the same as Joshua in Hebrew. (Cf. Acts 7: 45; Heb. 4: 8, marginal reading.) There were oth-

er people who bore the name "Jesus" (cf. Col. 4: 11), but no one else wore that name by divine authority. The "Jesus" we are now considering is the Son whom God gave because of his great love for the world which was lost in sin; and inasmuch as he was sent to accomplish a specific purpose, it was the Father's will that he have a name in keeping with that objective.

When the angel gave instruction to Joseph regarding the name of the child which his wife would bear, he also told him why the name should be given to him, namely, "for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." This is the first promise of the New Testament concerning the great work which Christ would accomplish. He was not simply to be a great leader, such as Joshua was; but a Saviour in the final and highest meaning of that term. Salvation from sin is full and complete; it includes salvation from the love, practice, guilt, power, and punishment of sin. This is the salvation which Jesus is able to offer; but it is also a salvation which the sinner must be willing to accept (cf. Eph. 2: 8, 9); for the Lord saves no one against his will. (Cf. John 5: 40.)

## The Text Explained

### The Flight into Egypt

(Matt. 2: 13-15)

Now when they were *departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.*

The portion of the chapter which serves as the devotional reading for today tells of the visit of the Wise-men in Bethlehem, where Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus were still

residing. The words and actions of these men from the east, along with their lavish gifts which they bestowed upon the infant Jesus, must have warmed the hearts of Joseph and Mary; but, as is often the case, they were totally unaware of what they were soon to be called upon to endure, in order to escape the wrath of the king of Judaea. But God always knows the way which his people must travel; and if they are willing to trust him, he will continue his watchful care over them. In the words of a wise man of ancient Israel, in Prov. 3: 5, 6,

*"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding:*

*In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths."*

Angels, of course, do not speak directly to people today, that is, in

audible tones, but that does not mean that angels have no place in our lives today. (Cf. Heb. 1: 13, 14.) God's providence is as real now, as it was in Bible times; and the passage just cited plainly says that the angels are his ministering servants, "who are sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation," that is, Christians. (See Tit. 3: 7; Heb. 6: 12; cf. Rom. 8: 28.)

We, of course, do not know what use Joseph and Mary made of the gifts of the Wisemen, but it is entirely possible that they were providently given for use during the journey to, and the stay in Egypt. At any rate, when the Lord tells his people to do something, he will see to it that they have that which they need in its accomplishment. (Cf. Phil. 4: 13, 19; Heb. 13: 5, 6; Deut. 8: 1-4.) Trust in Jehovah after this fashion is but a practical demonstration of one's confidence in him. (Cf. Heb. 11: 6.)

When one learns something of the character of Herod, he will not be surprised at anything that he did. Some observations regarding him will be made in the following section of this lesson. However, at this time it should be noted that he was not a Jew, although he was the king over them, and to some extent embraced the Jewish religion. This Herod was also known as Herod the Great, and he was the son of Antipater, an Edomite, or Idumaeen, as they were also called, and was the founder of the family of Herods, prominently referred to in the New Testament. Herod the Great was appointed king of Judaea in 40 B. C., by the Roman Senate, at the suggestion of Antony and with the consent of Octavius. The Jews greatly opposed the appointment, but Herod in time overcame this opposition, and took possession of the kingdom in 37 B.C. After the battle of Actium, he was confirmed by Octavius, whose favor he ever after enjoyed.

The typical and antitypical use of the calling of Israel out of Egypt, and the return of the infant Jesus from that country, is another example of the manner in which the entire Bible is so interrelated, as to make it impossible to claim inspiration for one part of it, while denying

it to another. Israel was enslaved in Egypt, but were called out of that country by Jehovah, and molded into a nation. Later on, Hosea (11:1) referred to that event in his effort to bring the rebellious people back to Jehovah; and it was this prophecy by Hosea that Matthew quoted, as given in the text now before us.

#### The Slaughter of the Innocents (Matt. 2: 16-18)

*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wisemen, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying,*

*A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
And she would not be comforted, because they are not.*

In speaking of the general character of Herod, Thayer says that "he was brave and skilled in war, learned and sagacious; but also extremely suspicious and cruel. Hence he destroyed the entire royal family of the Hasmonaeans, put to death many of the Jews that opposed his government, and proceeded to kill even his dearly beloved wife Mariamne of the Hasmonaeen line and the two sons which she had borne him. By these acts of bloodshed, and especially his love and imitation of Roman customs and institutions and by the burdensome taxes imposed upon his subjects, he so alienated the Jews that he was unable to regain their favor by his splendid restoration of the temple and other acts of munificences." With this kind of attitude and background, no one who is aware of them is surprised at his effort to kill God's Son, along with the slaughter of all the male children in Bethlehem, and all its borders.

Renan summed up the character of Herod by calling him a "very fine beast." Josephus devotes many pages to his life and works, but there is nothing, when considered in the light of its true context, which

commends him as a respectable moral character, to say nothing of a servant of the Lord. *The Speaker's Bible* notes that whatever else may be said about the murder of the innocent children of Bethlehem and the surrounding parts, it is wholly in keeping with what we know of him. The man who never stopped at massacre would certainly not stop at killing a few babies, one among whom, as he thought, might be a potential rival for his throne. It has been said that Herod's final act was to assemble all the leading people of Jerusalem in the hippodrome, so that when he died they also might be put to death, and thus make certain that there would be some real grief at his funeral.

In speaking of the reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah, *The Fourfold Gospel* says, "Verses 6, 15, and 18 give us three different kinds of prophecy. The first is direct, and relates wholly to an event which was yet future; the second is a case where an act described is symbolic of another later and larger act; the last is a case where words describing one act may be taken as fitly and vividly describing another later act, though the acts themselves may bear small resemblance. Matthew does not mean that Jeremiah predicted the slaughter at Bethlehem; but that his words, though spoken at another occasion, were so chosen of the Spirit that they might be fitly applied to this latter occasion." *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* thinks that the calamity, caused by Israel's sin, eventually brought Herod to the throne, and that the atrocity of Bethlehem was one of the direct results; and it was for this reason that Matthew looked upon both calamities as a part of the same picture.

### The Return from Egypt to Nazareth

(Matt. 2: 19-23)

*But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Ar-*

*chelaus was reigning over Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.*

God frequently allows wicked people to have their own way, while he uses other ways and means of accomplishing his purpose, as in the case of Herod. This, no doubt, is to allow them to complete their work and fill their cup. It will be seen that the movements of Joseph and Mary in the protection of the child Jesus, as directed by the angel of the Lord, were such as would be regarded as natural by the average person; and regardless of what the situation was, no one was ever able to halt the work of Christ, until his time came. But when he had accomplished his mission and the time had come for him to go to the cross, he was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and was slain by the hands of "lawless men." (See Acts 2: 22-24.)

Herod died in the thirty-seventh year of his reign and in the seventieth year of his life. He was seized with a terrible inward burning, according to Josephus, and some members of his body were putrefied, and the stench of his breath was almost unbearable, both to himself and to those about him. Josephus continues: "Now any one may easily discover the temper of this man's mind, which not only took pleasure in doing what he had done formerly against his relations, out of the love of life, but by those commands of which savoured of no humanity; since he took care, when he was departing out of this life, that the whole nation should be put into mourning, and indeed made desolate of their dearest kindred, when he gave order that one out of every family should be slain, although they had done nothing that was unjust, or that was against him, nor were they accused of any other crimes; while it is usual for those who have any regard for virtue to lay aside their hatred at such a time, even respect to those they justly esteem their enemies." (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 17: 6, 6; cf. Acts 12: 21-23.)

It appears that Archelaus was as brutal a ruler, as was his father. The will of Herod the Great specified that his kingdom be divided between his three sons, Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip; and it appears that Caesar Augustus approved the terms of the will. Archelaus received as his part Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea, but the title of king was withheld from him until it was seen how well he conducted himself. His conduct, however, was so unacceptable that he was deposed by the emperor, and Judaea became a Roman province, and was ruled by governors who were appointed by the emperor.

If one should read the Book of Matthew alone, he would get the idea that Joseph and Mary were permanent residents of Bethlehem; and that they would naturally go there upon their return from Egypt. But Luke informs us, as we have already seen, that their home was in Nazareth. However, it is possible that Joseph and Mary would have returned to Bethlehem, if they had not been warned of the angel not to do so. But be that as it may, they followed the instruction of the angel, and returned to Nazareth. Nazareth was in Galilee, some twenty or twenty-five miles almost due west of the southern end of the sea of Galilee.

It appears that Jesus grew to manhood in the little town of Nazareth, and when he began to call men to be his disciples, Philip told Nathanael about him, and the latter said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" See John 1: 45, 46.) This is

not to be construed that Nazareth was a wicked place, but the reference is rather to its smallness and insignificance, in comparison to the great things which were ascribed to it by the intimation that the Messiah lived there! Nazareth is not mentioned in either the Old Testament or by Josephus; and inasmuch as it was a small and insignificant place, it appears that Nathanael must have thought, as the Wisemen seemingly did, that such a great man would live in a larger and more prominent place.

It should be noted that Matthew does not say that any particular prophet predicted that Jesus should be called a Nazarene; but rather "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene." No such prediction is found anywhere in the Old Testament, and it appears that the plural "prophets" implies that the general idea is taught in that portion of the Sacred Writings. McGarvey and Pendleton classify this as a fourth kind of prophecy, namely, "one where the very trend or general scope of Scripture is itself a prophecy." The marginal note in the text notes the possibility that Isa. 11: 1 may be the reference Matthew had in mind. If this is true, then the idea probably grows out of the fact that the Hebrew *netser* which means a shoot or branch, that is, something lowly; and when applied figuratively to a place or person, the implication would be small or insignificant.

## Questions for Discussion

What Is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

In what way is Jesus related to the people of the earth?  
Why is there so little said about the first thirty years of his life?  
What information do we have regarding the infancy of Jesus?  
Reconstruct the early life of Jesus according to the record which we have.

### The Golden Text

Why is so much interest and significance attached to the naming of a newly born child?  
Discuss this practice from the standpoint of pious Jews during Bible times.  
In what way was the naming of Jesus brought about and what does the word mean?

What is the meaning of salvation, as it is related to Jesus?

### The Flight into Egypt

What must have been the general feeling of Joseph and Mary just prior to the angel's visit?  
What great lesson should we learn from this?  
What does the Bible teach regarding angels in the lives of Christians today?  
What probable use did Joseph and Mary make of the gifts of the Wisemen?  
What may his people expect, when God tells them to do something?  
Who was the Herod of this lesson and how did he come to be the king of the Jews?  
What typical lesson is taught here?

### The Slaughter of the Innocents

Tell something of the general character of Herod.

Why would any human commit so many atrocious crimes?  
 Discuss the different kinds of prophecy which are found in the Old Testament.  
 In what sense was the weeping for the children a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy?  
 What lesson should we learn here regarding the inspiration of the Bible?

The Return from Egypt to Nazareth  
 Why does God apparently allow wicked people to have their own way at times?  
 How does this affect his own basic purposes?  
 Why can't wicked people see how they are often carrying out the will of God?

In what way did Herod meet his death?  
 Tell something of the successor to Herod in Judaea.  
 What further instruction did Joseph receive from the angel of the Lord?  
 What idea does one get regarding the home of Joseph and Mary, if he reads only the record which is given by Matthew?  
 Where was Nazareth located?  
 What has been the feeling of many regarding that little city?  
 In what sense did the prophets predict that Jesus would be called a "Nazarene"?  
 What further lesson do we learn here regarding the prophecy of the Old Testament?

## Lesson II—April 10, 1966

### THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

#### Lesson Text

Luke 2: 40-52

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Je-ru'-sa-lem at the feast of the passover.

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

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Je'-sus tarried behind in Je-ru'-sa-lem; and his parents knew it not;

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

45 And when they found him not, they returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem, seeking for him.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,

both hearing them, and asking them questions:

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

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

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

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

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'-a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

52 And Je'-sus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Golden Text.—*"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."* (Luke 2: 52.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 2: 8-20.

#### Daily Bible Readings

April 4. M. ....	Program for Jewish Children (Deut. 6: 1-9.)
April 5. T. ....	Jesus in Capernaum (Matt. 4: 12-22)
April 6. W. ....	Early Religious Activity (Luke 4: 15-22)
April 7. T. ....	A Synagogue Service (Matt. 12: 9-14)
April 8. F. ....	Home Training (2 Tim. 1: 3-14)
April 9. S. ....	Duties of Parents (Eph. 6: 1-9)
April 10. S. ....	Life in Nazareth (Luke 2: 40-51.)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 5 and 8.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and the temple.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his parents, and the teachers in the temple.

## Introduction

All who accept the Bible as an inspired revelation from God also accept the fact that Jesus Christ is the central figure in history. This implies, theoretically speaking, that all time *before* the birth of Jesus would be B. C., that is, before Christ; while all time *after* his birth is A. D., that is, *anno Domini*, the Latin for in the year of our Lord. But, practically speaking, the situation in which we find ourselves is not as simple as that. The reason for this unusual situation has been explained in the past but, in order to refresh our memory and for the benefit of those who may not have seen the explanation, the reason for the apparent contradiction is given again. The quotation which follows, in which the explanation is to be found, is from *The Concise Bible Dictionary*, which is included in some editions of the American Standard Version of the Bible, published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York City.

"The date of the birth of Jesus Christ, the central event in the world's history, was first fixed, in the sixth century A. D., by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman monk, in the year 753 after the building of Rome (A. U. C., *Anno urbis conditoe*). That this was not the exact year of our Lord's birth has been abundantly proved; but the use of the date all over Christendom is too firmly established to be changed. It is certain from St. Matthew that our Lord was born before the death of Herod the Great (spring of 750 A. U. C.). The nativity can scarcely be placed later than the autumn of 749 A. U. C. (B. C. 5-4). For the date December 25, there is no direct evidence whatever." (P. 26.) The date given here is the latest which reputable Bible students accept, and there are many who think that it would be more correct to say that Jesus was born as early as B. C. 7.

That which has just been stated is another way of saying that no one knows for certain the date of the birth of Jesus; and this may have been providentially designed by Je-

hovah himself. It is easy for us to see what the so-called Christian world has done with the supposed December 25 date of his birth; and it is not difficult to imagine what would happen, if the exact time of the Lord's birth had been divinely given. The death of Herod the Great is placed at B. C. 4, and since Jesus was born during Herod's lifetime, he could not have been born later than B.C. 4: but we do not know how much earlier than that date. It is not known just when Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Egypt, but we do know that they did not return to the land of Israel until after the death of Herod. It is enough therefore for us to know that Jesus was born "in the days of Herod the king" (Matt. 2: 1), and during the time that "Quirinius was governor of Syria" (Luke 2: 1,2).

It has long been alleged by some that Quirinius was governor of Syria and that in A. D. 6 (cf. Josephus, Ant. 18: 1, 1); but Ramsay has produced evidence to the effect that he was governor twice. The recent Revised edition of the *Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings, says that there is an existing inscription which all authorities agree refers to this Quirinius, and which states that he governed Syria twice. It is pointed out by Josephus and others that Quirinius was governor of that country in A. D. 6, and that following the removal of Archelaus from Judaea in that year, he was sent by the emperor "to sell the house of Archelaus." (Ant. 17: 13, 5.) The "first enrolment" referred to by Luke implies a "second" such enrolment. Bible students generally agree that the first enrolment took place in A. D. 6, and that it is referred to in Acts 5: 37. If such enrolments occurred at intervals of from ten to fourteen years, as suggested by Ramsay and Robertson, then the first one could easily have been around 8, 7 B. C., which would have made it possible for Christ to have been born anywhere from 7 to 4 B. C., during the days of Herod and the governorship of Quirinius.

## The Golden Text

The portion of the lesson is contained in the principal text, and it will be considered in its proper place.



## The Text Explained

### Childhood Growth and Development

(Luke 2: 40)

*And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

This is all the information we have regarding Jesus from his infancy until he was twelve years of age; but the words just quoted are full of meaning. The family of Joseph had been in Egypt in order to escape the wrath of Herod; but, at the direction of the angel, they had returned into the land of the Lord's people. However, they did not return to Jerusalem or Bethlehem, but came again to their own city of Nazareth, so that they might not be within the reach of Archelaus, as the angel had warned them. Galilee must have been a quiet country, and Nazareth evidently was a desirable place in which to rear the child Jesus. In contrasting Galilee with Judaea, Alfred Edersheim says,

"It was quite otherwise in Galilee. The smiling landscape of Lower Galilee invited the easy labor of the agriculturist. Even the highlands of Upper Galilee were not, like those of Judaea, sombre, lonely, enthusiasm-kindling, but gloriously grand, free, fresh, and bracing. A more beautiful country—hill, dale, and lake—could scarcely be imagined than Galilee Proper. It was here that Asher had 'dipped his foot in oil.' According to the Rabbis, it was easier to rear a forest of olive-trees

in Galilee than one child in Judaea. Corn grew in abundance; the wine, though not so plentiful as the oil, was rich and generous. Proverbially, all fruit grew in perfection, and altogether the cost of living was about one-fifth that in Judaea. And then, what a teeming, busy population! Making every allowance for exaggeration, we cannot wholly ignore the account of Josephus about the 240 towns and villages of Galilee, each with not less than 15,000 inhabitants. In the centres of industry all

the then known trades were busily carried on; the husbandman pursued his happy toil on genial soil, while by the Lake of Gennesaret, with its unrivaled beauty, its rich villages, and lovely retreats, the fisherman

plied his healthy avocation. By those waters, overarched by a deep blue sky, spangled with the brilliancy of innumerable stars, a man might feel constrained by nature itself to meditate and to pray; he would not be likely to indulge in a morbid fanaticism." *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. I, p. 224f.*)

The words of the text now under consideration describe the natural human growth of Jesus, and the corresponding favor of God which was upon him. It must be remembered that Jesus was both human and divine; and that his human part had to grow and develop, just like any other similar being. As the body grew in stature, the soul grew in wisdom; and the divine nature revealed its own wisdom in proportion to the measure of the bodily growth.

If any one should wonder why so little is said about Jesus during the first thirty years of his earthly life, the answer is probably to be found in the fact that it was the purpose of the inspired writers to give an account of his public ministry, rather than the facts of his private life. However, that which is said about his private life, enables us to understand and appreciate the manner in which godly parents can meet their responsibility of rearing a child whose immortal soul belongs to God. The few insights which we have of the early life of Jesus reveal him as being wise, pure, pleasing to God, and greatly skilled in the law of Moses. His example is one which all children should imitate; and any one who follows him will discover that he is increasing in favor with both God and man.

### At the Passover and in the Temple

(Luke 2: 41-51)

*And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaint-*

*tance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.*

The law of Moses was very explicit regarding the attendance at the three great annual feasts, which were ordained for the Jewish people. (See Ex. 23: 14-17; cf. Deut. 16: 1-17; Lev. 23: 1-44.) In addition to the names of the feasts which are given in the passages just cited, they were also called the passover, Pentecost (in the New Testament only, since Pentecost is the transliteration of the Greek term), and tabernacles. We are not told at what age the Jewish males were required to begin attending these feasts; but it appears that the rabbis held that a boy became a "son of the law" when he reached the age of twelve; and inasmuch as Luke mentions the fact that that was the age of Jesus when he went to this feast, it is possible that male children were expected to begin to attend these feasts at that age.

Alford notes that one of the great Jewish teachers, Hillel, taught that women were required to attend once each year; and it appears that the passover was the feast which was so designated. However, there is nothing in the law regarding this requirement; but we do know that women did attend some of these feasts. See 1 Sam. 1: 1-7; cf. Ex. 34: 23, 24.) It would be a wonderful thing if people today who profess to be the Lord's people were as faithful to attend the public assemblies of the saints, as the pious Jews were in their day and time. (Cf. Heb. 10: 25, 26; James 4: 17.)

The time required for celebrating the passover and the feast of unleavened bread, which was reckoned as a part of the over-all festival, was eight days—one day for killing and eating the passover lamb, and seven days for eating unleavened bread. (See Ex. 12: 1-20; Lev. 23: 5, 6.) After the requirements of this feast had been fulfilled, the people began their journey back home—going, as the text implies, in caravans. The record does not say, or even intimate, why Jesus remained behind; but from what he did, one might infer that he desired to take advantage of seeing and hearing the teachers of the law. Luke is the only one of the gospel writers who mentions all the

stages in the life of Christ, namely, a babe, 2: 12; a child, 2: 40; a boy, 2: 43; and a man, 3: 23.

Inasmuch as the people who were returning to their homes from the feast of the passover were travelling in caravans, it would be natural for Joseph and Mary to *suppose* that Jesus was in the company, probably with other young people near his age; and since he was a dutiful child, they had no reason to be apprehensive regarding him. But when the time arrived for them to set up camp for the night, they began to look for him. Only parents who have lost a child, even temporarily, can imagine how Joseph and Mary must have felt, when they failed to find Jesus. And when they were convinced that he was not where they supposed he was, they immediately returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

The incident now before us is another in the life of Christ which is rich in suggestions for practical application to us. People today can lose Christ in a manner which has far greater consequences, than those which were experienced by the parents of Jesus in the long-ago. And when we consider who it was that lost Jesus then, the question should become more real to us now. The historical Christ was lost by the one who was least expected to have such an experience; and in thinking of the matter, it is well to ask, Why did Mary lose Jesus?

This answer to this question did not lie in her failure to love and appreciate her son as she should have done; for it is doubtful if any mother ever loved her child more than Mary loved Jesus: for she knew that he was the Son of God, as well as her own offspring. And neither did Mary lose Jesus because she was an unworthy woman. She was evidently one of the best women of her day (cf. Luke 1: 28), and had just been to worship Jehovah. Again, Mary did not lose Jesus because she could not have known where he was at the time she missed him. She could have seen to that before they left Jerusalem, and could have known something of his whereabouts all along the way they were travelling.

The record simply says that they *supposed* him to be in the company.

that is, in the caravan; and that they went a day's journey before they discovered that their son was not among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. Thoughtful people do not usually rely upon supposition in the affairs of this life. For example, supposition has no place in deeds to property and other transactions which involve such matters. Business people want to be sure that their business dealings are in order and fully protected. But in matters of religion, which involve man's eternal destiny, it is more often true than not that otherwise intelligent people rely almost exclusively on their supposition. (Cf. Acts 17: 10-12.)

It is, in fact, safe to say that the majority of failures in religion can be traced directly to people's not making sure that they are right in their thinking, before they proceed with their action. The New Testament, for example, specifically condemns partyism (John 17: 20, 21; 1 Cor. 1: 10); but where is the denomination which does not *suppose* that it has Christ? Jesus himself says that if one enters the kingdom of heaven, he must do the will of God (Matt. 7: 21-23); but where is the average professed Christian who knows that he is not taking this proposition seriously that does not *suppose* that he has Christ? (Cf. James 2: 10; 4: 17.) Peter teaches the Lord's people to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3: 18); but where is the man who makes but little effort to meet this requirement that does not *suppose* that he has Christ?

Joseph and Mary realized that something important was at stake, and their first effort was to determine the facts in the case; and when they saw that the facts did not support their supposition, they took immediate steps to do something about it. They knew where they had last seen Jesus, and they promptly set out to return to that place, namely, Jerusalem; and there began the search for their lost son. This was the spirit which motivated the restorers of the ancient order of things, and the principle upon which they acted, in contrast with those who simply tried to reform existing conditions. The only possible way for any one to be sure that he is right

before God, is for him to go to the original source of the truth, that is, the New Testament; and any responsible person is capable of doing just that. (Cf. Matt. 13: 12; John 7: 17.) Supposition in matters of religion is never acceptable to God. (Cf. John 8:31,32.)

*And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*

Inasmuch as there appears to be some confusion regarding the Jewish method of counting time, this is probably a good place to make a few observations regarding it. The expressions "after three days" and "on the third day" were used interchangeably by the Hebrews, as may be seen by reading the following scriptures: Gen. 42: 17, 18; 2 Chron. 10: 5, 12; Esth. 4: 16; 5:1; Matt. 27: 63, 64. The entire twenty-four hour period (day and night) was expressed by a single term (day); and any part of it was made to stand for the whole. With these things in mind, it is very probable that Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem and sought for Jesus on the next day after they missed him, which would be the second day; and they apparently found him on the following or third day. It is possible, of course, that Joseph and Mary spent three full days in searching for Jesus, but that is hardly probable. The place in the temple where Jesus was found was probably one of the rooms which had been attached to the main building, and where the rabbis conducted their schools.

Instead of having one teacher for several students in those schools of the rabbis, it appears that there were several instructors before each group; and that they sat on semicircular benches, with their pupils before them. This arrangement placed the instructors partially around the

students, with the latter actually "sitting in the midst of the teachers." These teachers (doctors, margin; cf. Luke 5: 17; Acts 5: 34) were the professional instructors in the schools of the rabbis, and should not be confused with the scribes, who were also teachers, but primarily copyists. It does not appear that Jesus was attempting to "teach the teachers," but was simply listening to them, and asking them questions as he had the need and opportunity. That which Jesus was doing was entirely in keeping with the customs and practices of those schools, and the teachers must have asked Jesus questions, too; for "all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." Any believer in the Bible today would be happy if he could have stood where the parents of Jesus stood at the time of this lesson.

Joseph and Mary evidently stood as much in awe of the renowned teachers before whom Jesus sat, as peasants do of kings; and it was natural therefore for them to be astonished when they saw and heard him talking with them. The question which Mary asked Jesus implies that she and Joseph thought that he understood when they were to leave the city for the journey home, and that he was expected to depart when they did. In referring to Joseph as the "father" of Jesus, it should be remembered that the former was only the latter's *legal* father; but inasmuch as the true facts of the birth of Jesus were not generally known, both Luke and Mary spoke of Joseph as being the father of Jesus. (Cf. Luke 3: 32.) This is the last time that Joseph appears in the sacred history.

The words which Jesus spoke in reply to his mother are the first recorded sayings of his, and it is not out of place to observe his use of the term "must," which was to play such an important place in the public ministry which characterized the last three and one half years of his life

here upon the earth. (Cf. Luke 4: 43; 9: 22; John 9: 4; 10: 16; 20: 9; 4: 24.) The question which Jesus asked his parents was not a reproachful one; it came from the boldness and simplicity of early childhood. With the divine information which Joseph and Mary had concerning Jesus, they should have expected conduct such as they were beholding. However their reaction is but another example of the slowness of the human mind to comprehend the things of the Spirit. (Cf. Luke 9: 43b-45; 18: 31-34.) One has only to read Heb. 5: 11-14 in order to see that the same condition can characterize those who become the spiritual followers of the Lord.

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

Nazareth was north of Jerusalem, and we usually think of that direction as being "up"; but any one who will take the time and make the effort to examine the facts in the case, will see that all such geographical and topographical references in the Bible are correct. Mary already had many treasured sayings in her heart before Jesus could talk, such as those of the angel who told her that she would become his mother, the shepherds, the Wisemen, and the prophets; and she was then adding the sayings of Jesus himself.

### The Scope of Idea! Growth and Development

(Luke 2: 25)

*And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

In this brief statement, Luke speaks of the mental, physical, moral, and spiritual growth of Jesus. The marginal rendering of "stature" is *age*, which is also the meaning of the original. Although Jesus later lost the favor of men, he always had the approval of his Father. (Cf. John 5: 30; 8: 29; Matt. 17: 5.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and **persons**.

Introduction

What is the relationship of Jesus Christ to the history of the world?

In what way is time divided and what is

the generally accepted date of the Lord's birth?

What does the Bible itself say regarding this event?

How do we know that there are two "enrolments" mentioned in the New Testament?

What bearing does the mention of Herod and Quirinius have on the date of the birth of Jesus?

#### Childhood Growth and Development

Why is there such a little in the New Testament regarding the private life of Jesus?

Why did Joseph and his family go to Nazareth instead of going to Bethlehem or Jerusalem?

Where was Nazareth?

What can you say of the living conditions in Galilee?

What did Luke have in mind is speaking of the growth and development of Jesus?

What impression do we have of the early life of Christ?

#### At the Passover and in the Temple

What was the passover and its relation to the feast of unleavened bread?

What did the law of Moses require regarding attendance at the annual feasts of the Jews?

What do we know about women and children in this respect?

How long did the passover continue?

Who alone mentions all the stages in the life of Jesus and what were they?

Why didn't Joseph and Mary know that Jesus was not in the company on the way home?

What did they do when they discovered that he was not with their kinsfolk and acquaintances?

Why did Mary lose Jesus and what lesson is there in this for us?

What are some of the ways in which we may lose Christ?

Trace the steps which Joseph and Mary took in trying to find their lost son.

What great principle is suggested by their action?

Why are there so many failures in religion?

What is the only sure way to find Christ when he is lost?

How long were Joseph and Mary engaged in finding Jesus? Give reasons for your answer.

Give some idea of the situation in which they found him.

Why were the parents of Jesus astonished when they saw Jesus in the midst of the teachers?

What question did Mary address to her son and what was his reply?

What significant word did he use at that time?

Why didn't Joseph and Mary understand the meaning of that which Jesus spoke?

What important lesson do we learn here regarding the geography and topography of Palestine?

What great treasures did Mary keep in her heart?

#### The Scope of Ideal Growth and Development

In what four ways did Jesus grow and develop?

### Lesson III—April 17, 1966

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

### Lesson Text

Matt. 3: 1, 4-17

1 And in those days cometh John the Bap-tist, preaching in the wilderness of Ju-dae'-a, saying,

4 Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his rood was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out unto him Je-ru'-sa-lem, and all Ju-dae'-a, and all the region round about the Jordan;

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

7 But when he saw many of the Phar'-i-sees and Sad'-du-cees coming to his baptism, he said unto them,

Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our

father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

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

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

13 Then cometh Je'-sus from Gal'-i-lee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John would have hindered

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

15 But Je'-sus answering said unto him, Suffer *it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.

16 And Je'-sus, when he was bapt-

tized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him;

17 And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."* (Luke 3: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 1: 1-11.

### Daily Bible Readings

April 11. M.....	John, Forerunner of Christ (Matt. 3: 1-3)
April 12. T.....	John's Preparatory Work (Matt. 3: 4-12)
April 13. W.....	Baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-17)
April 14. T.....	The Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16)
April 15. F.....	Christ Our Example (1 Pet. 2: 21-24)
April 16. S.....	Some Rejected Baptism (Luke 7: 29-35)
April 17. S.....	God's Approval (Luke 3: 21, 22)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 23 and 26.

PLACE.—The wilderness of Judaea at the river Jordan.

PERSONS.—John the Baptist, some Pharisees and Sadducees, and Jesus.

### Introduction

The baptism of Jesus, as any thoughtful observer can easily see, was the dividing line between his private life and his public ministry. Or, to state the same thing in another way, when the time came for him to be separated unto the work which he came to do, he was baptized. Baptism therefore had a definite meaning in the life of Christ, and it also has a definite meaning in the life of every person who becomes a follower of Christ. This is what Jesus meant when he said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." When Nicodemus indicated that he did not understand that which Jesus was saying, the Lord continued, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (See John 3: 3-5.)

When the time came for the kingdom of Christ to be established, and people were ready to seek admission into it, they were taught to give heed to the gospel message, comply with its requirements, and they would be numbered among the Lord's people. One has only to read the Book of Acts in order to see that the final step which those who entered the kingdom, or, which is the same thing, the church, was baptism.

When Jesus gave the worldwide commission to his disciples, soon after his resurrection from the dead, he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 19, 20.) After Christ became king in fact, there is no evidence whatsoever to the effect that any person entered his kingdom who had not been baptized as he was commanded to do.

Christ set the example of obedience to that which God commanded, and he fully realized that he could not be pleasing to his Father without doing as he directed; and this is exactly the attitude which people today must manifest toward the Saviour. In commenting on Mark's record of the commission, Albert Barnes says, "It is worthy of remark that Jesus has made *baptism* of so much importance. He did not say, indeed, that a man *could not* be saved without baptism, but he has strongly implied that where this is neglected *knowing it to be a command of the Saviour*, it endangers the salvation of the soul. *Faith* and *baptism* are the beginnings of a Christian life: the one the

beginning of piety *in the soul*, the other of its manifestation *before men*, or of a *profession* of religion. Every man endangers his eternal interest by being ashamed of Christ before men. See Mar. viii 38."

In prefacing the great commission, as recorded by Matthew, Jesus said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (see Matt. 28: 18), which means, of course, that everything needful for the accomplishment of his mission to save the lost has been placed in his

hands (cf. Eph. 1: 22, 23). No one therefore can be pleasing to God who does not respect the authority of Christ (cf. John 5: 22, 23). But before any one can respect the authority of Christ, he must come under it; and the New Testament makes it plain that that is done by being baptized into him. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27; cf. 1 Cor. 10: 1-4.)

## The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is substantially the same as its parallel in the text, and it will be considered in its proper place.

## The Text Explained

### The Harbinger Introduced

(Matt. 3: 1)

*And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying,*

We learn from the third chapter of Luke that there were approximately thirty years between the second and third chapters of Matthew. But it appears that the contrast was not between the two periods in the life of Christ, that is, between the time of his infancy and the beginning of his public ministry; but between the time of this lesson and the time when Matthew wrote, which was probably more than thirty years later. (Cf. Luke 3: 1-23.) It appears that Matthew's purpose was simply to indicate the period of John's ministry with special reference to its beginning, without giving the exact date. Luke, however, as if filling in the gap left by the omission of Matthew, leaves no doubt as to the exact time of the harbinger's appearance as a public preacher.

It seems fair to conclude that the greater part, if indeed not all, of John's preaching was done in the wilderness of Judaea, a barren Wasteland extending along the western shore of the Dead Sea, and northward to include the lower part of the river Jordan. The expression "barren wasteland," however, should not be understood as meaning absolute barrenness, but rather a strip of country which was not appropriated by land-holders, and which therefore afforded free range for shepherds

and their flocks. It will be remembered that Moses kept the flocks of his father-in-law in the *wilderness* of Sinai. (See Ex. 3: 1; Acts 7: 29, 30.) But regardless of the barrenness of the country where John did his preaching, he had no trouble in getting an audience to hear his message.

There were apparently two reasons for calling John *the Baptist*, namely, (1) because he was the originator of the baptism which he administered (by the authority of God, of course) and which was administered by others under the same authority, and (2) because he baptized people. There is no record of any practice comparable to John's baptism in any previous age. The washings which were authorized by the law of Moses were not "baptisms" which were administered by others for the benefit of those who were being washed. The baptism of John was new, and it must have made a profound impression upon those who submitted themselves to it.

### John the Baptist at Work

(Matt. 3: 4-12)

*Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said*

unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

There were two principal reasons why John the Baptist attracted so much attention among the people of Judaea, namely, (1) his was the first voice to break the four hundred years of silence, since the days of Malachi; and (2) his manner of living, that is, his personal appearance and habits of sustenance. There is, of course, no detailed account of his physical features in the Bible; but we may be able to get some idea of how he must have looked to the people of his day from Hastings' description of him in *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*: "His hair was long and unkempt, and his features were tanned with the sun and the air of the desert. Probably they were thinned, too, by austerity; for his habitual food was of the simplest order, consisting only of locusts and wild honey. Locusts, dried and preserved, form still, at the present day, an article of food in the East, but only among the very poor; people in the least degree luxurious or scrupulous would not look at it. Wild honey, formed by hives of bees in the crevices of rocks or in rifted trees, abounds in the desert-places of Palestine, and may be gathered by anyone who wanders there.

"The raiment of the Baptist corresponded with his food, consisting of a garment of the very coarsest and cheapest cloth, made of camel's hair. The girdle of the Oriental is an article of clothing on which a great deal of taste and expense is

laid out, being frequently of fine material and gay coloring, with the added adornment of elaborate needlework; but the girdle with which John's garment was confined was no more than a rough band of leather. Everything, in short, about his external appearance denoted one who had reduced the claims of the body to the lowest possible terms, that he might devote himself entirely to the life of the spirit." John's personal habits therefore were entirely consistent with the work which he came to do. Nothing could have been more appropriate in the preacher of repentance, than that he himself should set the example of austere self-denial.

The remarkable appearance of John the Baptist, his ringing message, which he knew was authorized and supported by divine authority, and his moral intensity, made a profound impression upon the people of all that area. This was, as already indicated, the first divinely authorized message which had been addressed to the people of Israel in approximately four hundred years; but all during that long period of divine silence, they had not ceased to look for the fulfillment of the predictions which had been made by the prophets of the Old Testament period regarding the "coming One." John's proclamation concerning the coming kingdom appealed to the common Messianic hope of the chosen people; and it is not surprising that they took him as a prophet. (Cf. Matt. 21: 26; Luke 1: 76-79.)

John's preaching, for the most part at least, as has already been noted, was done in the wilderness and away from the urban areas; but he never lacked an audience. The attendance, of course, may have been small at first, but, if so, it steadily grew until it reached colossal dimensions. The term "all," in the passage now under consideration, is not to be understood in the sense of every individual in the areas named; but, according to a Hebrew idiom, it meant the greater part of the people. (Cf. Matt. 21: 23-26; Luke 7: 29, 30.) Some Bible students have estimated that, all told, a million people may have heard John preach.

We have no way of knowing how many thousands of people John baptized; and inasmuch as his baptism



was for the remission of sins (Mark 1: 4), it is virtually certain that they confessed their sins prior to their baptism (Matt. 3: 6.) Such a confession, that is, an acknowledgment that they were sinners, was essential to the repentance which John demanded; for no one will repent of a sin which he will not acknowledge or admit. And what was true in John's day is just as true today: people must be taught to confess their sins, repent of them, and seek the Lord's forgiveness. (Cf. 1 John 1: 8, 9; Acts 8: 20-24; Luke 15: 17-21.)

Everything which we are told about John the Baptist is unique. The ascetic nature of his life in the wilderness, the startling message with which he broke the prophetic silence of four hundred years, the incorruptible sincerity of his humility, out of which no popularity or allurements could bribe him, the fearless honesty of his words, and the tragic horror of his death—all combine to give him a peculiar and distinctive place in the annals of Sacred History. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and his dress and manner of living are not the only things which serve to remind us of that great prophet of old; but as great as Elijah was, he did not have the privilege of preparing the way for the coming Messiah. (Cf. Matt. 11: 7-11.)

John the Baptist stood between two great dispensations—the Jewish and the Christian; and there was much that characterized him which connected him with both ages, which, of course, shows that he did not belong exclusively to either. He had more knowledge of the nature, person, and work of Christ than any of his predecessors among the prophets of the Old Testament period, and "yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than ne." In fact, according to the Lord's evaluation of him, no one had arisen among them that are born of women who was greater than the Messianic harbinger; but the fact that this greatness would be surpassed by those who would be in the kingdom when it was established, shows how important the kingdom of Christ is. The greatness of John the Baptist also emphasizes the greatness of the Christ. (Cf. John 3: 27-30.)

John readily recognized the hypocrisy of some of the people who came to his baptism, that is, for his baptism (see marginal note); and he plainly told them that they were unacceptable to the Lord. The only way that any one can demonstrate that he has repented of his sins, is to show by his actions that he has done so. There is no better demonstration of this truth than that which was supplied by the prodigal son; for, as one can plainly see, Jesus was talking to the same class of impenitent sinners. The Pharisees and Sadducees considered that they were acceptable to the Lord, because they were the children of Abraham; but John made it plain to them, as Jesus did to Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees, that such was not a valid claim. (See John 3: 1-8.) Verse 10, "And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," emphasizes personal responsibility—a lesson which is as vital now as it was then.

The remark which John made regarding the baptism which he was administering, and the baptisms which Christ would administer, can be better understood in the light of the parallel statement in Luke. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; John answered, saying *unto them all*, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3: 15-17.)

That which John spoke was addressed unto all the people whom he baptized. "I indeed baptize *you* with water; ... he shall baptize *you* [the same *you*] in the Holy Spirit and in fire." If only the twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost and the house of Cornelius were baptized in the Holy Spirit, then Jesus did not do what John said he would do; for we know that more people were saved whom John had baptized than twelve. This should be enough to

show that John was not talking about literal baptisms in the Holy Spirit and in fire. John was a "baptizer," and he told his hearers that Jesus would also be a "baptizer"; but he made it plain that his baptism was literal, while those of Jesus would be figurative. The bestowal of the Holy Spirit indicates acceptance with God. (cf. Acts 5: 32), while baptism in fire is eternal punishment (cf. Mark 9: 42-48). The remark about thoroughly cleansing the threshing-floor plainly implies that every individual will be dealt with in one way or another, that is, each one will either be saved, indicated by the reception of the Holy Spirit, or suffer eternal punishment in a lake of fire and brimstone.

#### The Meaning and Purpose of Baptism Demonstrated (Matt. 3: 13-17)

*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

We learn from the parallel passage in Mark (1: 9) that Jesus came from his home in Nazareth to the place where John was baptizing, for the purpose of submitting to that ordinance himself. Jesus was not persuaded by John that he should be baptized, but left his home in Galilee for that express purpose, evidently arriving at that conclusion himself. Jehovah had commanded all Jews to submit to John's baptism (cf. Luke 7: 29, 30); and since Jesus was himself an Israelite, it was just as much his duty to be baptized of John, as it was that of his fellow Jews. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." The only possible way for any one to be regarded as right-

eous before the Lord, is for him to obey that which the Lord has commanded. (Cf. Psalm 119: 172.) Jesus, of course, did not have to be baptized for the remission of his sins, for he had no sins; but it was necessary for him to obey the command of God. (Cf. John 5: 30; 8: 29.)

The Scriptures do not say in so many words that Jesus went down into the water before John baptized him; but they do specifically state that he came up out of the water, following his baptism. It would, of course, be impossible for any one to come up out of water, without first going down into it; and this is one of the clear examples of the use of necessary inferences in arriving at the teaching of the Bible. Most Bible students are aware of the fact that there are three methods of arriving at the meaning of the Scriptures, namely, (1) an expressed statement of fact, (2) an approved example which shows how the people in question did that which they understood was required of them, and (3) a necessary inference. It is often advisable to consider the second and third methods in the light of each other; for it is obvious to any thoughtful student of the Bible that there are examples in the Scriptures, even of inspired men, which are not required of people today. Before any example is to be considered as being approved for people of all ages, it must be one which clearly shows that that is what the Lord expects of them.

Men who profess to believe the Bible have tried in every conceivable way to prove that Jesus was not immersed; but, if not, why did he go down into the water? Any method of "so-called baptism," such as pouring or sprinkling, does not require either the going down into water, or the coming up out of water, after the rite has been completed. In fact, it would be nothing short of ridiculous for any one who was having water poured or sprinkled upon him, to descend into water or to arise out of it. When any reference or indication regarding the mode or form of baptism is given in the New Testament, no thoughtful person is confused by it: for the meaning is unmistakably clear. (Cf. Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 21; 1 Pet. 3: 32.) Further-

more, immersion, sprinkling, and pouring, all represent different ideas, so distinct as to make it totally impossible to indicate either one of them by the other two words. (Cf. Lev. 14: 15, 16, where all three of the terms are found, both in Hebrew and English, that is, the original contains the Hebrew, and the translation has the English.)

Luke (3: 21, 22) says that Jesus was praying when he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit "in bodily form, as a dove," descending upon him; and we learn from John (1: 29-34) that John the Baptist also saw the Spirit coming upon and resting upon Christ; and that it was in this way that he knew that Jesus was the Christ. It is well to note

that voices from heaven acknowledged Jesus at his birth, baptism, transfiguration, and near the close of his earthly life (John 12: 28). When God spoke on the occasion now before us, he gave expression to two ideas, namely, (1) that Jesus is his Son, and (2) that he was pleased with him, both for what he had just done and as he was about to enter upon the work for which he had come to the earth. It was pointed out earlier in this lesson that the baptism of Jesus marked the dividing line between his private life and his public ministry; and it is well to note here that no one today can begin his work as a Christian before his baptism into Christ. (Cf. Gal. 3: 26, 27.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What place did baptism occupy in the life of Christ?

How do we know that it has a similar meaning for every follower of the Lord?

In what way did Jesus emphasize this truth?

What is the relation of baptism to the authority of the Lord? Give reason for your answer.

### The Harbinger Introduced

What does Matthew mean by saying "in those days cometh John the Baptist?"

Where did John do the greater part, if not all, of his preaching?

What kind of a place was the wilderness of Judaea?

Why was John called "the Baptist"?

How do we know that "baptism," as John administered it, was a new ordinance?

### John the Baptist at Work

Why did the Baptist attract so much attention among the people?

Give some idea of how he must have appeared to the people of his day.

What is said regarding his daily food?

What bearing therefore did his personal habits have upon the work he came to do?

What was the principal theme of John's preaching?

Why did his ringing message have such an appeal to the people?

What made John such a forceful preacher? Give reasons for your answer.

What is said regarding the sizes of the audiences which heard him?

How do you account for the fact that such crowds came to such an unlikely place?

What was the purpose of John's baptism?

In what way is confession of sins related to repentance and baptism?

Give a summary of the unique character of John the Baptist.

In what way was he related to Elijah and how did he exceed him?

How was John related to the Jewish and Christian dispensations?

What estimate did Jesus give of John?

How did John react to the hypocrisy of some who came to his baptism?

In what way did he emphasize personal responsibility?

What did he say regarding the thorough work which Christ came to do?

### The Meaning and Purpose of Baptism Demonstrated

Under what circumstances did Jesus go to John for baptism?

Why was it essential for Christ to submit to baptism?

How alone can one be regarded as righteous?

How do we know that Jesus went down into the water before his baptism?

What lesson do we learn here regarding Bible study?

When is an approved example binding upon people today?

Give reasons for believing that Jesus was immersed.

Under what circumstances did the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus?

What meaning did this have to John the Baptist?

Lesson IV—April 24, 1966

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Lesson Text

Matt. 4: 1-11

1 Then was Je'-sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.

3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:  
and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Je'-sus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Je'-sus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For *we have . . . one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” (Heb. 4: 15.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 2: 11-18.

Daily Bible Readings

April 18. M.	Matthew's Report (Matt. 4: 1-11)
April 19. T.	Luke's Report (Luke 4: 1-13)
April 20. W.	Christ Understands (Heb. 4: 12-16)
April 21. T.	Christ Intercedes (Luke 22: 31-38)
April 22. F.	Progress of Temptation (James 1: 12-18)
April 23. S.	Help for Those Tempted (Heb. 2: 11-18)
April 24. S.	Temptation Allowed (1 Pet. 1: 3-12)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 23 and 26.

PLACE.—The wilderness, the holy city, and an exceeding high mountain.

PERSONS.—The Spirit, Jesus, Satan, and the ministering angels.

Introduction

It appears from Mark's record of the gospel that the temptation of Jesus occurred immediately following his baptism. After giving the facts of the Lord's baptism and the events which took place in connection with it, Mark says, "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and angels ministered unto him." (Mark 1: 12, 13.) This is all that Mark says about our Lord's tempta-

tion, while John does not mention it at all. Matthew and Luke have substantially the same amount of information regarding it, but they differ regarding the order of the second and third temptations. There is, however, no disagreement between them concerning the nature and details of the temptations. Both Matthew's and Luke's account of these trials should be read before beginning the study of the Lord's ordeals on the occasion of this lesson.

The Bible does not tell us the ex-

act place in the wilderness where the temptation of Jesus took place, but Farrar says that tradition "fixes the scene of temptation at a mountain to the south of Jericho, which from this circumstance has received the name of Quarantania." The place is described as "naked and arid like a mountain of malediction," and as a region where the "owls dwell and the satyrs dance." Ledlow notes that in bold contrast with the Mount of Beatitudes which faces the beautiful and lovely lake of Galilee, the Mount of Temptation gazed at the "sluggish, bituminous waters of the Sodomitic Sea." The natural scenery and the general environment harmonized with the experiences which Jesus was destined to undergo.

Both the time and the place of the temptation, as well as the circumstances surrounding it, suggest the idea of loneliness. His baptism stood between his life as a private

citizen of Nazareth, and his public ministry as the Son of God; and now, ready to begin a work which would directly challenge the devil, the Spirit led him, or, as Mark has it, drove him, into direct conflict with the evil one. The place of this struggle, as we have already seen, was the wilderness where "he was with the wild beasts;" and the time was soon after he had left his home and friends in Galilee, and before he had chosen his disciples, who would also be his companions. The providence of God, as directed by the Spirit, brought Jesus into a situation where he could at once demonstrate his ability to withstand the devil and resist evil from any direction. The magnitude of the temptation of Jesus is seen from a statement by Luke, namely, "And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season." (Luke 4: 13; cf. 1 John 2: 16.)

### The Golden Text

*"For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like us we are, yet without sin."* This is one of the great statements of the New Testament, and it should be read in the light of its full context. "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." (Heb. 4: 14-16.)

Jesus is our Prophet, Priest, and King. He is our Prophet, because he speaks for God to us; he is our priest, because he stands between God and us and makes intercession for us; and he is our King, because

it is by his authority that we are able to live for God. But in the lesson now before us, we are mainly concerned with the priesthood of Christ. The very fact that Christ understands our needs and is sympathetic toward us, makes him an

effective priest on our behalf. That is the idea which the writer of Hebrews is emphasizing in the passage from which the golden text is taken. Christ tells us that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to him; and there is therefore no problem that can affect us which is too great for him to deal with. And so, in the words of Paul, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7; cf. John 14: 13, 14.)

The opportunity of approaching the throne of grace, through our great high priest, whenever any need arises, is not simply a theory to be believed, but an assurance to be put into practice. For example, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 13; cf. Heb. 13: 5, 6; James 1: 2-8.) "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his

own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8: 31-34.) The marginal reading has an interrogative in an-

swer to the question, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" "*Shall God that justifieth?*" And also in answer to the question, "Who is he that condemneth?" "*Shall Christ Jesus that died. . . ?*" Thus, instead of condemning us, Christ Jesus, our faithful high priest, is at God's right hand, making intercession for us! Thoughtful Christians never cease to give thanks to God for the priesthood of Christ.

## The Text Explained

### The Conditions Under Which Jesus Was Tempted

(Matt. 4: 1, 2)

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.*

The fact that Jesus was tempted by the devil shows that he was subject to temptation. In the words of the golden text, he was tempted in all points like as we are, but without sin. The New Testament, however, makes it plain that Jesus did not voluntarily go into temptation, but was providentially placed in a situation where he met it. Jesus was about to enter upon the great work he came into the world to do, and at the very outset, he was made aware of the greatness of the task which was before him. John says that "to this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8b); and it was God's will that his first step in that great undertaking was to test his own strength against that of Satan's.

If the nature of Jesus had been such that temptation could not appeal to him, then he would not have been in position to sympathize with fallen humanity; and if temptation had no meaning for Christ, then the proposals which Satan made to him likewise would have had no meaning for him. But we know that those things did appeal to our Lord, and the fact that he overcame the temptations which Satan placed before him, has made Christ a meaningful Saviour to us. Jesus, while here upon the earth, was both God and man, but we must understand that he triumphed over temptations as a man. If this had not been true,

then his example would have no meaning to us. Jesus, of course, was a perfect man, and his life had never been weakened by sin, as ours so often is; but he has taught us that whatever need we may have in order to overcome, we may apply for help at the throne of grace, with the assurance that our needs will be met.

Temptation implies moral excitement; for nothing can be a temptation to any one which does not first enter his soul, and touch certain susceptibilities there. This is why something may be a temptation to one person, and not to another; or which might be a temptation to a man at one point in his life, and not at another. Sin does not consist merely in the occurrence of a thought, but in its entertainment. James says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death." (James 1: 13-15.) Unregulated desire therefore always results in sin.

The devil is the arch enemy of mankind; and since his fall, he has had no fear, that is, reverence or respect, for either God or man. This is because all hope for his restoration is gone. In speaking of this hopeless condition of the evil one, Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, represents Satan as saying,

So farewell hope, and with hope  
farewell fear,  
Farewell remorse! All good to me  
is lost;  
Evil, be thou my good.

Satan's every desire, beginning with Eve in the garden of Eden, has been to turn man away from God; and he has left no stone unturned, in his effort to do just that. Peter exhorts, "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5: 8.) Satan, however, is a coward, and he can easily be defeated by the least of God's children, if he will but avail himself of God's help. "Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:

7.) "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 13.) This is the plan which Jesus followed, as we shall see further on in this study; and the same thing is expected of his people.

That which Jesus engaged in on the occasion now before us was no perfunctory ceremonial fast; instead, it was the result of communion with his Father in complete abstention from food, as in the case of Moses during a comparable period of time. (See Ex. 34: 28; cf. 1 Kings 19: 1-

8.) There probably was no food in the place where Jesus was, but that was not the reason for his fast; he did not desire food, because of his mental preoccupation. This is the true spirit of the fasting which is pleasing to the Lord. (Cf. Matt., 6: 16-18; 9: 14, 15.) The expression "he afterward hungered" implies that the period of fasting (forty days and forty nights) preceded the sense of hunger. (Cf. Luke 4: 2.) The fact that Jesus did not feel the Pangs of hunger until the close of the forty days, suggests the complete absorption in his communion with God. The concern with his soul was so entire that he did not notice the passing of time, or feel the lack of food, until he approached the point of almost total physical exhaustion.

The question as to the length of the time of the Lord's temptation should not be overlooked. Was he tempted during the entire forty days? or only at the end of them? The answer to these questions is not clearly stated by Matthew, but it seems fair to conclude from the rec-

ords of Mark and Luke that he was tempted during the entire period of the forty days. "And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan." (Mark 1: 13a.) "And he was led in the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil." (Luke 4: 1b, 2a.) These passages seem to imply continuous temptation during the entire period of the forty days; and that may account for Luke's further statement to the effect that the devil completed *every* temptation before he left the Lord. (Cf. Luke 4: 13.) It is fair to assume, however, that the first of the recorded temptations, and probably all three of them, did not come until the sense of hunger was experienced at the close of the forty days; or, to state the same thing in another way, it is very probable that the three recorded temptations came as a dramatic climax to the whole period of temptation.

The difference in the order of the temptations which are mentioned by Matthew and Luke may cause some to wonder if there is a contradiction in the divine record; but inasmuch as neither of those writers lays claim to a chronological arrangements of the facts in the life of Christ which he records, there is, of course, no contradiction between them. It is probably true that Luke presents a geographical arrangement, placing together the two trials which took place in the wilderness, and then the one on the temple; while Matthew probably presents them in the order of their actual occurrence, that is, in their chronological order.

### The Three Recorded Temptations (Matt. 4: 3-10)

*And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

J. W. McGarvey points out that before we can properly estimate the force of the temptation of Jesus, a standard must be erected by which it can be properly measured. James, as he goes on to say, tells us that all temptation results from the excite-

ment of some lust or desire (James 1: 14); and it follows then that the more intense the desire is which is aroused, all other things being equal, and the more cunningly the sinfulness of the forbidden act is disguised, the more easily one is induced to commit it. These facts should enable us to grasp something of the force of the temptation to which Satan subjected Christ, when the latter became aware of his need for physical food.

The word "if" which introduces the first diabolical suggestion which the tempter made to Jesus implied doubt, and brought to the forefront the question of the Lord's divinity. The devil, in fact, may have referred to the testimony of God, as recorded in Matt. 3: 17. At any rate, Satan appears to have challenged, if not actually questioned, the divine Sonship of Jesus, and called upon him to perform a miracle to demonstrate it. But if Jesus had responded to the devil's suggestion to turn the stones into bread, it would not have changed the challenger's mind, nor have accomplished any good; for that is not the way in which the moral world is governed. Furthermore, to supply his food miraculously could not have benefited humanity; for no one could follow such an example. It was necessary therefore that Jesus meet the temptation as a man, and not as God.

Jesus appealed to God's word in meeting this temptation, as indeed he did in all the recorded temptations (cf. Psalm 119: 11); and the scripture which he cited here was from Deut. 8: 3, and his purpose was this: As Jehovah led Israel in the wilderness and showed them that they were to depend upon him for their needs, rather than upon material food, so Jesus accepted the Spirit's leading in his situation. It would have demonstrated a lack of trust in God and his purpose concerning his Son, had the latter attempted to satisfy his hunger by supernatural means. Jesus was tempted as a man, and he quoted a passage from the divine record which was addressed to human beings. Men today have access to God's word, and they have a right to use it as a protection against sin. This is the

only way to overcome temptation successfully.

*Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,*

*He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and  
On their hands they shall bear thee up,  
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

*Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.*

It appears that Satan was permitted to have the person of Jesus at his disposal during these temptations, somewhat as he had been allowed to deal with Job at the time of his trials. (See Job 2: 6.) The "pinnacle" of the temple was a wing of that building (see marginal reading); but it is not known which wing it was, or anything of its height. Some have thought that the reference may have been to Herod's royal portico which overhung the Kedron valley, and looked down several hundred feet. But whatever wing it was, or its exact height, a leap from it would have been fatal without divine protection.

In addition to the scornful "if," which was likewise used in this instance, the tempter also proceeded to quote from the Scriptures himself, in his effort to get Jesus to yield to his suggestion. The force of the second temptation is seen in the appeal to the display spirit, and a dare to Jesus to test the Lord's promise for divine assistance. But if Christ had yielded, no one would have been benefited from that which he would have done; and neither could any one follow his example. The devil, in quoting the scripture which he used, not only left out a clause, but also misinterpreted the intent of the passage. Furthermore, if Satan believed the Bible and urged others to rely upon its promises, why didn't he do that himself? But instead, he tried to get Jesus to tempt Jehovah by trusting the angels to protect him in an unnecessary leap from the dizzy heights of the temple, an act which, if the Lord had yielded, would have been a demonstration of overconfidence in God.



*Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

In giving the setting for this temptation, Luke says that the devil showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." This wonderful panorama was undoubtedly partially mental and imaginative, since Satan caused all the kingdoms of the world to pass in review before Jesus in a moment of time. But this does not mean that all phases of the temptation were subjective, without the objective presence of the devil. Or, to state the matter in another way, this temptation was evidently both subjective and objective.

It has always been a debatable question as to whether or not Satan actually possessed the power which he claimed regarding the kingdoms; but it is a noticeable fact that Jesus did not deny the devil's hold on the world of men. Luke, in fact, quotes Satan as saying, "To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." From the practical point of view, Satan had at least usurped the authority of the kingdoms of the world; but Christ as God's Son had come into the world to redeem men from the evil one, and not to do

homage to the devil. Sin is a personal matter, and it can be destroyed only as men renounce it and accept the way of righteousness.

In the Lord's refusal to submit to this temptation, he relied on a statement of scripture found in Deut. 6:

13. It is interesting to observe that in all three of the Lord's answers to the intrigues of Satan, he relied on the Book of Deuteronomy, the very part of the Old Testament which modern critics have refused to accept as being that which inspired men have claimed for it, namely, a part of the writings of Moses. (Cf. Acts 3: 22, 23.) If Jesus had yielded to this temptation, it would have meant that he had no confidence in God.

### Respite and Encouragement (Matt. 4: 11)

*Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

The devil failed in his every effort to woo Christ away from God; and he left him for a season, as Luke has it. But it was not long until the attack was renewed in the persons of the Pharisees and others who were not faithful to God. The hunger of the Lord was relieved by the angels. (See again 1 Kings 19: 1-8; cf. Heb. 1: 13, 14.) In meeting the temptations of the devil, Jesus thoroughly tested his own character and his ability to meet and resist all temptations, with the God-given means which are available to all men for the same purpose. It should also be observed that the same temptations are common to the human race. (Cf. 1 John 2: 15-17.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

**What appears** to have been the time of the Lord's temptation and where did it take place?

How did he come to be tempted of the devil?

What do we know of the magnitude of the Lord's temptations?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text written?

What three important relations does Jesus sustain to his people?

What are the particular functions of a priest?

What exhortation and assurance do we have in this text?

### The Conditions Under Which Jesus Was Tempted

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be tempted?

How do we know that he was subject to temptation?

What meaning and encouragement does this have for us?

What is implied in any temptation and why aren't all people tempted alike?

Why is Satan so intent in trying to dishonor God and alienate man from him?

What warning and exhortation do we have in this respect?

Why did Jesus fast and how long was he tempted?

Discuss the difference in the order of the

temptations as given by Matthew and Luke.

### The Three Recorded Temptations

How can we judge as to the force of the temptations which come to any one?

What is implied in the devil's use of "if" in the first two temptations?

Why didn't Jesus change the stones into bread?

How did he overcome the temptation?

Where and what was the pinnacle of the temple?

Why did Satan quote scripture in the second temptation?

Why wouldn't Jesus yield to this temptation?

In what way did Satan present the third temptation?

What was evidently the nature of this temptation?

What would have been the force of the third temptation if the devil could not deliver the kingdoms of the world to Christ?

How did Satan come to have a hold on the kingdoms in question?

From what portion of the Bible did Jesus quote in combating temptation?

### Respite and Encouragement

When and under what circumstances did Satan leave Christ?

In what way was his hunger satisfied?

## Lesson V—May 1, 1966

# A SERMON OF JESUS

## Lesson Text

Matt. 5: 1-12

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And *why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Luke 6: 46.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 6: 41-49.

## Daily Bible Readings

April 25. M.....	Subjects of the Kingdom (Matt. 5: 1-12)
April 26. T.....	Rule for Living (Luke 6: 20-26)
April 27. W.....	Faithful Subjects (Psalm 1: 1-6)
April 28. T.....	Merciful Subjects (Luke 6: 36-38)
April 29. F.....	Righteous Subjects (Psalm 112: 1-10)
April 30. S.....	Loving Servants (Luke 6: 31-35)
May 1. S.....	The King of Glory (Psalm 24: 1-10)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 24 and 27, or shortly thereafter.

PLACE.—Possibly Mount Hattin, or some mountain in that vicinity.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

## Introduction

If one reads only the Book of Matthew, he will likely get the idea that the sermon which we are to consider in this lesson was preached soon after

the temptation of Jesus; but when we take all the gospel narratives into consideration, it will be seen that there is approximately one

year's difference in time between verses 11 and 12 of the fourth chapter of Matthew. Or, to say the same thing in another way, practically all the events of the first four chapters of John took place between the eleventh and twelfth verses of the fourth chapter of Matthew. The greater part of the first year of Christ's ministry took place in Judaea, and it is in Matt. 4: 12 that we have his reason for leaving Judaea and going into Galilee, while verse 13 tells of the change in his residence from Nazareth to Capernaum. The remaining part of Matt. 4, that is, verses 14-25 should be read in order to understand something of the beginning of the Lord's great Galilean ministry; for it apparently was early in that ministry that the Sermon on the Mount was delivered.

The discourse of Jesus which we are to consider at this time is generally regarded as the greatest statement of moral and religious principles to be found in the annals of history. Even those who are unwilling to follow Jesus as a religious leader are practically united in their acclaim of the sermon's loftiness and sublimity. There are few people who are willing to dispute the moral excellence of that which Jesus said on this occasion. It is true that there are some people who have not been favorably impressed with the Sermon on the Mount; but even those who have criticized it have, as a rule, registered their objections to it, not on the basis of its lack of nobility, but rather upon its impracticabil-

ity. Its very idealism, they contend, is its most damaging feature; for it is, according to their viewpoint, on a plane too exalted for everyday living.

There are even among so-called Christian people many who do not take the Sermon on the Mount seriously. They apparently feel that its demands are beyond their ability to reach; and as a result they "find themselves with a divided conscience, if not a besetting hypocrisy." Such people, however, have no fault to find with the sermon's teaching; they simply feel that it is beyond their reach, and more or less unrelated to the immediate problems of the average man in the workaday world.

But the teaching which is found in the sermon now before us has been put into practice, both by Jesus himself and by others who have endeavored to follow him. The Lord's message in the Sermon on the Mount therefore can be understood and put into practice by the Lord's followers; and it is valid and useful, apart from the historical, literary, and exegetical questions concerning it, which are receiving so much attention today, and which tend to overshadow the real significance and power of the Lord's teaching. The words of Jesus in this sermon set forth an ideal for human life, founded upon religious truth and moral principles, making it the highest standard of life yet conceived. It is, in fact, regarded as the ultimate standard to which mankind can and must attain.

## The Golden Text

*"And, why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* The words just quoted are from Luke's record of the Sermon on the Mount, or from the teaching of Jesus on a similar subject on another occasion, and they correspond to the Lord's statement in Matt. 7: 21-23, namely, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I nev-

er knew you: depart from me, he that work iniquity."

Christ, indeed, is Lord, but it will avail nothing to address him as such, while refusing or even failing to do that which he has commanded. Any one who understands the Bible, and believes that which is said regarding the plan for saving the lost, is aware of the fact that it is impossible for any person to be saved apart from the blood of Christ. That blood was shed when Christ died on the cross, and only those who are willing to heed that which he says, and do that which he commands, have the promise of the benefits of that blood. The writer of Hebrews says, "Though he

was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

The same writer who penned the statement just quoted, also said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, 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: 1-4.) People may profess to believe in Christ, and may even call him, Lord; but unless they are willing to obey that which he ordains, their profession will amount to nothing. There is no better illustration of the lesson now before us than the attitude and conduct of the five foolish virgins. (See Matt. 25: 1-13.) There is no point in ascribing to Christ the title of Lord, while withholding from him the service which goes with it. Empty titles are never acceptable to God.

## The Text Explained

### The Setting for the Sermon

(Matt. 5: 1, 2)

*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,*

The multitudes referred to in the passage just quoted were apparently those mentioned in the closing paragraph of chapter 4. "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their <sup>s3</sup>nagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judaea and from beyond the Jordan." (Matt. 4: 23-25.) Jesus had begun his great Galilean ministry, and crowds were coming to him from every side. The time, as already indicated, was about a year after his baptism and temptation.

The identity of the mountain upon which Jesus spoke is not definitely known, but many Bible students suppose that it was Mount Hattin, known also as the "Horns of Hattin," a saddle shaped twin-peak elevation overlooking the Sea of Galilee and the Plain of Genesaret, between Cana and Tiberias. It is sometimes referred to as the "Mount of Beatitudes" and has been called the "Si-

nai of the New Testament," since the fundamental principles of the two dispensations were announced from Sinai and the mountain on which Jesus spoke, respectively.

It will be noted that Jesus occupied a sitting posture when he spoke to the people, that being the common practice of Jewish teachers; and it was very appropriate on the occasion now before us, inasmuch as the instruction which he gave was didactic rather than oratorical. Paul, on the other hand, very often stood up to preach, especially if he was addressing people who were influenced by Greek culture. (Cf. Acts 13: 16.) If the intervening section of Matthew is read, that is, the verses between this lesson and the last one, it will be seen that Jesus had begun to assemble around him some disciples; and it appears from Luke 6: 12ff that he had just selected the twelve apostles from among them: If we take the section of the lesson we are now considering alone, it would seem that Jesus intended the teaching for his disciples only; but if we read Matt. 7: 28, 29, it will be seen that he taught the multitudes too. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

The Beginning and Progress  
of Faith  
(Matt. 5: 3-6)

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are they that mourn: for*

*they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

There are few parts of the New Testament which are better known than the Beatitudes which form the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. The eight statements of this part of the Lord's sermon do not refer to eight different classes of people—some poor, others meek, etc. Instead, they all describe the character of the citizen of the kingdom of heaven, in its psychological development. Or, to say the same thing in another way, each beatitude presents a specific idea; but when they are all considered as a whole, the result is the complete picture of the citizen of the kingdom which Christ came to establish. The beatitudes which Christ set forth are not mutually exclusive: they are all bound together in organic unity. Like so many facets of a diamond, they present the ideal life from eight different points of view, and indicate the several characteristics which make up the whole.

Furthermore, the beatitudes of this lesson reveal a beautiful order of arrangement, which may be listed under the following heads, namely, (1) the beginning of faith; (2) the progress of faith; (3) the perfection of faith; and (4) the trial of faith. The first and the last of the beatitudes mention the kingdom of heaven, while the other six describe its nature and its blessings. (Cf. Rom. 14: 17.) Thus, according to Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is the beginning and the end of blessedness; and it includes all spiritual blessings, as may be seen by reading Eph. 1: 3. It is also well to observe that each individual beatitude consists of three parts, namely, (1) the *ascription* of blessedness; (2) the *description* of character; and (3) the *description* of blessedness.

The term "blessed" means *happy*, and that is the rendering in some versions. Robertson points out that Jesus takes the word "happy" and puts it in this rich environment; and it is a pity that we have not kept the word on the same high plane; for it is only there that real and enduring happiness can be found. Happiness is one of the words which have been

transformed and ennobled by New Testament usage; and it has become the expressed symbol of that state which **is** identified with pure character. Those who recognize this significance are also aware that sin is the fountainhead of all misery, and that holiness is the final and effectual cure for every woe. The character of those people who undergo the change which is necessary for membership in the kingdom of heaven, together with the blessedness or happiness which is theirs in this new relationship, **is** described in the text now under consideration; and it is in this part of his sermon that Jesus furnishes his people with a universal ideal and a universal criterion. That which he says pertains to the fundamental nature of a person and concerns all men equally, that is, all men who submit themselves to his teaching.

The first three of the beatitudes of this lesson may be described as the beginning of faith, that is, they describe the experience of a person who turns from darkness to light; and it marks the beginning of that life which, if consistently lived, will ultimately lead to a home with God. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* When we say that a man is poor in purse, we mean that he has no money or material resources; and, by the same token, when a man is poor in spirit, it must mean that he is without spiritual strength or resources. Such a person is utterly destitute of any ability to make himself better, and must therefore depend upon God and his mercy, if he is ever saved. A man in this condition sees himself as he really is in God's sight; and he is willing to accept spiritual help from the Lord on his own terms. (Cf. Isa. 66: 2; Luke 15: 17-19.) The kingdom of heaven belongs to a person like this, because he will seek it, that is, he will ask for and will meet the conditions of entrance into and membership in the kingdom. (See John 3: 3-5; Acts 2: 37, 38; Col. 1: 13; cf. Acts 18: 9, 10.)

*"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."* The reference here is not to all mourners, but to those who mourn with regard to sin, that is, their sinful condition; or, to state the same thing in another way, their sorrow is on account of

sin, rather than because of the consequences of sin. This was the spirit of the prodigal son; and it was for that reason that he did not ask for his former place in the home. The saddest thing in the world is not the soul that sorrows, but one who is so dull that he is incapable of feeling grief at all—a heart so selfish that nothing but that which brings comfort and ease moves it to a twinge of feeling. The story is told of a man who accidentally spilled some boiling water on his foot, and felt no pain; and it was not until then that he discovered, to his dismay, that he was a leper. The original word for “mourn” indicates a sorrow which begins in the heart, takes possession of the whole person, and is outwardly manifested—too deep for concealment. The word for “comforted” carries with it the idea of bracing, rather than soothing; and it denotes strength which comes from companionship with the Lord, or “fortitude in alliance with someone.”

*“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”* The primary meaning of the term “meek” is mild and gentle; and it carries with it the idea of gentleness of strength, or patience in the reception of injuries, while believing that God will vindicate. (Cf. Rom. 12: 17-21.) As used in the passage now before us, it apparently refers to that humility of spirit which results from the renunciation of self-righteousness and the confession of sin. Such people will enjoy the earth more fully here; and if 2 Pet. 3: 8-13 is to be understood literally, it shall be a part of their final inheritance.

The fourth beatitude has reference to the progress of faith: *“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”* These words picture to us a man who longs for that which God has to offer, just as one who is starving for food and parched with thirst longs for that which will satisfy his natural desire for food and drink for the body. Righteousness, as used here, refers to a state or condition which is acceptable to God, or which he approves. (Cf. Rom. 1: 16, 17; 10: 1-4.) Such righteousness involves purity of life, and correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting. (Cf. Deut. 6: 25.)

## The Perfection and Trial of Faith

(Matt. 5: 7-12)

*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.*

The first three beatitudes of this section of the lesson text set forth the perfection of faith. *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”* Mercy has two aspects, namely, (1) the alleviation of suffering, and (2) the forgiveness of wrongs, or the proper attitude toward the sinner. Jesus is not discussing the question of sin, as such; his emphasis, rather, is on the sinner. We are too often inclined to import into our attitude toward the sinner the hatred which we feel for his sin. The interest of Christ is always in the man—how he can be freed from sin; and that should also be our attitude toward the question. The manifestation of mercy tends to elicit mercy from others—both from God and man. (Cf. James 2: 13; Psalm 18: 25.) And so in the words which Shakespeare put into the mouths of some of the characters in *The Merchant of Venice*, as they endeavored to dissuade the Jewish money-lender from demanding the pound of flesh which had been pledged to secure a loan from him, and which had not been repaid: “How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?” And, “Therefore Jew, though justice be thy plea, consider this, that, in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.”

*“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”* The pure in heart are those who are free from evil desires and purposes. This condition is possible only by the absolute enthronement of God in our

hearts. This beatitude has been called *"The Beatific Vision,"* and it can come only to those whose hearts are pure; for no other can see the King. Those whose hearts are pure can see him by faith here; and they shall see him face to face in heaven.

Face to face shall I behold him.  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all his glory,  
I shall see him by and by!

*"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God"* The reference here is not merely to peaceable men, but rather to the active promoters of peace. Such people not only keep the peace themselves; they also seek to bring men into harmony with each other, and with God. God is a God of peace; and those who are like him in this respect shall be called his sons. (Read James 3: 13-18.)

The last, that is, the eighth, beatitude in the series now under consideration may be described as the trial of faith. *"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."*

It was pointed out earlier in this lesson that the eight beatitudes

which are set forth by Jesus in his sermon on the mount reveal a beautiful order of arrangement, namely, the beginning, progress, perfection and trial of faith. The trial of faith is never pleasant, of course, from the human point of view; but that is the only way by which the strength of one faith can be made known. And inasmuch as only the faithful can please God (cf. Heb. 11: 6), it is to our advantage that our faith be subjected to an adequate test. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." (James 1: 2-4.) But we have the blessed assurance that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10: 13.) The trial of faith which Jesus mentions manifests itself in three ways, namely, (1) reproach; (2) persecute; and (3) say all manner of evil falsely, for Christ's sake. The Lord's people who receive this treatment have done no wrong, but are suffering as Christians, for the sake of their Lord (cf. Matt. 10: 24, 25); but it is easier to rejoice in the midst of such treatment, when we look at Christ and the reward. (Cf. Heb. 12: 2.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

At approximately what time in the ministry of Christ was this sermon delivered?

Give reasons for your answer.  
What can you say regarding the nature and contents of the discourse?

Why do some people object to the teaching contained in it?

What reasons can you give for saying that the sermon can be put into practice today?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

What did Jesus mean by the question?

In what way only can Christ be a blessing to the people of the earth?

What, then, should every professed follower of Christ always strive to do?

What illustration of the practice of call-

ing him, Lord, Lord, while not doing what he commands, did Jesus give?

### The Setting for the Sermon

What multitudes apparently were present when Christ spoke on the mountain?

Which mountain was it and where was it located?

What posture did Jesus occupy while teaching and why?

For whom was the teaching intended?

Give reason for your answer.

### The Beginning and Progress of Faith

What apparently was the Lord's purpose in his use of the beatitudes?

How do we know that he was not speaking of different classes of people?

What peculiar order of arrangement do the beatitudes reveal?

What emphasis did Jesus place upon the kingdom of heaven?

Discuss the beatitudes from the standpoint of their contents.

In what sense did Jesus use the term "blessed"?

Where alone is real and enduring happiness to be found?

In what way are the first three beatitudes related to the over-all lesson of the text?

Who are the "poor" and in what sense is the kingdom of heaven theirs?

What "mourners" did Jesus refer to and what promise is made to them?

Who are the "meek" and in what sense will they inherit the earth?

What is the place and purpose of the fourth beatitude?

How do people hunger and thirst after righteousness and in what sense are they filled?

What is the meaning of the term "righteousness"?

### The Perfection and Trial of Faith

How are the fifth, sixth, and seventh beatitudes related to the over-all picture?

What is the meaning of "merciful" and how shall the merciful obtain mercy?

Who are the "pure in heart" and in what sense shall they see God?

Who are the "peacemakers" and in what sense are they such?

Why are the peacemakers called the sons of God?

What is the place and purpose of the eighth beatitude?

Why is it essential that our faith be tried?

What gracious promise has the Lord made in this connection?

In what three ways is the trial of faith in this lesson manifested?

## Lesson VI—May 8, 1966

# A MIRACLE OF JESUS

## Lesson Text

### Luke 7: 2-10

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death.

3 And when he heard concerning Je'-sus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant.

4 And they, when they came to Je'-sus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him;

5 For he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue.

6 And Je'-sus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 And when Je'-sus heard these things, he marvelled at him and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Is'-ra-el.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Jesus of Nazareth . . . went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10: 38.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Luke 7: 11-17.

## Daily Bible Readings

May 2. M.....	Faith's Answer (Luke 7: 2-10)
May 3. T.....	Dead Restored to Life (Luke 7: 11-17)
May 4. W.....	"Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee" (Luke 7: 36-50)
May 5. T.....	God's Kingdom First (Matt. 6: 26-34)
May 6. F.....	Serving in the Kingdom (Luke 5: 1-11)
May 7. S.....	True Treasure (Matt. 6: 19-25)
May 8. S.....	God's Care (Psalm 40: 1-8)

**TIME.**—Probably between A.D. 24 and 27, or shortly thereafter.

**PLACE.**—Capernaum.

**PERSONS.**—Jesus, the centurion, and others.



## Introduction

If Luke 6: 20-49 is parallel with Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount, then the incident which we are to consider at this time took place soon after Jesus had finished that discourse. "After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum." (Luke 7: 1.) The closing words of the Lord's sermon are contained in the preceding paragraph of chapter 6: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6: 46-49.)

The twelve apostles of Christ were selected from a group of his disciples just prior to his sermon on the mount, as may be seen by reading Luke 6: 12ff, which apparently was early in his Galilean ministry; and the entire period from that time to the transfiguration, which some regard as the climax of his ministry, is covered by Luke in less than four chapters—Luke 6: 12-9: 36. If one will read the passage just referred to, he will see that Luke selected a series of the Lord's words and deeds

which do not make a connected narrative, but which do illustrate the character of his ministry. It appears that Luke was primarily interested in miracles of healing and parables which enabled the Lord's hearers to understand something of the nature of his kingdom. This is another good place to emphasize the fact that the writers of the gospel narratives did not always strive to be chronological in their records. Their purpose, rather, was to emphasize the character of Jesus; and they illustrated their efforts by his words and deeds, regardless of the time of their occurrence.

It was pointed out in a previous lesson that Jesus, near the beginning of his Galilean ministry, moved his residence from Nazareth, where he had lived most of the first thirty years of his life, to Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the sea of Galilee. (See Matt. 4: 12-17.) Although not mentioned as such in the Old Testament, Capernaum was an important city during the time of Christ. It also appears that several of the Lord's disciples lived there. (See Mark 1: 21-31; Matt. 9: 1-9.) The Romans maintained a tax-collector's office there, and the presence of a Roman centurion indicates that they also had a military garrison in or near the city. Capernaum was greatly favored during the Lord's ministry, but he eventually condemned the city for its lack of faith. (Cf. Matt. 11: 23, 24.) This should certainly make all of us think seriously of our opportunities while in the land of the living.

## The Golden Text

*"Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him"* These words are taken from Peter's discourse in the house of Cornelius. In addition to the setting for the golden text, Luke's record here will give us some idea of the manner in which Jesus and the apostles preached. (Read Acts 10: 34-43.) There are some important points which we should observe, as we read Peter's words on the occasion now before us. For example, God endowed his Son with his Spirit, that is, with the Holy

Spirit; and it was by the Spirit that Jesus was enabled to do his mighty works. God also was with Christ; for on one could do that which Jesus did, without God's approval. (Cf. John 3: 1, 2.) Jehovah had personified his Word and his Spirit, and they were to be his agents in the great effort of bringing the lost back to him. And, finally, Jesus went about doing good. Regardless of what Jesus did, it was always for the good of those who were thereby affected.

The expression he "went about doing good" is perhaps the best sum-

mary of the ministry of Christ as a whole. No one can read the gospel narratives without realizing that this was historically true. There was never a day in which he was not found helping some one to a better life. He often went without food and rest, in order to minister to the needs of others. For example, "And he cometh into a house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself." (Mark 3: 19b-21.) On his way from Judaea to Galilee, Jesus was weary and stopped by Jacob's well for rest, while his disciples went into the city to buy some food. While they were gone, the woman of Samaria came, and the Lord made a believer out of her. She went into the city, spread the news of him; and before he could eat the multitudes were coming to him. The disciples, evidently disturbed at the turn of events, implored him to eat. "But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not. The disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man

brought him aught to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (See John 4: 1-34.)

When we consider the words of Paul to the effect that the church is the body of Christ, and the "*fulness*" of him that filleth all in all," it does not appear out of place to say that the church is actually an extension of the ministry of Christ. (See Eph. 1: 22, 23.) Or, to say the same thing in another way, the church is under obligation to continue the good work which Jesus did while he was here upon the earth. This, of course, does not mean that the church can perform the miraculous, but it can do the kind of good which he did while he was here upon the earth. It is always in order to help people physically, when they need help and when such assistance will actually be a blessing to them; but we should never lose sight of the fact that the ultimate aim of Jesus, and the same should be true of the church, was to bless them spiritually and bring them to God.

## The Text Explained

### The Commendation of the Centurion by His Neighbors

(Luke 7: 2-6a)

*And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant. And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue. And Jesus went with them.*

The term "centurion" literally meant the captain or commander of a hundred soldiers, but, as used by the Romans, the word came to mean the captain or commander of a *company* of soldiers which might or might not have been exactly a hundred men—in fact, more often not a hundred. It is interesting to note that when we meet with a centurion in the New Testament, he is usually a man who wins our esteem and admiration. (Cf. Matt. 27: 54;

Acts 10: 1-4; 27: 1ff.) The case of the centurion of this lesson is a good example of the different estimates which may very naturally be expressed, and correctly so, by the various people who know him.

The first estimate of the centurion of this lesson which the text sets forth is that of the people among whom he lived; and who evidently knew him well. They were able to observe his daily life, and therefore had sufficient opportunities to form a judgment of him, which had the support of facts. And in order to appreciate their opinion of him, we should try to visualize the circumstances under which he and his neighbors had to live. The centurion was an alien, that is, he was not a Jew, and that, of course, put him in the position of being closely watched by the citizens of the community in which they lived. The Jews greatly disliked any alien power which was exercised over them, and it is fair to assume that they at first, at least, looked with suspicion upon the centurion who had been sent to their city for the express purpose of pre-

serving order among the people there. We do not know how long the centurion had been there at the time of this lesson; but it had evidently been long enough for the Jews to decide that he was a man whom they could trust.

Not only did the centurion live an upright life among the people of Capernaum, but he saw his opportunity to help them in a material way. He probably observed their devotion to their religion, and decided to build a place of worship for them. We are not told that they could not afford the cost of building it themselves, but are simply allowed to observe the centurion's devotion to and generosity for the people who were under his authority. The people who commended the centurion therefore were able to do so because they had seen him in both public and private life, on guard and off; and their judgment was based, not on what he professed to be, but on what his moral and religious life led him to do.

There are many people today who wonder why their neighbors do not have a better opinion of them, but before condemning them for their lack of appreciation for them, it might be well to take a look at themselves. What kind of life have they lived in the community? and what have they done to cause people to look upon them with favor? It is not always necessary for people to be able to benefit others materially, in order to have their good will; but it is essential that they demonstrate the genuineness of their character, so that they can be seen for what they are, rather than trying to make it appear that they are something which they are not. Some one has expressed the matter in these words:

If you seek for kindness, be kind;

If you seek for truthfulness, be true:

What you seek in others you find;

For your life is a reflection of you.

### **The Manner in Which the Centurion Felt about Himself**

(Luke 7: 6b-8)

*And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come*

*under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

It should be observed that the centurion about whom we are studying today had friends who were willing to go to his assistance. When he needed some to go to Jesus for him, with the request that he come and save his servant, the elders of the Jews were willing to go and to state the case for him in a persuasive manner. And when he needed others to explain to Jesus his own unworthiness, there were those who are willing to do that. In other words, the centurion himself had demonstrated the meaning of friendliness in the city of Capernaum, and there were others who were willing to reciprocate.

There is every reason for thinking that the centurion was sincere regarding the feeling which he had for himself; and it is in order to ask, Why did the estimate which he formed of himself differ so radically from that which was expressed by his neighbors? The answer is probably found in the fact that he knew more about himself than they did. It is a truth, worthy of emphasis, that the better a man is, the loftier his ideals will become. This is true in almost any realm of one's experience. For example, the more one learns intellectually, the more he realizes his own ignorance; and the closer one lives to Christ, the more he gazes on his spotless purity, and the more he sees in him to imitate, the more sensitive he becomes to his own imperfections. One of the best commentaries on the way in which a person should feel with reference to himself before the Lord, may be found in a statement which Paul made to the Philippian. After listing some of his attainments while endeavoring to keep the law of Moses, he said:

"Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my

Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3: 7-14.) Any one who assumes the attitude which was expressed by Paul, and who follows his example, will never think more highly of himself than ye ought to think. (Cf. Rom. 12: 2.)

### The Lord's Estimate of the Centurion

(Luke 7: 9, 10)

*And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.*

The New Testament records only two instances in which Jesus is said to have marvelled, Mark 6: 6 and Luke 7: 9. The reference in Matt. 8: 10 is the same as that in Luke 7: 9. When the Scriptures say that Jesus marvelled, it is natural for us to ask, Just what did that signify? or, more correctly, why did the Lord marvel? This question can best be answered when we consider the metaphor which the centurion used, when he sent his message, asking that Christ not come into his house. He drew a comparison between himself and Christ, regarding the power and authority which each one of them possessed. The centurion was an officer in the Roman army, and as

such he was a man who could exercise authority, and that authority, so far as those under his command were concerned, was absolute. Any order which he gave would be promptly executed.

The centurion, in saying the things just referred to, meant this: Jesus was a man with authority, and that whatever he desired would be done; and it was for that reason that he besought the Lord to speak the word only, and his will would be accomplished. If the Roman centurion, who both had authority and was under authority, could have his command obeyed, then how much more would the word of Jesus be carried out! The centurion knew that the word of Jesus was sufficient; because he knew that his word was all that was needed in the realm where his authority was exercised. And when Jesus said that he had not found so great faith, no, not even in Israel, he was but saying that the Roman soldier, a man who was alien to the Jewish economy, had seen a truth which the leaders of the Jewish people, and even the disciples of Christ, had so far failed to recognize.

The faith which the centurion manifested did not come to him overnight. It would be interesting to observe its growth and development, if we knew more about the man; but since that is not possible, we can say with assurance that it did have a firm foundation, because such good fruit can only come from a tree which is sound and wholesome. It is no doubt true that the centurion, like his fellow soldier Cornelius, took advantage of his opportunity and studied and practiced the things which are found in the Old Testament, and thereby came to an understanding regarding the Messiah which raised him above all of his contemporaries among the Hebrew people. And because of his great faith, Jesus granted his request and saved the life of his beloved servant; for we are told that "they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole."

The lesson which we learn from the centurion is one of the most important that can come to us, that is, the recognition of the authority and power of Christ. Once we recognize the authority of Christ, we are then in position to believe that nothing is

too great for him to do. That is the teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments, as may be seen from many parts of the Bible. For example, when Moses was delivering the addresses which make up the Book of Deuteronomy, he cautioned the people of Israel not to distrust the power of Jehovah which would be needed to enable them to occupy the land of Canaan, as may be seen from the following passage:

"If thou shalt say in thy heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? thou shalt not be afraid of them: thou shalt well remember what Jehovah thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; the great trials which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, whereby Jehovah thy God brought thee out: so shall Jehovah thy God do unto all the peoples of whom thou art afraid. Moreover Jehovah thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves, perish from before thee. Thou shalt not be affrighted at them; for Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a great and a terrible." (Deut. 7: 17-21.)

But every Bible reader knows the sad story of the Israelites. They were never faithful to Jehovah for very long at a time. They did not trust his might, nor did they rely upon his promise. The Lord repeatedly told the people that he would bless them beyond measure, if they would only rely upon him and do as he commanded them; but they chose the way of the heathen people, rather than the good way of God. Some thirty-eight years earlier, when the host of Israel had reached the southern boundary of the promised land, and were told to go in and possess the country, they refused to obey, because of their unbelief; notwithstanding the fact that God told them that he would drive out the inhabitants, and give the land to his peo-

ple. The writer of Hebrews refers to this incident in the following passage:

"For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3: 16-19.) The writer then goes on to exhort the Hebrew brethren, "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard." (Heb. 4: 1, 2.)

Passages like the ones just quoted could be multiplied; but the ones already given are sufficient to *show* the consequences of failing to respect the authority and the word of the Lord. Jesus went about teaching the people, and healing their sick, as well as performing other miracles; so that the people would know that he was the promised Messiah, and could have faith in him. But here was an uncircumcised Gentile who recognized the authority of Christ *before* the miracle was performed, and was willing to rely upon his word for the blessing which he so greatly desired. The faith of that centurion put the people of Israel to shame; and if we could only see ourselves as we really are, we too would be greatly humiliated because of our little faith. How many of us are willing to say, "Speak, Lord, and we will hear; command, and we will obey," in even the ordinary things which characterize our everyday living?

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

At what time in the ministry of Jesus did the miracle of this lesson take place?

Give reasons for your answer.

What was Luke's apparent purpose in writing this section of his narrative?

What lesson do we learn here regarding the question of chronology?

What change had the Lord made in the place of his residence?

Give some pertinent facts regarding the city of Capernaum.

### The Golden Text

When and under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken? What are some of the prominent points which Peter emphasized in that address? Tell something of the manner in which Jesus went about doing good. What obligation does the church have in this respect? Show some ways in which the church can be a blessing to the people about them.

### The Commendation of the Centurion by His Neighbors

What is the meaning of the term "centurion?" What impression did the centurions of the New Testament usually make? Cite examples. How did the Jewish neighbors of the man of this lesson feel toward him? In what way did the centurion win his way into the affections of the Jewish people? What important lesson should we learn from this? What good motto in this respect would be good for us to learn?

### The Manner in Which the Centurion Felt about Himself

Show in what way the centurion was blessed by friends. What feeling did the centurion express regarding himself?

Why did his estimate of himself differ so radically from that of the Jewish elders? What great lesson do we learn from Paul regarding self-abasement? Why is this lesson so important to us?

### The Lord's Estimate of the Centurion

On what occasions did Jesus marvel? What is the meaning of that term and why did the Lord express that feeling? How did the centurion go about demonstrating his great faith in Jesus? Why were the Jewish people unable to recognize that point? Why did the Roman officer think that the word of Christ was sufficient for the miracle? How had such faith been developed in the heart of the centurion? What lesson should we learn from this regarding our opportunities? How do we know that the Lord performed the requested miracle? Why is it so important for us to recognize the authority of the Lord? Why can we have so much confidence in the final outcome of things for our good, if we recognize and acknowledge the authority of God? Cite some lessons which have been recorded for us in the Bible. At what time in the record of this lesson did the centurion recognize the authority of Christ?

## Lesson VII—May 15, 1966

# AN INVITATION OF JESUS

### Lesson Text

Matt. 11: 20-30

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

21 Woe unto thee, Cho-ra'-zin! woe unto thee, Beth-sa'-i-da! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Si'-don which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Si'-d5n in the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Ca-per'-na-um, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Ha'-des: for if the mighty works had been done in Sod'-om which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sod'-om in the day of judgment than for thee.

25 At that season Je'-sus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes:

26 Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.

27 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

**Golden Text.**—*"He that will, let him take the water of life freely."* (Rev. 2: 17.)

**Devotional Reading.**—**Matt. 11: 1-15.**

## Daily Bible Readings

May 9. M.....	Jehovah's Great Invitation (Isa. 55: 1-3)
May 10. T.....	God's Invitation to Israel (Ezek. 18: 25-32)
May 11. W.....	Moses' Invitation to Hobab (Num. 10: 29-36)
May 12. T.....	Cyrus' Invitation to the Jews (Ezra 1: 1-4)
May 13. F.....	The Hungry Invited (John 6: 32-51)
May 14. S.....	The Thirsty Invited (John 7: 37-44)
May 15. S.....	The Water of Life (Rev. 21: 1-6)

**TIME.**—Probably between A.D. 25 and 28.

**PLACE.**—Somewhere in Galilee.

**PERSONS.**—Jesus and the multitudes.

## Introduction

The entire lesson text for today presents a contrast between those who reject Christ, and those who receive him, and this should make a profound impression upon us; for we shall certainly find ourselves in one group or the other. Every normal person has the power of choice, and he will be held responsible for the decisions which he makes. The Lord wants every one to be saved, and he has done, is doing, and will do everything which is consistent with justice and mercy, to get people to do right; and he has given positive assurance that he will care for and defend against the evil one all who put their trust in him; but even at that, the final choice must be made by the individual himself. These truths should greatly humble all of us, and cause us to realize what it really means to have the offer of help from the greatest of all possible sources.

An invitation, if sincerely extended, always indicates an interest, on the part of the one sending it, in the one to whom it is addressed. This is especially true in the case now before us; for no one could possibly love us as much as the Lord does. We read in John 3: 16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." The same general thought is expressed by Paul in these words: "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a

righteous man will one die: for per-adventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 6-8.) No greater person therefore could extend an invitation to any one than the Lord; and we are expressly told that he wants all men to be saved, and does not want any one to be lost. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.)

The fact that the Lord has included each one of us in the invitation which he has extended to all men, makes our responsibility great. Any person who has heard the gospel message, or who has had the opportunity of hearing it, can never be the same again; for he must of necessity do something about it. All men are travelling life's highways, and it is not possible for any one to refuse to go forward, in one direction or another. As Jesus was drawing near the end of his great Sermon on the Mount, he gave this exhortation regarding the kingdom which he was soon to establish: "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." (Matt. 7: 13, 14.) All responsible people must walk in one or the other of these ways; and the reaction which each individual person makes to the Lord's invitation will determine the one in which he shall travel.

## The Golden Text

*"He that will, let him take the water of life freely."* The words just quoted are taken from the last chapter of the New Testament, and they are found in this setting: "And the Spirit and the bride say. Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Any one who reads the New Testament thoughtfully will readily see that salvation is an individual matter. Every person who is saved must respond to the gospel message. There is no such thing as "group salvation," without personal responsibility on the part of each individual. This principle is forcefully illustrated by the calling of penitent Israel from their several dispersions. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will beat off his fruit from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt; *and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.*" (Isa. 27: 12.) "One by one" not only is the manner in which the people of the world are saved; but the expression also emphasizes the importance of the individual. The gospel is proclaimed, and the invitation is extended, to the masses; but it is the individual who responds to it. It is true that all who hear may respond, but they do so as individuals. It is always "he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

If people could be brought to realize just how much the Lord loves them, they would immediately accept his offer to bless them. Behold the father as he anxiously awaits the return of the prodigal son! and what preparations were made to welcome him, and to restore him to his place again! That is but a picture of the heavenly Father, who wants all of his children to come back to him, live for and with him, both here and in the world which is to come. And

not only does the Lord want his people to return to him; he has also made every possible sacrifice and preparation for them to find the place of sonship in his home. In the words of the messianic prophet, "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." (Isa. 55: 1.)

The closing verses of the Book of Revelation, in which the words of the golden text are found, have been compared to the final movement of some concerto, in which we hear all the instruments of the orchestra swelling in the flood of triumph. In them many voices are audible alternately. Sometimes it is the Seer who speaks, sometimes an angel, sometimes a deeper voice from the Throne, that of Christ himself. It is often difficult, therefore, amidst these swift transitions, to tell who is the speaker; but this much is clear, that, just before the verse from which the golden text is taken, our Lord has been proclaiming from the Throne his royalty and swift coming to render to every man according to his work, and to gather his own into the heavenly city. After that solemn utterance he is silent for a moment, and there is a great hush. Then our Lord's declaration is met by a response from the Spirit and the church. The Spirit and the bride reply, "Come." The call is also urged upon every hearer; each one is to say, "Come." Then, in answer to the cry of the Spirit, of the church, and of faithful individuals, begging every one to come, our Lord speaks again, this time to all the yearning and weary souls of mankind: "He that is athirst, let him come: he that will [that is, he that desires to have the salvation which Jesus offers], let him take the water of life freely."

## The Text Explained

The Doom of Cities of  
Opportunity  
(Matt. 11: 20-24)

*Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Choraz-*

*in! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done to you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of*



*judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

The term "upbraid" means to accuse or reprove reproachfully. The people about whom Jesus was speaking had had wonderful opportunities to see their great wickedness, repent, and turn to God; but they had refused to heed the Lord's teaching and mend their ways. It was in response to the obstinate attitude which the people of the cities referred to manifested, that led Jesus to emphasize again the principle that one's responsibilities will be measured in proportion to his opportunities. Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility. The words of this section of the text were spoken by Jesus "because they repented not." It is probably true that the task of bringing people to repentance is one of the most difficult which any gospel preacher experiences.

The exact locations of Chorazin and Bethsaida are not certainly known; but it is now generally thought that they were in the vicinity of Capernaum. The probable site of Chorazin has been placed about two miles northwest of Capernaum; and if this Bethsaida was the home of Andrew and Peter (cf. John 1: 44), it was probably a suburb of Capernaum. Both places have long since been destroyed. There is no record in the gospel narratives of any miracles having been wrought in either of these cities; but their proximity to Capernaum may have been such that when miracles were performed in Capernaum, they were regarded as having been wrought in the metropolitan area, which, if the assumption is correct, included Chorazin and Bethsaida.

Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities of Phoenicia, and were therefore Gentile cities. Phoenicia was the coastal region northwest of Galilee, and the wickedness of the two cities here named was well known to the people of Capernaum and vicinity, a short distance to the southeast.

The "mighty works" which Jesus referred to were his miraculous powers which the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida had witnessed. The miracles which Jesus performed demonstrated the fact that he was Divine, and therefore that which he claimed to be, namely, God's Son; and that fact should have caused the people who saw them to heed the Lord's preaching, and repent of their evil ways.

But when high privileges are disregarded, the guilty parties are made to feel less the need for repentance. The gospel will always make people better or worse, depending, of course, upon their attitude toward it. This is the idea which Paul set forth in 2 Cor. 2: 14-16. If a ball of clay and a ball of wax are placed side by side on the sidewalk, and the hot summer sun is allowed to exert its energy upon them, any one knows that one will be hardened, while the other melts. That is what happens when the gospel is preached to those who are willing to hear it, and those who reject it: the heart of the one will be softened, while that of the other will be hardened. The Galilean cities we are now considering had had the privilege of hearing the greatest of all preachers; but, in the estimation of Jesus, they were less susceptible to the gospel message than their neighboring Gentile cities would have been. This was a terrible indictment; but any thoughtful person today knows that there are innumerable members of the church who are harder to reach with some phases of the gospel pertaining to Christian living, than many in the denominations, or even in the world. This is to say that it is often easier to get denominational and worldly people to see certain truths of the New Testament, pertaining to Christian living, than it is to get members of the church to accept them. (Cf. Acts 21: 3-6; 27: 3.) The expression "more tolerable" means that those with less opportunities will be more excusable. This idea is fully illustrated in Luke 12: 47, 48.

It has already been pointed out that Jesus, near the beginning of his ministry in Galilee, left his home in Nazareth, and "came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naph-

tali." (Matt. 4: 13.) The presence of Jesus in that city accounts for the figure which he used regarding Capernaum's being exalted unto heaven, which implied that the city's opportunities were greater because of the presence and miracles of Jesus. But the exaltation, when it was disregarded, caused the city to suffer a corresponding degradation, namely, the casting down to Hades. This was a figurative expression to indicate the plight of lost opportunities. The city of Capernaum has long since been in a state of complete ruins.

In summing up the truths of this section of the lesson text, the following should be emphasized and remembered. (1) Every hearer of the gospel message is either better or worse as a result of his opportunity in that respect. (2) The "mighty works," that is, the miracles of Jesus, were calculated to lead men to repentance, since they demonstrated that he was Divine and therefore had the authority to demand that men repent. (3) There is a difference among the people who stand condemned at the judgment, inasmuch as it is more tolerable for some than for others. This is plainly stated, as we have already seen, in Luke 12: 47, 48. (4) God takes into account one's opportunities, when he comes to measure his guilt. (Cf. Matt. 5: 21, 22; John 9: 39-41; 15: 22-24; Rom. 2: 12.)

### A Matter for Thanksgiving

(Matt. 11: 25, 26)

*At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.*

If we read Matthew's record alone, it is natural to assume that Jesus spoke the words of this section of the lesson text immediately after his pronouncement regarding the cities which had rejected him; but when we read Luke 10: 21, 22, it appears that they were spoken after the return and report of the seventy. It is possible, of course, that the Lord spoke the words we are now considering on both occasions; and possibly on many more occasions. The time and place of such utterances are not

nearly so important as the words themselves. But whatever the occasion for speaking the words now before us, Jesus is pictured in a mood of worship; or, as some one has said, it was a momentary outburst of his continual inward communion with the Father. The marginal reading of "thank" is *praise*, which fits into the idea of worship.

Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 1: 21 is a good commentary on the passage now under consideration. "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." It has never been the divine plan that men, through their wisdom, should arrive at a knowledge of God's will; such knowledge is possible only by inspired revelation. "The preaching" (the *thing preached*, margin) means *inspired preaching*; and so Jesus, in the passage now before us, praises God for the wisdom of his plan of hiding these things, that is, the things which belong to God, from the earthly wise (cf. 1 Cor. 2: 6-13), and revealing them unto them who are humble and teachable, and who are without, or who do not depend upon, the wisdom of the world. (Cf. Matt. 5: 3; 11: 5b.)

### A Great Claim and a Precious Invitation

(Matt. 11: 27-30)

*All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

The statement which Jesus made in the passage just quoted should be interpreted in the light of the preceding section of the lesson text. There it is implied that the "wise and understanding" profess to want to know the things of God; but they have been hidden from such people. Here Jesus declares that God has

delivered all things unto him; and that apart from him no one can know the Father. This places Jesus directly between the Father and those who claim to want to know him. The Father and the Son are the only ones who understand each other; and since the Father sent the Son to be, as it were, his representative here among men, the only possible way that any one can come to know either the Father or the Son, is for him to humble himself before the Son, and learn the lessons which he came to reveal. As long as people reject Christ, it is utterly impossible for them to know the truth which they must have in order to be saved. (Cf. Matt. 13: 10-17; John 14: 6; Heb. 1: 1, 2.)

Not only does Jesus have full and complete knowledge of God, and is the only authorized and indispensable revealer of him; he is also pictured in this lesson as a devout worshipper of the heavenly Father. All of this places Jesus in the light of the true mediator. He describes himself as the divine philanthropist, as he looks with an eye of unutterable love and tenderness upon an afflicted and sin-burdened world; and graciously invites every distressed soul to come to him for rest.

When people read the four gospel records, they are certain to find that the one thing which Jesus preached was himself. He made no effort to set before his hearers a ready-made system of religious truth. He simply said, "Come unto me;" "learn of me," "follow me;" "love me," obey me;" "I am the good shepherd;" "I am the true vine;" "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven;" "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself;" "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." All of this clearly shows that Jesus regarded himself as being the answer to all of our needs; and that truth, morality, and true religion can be ours only in our personal relationship with him. This is what it means to preach Christ.

The invitation which Jesus extended on the occasion of this lesson, is addressed to people who feel their need of help. Such people are the ones who labor (active) and are heavy laden (passive). The burdens

of life fall into two classes, namely, (1) the inevitable, and (2) the self-imposed. Most of ours are self-imposed, which are brought on by carelessness, thoughtlessness, sins of the past and present, which we have carried because we have refused to seek their forgiveness; evil habits which are allowed to go unchecked, by declining to exercise self-discipline, and refusing to heed the wise advice of others. But whatever may be the nature of our burdens which we are compelled to carry, Jesus has graciously offered to remove them from our shoulders. But not only do many people continue to carry their own burdens, they actually turn the religion into an extra burden. Or, to state the matter in another way, the very provision which is intended to make their load lighter, has itself been turned into an additional load.

The rest which Christ gives, as pointed out by James Hastings, is based on a perfect reconciliation to God; for there can be no true rest apart from the heavenly Father. (Cf. the misery of the prodigal son in Luke 15.) Thus, Christ gives us an eternal settlement, adjusting us to a place which we feel to be thoroughly suitable, and satisfying in us all which we feel deserves to be satisfied. He gives us rest by making life intelligible, and by making it worthy; by showing us how, through all its humbling and sordid conditions, we can live as God's children; by delivering us from guilty fear of God, and from sinful cravings; by setting us free from all foolish ambitions, and by shaming us out of worldly greed, and all the fret and fever which come of worldly greed; by filling our hearts with realities which still our excited pursuits of shadows; and by bringing into our spirits the abiding joy and strength of his love for us. We enter into the truest rest when we believe that he takes part with us, and that we can depend upon him. In short, the rest which Christ gives is not rest *from* toil, but rest *in* toil. (Cf. Isa. 26: 3; Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

A yoke, as used here, is something which is placed upon one's shoulders to aid him in bearing his burden. A sentimental interpretation is never right; for the religion of Christ is not a cruise, but a pilgrimage. The

gracious words of Jesus in the text now before us do not urge us to try to escape from life; but to face it in the right way. To bear a yoke is not to escape a burden; it is to learn to carry it properly. Any one who has been on a walking tour knows the difference in comfort between a cheap, ill-adjusted knapsack, and one which is properly fitted with a frame, and adjusted to the back and shoulders.

With the kind of arrangement just

described, the weight of the burden is properly distributed; and one can carry twice as much without feeling the strain. That is what Jesus means by saying that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. No man has ever lived who can devise a better yoke for the burdens of life, than the one which Jesus offers. Jeremy Taylor says that the yoke of Jesus is like feathers to a bird; they are not loads to be carried, but helps to motion.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persona.

### Introduction

What great contrast is presented in the lesson for today?

What impression should this make on us?

Why are people on the opposite sides with reference to Christ?

What great human responsibility is involved in this?

What is implied in an invitation?

What happens to us when the invitation of the Lord comes to us?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

Upon what basis does the Lord endeavor to save people?

Why do so many people ignore their opportunity for salvation?

Discuss the greatness and the urgency of the Lord's offer of pardon.

### The Doom of Cities of Opportunity

What is meant by the term "upbraid" and why was it necessary for Christ to do that which it signifies?

Where were the cities involved and what comparison was made regarding them?

What always happens when high privileges are disregarded?

What effect does the acceptance or rejection of the gospel have on those involved?

Why is it so difficult to get some members of the church to improve their lives?

What are the principal lessons in this section of the study to be remembered?

### A Matter for Thanksgiving

When were the words of this section of the text probably spoken?

What picture of the Lord is here presented?

Why are the things of God hidden to some and revealed to others?

### A Great Claim and a Precious Invitation

Why did Jesus say that all things had been delivered unto him by the Father?

Discuss the importance of the position of Jesus, in the light of this statement.

With this great responsibility in his hands, how does Jesus feel toward the people of the world?

What was the principal content of the preaching of Jesus and why was this so?

To whom did Jesus address his invitation?

What is the meaning of "labor" and "heavy laden"?

What is the nature of most of our burdens?

What additional burden do many people carry?

What is the rest which Jesus offers to give those who accept his invitation?

What is the "yoke" which the Lord asks his people to take upon them?

What will such a yoke do for them?

## Lesson VIII—May 22, 1966

# THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS

## Lesson Text

Luke 9: 28-36

28 And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

29 And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *became* white and dazzling.

30 And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Mo'-ses and E-li'-jah;

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Je-ru'-sa-lem.

32 Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they

saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Je'-sus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mo'-ses, and one for E-li'-jah: not knowing what he said.

34 And while he said these things,

there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him.

36 And when the voice came, Je'-sus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

Golden Text.—*"For he received from God the Father honor and glory."* (2 Pet. 1: 17.)

Devotional Reading.—Mark 9: 2-10.

### Daily Bible Readings

May 16.	M.....	Matthew's Report (Matt. 17: 1-8)
May 17.	T.....	Mark's Account (Mark 9: 2-8)
May 18.	W.....	Luke's Record (Luke 9: 28-6)
May 19.	T.....	Peter's Mention (2 Pet. 1: 1-16)
May 20.	F.....	The Glory of Christ (John 1: 1-14)
May 21.	S.....	Majesty of God (Psalm 145: 1-5)
May 22.	S.....	God's Glory in Christ (Eph. 3: 1-22)

Time.—Probably between A.D. 26 and 29.

Place.—Probably on Mount Hermon.

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

### Introduction

The transfiguration of Christ is not to be regarded as a detached and isolated event in his earthly experience; but rather as a specific part of those demonstrations which were designed to show the divine plan in sending him to the earth. About a week before this great experience. Peter had confessed his faith and that of the other apostles in the Lord's Messiahship. This was a great moment in the lives of all of them; but almost immediately Jesus informed them of his impending suffering and death. This announcement fell like a thunder-bolt upon the ears of the apostles, and it was more than the impulsive Peter could bear; and he, accordingly rebuked the Master, and assured him that such a thing would never happen to him.

Notwithstanding the plainness of the Lord's words regarding his forthcoming treatment at the hands of his enemies, the disciples did not comprehend their meaning. Some one

has said that there is nothing more difficult than to change the ideas of men, and that explains why the disciples could not conceive the idea that the Messiah must die. There was no room in their thinking for

such an idea; and they, accordingly, held on to their idea that the Christ was being sent to the earth to establish an earthly kingdom. But Jesus went on to show his followers that not only must he die, but that they themselves would have to share his suffering.

It may seem strange that Jesus would let the repeated blows fall upon his disciples; but it was essential that he lead them to understand what the future held for their Lord, and for them too. However, the time had come when they needed reassurance. And so Jesus said to his disciples, "But I tell you of a truth. There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." (Luke 9: 27.) This rhetorical statement implies that there would be death among that group before the coming of the kingdom of God; and the evident reference was to the deaths of Jesus and Judas. The encouragement contained in the reference just cited was followed by the transfiguration of Christ, which served to impress the disciples with the unmistakable divinity of his nature; and which gave them a foretaste of the things to come. (Cf. Phil. 3: 21.)

## The Golden Text

***"For he received from God the Father honor and glory."*** The historical account of the transfiguration of Christ is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, and they should all be read carefully; but in the chapter from which the golden text is taken, we have an example of the practical use which one of the eye-witnesses made of the event. The full context of the passage now under consideration follows: "Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. 1: 12-18.)

The transfiguration of Jesus has been described as the highest point in our Lord's earthly experience which was shared with his disciples. The rest of the journey was but a

gradual descent into the valley of humiliation, suffering and death. The glorious scene which we are to consider in this study took place, as we have already noted, about a week after Jesus made the first plain announcement to his disciples of his approaching death at the hands of men. Jesus therefore was fully aware of that which lay ahead for him and the men whom he had chosen to be his witnesses; but even the Son of man himself, while he was here in the flesh, needed encouragement, which was certainly true of the men who followed him; and we are about to witness one of the greatest demonstrations on record of the ability of God to encourage his people.

But in addition to strengthening Christ for the ordeal which was before him, and to enable the disciples to get a glimpse of the glory of the Lord's being, the experience, as the quotation from Second Peter declares, was also made to serve as a basis of instruction and encouragement for future followers of Christ. John may have had the transfiguration of Christ in mind, when he wrote, "And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." (John 1: 14.) William M. Taylor, in commenting on the events on the holy mount, says, "And we know that Peter long after, when contemplating his decease, looked back upon this whole scene as one of the strongest verifications of the gospel. . . . Thus, through all his later experiences, the memory of Hermon's glory stayed up the heart of the apostle and sustained his faith."

## The Text Explained

### The Place of and the Occasion for the Transfiguration

(Luke 9: 28)

***And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.***

If one should decide to make a study of the mountains of the Bible, and especially the part which they played in the lives of the peoples of the earth, he would soon find that he

was confronted with enough valuable information to fill an average-size volume. Those who are acquainted with the life of Jesus here upon the earth are aware of the part which mountains played in his experience. While he was being subjected to the temptations of the devil, he was taken unto an exceeding high mountain, from which he saw all the kingdom of the world, and the glory of them. The sermon which gave voice to the greatest statement of moral and religious principles to

be found in the annals of history, was delivered by Jesus on a mountain. It was on a mountain that he spent an entire night in prayer, before selecting from among his disciples the twelve men whom he named apostles. And it is indeed true, as some one has observed, that he was often upon the mountains, lingering in their lonely recesses, and finding amid their grandeur and majesty that sympathy which he could never get in the busy haunts of men.

It was in such a setting as this that Jesus went to pray, on the occasion now before us; and he took with him three of his apostles, Peter, John, and James. These three disciples are frequently referred to as "the inner circle" of the Lord's disciples, or those who were given special privileges in company with him. In addition to this occasion, they were with Jesus when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5: 21-37), and in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 36, 37). These experiences, especially the one now under consideration, made an indelible impression upon the minds of these three men.

The time of the transfiguration was, according to Matthew and Mark, six days after the Lord's disclosure to his disciples of the suffering and death which awaited him, that is, there were six days between that revelation and the transfiguration. Luke's language, "And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings," implies that he included the two days of the Lord's conversation with his disciples, which preceded the six-day interval, and the transfiguration which followed. Neither of the three gospel writers gives the name of the mountain upon which the transfiguration took place; but inasmuch as nothing is said regarding the Lord's leaving the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, the probability is that mount Hermon was the place, since it fulfills the demands of a "high mountain." (See Matt. and Mark, *in loco*.) McGarvey notes that some lofty terrace on its side would have been in every way a suitable place for the transfiguration. All indications point to the fact that the time was at night. (Cf. Luke 9: 37.)

## The Glorious Scene Which The Apostles Beheld

(Luke 9: 29-32)

*And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling. And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.*

The transfiguration was a transformation which was outwardly visible. Bengel observes that our Lord always possessed the glory within himself. In saying that the fashion of his countenance was altered, Luke evidently meant that there was a change in the Lord's appearance: indeed, that is what transfiguration implies. Matthew says that "his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light;" Mark says that "his garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them;" while Luke says that "his raiment became white and dazzling." Up to this point in the Lord's experience, the glory of the Lord's deity was, to a great extent, hidden by his suffering humanity, and he had for the most part been seen as the man of sorrows and the one who was acquainted with grief; but on the occasion now before us, his divinity burst forth in all its glory.

There is nothing in any of the records of the transfiguration which indicates how the disciples came to recognize the two men who appeared with Jesus as being Moses and Elijah. It is, of course, possible that they became aware of their identity by listening to the conversation which they had with Jesus; for Luke says that they "spoke of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." This was the subject which Jesus had made known to his disciples in his talk with them six days before the transfiguration, and concerning which Peter rebuked him. (See Matt. 16: 21-23.) Moses and Elijah were the representatives of the old order—the law and the prophets—under which the Israelites had lived from Sinai to the time of

this appearance. Moses was the great lawgiver of the Old Testament period, while Elijah, one of the most illustrious of the prophets, had endeavored to turn the hearts of rebellious Israel back to God; and was made the type of the forerunner of Jesus. (See Mal. 4: 5, 6.)

The vision of the transfiguration probably came at night, for the following reasons, namely, (1) Jesus had gone into the mountain to pray, which he frequently did at night; (2) the disciples were heavy with sleep; and (3) Jesus and the three apostles went down from the mountain "on the next day." But when the three disciples who were with Jesus were fully awake, they saw the glory of Jesus, and the two men who stood with him. If we keep in mind the facts of the Old Testament history, the appropriateness of the visits of Moses and Elijah, and their conversation with Jesus regarding his forthcoming departure (see marginal note), will be apparent. Moses died on mount Nebo in Moab, and was divinely buried; while Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire, which was drawn by horses of fire. (See Deut. 32: 48-52; 34: 1-6; 2 Kings 2: 1-12.) And so, who were better fitted to discuss with Jesus his approaching death, than these two ancient worthies, with such unusual experiences?

#### Peter's Proposal and Jehovah's Response (Luke 9: 33-36)

*And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said. And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him. And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.*

Peter's words regarding the possibility of building three tabernacles, one each for the men who were having parts in the scene which was being enacted before the apostles,

were spoken at the time the two heavenly guests were leaving Jesus; and while the record says that the speaker did not know what he was saying, his motive was probably to continue the mountain-top experience. The fact that Peter, rather than James or John, spoke was in keeping with his well known characteristic impulsiveness. However, it is not out of place to suggest that many of us, in the midst of some unusual experience, and possibly out of sheer bewilderment, have also been guilty of saying something without being aware of the significance. Robertson suggests that there are many people who want to keep up the exalted experiences of the mountain, when the needs of the valley are calling loudly for them.

It was while Peter was speaking the words just referred to that the cloud appeared and overshadowed them; and this brought fear into the hearts of the apostles. If one will read such passages as Ex. 24: 12-18; 1 Kings 8: 10, 11, he will be able to understand better something of the meaning of the cloud. It both indicated God's presence and hid him from the view of those who saw the cloud. Although the term is not found in the Bible, later Jewish writers used the word "Shekinah," meaning "to dwell" or "that which abides," to denote Jehovah's presence among his people. This cloud frequently appeared during the Old Testament period; and it had about the same meaning then that was attached to the term "glory" in the New Testament, in such passages as Heb. 1: 3; 9: 5; 2 Cor. 4: 6. It appears from 2 Maccabees 2: 7, 8 (one of the Apocryphal books) that the Jews were expecting the cloud to reappear during the time of the Messiah. In the passage just cited, Jeremiah is quoted as saying, "the place shall be unknown until God gathers the congregation of his people together and shows his mercy. Then the Lord will show where they are, and the glory of the Lord will appear, as they were shown in the days of Moses, and when Solomon asked that the place might be made very sacred."

Where Luke says, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him," Matthew has, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye



him." Both statements contain three parts, namely, (1) "This is my Son"—**Luke**; "This is my beloved Son"—**Matthew**; (2) "my chosen"—**Luke**; "in whom I am well pleased"—**Matthew**; and (3) "hear ye him"—both **Luke** and **Matthew**. Mark simply says, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." The first two parts of **Matthew** were spoken by the Father at the baptism of **Jesus** (Matt. 3: 17), but the third part is found only at the time of the transfiguration. This message regarding the Son, and the disappearance of **Moses** and **Elijah**, the ones who had spoken for **God** to the fathers, indicated that during the coming dispensation **God** would speak only through his Son. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the message of the transfiguration is the same as that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, namely, the passing of the old order, and the bringing in of the new.

It has already been suggested that one of the purposes of the transfiguration, was to strengthen **Jesus** and prepare him for the ordeal which awaited him. It was as if the veil had been drawn aside, and the eternal world for the time being was opened up to him. **David Smith** says that it was like a vision of home to the exile, or a foretaste of rest to the weary traveller. **Jesus** was granted a glimpse of the glory which he had laid aside for the work of redemption (cf. John 17: 24; Phil. 2: 5ff); and was given an earnest of the joy which awaited him, when the work which he had come to do was finished (Heb. 12: 2).

To continue the words of **Dr. Smith**, "From the vantage-ground of the Mount of Transfiguration he described the consummation which awaited him beyond the Hill of Calvary. Nor was that the only consolation which was vouchsafed to him. His heart had been grieved by the dullness of the twelve, the folly of the multitude, and the hostility of rulers, and in the transcendent hour it was revealed to him how his work was viewed by **God** and the glorified saints. Though he stood alone on earth, misunderstood, forsaken, and persecuted, he had Heaven's sympathy and approval."

If we take into consideration all three of the accounts of the transfiguration, it appears that the

last great event in the transaction was the voice of **Jehovah**. **Luke** says, "And when the voice came, **Jesus** was found alone," but the marginal reading for "came" is *was past*. **Moses** and **Elijah** had already departed, and the evident purpose of the voice of **God** was to call attention to the authoritative position of **Christ**; or to say the same thing in another way, the voice of **God**, the last to speak, was the voice of imperative duty, which every one who pleases **God** must recognize and obey. Just before giving the commission to his disciples, as recorded by **Matthew**, **Jesus** said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28: 18); and when **Paul** wrote one of his prison epistles he said, "And he [that is, **God**] put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 22, 23). These scriptures plainly imply that no one can become a child of **God** without bowing to the authority of **Christ**; and that no one can live a Christian life without submitting to the authority of **Christ**.

In speaking of the voice of **God**, **Matthew** says, "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And **Jesus** came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save **Jesus** only." Thus, the touch and voice of **Jesus** assured the prostrated disciples that he was still in the flesh, and that they therefore had no reason to be afraid. (Cf. **Luke** 24: 36-43.) People today, of course, cannot hear the voice of **Jesus** and feel his touch, as the three disciples on the mount of transfiguration did; but they have the assurance of his eternal word that all will be well with them, if they will do as he has commanded. (Cf. **Rom.** 8: 28; 1 **John** 4: 17, 18; 5: 3.) "**Jesus** only" or "**Jesus** alone" is the great lesson of the transfiguration; he is **God's** only spokesman to the human race today. Only that which he has authorized is binding on men in this age of the world.

After discussing the purpose of the transfiguration, as it related to **Christ**, **David Smith** points out that it also had a purpose for the disci-

ples. It was designed to reconcile them to the incredible and repulsive idea that the Messiah would have to suffer the ignominious death at the hands of men. This was done by showing the three chosen apostles the approval of Heaven and the glories which were to follow. These three disciples heard Moses and Elijah talk of their Lord's decease, or, as the original has it, "the exodus which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." And so, in the view of Moses and Elijah the death of Jesus, so far from being an intolerable ignominy and crushing defeat, it was a splendid triumph, comparable to the mighty deliverance which Jehovah wrought for Israel when he brought them out from the land of Egypt, and enabled them to pass through the Red Sea on dry ground. Dr. Smith notes that it is significant that in the copies of Luke's Gospel which

were in use during the time of Chrysostom, the sentence regarding the Lord's decease ran thusly, "They spake of the *glory* which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." And it was this conception of the sufferings of Christ, which was later revealed to the church, that the writer of Hebrews expressed when he wrote, "But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor." (Heb. 2: 9.) And so, refreshed by the experience on the mountain, Jesus on the following day set his face toward the plain where he could again mix and mingle with the people, while charging the disciples not to tell any one about what they had seen, until after he had been raised from the dead, lest his experience on the mountain be misconstrued.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What relationship did the transfiguration have to the over-all life of Christ?

Why was it so difficult for the disciples to understand that their Lord would have to die?

What need did the disciples have at that time and how was it supplied?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

Why is the transfiguration of Christ considered by some as the climax of his earthly life?

What were the general circumstances during which the transfiguration came?

Why were the three apostles taken along with Jesus to witness the event?

What later use did Peter make of the experience?

### The Place of and the Occasion for the Transfiguration

Discuss the part which mountains played in the life of Christ.

Why would Jesus want to be in the mountains so often?

What other great experiences were given to Peter, James, and John?

When and where did the transfiguration take place?

How reconcile the time element in Luke's record with that of Matthew and Mark?

### The Glorious Scene Which the Apostles Beheld

What happened when Christ was transfigured?

Compare the three records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in this respect.

Why hadn't the disciples been able to see the glory of Christ before?

Who were the two men who appeared with Jesus and what did they do?

At what time (that is, day or night) did the transfiguration apparently occur?

Give reasons for your answer.

Why were Moses and Elijah especially fitted to discuss with Jesus his approaching death?

### Peter's Proposal and Jehovah's Response

What was Peter's proposal and why did he make it?

Why is it so easy to understand why Peter would speak as he did on that occasion?

Why are so many of us today like Peter in this respect?

What happened while Peter was speaking?

Why would the disciples be afraid when the cloud came over them?

Discuss the significance of the "cloud" in Jewish life.

What were the words of Jehovah which were spoken from the cloud?

What were their meaning and significance?

Discuss further the twofold purpose of the transfiguration.

When did the disciples discover that Jesus was alone?

What is the great message of the transfiguration?

What is the position of Christ in the present dispensation?

Lesson IX—May 29, 1966  
PARABLES OF JESUS

Lesson Text  
Matt. 13: 3-8, 31-33, 44-46

3 And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow;

4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them:

5 And others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them:

8 And others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

\* \* \* \* \*

31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed,

which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

44 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls:

46 And having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Golden Text.—*"Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live."* (Isa. 55: 3.)

Devotional Reading.—Mark 4: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

May 23.	M.....	Sowing and Reaping (Gal. 6: 1-10)
May 24.	T.....	The Seed of the Kingdom (Matt. 13: 1-9)
May 25.	W.....	The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8: 4-18)
May 26.	T.....	Parables of Jesus (Matt. 13: 24-33)
May 27.	F.....	Kingdom a Treasure (Matt. 13: 44-46)
May 28.	S.....	A Sure Harvest (Eccles. 11: 1-8)
May 29.	S.....	Parable of the Sower Explained (Matt. 13: 18-23)

Time.—Probably between A.D. 26 and 29.  
Place.—By the Sea of Galilee, probably near Capernaum.  
Persons.—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

Introduction

The thirteenth chapter of Matthew, as the reader can see, contains seven parables; and it appears that they were all spoken on the same occasion. These parables all had reference to the kingdom which Jesus was soon to establish, and each one of them was intended to emphasize one distinctive feature of that kingdom. The general subject of this series of parables is the same as that

of the Sermon on the Mount, which the Lord delivered soon after beginning his great Galilean ministry. If we speak of the sermon just referred to as the gospel of the kingdom; then the parables which are found in the chapter from which this lesson is taken may be regarded as an illustrative appendix to that great address.

When Jesus delivered the Sermon

on the Mount, he dealt primarily with the principles of the kingdom of heaven; while in the parables he used familiar figures to illustrate the nature of the kingdom, and to emphasize the different effects which the teaching regarding it produces on men of different dispositions. In the sermon, Jesus set forth the difference between the law of Moses and the regulations which he would give; and it was in this respect that the sermon was somewhat retrospective, while in the parables he was almost entirely prospective, as he unfolded the manner of the progress of the kingdom and the nature of its consummation. Or, to state the matter in another way, in the sermon broad principles and specific commandments were set forth; while in the parables prominence is given to individual cases and peculiar features.

Another matter which should not be overlooked with reference to the

parables is the order of arrangement. All of the parables in the chapter from which the lesson text is taken, as has already been suggested, were related to the forthcoming kingdom; and each of them, of course, had a specific purpose. The Lord was not speaking a number of unrelated parables, but was delivering a well-ordered discourse (a series of illustrations) regarding the kingdom. The first parable, generally spoken of as the parable of the sower, stands alone as illustrating the general effects which would be produced by the preaching of the gospel to all men; while the other six parables are in pairs. In the three couplets, as the careful student will see, each member is a complement and comparison of the other. Not all seven of the parables are included in this lesson; but if the student will read the entire thirteenth chapter of Matthew, he can easily see this truth for himself.

### The Golden Text

*"Incline your ear, and come unto me; and hear, and your soul shall live."* These words were a part of the Lord's offer to save the people who would listen to him. "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. 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. 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." (Isa. 55: 1-3.)

Man's greatest responsibility is to listen to that which Almighty God has to say. In Mark 4: 24, which is in a parallel context of our lesson for today, Jesus says, "Take heed *what* ye hear." There are many things said today which purport to come from God; but some of them are the very opposite of that which is contained in his revealed word. Paul warns in 1 Cor. 4: 6 that we should "learn not to go beyond the things which are written," and John tells what the results will be, if peo-

ple do go beyond that which God has spoken: "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." (2 John 9.)

In the same connection in which Mark says, "Take heed what ye hear," Luke says, "Take heed therefore *how* ye hear." (Luke 8: 18.) We must listen to that which the Lord has spoken, whether it pleases us or not; that is, if we are to please him. Jehovah warns, a few verses below the golden text for today, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55: 8, 9.) The case of Balaam is a good example of how one should not hear (see Num. 22: 19; cf. Rom. 15: 4); while the attitude which was manifested by Cornelius illustrates the kind of hearing which pleases God (Acts 10: 33). The results of the latter kind of hearing always leads to the Lord. (Cf. Acts 17: 10-12.)

Along with the necessity of *what* we hear and *how* we hear, the spirit of the golden text emphasizes *whom*

we should hear. So far as we are concerned today, God says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17: 5b) Jesus declares, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I

spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the father hath said unto me, so I speak." (John 12: 48-50; cf. Acts 3: 22, 23; Luke 10: 16.)

## The Text Explained

The Parable of the Sower  
(Matt. 13: 3-8)

*And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and, the thorns grew up and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

A parable has been defined as "a narrative moving within the sphere of physical or human life, not professing to describe an event which actually took place, but expressly imagined for the purpose of representing in a pictorial figure, a truth belonging to the sphere of religion, and therefore referring to the relation of man or mankind to God." The term "parable" literally means to place alongside for comparison or measurement, like a yardstick. It is an objective illustration for spiritual or moral truth. Other men taught by means of parables; but it is doubtful if any one ever equalled Jesus in this respect. The parables of Jesus, as a rule, illustrate one principle truth, and the details are more or less incidental, although the Lord himself sometimes explains them too.

There were no farm houses in Palestine, as we understand their place and purpose. All the people of that country lived in cities, towns, and villages; and the farmers literally went forth to sow." This is an important work which cannot be dis-

pensed with; for if there is no sowing, there will be no harvest. The "way side" was a path or road made by the people along the edge or through the middle of the plowed ground. It was natural, of course, for the birds to eat the seeds which did not enter into the prepared ground.

The "rocky places" were areas of the field where only a thin layer of soil covered the ledge which was beneath the surface; and when the sun shown on that type of soil, it also warmed the rock beneath it, with the result that the moisture soon disappeared, and left only dry soil in which the young grain stalks could not continue to thrive: and so, they withered away. The place of the thorns was a section of the field where the seeds and roots of thorns were already there—"upon the thorns"—; and they would, of course, grow faster and more vigorously than the grain which was being sown. This accounts for the fact that the thorns choked the growth of the grain. The "good ground" was that part of the field which had been prepared for the grain, and which was free from the things which would hinder a normal harvest.

The Lord's explanation of the parable of the sower is not given in the lesson text for today, but it should be read in verses 18-23. The lesson of the parable now under consideration is an important one; and it will be to our advantage to look at the results: for if we know nothing of the meaning of the parable, little or no good will accrue to us from this study. The Lord wants us to know something of the relationship which exists between the word of God and the souls of men. And, too, it should be observed that the one who is charged with the responsibility of sowing is not primarily responsible for the condition of the soil. Je-

sus, in the parable now before us, simplifies the situation. He does not go into detail about why people differ in their attitude toward the gospel; he simply points out the various reactions which are manifested. God wants everybody to be saved (see 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9; cf. Ezek. 33: 11), and that is the reason for sowing the seed in all parts of the field; but the condition of the heart of the individual will determine the reception which it will receive.

The man who is represented by the good ground differs from the way side hearer, in that he *understands* the word and does not permit Satan to remove it from his heart. The reason for his understanding is not necessarily superior natural ability, but superior attention. Such a man is willing to ask questions and search the Scriptures, so that he may know the meaning of that which was spoken to him. (Cf. Acts 17: 10-12.) How can any person plead honesty in ignorance, while making no effort to learn the truth. (Cf. 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4.)

The good ground hearer differs from the rocky ground hearer, in that he is not content to make no effort to learn more about the truth which he has received from the sower. His mind is fixed upon the word of God, and he is happy to have it so. "But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm 1: 2.) The good ground hearer differs from the thorny ground hearer, in that he does not allow the things of the world to divert his attention from the work of the Lord. Instead of being overcome by such things, he is himself the victor. (Cf. 1 John 2: 15-17; James 4: 4.) And finally, the good ground hearer differs from all of the others in that he alone is fruitful. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15: 8; cf. Col. 1: 10; Gal. 5: 22, 23.)

### **The Mustard Seed and the Leaven**

(Matt. 13: 31-33)

*Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed*

*in his field; which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

The two parables of this section of the lesson constitute a pair; and they must be studied together, if we are to get the lesson which they are intended to teach. The subject which they are both concerned with is the progress of the kingdom of heaven here upon the earth. The parable of the mustard seed emphasizes the contrast between its small beginning and its ultimate greatness; while that of the leaven gives prominence to the method of the kingdom's internal operation and the universality of its diffusion at the last.

The mustard plant which is described in the passage now under consideration is very different from the mustard which is a common garden plant with us. Johnson says that Dr. Hooker measured a mustard plant, similar to the one about which Jesus spoke, in the Jordan valley and found it to be ten feet in height. The mustard seed of the text is called "less than all seeds," but that does not mean that it was smaller than any seed known to man. It appears that "a grain of mustard seed" was, among the Jews, a familiar expression for any thing which was exceedingly small. The smallness of the seed we are now considering was regarded as being small, not by comparing it with other seed, but with the large plant which grew out of it. It is therefore a suitable figure to represent the general idea that great things can arise out of small beginnings. (Cf. Dan. 2: 34-35; Zech. 4: 6, 10.)

While the parable now before us has primary reference to the kingdom of heaven itself, it is not out of place to apply the principle which it illustrates to the church in any given community. If those who are responsible for the work in such congregations will see to it that the gospel of Christ is faithfully preached, and obeyed by each member, it will make little difference how small the beginning may be, the work will grow into a vigorous church in the Lord. This should be a matter of great encouragement to every faithful member of the body of Christ.

*Another parable spake he unto them; the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till all was leavened.*

Leaven, as every homemaker knows, quietly but certainly diffuses itself throughout the mass into which it is placed; and this is the way in which the kingdom of Christ affects human society. The word of God, which is the seed of the kingdom (cf. Luke 8: 11), is sown in the hearts of men; or, to change the figure somewhat, the *idea* is planted in their minds; and then, working like yeast, it is going to have an effect in their lives, if it is permitted to remain in their hearts.

Leaven is not an integral part of the meal; it is brought from the outside and put into it, and then its work begins. Just so with Christianity: it is, so far as the world is concerned, an important power. Christ declares that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18: 36). The kingdom of Christ has been brought into the world, that is, established in the world, not to become like it, but to win men from the control of Satan and turn their allegiance to God. The reformative work which Christ has authorized begins, not with outward forms and institutions, but with inward principles (cf. Heb. 4: 12, 13); and it then continues its penetrating influence until it fashions it subject into its own ideals.

Inasmuch as leaven, as used in the Bible, usually stands for evil, some commentators profess to see in this Parable the progress of corruption, rather than the regeneration of the world. It is true that leaven in the Bible is generally associated with evil, but it is not always so. (Cf. Lev. 23: 17.) But since Jesus said that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," we must conclude that he was using the nature of leaven, and the manner in which it works, to illustrate the progress of the kingdom of the Lord here upon the earth. Evil will never be able to overcome the kingdom; or, which is the same thing, the church which Christ built. (Cf. Dan. 2: 44; Matt. 16: 18; Heb. 12: 28.)

It should also be observed that the heaven is always smaller in quantity, than the mass into which it is placed; and that has always been

true with Christianity, in its relationship with the world. When Jesus began to call his disciples from the masses of their countrymen, his primary interest was not in quantity, but in quality; and it has always been that way with his people since the church was established on the first Pentecost following his ascension. Those who have come the nearest to doing his will have always been in the minority, both with reference to the world about them and their own brethren.

Every professed follower of Christ should ask himself this question: "Am I a part of the meal, or a part of the leaven?" It is all too often the case that we forget the mission of Jesus and the manner in which he has called us to work for him, and seek to become members of a majority for the maintenance of the *status quo*. The world, along with many professed Christians, needs to be changed; and the Lord's message in the parable of the meal and the leaven tells his followers how they are to work toward that end.

### **The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price**

(Matt. 13: 44-46)

*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

As in the case of the two parables of the preceding section of the lesson for today, the two parables now before us have a common lesson, namely, the intrinsic value of the kingdom of heaven, along with the willingness, yes, and the eagerness, of the one making the discovery to sacrifice everything he possesses in order to obtain it. The one principal difference between the two parables of this section is this: The one comes upon the treasure, as it were, by accident or at least unexpectedly, while the other finds it as he goes about the business of his life.

The imagery of the parable of the hidden treasure is based upon the customs of the time of Christ here upon the earth. The people who had valuable possessions often buried them for safe keeping. The owner of the treasure now under consideration may have been vastly wealthy,

and may have hidden many treasures in the field; and in the course of time he may have forgotten about one or more of them. It is also possible that he left the country, and was never able to return for his possessions. Or again, he may have died without disclosing the location of the treasure which he had buried. The field may have been sold to another man, without any knowledge that the treasure was hidden therein. At any rate, the treasure was hidden in the field and the owner apparently knew nothing of its presence there.

And then one day another man found the treasure, and immediately hid it again. The discovery of the treasure brought great joy to the finder's heart; and he determined to make it his own. There is no indication, let it be said again, that the man who owned the field at the time that the treasure was found knew of its existence, and he was therefore willing to sell the field without reckoning the value of the hidden treasure in the price of the land. These considerations, of course, are merely the drapery of the parable; and they must not be allowed to overshadow the principal lesson which it is designed to teach. The manner of obtaining the field without informing the owner of the treasure which had been found is no more commended by the Lord, than the dishonesty of the unjust steward was upheld while commending his wisdom. (See Luke 16: 8.)

The treasure of the parable now under consideration is made to stand for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. Paul speaks of them as "the unsearchable riches of Christ." (See Eph. 3: 8.) Many people have learned of these blessings at a time when they were not seeking for them. (Cf. the example of the woman of Samaria, Saul of Tarsus, the Philippian jailor, et al.) It should be observed, however, that each man must make these treasures his own by a distinct act of his will. No one can become a Christian without knowing it.

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

Although the general lesson is the same, the peculiar situation in the parable we are now considering is the exact opposite of that in the preceding one. Here the man was in search for something which was better than that which he already possessed. He has a definite purpose in mind; and he is not going to be content until he finds that for which he is looking. But, having found the object of his search, he, like the man who found the hidden treasure, does not consider any sacrifice too great to make in order to obtain the newly found blessing. (Cf. Phil. 3: 7-11; Luke 14: 25-33.)

## Questions for Discussion

What Is the subject?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Under what conditions were the parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew spoken?

In what way are they related to the Lord's sermon on the mount?

Discuss the order of the arrangement of the parables of the chapter just referred to.

Why is it important to read the entire chapter in preparing this lesson?

### The Golden Text

Give the setting of the passage which serves as the golden text.

What is man's greatest responsibility?

Give reasons for your answer.

In what ways does the New Testament teach that we should give heed to that which is spoken?

What will be the result if we follow these instructions? Give reasons for your answer.

### The Parable of the Sower

What is the meaning of the term "parable"?

What is the purpose of a parable?

What was the general situation of the countryside during the time of Jesus?

What was the "way side"?

What was meant by "rocky places"?

Discuss the meaning of the "thorny ground."

Why were other parts of the land called "good ground"?

Why is it important in this study to read the Lord's explanation of the parable of the sower?

Show how the good ground differs from the other three types mentioned in the parable.

### The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

Give reasons for saying that these two parables constitute a pair and show their common lesson.

What was the "mustard seed" about which the Lord spoke?



What did the expression "a grain of mustard seed" apparently mean to the Jews?

What was the comparison which the Lord was making?

What application does this principle have for us today?

Discuss the manner in which leaven works and what is the lesson of this parable?

How is the leaven related to the meal and how is the kingdom of heaven like this?

What question in this connection should each professed child of God ask himself? Give reasons for your answer.

The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl  
of Great Price

What is the common lesson of these two parables?

What principal difference is between them? and what is its "drapery"?

What is the real "core" of the parable?

Give reasons for saying that the Lord did not endorse the deception of the man who found the hidden treasure.

What application does the treasure have in the kingdom of Christ?

Why is it true that no one can become a Christian without knowing it?

How did the two men feel about the "hidden treasure" and the "pearl of great price"?

Lesson X—June 5, 1966

SOCIAL LIFE OF JESUS

Lesson Text

Luke 14: 12-24

12 And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; because they have not *wherewith* to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him. Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many:

17 And he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for *all* things ore now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent*

began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and the blind and lame.

22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 22: 1-14.

Daily Bible Readings

May	30. M.	.....A Slighted Invitation (Luke 14: 15-24)
May	31. T.	.....The Gospel Invitation (Rev. 22: 1-17)
June	1. W.	.....The Great Wedding Feast (Matt. 22: 2-10)
June	2. T.	.....Christ's Invitation (Matt. 11: 21-28)
June	3. F.	....."Come Ye" (Isa. 55: 1-3)
June	4. S.	.....All Invited (Rom. 10: 11-15)
June	5. S.	.....Invitation to Worship (Psalm 96)

Time.—Probably between A.D. 26 and 29.

Place.—Probably in Peraea.

Persons.—Jesus, his host, and other guests at meat.

## Introduction

The lesson text which we are to consider today grew out of a situation which Jesus observed, as he marked how the guests sought the best seats when they were bidden to a feast. When verses 7-11 of the chapter now under consideration are read, it will be seen that Jesus had some specific instruction for those who are invited to such a feast. Jesus had gone into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a sabbath day to eat bread. It can be assumed that the Lord was there as an invited guest. Such an invitation, in and of itself, would appear to be a courteous act on the part of the host; but the very next words of the text indicate that the spirit which prompted the invitation was not of the highest order, to say the least of it; for "they were watching him," with the evident intent of finding fault with him. They obviously were curious to see what he would say and do; and they were on the alert to take advantage of anything which might enable them to bring an accusation against him.

But Jesus, as was his usual practice, took the situation in hand; and it was not long before he had the others at the table on the defensive. There was a man before Jesus who had the dropsy, who was probably in the place where they were eating as an uninvited observer, pretty much as the sinful woman of Luke 7: 36-50 was in the house of Simon without an invitation. It is probable that the afflicted man heard that Jesus was in the Pharisee's house, and that

he came in the hope that the Lord would have compassion on him and heal him. At any rate, the man with dropsy was there, and Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees the direct question, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?" But when no one ventured to speak, Jesus healed the man, and put all who were at the table to silence.

And then when Jesus observed how the guests in the Pharisee's house were seeking for themselves the best seats, he spoke a parable to them which commended to them a spirit of humility that would lead a person to take the lowest seat, if left to himself; and then if such a person should be asked to move, it would of necessity be to a higher place. The words of the Lord's parable which contains the rules of etiquette for guests at a feast are as follows: "When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then thou shalt have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

## The Golden Text

*"Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."* The exhortation contained in the passage just quoted implies that the Hebrew brethren were well aware of that duty. Our modern way of living has greatly modified the practice of entertaining strangers in our homes, and it is probable that the need is not so wide-spread as it was back in Bible times. But even so, this change in our way of living is a not

a sufficient reason for ignoring the subject of entertaining strangers altogether. Great impressions for good can often be made by showing love unto strangers; and, along with that, real needs can sometimes be met. The enemies of Christianity observed this virtue among the early followers of Christ. The apostate Julian assigns "kindness to strangers" as one of the reasons for the rapid progress of Christianity during the early days of the church. The reference to

entertaining angels unawares was probably to such instances as those of Abraham (Gen. 18: 1-8) and Lot (Gen. 19: 1-11).

Sympathy for those in trouble was also a distinguishing mark of the early church. People were persecuted and often cast into prison because of their faith in Christ. Many of them were poor and no doubt in debt; and it was probably true that some of them who were unable to pay their debts, due to conditions over which they had no control, were cast into prison until something was done about them. And sometimes mere pretexts were made the basis for unjust treatment of the Lord's people. When any of these things took place, the brethren who were in position to do so, went to their rescue. Tertullian said, "If there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons for nothing, but their fidelity to the cause of God's church, they became nurslings of their confession." And, according to Aristides, "If they hear that any one of their number is imprisoned or in distress for the sake of their Christ's

name, they all render aid in his necessity, and, if he can be redeemed, they set him free." This kind of an attitude is what Jesus has reference to in Matt. 25: 31-46.

Those who are familiar with the teaching of the New Testament are aware of the fact that the spirit and attitudes just described belong to the nature and spirit of Christianity. The Lord's people will gladly respond when there is a genuine need placed before them; but they are not always interested in favoring those who take advantage of the hospitality of others, and impose themselves upon them, just to save the price of a hotel or motel room, when there is no actual need. Such undue advantages, which some have sought, have made it hard on those who are deserving and who actually need the kind consideration of others who are in position to show them kindness. Such spongers are comparable, so far as results are concerned, to those hitchhikers who have made it exceedingly dangerous for the motoring public to offer a ride to those who are worthy, and who would appreciate a lift.

## The Text Explained

### Rules of Hospitality for a Host

(Luke 14: 12-14)

*And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.*

The first twenty-four verses of the chapter from which the lesson text for today is taken have been referred to as "the table talk of Jesus" which, of course, is in keeping with the idea suggested in the subject of the lesson, namely, the social life of Jesus. (1) The first six verses tell of the presence of the afflicted man who was in the home of the ruler who had invited Jesus to eat bread with him and others. This gave the

Lord the opportunity to discuss with them the proper use of the sabbath day. (2) In verses 7-11 Jesus gave a lesson on the proper attitude which invited guests should manifest when they attend a feast. (3) Next come the verses now under consideration in which Jesus gave instruction to the host who planned a dinner or supper, verses 12-14. (4) And then in verses 15-24 the great climax is set forth. All of this should give us some idea of the way and manner in which such social gatherings can be made profitable in both enjoyment and character building.

When Jesus told his host not to invite his friends, brethren, kinsmen, and rich neighbors, the idea appears not to be a strict prohibition with reference to such potential guests; but rather not to allow that to be his habitual practice. The New Testament frequently denies a less important matter, in order to emphasize that which is of greater value. (Cf. 1 Pet. 3: 3, 4; 1 Tim. 2: 9, 10.) It is not wrong therefore for one to invite his close relatives and friends to dine with him; but if he makes that

the sole practice of his social life, he will not be doing anything in that respect which will identify him with the Christian religion.

While on the other hand, if kindness is extended to the poor and needy, Christian people are thereby following the example of the Lord, and they may expect his blessings; for those who are the beneficiaries cannot themselves reciprocate, but God has promised to act in their behalf. Any one who is familiar with the teaching of Christ is aware of the fact that the doctrine of rewards, as well as that of punishments, is a vital part of his program. Furthermore, the whole question now under consideration resolves itself into one of motives; or, to state the same thing in another way, one's very practice with reference to such social relations as we are now considering will reveal at once whether he is motivated by selfishness or altruism, and especially that which is Christ-like. (Cf. Heb. 6: 10.)

### **The Great Supper and the Attitude of Some Toward It** (Luke 14:15-21a)

*And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many; and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came, and told his lord these things.*

The remark of the guest who spoke to Jesus evidently grew out of that which the Lord had just said about inviting the poor and unfortunate to the supper, and the blessings which would follow. This probably caused the man to think of the coming messianic kingdom, as the Jews supposed it to be, and the feast which would usher it in. That which

was said could hardly refer to heaven; for there will be no such feasts when that glad day comes. The confident anticipation which characterized the guest who spoke to Jesus was evidently due to the fact that the Jews fully expected to have a part in the feast when men would eat bread in the kingdom of God. However, that was an erroneous view and a false expectation; and Jesus sought to make correction in the parable which follows.

This is a lesson which needs to be stressed over and over again; for there are multiplied thousands of people who confidently expect to enjoy the glories of heaven, who will never get there; because they are not willing to meet the conditions for entrance into the kingdom of the Lord. And furthermore, they continually offer excuse after excuse for not doing that which the New Testament specifically requires for membership among the saved. It appears that relatively few people are willing to examine themselves and their conduct in the light of that which has been plainly written; and which has been made available to every one for that purpose. (Cf. 2 Cor. 13: 5; Matt. 7: 21-23; John 12: 48-50.)

Those who carefully read the New Testament have little difficulty in understanding the parable which Jesus spoke on the occasion now before us. The man who made the supper represents God, who desires the salvation of every one. (Cf. 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.) The supper itself stands for the provisions which the Lord has made for the salvation of everyone; while the invitation signifies the offers which he made to men, and especially the Jews. (Cf. Matt. 22: 1-14.) The practice of sending a second message to the invited guests to inform them that the feast was ready was customary in that country. (Cf. Esth. 5: 8; 6: 14.) William M. Thomson comments on this practice in Vol. III of his *The Land and the Book*, p. 74.

Various commentators have pointed out that the different excuses, which the invited guests made when they were informed that the supper was ready, reveal some unholy conditions in the lives of those who made them. For example, these men made engagements which they used

as excuses for not going to the feast; and they made them without any regard for the hour of the banquet to which they had already been invited. They also set little value upon either the friendship of the man who had showed kindness to them by inviting them to his home, or for the feast which he had provided for their enjoyment. The three excuses which were offered reveal steady progress in disrespect, namely, the first was offered on the ground of necessity; the second merely offered a reason; while the third is almost impudent in its bluntness.

If we look at the excuses from the spiritual point of view, we note that each one of them contains an element of *newness*, namely, new field, new oxen, new wife. Thus the things of earth seem new and more to be desired, when they are compared with the gospel invitation. Furthermore, all the excuses which were offered are trifling; for the design of the parable is to teach men that they will forego their privilege of going to heaven for things of little value, as may be seen when they are placed beside the things of eternity. (Cf. Matt. 16: 24-26.) It is also noticeable that the things which people must *hate*, if they are to please the Lord, would have eliminated all the excuses which were made. (See Luke 14: 25, 26.) It is altogether possible that Paul had this kind of a situation in mind, when he wrote 1 Cor. 7: 29-34a. The three excuses which the men of the lesson now before us offered warn us not to be hindered (1) by the love of possessions; (2) by the affairs of business; and (3) by our family or social ties. (Cf. Matt. 10: 34-39.)

The term "consent" is not in the original text of the lesson now before us, as indicated by the use of italics; it was added by the translators, but its meaning may not be clear to every one. Phillips renders the passage in these words, "But they all, as one man, began to make their excuses." The idea is that the three men were animated by one spirit, moved by one impulse, or were influenced by the same disposition in making their excuses. Each one considered the thing which he did as being more important than the enjoyment of the feast. The things which they did *were* not evil,

in and of themselves; but they became so when they were put before the things which were of greater importance. (Cf. Matt. 6: 33.) All of the men who made excuses could have done the things which they did, without making their prior obligation subservient to them; they simply did not want to go to the feast. (Cf. John 5: 40.)

It is, of course, true that the teaching of the Bible is applicable to men in all ages of the world. People today manifest the very same attitude toward the gospel which was manifested by the men of the parable now under consideration. When the excuses which are now offered for not obeying the gospel, either in becoming Christians or in living the Christian life, are analyzed, it will be seen that those who make them are motivated by the very same principles which prompted the men of this lesson. Such people want something else, more than they want the things of God. But here is something which they should consider, namely, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

### The Reaction of the Master of the House to the Slighted Invitation

(Luke 14: 21b-24)

*Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.*

There are several lessons in this part of the parable now under consideration which should be emphasized. First, as in the case of the similar lesson in Matt. 22: 1-14, the men who were originally invited to the feast made light of the invitation

which had been extended to them. This, of course, refers primarily to the treatment which the Jewish people gave to God's offer to them when he sent Christ into the world. They were more interested in having their way about the affairs of this life, than they were in learning and doing the will of God. The Old Testament Scriptures had plainly revealed that which God proposed to do for them, but they had misread that part of God's revelation; and when Jesus came and explained to them exactly what God wanted them to do, they were in no mood to listen to him. This same condition prevails even today, as may be seen by any careful observer; but no man can trifle with the Eternal and escape the damnation of hell: all people who reject Christ will be rejected of God. (Cf. Heb. 2: 1-4.)

Some Bible students see in the wording of the parable now under consideration three groups to whom the Lord's invitation was sent, namely, (1) those who were originally invited—the Jewish leaders; and then when they failed to go, (2) the neglected class among the Jews—the publicans and sinners; and (3) the Gentiles. It is not the will of God that any one be lost, and he has, accordingly, ordained that the gospel invitation be extended to all men.

"And yet there is room." There are some people who wonder if there will be enough room for all the righteous to enjoy the glories of the world to come. There is, of course, no need for concern about this; for there will always be room for any one who longs to live with God. Bengel notes that "nature and grace alike abhor a vacuum." In the words of Barnes, There is a banquet

there which no number can exhaust; fountains which no number can drink dry; and always places for others to occupy. This glad news and urgent demand on the part of the Lord should make every child of God try harder to bring others to Christ.

The emphasis in the text is on the work of the master's servant who was charged with taking the invitation to all classes of people, and wherever they could be found; but the Bible also teaches that the people who hear the gospel message have a responsibility. We know that is true from what happened to the men who slighted the invitation, that is, those who made the excuses. "For I say unto you that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." It is a fearful thing for one to reject the Lord's invitation. (Read again Heb. 2: 1-4.) The Gentiles today enjoy the privileges which were once vouchsafed only to the Jews, and their responsibility in the sight of the Lord is just as great as was that of the Jews. (Cf. Rom. 11: 19-23.) We all should remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that every responsible individual will be held accountable for his opportunities.

Some men have endeavored to find fault with God for sending people to an eternal hell; but they have completely missed the point. The parable now under consideration pictures the Lord as making every possible effort to get men to come to the banquet table. Any one who is eternally lost must first reject the mercy which God has offered, and then his fate will become his own responsibility. (Cf. Isa. 55: 6, 7; Heb. 10: 26-29.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Discuss the background of the lesson now before us.

How did Jesus handle the situation which was manifested on that occasion?

What lesson did he teach regarding the attitude of invited guests?

### The Golden Text

What is implied in the exhortation contained in this text?

Do we need exhortations like that today?

Give reasons for your answer.

Discuss the good which often comes from showing love to strangers.

Why do many people hesitate to invite strangers into their homes as guests?

How can the Lord's people improve this situation?

### Rules of Hospitality for a Host

Give an analysis of the first twenty-four verses of Luke 14.

What important lesson should we learn from this analysis?

Is it wrong to invite one's relatives and close friends for a dinner? Give reasons for your answer.

What lesson, then, did Jesus mean to teach?

How does the Lord regard kindness which his people show to the poor and needy?

#### The Great Supper and the Attitude of Some Toward It

What was the occasion for the Lord's speaking the parable of the great supper?

What important lesson had the Jews of his day failed to learn?

What vital lesson is there in this for us?

What are the principal points in the parable which Jesus spoke?

What do we learn regarding the men in question from the excuses which they gave?

What does a spiritual view of these excuses reveal?

How may the Lord's people be freed from the necessity of such excuses?

What warnings are contained in them?

What is the significance of the term "consent"?

Why were the excuses which the men offered sinful?

Show how people today become guilty of the sins of the men of the parable.

#### The Reaction of the Master of the House to the Slighted Invitation

What are some of the lessons which we should learn from this part of the lesson text?

Why did the Jews so completely miss the predictions of the Old Testament regarding Jesus?

Show how the same situation may be applicable to us.

What three groups were included in the master's instruction to his servant?

What can you say regarding the available room in heaven for all who want to be saved?

Where did the parable place the emphasis for getting the house filled?

What other responsibility is clearly set forth?

What application does this have for us?

Why do some people try to place the responsibility for the punishment of the lost on God?

What are the true facts regarding this matter?

### Lesson XI—June 12, 1966

## BEARING THE CROSS OF JESUS

### Lesson Text

#### Luke 14: 25-35

25 Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have *wherewith* to complete it?

29 Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and asketh conditions of peace.

33 So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill: men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Far be it from, me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"*(Gal. 6: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 5: 1-13.

### Daily Bible Readings

June 6.	M.....	Suffering for Righteousness (Matt. 5: 1-12)
June 7.	T.....	Enduring Persecution (2 Tim. 3: 10-12)
June 8.	W.....	Saul, Persecutor of the Church (Acts 8: 1-4)
June 9.	T.....	Suffering Hardship for Christ (Phil. 4: 14-20)
June 10.	F.....	Reward of Humility (Prov. 22: 1-9)
June 11.	S.....	Mind of Christ (Phil. 2: 5-11)
June 12.	S.....	Reaping in Joy (Psalm 126: 1-6)

Time.—Probably between A.D. 26 and 29.

Place.—Probably in Peraea.

Persons.—Jesus, and the multitudes who followed him.

### Introduction

It is natural to assume that the vast multitudes who followed Jesus on the occasion of the lesson now before us were waiting in the vicinity of the house in which he had just been a guest at dinner. When once the people learned of Jesus, he never lacked for a crowd to accompany him; but if we consider the over-all view of his earthly ministry, it is easy to see that the great majority did not follow him because they wanted to be saved from their sins. Two of the chief aims which characterized the multitudes were material gains (the loaves and the fishes) and political ends (they expected Jesus to become an earthly king). There were, of course, those who sought the healing touch of the Lord, both for themselves and others; as well as the curious. But whatever the motive, great multitudes followed Jesus wherever he went while he was free to mix and mingle with the people; but it should be remembered that it was the multitude who called for his death when he was taken into custody by the Romans.

But whatever may have prompted the people to follow Jesus, the greater part of them did not understand his purpose. It often became necessary therefore for him to sift the crowds, which he did by speaking plainly to them regarding his mission to the earth. (Cf. John 6: 1-71.) When occasions like this occurred, only the most spiritually-minded understood that which he said. The majority would leave him

because they professed not to understand him; but they did understand him well enough to see that he was not the person for their purpose. That which has just been referred to happened "in the days of his flesh;" but any thoughtful observer knows that substantially the same situation is present today. Churches are overflowing with professed followers of Christ; but it often happens that when the testing time comes, many are found going in the other direction.

The main proposition which we are to consider in this lesson is that of the conditions of discipleship. This is a most important study; for it is obviously true that many people who claim to be Christians have yet to learn the conditions which must be met, if they are to be acceptable to God. There are multitudes who have mistaken that which they call obeying the first principles of the gospel for the first steps and they need to learn the difference between "first principles" and "first steps." The first steps are faith, repentance, and baptism; but there are some principles which must be recognized and accepted before one is ready to take those first steps. Or, to state the same thing is another way, there are some conditions which must be met before one is ready to take the first steps mentioned above. This is the burden of the lesson now before us, as we shall see as we proceed with this study.

### The Golden Text

*"Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"* The words just quoted are taken from the closing part of Paul's letter to the Galatians who were turning their backs on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross had made their salvation possible. It appears that the apostle usually employed a letter-writer, also called an amanuensis, when he sent a message to the churches or individuals; but he made it clear in 2 Thess. 3: 17 that he himself penned the autograph. His words are: "The saluta-

tion of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write." The words of the golden text which we are now considering are taken from Paul's autographic attestation, along with a warning against the Judaizers whose opposition to the cross of Christ had had the effect of invalidating the gospel itself. It would be difficult to find a more pathetic plea to his beloved disciples than the one contained in the context of the passage now before us. The full statement follows:



"See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything, not uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

"Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." (Gal. 6: 11-17.)

Paul was getting along in years when he wrote the words just quot-

ed, and he had long known the meaning of the cross of Christ. It was the symbol of Christianity; for Christianity is the religion of the cross. Its subject matter is identified with the cross; for its author and Lord is the incarnate, risen, and exalted Son of God who died upon the cross. Paul made it plain to the Galatians that the death of Christ was absolutely essential for the salvation of the human race; and it was because of this that he refused to glory in anything, save in the cross of Christ. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought." (Gal. 2: 20, 21.)

## The Text Explained

### The Claim of Christ

#### Is Supreme

(Luke 14: 25-27)

*Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

It probably seems to the casual reader that Jesus would want great multitudes to follow after him; but they evidently do not take into consideration the motives which Prompted them. Jesus, indeed, does want all men to come after him; but he wants them to do so because of who and what he is. He will not allow any one to deceive himself into thinking that he can be acceptable to him, unless he is willing to meet the conditions of discipleship. It is not the person who counts in the sight of God, but the character of the individual. Character cannot be obtained in the market-place; it must be grown or developed. If an individual therefore is willing to enter into and accept the true meaning of discipleship, he will find that the

Lord will welcome him into the company of his followers, and will give him every needed help and encouragement to continue the journey with him. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19, 20.)

Unless one is willing to make a careful study of the teaching of Jesus regarding discipleship, he is almost certain to misunderstand that which he says regarding hating one's relatives and himself. If one is familiar with the Book of Matthew, he very likely will think of Matt. 10: 34-37, where Jesus says, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

The word for "hate" in the passage now before us is *miseo*, and the term for "set at variance" in Matt. 10: 35 is *dichazō*. The latter term clearly means to love less, and that, of course, must be true in any event, that is, the disciple of Christ must love all others less than he loves the Lord. The gospel of Christ often

has the effect of turning its opponents against those of their relatives who accept it. But the word *miseō* is a stronger word than *dischazō*, and the idea is that we must not only love our relatives and ourselves less than we love Christ, but that we must actually oppose in them and us anything which is contrary to the will and way of Christ. (Cf. Deut. 13: 6-11; 1 Kings 15: 13.) The word "deny" (*aperneomai*) in Matt. 16: 24 seems to confirm this idea. When one denies himself, he renounces or disowns himself as a leader, and subordinates all to Christ. Or, to express the same thing in another way, he moves himself out of the way, and makes room for Christ to lead the way. (Cf. Phil. 3: 7-11.) When one is animated by that kind of a spirit, he will oppose any relative or himself in anything which is contrary to the will of Christ.

"Cross-bearing," so we are told, was a familiar sight to the Jews of Jesus' day. In fact, according to one writer, the sight was so familiar that it was not an uncommon thing for a man to dream of his own crucifixion. The words of Jesus therefore must have made a deep impression on the minds of those who heard him make this pronouncement; and it is quite probable that many of them actually thought that he was referring to a literal act. The Speaker's Bible points out that no adult who was present on that occasion could have forgotten the awful days, some thirty years before when, upon the death of Herod the country had seethed with revolt, which had been repressed with frightful cruelty by the Roman commander Varus. Many of the people who heard Jesus that day had seen the long chain of two thousand people, each bearing his own cross on his back, on the way to his death; and they may well have thought that Christ was predicting a similar end to his followers.

But Jesus did not have in mind the bearing of a literal cross of wood. There is, however, another mistaken idea which many people today have of cross-bearing; they confuse it with burden-bearing which may come alike to saints and sinners. Any one, regardless of his moral or spiritual status, is subject to burden-bearing, such as comes with poverty, trouble of various

kinds, et cetera. No one needs to be commanded to bear burdens: those with burdens have no choice in the matter; but they can learn to bear them gracefully. Cross-bearing, on the other hand, is something additional to burden-bearing; for the cross is something which is taken up voluntarily; and it is within our power to refuse to touch it. (Cf. John 10: 17, 18.) We are bearing our crosses, then, when we voluntarily suffer for the good of others, when we are willing to do something which will cost us effort or pain, or perhaps both, in order to help those who may have need of our assistance. We do this, not because we cannot escape it, but because it is a consequence of our following Christ; and the good of bearing this cross is because we cannot be in fellowship with our Lord without it. He, then, is a true disciple of Christ who will bear any cross, or endure any hardship, which is involved in loyally following the Master. But we must not invent crosses for ourselves, and certainly not for others.

### The Need for Countin? The Cost Illustrated

(Luke 14: 28-33)

*For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it. Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

When Jesus speaks of counting the cost, in the lesson now under consideration, he does not mean that the potential or prospective disciple should consider that which it will cost him to follow the Lord; and then if upon mature study he decides that it will involve more than he is willing to do, or thinks that he can do, he had better refrain from

becoming a disciple at all. Such an idea as that is utterly foreign to the plain teaching of such passages as the following: "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." (2 Thess. 1: 7-9.) Jesus never encourages any person to remain in the kingdom of Satan, because of that which the cost of discipleship in the Lord's kingdom involves; but on the other hand he is calling on men everywhere to forsake the evil way and come to him at all costs. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; 2 Cor. 5: 9-11; Heb. 10: 30, 31.)

That which the Lord is doing in the passage now under consideration is that of urging people to count the cost of not becoming his disciples. Discipleship does indeed involve tremendous consequences; but they fade into insignificance when compared to the effects of rejecting Christ. Both of the parables now before us emphasize the same truth, and they are placed along beside the parable of The Great Supper (Luke 14: 15-24), and are intended to supplement its lesson, and to preclude any perversion of its meaning. The gospel provisions, as the first parable clearly shows, are open to all men; and while every effort is made to get them to accept the Lord's invitation, the two now under consideration emphasizes the stupendous responsibility of those who see fit to reject it.

A builder, for example, would be foolish to begin a structure before ascertaining whether or not he had the necessary means and resources to complete it. It would be much better to make the necessary investigation first, than it would be to run the risk of being taunted as a failure by those who observe his unfinished building. Or, to state the same thing in another way, no man should undertake anything, the success of which depends upon his own resources, without first finding out whether or not he is able to complete it. This is another way of saying that any thoughtful person will first take into consideration that

which is involved in his ability to build a character which will stand in the last day, before rejecting the offer of Christ. And when this is done, the person in question will be able to see clearly that the only sensible thing for him to do is to become a disciple of the Lord.

As already pointed out, the parable of the king with the smaller army teaches the same lesson, as that of the builder with insufficient resources. No thoughtful king would undertake a conflict with another ruler with an army twice the size of his own, without first taking into consideration his chances for success; and when he concludes that there is no possibility of his winning the victory, he takes the necessary steps to secure a peaceful solution. This, of course, can be done only when he realizes that the king with victorious resources has the sole right to name the conditions of peace. The king who is sure of defeat has no voice in such matters. His responsibility is to comply with the demands which are imposed upon him.

The lessons taught by the two parables which we have just considered must be learned and accepted before any one can become a disciple of Christ. The man away from Christ must learn that he does not have sufficient resources to build a character which will stand in the judgment, without the help of the Lord; and when he comes to that conclusion, and only then, is he ready to ask, What must I do to be saved? He is in no position to have anything whatsoever to say regarding the terms of salvation; he must listen to that which is commanded him, and must render unquestioned obedience. Any man who will count the cost of what is involved in rejecting Christ will have little trouble in seeing the necessity of renouncing any worth or merit which he may think that he has, and of turning in true humility to Christ for his mercy. (Cf. Acts 2: 36-38.) This is what it means to be poor in spirit, that is, without any spiritual resources. (Cf. Matt. 5:3.)

**True Discipleship Versus a  
Mere Profession**  
(Luke 14: 34, 35)

*Salt therefore is good: but if even  
the salt have lost its savor, where-*

*with shall it be seasoned? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dung-hill: men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Jesus was able to take the most common things of earth, and clothe them with a vital Christian meaning; or, which is the same thing, he could use them to teach truths which men must know, if they are going to please the Lord. Salt is one of the familiar things in human experience, and Jesus frequently used it to emphasize vital truths. (Cf. Matt. 5: 13; Mark 9: 49, 50.) The salt which Jesus had in mind was a mixed substance; and it was said to have lost its savor when the sodium chloride had been washed out of the earthly residuum. A saltless disciple, then, is one who has gone back to the earthly, the worldly, the carnal. (Cf. James 4: 4; 2 Pet. 2: 20-22.) The heavenly element is no longer in the ascendancy; the salt has lost its savor. It has no further use either as a seasoning or preserving power, or as a fertilizer of the land. (Cf. Col. 3: 1-4.)

"Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" This is a rhetorical question, and the lesson is obvious. By paraphrasing the words of Jesus, we can easily see that which the Lord wants us to understand. "Discipleship therefore is good: but if even the discipleship have lost its saving power [that is, its contact with Christ], wherewith shall it be reanimated? It has no useful purpose: and even men reject it." There is nothing more distasteful to the people of the world, to say nothing of the Lord, than a professed follower of Christ who does not take his religion seriously. The remark of Jesus is intended to caution the potential or prospective disciples of his that a mere profession of discipleship will not suffice; their devotion to him must be genuine.

This certainly should cause every

professed follower of Christ to give himself a careful examination, and ascertain in the light of God's word and the facts of his own experience if he is in reality following Jesus. And so, let us ask, What are some of the signs of spiritual deterioration? In seeking an answer to this question, let us use the term salt, as Jesus did, to represent true discipleship. We may be sure that spiritual deterioration has set in (1) when there is a loss of distinction between the salt and that upon which it is supposed to act as a seasoning and preserving power. (2) When people do not seek the companionship of the Lord and his people, and listen for his voice through his revealed word. (Cf. 1 John 1: 6, 7; Luke 22: 54b; 2 Tim. 4: 10.)

(3) A growing indifference toward the work which the Lord has authorized his people to do, namely, build up the saints, evangelize the world, and do that which is good toward all men, as the opportunity presents itself. The attitude and conduct of the church of Laodicea—Rev. 3: 14-18—is a splendid example of such indifference.

The doom which Jesus pronounced on saltless disciples is rejection of both God and men. (Cf. Matt. 5: 13.) The force of the doom and the humiliation of it are emphasized by the fact that even the men of the world tread such people beneath their feet. When the savor and strength of divine grace depart from a congregation or an individual member of the church the result is fatal. The perishing which follows is not due to an immediate act of God—that would be too noble a destiny—but to men; and in many instances the very men whom the disciples in question sought to conciliate, by making their lives conform to the ways of the world. (Cf. Rom. 12: 1, 2.) Jesus concluded this section of the lesson text by warning the people to make the proper use of their ears.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Where did the great multitudes who followed Jesus on this occasion probably come from?

What were some of the motives which prompted people to follow the Lord?

What else do we know about the multitudes who followed Jesus?

Why did Christ sometimes speak so plainly to the crowds about him?

What lesson should we learn from this?

What is the principal purpose of the lesson now before us?

Distinguish between obeying the first principles of the gospel and in obeying first steps.

The Golden Text  
Under what circumstances did Paul write the words of this text?  
Discuss the context in which it is found.  
Why did Paul glory in the cross of Jesus?

The Claim of Christ Is Supreme  
Why did Jesus seemingly discourage great crowds from following him?  
Why is character so important to us?  
What has the Lord promised to do for those who sincerely want to be his disciples?  
Why are many people in danger of misunderstanding the words of Jesus on this occasion?  
In what sense are we to "hate" our close relatives and ourselves?  
What is the principal difference between "hating" and "loving less"?  
In what sense must prospective disciples "deny" themselves?  
What did the people probably understand Jesus to mean by "cross-bearing"?  
What is the New Testament meaning of that expression?  
What is the difference between cross-bearing and burden-bearing?

The Need for Counting the Cost Illustrated

What does Jesus mean by "counting the cost"?  
Has he ever said or done anything to discourage people from following him?  
Give reasons for your answer.  
Why should potential or prospective disciples count the cost?  
What is the lesson taught by the builder?  
By the king with the smaller army?  
What is the principle lesson of these two parables?  
Why doesn't the lost person have any right to discuss the plan of human redemption?

True Discipleship Versus a Mere Profession

Why did Jesus use so many common things of life to teach spiritual truths?  
What was the nature of the salt which he used to illustrate his lessons?  
What are the principal uses of salt?  
Why is salt a fitting illustration of discipleship?  
Who, then, are saltless Christians?  
Why is "saltless salt" rejected by men?  
What is the lesson here for us and what are some of the signs of deterioration?  
What use should those who have ears make of them?

Lesson XII—June 19, 1966

THE FAMILY OF JESUS

Lesson Text

Matt. 13: 53-58; John 7: 1-5

53 And it came to pass, when Je'-sus had finished these parables, he departed thence.  
54 And coming into his own coun-try he taught them in their syna-gogue, insomuch that they were as-tonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?  
55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Si'-mon, and Ju'-das?  
56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?  
57 And they were offended in him. But Je'-sus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their un-belief.  
1 And after these things Je'-sus walked in Gal'-i-lee: for he would not walk in Ju-dae'-a, because the Jews sought to kill him.  
2 Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand.  
3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Ju-dae'-a, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest.  
4 For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world.  
5 For even his brethren did not believe on him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."* (Mark 3: 35.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 3: 31-35.

Daily Bible Readings

June 13. M.....The Family of Jesus (Matt. 12: 46-49)  
June 14. T.....Acquaintances of Jesus (Mark 6: 1-6)  
June 15. W.....A Friendly Family (Luke 10: 38-42)

- June 16. T..... An Unfriendly Community (Matt. 13: 54-58)  
 June 17. F.....Proofs of Friendliness (Matt. 10: 5-15)  
 June 18. S.....Mary, Mother of Jesus (Matt. 27: 45-56)  
 June 19. S.....Jesus' Concern for His Mother (John 19: 25-27)

TIME.—Matthew, between A.D. 26 and 29; John, A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Matthew, Nazareth; John, probably at Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Matthew, Jesus and the people of Nazareth John, Jesus and his brethren.

## Introduction

As all Bible students who accept the New Testament as the inspired word of God know, Jesus of Nazareth was born into this world as the Son of God and the son of Mary; thus proclaiming his deity and his humanity. Jesus therefore, during his earthly pilgrimage, was both God and man. These truths are readily accepted by most people who study these lesson; but there are many to-day, even in the pulpits of the land, who not only have called them in question, but who stoutly deny them. Many of the young people of Christian families have been, and will be, subjected to this false teaching; and there are some who have been, and who no doubt will be, overcome by it. This, alone, is sufficient to show that the Lord's people should not only accept the truths regarding Jesus, but they should also prepare their children and others so that they will cling to them.

Our lesson for today, however, has to do with the earthly family of Jesus, particularly his mother, and his brothers and sisters. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary the mother of Jesus denies that the latter had any brothers and sisters, or, which is the same thing, that Mary was the mother of any besides Jesus. This doctrine, of course, is in direct conflict with the plain statements of the New Testament. (Cf., for example, Matt. 12: 46, 47; Acts 1: 14; Gal. 1: 19.) The brothers and sisters of Jesus were his half brothers and sisters, since they were the children of Mary and presumably Joseph. There are some who claim that these other children were those of Joseph by a former marriage, while others are of the opinion that they were the chil-

dren of Mary's sister, thus making them the cousins of Jesus. But if the gospel writers who record their names and who say that they were the brothers (*adelphoi*) of Jesus meant that they were his cousins, why then did they not use the word for "cousin" (*anepsios*, Col. 4: 10)?

We may be certain, from the meager information which we possess, that Jesus enjoyed a normal family life, and that he grew up in a natural way with his brothers and sisters, under the watchful care of Joseph and Mary. Joseph was himself a carpenter, and it is assumed that he taught Jesus that trade. If we can put any reliance in tradition, Joseph probably passed on before Jesus was grown; and inasmuch as he was the oldest of the children, it would be natural for him to assume the status of the head of the household, so far as earning a living was concerned. In his book, *Jesus and His Methods*, W. F. Ledlow, in speaking of the life of Jesus during his years at home in Nazareth, says, "His stay on earth was in a large measure distinctly human. He lived, he worked, he rejoiced, he sorrowed, he died—all the same as man. His close touch with man and nature prepared him for his public ministry. His whole life was a school, a drill, a preparation for his work as redeemer, priest, mediator, and king. . . . From the great abundance of his experimental life Jesus drew his lessons, and appropriated his experiences to distinctively religious purposes. He presented his doctrines and truths with such pathos and interest as he could not have done, had he not lived and experienced life as a man."

## The Golden Text

"For *whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother* " The passage

which has just been quoted is from Mark's record of an extremely busy period in the ministry of Jesus. 1<sup>o</sup>

the words of this gospel writer, "And he cometh into a house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself." (Mark 3: 19b-21.) This was followed by his exposure of the corrupt state of some scribes who had ascribed the power which he exercised in casting a demon to Satan, and his pronouncement regarding an eternal sin. And then comes the immediate context of the passage which serves as the golden text for today.

"And there cometh his mother and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round upon them that sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Mark 3: 31-35.) This is but one example during the public ministry of Jesus when he emphasized the priority of the spiritual relationship to him over the physical (cf. Luke 11: 27, 28); or, to state the same thing in another way, he was saying that fleshly ties have no ultimate significance. We know that Jesus was never disrespectful to his mother or his brethren (cf. John 19:

26, 27); but the time had come in his life when his relationship to God had to be emphasized.

It matters not what one's relationship in this life may be, so far as others are concerned, nothing counts unless he is right with God; and, as *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* points out, entrance into God's family is gained by doing the will of God, and such obedience begins by hearing, believing, and following God's Son. And if one wants to know what it means to follow God's Son, let him consider the following passages: "But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 15.) "But he answered and said, It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4: 4.) "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5: 3.) "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." (John 4: 34.) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21.) "I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 5: 30.) "And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him." (John 8: 29.)

## The Text Explained

### Jesus Revisits Nazareth and Is Only Partially Identified (Matt. 13: 53-57)

*And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. The parables which Jesus had finished speaking were the seven which are contained in the chapter from which this portion of the lesson text is taken. The Lord was on the Sea of Galilee when they were spoken, probably near Capernaum. The multitudes who had gathered around him were so great that "he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the*

beach." (See Matt. 13: 1, 2.) That was a busy day for Jesus; and when he had finished his teaching, he departed thence.

*And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, inasmuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in*

*his own country, and in his own house.*

While the record does not specifically say so, it is generally thought that the particular part of his "own country" to which Jesus went was his former home town of Nazareth. Luke, in describing a similar visit there, said, "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up." (Luke 4: 16a.) Jesus lived in that city from early childhood (see Matt. 2: 22, 23; Luke 2: 42, 51), until he moved to Capernaum, following his rejection at Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4: 16-31. (Cf. Matt. 4: 12, 13.) The writers of the gospel narratives did not always follow the chronological order in recording the events in the life of Christ; and that fact sometimes makes it difficult for us to place certain events in their proper places. But if all the records are considered together, it is fairly easy to get a general idea of the order of events in the life of our Lord.

Some time had elapsed since Jesus was first rejected at Nazareth (see again Luke 4: 16-31), when his fellow townspeople tried to kill him; but at the time of this lesson, he was returning again, no doubt with the hope of bringing them a blessing. He was like the good shepherd who was seeking for the lost sheep, and the kindly physician who would heal the illnesses and infirmities of his people. As Jesus taught in the synagogue of Nazareth, his former neighbors readily recognized him as having grown up there, and they quickly identified him with the members of his family. It also appears that they did not attempt to deny nor even to minimize the mighty works which he was doing; but they were not prepared to admit that he came from God. (Cf. John 3: 1, 2.) Or, to state the same thing in another way, they only partially recognized Jesus.

The attitude of the people of Nazareth toward Jesus, however, was nothing unusual. Men all through the ages have thought that they had to account for him, and the Nazarenes therefore were only giving expression to a common practice, when they asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" The desire to account for the "Man of Galilee" is one of the remarkable things about him; and it

is enough to cause us all to stop and think. No other person in human history affects us in this manner. No other man so persistently arouses in us the question, "Who art thou?" and forces us to feel that he is completely different from any other person who ever walked upon the earth.

The uniqueness of Christ does not stem from the fact that no other exceptional men have lived upon the earth. Many such men have left their footprints upon the sands of time; but not a single one of them has caused us to feel that we are compelled to account for him. The lives of others do indeed compel an interest on our part; but Jesus demands an explanation. He is revealed in the gospel records as a humble Galilean peasant; but in a little more than three short years he laid the foundation for the greatest kingdom and the purest religion this world has ever seen. And he has so woven his own personality into the texture of that religion as to become its central figure, with the value of God for all of his followers.

This exalted position of Jesus did not come to him as a result of long-delayed meditation and reflection by men of later years. The people who lived most continuously in his immediate presence were the first to recognize his true worth. Is it any wonder, then, that from that day forward, when men and women truly met him, they recognized in him a problem which they could not evade? Jesus indeed must be identified; but the mistake which the Nazarenes made regarding him was only in partially identifying him. His identity must be complete, if we are to understand him as we should and must.

The reason for the incomplete identification of Jesus by the people of Nazareth was due to the fact that they *thought* that they knew all about him. He had grown up in their midst, and what else was there for them to learn about him! There does not appear to be any reason for thinking that the former neighbors of Jesus were snobbish in referring to him as "the carpenter's son" (cf. Mark 6: 3); that was simply their way of identifying him. The Jews believed that all children should be taught an honorable trade, and there was certainly nothing dishonorable



about being a carpenter. (Cf. Acts 18: 3.) But instead of knowing all about Jesus, the Nazarenes knew only a very little about his outward life. (Cf. Luke 2: 41-50; John 8: 12-19.)

The superficial thinking of the people of Nazareth led them to conclude that it would be impossible for them to live beside the Son of God, and not know it. (Cf. John 6: 42; 7: 25-27.) This is one of the most common mistakes made by men today. (Sec Matt. 25: 31-46; Acts 22: 3-8.) The people of Nazareth were under the impression that any introduction to God would have to be externally authenticated and guaranteed. (John 7: 40-52.) It apparently never occurred to the people where Jesus grew up that he could speak as God's representative, without the authority and endorsement of the scribes and priests. (Cf. Matt. 7: 28, 29; John 12: 48-50.)

The names of the four brothers of Jesus are given, but nothing is said here or elsewhere regarding the names of his sisters. There is a widespread feeling among Bible students that two of the brothers, James and Judas, were the authors of the New Testament epistles which bear their names. It should be observed that "Jude" is a contraction of Judas. In saying that the people of Nazareth were "offended at" Jesus, the idea is, as indicated in the marginal reading, that they were caused to stumble. In the words of Goodspeed's translation, "And they took offense at him." Or, as Moffatt has it, "So they were repelled by him," while Weymouth renders the passage, "So they turned against him." It was inconceivable to the people of Nazareth that Jesus was above them, and they therefore took exception to any indication that he was.

The reply of Jesus to the attitude manifested by the people of Nazareth was expressed in these words: "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house." J. W. McGarvey points out that it is jealousy which prevents a prophet from being honored in his own country, and by his own people. The attitude on the part of those who live closest to the prophet is so widespread as to make it proverbial. In the words of Thomas Heywood,

Seven cities warr'd for Homer being dead,  
Who living had no roofe to shroud head.

Thus, in Nazareth, Jesus was no more than the son of a carpenter, himself a carpenter, and the brother of certain very ordinary men and women whom they all knew, or thought they knew. But in other parts of the country, Jesus was proclaimed as a prophet of God, mighty in word and deed. (See Luke 24: 19.)

There are some very definite results which follow prejudicial thinking, that is, the kind of thinking which characterized the people of Nazareth; and as we shall see later on in this study, the brothers of Jesus also, (1) *It is self-contradictory.* It marvels at the truth which is spoken, and the deeds which are done; while continuing to hold to the idea that a poor and uninfluential neighbor cannot be a great teacher. They did not question either the message or the works, but only the ability of the man who had lived among them to say and do them! (2) *It is manifestly foolish.* This is true because the merits of a doctrine are always independent of the circumstances of the teacher. Furthermore, some of the greatest teachers which the world has ever known came up from the lowest ranks of life. (3) *It is lamentably pernicious.* Prejudicial thinking prevents people from believing the truth (cf. Acts 17: 1-12), and makes impossible the work which God could and would do for them, if they had a different attitude, as we shall see in the next section of the lesson text for today.

The Lord's Mighty Works  
Were Limited Because of  
Their Unbelief

(Matt. 13: 53)

*And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

The parallel statement in Mark reads this way: "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief." (Mark 6: 5, 6.) It appears that the Lord's inability to perform miracles in Nazareth, on the occasion of this lesson,

was not due to any effort on the part of the people to limit his power and prevent the exercise of it; but rather because that in their unbelief they refused to bring the afflicted to him. This is clearly implied in the statement "save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." This is another way of saying that he healed all who were brought to him. The Bible nowhere teaches that the Lord's power to work miracles was dependent upon the faith of the people; for he sometimes healed where no faith was in evidence. (Cf. Luke 22: 50, 51.) But, as in the case now before us, Jesus did not perform miracles when the people were not willing to have him do so.

In commenting on this portion of the lesson text, David Thomas says, "*Their not believing on him prevented divine operations.* It is so in everything. Would the agriculturist have God to perform mighty works on his fields, covering them in autumn with abundant crops? then he *must have faith* in the laws of nature, and in the capacity of his soil. Would the poor man have God to perform mighty works for him, raise him from penury and obscurity to wealth and influence? he must have faith in the principle that '*the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*' Would the statesman have God perform mighty works for his country? he must, in all the measures he proposes and the laws he enacts, have faith in the truth that '*Righteousness exalteth a nation.*' It is so in everything. '*He that hath faith as a grain of mustard seed, shall say unto this mountain,*' etc. Would you like to know what God has done through faith? Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews." (*The Gospel of St. Matthew*, see pages 248-250.)

### The Unsympathetic Attitude of Jesus' Brethren Toward Him

(John 7: 1-5)

*And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples may*

*also behold thy works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world. For even his brethren did not believe on him.*

The natural way to understand the expression "after these things" is to regard it as referring to the things discussed in the preceding chapter; but it is only fair to say that this view is not unanimous among Bible students. There are some who think that the reference is to the things of chapter 5. If, however, the reference is to the things of chapter 6, then there was about six months between the events of the two chapters. (Cf. John 6: 4.) The feast of the passover came during the first month of the Jewish religious year, our March-April; while the feast of tabernacles was celebrated during the seventh month, our September-October. The feast of the tabernacles was the most joyous of all the feasts of the Jews.

When all the facts are considered, it appears that the brothers of Jesus felt toward him about like the people of Nazareth did. They did not deny that he performed miracles, but they refused to accept him as the Messiah. It is natural to assume from John 2: 12 that the brethren of Jesus were in sympathy with Jesus and his work; but that was before the great controversy between Christ and the Jewish leaders took place regarding his claim to the Messiahship. It is also possible that the events of chapter 6 did much to bring about the change in the attitude of the brothers toward Jesus. They evidently had a materialistic conception of the Messiahship. (Cf. John 6: 15, 16, 60-71.)

The brothers apparently wanted Jesus to succeed as a spectacular leader, even though they did not believe him to be the Messiah; and it was evidently for that reason that they wanted him to go to the feast in Jerusalem, where he would have the greatest opportunity to display his powers. Jesus, however, was not interested in the spectacular; and he did not intend to be governed by such a motive. It is good to know, however, that the brethren of Jesus did change their attitude toward him for the better after his resurrection

from the dead, as may be gathered from Acts 1: 14. James, in addition to writing the epistle which bears his name, became one of the most

influential leaders in the early church, even with the rank of an apostle. (Cf. Acts 15: 1-29; Gal. 1: 19; 2: 12; Acts 21: 17-26.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What can you say of the twofold nature of Jesus while he was here on the earth?

Why do so many professed followers of Christ deny his virgin birth?

Why is it essential that the Lord's people familiarize themselves with these issues?

Why do some people deny that Jesus had any fleshly brothers and sisters?

What kind of a life must Jesus have lived in Nazareth during his first thirty years?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this text?

What appears to have been his reason for saying that which he spoke on that occasion?

In what way alone may people become members of the spiritual family of Christ?

How did Jesus demonstrate that he was pleasing to his heavenly Father?

### Jesus Revisits Nazareth and Is

#### Only Partially Identified

**What parables had Jesus just finished speaking at the time of this lesson?**

**What did he do next and where did he apparently go?**

How long did Jesus live in Nazareth and under what circumstances did he change his residence to another place?

**Why did he probably want to return to Nazareth at the time of this lesson?**

**What was the attitude of his former neighbors toward Jesus and why?**

Was their attitude unusual? Give reasons for your answer.

Why have people in all ages felt that they had to account for Jesus?

Why is he unique among men?

Why did the people of Nazareth fail to identify him completely?

What great mistake did they make and why were they offended in Jesus?

What is known regarding the family of our Lord?

What are some of the results which follow prejudicial thinking?

### The Lord's Mighty Works Were Limited Because of Their Unbelief

Why was Jesus unable to perform many mighty works in Nazareth at the time of this lesson?

Can the lack of faith on the part of people render Jesus unable to work miracles? Give reasons for your answer.

What important lesson should we learn from this circumstance?

### The Unsympathetic Attitude of Jesus' Brethren Toward Him

After what 'things' did Jesus cease to walk in Judaea and why in Galilee?

At what season of the year did the events of this portion of the text take place?

What appears to have been the particular feeling which the brethren of Jesus had toward him at the time of this lesson?

Why did they evidently want him to succeed and in what?

Why did Jesus refuse their request?

What change evidently took place in the Lord's brethren after his resurrection?

Give an estimate of the life and influence of James during the early years of the church.

## Lesson XIII—June 26, 1966

# THE TENDERNESS OF JESUS

## Lesson Text

### Matt. 15: 21-31

21 And Je'-sus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Si'don.

22 And behold, a Ca-na'an-i'-tish Woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.

23 But he answered her not a Word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Is'-ra-el.

25 But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

27 But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Je'-sus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy

faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

29 And Je'-sus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Gal'-i-lee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there.

30 And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the

lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them:

31 Inasmuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Is-ra-el.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 7: 24-37.

### Daily Bible Readings

June 20. M. ....	Christ, Friend of Sinners (Luke 15: 1, 2)
June 21. T. ....	Christ's Concern for Jerusalem (Luke 13: 34, 35)
June 22. W. ....	A Case of Healing (Mark 5: 25-34)
June 23. T. ....	Jesus Came to Save the Lost (Luke 19: 1-10)
June 24. F. ....	Balm in Gilead (Jer. 8: 18-22)
June 25. S. ....	Compassion of Jesus (Mark 3: 7-10)
June 26. S. ....	Helpfulness in Sickness (2 Kings 5: 1-7)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 29.

PLACE.—The parts of Tyre and Sidon; a mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, the Canaanitish woman, her daughter, and the multitudes.

### Introduction

The events of this lesson took place during the Lord's third Galilean preaching tour, and also during the third year of his public ministry. Those who are familiar with the New Testament are aware of the fact that no one of the gospel writers professed to record all of the sayings and deeds which were spoken and performed by Jesus. All of them together, in fact, do not make that claim. (Cf. John 21: 25.) This means, of course, that the biographical writers had another purpose in mind when they wrote their records. In writing of "The Four Gospels," W. F. Ledlow says that the gospels are peculiar books; each has a distinct characteristic. To some extent they deal with the same problems, and at times repeat one another; but in the main they are supplementary; and the four present a complete story. They describe a character rather than a person; and endeavor to show how Jesus lived rather than how he looked.

It is generally thought that Matthew wrote primarily for the Jews; but there is nothing to indicate that other people would not be benefited by that which he recorded. His prime purpose seems to have been to

show that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, whose coming was predicted in the Old Testament scriptures. And then in addition and subordinate to this primary purpose. Matthew also recorded many precepts, promises, and predictions of Jesus, which would be useful for the practical guidance of his people after his kingdom was set up. And what was true of Matthew was also true of the other three writers. Ledlow says further, The four men, commonly known as Evangelists, approached the Master from four different angles, and each described his life and work from his own viewpoint; and interpreted him in terms of his own selection. The distinct personality of each writer appears, and in the end the perfect Christ is described. (*Jesus and His Methods*, p. 75.)

Those who study these lessons should, whenever possible, read carefully the parallel passages in the other gospel narratives. The lesson which is before us at this time is also found in Mark 7: 24-37, the passage which serves as our devotional reading for today. When the records of Matthew and Mark are carefully compared, it will be seen

that each complements the other by a number of details. This is a demonstration which plainly shows that their purpose was not to record every detail of the Lord's ministry; but to accomplish a definite thing for

their readers. If Jesus had done only a fraction of that which any one of the four gospel writers attribute to him, the fact of his Messiahship would have been abundantly established.

## The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the principle text, and it will be dealt with in its proper place.

## The Text Explained

A Mother's Cry for Mercy  
(Matt. 15: 21-24)

*And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

The incident of this lesson follows closely upon the Lord's encounter with the scribes and Pharisees, who came to him from Jerusalem. (Read Matt. 15: 1-20.) The text now before us does not specifically say that Jesus actually crossed the border into Gentile territory; but it is generally assumed that he did. Tyre and Sidon were the principal cities of Phoenicia, a narrow strip of land northwest of Palestine, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. (See map.) The record does not say that Jesus went to Tyre and Sidon, but rather to "the parts," that is, territory, which belonged to those cities.

If Jesus actually crossed the border from Galilee into Phoenicia, then that was probably the only time that he was on Gentile soil during his public ministry. One commentator suggests that after the interview with the sanctimonious Pharisees who regarded the whole world outside of Judaea as being unclean, it would be a refreshment to the Lord's spirit to cross over the line and feel that he was still in God's world, with blue sky overhead and the sea on one hand and the mountains on the other, all showing the glory of their Maker. In that case,

Jesus would breathe a freer, less stifling atmosphere there. This should suggest to all of us that we have a great obligation to try to make Christianity attractive to those who may be around us.

Mark refers to the woman whom Matthew calls a Canaanitish woman as "a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race." The term "Greek" is to be understood in the sense of a Gentile (the Gentiles were made up of many races), in contrast with the Jews; while "Syrophoenician" means a Syrian who lived in Phoenicia. It appears that Phoenicia was controlled by Syria, in that it was a part of the Syrian province. There is nothing in Mark's record which conflicts with the idea that the woman in question was a "Canaanite." The Canaanites were the original inhabitants of Palestine, and the Phoenicians were descended from them. (See Gen. 10: 15-19.)

The expression "Have mercy on me" implies that the distressed mother had made her child's misery her own. (Cf. Mark 9: 22.) The statement of the woman regarding Jesus as the son of David shows that she had some knowledge of the Messianic hopes of the people of Israel. Her country was adjacent to that of the Jews, and Matthew had earlier said that the report of Jesus "went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them." (Matt. 4: 24.) The troubled mother had in some way learned that Jesus was in her vicinity, and she immediately sought for him; and when she told him that her daughter was grievously vexed with a demon, she was literally saying that the child was badly demonized. Mark says that the girl was a little daugh-

*ter*, and that she had an *unclean spirit*, that is, an impure or wicked spirit.

Matthew's remark about the Lord's failure to answer the woman's cry for mercy is, in many ways, a remarkable statement. It has been called the silence of love; and, in the light of that which later happened, we can well understand that it was. The normal human being has a listening and apprehending capacity; and he has been taught to expect a response, when there is a need and a call for help has been made. This is the way in which David prayed: "Unto thee, O Jehovah, will I call: my Rock, be not thou deaf unto me; lest, if thou be silent unto me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle." (Psalm 28: 1, 2.) The silence of Jesus toward the Canaanitish woman was not a silence of indifference; we may be certain that his purpose was to teach a lesson—possibly to test and to allow her to demonstrate her faith.

It is hardly probable that the disciples, in their request to Jesus to send the woman away, meant for him to send her away without granting her request; but rather to do that which she had asked him to do, and thereby get rid of her. They were evidently annoyed by her entreaties; and they apparently did not like that form of public attention, that is, a strange woman crying after them. Mark implies that Jesus and the disciples were seeking to be alone: "And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid." (Mark 7: 24.)

The Lord's reply, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," was apparently in response to that which the disciples had said about sending the woman away; and it is very likely that it reminded them of the instruction which he had given them in Matt. 10: 5, 6. The remarks of Jesus on the occasion now before us were not meant to suggest that he was not interested in the plea of the suffering mother and her afflicted daughter, nor that the terms of his commission made it impossible for him to respond to her petition. His purpose was probably

to indicate the proper course of his public ministry. We know that Jesus did frequently give help to Gentile people; but that was not the principal purpose of his ministry. (Cf. Acts 3: 26; 18: 5, 6.)

### The Reward of Faith

(Matt. 15: 25-28)

*But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.*

Mark says that the woman came and fell at the feet of Jesus; and we may be sure that the piteous cry of this helpless mother was the most condensed possible form of expression which was wrung from the anguish of her heart. We have no possible way of knowing the precise feeling which it generated in Jesus. He may have felt that her request was not merely an isolated one, but was in a sense representative of the Gentile world inviting him, who was all but rejected by his own people, to come over and help them, a kind of omen of the transference of the kingdom from Jewish to Gentile territory.

The word for "dogs," in the Lord's reply to the mother who was crying for help, is diminutive and *literally* means "little dogs;" and the picture is that of a family meal, with the pet dogs running around the place where their masters were eating, and begging for something for themselves. The idea is not the uncleanness of the dog, but rather their subordinate and dependent position. There was therefore nothing degrading about the Lord's metaphor; he was simply emphasizing the relative positions of the Jews and Gentiles: and this was done by calling attention to the relative positions of the children and their pets. "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." (Mark 7: 27.)

The children are the masters of

the dogs, and Mark quotes the mother of the afflicted child as saying, "Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." (See Mark 7: 28.) Jesus had suggested the order in the home by which the pets are required to wait until the meal is over before receiving their portion; but with a wit made keen by her desperate plight, the mother replied by alluding to a well known fact that dogs under the table are permitted to eat the crumbs which fall to the floor, even while the meal is in progress; thereby intimating that she hoped to receive aid for her child, even before the needs of the Jews had been entirely satisfied.

The use of the diminutive throughout this exchange between Jesus and the Canaanitish woman is both interesting and suggestive. First, Jesus said that it was not proper to feed the "little dogs," that is, the household pets, before the children have their portion; and then the woman replied, That is right, but even the "little dogs" eat of the "little crumbs" which fall from their masters', that is, the "little children's," table. Thus, with ready wit, deep humility, and abundant faith, this woman skillfully turned the Lord's figure to her own advantage. She promptly and cheerfully accepted the Lord's evaluation of the situation, and asked only to fare as the household pets, which are fed during the meal without loss to the family in question.

Jesus' immediate compliance with the request of the distressed woman, and his great delight in her faith, may have recalled to him a similar case of aid given to a Gentile. (See Matt. 8: 5-10.) The heart of Jesus must have been greatly refreshed, as he experienced such unsophisticated moral nature on pagan soil, in contrast with the traditionalism of his own people. Some one has said that the transition of the one scene to the other unconsciously serves the purposes of consummate dramatic art.

It appeared at first that Jesus would deny the woman's request altogether; but when she demonstrated her faith, he bade her enter the treasure-house and help herself to her heart's content. Few things are more rewarding than prayer and persevering faith; indeed, all things

are possible to him who believes. Some one has observed that the hindrances which were thrown in this woman's way tended only to increase her faith. The faith which was hers may be compared to a river, which becomes enlarged by dams that have been placed across it, until at last they are all swept away by the mighty stream which they helped to create. The following observations by J. W. McGarvey are worthy of our careful consideration.

"The earnest perseverance of the faithful woman gains its point, and her mother's heart is made to rejoice. Less love for her child, or less faith in Jesus, would have caused a failure. The entire scene is often repeated in pious households. How often a pious mother, with a child grievously vexed with the demon of sin, cries piteously and long to the blessed Savior, saying, 'Lord, help me.' And how often does Jesus appear, for awhile, to give no heed to the cry, until even a cold world begins to pity the wretched petitioner. But finally, when a mighty faith has been developed out of sorrow and weeping, the unheard answer comes, 'Be it unto thee as thou wilt.' The story of the Canaanite woman is a type, and it is written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world have come. It is another illustration of the Savior's doctrine, that 'men ought always to pray, and not to faint.' (Luke 18: 1.)"

#### More Miracles and Their Glorious Effect (Matt. 15: 29-31)

*And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.*

Mark is more explicit regarding the route of the Lord's return to the vicinity of the sea of Galilee: "And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the

midst of the borders of Decapolis." It appears that Jesus went northward from Tyre to Sidon, and then eastward across the Jordan in the direction of Damascus; and then turning southward through Decapolis, he approached the sea of Galilee from the east. The probable reason for this circuitous route was to enable Jesus to keep away from the territory which was ruled by Herod Antipas. The tetrarch Philip who governed the districts east of the sea of Galilee and the upper Jordan, was a better man than his brother Antipas; and furthermore, he had no cause to feel uneasy about Jesus. We are not told why Jesus went to the mountain near the sea of Galilee; it may have been to rest and enjoy the scenery, or possibly to teach.

But wherever Jesus went, and for whatever reason, the people usually heard about it; and it was not long before great crowds were hastening to him. The multitudes had learned of the Lord's compassionate nature, and his ability and willingness to heal; and they often brought the afflicted to him. The text now under consideration is a graphic account of the happenings which took place when the people heard that Jesus was on the mountain near the sea of Galilee. They brought all kinds of afflicted people to him, and literally flung them at his feet. This was not done in a careless and indifferent manner, but in haste; because so many were coming to Jesus for the same purpose. This was the same district from which the people at an earlier date had asked Jesus to leave their country. Two men, on that occasion, who were possessed with demons had been healed; and the demons which were cast out had asked for and had obtained permission to enter a herd of some two thousand swine, with the result that the entire herd became stampeded and rushed down a steep place, and perished in the waters. This, apparently, was more than the people could tolerate. "And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders." (Matt. 8: 34; cf. Mark 5: 1-20.)

The reason for the change in the attitude of the citizens of that country toward Jesus was probably due

to their own reflections and to the preaching of one of the men who had been saved from the demons. (See again Mark 5: 18-20.) This should be an impressive lesson to us today, especially if we are willing to do what we can to interest people in the Saviour. There are many who reject the gospel today, but who may be won by it tomorrow. Time and events often soften the hearts of people for whom we may hold little hope for gospel obedience. Jesus, of course, does not heal the bodies of men miraculously, as he one time did; yet he never fails to heal the souls of those who come to him in humble obedience. If we will do our part in seeing to it that they are brought to the Lord, we can always depend upon his supplying whatever need they may have, providing, of course, that they are willing to receive his blessings. (Cf. John 6: 44, 45; Rom. 1: 16, 17; Mark 16: 15, 16.) This is the great lesson which we recently observed in the *Parable of the Great Supper*. (See Luke 14: 15-24.)

The cures which Jesus perfected on the occasion of the narrative now under consideration present a scene which no professed healer of our day, whoever he is and whatever his claims may be, can reproduce. In fact, no modern faith healer can cure a single person who is dumb, maimed, lame, or blind. The multitudes who had brought the afflicted to Jesus had seen that which he did; and their eyes did not deceive them. The result was that they glorified the God of Israel. Mark, in reporting the same incident, mentions only one case of healing, possibly one of the most unusual cases. This is a good illustration of the common difference between the narratives of Matthew and Mark. Matthew, as a rule, records the healing of more than one, while Mark apparently selects one of the most remarkable cases, and describes it in detail. (See Mark 7: 31-37.)

There is also an interesting contrast between Matthew and Mark regarding the reaction of the multitudes to the miracles of Jesus. Matthew, as we have already observed, says simply, "And they glorified the God of Israel." But Mark, in his characteristic style, says, "And they were beyond measure astonished,



saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." (Mark 7: 37.) It is also worthy of notice that when the people saw the miraculous power which was employed by Jesus, they recognized it as coming from God. (Cf. John 3: 1, 2; 5: 19, 30.)

The expression "the God of Israel" was probably used with reference to the large heathen population of the district in which Jesus was at the time of this lesson. The Lord had

come with the twelve from the wholly Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon into a locality which, although chiefly heathen, was in close proximity to a purely Jewish population; and where, in consequence of which, the name of the God of Israel would be known and revered. Jesus was in this way doing much to reduce the national prejudice of his disciples, and was gradually preparing them for their future mission among all the nations of the earth. (Cf. Matt. 28: 19.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today's lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons

### Introduction

When did the events of this lesson take place?

Why is so little about the Lord's public ministry preserved in the gospel records?

For whom was the narrative which Matthew wrote apparently intended and why?

What further use is made of all the gospel records?

Why is it important to read parallel accounts by other New Testament writers, when they are available?

### A Mother's Cry for Mercy

What is the general setting of the incident now under consideration?

Why did Jesus probably cross over into Gentile territory, if indeed he did?

Where were the borders of Tyre and Sidon?

What is known of that country and people?

Who was the woman who came to Jesus and why did she come?

What difference is noted between Matthew and Mark regarding her?

Why would the Canaanitish woman go to Jesus with a request for help?

How does Mark describe the woman's daughter?

What attitude did Jesus manifest toward the request the distressed mother made?

In what way has his silence been described?

What apparently was the Lord's purpose in remaining silent?

**What was the attitude of the disciples toward the woman and why?**

**What did Jesus then say to them?**

### The Reward of Faith

What further action did the woman manifest when Jesus apparently refused to listen to her?

What effect must her words have had upon him?

What great event did the situation possibly foreshadow?

When Jesus did speak, what reply did he make to the praying woman?

What kind of dogs did he have reference to?

What was the lesson which he intended to convey to the woman?

Discuss the use of the "diminutive" throughout the exchange between Jesus and the woman.

What effect did the lesson have on her and what was her reply to the Lord's metaphor?

In what way was Jesus affected by the woman's response?

How may we think of such faith as the woman manifested?

What great lesson is there here for us?

### More Miracles and Their Glorious Effect

Describe the Lord's return route to the mountain near the sea of Galilee.

What was his probable reason for going that way?

What happened when the people learned of his presence in their locality?

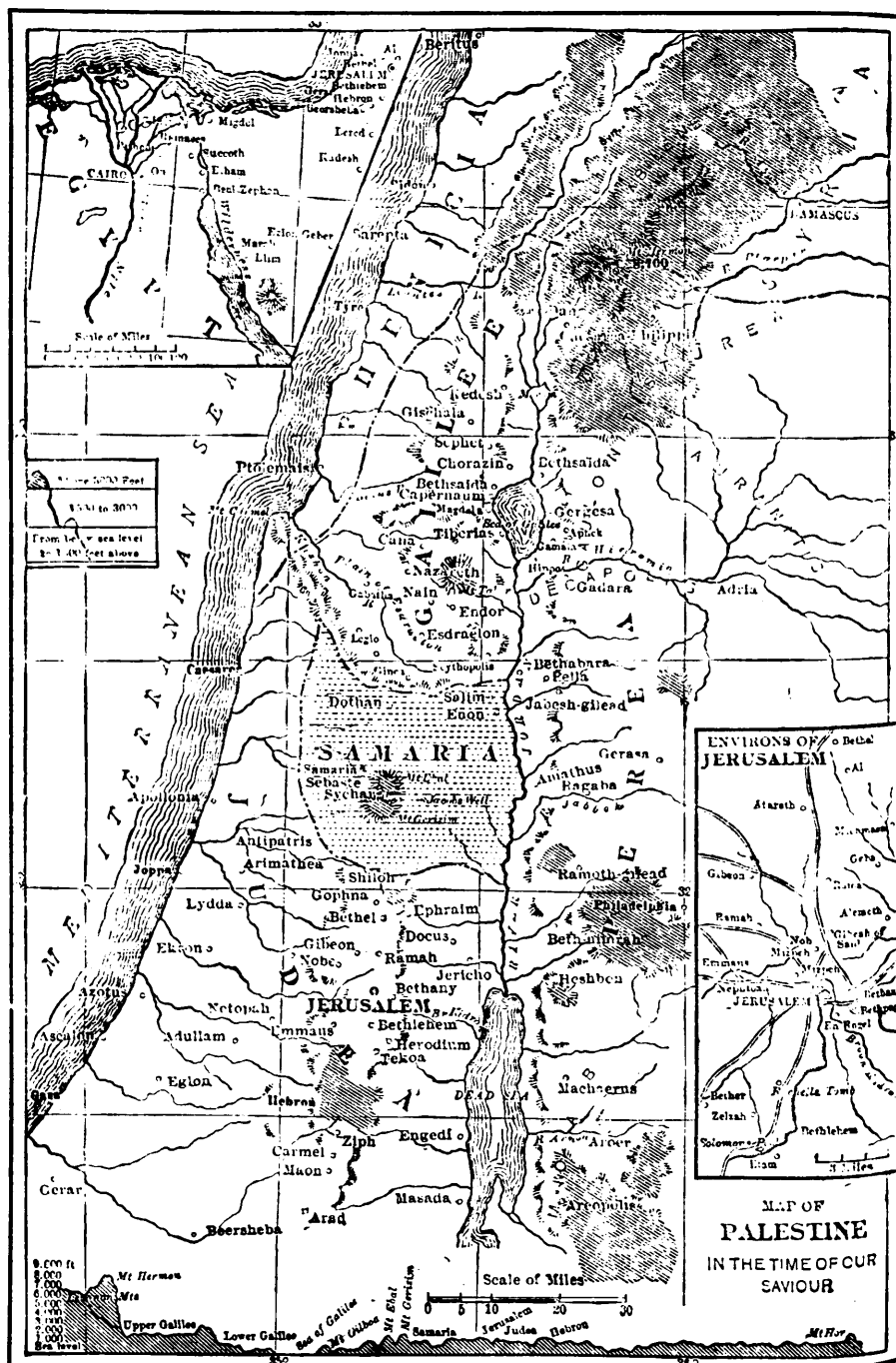
What response did Jesus make to their acts of faith in his power to heal?

What great change in the attitude of the people toward him is noted at this time?

What probably brought about that change?

What great lesson is there in this for us today?

What impression did the Lord's deeds of mercy make on the people who saw that which he did?



THIRD QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE LIFE . OF CHRIST

(Second Half of a Six-Month Course)

*Aim.—To study, in detail, outstanding events in the earthly life of our Lord, and from the lessons thus learned to imbibe the spirit of Christianity, that the principles which he taught may find expression in our lives today.*

Lesson I—July 3, 1966

JESUS PROMISES TO BUILD HIS CHURCH

Lesson Text

Matt. 16: 13-20

13 Now when Je'-sus came into the parts of Caes-a-re'-a Phi-lip-pi, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?'

14 And they said, Some *say* John the Bap'-tist; some, E-li-jah; and others, Jer-e-mi'-ah, or one of the prophets.

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

16 And Si'-mon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Je'-sus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Si'-mon Bar-Jo'-nah: for flesh and blood hath

not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

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

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

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

**Golden Text.**—*"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it."* (Eph. 5: 25.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Matt. 16: 1-12.

Daily Bible Readings

June 27.	M. ....	Kingdom Promised (Dan. 7: 13, 14)
June 28.	T. ....	Church Promised (Matt. 16: 13-20)
June 29.	W. ....	Kingdom at Hand (Matt. 3: 1-10)
June 30.	T. ....	Kingdom Not of This World (John 18: 36-38)
July 1.	F. ....	Christ Head of the Church (Eph. 1: 19-23)
July 2.	S. ....	Church a Body (1 Cor. 12: 12-28)
July ...3.	S. ....	Christ Saviour of Body (Eph. 5: 22-30)

**TIME.**—Probably A.D. 29.

**PLACE.**—In the parts of Caesarea Philippi.

**PERSONS.**—Jesus and his disciples.

Introduction

Just a few months before Jesus finished his public ministry here upon the earth, he told his disciples that he was going to build his church. He had come to the earth for the purpose of preparing himself to be the Saviour of men; and inasmuch as that phase of his mission was soon to be accomplished, he

made known to his followers just how he planned to gather the people together whom he would be able to rescue from the evil one. The original word for "I will build" is *oikodomēsō*, which is the first person singular, active future indicative of the verb *oikodomeō*, and which literally means to build a house. (The Greek

word for "house" is *oikos*, used either for a dwelling or a family, that is, a household. It is easy to see the term "*oikos*" is the word *oikodomeō* or *oikodomēsō*.) Jesus called the "house" which he proposed to build his "church," and that is the way in which other New Testament writers referred to it. (See 1 Tim. 3: 15; Heb. 3: 1-6; 1 Pet. 2: 5.)

Much of the thinking by religious people, during the last two or three centuries of the Christian era, has been characterized denominations and denominationalism. This condition has resulted in great confusion, insofar as the meaning and use of the New Testament word for church is concerned. There are few people today, as a matter of fact, who always and under all circumstances employ the term in its strictly Biblical sense. The great majority of people who are interested in the church, as a religious "institution," as they are wont to speak of it, use the term in senses which are wholly foreign to that which is contained in the Scriptures.

### The Golden Text

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." Christ gave himself up for the church, when he died to make it possible. Paul had the same idea in mind when he addressed the following words to the Ephesian elders, when they met him at Miletus: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.) The marginal reading for "purchased" is *acquired*, that is, obtained or gained, for himself. The original word for purchased (*peripoieō*) is found in Greek texts which are quoted by many commentators only in the passage just quoted and in 1 Tim. 3: 13, where it is rendered *gain*; but the Greek text of Westcott and Hort has the infinitive of *perioieō* (to gain) in Luke 17: 33, instead of *sōzō* (to save). If the text of Westcott and Hort contains the correct reading in this respect, then the original word for *purchased* is of course, found three times in the New Testament. A *Corcordance to the Greek Testament*, by Moulton and Geden, cites the three references listed above. At any rate, we can easi-

The confusion regarding the meaning and use of the term church grows out of the common, and not altogether unnatural, tendency of men to form their own conception of Bible terms, not from the Bible itself, but from the circumstances and uses which are current among the people around them. It apparently never occurs to such people that they should allow the Bible itself to say that which the Lord wants men to know regarding the church which he said that he would build. Instead of permitting the Bible itself to become the standard for all such questions, the average person seems to regard his religious environment as the criterion for determining the contents of the Bible. But if one will only stop and familiarize himself with the Scriptures, he will soon see that there is usually a very wide difference between that which is in the Bible and the present-day religious environment. (Cf. Isa. 55: 8, 9.)

ly see from passages just referred to what Paul means when he said that Christ gave himself up for the church. (Cf. Tit. 2: 14; 1 Pet. 2: 9.)

The setting of the golden text can best be seen by reading the context in which it is found. "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also 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: 22-27.)

The principal lesson which we should learn from the text now before us is the close relationship which exists between Christ and the church, and, consequently, that which is expected of the church. Christ did not love the church, and

give himself up for it, merely for the purpose of making the church an "ornamental institution." The husband and the wife have a mutual relationship, if they are to function as a unit, as God ordained that they should; and the same thing is true of Christ and the church. This truth is clearly implied in the following statement: "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave

him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) The church is pictured here as being the "complement" of Christ; or, which is the same thing, that which makes him complete. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the church is expected to continue the work of Christ here upon the earth.

## The Text Explained

### A Direct Question and a Straightforward Answer

(Matt. 16: 13-16)

*Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

The city which is referred to in this section of the lesson text was anciently called *Panium*, but when it was rebuilt by Herod Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis and Ituraea (see Luke 3: 1), it was called Caesarea Philippi, after the Roman Emperor and himself. The addition of the name "Philippi" to *Caesarea* enabled the people to distinguish that city from another Caesarea which was located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Caesarea was located at the foot of Mount Hermon, and it was the most northern point which is mentioned in the travels of Jesus.

Luke says that as Christ was praying apart, his disciples were with him, and he asked them, saying, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" It should be noted that Jesus did not ask his disciples about the views of the scribes and Pharisees and other leaders among the Jews regarding him, but rather who the common people thought that he was. The people of Nazareth, and the ruling class among the Jews, had frequently expressed their adverse opinion regarding him; and now he asked his disciples to give him the popular opinion, or, which was the same thing, the opinion of the common people. The purpose of the

question which called for this answer was doubtless to prepare the disciples for the next interrogation.

It appears that the disciples knew what the general views of the people were concerning Jesus, and they quickly told him. Jesus, of course, knew too, but he wanted to get his immediate followers in the proper frame of mind to express their own view regarding him. We learn from Matt. 14: 1, 2 that Herod voiced the opinion that Jesus was John the Baptist, who had been raised from the dead. This was the Herod, that is, Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, who had put John to death. It is probable that those who considered Jesus as Elijah based their conclusion on a prediction by Malachi, as the Old Testament record was coming to a close. (See Mal. 4: 5.) And it appears that there was a popular opinion among the Jews that "one of the old prophets" (cf. Luke 9: 19), of whom Jeremiah was a representative, would reappear on the earth to usher in the advent of the Messiah. (Cf. John 1: 21.)

It should be observed that, although the multitudes differed among themselves as to the identity of the Christ, they all agreed that he was no ordinary person, but some one who had been sent directly by the authority of heaven. However, it is also noticeable that none of the opinions expressed regarded Jesus as being the Messiah. The disciples, on the other hand, had been with Jesus for more than two years (their continuous following of him did not begin until after he had completed the first year of his public ministry, as may be learned from the first four chapters of John; Matt. 4: 12-22; Luke 5: 1-11; and they had had therefore ample time and opportunity

ty to form a correct judgment regarding the identity of the Lord. These were the men who were to be his ambassadors; and it was necessary therefore that they be brought to believe that he was indeed God's Son and the promised Messiah. The Lord's question therefore to them would enable both Jesus and the disciples to see what progress had been made in the letter's training for the great work which was before them.

Peter, who was usually the first to speak, evidently answered for all the disciples, or at least his reply is the only one which has been preserved in the record. The answer which he gave contains two propositions, namely, (1) his Messiahship, as the promised son of David—his human side; and (2) the Son of God—his divine side. Peter's reply to the question which Jesus asked was not made in terms similar to the answer to Jesus' first question, such as, "we say," or "I say," but a resounding "thou art!" The confession which Peter made is in principle the confession which every person who is acceptable to God must make. It has frequently been pointed out that the term "confession" literally means to say the same thing; and inasmuch as God says that Jesus Christ is his Son, we confess our faith in the Son when we say the same thing. Jesus must be recognized and accepted as the promised Messiah, that is, the Christ, and also as God's Son whom he sent into the world for the purpose of making redemption and eternal salvation possible to all men.

### Christ and the Church

(Matt. 16: 17, 18)

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon, Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

"Bar-Jonah" means *son of Jonah*, and that was the manner in which Jesus addressed Simon, after the latter had made his great confession. The beatitude for Simon was expressed in these words: "Blessed art thou," and the meaning was that he was highly favored of God. The

apostle had confessed a truth which no human mind could conceive, or could convey to another; only Jehovah could reveal it unto him. Jesus accepted the confession as being true, and he thereby in effect stated his own claim to be the promised Messiah and the Son of God. It is possible that Jesus had reference to the testimony which God bore after Jesus had come up from the waters of baptism, when he said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (see Matt. 3: 17); but if not, then it was probably through the words and works of Jesus that the revelation that he was the Son of God was made.

The point of comparison in the expression "I also" is this: Peter had made a certain declaration with reference to Jesus, which God had revealed to him; and now Jesus will reveal another truth to him. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the Father had revealed one truth to the apostle, and Jesus said, I *also* will reveal to you another truth. The truth which the Father revealed to Peter was with reference to the true identity of Jesus—the Christ and the Son of God; while the truth which Jesus was about to reveal to Simon was with reference to the building of the church and its enduring nature.

There are three words in the section of the lesson text now under consideration which should be carefully defined before attempting an exegesis of it, namely, Peter, rock, and church. "Peter" is the Greek *Petros* (masculine), and means a single stone; "rock" is feminine (*petra*), and refers to an unmovable ledge or bed-rock; while "church" (*ekklesia*) is a compound word from the preposition *ek* (out of) and the verb *kaleo* (to call or summon). Peter was a stone, but the truth which he had just confessed was comparable to a mighty bed-rock upon which a building could be erected: and that was what Jesus told him that he was going to do, that is, he was going to build his church, which is elsewhere called a house, upon that mighty truth.

Jesus came into the world to seek and to save the lost (cf. Luke 19: 10), and he was revealing to his disciples, Peter in particular, just how he was going about the work. The entire enterprise would have to be

based on the truth of his Messiahship and his divine Sonship, the truth which Peter had just confessed; and since the foundation was now assured, he could at the proper time go forward with the building or the establishment. As already observed, the saved are likened to a building which is erected upon a solid foundation; or, to say the same thing in another way, the call would go out for men to quit the ways of the world, and all who will respond to the call will be separated *from* the evil one, and *unto* Christ who, in turn, will build them into a spiritual house in which the Father and he will dwell in the Spirit. (Cf. Eph. 2: 19-22; 1 Pet. 2: 5.)

The word "church" occurs in the New Testament for the first time in the passage now before us. In fact, the term is found in only one other place in the four gospel records, namely, Matt. 18: 17, where the obvious meaning is that of a single congregation. (See marginal reading.) The Greek word for "church" was not coined by Christ and the apostles, but was in general use by the Greek-speaking people at the time Christ first employed the term. The word *ekklesia* (church) never had any religious significance among the Greeks; it literally meant the *called out ones* or an *assembly*, and it was applied to any body of people who had been called out and, consequently, together for any purpose. There is therefore nothing about the original word itself which indicated the character of the assembly. It might have been political, religious, or even an unorganized mob. The term, in fact, was applied twice to such a mob in Ephesus, and once to the proconsular court. (See Acts 19: 32, 39, 41.) The word was also used by Luke to describe the people of God during the wilderness wandering, as they were being led by Moses. (See Acts 7: 38.) Thus, the *kind* of church must always be determined by the context. Other terms and circumstances will indicate whether the reference is to a church of the Lord, or a church of men.

When Jesus therefore said that he would build his church, he meant nothing more than that he would call his people together and constitute them into an assembly, to be known as the people of God in con-

trast with the people of the world. (Cf. John 10: 16; 15: 18, 19; 17: 14-16; 1 Pet. 2: 9.) Robertson (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*) observes that the word originally meant an "assembly"; but that it came to mean an "unassembled assembly," as in Acts 8: 3. The people of God during the days of Moses were God's church (*ekklesia*) for that period (see again Acts 7: 38), and they had the Old Testament as their law; and in like manner, the people of God during the age of Christ are his church (*ekklesia*) for this period (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 9; 1 Tim. 3: 15; cf. Heb. 3: 1-6), and we have the New Testament for our law. (Read Gal. 3: 15-4: 7 for the contrast between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ).

In the light of that which has just been said, it is easy to see that the church of Christ, that is the church which he built and over which he presides as head (Eph. 1: 22, 23), is composed of his people (cf. Acts 18: 9, 10) who heed his call through the gospel, and thereby become his subjects, his people, or his body. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16; 2 Thess. 2: 13, 14; Col. 3: 15.) These people are not called together in a literal or physical sense, as were the uproarious assembly in Ephesus and the Israelite? in the wilderness. Those who belong to Christ are a spiritual body; and they are called out of and separated from the world in a spiritual sense.

In the expression "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," the pronoun "it" is in the feminine gender; and if the term had been rendered "her" instead of "it," there would have been no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this passage. "Not even the gates of Hades—than which nothing was supposed to be stronger—shall surpass the church in strength." (Thayer.) Thus, in the imagery which Christ presents, Hades is pictured as a walled city waging war against the church. The gates of the walled cities of those days symbolized their power, since it was through the gates that their military forces issued forth.

Hades is the place of the dead between death and the resurrection; and the practical meaning of the passage is that death would never be

able to destroy all the members of the church at any one time. There are also other scriptures which teach the same truth. (See, for example, Dan. 2: 44; Heb. 12: 28.) Meyer, in commenting on the passage now before us, represents Jesus as saying, "So securely will I build my church upon this rock, *that the gates of Hades will not be able to resist it*, will not prove stronger than it; indicating by means of a comparison, the great strength and stability of the edifice of the church, even when confronted with so powerful a structure as that of Hades, the gates of which, strong as they are, will yet not prove to be stronger than the building of the church."

### A Promise and a Prohibition

(Matt. 16: 19, 20)

*I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.*

Jesus, in this section of the lesson text, was continuing the figure of a

building. As noted earlier in this study, the church or kingdom was spoken of as a house, and Peter was promised the keys, that is, the authority to open its doors. That which Jesus called the "church" in verse 18, he referred to as the "kingdom" in verse 19. The two terms are used interchangeably, the church signifying the *called out* feature of the Lord's people, while the kingdom refers to the idea of *government*. The promise to recognize in heaven that which is bound or loosed on earth was not restricted to Peter; the same promise was also made to the other apostles and to the church. (See John 20: 21-23; Matt. 18: 18.) Peter was given the first opportunity to exercise that authority when he was privileged to open the doors of church to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2 and 10), that is, he was permitted to announce the terms of entrance, which were approved in heaven, because he spoke by the Holy Spirit.

The people were not yet ready for the truth that Jesus was the Christ, and to announce it then would have hastened his death and would have defeated his purpose. (Cf. Luke 9: 18-22; 24: 49.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Under what circumstances did Jesus tell his disciples that he was going to build his church?

What is the literal meaning of "I will build"?

Why is the church referred to as a house?

Why do so many people fail to understand the New Testament meaning of the term "church"?

### The Golden Text

In what sense did Jesus give himself up for the church and what was the motive behind it?

How did other New Testament writers speak of this question?

What is the principal lesson which we should learn from the golden text for today?

### A Direct Question and a Straight-forward Answer

What is known of the city of Caesarea Philippi?

Under what circumstances did Jesus ask the questions of this section of the lesson text?

What were the popular opinions regard-

ing him and how did the people arrive at them?

Why, apparently, did Jesus ask for the opinions of the people in general?

What was Peter's reply and what two propositions did it contain?

Why is his answer called a "confession"?

Discuss the literal meaning of the term "confession" and show why all men must confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

### Christ and the Church

How did Jesus address Simon and what did he mean by the expression?

In what sense was Peter blest of God?

How had he come into the knowledge of the truth which he had just confessed?

What did Jesus mean by saying, "And I also say unto thee"?

Discuss the meaning and use of the terms Peter, rock, and church.

What was the Lord's purpose in building a church?

Under what circumstances does the word "church" occur in the gospel narratives?

What was the popular use of the word "church" during the time of Christ and the apostles?

In what way can an "assembly" become an "unsembled assembly"?

In what way will the gates of Hades be unable to prevail against the church?



A Promise and a Prohibition  
What figure did Jesus continue in this section of the lesson text?  
What is the relationship between the church and the kingdom?  
What were the "keys" of the kingdom and in what sense did Peter use them?

What was meant by saying that whatsoever was bound and loosed on earth would also be bound and loosed in heaven?  
Why would this be true?  
Why did Jesus prohibit the apostles from telling any one that he was the Christ?

Lesson II—July 10, 1966

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Lesson Text

Luke 16: 19-31

19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day:

20 And a certain beggar named Laz'-a-rus was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the *crumbs* that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried.

23 And in Ha'-des he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Laz'-a-rus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Laz'-a-rus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.

25 But Abraham said. Son, remem-

ber that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Laz'-a-rus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

27 And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house;

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 But Abraham saith, They have Mo'-ses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him. If they hear not Mo'-ses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment."* (Heb. 9: 27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 16: 1-18.

Daily Bible Readings

- July 4. M.....Love of Money (1 Tim. 6: 6-10)
- July 5. T.....Power to Get Wealth (Deut. 8: 11-18)
- July 6. W.....Faithful with Little or Much (Luke 16: 10-13)
- July 7. T.....Danger of Covetousness (Luke 12: 13-15)
- July 8. F.....Proper Use of Property (2 Cor. 9: 6-12)
- July 9. S.....Lovers of Money Condemned (Luke 16: 14-17)
- July 10. S.....Our Gifts Are from God (Rom. 12: 1-8)

TIME—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Probably in Peraea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and the Pharisees.

Introduction

The text of our lesson for today has a direct connection with the first thirteen verses of the chapter from which it is taken. The subject contained in that portion of the chapter is that of the unrighteous steward;

and, as we shall presently see in this study, the lesson of that parable had a direct bearing on the Pharisees to whom, in part at least, the words of this lesson were spoken. The Pharisees were constant critics of Jesus; and when they heard his parable of the unrighteous steward, they scoffed at him, or, literally, they turned up their nose at him. Luke, in speaking of them says, "And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him. And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16: 14, 15.)

Two of the outstanding characteristics of the Pharisees were self-righteousness and covetousness. Jesus severely condemned their self-righteousness in a series of parables in chapter 15 of the Book of Luke; and now the second characteristic is just as soundly condemned in the two parables of chapter 16. Any one who reads the two chapters together will have no trouble in seeing that there is a point of contact between the parable of the unrighteous steward and that of the prodigal son. The prodigal son was guilty of

*"wasting his substance,"* while the unrighteous steward was charged with *"wasting his lord's goods."*

It was evidently the purpose of Jesus on the occasion now before us to teach those who held to the idea of self-righteous respectability, that there are other ways of misusing that which has been entrusted to them, than by riotous living, such as characterized the prodigal son. Thus, according to Jesus, when one appropriates to himself that which should be used in the Lord's service, he is in reality just as unfaithful to God, as is the abandoned sinner who spends his substance in riotous living. This was the Lord's way of exposing the sin of covetousness; and when the Pharisees scoffed at him, he replied to them in the text of our lesson for today. The principle lesson of the parable of the unrighteous steward is plainly stated in verse 9: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles;" and the burden of the lesson now before us is contained in the story of a man who did not use his money to help others, when he had the opportunity. (Cf. 1 John 3: 17.)

### The Golden Text

*"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment"* The words just quoted are taken from a section of the *Letter to the Hebrews* which may be entitled, "The Sacrifice of Christ Was Once for All," found in Heb. 9: 23-28. It seems that the writer's purpose in the words which are used for the golden text of this lesson was to illustrate the truth which he stated in the previous verses. Thus, the common lot of men is to die only once; they are not permitted to return to the earth after their death to compensate for any neglect or failure which may have characterized their lives, but instead must enter upon the results which follow. The term "judgment" appears to be used in the sense of one's reaping that which he sows, which, of course, will be manifest at the day of judgment.

Men, through the years, have tried to rule out the fact of a judgment

after death. Irvin S. Cobb, who died a little more than twenty years ago, wrote a letter a few months before his death in which he gave his views regarding God, religion, and the hereafter, but gave instructions that the letter was not to be opened until after his passing. Mr. Cobb died on March 10, 1944, and the next day his letter was read by millions of people throughout the country. Said Mr. Cobb: "When a man dies with his sins, let the sins die with the man. That's what I say and it sums up such speculations as I might ever have had touching on the future state, if any." If that philosophy were true, it would bring to those who die without God the greatest blessing imaginable; for then they would be spared all future sufferings for their sins.

But as it is, man has an eternal spirit; and being a moral creature, he must either accept the mercy

which the Lord offers him, or suffer for his sins. One of the benevolent purposes of the Bible is to teach man that his sins do not and cannot die with him. Here is the testimony of the Scriptures, and God's word has never been know to fail. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth

unto the Spirit shall of Spirit reap eternal life." (Gal. 6: 7, 8.) "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 10.) "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14: 12; cf. John 12: 48-50; Rev. 20: 11-15.)

## The Text Explained

To Every Responsible Man  
There Comes an Opportunity

(Luke 16: 19-21)

*Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day; and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed, with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.*

It has already been pointed out in this lesson that the text which we are to consider today is the Lord's reply to the Pharisees for their criticism of his teaching in the parable of the unrighteous steward. The Pharisees were lovers of money, that is, they wanted it for themselves, rather than to use it in the service of God, both for the extension of his work and to relieve the needs of the poor. And so, when they scoffed at him, Jesus said unto them, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Jesus clearly stated the purpose for which the parable of the unrighteous steward was given (see again verse 9); and it will be easy for us to see that the rich man in the lesson now before us, who possessed the mammon of unrighteousness, in abundance, failed utterly to use it so as to make friends who could receive him into the eternal home of the soul.

Verse 10 of the preceding parable says, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." And the parable now before us contains an example of a man who was un-

righteous and who, as a result of his attitude and conduct, was denied the eternal enjoyment which comes to the faithful. Verses 11 and 12 say, "If therefore ye have have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give to you that which is your own?" The rich man was not faithful in that which belongs to God, and consequently was denied that which could have been his eternally. Verse 13 lays down the broad principle which covers the attitude and conduct which is contained in the lesson now before us; and we must understand that no one can grasp the meaning of the lesson regarding the rich man and Lazarus, unless he is familiar with and understands the parable of the unrighteous steward. Verse 13 says, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And what was true then is true now: we cannot serve God and the material possessions of this life. And unless we apply these principles to ourselves, we have missed the whole purpose of the lesson.

The Latin word for "rich," namely *dives*, is the term usually employed to designate the rich man of the parable. *Dives* is not a proper name for a person, but the term has been capitalized and, for all practical purposes, converted into a title or name. This, apparently, is the result of the use of the Latin adjective *dives* in this passage in the Vulgate, that is, the Latin Version of the Scriptures, by Jerome. The idea behind the use of the term "dives" is to show something of the character and conduct

of the rich man, rather than to give him a name. The purple dye was obtained from a rare shell-fish, each one yielding about one drop; and this fact gives some idea of why only expensive garments were dyed purple. It appears that the purple was the outer garment, while the linen was the inner one. The mention of this type of clothing, along with the continual feasting, indicates a life of extreme luxury.

It seems quite evident that the only possession which the poor man had was his name; and it is worthy of notice that this is the only parable which Jesus spoke in which he gave the name of one of the characters in it. The whole story of the rich man and Lazarus is one of contrasts. It begins with the rich man's extreme wealth, and the beggar's extreme poverty. It is also worthy of note that the rich man was not charged with any ill-gotten gain, and that the poor man did not ask for anything more than that which "fell" from the banquet table. The point to remember is that the rich man did not *give* the poor man anything. Another point of contrast is suggested by the attention of the dogs. The only consideration which the poor man received was from the scavengers of the streets, while the rich man was surrounded by his family and attentive servants.

### The Consequence of Social Injustice

(Luke 16: 22-26)

*And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you*

*may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.*

This section of the lesson text begins with another contrast between the two men of the parable, namely, one was buried, but nothing is said about such service for the other. The destinies of both men, however, are specified; and they provide the greatest contrast. The state of the righteous is represented by being in "Abraham's bosom" which, according to Vincent, was a Rabbinical phrase, equivalent to being with Abraham in Paradise. Vincent also quotes Goebel as saying that "to the Israelite Abraham seems the personal centre and meeting-point of Paradise."

Hades, literally the unseen or invisible world, is according to Thayer, the realm of the dead, or the common receptacle of disembodied spirits. The corresponding Old Testament word is *Shoel*, as may be seen by considering Peter's use of the quotation from Psalm 16: 8-10, as found in Acts 2: 25-31. Many Bible students hold that Hades is divided into two regions—one called Paradise, which is the abode of the righteous dead; the other called Tartarus, which is the abode of the wicked dead. It is between these two abiding places that the impassable gulf is fixed. This, of course, means that one's eternal destiny is settled at death, although he will not enter into his eternal state until the day of judgment, at which time rewards and punishments will be meted out. (Cf. Rev. 22: 12.)

Some Bible readers, especially those who have only the King James Version of the Scriptures, may experience some difficulty in understanding the true significance of the term "Hades," since it is translated "hell" in that version. There are, in fact, three words, each with a separate and distinct meaning, which are rendered "hell" in the King James Version, namely, Gehenna, Hades, and Tartarus. *Gehenna* <sup>always</sup> refers to the place of eternal punishment; *Hades*, to the intermediate state; and *Tartarus*, to that part of Hades where the wicked are reserved, that is, kept (2 Pet. 2: 4) during the intermediate state. The American Standard Version clearly shows the difference in the meaning of all three of these words. *Gehenna*

is uniformly translated "hell;" *Hades* is always anglicized, that is, made to conform to English by using English letters in the spelling of the term, instead of Greek symbols; and while *Tartarus* is rendered "hell," the marginal reference shows that *Tartarus* is the term which Peter used.

It is well, when considering the rich man's cry for mercy, to compare the small favor which he requested with that which Lazarus desired in the way of food. The rich man, during his lifetime, had much of the mammon of unrighteousness in his possession, and he could have used it in such a way as to make friends for such a time as this; but alas! he abused his stewardship by lavishing his substance upon himself. The anguish which the rich man was suffering was the punishing which he was experiencing in the intermediate state. (Cf. 2 Pet. 2: 9.) Both Jesus and Peter teach that the punishment in *Tartarus* is both severe and continuous throughout the period between death and resurrection; but the Scriptures also teach that there is a difference in the mode and degree of the punishment of the intermediate and the eternal states.

The punishment in *Hades* or *Tartarus* is the punishment of the disembodied spirit; whereas, the punishment in *Gehenna* is the punishment of both the body and the spirit. (Cf. Matt. 10: 28.) J. W. McGarvey says, "As the body and soul are both to be destroyed in hell, hell (*Gehenna*) cannot belong to the intermediate state, but to that state which follows the reunion of body and soul at the resurrection. Hell, then, lies beyond the final judgment." (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 35-44.) The punishment of the intermediate state will end with the resurrection; but the punishment of *Gehenna* will continue for ever. (See Matt. 25: 46.)

This section of the lesson text not only teaches that people will reap that which they sow (cf. Gal. 6: 7, 8); it also makes it plain that *memory* is a definite factor in future punishment—"Son, remember!" The reference to the great gulf which is fixed is sufficient to show that it would be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to find language which exhibits in a clearer manner that with death the righteous and the wicked

are for ever separated. Two important lessons may be learned from this part of the lesson text, namely, (1) the righteous are neither homeless nor unconscious during the period between death and the resurrection (cf. Phil. 1: 23); and (2) the doctrine of Universalism is refuted: for the gulf is fixed and cannot be crossed—the wicked are eternally lost!

### The Sufficiency of God's Word (Luke 16: 27-31)

*And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.*

The Fourfold Gospel (McGarvey and Pendleton) suggests that the double attempt of the rich man to use Lazarus was due to the difficulty which he had of adjusting himself to his new condition. At any rate, his eyes were opened to the truth, and his natural sympathies were awakened toward his brethren. It is certain that no one who is lost wants his loved ones to share his misery with him. Albert Barnes thinks that it is remarkable that the rich man did not ask to go on the mission to his father's house himself. He may have realized that that was impossible, since his condition was "fixed." But whatever may have been his reason for not making the request for himself, we should learn from this circumstance that the time for people to try to keep their friends and loved ones from going to the place of torment, is while they are still here on earth with them.

When Abraham told the rich man that his brethren had Moses and the prophets; let them hear them, that was equivalent to saying that they had the Old Testament Scriptures to guide them. (Cf. 2 Tim 3: 15-17.) God has never failed to supply responsible beings with whatever they needed to enable them to do his will

It is altogether possible that the rich man and his brothers heard the Old Testament Scriptures read in the synagogue every sabbath (cf. Acts 15: 21); but if they did, it had not produced faith in their hearts. That is God's way of producing faith; and if it will not work, neither will man's way succeed. No miracle will change the hearts of people who are set in their own ways, and who will not listen to that which God has spoken through his inspired word.

It was not long after Jesus had spoken the parable now under consideration before a *real* Lazarus did arise from the dead; but instead of causing the Jewish leaders to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, the miracle served to intensify their efforts to put him to death. (See John 11: 47-53.) These leaders, in fact, wanted to kill Lazarus too; "because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." (See John 12: 9-11.) It was Abraham in the parable who did the speaking to the rich man, but it was Jesus who put the words into his mouth. And so the lesson before us is in reality the Lord's appraisal of the purpose and power of the revealed will of God. This inspired revelation is designed to show people how to get to God; and we may be sure that there is no substitute for it.

In emphasizing Moses and the prophets, Jesus incidentally indicated that the rich man was suffering, and that his brothers would suffer, the penalties which they imposed. (Cf. Heb. 2: 1-3.) The rich man had failed to keep the commandments; he had not loved his neighbor as himself. The Jews had Moses and the prophets, while we have Christ and the

apostles; and if we get the lesson which we should, we will see the necessity of listening to and obeying the message which is addressed to us. Any one who has an opportunity, and does not use it, need not ask for more; for the New Testament says, "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4: 17.) The rich man and his brothers rejected the law which they had, and why should the Lord give them a further miraculous revelation? In speaking of people and their opportunities, Jesus said this, "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matt. 13: 12.)

This should be an impressive lesson to those who think that the gospel is not sufficient to save those out of Christ. While Jesus was here on the earth, he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 44, 45.) It was the purpose of the Old Testament to direct men to Christ (cf. Gal. 3: 24; 2 Tim. 3: 15); and when Christ had finished his work of redemption and was about ready to return to the Father, he told his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation (see Mark 16: 5). It is this gospel which is God's power to save the believer (Rom. 1: 16); and we may be certain that he has no other way to accomplish that purpose. (Cf. Gal. 1: 6-9; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons

### Introduction

Discuss the general setting of the lesson text for today.  
Why did Jesus speak the parable of the rich man and Lazarus?  
What were two of the chief characteristics of the Pharisees?  
Show how Jesus exposed and condemned both of these traits.  
Why do men so often condemn in others the very sins of what they themselves are guilty?  
What is the principal lesson of the parable of the unrighteous steward?

Why is it essential to understand that parable before we can grasp the meaning of the one we are to study today?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text written?  
What is its principal lesson?  
Why do we try to escape the judgment which comes after death?

### To Every Responsible Man There Comes an Opportunity

Why did the Pharisees need such a lesson as that of the rich man and Lazarus?  
Wherein had the rich man so utterly failed?

What broad principles did Jesus lay down in the parable of the unjust steward? Why cannot any man serve two masters at the same time? Why is the term "Dives" usually applied to the rich man of this lesson? Discuss the material contrasts between the rich man and Lazarus.

#### The Consequence of Social Injustice

What further contrast between the two men is seen in the beginning of this part of the text?

What is said regarding their destinies?

What and where is Hades?

Why is there so much confusion regarding the meaning and significance of Hades?

How can much of that confusion be cleared away?

Why was the rich man in Hades?

What does the New Testament teach regarding the punishment of Hades and Gehenna?

In what way does memory contribute to future punishment?

What two important lessons do we learn from this section of the lesson text?

#### The Sufficiency of God's Word

What was the attitude of the rich man when he reached Hades?

What did he want Abraham to allow Lazarus to do for his brethren?

What great opportunity had the rich man passed up in this respect?

What lesson should we learn from this?

Why did Abraham tell the rich man that his brethren had Moses and the prophets?

Why wouldn't a visit by Lazarus do them any good?

What was Jesus in effect doing regarding God's revealed will at this time?

How do we know that a miraculous revelation would not benefit people today?

What does the New Testament teach regarding this question?

What great lesson should we all learn from Abraham's refusal to send Lazarus as requested?

### Lesson III—July 17, 1966

## JESUS TEACHES ABOUT FORGIVENESS

### Lesson Text

Matt. 18: 21-35

21 Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?

22 Je'-sus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But that servant went out, and

found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest.

29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besougest me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.

35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful."*  
(Luke 6: 36.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 5: 43-46.

## Daily Bible Readings

July 11. M.....	A Lesson in Forgiveness (Luke 17: 1-4)
July 12. T.....	A Grateful Heart (Psalm 117: 1, 2)
July 13. W.....	Teaching Regarding Forgiveness (Matt. 18: 21, 22)
July 14. T.....	Forgiveness Commanded (Mark 11: 20-25)
July 15. F.....	Blessings of Forgiveness (Psalm 32: 1-5)
July 16. S.....	Example of Forgiveness (Gen. 50: 15-21)
July 17. S.....	Another Example (Acts 7: 54-60)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, and presumably the other disciples.

## Introduction

The term "forgiveness" has been described as being the most beautiful word in any language; and, we may add, it is as great as it is beautiful. But we should learn at the very outset of this study that forgiveness is not something which is easy to grant. This is one of the reasons why it is so beautiful and so great. That which has just been said is true, if one takes sin seriously instead of merely condoning it. Here is a man, for example, with a lovely daughter, whom he loves more than life itself. Now suppose that a scheming, worthless person, who calls himself a man should seduce her into immorality. It might be easy for a moral renegade to pass over the sin lightly, without either censure or adequate punishment, as if the sin did not matter much; but it would not be easy for the father to forgive the offender.

This principle is forcefully illustrated by George Eliot, in her story of *Adam Bede*. Hetty Sorrel was a pretty, vain, and superficial girl whom the stalwart carpenter, Adam Bede, loved and wanted to marry. But before anything was done about that, Arthur Donnithorne, a careless, impulsive, well-meaning, rich young man ruined Hetty, and left her with a hapless baby. Arthur tried desperately to make amends for that which could never be amended. He finally went to Adam Bede and asked his forgiveness: and Adam forgave him, but it was not easy. He said to the offender, "There's a sort o' damage, Sir, that can't be made up for. It's like a bit o' bad workmanship—you never see th' end o' th' mischief it'll do." People whose sins affect others should remember this principle. It is easy to ruin one for life by a word

or deed which leaves the wrong impression; it is a serious thing not to represent one correctly. Shakespeare, in *Othello*, makes Iago say.

Who steals my purse steals trash;  
'tis something, nothing;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been  
slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my  
good name  
Robs me of that which not enrich-  
es him  
And makes me poor indeed.

When Alexander Pope said, "To err is human, to forgive is divine," he was not engaged in the use of idle words. Forgiveness is an attribute of God; and only those who have been forgiven are in position to understand and appreciate its meaning, and to manifest the spirit of forgiveness toward others. Not only is the term "forgiveness" the tenderest and most beautiful word in our language; it is also very far reaching in its consequences. This is true because it has to do with human relationships, which involve the destinies of the souls of men. Jesus plainly says that God will not forgive the trespasses of those who are unwilling to forgive others. Any unforgiving person, of course, cannot be saved, it matters not what else he may do in the way of observing that which God has commanded.

The lesson before us today can best be understood in the light of the verses of the chapter which precede the text which we are to consider. In the first part of the chapter, Jesus warned against and showed the seriousness of giving offense. (See verses 1-14.) In verses 15-17, he shows how to act if and when offense has been received; and when these three verses are studied in the



light of Matt. 5: 23-26, it will be seen that neither the offended nor the offender is to wait for the other, in trying to bring about a reconcilia-

tion. Verses 18-20 set forth the authority of the church in matters of discipline, and illustrate its sublime power.

### The Golden Text

*"Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful."* This text is taken from Luke's account of the Lord's teaching which is found in the sermon on the Mount, as contained in Matthew's record of the gospel. In giving a general view of the subject, *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* notes that mercy is a communicable attribute of God, and expresses his goodness and love for the guilty and miserable. Dr. Goddard, who wrote the article, continues: "It is both free (not required by outward restraint) and absolute (covering all areas of human life). General mercy is best seen in creation and providence. Special mercy, for the elect only, is that which bestows compassion upon the victim of sin. Grace, as distinguished from mercy (which has respect for man's wretchedness), has in view man's culpability. God's mercy to man requires mercy on man's part (Matt. 18: 23-25)."

The two aspects of mercy are (1) the alleviation of suffering, and (2) the forgiveness of wrongs which, of course, involves the proper attitude toward the sinner. When Christ speaks of the latter, the emphasis is upon the sinner, rather than upon his sin. Our danger is to import into our attitude toward the sinner the hatred which we feel toward his sin. Christ's interest is always in the man, and the question is, How can he be saved? And it is with this idea in mind that he calls upon his people for merciful judgment. How can we judge properly until we know all the facts; and how can we know the facts until we know the man himself—know what hidden fires of passion burn in his heart, which were kindled long ago by the sins of others; what lurid tempta-

tions have dogged his steps, until at last they tracked him down; how far those around him have contributed to his downfall; and finally what heroic efforts he himself put forth before he fell a victim to the onslaughts of the evil one.

The unforgettable words of Portia to the money-loving Shylock, as she pled for mercy toward the benevolent merchant of Venice, forcefully illustrate the nature of and the need for mercy. Her words follow:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from  
heaven

Upon the place beneath: it is twice  
blest;

It blesseth him that gives and him  
that takes;

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it be-  
comes

The throned monarch better than his  
crown;

His sceptre shows the force of tem-  
poral power,

The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear  
of kings;

But mercy is above this sceptred  
sway;

It is enthroned in the hearts of  
kings,

It is an attribute of God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show  
likeliest God's

When mercy seasons justice There-  
fore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider  
this,

That, in the course of justice, none  
of us

Should see salvation: we do pray for  
mercy;

And that same prayer doth teach us  
all to render

The deeds of mercy.

### The Text Explained

The Scope of Forgiveness  
(Matt. 18: 21, 22)

*Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him,*

*I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.*

We have no way of knowing what prompted Peter to ask the question just quoted, but judging from human nature and experience, it appears to

be a natural one. The apostle had evidently gathered from that which Jesus had just said that those who are sinned against are required to possess a large amount of forbearance and forgiveness. It appears that some of the Jewish teachers had taught that forgiveness should be limited to three times (cf. Amos 1: 3ff; Job 33: 29, 30). In the words of one such teacher, "To a man sinning against another they remit once, they remit twice, they remit a third time, they do not remit a fourth time." Peter may have been influenced by ideas of this kind when he asked the question; and he may have felt that he was being generous when he suggested that the number of times be extended to seven. (Cf. Prov. 24: 16; Lev. 26; 18-28.) Such a question, however, very plainly implies that Peter did not understand what real forgiveness is; and what was true of him is, to a large extent, also true of many of us.

When Jesus made his reply to Peter, he evidently made a play upon the word "seven," as used by Peter; but the lesson is perfectly clear. Forgiveness must be characterized by quality, rather than by quantity. Or, to state the same thing in another way, there must be no limit to forgiveness; it must be extended as often as there is an occasion for it: and that is precisely what the true child of God will be glad to do. In the language of Jesus, "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive." (Luke 17: 3, 4.)

### The Necessity of Forgiveness Illustrated

(Matt. 18: 23-34)

*Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have pa-*

*tience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.*

When we take into account the arithmetic of the proceeding section of the lesson text, it is easy to see that seventy times seven is four hundred and ninety; but the arithmetic which Jesus was using on that occasion is not the kind which is limited to "head computation": it is celestial arithmetic, which we must compute in our hearts. That is the purpose of the parable which we are studying today. The marginal reading notes that the ten thousand talents which the servant owed his lord was equivalent to approximately ten million dollars which, according to *Harpur's Study Bible*, exceeded the wealth of Croesus himself. This was an enormous debt, and far beyond any servant's ability to discharge, which means that that servant's condition was hopeless. The lesson is, of course, the Lord's way of showing his disciples, and all of us, the sinner's insolvent status before God.

The law of Moses permitted the selling of men for their debts (cf. Lev. 25: 39, 47; 2 Kings 4: 1); but the circumstances connected with the parable now before us indicate that the imagery which Jesus employed was that of Oriental despotism, rather than the law of Moses. And so when the servant learned of his lord's intention concerning him, he, in keeping with the customs of eastern countries, prostrated himself before his lord in humility and reverence, with a plea for patience and a promise to pay all that he owed. The king, of course, knew that it would not be possible for the servant to keep that promise, but, being moved with compassion, he gladly forgave him all that great debt. It was the plea for mercy and the hopeless condition of the petitioner which touched the heart of the monarch; and he was moved to do exceedingly more than he had been requested to do.

This whole lesson, of course, is a picture of God dealing with his sinful people. The severity of God continues only until the sinner is brought to acknowledge his guilt. Joseph appeared harsh to his brethren, when they stood before him in

Egypt; but that was in reality love in disguise. After the brothers had fully demonstrated that they realized the terrible sin which they had committed against their helpless brother, that is, Joseph, the latter could no longer refrain himself; he told his brothers that he was Joseph, and that he was extending mercy to them. There is no such thing as forgiveness in the dark. God is always willing to forgive; but he wills that the sinner must first know for what he is being forgiven. No sinner can appreciate his forgiveness, before he is aware of his sins. Or, to say the same thing in another way, he must have the sentence of death in himself, before the words of life will have any abiding worth for him.

*But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings; and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due.*

The term "but," with which this part of the lesson text begins, introduces a contrast—a contrast between the mercy of the king and the utter lack of mercy on the part of the servant whom he had forgiven. The amount which the fellow-servant owed was, according to the marginal reading, about seventeen dollars. *Harper's Study Bible* says that, that was an obligation of only one twenty-thousandth of one per cent as great as the debt which the first servant owed his lord, and for which he had been forgiven. It was, under ordinary circumstances, possible for a man to discharge a small debt like that which was owed by the fellow-servant; but the remarkable thing about the aggressive servant is that he paid no attention to the words which were addressed to him by his fellow-servant, although they were, with the exception of the term "all," exactly the same as those he had used in making his plea for mercy, and which had effectively led his lord to release him from the impossible debt of ten million dollars.

The unmerciful servant even seized his fellow-servant by the throat, and demanded immediate

payment of the small debt. The average professed Christian today does not need to have any one tell him that this type of treatment is characteristic of most of us; but what we have not yet learned is that when we make such demands upon our fellow men, we are, in reality, drawing the sword against ourselves. Alford quotes Chrysostom as saying that the unmerciful servant did not recognize the harbor in which he escaped his impending shipwreck. When people forget their own forgiveness, they tend to become cruel to others. But James says that judgment will be without mercy to him who shows no mercy. (See James 2: 13.)

When people forget their own forgiveness (cf. 2 Pet. 1: 9), they tend to become cruel to others. They demand perfection in their fellows, while completely ignoring their own sins. This reminds us of the attitude of David, when he said, "The man that hath done this is worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity," when he himself was the sinner. (Cf. 2 Sam. 12: 1-7a; John 8: 7-9.) When Paul exhorted Titus "to be gentle, showing all meekness toward all men," he gave as the motive the fact that "we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another;" but that we were saved through the kindness and mercy of God. (See Tit. 3: 2-5.)

*So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besougest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.*

It was but natural for the fellow-servants to feel and act as they did toward the unmerciful servant; for no matter how much we are inclined to deal harshly with men ourselves, we never like to see others mistreated by some one else. Trench calls attention to the fact that the different

emotions which are ascribed to the fellow-servants and to God are not accidental. Man is himself a sinner, and he is conscious of the fact that when he sees sin manifest itself in another, that the same condition exists (in germ at least) in his own heart, and that realization produces in him humiliation; and it is for that reason that he can *grieve* at sin. But it is different with God. He is holy and "of purer eyes than to behold evil," and he, accordingly, is *angry or wroth* with such conduct as that which characterized the unmerciful servant.

It is worthy of notice that before the lord pronounced his wrath upon the merciless servant, he calmly pointed out to him how shamefully unreasonable and heartless his conduct was toward his fellow-servant, especially in view of the fact that he himself had been treated so kindly by the one to whom he was overwhelmingly indebted. This realization, of course, would give the punishment which was meted out to him a double sting. He was called a *wicked servant*, not on account of his debt, but because of his ingratitude and cruelty. The guilt with which he was charged was, as Trench points out, not that, *needing mercy*, he refused to show mercy; but that, *having received mercy*, he remained unmerciful still. Every redeemed child of God has received mercy, and he is therefore deeply obligated to show mercy to his fellow men.

It has already been pointed out in this lesson that the standard of judgment at the last day is "no mercy to the unmerciful." The full statement is, "For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment." (James 2: 13.) The Lord, in the first part of the parable, dealt with his servant as a creditor with a debtor; but at the end of the parable, he dealt with him as a judge with a criminal. The wicked servant was not only taken to prison; but to terrible punishment as well. Vincent quotes Livy as picturing an old centurion who was complaining that he had been taken by his creditor, not into servitude, but to a workhouse and torture, and showing his back scarred with fresh wounds.

A question in this connection is

frequently asked, Do sins which have been forgiven by the Lord come back again? Alford appears to have the correct answer, so far as this parable is concerned. He notes that it is a spiritual meaning which must be taken into consideration; and so, he who falls from grace into condemnation, and is overwhelmed with "all that debt," not of this or that sin which was formerly remitted, but of the whole state of enmity to God. The latter is what must be paid; and inasmuch as that is utterly impossible, the torture will continue for ever. This is a terrible thought to contemplate.

### The Consequence of Mercilessness

(Matt. 18: 25)

*So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.*

God will not accept a sham or lip pardon; the forgiveness which we grant must be genuine—it must be from the heart. The verse just quoted may be regarded as the **essence** of Christ's reply to Peter's question. (Verse 21.) No man with an unforgiving spirit can live in harmony with a forgiving God. (Cf. Amos 3: 3.) The forgiveness we receive from God is genuine; for he says, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember against them no more for ever;" which evidently means that he will treat those whom he forgives as if they had never sinned against him. That, of course, is the way in which we must also regard those whom we forgive. In speaking of the idea just expressed, Hall L. Calhoun says, "While this is true, I do not believe that the one forgiven should presume to draw very heavily upon the forbearance of the one whom he has injured until he has had time for ample proof and until he himself has made earnest efforts by his loyal conduct toward the one whom he has wronged to establish in the heart of that person a feeling of certainty that the offending party has really and truly repented of the wrong. It seems that some flagrant sinners almost demand, when they make a simple confession of their wrong, that they should be lauded with honors and given positions of preference and prominence among

those whose forgiveness they have sought. . . . Nothing is more despicable than for a flagrant offender to

impose himself upon the forbearance of those by whom he has been forgiven."

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

Why is "forgiveness" such a beautiful deed, yet not always easy to grant?  
What is involved in forgiveness?  
Why does forgiveness often affect human relationships?  
Give an analysis of the chapter from which this lesson text is taken.

### The Golden Text

What is the general meaning of the term "mercy"?  
What are its two chief aspects?  
What are some of the things which we should know about a person before we condemn him?  
Why is the quality of mercy so important in the lives of people?

### The Scope of Forgiveness

What are some of the probable reasons for the question which Peter asked Jesus?  
What did the answer which Jesus gave him involve?

### The Necessity of Forgiveness Illustrated

What is the difference between "natural" and "celestial" arithmetic?  
What can you say of the amount of the debt which the servant owed to his lord?  
What was the usual thing which was done to debtors who could not pay what they owed?  
What caused the king to forgive this particular debtor?

What was the over-all purpose of the parable which Jesus spoke at the time of this lesson?

What must always be done to and for the sinner before he can be truly forgiven?

Why is this true?

What is the force of the word "but" in the expression, "But that servant went out"?

What about the debt which his fellow-servant owed the unmerciful servant?

How did the latter treat his fellow-servant and why?

What is the lesson which we should learn regarding the incident now before us?

Why did the other servants take the treatment of their fellow-servant to heart?

What did the lord do regarding the unmerciful servant and why?

What is said about the standard of judgment at the last day with reference to the unmerciful?

Does the Lord cause the sins of ungrateful people to return to the offenders? Why?

### The Consequence of Mercilessness

Why does God demand that forgiveness on the part of his people be genuine?

What should be our attitude, then, toward those whom we forgive?

What should the attitude of those who receive forgiveness be toward those who extend it?

Why is the great blessing of forgiveness so often abused?

Why should the truths which we have studied today be frequently emphasized?

How is the best way to teach the fine art of forgiveness?

## Lesson IV—July 24, 1966

# JESUS TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER

## Lesson Text

Luke 18: 9-17

9 And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phar'isee, and the other a publican.

11 The Phar'isee stood and Prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.

13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his

eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.

14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 And they were bringing unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16 But Je-sus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them

not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whoso-

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."* (James 4: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 18: 1-8.

### Daily Bible Readings

July 18. M.....	An Example of Prayer (Luke 11: 1-13)
July 19. T.....	Perseverance in Prayer (Mark 7: 24-30)
July 20. W.....	Humility in Prayer (Matt. 8: 5-13)
July 21. T.....	A Prayer of Faith (Mark 9: 20-27)
July 22. F.....	A Prayer of Jesus (John 17: 1-26)
July 23. S.....	A House of Prayer (Matt. 21: 12-16)
July 24. S.....	Paul and Prayer (Rom. 15: 30-33)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Peraea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, and others, including some little children.

### Introduction

There are always urgent reasons for studying the meaning of prayer; for prayer is either the primary fact in our earthly experience, or our worst delusion. Any thoughtful student who has given this subject any consideration knows that many unscriptural and unreasonable theories have been put forward in the name of prayer. These false notions, of course, have kept many people from receiving the real benefits of prayer which God has ordained for them; but, passing over these erroneous ideas, let us ask, What kind of prayer can we, as rational people with an open Bible, believe in? The only adequate answer to this question lies in a careful consideration of just what prayer is and does, as revealed in the Bible; and in observing its proper place in the total working of religious faith.

The task now before us, that is, learning the meaning of prayer, is not an easy one; for it must be admitted by many of us that we, if not strangers altogether, are at best only occasional visitors in the halls of prayer. But, difficult as it may be, there is no task which is more deserving of our hardest work than that of recapturing the meaning and reclaiming the power of prayer. The words "let us pray" are familiar ones. They are used in public worship to introduce the period of prayer; and they either open the door to the secrets of

spiritual power, or they are as "sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." Prayer is not the stock in trade of preachers; it is, as Harold A. Bosley says, "every man's supreme effort to find the right answer to the meaning of life." No one will ever receive a more crucial invitation than the one which bids him confront God as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of his life.

As we continue our inquiry into the meaning of prayer, let us ask regarding the nature of God: Is he real? The average professed follower of Christ would answer immediately, Yes; but is the answer theoretical, or does he make a practical or an applied use of that truth? Both the Bible and nature, together with competent men and women of all ages, unite in their testimony that God is (Cf. Gen. 1: 1; Psalm 19: 1ff.) But notwithstanding all of this, the requirements of prayer have not been fully met, if one takes the reality of God on faith and hearsay alone. God's reality, as a fact or truth, must be tested by every means at hand; which is to say that it must be believed in and held to be of supreme importance, before one can feel the true need and importance of prayer. The lack of this attitude and experience is one of the chief reasons why so many professed followers of Christ fail to avail themselves of the practice of prayer.

### The Golden Text

*"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."* The words just quot-

ed are found in this context: "Whence come wars and whence come

fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." (James 4: 1-3.) Another question comes to mind just here, namely, Is God the sort of God who can be consciously and personally approached, with the expectation of a definite response to one's prayers? The passage just quoted responds with a ringing, Yes. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches that one cannot please God, who does not trust him to answer prayer; or, which is the same thing, who does not trust God to bless him. (Cf. Heb. 11: 6; Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

If we are willing therefore to take what the Bible says regarding God and prayer, it should not be difficult for us to give the practice of prayer a fair trial; and if we do, we can have the deepest and most persuasive kind of evidence for the reality of prayer, as a personal relationship with God, which is possible for the child of God to possess. It is not surprising therefore to read from a well known columnist that prayer, in his opinion, is man's greatest spiritual exercise and privilege. He then goes on to say: "Prayer leads us into the presence of God. The prayer of repentance bends God's ear toward us. The prayer of faith brings us assurance of salvation. The prayer of intercession makes an impact upon heaven and earth. The heart-cry of every Christian is that of the disciples: 'Lord, teach us to pray.' Samuel Chadwick once said: 'The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears

nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil; he mocks at our wisdom; but he trembles when we pray.' In these busy days we say we cannot spare the time to pray. But I have found that when I am busy I cannot afford to neglect prayer. It sharpens the mind, fills the heart with purpose, and helps us to be conscious of God's guidance and direction."

While prayer is the privilege of every child of God, we must all remember that there are definite conditions which must be met, before we have the right to expect an answer to our prayers. This is the plain affirmation of the words which serve as the golden text for today. The full verse says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures." The practical meaning of this is that we must be actuated by the right motive when we pray. Looking at the New Testament as a whole, the conditions of acceptable prayer may be listed as follows: (1) *It must be offered in faith*, Matt. 21: 22, and in order to do this, one must believe that which God says about prayer, Rom. 10: 17; he must ask for something which God has promised to give; and he must ask according to the conditions which he has named—for example, bread: Matt. 6: 11; Gen. 3: 19; salvation: Rom. 1: 16, 17; Mark 16: 15, 16. (2) *It must be prompted by the right motive*, James 4: 3; cf. 5: 16b-18; 1 Kings 18: 36, 37. (3) *It must be offered according to the will of God*, 1 John 3: 22; 5: 14, 15. (4) *The worshipper must be in the right condition spiritually*, John 15: 7. (5) *It must be offered in the name of Christ*. (John 14: 13, 14; 15: 16; 16: 24.)

### The Text Explained

The Parable of the Pharisee  
and the Publican  
(Luke 18: 9-13)

*And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest*

*of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.*

In the preceding paragraph, which contains the parable of the importunate widow and the unrighteous judge, Jesus taught that men ought

always to pray, and not to faint; but in the parable now before us he clearly shows that not all so-called praying is acceptable to God. This is a lesson which we should all learn, and learn well. The Lord touched upon this idea in his sermon on the mount, when he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21; cf. 25: 1-13, where the foolish virgins are represented as doing the very thing which Jesus said would not avail for acceptance with God.)

The manner in which Jesus illustrates the lesson which he means for us to get is by means of a contrast. Two men went up into the temple to pray. The one was a self-righteous Pharisee, who trusted in his own righteousness, and set all others at naught; while the other was a penitent publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself. The fact that he "stood" was not the objectionable feature which he displayed, for that bodily posture was both recognized and endorsed by Jesus himself (see Matt. 6: 5; Mark 11: 25): the trouble with the Pharisee was his attitude toward himself and God. He took his position by himself and prayed with himself as he gave utterance to a mere self-complacent soliloquy. He expressed no wants, and gave voice to no petitions. He simply rehearsed his religious practices, and recounted his good qualities. It is true that he thanked God in words, but it is not difficult to see, in the light of his general attitude, that he was merely congratulating himself. There was not even so much as the feeling of need, to say nothing of the urgency of one who felt that unless God supplied that which was lacking in his life that he would be for ever undone. There was no evidence of devotion or dependence, or of any other religious emotion—nothing but a trust in himself, and a disregard for all others. (Cf. the attitude of the Laodiceans, Rev. 3: 17.)

But how unlike the prayer of the Pharisee was that of the publican! Although standing, but "afar off," he was abashed in the presence of his Maker. The attitude which he manifested was not assumed for effect, like that of the Pharisee, but

was the natural expression of the feelings which were surging within him, as evidenced by his whole body. William M. Taylor notes that it is a mistake to suppose that a man speaks only with his tongue. His eyes, face, and hands have all been endowed with the power of expression; and when his heart is profoundly moved, the very posture which his body intuitively and unconsciously assumes is an indication of the emotions which stir his soul. Thus, the attitude and action of the publican, his bowed head, the smiting of his breast, as well as the place in which he stood, were just so many indications—all the more sincere because they were unstudied—of his profound humility. This, along with the earnestness which his words expressed, gave all the evidence which is needed to show that he was entirely dependent upon God for the blessings which he alone could bestow. (Cf. Matt. 14: 30; Mark 9: 24.)

#### The Lord's Appraisal of the Two Prayers (Luke 18: 14)

*I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

And so, as Jesus pressed his lesson, it was the penitent tax collector whom he declared to be justified, rather than the self-righteous Pharisee; and it is in order for us to ask why this was true. In the first place, the prayer of the publican was motivated by his deep conviction of sin. He referred to himself as "the" sinner. (The article is in the original.) This is to say that he was thinking of his own sins, and not those of other people, as was the case of the Pharisee—"I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Sin, in the estimation of the penitent publican, was rebellion against God and his law; and it did not matter whether that law was intended to regulate his conduct toward God or his fellow men. Disobedience to God's law was sin, as he viewed the matter; and when he was thus convicted of sin, he could but stand abased in God's sight.



In the second place, the penitent publican, unlike the proud Pharisee, pled for the mercy of God. This implied that he realized that there was nothing about himself which could in any way make it possible for him to claim forgiveness as a favor which was due him. He did not therefore ask for justice, or even seek for anything which could be regarded as his right. This is the spirit which must characterize us, if we are to receive the Lord's favor. Salvation from sin is God's gracious gift to those who in faith and penitence are willing to receive it. (See Eph. 2: 8, 9.) In writing to Titus, Paul said, "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3: 5.) This has been called a "humbling doctrine;" but any one who is acquainted with the New Testament knows that it is the doctrine which must be believed and accepted, if we are to meet God in peace. Some one has said, "Tis from the mercy of our God that all our hopes begin."

And, finally, the prayer of the publican, in contrast of that of the Pharisee, was a prayer of faith. This is evident from the fact that the original term which is rendered "be merciful" (*hilasthēti*, first aorist passive imperative of *hilaskomai*) literally means be propitiated. The only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in Heb. 2: 17, where it is rendered "to make propitiation." Its cognate noun (*hilastērion*) is translated "mercy-seat" in Heb. 9: 5; and "propitiation" in Rom. 3: 25; while the related term *hilasmos*, a substantive from *hilaskomai*, is rendered "propitiation" in 1 John 2: 2; 4: 10. Thus, with the history of the original word before us, it is reasonable to suppose that the Publican, in his plea for mercy, had reference to the fact that he had complied with requirement of the law regarding sacrifice for sin, and was relying upon God's promise which he had made to the Jews in connection with the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificial victim upon the mercy-seat. The man was praying in the temple, and it was from its courts that sacrifices were made continuously.

It is, then, from the publican that

we can see something of the true meaning of prayer. It may be described as a direct and personal approach to God. It is the creature seeking the Creator, the one in whom he lives, moves, and has his being. (Cf. Acts 17: 27, 28.) William James describes prayer as "intercourse with an Ideal Companion;" and with this view of the question in mind, it is easy to see that prayer is not primarily a matter of our talking, God's listening, and then answering, as is so commonly assumed. (Cf. 1 Thess. 5: 17.) The real core of the question regarding prayer may be expressed in this way, "Is it possible for me to expose the whole range of my life to the Creative Source from which it came, and to the Creative Will which seeks to assert itself through me?" There is no doubt about the reality of the Source and the Will; but are we consciously willing to turn our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength toward God? When one does that, he really prays; but, without that attitude and practice, he cannot pray in the true sense. A double life in prayer is impossible, as may be learned from James 1: 1-8. (Cf. Matt. 7: 21.)

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

—King Claudius, in *Hamlet*

In answer to the question, *Why pray if God knows?* George MacDonald says, "Reader, if you are in any trouble, try whether God will not help you: if you are in no need, why should you ask questions about prayer? True, he knows little of himself who does not know that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; but until he begins at least to suspect a need, how can he pray?"

"But if God is so good as you represent him, and if he knows all that we need, and better far than we do ourselves, why should it be necessary to ask him for anything?" I answer, What if he knows prayer to be the thing we need first and most? What if the main object in God's idea of prayer be the supplying of our great, our endless need—the need of himself? . . . Hunger may drive the runaway child home, and he may or may not be fed at once, but he needs his mother more than

his dinner. Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other needs: prayer is the beginning of that communion, and some need is the motive of that prayer. ... So begins a communion, a talking with God, a coming-to-one with him, which is the sole end of prayer, yea, of existence itself in its infinite phases. We must ask that we may receive: but that we should receive what we ask in respect of our lower needs, is not God's end in making us pray, for he could give us everything without that: to bring his child to his knee, God withholds that man may ask." (From *The Word of Jesus On Prayer*.)

### Jesus and Little Children

(Luke 18: 15-17)

*And they were bringing unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.*

These "babes" were small children who were probably brought to Jesus by their parents. Both Matthew and Mark refer to them as "little children." Mark and Luke say "that he should touch them;" while Matthew has "that he should lay his hands on them, and pray." It appears to have been the custom of that day for mothers to take their small children to their great and good teachers, and ask them to lay their hands upon them, and bless them. It is possible, of course, that the mothers who brought their children to Jesus, on the occasion of this lesson, may have recognized in him more than a great and good teacher; but it is not reasonable to suppose that they regarded him as being anything less.

When the disciples rebuked the mothers for bringing their children to Jesus, they probably felt that they were doing him a favor. They had often seen people crowd around him, and they knew that he was often physically tired and exhausted; but they did not always understand the

heart of their Master. The subject of childhood is one of the most important questions which can engage our attention. No Christian home nor congregation of the Lord's people can give too much of the right kind of attention to their children; for if the child is permitted to start its growth and development in the wrong direction, the end may be fatal. But even if one does not end in that manner, it will, in all probability, involve an endless struggle to bring the child to and keep him in the right way.

But when Jesus saw that the disciples were trying to keep the children away from him, he said, in effect, "Stop hindering them, and allow them to come to me." The command to his followers was put in a twofold way, namely, negatively and positively. The fact that those who brought their children to Jesus wanted him to lay his hands on them, and pray, which he did, does not in any way suggest the idea of infant church membership; and those who think that is does receive their ideas from the traditions of men.

The expression "for to such belongeth the kingdom of God" does not refer to the babes who were then being brought to Jesus, but to people whose characters are like those of little children. This is the interpretation which Christ himself placed upon the question: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." The kingdom of God, spoken of here, is the church which is made up of people who have been saved from sin (cf. Acts 2: 47; 1 Cor. 1: 18); and since little children have never been lost, they cannot be among the saved and cannot therefore have membership in the body of the saved—the church.

The Soul of the Child is the loveliest flower

That grows in the garden of God.

It climbs from weakness to knowledge and power.

To the sky from the clay and the clod.

To beauty and sweetness it **grows** under care,

Neglected, 'tis ragged and wild.

'Tis a plant that is tender, but wondrously rare

The sweet, wistful soul of a child!  
 Be tender, O gardener, and give it  
 its share  
 Of moisture, of warmth, and of light,  
 And let it not lack for thy painstaking care  
 To protect it from frost and from  
 blight.

A glad day will come when its bloom  
 shall unfold;  
 It will seem that an angel has  
 smiled,  
 Reflecting from its beauty and  
 sweetness untold  
 In the sensitive soul of a child.  
 —Selected

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What are some of the urgent reasons for  
 studying the subject of prayer?  
 Why is such a study so often neglected  
 by professed Christians?  
 How should we go about discovering the  
 meaning of prayer?  
 When does one come to feel the true  
 need and importance of prayer?

### The Golden Text

In what context are the words of the  
 golden text found?  
 What should be our feeling toward God.  
 if we are to pray effectively?  
 What are the principal conditions of ac-  
 ceptable prayer?

### The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican

What lesson had Jesus, in the chapter  
 from which this lesson is taken, pre-  
 viously taught regarding prayer?  
 What lesson do we learn in the parable  
 now before us with reference to pray-  
 er?  
 Discuss the conduct and prayer of the  
 Pharisee.  
 Why was he so interested in himself and  
 so opposed to others?  
 How did the publican manifest his true  
 self?

### The Lord's Appraisal of the Two Prayers

Why was the publican justified in the  
 sight of God, rather than the Pharisee?  
 How did each man regard the question of  
 sin?  
 Discuss the two prayers with reference to  
 the matter of petition.  
 Why is mercy so important in our lives?  
 In what way did the publican demon-  
 strate his faith in God?  
 What do we learn from the publican re-  
 garding the true meaning of prayer?  
 With these facts in mind, what can we  
 say regarding prayer?  
 Why is a double prayer life impossible?  
 What is the principal reason for praying?

### Jesus and Little Children

How do we know that these were simply  
 small children?  
 Why were they brought to Jesus?  
 Why would mothers be anxious for Jesus  
 to lay his hands on and bless their chil-  
 dren?  
 Why did the disciples probably try to  
 keep the children away from Jesus?  
 How should all of God's people feel to-  
 ward the children in their midst?  
 Why is the proper training of such chil-  
 dren so important?  
 How did Jesus feel toward little children?  
 How do we know that there is no place  
 for little children as members of the  
 church?  
 What, then, is the meaning of seeking the  
 kingdom of God as a little child?  
 Why is the soul of a child such a lovely  
 thing?

## Lesson V—July 31, 1966

# JESUS AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER

## Lesson Text

### Matt. 19: 16-26

16 And behold, one came to him  
 and said, Teacher, what good thing  
 shall I do, that I may have eternal  
 life?

17 And he said unto him, Why  
 askest thou me concerning that which  
 is good? One there is who is good:  
 but if thou wouldest enter into life,  
 keep the commandments.

18 He said unto him, Which? And  
 Je'-sus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou  
 shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt  
 not steal, Thou shalt not bear false  
 witness,

19 Honor thy father and thy

mother; and, Thou shalt love thy  
 neighbor as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him,  
 All these things have I observed:  
 what lack I yet?

21 Je'-sus said unto him, If thou  
 wouldest be perfect, go, sell that  
 which thou hast, and give to the  
 poor, and thou shalt have treasure  
 in heaven: and come, follow me.

22 But when the young man heard  
 the saying, he went away sorrowful;  
 for he was one that had great pos-  
 sessions.

23 And Je'-sus said unto his disci-

ples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

**Golden Text.**—*"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt. 6: 33.)

**Devotional Reading.**—Matt. 19: 1-15.

25 And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 And Je'-sus looking upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

## Daily Bible Readings

July 25. M.....	Treasure in Heaven (Matt. 6: 19-24)
July 26. T. ....	Danger of Riches (Deut. 8: 11-18)
July 27. W.....	The Right Motive (1 Tim. 6: 17-21)
July 28. T.....	Things to Avoid (Luke 12: 22-34)
July 29. F.....	Cheerful Giving (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
July 30. S. ....	God's Promise (Mal. 3: 7-12)
July 31. S.....	First Things First (Matt. 6: 28-34)

**Time.**—Probably A.D. 30.

**Place.**—Peraea.

**Persons.**—Jesus, the rich young ruler, and the disciples.

## Introduction

The lesson before us today presents one of the many instances in the Bible, in which we see the necessity of taking all that is said on any one subject, in order to learn the full truth regarding it. This is seen when we consider the fact that the man who is referred to as the "rich young ruler" is nowhere described in these words, that is, no New Testament writer calls him the *rich young ruler*. But that he was the rich young ruler is true, as may be seen by the combined testimony of the three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who record the incident regarding him. The threefold account of the memorable event which we are to study today is an interesting example of the manner in which one record is supplemented by others. Matthew alone tells us that he was young; Luke alone says that he was rich, although both Matthew and Mark say that he "had great possessions." Luke also is the only one who says that he was a ruler.

While Mark does not mention the fact that the man about whom we are studying today was either young or a ruler, he does add some interesting facts which are omitted by both Matthew and Luke; as, for example, the running and the kneeling,

the earnestness and the reverence, the look which Jesus gave to him, and the love which he had for him. The Lord must have felt a personal attachment for this young man; and when we consider the references which are made to his character, it is not difficult to understand why. For instance the young man had an eye for goodness in others, he had courage, he had kept himself unspotted from the world, he was dissatisfied with himself and his way of living, and he was in quest of eternal life.

But a study of the attitude which the rich young ruler later manifested shows that it sometimes happens that, in spite of one's high moral character and his professed devotion to God, there may be in his heart a longing for and a service to the material things of earth, which will nullify all of his claims of interest in the Lord. Jesus declares that "no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 24.) Before one can demonstrate his loyalty to God, he must first make sure that his sense of values does not contradict that claim.

### The Golden Text

*"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

The passage from which this text is taken is truly one of the great, as well as one of the most beautiful, passages of the New Testament. It reads as follows: "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubic unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 25-34.)

The passage which serves as our golden text for today is the seventh in a series of eight reasons which Jesus gives for not being anxious regarding the two great objects of men's anxiety, namely, (1) life (its prolongation), and (2) the body (its comforts and needs). The reason which is emphasized in the passage now before us is that of putting first things first. This should and must be the aim of every one who would be pleasing to God. Paul was dealing with this idea, when he said, "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be Well-pleasing unto him." (2 Cor. 5:

9.) Everything else must be made subordinate to this goal, if the greatest good is to be realized. The kingdom of God which we are to seek is a great ideal, which finds full expression in the New Testament. It is God's government for his people; and for one to seek his kingdom, therefore, is equivalent to his making the effort to bring himself into complete harmony with the divine will.

When people are willing to make the proper adjustments in their lives, and actually put into practice that which they are told to do, God will always do his part. George Bernard Shaw is reported to have said, "Ask any man would he like to be a better man; and he will say yes, most piously. Ask him if he would like to have a million of money; and he will say yes, most sincerely. But the pious citizen who would like to be a better man goes on behaving just as he did before. And the tramp who would like the million does not take the trouble to earn ten shillings." (Cf. Matt. 23: 1-3.) The quest for the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, requires detachment, as well as concentration. Practically every responsible person is influenced by his material surroundings, and the society into which his life has been cast; but he must not become so involved in the existing material order, that all is lost if it is destroyed. Or to state the same thing in another way, the child of God must have spiritual values which will survive social change and economic ruin. This is what Jesus urges his people to do; and if they seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, they will have that which is both indestructible and eternal: and then if all that which is worldly is destroyed, they will still have that which cannot be taken away from them. (Cf. Luke 12: 15.) The addition of the material things which Jesus says will come to the faithful child of God is not due to the miraculous; they come as a result of our giving attention to the true laws of our being. Some one has said, "Let religion be the first thing in our affections and in our labors, and Providence will be our mighty partner and helper in business." (Cf. Psalm 37: 25.)

## The Text Explained

### A Request and an Answer

(Matt. 19: 16-21)

*And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.*

If one will read the three records of the incident regarding the rich young ruler, he will find several suggestions from the combined testimony of the three Synoptic writers, which he would not get from the reading of a single record. For example, both Mark and Luke have "Good Teacher," whereas, Matthew has "good thing." It is quite evident that the young man did not have a very accurate idea of the term "good," according to its use by Matthew; and he must have thought that there was some particular work of merit which, if he could do, would result in his having eternal life.

The question which Jesus asked the young man, as contained in the text, was apparently meant to lead him to the lesson which he needed to learn. Bruce calls this the teacher's way of leading the pupil on. The question regarding the "good thing" which is necessary to be done, in order to have eternal life, is superfluous; and the answer is self-evident, namely, Since God alone is good, the *good thing* about which the man asked can be nothing more nor less than obedience to his will. Therefore, if one would enter into life, he must keep the commandments which God has given. (Cf. Matt. 7: 21; John 8: 29.)

When Jesus mentioned the keep-

ing of God's commandments, as a condition for entrance into life, the young man's answer was "Which?" This evidently implies that he was still under the impression that there was some "one thing" which would enable him to achieve his great desire, that, if he would do that one thing. But the Bible nowhere teaches that men can earn their salvation. Paul wrote to Titus these words: "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3: 5.) This is to say that God removes sin and imparts life to those who obey him; and that obedience is but a demonstration that the people in question have surrendered themselves to him. This same truth is set forth in Eph. 2: 8-10. (Cf. Acts 22: 10, 16.)

The commandments which Jesus cited, in response to the inquiry of the man before him, were the last six commandments of the Decalogue, that is, if we consider the last one, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," as being both a substitute for the tenth commandment itself, as well as a summary of the entire six. The full statement of the tenth commandment reads as follows: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." (Ex. 20: 17.) No one could love his neighbor as himself, without keeping the tenth commandment; and furthermore, Jesus used the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," along with "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," as a summary of or a basis for the whole law and the prophets. (See Matt. 22: 34-40.)

We are not told why Jesus cited the last six commandments of the Decalogue, rather than the first four; or, indeed, why he did not mention all ten of them. McGarvey supposes that the last six, rather than the first four, were given, because they were more frequently violated than the first four; and that they therefore would form a better test of charac-

ter. One needs only to read all of the Ten Commandments in order to see that the first four pertain primarily to one's duty to God, while the others cover man's duty to his fellow men.

When the young man said, "All these things have I observed," or, as Mark and Luke have it, "All these things have I observed from my youth," there is nothing in the text to indicate that his statement was not true, insofar as he understood the import of the commandments. This, however, does not imply perfect obedience; but he did speak with a refreshing earnestness, which caused Jesus, as Mark observes, to look upon him and love him. And so, notwithstanding the young man's erroneous view regarding the method of obtaining eternal life, there was a nobleness and openness about him, which stood in marked contrast with the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees; but even with all that, he still thought that there was some meritorious act which this new Teacher could bring to his attention, that would enable him to realize his quest for God's greatest blessing.

After reading all three of the accounts of the rich young ruler, it appears necessary to assume that Jesus regarded him, up to this point, as being entirely sincere; and on the assumption of his sincerity the Lord proceeded to tell him what was still lacking in his life. In his book, *The Compassionate Christ*, Walter Russell Bowie, notes that Jesus, in effect, told the man who was seeking God's greatest blessing that a life which is pleasing to God must, first of all, stand upon the old foundations of integrity; but that it must not stop there. If this life is to rise into the sunlight of truth, it must have larger aspirations; and it was with this idea in mind that Jesus told him that he would show him how his soul could grow. Although the young man did not realize it, he was still bound within the narrow limits of a basically selfish attitude: and the one thing which he lacked to deliver him from that littleness in his life was a thrust of devotion, which would be manifested by the selling of that which he had, and the giving to the poor. This would not only raise his own spiritual stature, but would also

assure him of treasure in heaven. (Cf. Matt. 6: 19-21.)

One of the important lessons which we should learn from the Lord's instruction to the rich young ruler to sell his goods, and give to the poor, is that it is possible for one to be sincere in some areas of his life, while not realizing what may be required of him in others. The command to sell what he had, and give to the poor, was not a general requirement for all people who would become followers of Christ. Some of the most devoted people of the ages have been men of great wealth. (Cf. Abraham, Job, et al.) It is not the wealth, as such, but the attitude of the man who possesses it, that counts. (Cf. Matt. 6: 24; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19; Luke 12: 16-21; 19: 8, 9.) The man before Jesus was in quest of eternal life; and it was essential that he know the truth about himself. He had a serious defect, concerning which he appears to have been totally unaware. The fact is, one fault may often counterbalance all of one's virtues. If an otherwise perfect watch lacked only one thing—the mainspring—, it would be of no service in the sense in which it is expected to function, namely, record the time of day. (Cf. James 2: 10.)

### **"The Great Refusal"**

(Matt. 19: 22)

*But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions.*

The manner in which Jesus dealt with the young man of our lesson enabled him to see himself as he really was; and how often is this same lesson needed today! If some one had told the rich young ruler that he loved his possessions more than he loved God, he probably would not have believed it; but that was the truth of the matter. He had a great lack which he did not realize, but which came clearly into view when he was put to the test. Dante called this "the great refusal," and although sorrow filled the heart of the young man who had talked with Jesus, yet he knowingly and deliberately turned away from the source of the life which he professed to be seeking. (Cf. John 5: 40; Col. 3: 1-4; 1 John 5: 10-13.)

The possibilities which the young man of the lesson now before us possessed, may be likened to a fully-rigged ship which is ready to set out on a great voyage; but which is too heavily loaded to be able to cross safely over the hidden shoals. It is essential that some of the unnecessary things which burden it be thrown overboard, or at least be removed from the vessel, before it can get past the shallows and into the open sea. It was into the open sea, so to speak, that the young man wanted to go, and it was there that Jesus, too, wanted him to go; but the Lord knew what it would require to get him there, and that was what he told him he lacked. There are certain things which must be put out of our lives, before we can put on that which is essential to our salvation. (Read Col. 3: 5-17.)

### The Peril of Riches

(Matt. 19: 23-26)

*And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*

The original word for "hard," in the text now before us, means *with difficulty*. Jesus does not say that a rich man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven but he does say that it is difficult for him to do so. This is true because of the perilous attachment which men have for riches; an attachment which makes it extremely difficult for them to renounce their great possessions, and keep themselves free from the evils which great possessions tend to heap upon them. The sure way to avoid this is to follow the instruction which was given by Jesus and the inspired apostles. Paul, for example, says, "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things

to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." (1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) This is substantially what Jesus meant, when he said, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Luke 16: 9.)

There have been people through the ages who have tried to lessen the effect of the Lord's language regarding the "needle's eye" by endeavoring to make it mean something other than a literal needle's eye, such as a small gate in the wall of a city by the name of *needle's eye*. The original word for "needle," in the passage now before us is *raphidos*, and it means, according to Arndt-Gingrich, Thayer, et al, "the eye of a needle," such as is used for sewing. Luke (*The New Testament in Greek*, Westcott and Hort) has *belonēs*, instead of *raphidos*, which also means, according to Thayer, Arndt-Gingrich, et al, a needle; and Arndt-Gingrich notes that there is no good evidence that this is figurative language for a narrow gate. Vincent, in commenting on Luke's use of *belonēs*, says that it is an older term, and is the peculiar word for the *surgical* needle.

The Lord's purpose in saying that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, was, it appears, to set forth by means of a well known proverb the greatest human impossibility. This is made clear, as we shall see, in *verse 26*. The great danger in a rich man's losing his soul, as has already been indicated, is not to be found in the simple possession of great wealth, but in the difficulty which he experiences in subordinating it to the will of God.

The amazement of the disciples, when they heard the Lord's remark about the impossibility of a rich man's being saved, must be understood in the light of the situation which was then before them. They had just witnessed a rich man who lacked only "one thing" turn away



from Jesus; and that was the occasion for the latter's remark about the seemingly, **utterly** impossibility of a rich man's being saved. If they had been thinking about rich men who oppress the poor, they would not have been surprised; but inasmuch as most people seek for riches, in one way or another, the disciples were greatly surprised to hear that not even a "good" rich man can be saved, without extreme difficulty. They themselves had not fully understood the Lord's teaching with respect to this issue.

The probable antecedent of "this," in verse 26, is salvation in general, suggested by the question, "Who then can be saved?" The Lord's re-

ply is that the salvation of any man, in any way, is alike impossible to any except God. And in the case of a wealth-loving person, God can, through his word and providential working, so influence him, as to make him a dispenser of blessings. Any rich man therefore should consider it a blessing from heaven, when opportunities for using his wealth are presented to him. Of course, if the rich man is unwilling to yield himself to God, even God would be powerless to save him, in harmony with his righteous will. This was true in the case of the rich young ruler; and he was permitted to turn away from the Lord in sorrow.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Why is it essential to consider all that the Bible says regarding any subject found therein?

Show how this is illustrated in today's lesson.

What are some of the traits of character of the young man which Mark points out?

What did the attitude of the man of the lesson illustrate?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

What great lesson does Jesus mean for us to get from his words here?

How can people usually test their own characters with respect to this question?

What is the danger of becoming too greatly attached to material things?

### A Request and an Answer

What use of the word "good" was made by the rich young ruler?

What reply did Jesus make to it and why?

Why isn't there "one thing" which people can do in order to be saved?

What commandments did Jesus tell the young man to keep and why?

What are we to understand by his claim that he had always kept those commandments?

How did Jesus apparently feel about the matter?

What, then, did the Lord mean by saying that the young man lacked one thing?

Why didn't the latter realize this basic need?

What important lesson should we learn from this?

### "The Great Refusal"

What result followed the Lord's dealing with the rich young ruler?

Why is it appropriate to refer to the young man's action as "the great refusal"?

Where alone is eternal life found, so far as we are concerned, and why?

Why was it essential that the young man be told of his great need?

### The Peril of Riches

What does Jesus mean by saying that it is "hard" for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven?

What is the best way to avoid this difficulty?

What does the New Testament say regarding this question?

What did the disciples evidently understand by the expression a "needle's eye"?

Is it wrong for a Christian to have great material possessions? Give reasons for your answer.

Why were the disciples astonished at the remark of Jesus about a rich man's chances of going to heaven?

What is "impossible" with men and what is "possible" with God?

How should the Lord's people who are rich feel about opportunities for using their wealth which come to them?

## Lesson VI—August 7, 1966

## JESUS TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE

### Lesson Text

Luke 20: 9-19

9 And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husband-

men, and went into another country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent unto

the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

11 And he sent yet another servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

12 And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth.

13 And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What

therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written,

The stone which the builders rejected,

The same was made the head of the corner?

18 Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.

19 And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them.

Golden Text.—*"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's"* (Luke 20: 25.)

Devotional Reading.—Luke 20: 1-8.

### Daily Bible Readings

August	1. M.....	Wicked Men (Luke 20: 9-18)
August	2. T.....	Rejoicing When Reproached (Matt. 5: 10-12)
August	3. W.....	Efforts to Trap Jesus (Luke 20: 19, 20)
August	4. T.....	Persecution Inevitable (2 Tim. 3: 1-15)
August	5. F.....	An Insincere Question (Luke 20: 21-26)
August	6. S.....	Pharisees Hypocrites (Matt. 23: 1-15)
August	7. S.....	Persecution of the Church (Acts 8: 1-4)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 30.

PLACE.—In the temple, in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the people.

### Introduction

When Jesus spoke the parable which forms the basis for our study today, he was nearing the end of his teaching ministry. John the Baptist had come to prepare the way for him, and everything was done, so that the people, including the leaders of Jewish thought, might have an opportunity to learn from the Son of God himself, just how they stood in the sight of the heavenly Father. But instead of taking advantage of these opportunities, many of the people, and most of the leaders, actually rejected Jesus as an accredited teacher who had been sent to them by God, and that in spite of the fact that he performed miracles and presented other evidence, sufficient to convince any thoughtful person who was willing to stop and consider; but nothing that was said or done had any

effect on the callous hearts of those who had rejected the ways of God.

Jesus had just made his triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem, at the time of the lesson now before us; and as he came to the temple, some of the chief priests and scribes demanded that he show them by what authority he was doing these things, that is, cleansing the temple and teaching the people. In other words, they felt that Jesus was infringing upon their rights, since they considered themselves the designated "custodians" of the temple and the duly accredited teachers of the people. Luke, in speaking of this, says "And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him: and they could not find what they might do;

for the people all hung upon him, listening." (Luke 19: 47, 48.) It was then that they demanded to know by what authority he did these things, or who gave him that authority. Jesus, of course, knew their hearts and quickly exposed them to themselves and others. (See the *Devotional Reading* for today.)

It appears that immediately following the Lord's encounter with the Jewish leaders, regarding his authority in the temple, that he spoke the parable of the two sons, namely, "But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and

went not. Which of the two did the will of the father? They say, the first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believe him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him." (Matt. 21: 28-32.) This parable and the one which we are to study today were apparently intended to show to these misguided and wicked rulers something of their own attitude toward divine authority, such as had been demonstrated by John the Baptist and Jesus; but now, as then, there are none so blind as those who will not see.

### The Golden Text

*"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, and unto God the things that are God's."* It appears that the parable of the marriage of the king's son was spoken immediately after the parable of the lesson text for today (see Matt. 22: 1-14), and then came the effort on the part of the scribes and chief priests to trap Jesus by means of spies; and it was in this setting that the words of the golden text were spoken. "And they watched him, and sent forth spies, who feigned themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor. And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person of any, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Show me a denarius. Whose image and superscription hath it? And they said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they were not able to take hold of the saying before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." (Luke 20: 20-26.)

The passage which serves as the golden text for today sets forth the true significance of our twofold rela-

tionship—to God and to the powers that be. Each of these two has a claim upon us, and we cannot be pleasing to God unless we endeavor to satisfy both claims. (Cf. Rom. 13: 1-7.) No man can live as Christ directs that he should, who endeavors to ignore the claim which civil governments justly make upon those who live under their jurisdiction, any more than he can be faithful to him while disregarding the claim which God has upon him. But it must be admitted by thoughtful people that there are many professed followers of Christ who are satisfied to follow their own thinking, especially with reference to earthly governments, rather than to make a sincere effort to determine just what the Bible says on the subject. Or, to state the same thing in another way, there are too many people, claiming to follow the Lord, who want to use their own reason regarding the claim which the powers that be have upon their lives, rather than to seek diligently for some scriptural evidence as to what the will of the Lord is.

Although Christians must always remember that they have an obligation to Caesar which they cannot ignore with impunity, they must also not forget that they have a greater responsibility to God. It is God who ordained and controls human governments; and they are all therefore responsible to him. "And he made of

one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17: 26), which is another way of saying that he has set the limits of their history, both with reference to the time of their existence, and the extent of the territory which they shall occupy. (Cf. Dan. 4: 17.) This explains how God, during the period of the Old Testament, could accurately foretell the rise and fall of nations hundreds of years in ad-

vance. (Cf. Ezek. 21: 24-27; Dan. 2: 36-44.) There are therefore few greater lessons that the Christian should learn, than the one contained in the golden text, namely "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." It will always be, as it was in the case of the spies who were sent to trap Jesus, "And they were not able to take hold of the saying before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." (Luke 20: 26.)

## The Text Explained

### The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

(Luke 20: 9-15)

*And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country for a long time. And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet another servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them?*

The imagery of the parable now before us was familiar to the people of Palestine. (See Isa. 5: 1-7.) When Jehovah was preparing Moses to lead the people out of the land of Egypt to the country which he had promised to their fathers, he said, "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." (Ex. 3: 8a.) This appears to say that the pastures of the land would support great flocks of sheep and goats from which would

come the milk; and that the bees of the country would provide an abundance of honey. This picture was frequently held before the people, as they made their way to the promised land. The culture of the grape therefore, as would be expected, became one of the chief occupations of the land of Canaan, and involved a large investment of both time and money.

In the case now before us, the man who planted the vineyard apparently planned it for an investment; he expected to receive an income from it through the efforts of others. It was what we would call a "sharecrop" arrangement. Matthew says that the man, who was a householder, not only planted the vineyard, but that he "set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower," all of which was for its protection and for the production of wine. After providing for all the needs of those who would tend the vineyard, he let it out to husbandmen, "and went into another country for a long time." When the time arrived for him to receive the fruit of the vineyard, he sent unto them a succession of servants; but the husbandmen beat and otherwise mistreated them, and sent them away empty. Finally the lord of the vineyard decided to make one more final effort to appeal to the husbandmen, which he did by sending unto them his beloved son; but they killed him, so that they could claim the inheritance as their own.

It is clear that the lord of the vineyard now under consideration represented God, and the servants whom he sent to receive the fruit thereof were the prophets; but what did the

vineyard itself signify? The usual and most natural answer is that it represented the Jewish nation, or, as Stephen would say, the Jewish church. (Cf. Acts 7: 38; Psalm 80: 8-19.) William M. Taylor, however, thinks that the reference is primarily to the special advantages and opportunities which were given to the people of Israel as the chosen seed, and in virtue of God's covenant with them. He then goes on to say, "It would be running the parable into the ground, and allowing fancy to guide where reason alone should rule, if we were to undertake to say what is meant especially by the hedge, and what by the wine-fat, and what by the tower. We prefer, therefore, to content ourselves with the general assertion that the vineyard, with all in it, represents the *theocratic privileges* enjoyed by the Jewish nation under the Mosaic institute, the blessings which were peculiar to them above all other peoples on the face of the earth, and which came to them as the children of God's covenant."

If Dr. Taylor is correct in this application, then it is obvious that the people of Israel were expected to give a return for these great blessings; for it is an axiomatic truth that privilege always imposes responsibility. (Cf. Matt. 25: 14-30.) Any one who is familiar with the history of the Old Testament is aware of the fact that the Jewish people enjoyed more favors as a result of their relationship with Jehovah, than any other people in the world up to that time, so far as the record goes. They should therefore have made every effort to show their gratitude to God by yielding their lives to him in loving service, and cheerful and devoted loyalty to him in every way. This was the fruit which Jehovah expected and desired from his chosen people. This was equally true of the leaders of the Jewish theocracy and of the people as a whole. It is true that God dealt with Israel as a nation, but it is also true that he expected individual obedience from all the people.

The fact that the lord of the vineyard "went into another country for a long time" probably indicates that Jehovah, as it were, withdrew from Israel after giving them his

law, and made contact with them thereafter only through his divinely appointed messengers. This would allow the people to demonstrate their own attitude toward him. Trench expresses the matter in this way: "At Sinai, when the theocratic constitution was founded, and in the miracles which accompanied the deliverance from Egypt and the bringing into Canaan, the Lord may be said to have openly manifested himself to Israel, but then to have withdrawn himself for a while, not speaking again to the people face to face, but waiting in patience to see what the law would effect, and what manner of works the people would bring forth." (*Notes on the Parables*, p. 197.) Or, as Goebel has it, "He withdrew into expectant passivity, leaving room for the spontaneous development of the nation on the soil of the theocracy and under the influence of its institutions." (*Goebel's Parables of Jesus*, p. 342.)

One has only to read the remainder of the Old Testament record in order to see something of the shameful treatment which the people of Israel accorded the prophets who were sent to them, in an effort to turn them back to God. Jesus summed the matter up in these words: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we have been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are the sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt. 23: 29-36; cf. 2 Tim. 4: 1-5.)

## The Lord's Application

(Luke 20: 16-18)

*He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written,*

*The stone which the builders rejected,*

*The same was made of the head of the corner?*

*Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.*

If we read Luke's record alone, it would appear that the first part of verse 16 was spoken by Jesus in answer to his question, "What therefore will the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?" Matthew, however, makes it plain that the words now under consideration were spoke, not by Jesus, but those who heard the parable, probably the multitude. (See Matt. 21: 41.) The second part of verse 16 may have been a record of the reaction of the scribes and the chief priests, who were violently opposed to Jesus. Although those who replied to the Lord's question regarding the wicked husbandmen gave the correct answer, it is obvious that they did not know the true significance of that which they predicted, namely, that the privileges which the Jewish nation had enjoyed, but abused, would be taken away from them. (Cf. Matt. 13: 12.) But that is exactly what did come to pass. The time, in fact, was rapidly approaching when the Jewish people would no longer be God's chosen people, but would be replaced in that respect by the "new Israel" in Christ. (Cf. Rom. 2: 28, 29; 9: 6ff; Gal. 6: 15, 16.) Fleshly Israel had thoroughly demonstrated that they, along with the Gentile world, needed a Saviour. (See Gal. 3: 22; Rom. 11: 32; cf. Eph. 2: 14-22.)

It appears that the ruling class could not bear the idea that they were to be rejected of God, but Jesus, looking upon them, said, "What then is this that is written,

*The stone which the builders rejected,*

*The same was made the head of the corner?*

This quotation is from Psalm 118:

22, but Matthew quotes verse 23 also,

This is Jehovah's doing;

It is marvellous in our eyes.

(Cf. Mark 12: 10, 11.) If one will consider all that is said in the Bible about the "corner-stone," or the stone which was made the "head of the corner," he will find that there are probably two senses in which the expression is used, namely, (1) a foundation-stone, Isa. 28: 16; cf. Job 38: 6; and (2) a stone which crowns the building, Zech. 4: 7. It appears that it is correct to assume that the term "corner-stone" is equally applicable to the chief stone in the foundation of the building, and the one at the top. (Cf. Acts. 4: 11; Eph. 2: 20; 1 Pet. 2: 4-8.) And so, whether the reference was to the foundation stone, or to the coping stone which crowns the building, the scribes and chief priests who were, so to speak, the builders of God's house, were placed in the ridiculous position of rejecting the stone which he had chosen for the most important place in the building.

Although the reference in the lesson text was to the rejection of Christ by the Jewish leaders of that day, the principle of rejection is still applicable to our day, either in the matter of rejecting Christ outright, or the rejection of that which he teaches men to do. (Cf. John 12: 48-50; Gal. 1: 6-9; 2 John 9-11.) The following words from Peter are a good commentary on verse 18 of the lesson text now before us. "Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in scripture,

*Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:*

*And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.*

For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve,

*The stone which the builders rejected,*

*The same was made the head of the corner;*

and,

*A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;*

for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (1 Pet. 2: 4-8.) The effect which the stone will have upon the people therefore depends upon their attitude toward it; or, to state the same thing in another way, the effect which Christ will have upon those who come in contact with him, will depend upon their attitude toward him. If they fall upon him, they shall be broken to pieces; but if he falls upon them, he will scatter them as dust. (Cf. Matt. 11: 20-24.)

### The Reaction of the Scribes and the Chief Priests (Luke 20: 19)

*And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them.*

The attitude of the leaders of the Jews at the time of this lesson was no different, in principle, from the attitude of many people who are similarly situated today; and the rea-

son for the attitudes, in both instances, was and is due to an unwillingness to bow to the authority of Christ. (Cf. Matt. 21: 23-27.) When people's hearts are right in the sight of God, they not only want to do that which the Bible teaches them to do; they are constantly trying to discover that which they know will please him. (Cf. 2 Cor. 5: 9; Acts 17: 10-12.)

Some leaders in the church today seem to think that they are free to exercise their own judgment and will regarding those under their oversight, without ever stopping to ask themselves the question, Are we returning the fruit to the Lord from the vineyard which he has entrusted to our care? And when some one who is familiar with the teaching of the New Testament regarding such matters endeavors to call their attention to their attitude toward the matter, they are wont to treat them shamefully and cast them out. (See 3 John 9, 10; cf. John 9: 34.) There is, however, a great day coming; and it is then that the Lord will have his way.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Discuss the general setting of the lesson text for today.

How did the Jewish leaders feel toward Jesus and his teaching?

Why did they reject him and why did they ask regarding his authority?

What parable did Jesus speak just before the one which forms the basis of this lesson?

What was the general purpose of the two parables?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of the golden text?

What twofold relationship of the Lord's people is set forth by this text?

What great lesson should we learn from it regarding our attitude toward God?

### The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

Why was the imagery of this parable familiar to the people to whom Jesus spoke it?

What was the meaning of "a land flowing with milk and honey"?

Why would the lord of the vineyard want to invest so much and let it out to others?

What special preparation did he make and why?

How did he go about seeking his return

from the vineyard and with what success?

What are the principal lessons taught by the parable?

What do special privileges always impose upon those so blessed?

What is signified by the lord of the vineyard's going into another country for a long time?

In what way did the treatment of the servants by the husbandmen have its fulfillment?

In what way did Jesus summarize this truth?

### The Lord's Application

Who pronounced the doom of the wicked husbandmen? Give reason for your answer?

Who probably spoke the last part of verse 16? Give reasons for your answer.

In what way was the "vineyard" taken away from the Jewish people and to whom was it given?

What had fleshly Israel thoroughly demonstrated and in what way were they made like the Gentiles?

What was signified by the stone which was made the head of the corner?

Discuss the teaching of the Bible regarding this question.

In what position had the Jewish leaders placed themselves?

How is the same thing, in principle, applicable to people today?

What does the New Testament teach with reference to this issue?

What does Peter say regarding the stone which was rejected by the builders?

What will happen to the disobedient who come in contact with this stone?

Why will their responsibility be so great?

The Reaction of the Scribes and the Chief Priests

Show how the attitude of the Jewish leaders is still in evidence today.

How do some church leaders manifest this disposition?

Lesson VII—August 14, 1966

JESUS AND TRUE GREATNESS

Lesson Text

Matt. 20: 20-28

20 Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zeb'-e-dee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and asking a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom.

22 But Je'-sus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able.

23 He saith unto them. My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on *my* left hand, is not mine to give; but it is *for them*

for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren.

25 But Je'-sus called them unto him, and said. Ye know that the rulers of the Gen'-tiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister;

27 And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“But *he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*” (Matt. 23: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 20: 1-19.

Daily Bible Readings

August 8. M.....What True Greatness Is (Matt. 20: 17-28)

August 9. T.....Humility in Service (1 Pet. 5: 1-7)

August 10. W.....Humility in Prayer (Luke 18: 9-14)

August 11. T.....Lesson in Humility (Luke 14: 7-11)

August 12. F.....Christ, Example in Humility (John 13: 12-20)

August 13. S.....“Let This Mind Be in You” (Phil. 2: 5-11)

August 14. S.....Reward of Humility (Prov. 22: 1-9)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 30.

PLACE.—On the way to Jerusalem from Perea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, James and John, their mother, and the other ten disciples.

Introduction

The desire for greatness is characteristic of the human race; and although depravity has turned this principle into an evil direction, it is evident that it was implanted within us for the noblest of purposes. It is indeed, even in our present state, a witness to the immortal progress for which we were originally made. It is not proper therefore to denounce

this desire for greatness without reservation; for, if it is directed in the right channel, it serves as the main-spring of the soul, and will result in enormous good. This is enough to show that we should not seek to exterminate the desire for greatness which, as we have already seen, belongs to our nature; instead, we should give it a spiritual character,



and turn it into a direction which will benefit others, rather than primarily ourselves. It is easy to see therefore that man in his present state needs wholesome teaching regarding this vital subject; and that is what Jesus proposes to do in the lesson now before us.

The standard of true greatness which Jesus discusses in the lesson text now under consideration must always be kept in mind, if we are to understand his point of view; and it goes without saying that this is the kind of greatness which is pleasing to God. This is true because those who follow this pattern are helping to lead men back to the heavenly Father. After pointing out to his disciples their mistaken view of greatness, and seeking to restore harmony among them which had been caused by their erroneous view, he told them what true greatness is, and bade them seek after it. Any one therefore who has the true conception of the kind of greatness which Jesus had in mind, does not need to be concerned lest he become too great; for the more he strives in that direction, the more he will grow into the likeness of his Master.

When Shakespeare made one of his characters say, "But be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them," he was not speaking of the kind of greatness which Jesus wants his fol-

lowers to have. The greatness of Jesus is a way of life, and not some goal to be sought for in and of itself. In the words of Horace Mann, "If any man seeks for greatness, let him forget greatness and ask for truth, and he will find both." According to Samuel Johnson, "Nothing can be truly great which is not right." We usually think of greatness in terms of success; and if we will think of the true meaning of success, it will not be difficult for us to see something of what it means to be great in this life. The matter is expressed by Thomas Stanley in these words:

"He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and has accomplished his task—who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction." And, according to Seneca, "He who is great when he falls is great in his prostration, and is no more an object of contempt than when men tread on the ruins of sacred buildings, which men of piety venerate no less than if they stood."

### The Golden Text

*"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."* The verse just quoted is substantially the same as verse 27 of the lesson text for today; but since the one which serves as the golden text is found in a somewhat different setting, a few comments regarding it will probably be helpful. In his condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said, "But all their works they do to be seen of men: for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the chief places at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogue, and salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men. Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the

earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matt. 23: 5-12.)

This is the one passage in the Bible which specifically condemns the wearing of religious titles; and it is in this category that the term "reverend" falls. Many people who feel that it is wrong for preachers of the gospel to wear the term *reverend* are wont to quote Psalm 111: 9, where the word is found, and make this comment: "Inasmuch as the term is found only one time in the Bible, and is there applied to God's

name, it is not fitting that it should be appropriated by men; for the simple reason that they are not worthy to be classed with God." But there are at least two things wrong with that so-called argument, namely, (1) The term is not used as a *title* with reference to God, but is an adjective, along with holy, to indicate the nature of his name. Furthermore, if it is wrong to apply the term reverend to man, because it is used of God, then it would also be wrong to use the term "holy" with reference to man for the same reason. (Cf. 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16.) The terms "holy" and "reverend" are joined by a coordinate conjunction; and what one is for, so also is the other.

(2) It is not correct to say that the term "reverend" is found only one time in the Bible; for it is found in the original three hundred and seventy-six times, with forty-four of those instances, including Psalm 111:

9, being in the identical grammatical construction. The English *reverend* in the King James Version apparently was due to the influence of the Latin Version of the Scriptures, known as the Vulgate; and it was retained by the American Standard Version. The term "reverend" is not found in some English versions of Psalm 111: 9. The denominational world persists in making a distinction between the so-called "clergy" and "laity;" but it is a fact that Peter uses the word "*kleros*" (from which we have "clergy"), not to designate the preachers, but those whom the world calls the *laity*! The reason it is wrong for preachers to use the term "reverend" as a title, is because Jesus condemns the use of such titles; and he teaches that if any one wants to be "great" among his brethren, he must achieve that standing by serving.

## The Text Explained

### A Mother's Request for Her Sons

(Matt. 20: 20, 21)

*Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping him, and asking a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom.*

We learn from the preceding record of the gospel narratives that Jesus, having finished his ministry in Perea, east of the Jordan, was on his final journey to Jerusalem, where suffering and death awaited him. Mark notes, "And they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid." (Mark 10: 32a.) Trench observes that there are few pictures in the gospel records more striking than this of Jesus going forth to his death, and walking alone along the path into the deep valley, while behind him in awful reverence and mingled anticipations of dread and hope—their eyes fixed upon him, as with bowed head he walked before them in all the majesty of sorrow—the disciples followed, but dared not disturb his meditations.

It was under these conditions that Jesus took the twelve disciples apart, and told them about his condemnation, suffering, and death, in an effort to prepare them for the ordeal which lay ahead of them. But in spite of the plainness of his speech, Luke informs us that they failed to understand that which he said. In telling the disciples what to expect when they reached Jerusalem, Jesus uttered one of the most remarkable predictions found in the Bible, as may be seen by reading Matt. 20: 17-19. The minute prophecy which Jesus uttered on that occasion shows that he fully understood what was in store for him, and that he would submit to it willingly.

The mother of the sons of Zebedee was Salome, and her two sons were James and John, who apparently were the Lord's cousins. It is thought by many Bible students that Mary and Salome were sisters. (Cf. John 19: 25; Matt. 27: 55, 56; Mark 15: 40.) The *worship* mentioned in this connection was evidently in the nature of humble prostration, rather than paying to him divine homage. (Cf. marginal reading.) Mark does not mention Salome in his record, but does represent the two brothers as trying to commit Jesus in their favor, before making known their

real desire. Luke does not record the incident, but Matthew makes it plain that it was the mother who actually made the request of Jesus. Alford thinks that the reason the two brothers used their mother to present their petition was due to the fact that they remembered the rebuke which Jesus gave them, following their former contention about precedence.

The request which was made on the part of James and John was wholly out of place, especially in view of that which Jesus had said regarding his forthcoming suffering and death. It indicates, for one thing, that they had little feeling for his troubled state. It is true that they did not understand the significance of the prediction which Jesus made, but it is hardly possible that they failed to recognize the fact that he was in great sorrow. A short time before this, Jesus had told the apostles that "when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19: 28); and this may have suggested to them the idea of requesting places of honor, while presuming upon their physical relationship with Jesus and their high standing among the apostles (cf. Matt. 17: 1). It is, of course, possible that they may have had a higher motive for making their request; but even at that, it was poorly timed, in view of the sorrowful situation which then surrounded the Lord.

#### The Lord's Penetrating Reply

(Matt. 20: 22, 23)

*But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able. He saith unto them, My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.*

Thus, Jesus made it plain to James and John that they did not know what was involved in the request which they were making of him. The question which he asked them was another way of saying that the highest stages of reigning with Christ cannot be reached, without first

sharing in his sufferings. And how many of us today are continually asking the Lord for things, the nature of which we do not understand; and if we should receive them, we would not know where they might lead us. Israel asked for a king, in order to be like the nations about them; but how many of them expected their kingdom to become and end as it did? Marcus Dods notes that "perhaps no form of ruin covers a man with such shame or sinks him to such helplessness as when he finds that what he has persistently clamored for and refused to be content without, has proved the bitterest and most disastrous element in his life." People should always qualify their petitions. (Cf. James 4: 15.)

After asking the two brothers if they were able to drink the cup which he was about to drink, and, as Mark adds, to be baptized with the baptism he was to be baptized with, they both answered that they were able. It was customary in ancient times to execute criminals, and those who were regarded as such, by compelling them to drink a cup of poison; and the "cup" therefore, as well as the "baptism," came to be a symbol of suffering and death: and that is evidently what Jesus had in mind when he asked James and John the question, and made the application in their case.

However, it is doubtful if the two brethren understood the Lord's meaning. They may have thought that he had reference to some great battle, or other difficult and trying situation, which would attend the setting up of his kingdom; and inasmuch as they were not lacking in courage (cf. Luke 9: 51-56; Mark 3: 17), they were ready enough to pledge themselves to take part in it. Later on, however, they did come under the influence of the martyr's spirit, and suffered grievously for the sake of Christ. (Cf. Acts 12: 1, 2; Rev. 1: 9.) It is altogether possible that James and John were cheered by the Lord's prediction regarding them on this occasion, when it had its fulfillment in their case. They had asked for places of honor in the kingdom of Christ, but he proposed for them a quest. Even the Lord himself cannot give one a place in the kingdom of heaven, for which he is not prepared; and this should be

sufficient to teach us that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. (Cf. John 14: 1-3.)

### The Reaction of the Ten and the Secret of True Greatness

(Matt. 20: 24-28)

*And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 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: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

The other ten apostles evidently felt that James and John had taken unfair advantage of them; and they, accordingly, registered their resentment toward them. However, when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, it appears that the other ten themselves entertained the same ambition which was openly expressed by the two brethren; for only a short time before they were all quarrelling and contending as to who would be the greatest. (Cf. Mark 9: 33-37.) McGarvey points out that nothing moves the indignation of men more than to know that one of a company of equals is plotting to get an undue advantage over the others. It became necessary therefore for Jesus to interfere among his disciples as a peacemaker; and he did so, not only by teaching them the meaning of true greatness, but also by citing his own example to illustrate it.

Worldly governments are usually established and maintained by force; and so, in order to present the contrast between his kingdom as it would be, and as they expected it to be, Jesus pointed out the nature of Gentile rule. Later on, as Jesus stood before Pilate, he 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.) It appears that many people today, even in the

church, have just about as much trouble in learning what the true nature of Christ's kingdom is, as the disciples and others did at the time of this lesson. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.)

Jesus plainly states that there can be no lordship among his true disciples, as that which is manifested by worldly rulers; and his words are a stinging rebuke to all who entertain such ambitions. It goes without saying, therefore, that men who are prominent in the church should be the first to heed this admonition. The term "minister" is from the same original word from which we have the word *deacon*, and which McGarvey renders "domestic servant." It indicates one's activity *in behalf* of another, rather than his relationship to him. True greatness is based on real service, and the greater and more beneficial the service, the greater is the one who renders it. Jesus does not discourage, but rather encourages, greatness based on and motivated by this principle.

It should also be observed that it is not necessary for one to perform great deeds, according to the standard of the world, in order for his life to be a success; for Jesus says, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much" (Luke 16: 10a). This principle is illustrated by the parable of the talents. The man who had the two talents did not accomplish half as much as the man did who had the five; but the man who had the two was just as faithful as the man who had the five: and their lord spoke to them identical words of commendation.

There are too many people who have the idea that intelligence, authority, power, courage, eloquence, and the like, are the necessary ingredients of greatness and success; but any one who understands the teaching of Jesus now under consideration knows that they are not necessarily the marks of true greatness. Jesus, however, does not disparage nor ignore such traits. On the contrary, he would have them all used in service to mankind, if they are properly motivated by love. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 1-3.)

With this view of the nature of true greatness before us, let us observe that it is possible for any child of God to attain this greatness anywhere. This, obviously, is not true of

worldly greatness; for all men are not born equal, and the paths to earthly honors are greatly circumscribed. Not every boy in the United States can become president of the nation; not every one can reach the top in his profession; and not every one can become wealthy in a material sense. But in the kingdom of Christ there is room for every one to serve, if he so desires and will follow the rule of Christ. (Cf. Matt. 25: 14-30.) Furthermore, the greatness which Christ enjoins is always satisfying to its possessor, a thing which is not always true of those who are worldly great; for it often happens that when the prize is won it ceases to charm. That which seems to be desired while in the distance, often fails to satisfy when it is reached. But that is never true of the greatness of Christ. (Cf. 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

The reason why those who serve as Christ directs are great is because they are engaged in the work for which he gave his life, namely, the salvation and improvement of the human race. And inasmuch as the souls of people are more valuable than all the world (cf. Matt. 16: 26), it follows that those who serve in their behalf are engaged in life's greatest work, and are the most like Christ. And while this kind of service is intended primarily for others, the character of the one who performs it must not be overlooked. A small selfish person cannot render the kind of service which Christ re-

quires. (Cf. Matt. 5: 43-48; Rom. 12: 17-21; Matt. 16: 24.)

When Jesus cited his own example to illustrate his teaching, he was manifesting the consciousness which he had from the beginning of his ministry, that his divine mission was the sacrifice of himself for others; or, to state the same thing in another way, his words express the vicarious nature of his death. (Cf. Heb. 2: 9.) However, the sacrifice which Christ made will only benefit those who appropriate its blessings by accepting his offer of salvation. (See Heb. 5: 8, 9; Mark 16: 15, 16; Eph. 2: 8-10.)

Jesus therefore enforced his lesson on true greatness by citing the greatest of all examples, that of his own. He did not come to earth to have men serve him, but that he might serve them; and by citing this example he suppressed both the ambitious desire of James and John, and the indignation of their ten brethren. This is a lesson which is sorely needed today; and it would be impossible for elders, preachers, teachers, and all other workers in the church, to study and emphasize it too much. In the words of Ernest Renan, "But whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; this legend will call forth tears without end; his suffering will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What can you say of the desire for greatness as a characteristic of the human race?

How then should we feel about the question?

Why is it important to keep the Lord's standard of true greatness always before us?

What does the greatness which Christ enjoins actually amount to?

In what way are true greatness and genuine success related?

In what would you say that true success consists? Give reasons for your answer.

Why are great people still great in their prostration?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of this text?

What specific lesson was he teaching at the time he uttered these words?

Why is it wrong for gospel preachers to use the title "reverend" with respect to themselves?

What is the strongest reason you can give for this prohibition?

### A Mother's Request for Her Sons

Under what circumstances was this request made?

What picture of Jesus was presented at the time of this lesson?

What apparently prompted the request which James and John made of Jesus?

Why would they want their mother to do the talking for them?

### The Lord's Penetrating Reply

In replying to the request which the two brethren made, what did Jesus tell them?

What question did he ask them and why?

Why are people often disappointed in the things they ask the Lord for?

Why and in what way should they always qualify their petitions?

What did Jesus mean by drinking the cup which he was about to drink?

Why, apparently, did James and John so readily say that they could drink of it?  
What great change later came over their lives in this respect?  
How were they probably affected by the Lord's prediction when it found fulfillment in their lives?  
Why couldn't Jesus grant the request which the two brethren made of him?  
What great lesson should we learn from this?

The Reaction of the Ten and the Secret of True Greatness

Why did the other apostles seemingly resent that which James and John did in making their request?

What about their own attitude in this respect?  
What trait of human nature is seen in the attitude of the ten?  
How did Jesus go about restoring peace and harmony among his disciples?  
Why did he refer to the governments of the Gentiles and what is their general character?  
Why do so many people experience difficulty in understanding the nature of Christ's kingdom?  
What does it mean for a disciple of Christ to be a "minister," as it respects his brethren?  
Discuss the effect of the citing of his own example by Jesus.

Lesson VIII—August 21, 1966

JESUS FORETELLS JERUSALEM'S FALL

Lesson Text

Luke 21: 20-36

20 But when ye see Je-ru'-sa-lem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand.

21 Then let them that are in Ju-dae'-a flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein.

22 For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Je-ru'-sa-lem shall be trodden down of the Gen'-tiles, until the times of the Gen'-tiles be fulfilled.

25 And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows;

26 Men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son

of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees:

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now nigh.

31 Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.

32 Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

34 But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare:

35 For so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away"* (Luke 21: 33.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 24: 3-13.

Daily Bible Readings

August 15. M. .... Judgment Upon Jerusalem (Matt. 24: 1, 2)  
August 16. T. .... Tokens of Judgment (Matt. 24: 3-14)

- August 17. W.....Abomination of Desolation (Matt. 24: 15-28)  
 August 18. T....."After the Tribulation:" (Matt. 24: 29-31)  
 August 19. F.....Fig-Tree Parable (Matt. 24: 32-34)  
 August 20. S.....Conditions Prevailing (Matt. 24: 37-44)  
 August 21. S.....The Faithful and Wise Servant (Matt. 24: 45-51)

TIME.—Probably Tuesday afternoon, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—On the mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

## Introduction

The lesson text for today is parallel with that which is found in Matt. 24 and Mark 13; and if we will read Matt. 24 and 25, which is a fuller account of that which Jesus said on the occasion now before us, we will be reading one of the great recorded sermons of our Lord. In commenting on the words of Jesus, as found in all three of the gospel records, A. T. Robertson says, "This great discourse has as its background the death of Christ. Further on as part punishment of this crime lies the destruction of Jerusalem. This catastrophe is itself a symbol of the end of the world and in one sense a coming of Christ in power and judgment." Dr. Robertson then goes on to say that Christ boldly predicts his own personal coming, but the time is not revealed. The three major parts of the Lord's sermon just referred to are (1) The Destruction of the Temple Foretold, Matt. 24: 3-28; (2) The Second Coming of Christ Predicted, Matt. 24: 29-51; and (3) The Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment Illustrated, Matt. 25: 1-46.

A short while before the time of this lesson, Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and Luke's account of that incident is as follows: "And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest

not the time of thy visitation." (Luke 19: 41-44.) This is the text upon which Frederick W. Robertson based his sermon on "Three Times in a Nation's History," which he calls "a time of grace, a time of blindness, and a time of judgment." In commenting on the mood in which Jesus was at the time of his pronouncement, Dr. Robertson says:

"There is something significant and characteristic in that peculiar tone of melancholy which pervaded the Redeemer's intercourse with man. We read of but one occasion on which he rejoiced, and then only in spirit. He did not shrink from occasions of human joy, for he attended the marriage-feast; yet even there the solemn remark, apparently out of place, was heard—'Mine hour is not yet come.' There was in him that peculiarity which we find more or less in all the purest, most thoughtful minds—a shade of melancholy; much of sadness; though none of austerity. For, after all, when we come to look at this life of ours, whatever may be its outward appearance, in the depths of it there is great seriousness; the externalities of it may seem to be joy and brightness, but in the deep beneath there is a strange, stern aspect. It may be that the human race is on its way to good, but the victory hitherto gained is so small that we can scarcely rejoice over it. It may be that human nature is progressing, but that progress has been but slowly making, through years and centuries of blood. And therefore contemplating all this, and penetrating beyond the time of the present joy, the Redeemer wept, not for himself, but for that devoted city."

## The Golden Text

This portion of the lesson is found in the main text and will be discussed in its proper place.

## The Text Explained

### Concerning the Fate of Jerusalem

(Luke 21: 20-24)

*But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

The destruction which was foretold by the Lord in the text now before us was carried out by the Roman General Titus, and son of Vespasian, the first of the Flavian emperors of Rome. Titus succeeded his father on the throne in A.D. 79 and continued as emperor till A.D. 81. It is doubtful if any similar event in human history has equaled the suffering and misery which the people of Jerusalem endured during the siege and destruction of the city. Any one who is familiar with the writings of Josephus has read something of what took place during those terrible days. In paragraph 3 of chapter IX, Book VI of his *War's of the Jews*, this great Jewish historian says that during the siege of the city ninety-seven thousand were carried away captive, and that a million and one hundred thousand perished. These included the residents of the city and those who had come there for the annual feast. The closing paragraph of chapter IX, of the book already referred to contains this information:

"Now this vast multitude is indeed collected out of remote places, but the entire nation was now shut up by fate as in prison. and the Roman army encompassed the city when it was crowded with inhabitants. Accordingly, the multitude of those that therein perished exceeded all the destructions that either men or

God ever brought upon the world; for, to speak only of what was publicly known, the Romans slew some of them, some they carried captive, and others they made a search for under ground, and when they found where they were, they broke up the ground and slew all they met with. There were also found slain there above two thousand persons, partly by their own hands, and partly by one another, but chiefly destroyed by the famine; but then the ill savor of the dead bodies was most offensive to those that lighted upon them, inasmuch that some were obliged to get away immediately, while others were so greedy of gain, that they would go in among the dead bodies that lay on heaps, and tread upon them; for a great deal of treasure was found in these caverns, and the hope of gain made every way of getting it to be esteemed lawful. Many also of those that had been put in prison by the tyrants were now brought out; for they did not leave off their barbarous cruelty at the very last: yet did God avenge himself upon them both, in a manner agreeable to justice."

The people who were shut up in the city were, in time, reduced to such terrible condition by the famine, that they resorted to every conceivable means to obtain food. Garbage dumps and manure heaps were searched for food. "Children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives: and while they ate after this manner, yet were they not concealed in doing so; but the seditious every where came upon them immediately, and snatched away from them what they had gotten from others; for when they saw any house shut up, this was to them a signal that the people within had gotten some food; whereupon they broke open the doors, and ran in, and took pieces of what they were eating almost up out of their very throats, and this by force: the old men, who held their



food fast, were beaten; and if the women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing; nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to the infants, but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor. But still they were more barbarously cruel to those who had prevented their coming in, and had actually swallowed down what they were going to seize upon, as if they had been unjustly defrauded of their right. They also invented terrible methods of torments to discover where any food was." (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 5: 10, 3.)

Josephus goes on to say that the soldiers nailed the Jews to crosses, until "their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies." (Ibid., 5: 11: 1.) Can any one doubt the truthfulness of the words of Jesus, when he said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt. 24: 21, 22.) The terrible tribulation about which Jesus spoke was only about forty years away; and there is no wonder that Jesus wept over the city. But most of that suffering had to do with the physical man: what, then, will it mean when the end of the world comes? Let us remember that there are three phases of experience in the history of the average people, namely, the time of blindness, the time of grace, and the time of judgment; and let us ask, What will be our reaction to them? (Cf. Rev. 19: 17-21.) The "times of the Gentiles" apparently refers to their day of grace, in contrast with the Jews' day of grace; and is roughly equivalent to the present dispensation. (Read Rom. 11.)

### **The Signs of Destruction and the Coming of the Son of Man**

(Luke 21: 25-33)

*And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the*

*billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth high.*

The figures of speech used in this paragraph are apparently intended to portray something of the turbulent conditions of the world, between the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of Christ. The Jews were blinded to the signs which foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth; and in a similar manner the people of this age will not recognize the events which should serve as a warning that the end of all things is drawing near. The terrible destruction which will bring to completion the material universe, along with the attitude which the Lord's people should constantly maintain, is described by Peter in these words: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought yet to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3: 10-13.)

Christian people therefore have every reason, when they see the signs referred to by Jesus begin to come to pass, to look up, and to lift up their heads; for they can be certain that their redemption is drawing nearer. (Cf. Rom. 13: 11-14.) But there is a different story, so far as the wicked are concerned. "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall

suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1: 7-10.)

*And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now nigh. Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know that the kingdom of God is nigh. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.*

Jesus employed simple illustrations to make plain to his disciples his teaching, and the budding of the trees in the springtime was among the simplest. When that event takes place among the trees, any thoughtful person can know that summer is not far away; and in a similar manner, when the awe-inspiring and earth-shocking events named by Jesus begin to come to pass, the Christian can certainly know that the last day of history is getting closer. This is not to say that we can estimate that the judgment day is only a few years away, as we count time; for Peter notes in the first part of the previous quotation from him that God does not reckon time as we do. His words are: "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3: 8; cf. Matt. 24: 36.)

The words just quoted from Peter were the beginning of his reply to the scoffers of the preceding paragraph, insofar as the time element of the Lord's coming is concerned. The apostle wanted his readers then, and all subsequent readers of his epistle, to know that God does not count time as men do. There are no long and short periods of time with God; it is all an eternal now; and whatever he does about fulfilling his promises will be for his glory and the good of all concerned. "And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Pet. 3: 15.) The apparent delay of the Lord has indeed meant the salvation of many; for

had the world been destroyed while they were in their sins, they would have been eternally lost. This fact should cause every sinner today to seek the Lord at once. (Cf. Isa. 55: 6, 7.)

We should always keep in mind the fact that we have no way of knowing just when the end of the world will take place; but we do know that the time is getting nearer. Trench and others think that Christians can cause "the day of the Lord to come more quickly by helping to fulfil those conditions without which it cannot come; that day being no day inexorably fixed, but the arrival of which it is free to the church to hasten on by faith and prayer." If this is true, then that helps to explain why no one but God knows when that day will be. (Cf. 2 Thess. 2: 1-12.)

As the records of the gospel narratives now stand, it is easy to see that the Lord's statement, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished," was spoken in the setting of the second coming of Christ, rather than with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. This has long been a problem to biblical expositors. If the reference was to the generation of those who were living at the time the Lord's words were spoken, then the entire discussion through verse 33 would have to be understood as being concerned with the destruction of Jerusalem and the collapse of the Jewish commonwealth. But if the "generation" had reference to the race of Israel, then the meaning would be that the Jewish people would survive until the Lord comes again. This is the view set forth in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* and *the Fourfold Gospel*. The latter says:

"The simplest solution of the matter is to take the word 'generation' to mean the Jewish family or race—and the word does mean race or family—Luke 16: 8. Thus interpreted, the passage becomes a prophecy that the Jewish people shall be preserved as such until the coming of Christ. The marvelous and almost miraculous preservation of the racial individuality of the Jews, though dispersed among the nations, might well become the subject of prophecy, especially when Jesus had just spo-

ken of an event which threatened their very extermination."

### An Exhortation to Watchfulness and Prayer

(Luke 21: 34-36)

*But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

The principal idea behind these words of exhortation may be described as the place of a Christian in a changing world. Jesus had made it abundantly clear to his disciples that earth-shaking events were in store for all mankind; but he wanted his people to know that they have a secure place in his loving care. Practically the entire eighth chapter of Romans is devoted to the security of the believer. Consider the two following excerpts from that portion of the apostle's letter. (1) "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8: 26-28.)

(2) "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who

is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8: 31-39.)

If the child of God therefore will keep himself from the sinful things of the world, including the cares of this life (cf. Matt. 6: 24-34), and will give himself to prayer; he will find that the Lord will supply for the meeting of his needs, whatever they are, that which he cannot himself do. (Cf. 2 Cor. 1: 20.) The original word for "surfeiting" (*kraipalē*) occurs only here in the New Testament, and it means, according to the lexicons, a drunken headache, nausea, or hangover, following a period of drunken dissipation; dizziness and staggering, when the head refuses to function. (Cf. Thayer, Arndt-Gingrich.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Discuss the general setting of the lesson text for today.

In what way are the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ related?

What was the Lord's attitude toward the city of Jerusalem?

What had he only recently done regarding it?

What three important events in its history did the city experience?

What important lesson should we learn from all of this?

What should be our attitude toward the moral condition of the world?

#### Concerning the Fate of Jerusalem

In what manner was the destruction of Jerusalem brought about?

What does the Bible teach with reference to the magnitude of the misery attending it?

How many people are said to have been

made slaves and perished during the siege of the city?  
 Discuss the conditions which prevailed within the city during that time.  
 What are we told about the efforts which the people made in their search for food?  
 How should all of this help to prepare us for being ready when the end of time comes?

#### The Signs of Destruction and the Coming of the Son of Man

What is the apparent purpose of the figures of speech in this section of the lesson text?  
 Why were the Jews unable to recognize the approaching destruction of their city?  
 Why are people today unable to recognize the signs which are available to them?  
 In what way does Peter describe these things?  
 What does he teach regarding the attitude which the Lord's people should maintain and why?  
 What does Paul say with reference to this subject?

What does the New Testament teach regarding the fate of the wicked?  
 What does it mean to know God and obey the gospel?  
 What is the purpose of the parable of the fig tree, and all the trees?  
 What is known regarding the time when the world shall be brought to an end?  
 What are some of the blessings which come as a result of the apparent delay in the Lord's coming?  
 What effect should this have on the people who are now living, both the saved and the lost?  
 What possible part do the Lord's people have in determining when the last day of history shall come?  
 What "generation" did Jesus say would not pass away, till all things be accomplished?

#### An Exhortation to Watchfulness and Prayer

What great idea is behind these words of exhortation?  
 What great promise has the Lord made to his people?  
 What, then, should Christians always find themselves doing?

### Lesson IX—August 28, 1966

## JESUS AND THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

### Lesson Text

Matt. 25: 31-46

31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats;

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in;

36 Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink?

38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.

46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds"* (Matt. 16: 27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 25: 1-30.

### Daily Bible Readings

August 22. M.....	The Judge (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
August 23. T.....	The Day Appointed (Acts 17: 22-31)
August 24. W.....	All Must Appear (2 Cor. 5: 1-11)
August 25. T.....	Some Will Be Unprepared (Matt. 25: 1-13)
August 26. F.....	Many Will Be Disappointed (Matt. 7: 21-27)
August 27. S.....	All Things Revealed (Eccles. 12: 11-14)
August 28. S.....	Proofs of Coming Judgment (2 Pet. 2: 1-11)

TIME.—Probably Tuesday afternoon, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—On the mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

### Introduction

The lesson text for today is the closing part of the Lord's discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ. The entire twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, which is not reported by the other gospel writers, is apparently meant to illustrate and enforce the teaching which is contained in the preceding chapter. The closing paragraph of chapter 24 reads as follows: "Who, then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth."

Three of the ideas in the paragraph just quoted which should be emphasized are (1) the need to be ready when the Lord comes; (2) the manner in which that preparation is to be made; and (3) the certainty of a time of reckoning, or, which is the same thing, a day of judgment. And one has only to read the chapter from which the lesson text for today is taken, in order to see that the il-

lustrations which were used by Jesus as he closed his discourse deal with the three points mentioned in the order named. Or, to state the same thing in another way, the parable of the ten virgins show the absolute need of being ready to meet the Lord when he comes; the parable of the talents set forth the only possible way in which one can meet his approval, that is, by making full use of the opportunities which he has; while the closing portion of the chapter, which is the lesson text for today, presents a picture of the day of reckoning, or the manner in which the Lord will deal with the peoples of the earth at that time.

Some one has called the idea of a judgment the first principle of religion; and one has only to stop and think, in order to realize that it is involved in both revelation and conscience. The Old Testament conception of Jehovah as a Judge is affirmed over and over again, in that portion of the Bible; but it is only when we turn to the New Testament that the essence of the question is fully revealed. (Cf. Acts 17: 30, 31; 2 Cor. 5: 9, 10.) Thus, not only does the New Testament reaffirm the doctrine of a final judgment; it also unfolds the principle of it, which is summed up in Christ. (Cf. John 5: 22, 23.) But this Judge is unlike any other who ever sat upon a judgment-seat; for he is both Judge and the standard of judgment, and his authority and his law are one.

### The Golden Text

*"Then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds."* If one

will read the context from which these words are taken, he will see

that Jesus had just revealed to his disciples the fact that he was going to accomplish his work of saving the lost by building a church, a spiritual house, in which the redeemed would dwell and serve him. But before he could do that, it would be necessary for him to die for the sins of the world; for, apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission. The idea of his death before establishing his kingdom, however, was repugnant to his disciples; for they had not yet understood either his own nature or the nature of the work which he had come to do and the manner in which it was to be accomplished. And so, when Jesus began to show unto his disciples that he must be killed and raised up the third day, Peter, who had just confessed that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, promptly rebuked him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." Then Jesus turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."

The Lord's reply to Peter, which was just quoted, says in effect, Peter, you have your values mixed up; and that is the lesson which we want to emphasize here. The immediate context of the passage which serves as the golden text for today is as follows: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man

give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds." And so, if people will set themselves to considering what is important and what is not, they will be in much better condition to meet the Lord at the last day. "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 9, 10.)

But in discussing the question of a *future* judgment, it will be to our advantage if we begin by recognizing the reality of the *present* judgment. The purpose of the final judgment is not to determine whether or not one is pleasing to the Lord; but rather to give out rewards and punishments. (Cf. Rev. 22: 12.) It will be too late for one who has not met the Lord's requirements to make any changes at the last day. The question of one's standing in the sight of God belongs to the judgment of the present. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 19.) The very fact that the Lord knows them that are his is proof that they are doing that which he requires of them; and that condition will continue as long as they have the ability to choose between right and wrong, while making certain that they are striving to please the Lord. But when this life is over, we must meet the Lord face to face for a final reckoning, at which time we shall receive the things done in the body, according to that which we have done, whether it be good or bad. (Cf. Eccl. 12: 13, 14.)

### The Text Explained

The Setting for the Judgment Day

(Matt. 25: 31, 32a)

*But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations.*

If we consider well that which is said in the passage just quoted, there will be little doubt in our minds regarding the identity of the time referred to. That it is the day which

is commonly spoken of as the judgment day, at which time Jesus will judge the peoples of the earth before turning the kingdom back to the Father, there is no doubt. The following facts should be carefully considered, namely (1) Christ shall come in his glory; (2) all the angels shall be with him; (3) he shall sit on the throne of his glory; and (4) all the nations of the earth shall be gathered before him. This is the majes-

tic picture with which Jesus brings his great sermon on the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming to a close. The scene which is depicted here is in keeping with the judgment scene set forth in Rev. 20:

11-15, which reads as follows:

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

The coming of Christ on the last day of history will be in glory, because of the full manifestation of his power and majesty; and his throne is called the throne of glory, because from it shall come decisions of wisdom and righteousness. (Cf. Acts 17: 30, 31.) The awfulness of that occasion is described by Paul in 2 Thess. 1: 7-10, which read. No human being has the power to conceive of the vast number of people who will be at the judgment at the last day. In the words of William Cullen Bryant, "All that tread the globe are but a handful to the tribes that slumber in its bosom." But regardless of the number, all the people from Adam to the last person who shall live upon the earth will be there. Jesus declares, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment," that is, condemnation. (John 5: 28, 29.)

The angels in the Scriptures are frequently associated with Jesus in descriptions of the judgment. They are called "the reapers" in the parable of the tares; and we are told that

"the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." (See Matt. 13: 36-43.) And in the parable of the drag-net, it is said, "So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13: 47-50.)

There are many reasons why a day of final reckoning is necessary, but we shall consider only three here, namely, (1) Because man is a free moral agent, and he must therefore be held responsible for that which he does (Cf. Heb. 9: 27.) No one is permitted to return to earth after death to endeavor to compensate for that which he failed or neglected to do during his lifetime. Death forever seals his doom (cf. Eccl. 11: 3; Gal. 6: 7, 8), and he must from then on suffer the consequences. (2) Because God is righteous, and he must therefore reward man according to his just deserts. To withhold good from the obedient and punishment from the disobedient would be contrary to the principles of righteousness, and wholly unlike God. (Read Acts 17: 30, 31; 24: 25.) The character of God is at stake here. (3) Because in no other way would it be possible for God to provide and maintain a heaven for his people. Heaven is a place or state where God's will is done (cf. Matt. 6: 10); and unless the disobedient are separated from those who delight in his service, the happiness of the latter would not only be destroyed, but God would himself invite rebellion in his realm.

#### The Final Separation

(Matt. 25: 32b-45)

*And he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of*

*the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

In the expression "he shall separate them," the pronoun *them*, in the original, is masculine, while its antecedent "nations" is neuter. This clearly shows that the separation which will be made has reference, not to the nations as such, but to the individuals who make up the nations; for salvation is strictly an individual matter. (Cf. Mark 16: 15, 16.) The separation which will take place on the judgment day will be made with unerring penetration, and with infinite equity. The vast multitudes will move to the right or to the left under the influence of the Judge's mighty power. The metaphor is taken from the practice of shepherds of ancient times, who kept the sheep and the goats in separate flocks.

In the matter of judgment, the right hand is always represented as being the place of honor and preference, while the left is the place of the less favored or the despised. It is said that when people who were accused of crime were tried by the Jewish Sanhedrin, those who were acquitted were placed on the right hand, while those who were condemned were stationed on the left. It should be kept in mind throughout this study that the separation which the Lord will make at the judgment will not be the result of caprice or arbitrary power; but according to the settled principles in the government of God. "He will judge the world in righteousness." This principle will be discussed further in this lesson.

The occasion of this lesson is the only instance in which Jesus plainly calls himself the "King." (See verse

40.) Those who will be on his right hand are the blessed of the Father; or, which is the same thing, their character will demonstrate that they had lived according to his will, and under the influence of his benediction. Jesus spoke at length regarding the character and blessedness of his disciples, in the first part of his Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5: 3-12); and Paul speaks of this same blessedness when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." (Eph. 1: 3-6.)

In saying that the kingdom was prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world, the meaning, of course, is not from the beginning of the material world, as set forth in Gen. 1; for if that were true, then the statement of Christ in John 14: 1-3 would have no meaning. That statement reads, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The idea in the passage now before us is that it was and is the eternal purpose of God that none but the righteous can inherit his eternal kingdom, or, which is the same thing, live with him eternally.

After describing the glory and majesty of the judgment scene, the Lord next gives the reason for the public acknowledgement of the righteous. The acts which are mentioned here are all deeds of mercy, and they fall into the category of good works; and that presupposes a background of faith and love. In writing about the same thing, John says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not



abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But who-so hath this world's goods, and be-holdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 14-18.)

That which is set forth in the preceding paragraph is the principle which will determine our destiny, that is, the principle of godly and practical benevolence; and without it there is no conformity to the will of God, and no fitness of character for the eternal courts of heaven. The acts of mercy which are enumerated by Jesus in the text now before us are given as manifestations of character; and they are specified in order to show the importance which the Lord attaches to them. (Cf. James 1: 27.) It should be remembered, however, that good deeds alone will not save any one; the deeds of mercy which are acceptable to God are those which are prompted by faith and love. (Cf. Gal. 5: 6; 1 Cor. 13: 3.)

When Jesus says that the ones who perform the deeds of mercy which he mentioned are actually doing service to him personally, they will be astonished, for they will not be able to recall having ministered to him; but the idea behind all of this is to emphasize the unconsciousness of merit which characterizes the noblest deeds, when their performance is motivated by faith in and love for God and man. (Cf. Mark 9: 41.) During the early days of the church, when the brethren were frequently persecuted, which often included the destruction or confiscation of their property and being driven from their homes, the sympathetic consideration and help of fellow Christians, who were able to assist them, was sorely needed. (Cf. Heb. 10: 32-34.) But even today, when the most of us are free from such Persecution, there are always people in need; and Paul taught the Galatian churches, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which

is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith." (Gal. 6: 10.)

*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.*

Even the vilest sinner, while here upon the earth, is in a certain sense always before the Lord; but there will come a time when every unprepared person will be for ever banished from his presence. The "cursed" are those who are devoted to destruction; and their state is the very opposite of the "blessed." The condition of the wicked implies the negation of all the blessings which are promised to the faithful, as well as a positive infliction of eternal suffering.

The "eternal fire" denotes both the nature and duration of the punishment which will be the lot of the wicked. It was *prepared* for the devil and his angels; but it will also be the lot of all men who partake of the ways of the evil one. For one to suffer the same kind of punishment which was originally meant for the devil and his angels, shows something of the enormity of sin. Adam Clarke notes that we see here, plainly, why sinners are destroyed, not because there was no salvation for them, but because they neglected to receive good, and do good. They are cursed, because they refused to be blessed; and they are damned, because they refused to be saved.

It should be observed that in the three examples which Jesus gave to illustrate his discourse regarding his second coming, namely, the virgins, the talents, and the judgment, not a single one of those who were condemned was charged with any sin. except that of neglect: neglect alone

is sufficient to condemn the soul. (Cf. Heb. 2: 1-3.) It should also be noted that the wicked endeavored to justify themselves by showing that their accusation and, subsequent condemnation, were unwarranted; because they had not seen the Lord personally. But the man who sees only with his physical eyes seldom sees Christ as a man who is destitute of the necessities of life; and it is usually the lack of faith which produced hard-heartedness toward the poor and needy. Some people evidently pretend not to know of the distress of others, because they have no desire to relieve them; but, as this lesson plainly teaches, such ignorance will not benefit them in the judgment day. (Cf. Matt. 7: 21-23.) The only difference between the answers given to the righteous and the wicked is the word "not;" and the failure of the latter in this respect

will be the ground for their condemnation. No other sins or acts of disobedience are mentioned by Jesus; simple neglect is sufficient to bring about eternal alienation from the Lord.

### Eternal Punishment and Eternal Life

(Matt. 25: 46)

*And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.*

Efforts have been made throughout the ages to show that the punishment of the wicked will not continue for ever; but one has only to read the text now under consideration, in order to see that the punishment of the disobedient is co-extensive with the life of the righteous. The same Greek word measures both; and they are each declared to be eternal.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Discuss the general setting of the lesson text for today.

What three basic ideas in the Lord's discourse did he see fit to illustrate?

What were the illustrations which he used and what application did he make of each?

In what way is the idea of judgment related to religion?

Discuss the teaching of the Bible regarding the subject.

Why is Jesus different from all other judges?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

Why was it essential that Christ die before building his church?

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus for predicting his death?

What was the immediate context in which the golden text was spoken?

What two distinct ideas of judgment are presented in the New Testament?

Discuss the purpose of both judgments.

### The Setting for the Judgment Day

Give reasons for thinking that the judgment referred to here will be at the last day.

In what way does John describe the judgment day?

Why will it be a glorious day?

Who will be there?

What part will the angels have in that great event?

What are some of the reasons why a final reckoning is necessary?

### The Final Separation

Who or what is to be separated at the judgment day? Give reasons for your answer.

What significance is attached to the right and left hands?

Why are the righteous called the blessed of the Father?

In what sense was the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world?

Why will the righteous be publicly acknowledged at the judgment?

In what does righteousness in this case consist?

Upon what principle will the judgment at the last day be conducted?

What must always characterize those whose good deeds are acceptable to the Lord?

Why will the righteous be astonished when they learn that they had ministered to Christ?

Why was and is such service so essential?

What is the significance of the words, "Depart from me"?

Why will the wicked be punished in hell?

What common denominator characterizes the three illustrations which Jesus employed?

In what way will the wicked seek to show that their condemnation is unwarranted?

In what alone will the difference in the answers to the righteous and

wicked consist?

Why is simple "neglect" sufficient to condemn the soul?

### Eternal Punishment and Eternal Life

Why have people through the ages tried to show that the punishment of the

wicked will not continue forever?

What is taught on the subject in the passage now before us?

## Lesson X—September 4, 1966

## JESUS AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

## Lesson Text

Matt: 26: 17-30

17 Now on the first *day* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Je'-sus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Je'-sus appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples;

21 And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?

23 And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, even as

it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

25 And Ju'-das, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rab'-bi? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Je'-sus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of ol-ives.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."* (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 26: 1-16.

## Daily Bible Readings

August 29. M.....	Luke's Account of the Supper (Luke 22: 14-23)
August 30. T.....	Mark's Account of the Supper (Mark 14: 22-25)
August 31. W.....	Matthew's Account of the Supper (Matt. 26: 20-30)
Sept. 1. T. ....	Paul's Account of the Supper (1 Cor. 11: 23-29)
Sept. 2. F.....	Breaking Bread in Troas (Acts 20: 7-12)
Sept. 3. S.....	Communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10: 14-2)
Sept. 4. S.....	Forsake Not the Assembly (Heb. 10: 19-31)

TIME.—Thursday afternoon and evening, before the crucifixion, A.D. 30.  
PLACE.—Jerusalem and the mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the disciples.

## Introduction

The Lord's supper is a memorial feast which Jesus graciously made possible for his disciples; and its spiritual value to them cannot be overestimated. Its worth as a medium through which Christians may show their love and devotion to their Redeemer is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. No person could have been saved from eternal

death, had it not been for the supreme sacrifice which Jesus made; and he, accordingly, wants his people to be constantly aware of that truth. This is one of the primary purposes of the Lord's supper—a reminder to help us remember that which we ought not to forget.

The memorial feast about which we are to study today has been re-

ferred to as a love-drenched reminder that God is not willing that any should perish; but that all should have life in his Son, and that more abundantly. The Lord's supper, indeed, is a magnificent reminder that God is; that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead for our justification; that prayer is potent; that love is dynamic; and that faith is the victory. The enemies of Jesus thought that they had destroyed him, when they crucified him and saw to it that he was dead before his body was removed from the cross; but they did not understand God's plan for him. (Cf. Acts 2: 22-24.) Not only was Jesus not defeated in death; he arose to the greatest victory which the world has ever seen; and the Lord's supper also commemorates that crowning triumph.

In speaking of the memorial institution now under consideration, Hall L. Calhoun says that Jesus wants to be remembered by his followers. He wants them to remember that he loved them well enough to have his body broken and his blood shed for them; and he counts on his love for them to bring about a corresponding love on their part for him. It is this idea which really gives value and significance to the Lord's supper; for it proclaims in action that those who partake of it do believe that Jesus died for them, and that his resurrection makes possible their continued life with God. When people observe this memorial feast as they should,

they become witnesses to others of their faith in Jesus, as their crucified and risen Saviour and Lord; and inasmuch as the testimony of two is stronger than that of one, so the testimony of the entire church on earth becomes the testimony of a great cloud of witnesses, the strength of which will, if the church is faithful to her Lord, make a profound impression upon the world about her.

When the lives of those who eat the Lord's supper are faithfully patterned after the life of their Saviour and Master, the strength and convincing power of their testimony is greatly increased; but when the disciples of Christ become careless and indifferent regarding their lives, their witness when they partake of supper which is supposed to indicate their faith in him who made it possible is not only greatly weakened; it often has the opposite effect from that which is intended. This is true because there is a contradiction between what they profess while they are around the table, and their own daily living; and who can estimate the ill-effect which such a contradiction will have upon the people who should obey the gospel, to say nothing of the people in question! May the Lord therefore help us all to make an honest effort to see to it that our service in his cause may have its due effect on the lives of those who are about us every day; for this is one of our greatest responsibilities toward Christ.

### The Golden Text

*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."* Any passage of scripture can best be understood in the light of its context; and that is certainly true of the passage which serves as the golden text for today's lesson. The brethren in Corinth had fallen into many erroneous practices, and it was Paul's evident purpose when he wrote our First Corinthians to try to get the brethren there to see and to correct their mistakes. One of the major errors which characterized the Corinthian Christians was a social custom which made it impossible for at least some of them to eat the Lord's supper. (Cf. 1 Cor. 11: 20.)

The custom just referred to was the practice of taking ordinary food with them to the place of meeting, and eating it either before or after the worship of the church, during which time, of course, the Lord's **supper** was eaten. It certainly would take a wide stretch of the imagination for one to get the idea that people could eat and drink to excess, by consuming only the "elements" which are provided for the Lord's supper; and besides that, Paul called it their "own supper."

There is no scriptural evidence that the Corinthian or any brethren were divinely authorized to partake of their common food at to place of meeting; but it appears that

the practice grew out of that which Jude calls "your love-feasts." (See Jude 12; cf. 2 Pet. 2: 13.) It is fair to conclude therefore that the practice, in and of itself, was harmless; but it is evident that it had gotten out of hand in the church in Corinth; for it was the *abuse*, and not the practice itself, which Paul condemned. (Cf. 1 Cor. 11: 33.) It appears that the original purpose of the "love-feasts" was to provide food which might be shared with those who really needed it (cf. 1 Cor. 11: 22); but some of the Corinthians had begun to eat their own full meal in private in the meeting place of the church; and Paul asked them if they did not have houses in which to do that. If that was their purpose in eating, then they should go home and do it, or do it before they came to the place of assembly; for the shameful conduct in which they were engaging made it utterly impossible for them to eat the Lord's supper.

The whole idea behind the Lord's

supper is to honor Christ and proclaim to the world the great events which made the supper possible, and for the commemoration of which it was instituted. But when the conduct of those who come together to eat the supper is out of harmony with the purpose of the supper, it is not only not possible for them to do that which is pleasing to the Lord with reference to it; it also leaves a wrong impression on those who are not members of the church. And it is for this reason therefore that the professed followers of Christ should make every effort to see that their testimony with reference to Christ and his cause is effective for good, when they assemble around the Lord's table. We do not today have the practice of the "love-feasts," but there are many other things which we sometimes do, which are just as wrong as the abuse of the love-feasts which Paul so sternly condemned. And so, let us, as often as we eat the bread, and drink the cup, proclaim the Lord's death till he comes again.

## The Text Explained

### The Last Passover Feast

(Matt. 26: 17-25)

*Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover.*

The accounts of Mark and Luke regarding the question now before us are fuller than Matthew's; and by reading them the picture will be clearer to us. Luke says, "And the day of unleavened bread came on which the passover must be sacrificed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we make ready? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where-

into he goeth. And ye shall say unto the master of the house, The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them; and they made ready the passover." (Luke 22: 7-13.)

The passover was one of the three annual feasts which the Jewish males were required to attend. The feast now under consideration occurred on the fourteenth day of the first month of the religious year of the Jews, and they were required to eat unleavened bread for the next seven days. The entire period came to be called both the passover and the days of unleavened bread. (See Ex. 12: 1-20.) The normal population of Jerusalem was something like two hundred or two hundred and fifty thousand people; but when the Jewish people who lived elsewhere came to the city for the feast days, the population was raised to some three million souls. This, of course, required that every available room be placed in the category of guest-

chambers; and when we take into consideration the law regarding the passover feast, it is not difficult for us to understand why the rooms were "furnished" for that purpose. All that would be required of the disciples would be for them to make the necessary preparation for the number of persons who were expected to be there, in this case, Jesus and his twelve apostles.

*Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord? And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto the man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had not been born. And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.*

It appears that Jesus and his disciples were engaged in eating the passover, as the Jews had been taught to do; and it is easy to see that they were engaged in conversation as they ate. Only Jesus realized what was soon to follow, and so he told them that one of them would betray him. This, of course, produced a sorrowful situation, but it is doubtful if they expected the betrayal to take place in the immediate future. It is also noticeable that the disciples did not seem suspicious of each other; on the contrary, each appeared to be interested in himself. When they began to ask, "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus did not give a specific answer, but did indicate that the traitor was near to him. The "dish" contained a kind of sauce or broth, into which pieces of bread were dipped. Whether or not Jesus and all the disciples used the same dish, or whether they had two or more for smaller groups, it is not known; but it is certain that Judas was in a group close enough to Jesus to use the same dish that he did; and that, of course, emphasized the dastardly nature of his crime.

Bible students have never been in full agreement as to whether or not Jesus and the disciples ate the pass-

over on the day which was authorized by the law of Moses, or the day before, so that Christ himself could be slain on the day of the killing of the sacrificial lamb. Those who study may never reach unanimity on this subject, but there are some fundamental facts which should have some weight, regarding it, namely, (1) Jesus and the disciples ate the passover supper on the night before his condemnation and execution, according to John, chapter 13ff. (2) The Jews had not eaten the supper at that time, John 18: 28. (3) The day of the Lord's condemnation and crucifixion is called "the Preparation of the passover," John 19: 14, 31. (4) Luke says, "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them. With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22: 14-16.)

The expression "With desire I have desired" indicates the earnest longing which was in the heart of Jesus regarding this particular passover. This was the last time the institution could be observed, before the law of Moses was taken out of the way. The typical design of the passover was to set forth Christ as the lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world; and when he died for the sins of mankind, he became to those who accept his offer of salvation, their passover. (See 1 Cor. 5: 7.) The reference to the Lord's suffering (Luke 22: 15) was, of course, to his death on the cross; and with that in view, he longed to eat this particular passover with his disciples, before the ordinance was fulfilled in him. This is one of the reasons why some Bible students think that Christ and the apostles ate the passover supper of this lesson in advance of the regular time, so that his death would coincide with the slaying of the paschal lamb. Monser (*Types and Metaphors of the Bible*) says, "He was crucified that very day and time wherein the paschal lamb was slain."

#### The Lord's Supper Instituted

(Matt. 26: 26-29)

*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake*

*it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

It seems quite clear from the gospel narratives that the Lord's supper was instituted near the close of the passover supper. The leaders of the Jews were at that very time making plans for his death; and Judas had already bargained for his betrayal. His disciples were very close to him, but they did not know, and neither could they understand, what was taking place in his heart. John says that Jesus was troubled in spirit, and told them that one of their number would betray him, as has already been pointed out. (See John 13: 21.)

It was therefore in the midst of these solemn circumstances that Jesus instituted the supper, the observance of which he ordained for his disciples throughout the Christian dispensation. The bread which he used in instituting the feast was from the passover supper, and that means that it was unleavened bread; for no other kind of bread was permitted on the table of that Old Testament institution. This may not be conclusive proof that only unleavened bread may be scripturally used in the Lord's supper; but it is safe to say that if people sincerely want to please the Lord, that is the kind of bread they will use; for there is no evidence whatsoever that he would be pleased with any other. The particular type of drink at the passover was not specified at the time of our lesson; but Bible students, such as Vincent, Edersheim, and others, say that it was wine, diluted with water, "generally in the proportion of one part to two parts of water." There can be no reasonable doubt about the use of unfermented grape juice on the Lord's table; and that should satisfy the most discriminating mind, and especially since Jesus spoke of it as the fruit of the vine. However, if it is true that Jesus used diluted wine when he brought the Lord's supper into being, then no objection

should be raised to that type of drink for his memorial feast.

In instituting the Lord's supper, Jesus first took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, with the exhortation to eat it as representing his body. Following the eating of the bread, he took a cup, gave thanks for it, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it;" or, as Mark has it, "they all drank of it." This, of course, means that all of the disciples drank of the contents of the cup, rather than that they drank all that was in the cup. The original words for "give thanks" is *eucharisteō*, from which we have "eucharist," sometimes, though incorrectly so, used as a name for the Lord's supper. Matthew says that Jesus *blessed* the bread, but that he *gave thanks* for the cup; but it appears quite evident that the two expressions have the same practical meaning, or that they were used interchangeably.

It should also be observed that the term "cup" stands for the contents, or that which was in the cup; for it is obvious that the disciples drank that which was in the cup, rather than the cup itself. This is also made plain in 1 Cor. 10: 14-22. And so, regardless of the number of containers which are used on the Lord's table, there is still only one cup; for only the fruit of the vine can represent the blood of Christ. When therefore all Christians, the world over or in any given place, drink of that which symbolizes the blood of Christ, they are all drinking of the one cup. And what is true of the cup is also true of the bread; for there is only one bread which stands for his body. The "covenant" which Jesus referred to was the one which was predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 31: 31-34), and quoted and commented on by Paul in Heb. 8: 6-13.

The "elements" of which the Lord's supper is composed are among the most perishable on earth, and yet they have stood the test of nearly two thousand years. In commenting on the Lord's motive for instituting the supper now under consideration, A. B. Bruce says, "He seems to say, 'Fix your eyes on Calvary and watch what happens there. This is the great event in my earthly history. Other men have monuments, because they have lived lives

deemed memorable. I wish you to erect a monument to me, because I have died. The memory of other men is cherished by their birthdays, but in my case better is the day of my death than the day of my birth. My birth into the world was momentous, but still more is my death. Of my birth no festive commemoration is needed; but of my death keep alive the memory till I come again. Remembering it you will remember all, for of all it is the secret, the consummation, and the crown."

That which has just been said is true; for the death of Christ was a sacrificial, vicarious death. The paschal lamb of the Jewish passover was sacrificed as a call to remembrance of that night when God *passed over* every house in Egypt on whose lintel and doorposts were its blood. And in a similar manner, Jesus was the Paschal lamb of God, whose shed blood made possible the deliverance of the human race from a far deeper slavery than that of Egypt. "Behold, the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him." These are the truths which the Lord's supper is meant to proclaim; and it is to enshrine this faith and deepen it into adorning love and joyful assurance that Jesus commands, "This do in remembrance of me."

When Jesus said, "I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," he was expressing the confident anticipation of his triumph over death. With the raising of the cross on the next day, it would ap-

pear that evil had succeeded in its efforts to destroy the Galilean teacher; but with calm and unruffled confidence, Jesus looked beyond the dark tomorrow, and saw the reality of the kingdom which he had come to establish. And it was in that kingdom that he would drink a new and better cup with his disciples, not once, but throughout the dispensation which bears his name. McGarvey calls this the new method of drinking the fruit of the vine which, of course, signifies his spiritual communion with his disciples, in their celebration of the supper.

### A Fitting Conclusion

(Matt. 26: 30)

*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

The hymn which Jesus and his disciples sang, following the institution of the Lord's supper, was indeed and in truth a song in the night (cf. Job 35: 10); for not only had the physical darkness settled upon them (John 13: 30); a deeper darkness was descending upon their spirits. But any one who reads the verse now under consideration should be made to see that Jesus did not go to the cross as a man haggard with woe, but with a song in his heart. (Cf. Heb. 12: 2.) While we do not know which hymn was sung by Jesus and his disciples, following the last supper, it is thought by some Bible students that it may have been one of the Hallelujah Psalms, namely Psalms 115-118. Jesus, to be sure, had sorrow, but his joy was deeper than his sorrow. The going out must have been after the portion of his last discourse to his disciples contained in John, chapters 13 and 14, was spoken. (See John 14: 31.)

### Questions for Discussion

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

#### Introduction

Give some of the reasons for which Jesus instituted the Lord's supper.  
What are some of the great truths which it should help us to remember?  
What did the enemies who brought about the death of Jesus fail to take into consideration?  
Why is the Lord's supper sometimes referred to as a "love-feast"?  
What great truths does the supper proclaim?

Give reasons why the Lord's people should always try to be faithful to him.  
What are some of the harmful effects of unfaithfulness on their part?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?  
What great lesson should we learn from those circumstances?

#### The Last Passover Feast

What additional facts do Mark and Luke give regarding Jesus' instruction to his disciples?



What was the passover, and under what circumstances did it come into being? Why were "guest-rooms" available in Jerusalem at that time of the year? What preparation would the disciples need to make? What did Jesus reveal to the disciples during the passover supper? In what way were they affected by this information? What did Jesus say regarding the traitor and what did his nearness to Christ suggest? What is known regarding the time when Jesus and his disciples ate the passover? Why did Jesus desire to eat this particular passover with his disciples?

### The Lord's Supper Instituted

When and under what conditions was the Lord's supper instituted? What is known regarding the bread and fruit of the vine which he used in instituting it? What, then, should all the Lord's people today agree on regarding these issues?

Give reasons for your answer. Describe what Jesus did when he instituted the Lord's supper. What was evidently meant by "blessing" the cup, and what was the "cup"? What lesson does Paul teach regarding the "number" of cups which pertain to the Lord's supper? To what covenant did Jesus have reference, when he said, "This is my blood of the covenant"? What can you say of the "durability" of the "elements" of the Lord's supper? Why does Jesus want his death rather than his birth remembered? In what sense is Jesus our passover? What did Jesus mean by drinking the cup new with his disciples in God's kingdom? What meaning, then, does this have for us?

### A Fitting Conclusion

What is signified by the singing of a hymn by Jesus and his disciples? What may have been the hymn which they sang?

## Lesson XI—September 11, 1966

# JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

### Lesson Text

Luke 23: 33-46

33 And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

34 And Je'-sus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots.

35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself.

38 And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us.

40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said, Je'-sus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.

43 And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour,

45 The sun's light failing; and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And Je'-sus, crying with a loud voice said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15: 3.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 27: 32-56.

### Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 5. M.....Christ's Arraignment (Luke 23: 1-7)  
 Sept. 6. T.....Innocence Declared (Luke 23: 13-17)  
 Sept. 7. W.....Jesus Condemned (Luke 23: 18-25)

Sept. 8. T.....	Jesus Crucified (Luke 23: 32-38)
Sept. 9. F.....	Jesus and the Penitent Robber (Luke 23: 39-43)
Sept. 10. S.....	Jesus Dies (Luke 23: 44-47)
Sept. 11. S.....	Death Foretold (Isa. 53: 1-12)

TIME.—Friday morning, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Golgotha, near Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the Jewish leaders, two robbers, the soldiers, and the multitudes.

## Introduction

The best, in fact the only, way to get all the facts regarding any question which is set forth in the Bible, is to consider everything which is said about it; and if this is done regarding the last few hours of Jesus, before his crucifixion, it will be much easier for one to get the setting of the lesson now before us. Our last lesson saw Jesus and his disciples leave the upper room, where the last passover supper had been eaten, and the Lord's supper had been instituted. This was followed by the Teacher's farewell discourse to his disciples, and intercessory prayer. (See John 14-17.) It is not always easy to follow the chronological sequence of events as they actually occurred; but that is not always essential regarding every detail, as long as we can keep abreast with the principal happenings.

After the intercessory prayer which Jesus offered, a series of events occurred in rapid succession, culminating in the arrest, trials, and condemnation of our Lord. In due time, the march to the place of crucifixion began, and that brings us up to the time of the lesson for today. The events which led up to the Lord's condemnation took place during the night and early morning hours. After the dawn of the crucifixion day, Jesus was formally condemned by the Sanhedrin (see Matt. 27: 1; Mark 15: 1; Luke 22: 66-71), and was then led away for his first trial before Pilate. It was about this time that Judas, seeing that Jesus was actually being condemned, re-

turned the money, which had been given him to betray Jesus, to the Jewish leaders; and went out and hanged himself. Pilate found no fault in Jesus; but because of the pressure of the crowd, and having learned that Jesus was a Galilean, he sent him to Herod, where he was again acquitted.

After that, Jesus was again brought before Pilate, and was declared innocent, a second time, of the charges which had been lodged against him. But the question of how to release Jesus, in the face of serious opposition from the Jewish leaders, still confronted the governor. It appears that Pilate decided to take advantage of his custom of releasing unto the Jews, during the passover feast, any prisoner whom they might desire. (See Mark 15: 6.) The governor, accordingly, selected one of the worst prisoners who were then in his custody (Luke 23: 18, 19), and, presenting him with Jesus, asked, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ." Pilate knew the motive which was behind the Jewish leaders; and he evidently expected the people to ask for that which they considered the lesser of two evils, that is, if they actually considered Jesus as being evil. But in this the governor was mistaken; for the Jewish leaders stirred up the people, and persuaded them to ask for Barabbas. This led to the condemnation of Jesus by the Roman authority; and his execution was then only a matter of hours away.

## The Golden Text

*"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures"* The words just quoted are taken from the first paragraph of Paul's great statement regarding the resurrection of the dead. (See 1 Cor. 15: 1-11.) The subject set forth in the paragraph just referred to is a fundamental and

essential article of apostolic preaching, which was intended to introduce Paul's discussion of the resurrection. The first four verses of the paragraph read as follows: "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye

stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures."

There is no greater truth, nor one in which people who desire salvation from sin are more interested, than that which is stated in the words of the golden text for today's lesson. No one who professes to believe the Bible as the inspired word of God, will deny the fact that the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of sins. But while practically all people who accept Jesus as God's Son believe this great truth, many are often greatly confused when they are confronted with the further fact that salvation which is made possible by the blood of Christ, is a conditional salvation. It is apparently very difficult for them to understand how it is that Jesus died for the sins of all men (Heb. 2: 9), and yet at the same time accept the fact that there is something for the individual sinner to do, before he can obtain the forgiveness of his sins. (Cf. Heb. 5: 8, 9; Rom. 1: 5; 16: 26; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.) "Obedience of faith," in the two passages cited in Romans, is, in the marginal reading, *obedience to the faith*, which makes impossible the idea of salvation by faith only; for "faith" and "obedience of faith"

are not the same. Obedience is the result of faith. (Cf. James 2: 24.)

Man forfeited his life when he sinned, and was sentenced to die; but Jesus, by the sacrifice of his own sinless life (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 21), satisfied the demands of the law which had been violated; and thereby made it possible for man to live. (See Rom. 3: 23-26; 1 Pet. 1: 18-21.) But if man's life is saved through the blood of Christ, then Jesus is entitled to that life; and it is clearly taught in the New Testament that no one can approach God, except through and by virtue of the blood by which he was redeemed. (Cf. Eph. 1: 7; 2: 13-19.) Redeemed people therefore must come to God as servants of Jesus Christ.

It is not so much a question as to *how* the blood of Christ makes possible the salvation of mankind and their access to the Father; it is rather a *truth* or *fact* to be believed. A man who by mistake swallows a deadly poison is not deeply concerned about the chemical content of the antidote offered to him by the physician. Instead, he eagerly and thankfully accepts the fact that the medicine will counteract the poison in his system, and save his life; and he drinks it with all possible speed. Salvation is a matter of faith, and if we do as we are commanded to do, we have the assurance that the blood of Christ will cleanse us from all sin; for it is a fact "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

### The Text Explained

The Crucifixion Executed  
(Luke 23: 33-38)

*And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself.*

*And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

All of the gospel writers, except Luke, speak of the place of the crucifixion of Jesus as "Golgotha," which they interpret to mean the place of a skull. The term "Golgotha" is from the Aramaic "Gulgotha," and it equals the Hebrew "Gulgoleth" which is translated *skull* in Judg. 9: 53 and 2 Kings 9: 35. The English "skull" is a translation of the Greek *kranion*, from which we also have "cranium," which is that part of the skull which encloses the brain. It is very likely that the place of the Lord's crucifixion was called Golgotha, that is the place of a skull.

because of its skull-like shape, or perhaps because of the skulls which were seen there in ancient times.

The place of the Lord's crucifixion is often referred to as "Calvary," or "Mount Calvary," but neither expression has any basis in the Greek of the New Testament. (See Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.) It is true that the word "Calvary" is found in the King James Version of Luke 23: 33, but, as already noted, all the other references in the gospel records have the term "Golgotha," which they interpret to mean the place of the skull. Young points out that "the place of crucifixion is by each of the four evangelists called *Kranion*, and is in every case translated by *Calvaria* in the Vulgate, and in every place but that in Luke the English version translates the word by 'scull.' There is no sanction for the expression 'Mount Calvary,' for it is only eighteen feet high." *Calvary* therefore comes to us through the Latin version, and the term is not an English equivalent for the New Testament original Greek word.

The manner of crucifixion is described by Barnes in these words: "After the criminal had carried the cross, attended with every possible jibe and insult, to the place of execution, a hole was dug in the earth to receive the foot of it. The cross was laid on the ground; the person condemned to suffer was stripped, and was extended on it, and the soldiers fastened the hands and feet either by nails or thongs. After they had fixed the nails deeply in the wood, they elevated the cross with the agonizing sufferer on it; and in order to fix it more firmly in the earth, they let it fall violently into the hole which they had dug to receive it. This sudden fall must have given to the person that was nailed to it a most violent and convulsive shock, and greatly increased his sufferings. The crucified person was then suffered to hang, commonly, till pain, exhaustion, thirst, and hunger, ended his life. Sometimes the suffering continued for days; and when friendly death terminated the life, the body was often suffered to remain—a loathsome object, putrefying in the sun, or devoured by birds."

The men who were crucified with Jesus were "robbers" (*lēstai*), no: "thieves" (*kleptai*); but they have been called thieves so universally that practically every one thinks of them under that designation. Some one has suggested that they may have been members of the band of Barabbas. Nothing is said in the New Testament about why the robbers were crucified with Jesus; but whatever the reason, it was a fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Luke 22: 37; Isa. 53: 12), and it added materially to the indignity which was heaped upon Jesus. But amid all this suffering and shame, Jesus could say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This forgiveness was extended to those who accepted the gospel on Pentecost; and they were regarded as if they had never sinned.

It appears that the Roman law provided that the clothing of a condemned person would go to the soldiers who crucified him. John gives a fuller account of this incident in these words, "The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, 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. 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." (John 19: 23, 24.)

It is difficult for us to conceive of the heartlessness of the Jewish rulers and the Roman soldiers who scoffed at Jesus, and mocked him: but such has been characteristic of the thoughtless all through the ages. Paul's reaction to his former conduct will give us some idea of how they must have felt, if and when they came to see their terrible mistake. (Cf. Acts 26: 8-11; 1 Tim. 1: 12-15.) The "vinegar" which the soldiers offered to Jesus was apparently, a cheap grade of sour wine called *posca*, a container of which was placed near the cross for the refreshment of the soldiers. (Cf. John 19: 28, 29; Matt. 27: 46-49; Mark 15: 36.)

Each of the four gospel writers mentions the superscription which

was placed above the head of Jesus, but no two of them has the same wording. In speaking of this situation, Alford notes that "on the differences in the four Gospels as to the *words of the inscription itself*, it is hardly worthwhile to comment, except to remark, that the advocates for the verbal and literal exactness of each gospel may find here an undoubted example of the absurdity of their view, which may serve to guide them in less plain and obvious cases." It was not the purpose therefore of the gospel writers to give an exact and literal reproduction of the inscription; but simply to state that such a title was written and placed above the head of Jesus. The full title, according to all four of the writers, was THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

### The Reaction of the Two Robbers

(Luke 23: 39-43)

*And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

There were three crosses on Golgotha, but something different characterized each of the men who died there. One of the robbers had lived a life of sin, and remained impenitent to the end; and he, accordingly died *in* sin. The other robber had also lived a life of sin, but he became penitent before his death; and he, as a result, had his sins forgiven, because he had died *to* sin. But the man on the central cross was the spotless Son of God, and he died *for* sin. It is, of course, utterly impossible for any of us to die *for* sin; but it is as certain as death itself that we will die either *to* sin or *in* sin. What happens to us will depend on our attitude toward the gospel; for God does not want a single one of us lost. (See 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9.)

The terms of the gospel, according to which we must be saved, are very simply and easy to be understood, as may be seen by reading the Lord's commission to his disciples, and the manner in which the apostles understood and executed that commission. (See Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 46, 47; Acts 2: 37-39.) But men, all through the ages, have endeavored to justify their action in refusing to be baptized, as a condition of pardon for alien sinners, notwithstanding the plain statement of Jesus, which he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and Peter's word, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism." (See 1 Pet. 3: 21.) The efforts of men along the line just indicated have taken many forms, but there is one way of stating the matter which seems to some to be an "unanswerable argument," namely, "What about the thief on the cross? He was saved without being baptized; and if the Lord was willing to save him without baptism, he can and will, by the same token, save people today in the same way."

However, it might be well, just here, to ask, "Who is it that says. 'What about the thief on the cross?'" Did the people on Pentecost ask that question, when Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins? (See Acts 2: 37-41.) Instead of asking, What about the thief on the cross?, why not ask about Saul of Tarsus, who later became the apostle Paul? (Acts 22: 10); about the Philippian jailor? (Acts 16: 29-34); about the Corinthians? (Acts 18: 8). Who is it that says that people today are saved without water baptism—the Lord and his messengers or men?

Any one who wants to see the truth regarding this matter can easily do so by reading Mark 16: 15, 16 and Gal. 1: 6-9 together. The first passage says, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." And now Paul's statement in Galatians: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel:

only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema."

The word "pervert," in the passage just quoted, means to change, corrupt, to turn around so that the meaning will be changed. Goodspeed renders the passage in these words: "I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the mercy of Christ, to some different good news—not that there is any other, only there are some people who are trying to unsettle you and want to turn the good news of the Christ around. But even if we or an angel from heaven preach to you good news that contradicts the good news we have preached to you, a curse upon him! We have said it before, and I repeat it now—if any one is preaching to you good news that contradicts the good news you have already received, a curse upon him!"

The language of the New Testament says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," while the teaching of men says, "He that believes is saved. He may be baptized later, if he so desires and wants to join the church; but he is saved before and without water baptism." And this, in the face of Peter's declaration, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism." In the light of the indisputable facts which have just been presented, which one of the foregoing statements will thoughtful people rely upon? (Cf. 2 John 9.)

If any one wants to question the salvation of the dying, penitent robber, let him consider the teaching of Jesus in Luke 16: 19-31, where he plainly says that Paradise and the place of punishment are separated by an impassable gulf. When once the robber reached Paradise, he could not return to life; and neither could he cross the gulf where the wicked are. But what many people need to learn, in addition to that, is the further truth that the robber was saved *before* the conditions of salvation, as

set forth in the gospel, became effective. Jesus had the power, before his death, to forgive sins according to his choosing. (Cf. Mark 2: 1-12.) But when the law of Christ went into effect on Pentecost, all men became subject to its conditions. (Mark 16: 15, 16.)

### The Death of God's Son

(Luke 23: 44-46)

*And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing: and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, unto thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.*

"And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." (Mark 15: 25.) The third hour of the day, according to Jewish time, was nine-o'clock in the morning, according to Roman time, which was the same as ours. And by the same token, the sixth hour, Jewish time, was twelve o'clock, Roman time. This means, then, that the darkness was over the whole land from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon, as we count time. Jesus had been on the cross approximately three hours when the darkness came. Matthew says, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27: 46.) This indicates that Jesus was allowed to tread the wine-press alone, and thereby offer himself as an atonement for sin; and in doing so, he was able to experience the terrible meaning of the punishment, which was due the sins which he was bearing, and for which he was dying. This, of course, was a deeper anguish than the physical suffering which he bore. The question which Jesus asked does not imply any reluctance on his part to suffer; but it did express the deep internal agony which he felt. That which happened on the cross was but a completion of that which was begun in Gethsemane, namely, the drinking of the last bitter dregs of the cup which he agreed to accept; and he was being dealt with as if the sins for which he was dying were his own.

The writer of Hebrews apparently

refers to the rending of the veil of the temple, when he speaks of the "new and living way, through the

veil," by which people may go to God. (See Heb. 10: 19, 20; cf. 9: 7, 8.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What is the only certain way to learn that which the Bible teaches on any question?  
Show how this system works with reference to the lesson for today.  
Trace the principal events in the life of Jesus between the last lesson and this one.  
Why did Pilate allow Jesus to be crucified, while at the same time knowing that he was innocent?  
What was his last effort in trying to free Christ?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Paul write the words of this text?  
What problem do many people have with reference to the matter of salvation?  
What is the difference between "faith" and "obedience of faith"?  
What is expected of man when he is redeemed by Christ?  
What should be the sinner's attitude toward the cleansing blood of Christ?

### The Crucifixion Executed

Where was Jesus crucified and how did the place receive the name it bore?  
Why is the location often referred to as "Calvary"?  
What was the usual manner in carrying out a crucifixion?  
Who were the men who were crucified with Jesus and why were they put to death with him?

What was the attitude of Jesus toward his crucifiers and tormentors?  
What happened to his clothing and what superscription was placed above his head?

### The Reaction of the Two Robbers

What was the nature of the death of each of the three who died on the crosses?  
What are the terms of salvation from alien sins and why do so many people object to baptism?  
What unanswerable answer do they think that they have with reference to this question?  
What are some better questions which they should be asking and why are they better?  
What is the Bible's answer to their so-called unanswerable argument?  
What will thoughtful people always do regarding this question?  
Why are we reasonably certain that the penitent robber was saved?  
What vital lesson should all men learn regarding this matter?

### The Death of God's Son

At what time of the day was Jesus crucified?  
What unusual phenomenon occurred in the early afternoon?  
What cry did Jesus utter around the close of the period of darkness?  
What was suggested by that cry?  
Why was Jesus allowed to suffer alone?  
What effect should this have upon all of us?  
What is said regarding the veil in the temple and what typical meaning did the rending have?

## Lesson XII—September 18, 1966

# JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD

## Lesson Text

Luke 24: 36-53

36 And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart?

39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.

40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

41 And while they still disbelieved

for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish.

43 And he took it, and ate before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Mo'-ses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures;

46 And he said unto them, Thus

it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day;

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Je-ru'-sa-lem.

48 Ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

50 And he led them out until *they were* over against Beth'-a-ny: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Je-ru'-sa-lem with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, blessing God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The Lord is risen indeed."* (Luke 24: 34.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 28: 1-20.

### Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 12. M.....	"He Is Risen." (Luke 24: 1-7)
Sept. 13. T.....	An Angel Bears Good News (Matt. 28: 1-10)
Sept. 14. W.....	An Empty Tomb (Mark 16: 1-8)
Sept. 15. T.....	Appearance of Jesus (Mark 16: 9-18)
Sept. 16. F.....	Peter and John at the Tomb (John 20: 1-10)
Sept. 17. S.....	Mary Converses with Jesus (John 20: 11-18)
Sept. 18. S.....	Stephen Sees Jesus (Acts 7: 54-60)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and over against Bethany.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

### Introduction

The entire twenty-fourth chapter of Luke should be read, before the study of this lesson is started. After the account of the resurrection, we come next to the experience of two disciples, who were on their way to Emmaus, during the latter part of the afternoon of the resurrection day. Jesus appeared to them on the way, but they did not recognize him. This appearance of Jesus, after his resurrection, has been described as the most arresting of all of his appearances; for it has brought light to many who were in darkness, and comfort to innumerable souls who were in trouble. One of the two disciples who were going to Emmaus on that day was Cleopas; the other one is not named in the Scriptures, but Edersheim has suggested that since Luke's record of the gospel is characterized by vivid personal recollections, the unnamed companion of Cleopas may have been Luke himself.

We can well imagine the joy which filled the hearts of these two astonished disciples, as Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread. They immediately returned to Jerusalem, and reported to

the apostles and those with them their experience; and while they were yet speaking, Jesus himself stood in their midst, and spoke to them. The narrative which contains the record of these events is short, and is referred to by only one other New Testament writer, namely, Mark (16: 12); but it would be difficult to find a more beautiful production, or one which so vividly portrays the feelings of men who were laden with disappointment and dread.

Jesus remained on earth, after his resurrection, forty days (Acts 1: 3), during which time he frequently met with his disciples, and discussed with them the things concerning the kingdom which he was soon to establish. It was during this period of forty days that Jesus gave the great commission to the disciples, as well as many proofs concerning his resurrection from the dead; and then, as the brief period drew to a close, he led the eleven apostles out to the "mount called Olivet," near the little town of Bethany; and from there he ascended back to his Father in the glory world.



## The Golden Text

"The Lord is risen indeed." The mighty preaching of the apostolic age was the preaching of the *resurrection gospel*; and it is significant that the preaching of the early Christians did not stress the resurrection of Jesus, simply as a fact, although it was, of course, one of the most sublime facts of all time. And not only that: it was a fact so well attested, that they were willing to give their lives in the preaching of it, and to die, if need be, to seal their testimony of it. What the first preachers of the resurrection gospel did (all Christians were proclaimers of the gospel then) was to emphasize the good news of Christ's resurrection as a basis for the hope of salvation.

Something of the place which the resurrection gospel had in the thinking and preaching of the early Christians may be learned by reading the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, a part of which is quoted here. "Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up

Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable." (1 Cor. 15: 12-19.)

The passage just quoted has a wonderful ring of confidence, as is indeed true of the entire chapter. These words may be regarded as a kind of challenge to those who had come against, and had broken their last weapon, as they sought to destroy those who had given their lives to, and were following, the risen Christ. People in those days were being killed for their faith in and their loyalty to Jesus. It required great courage therefore for a man to be a Christian; but Paul wanted his readers to know that there are worse things which can come to the Lord's people, than to die prematurely for their faith in him. Thus, instead of death for Christ's sake being something to fear, the apostle boldly affirmed that it was for Christians a victorious gain. Christ had been raised from the dead, and there is therefore a resurrection for all who die in him. (Read 1 Cor. 15: 54-58; cf. Rev. 14: 13.)

## The Text Explained

### The Lord's First Appearance to the Apostles As a Group

(Luke 24: 36-43)

*And, as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled*

*fish. And he took it, and ate before them.*

When John, in speaking of the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on the occasion of their fishing experience, following his resurrection, said, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead" (see John 21: 1-14), he did not mean to say that this was his *third appearance* since his resurrection; but rather the third time that he was manifested to his disciples as a group. We know, from other parts of the gospel narratives that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16: 9), to the other women (Matt. 28: 5-9), to the two disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-31), and to Simon (Luke 24: 34). These four ap-

pearances took place on the resurrection day, before he appeared to the ten apostles later on that evening, according to the text now before us which, apparently, was the same appearance as that mentioned in John 20: 19-23; and then one week later he appeared to the eleven (John 20: 26-29). With these facts before us, it is easy to see that the appearance in John 21: 1-14, while actually the seventh in the series of appearances, was only the third appearance to the apostles as a group.

It is certain from the record of the movements of Jesus, following his resurrection, that he possessed the power to appear or disappear at will; which evidently means that he was not always in his body of flesh. (Cf. John 20: 26.) We have no means of knowing where Jesus was during the time between his several appearances to his disciples, but that question does not concern us; for it is evident that the period of his usual visible association with his disciples was over. He simply appeared to them at will during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension, and for the purposes which he had in mind.

"These things" which the disciples were speaking at the time Jesus appeared to them, were the things recorded in the preceding verses, namely, "And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24: 32-35.) These two disciples had had a wonderful experience; and they indeed had something to discuss with their brethren, who also may have had some unusual experiences. At any rate, when something has happened to people, it is not difficult for them to discuss it with others. And conversely, the lack of experience doubtless accounts for the inability of many to talk effectively about spiritual matters. Luke says that the "eleven" were present; but if

this appearance of the Lord to his disciples is identical with that in John 20: 19-23, then the term *eleven* was evidently used by Luke as the usual designation of the apostles as a group; for we know that at least one of the group was not there. (See John 20: 24.)

The fact that the apostles whom the Lord had selected to carry his message to all parts of the world, and represent him to all kinds of people, were affected as they were when they saw him on the occasion of the lesson now before us, plainly shows why their Lord had previously told them to tell no man that he was the Christ, while he was yet with them. They themselves did not understand the nature of Jesus, and they could not therefore explain the matter to any others. The appearance which is now before us was one of those referred to in Acts 1:3; and its evident purpose was to enable them to see that he had actually been raised up from the dead. The fact that he showed them his hands and his feet had a profound effect upon them; but they "still disbelieved for joy, and wondered." However, he ate before them; and if that had the same effect upon the group as it did on the two in Emmaus (Luke 24: 31), they must have recognized him as being their Master.

### Some Parting Remarks

(Luke 24: 44-49)

*And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.*

Jesus must have often called the attention of his disciples to that which was predicted concerning him

in the Old Testament Scriptures; and that is why he opened his remarks on this occasion with this statement: "These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." This threefold division was the usual way in which the Jews spoke of their Scriptures. It should be observed here that Jesus gave his endorsement to the entire Old Testament.

The Lord then "opened" the mind of his disciples, that they might understand the scriptures, which he evidently did in the same manner in which he opened the heart of Lydia (Acts 16: 14), that is, by explaining the scriptures to them. Among other things, he pointed out to them that it was ordained that the Christ would be put to death and rise again from the dead on the third day; and that the way of salvation would then be preached in his name to all the nations of the earth, beginning from Jerusalem. (Cf. Isa. 2: 2, 3.)

Verses 46, 47 of the section of the lesson text now under consideration are generally regarded as Luke's account of the Lord's final commission to his disciples, before returning to the Father, known also as the Great Commission. (See Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; John 20: 21-23; cf. Acts 1: 8; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) Luke's statement and the other five just cited contain the full instructions which the disciples received; and it is by considering all that is said in these passages that one learns all the Lord commanded to preach and be accepted, in order to salvation. If we consider the four gospel narratives alone, we have the following thirteen facts, namely, (1) foretold in the scriptures; (2) grew out of Christ's authority—in the name of Christ; (3) go—sent by Christ; (4) guided by the Holy Spirit; (5) make disciples—preach; (6) all nations—into all the world—whole creation; (7) the gospel—facts of the gospel; (8) believe; (9) repent; (10) baptize—be baptized; (11) "formula;" (12) saved—remission of sins—forgiveness; and (13) begin in Jerusalem.

Thus, by placing all the facts of the four records together in this way, as we would the testimony of witnesses who testify in court, or

anywhere else as for that matter, concerning any fact or truth to be established by testimony, we have the complete will of the Lord, as it respects his plan for saving the human race from their sins. By what authority would any thoughtful person seek to show that any item contained in the summary just given does not belong there? Or, to ask the same question in another way, is there anything which we may leave out of the list just given, and still please the Lord? (Cf. Gal. 1: 6-9.) However, it must be apparent to any person who stops to think, that some very important changes must be made in the Lord's final commission to his disciples, if it is ever made to fit some of the popular theories of our day, regarding the question of salvation. Some items must be canceled, others transposed, and, what is worse, the same changes will not fit all theories. For example, to fit infant baptism, the commission must begin with baptism, and everything else must be canceled; but when the same people baptize adults, they begin with teaching, and put baptism after salvation!

If one wants to get the full significance of the record of the Lord's remarks to his disciples, which he evidently made on various occasions but on the same general subjects, he should read Luke 24: 48-53 in the light of Acts 1: 1-12; for it is obvious that the two records overlap each other. (Cf., for example, Luke 24: 48 with Acts 1: 8; Luke 24: 49 with Acts 1: 4, 5; Luke 24: 50-53 with Acts 1: 9-12.) The work which the disciples did in bearing witness for Christ is graphically told in the Book of Acts. Acts 1: 8 says, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." If one will read the Book of Acts, he will see that that is precisely what the early disciples did. The first half of the book records the history of the work in Jerusalem, Judaea, and adjacent areas; while the last half tells of the efforts which were made in the regions beyond. (Cf. Rom. 15: 19-23; Col. 1: 23.)

The "promise of my Father" in Luke 24: 49 is, of course, identical

with the "promise of the Father" in Acts 1: 4; and in each instance, the disciples were told by Jesus to remain in Jerusalem until they received the promise, which was the Holy Spirit. In the case of the gospel record, they were to tarry in the city, until they were "clothed with power from on high;" while in Acts they were told not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise which would come to them "not many days hence." To be clothed with power from on high, and to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, both figurative expressions, refer to one and the same thing; and that promise was specifically fulfilled in Acts 2: 1-4, when "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." There is absolutely nothing said in the New Testament, or elsewhere in the inspired record, which teaches that "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is anything other, or different from, being filled with the Holy Spirit, which resulted in the disciples being clothed with power from on high, with the ability to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Cf. Acts 2: 33.)

### The Lord's Ascension

(Luke 24: 50-53)

*And fee led them out until they were over against Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, blessing God.*

Luke gives a fuller account of the ascension of Christ in Acts 1: 9-11: "And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."

The place from which Jesus ascended was the mount of Olives,

near Bethany, "which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off," that is, approximately two thousand cubits, or about three quarters of a mile the supposed distance which Jehovah required the children of Israel to keep between themselves and the ark of the covenant. (Cf. Acts 1: 12; Josh. 3: 4.) There was a marked contrast between the attitude of the disciples here and when Jesus met them soon after his resurrection. They were "terrified and affrighted" then; but now "they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, blessing God."

The final scene of Jesus with his disciples was that of blessing them. When the Lord left his followers on earth, he was not bereaving them: for he said, "I will not leave you desolate [orphans, margin]: I come unto you" (John 14: 18); and again, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not way, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you" (John 16: 7). This is as if he were saying unto them, I am depriving you of a lesser good, in order that I may bestow upon you one that is greater. This is the principle which usually operates in the lives of Christians; for we are plainly told that all things work together for our good, if we love the Lord and are called according to his purpose. (See Rom. 8: 28.)

It is interesting to note that Luke is the only gospel writer who gives any details of the ascension of Christ. Mark is the only other writer who mentions the fact, and he does so in these words: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." (Mark 16: 19.) Neither Mark nor Luke was an eye-witness of the ascension, that is, so far as the record is concerned, but Matthew and John were; yet neither one of these last two, who were apostles, makes any reference to this great event at the close of their narratives. John, however, does apparently allude to the ascension of Christ in John L 51; cf. Dan. 7: 13, 14.

But the earthly work of Jesus had been finished, and now in the presence of his chosen ambassadors, he

goes back to the Father who had sent him to be the world's Redeemer, to take his seat at the right hand of the throne of God, as Prophet, Priest, and King, where "he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. 15: 25.) And, in God's own good time, he "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." (Heb. 9: 28.) Paul's final message to his son in the gospel gives us some idea of what it will

mean to those who are ready for his coming, namely, "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Did you read the entire twenty-fourth chapter of Luke before beginning this study?

In what way did it help you in preparing for this class?

How were the two disciples who went to Emmaus affected when they recognized Jesus?

What is known regarding the forty days in the life of Jesus between his resurrection and ascension?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?

In what way did the resurrection of Jesus affect the preaching of the early Christians?

How do the writings of Paul illustrate this truth?

Why isn't more of that kind of preaching done by the Lord's people today?

What is the difference between preaching the resurrection as an "item of faith" and as the "ground of hope" for salvation, both here and hereafter?

Why does the resurrection gospel have such a ring of confidence in it?

How was this confidence displayed by the early disciples of Christ?

### The Lord's First Appearance to the Apostles As a Group

What do we know about this appearance of Jesus in relation to his other appearances?

Where else do we read of this same appearance of the Lord?

What was evidently true of the body of Jesus during his post-resurrection period on earth?

What "things" were the disciples of

Christ discussing when he appeared to them?

What difference does "experience" make in one's ability to speak effectively?

What important lesson should we learn from this?

What did the attitude of the disciples toward Jesus on this occasion show concerning them?

What use, apparently, did Jesus make of all his appearances to his disciples?

### Some Parting Remarks

What does the expression "These are my words which I spake unto you" imply on the part of Jesus?

What threefold division of the Scriptures is referred to and what did each division contain?

In what way did Jesus evidently open the mind of the disciples? Give reason for your answer.

How does Luke refer to the Lord's final commission to his disciples?

Discuss the full scope of this commission and show how it cannot fit all the religious theories of our day.

Why is it essential for one to read the closing words of Luke in the light of Acts 1: 1-12?

What are some of the parallels which these two passages contain?

When and under what circumstances was the promise of the Father fulfilled?

### The Lord's Ascension

What additional information does Luke give regarding the ascension in Acts?

From where did Jesus ascend and how far was it from Jerusalem?

Discuss the final scene of Jesus with his disciples and tell something of the effect of it.

What is the present position of Jesus in relation to the Father?

How long will Jesus reign and what are the Lord's people to look forward to regarding him?

Lesson XIII—September 25, 1966

JESUS DELIVERS THE GREAT COMMISSION

Lesson Text

Matt. 28: 16-20; Mark 16: 14-18

16 But the eleven disciples went into Gal'i-lee, unto the mountain where Je'-sus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped *him*; but some doubted.

18 And Je'-sus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

14 And afterward he was mani-

GOLDEN TEXT.—*And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed.*" (Mark 16: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 28: 1-15.

festated unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

17 And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 19. M.....	A Limited Commission (Matt. 10: 5-23)
Sept. 20. T.....	A Wider Invitation (Matt. 11: 25-30)
Sept. 21. W.....	Provision for All (John 3: 14-16)
Sept. 22. T.....	Promise to All (Acts 2: 37-42)
Sept. 23. F.....	"Whosoever Will" (Rev. 22: 16-20)
Sept. 24. S. ....	God No Respector of Persons (Acts 10: 34, 35)
Sept. 25. S.....	First Public Preaching of Commission (Acts 2: 1-42)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, a mountain in Galilee, and the mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the eleven disciples.

Introduction

It was pointed out in the study last week that the Lord's final commission to his disciples is referred to several times in the New Testament. The greatest details of that charge, however, are found in the first three of the gospel records, two of which are to be considered in this study. It is certain that Jesus spoke often to his followers regarding the work which he had ordained for them to do; and that accounts for the different reports of the commission which we have in the record. No one

narrative contains a full statement of the commission itself; and it is for that reason that one must read all that is said anywhere in the New Testament, if he is to have all the information on the subject in hand.

Any proper study of the Lord's commission to his disciples, as indeed is true of any other subject which is found in the Bible, must be made in the light of Paul's injunction in 2 Tim. 2: 15, namely, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth

not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." The marginal reading for "handling aright the word of truth" is *holding a straight course in the word of truth*. This suggests the picture of a man going through the word of truth, which the avowed purpose of learning whatever there is to learn regarding the question which is before him. If this is done with reference to the commission which Christ gave to his disciples, no one will get the idea that there is anything contradictory in the various statements of the inspired writers regarding the Lord's charge to his followers. On the contrary, one will see that each statement supplements the others; and that they all together give the full truth regarding that which the Lord commissioned them to do. It should be observed, further, that this commission was not simply for the early age of the church, but for the entire Christian dispensation. The following scriptures plainly show that the *Great Commission* is self-perpetuating.

"And the things which thou hast

heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2: 2.) This passage is rendered by Phillips in these words: "Everything that you have heard me teach in public you should in turn entrust to reliable men, who will be able to pass it on to others." And to the Galatians Paul wrote, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." (Gal. 1: 6-9.) The Lord himself told his disciples what to preach, and he has by inspiration made it plain that he will not tolerate any change whatsoever in it. (Cf. Gal. 1: 10-12.)

### The Golden Text

*"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed."* Mark's record of the gospel is, as all Bible students know, the briefest of the four narratives. He simply passes over the beginning at Jerusalem, and with one mighty stroke of the pen condensed into a single sentence that which Luke wrote in the entire Book of Acts, along with Paul's statement in Rom. 15: 19-24, where he said, "So that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written,

They shall see, to whom no tidings  
of him came,

And they who have not heard  
shall understand.

"Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you: but now, having no more any Place in these regions, and having

these many years a longing to come unto you, whosoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)." (Cf. Col. 1: 23.)

When the first preachers went forth to proclaim the gospel, they did not have an inspired record of it which they could cite as proof that they were preaching the word of the Lord; and that, of course, was the reason why the Lord worked with them in confirming their message by miraculous deeds, that is, such deeds as are referred to in the body of the lesson text for today. The writer of Hebrews had the same thing in mind when he wrote, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been

spoken through the Lord, 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: 1-4.)

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, on one occasion, he said, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." (2 Cor. 4: 7.) *This treasure* is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (verse 6); or, which is the same thing, the divine light which was the guide and inspiration of the apostolic ministry (so Vincent, *in loco*). Paul speaks of the same thing in 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19, where he says, "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the

ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, but having committed unto us the word of reconciliation." This is to say that the truth which makes men free (John 8: 31, 32), or, which is the same thing, the gospel of salvation, was revealed to, or, as the marginal reading has it, "placed in," the apostles; and was through them made known to the human race. (Cf. John 20: 21-23.) It was therefore only through the apostles that the gospel could first be learned (cf. Acts 2: 4); but now, what the first Christians had in earthen vessels, that is the apostles, we have in book form—the New Testament. It should be easy from these considerations for any of us to understand why it was essential that the first proclaimers of the gospel be divinely inspired.

## The Text Explained

### The Tryst in Galilee (Matt. 28: 16-20)

*But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

We learn from the records of Luke and John (Luke 24; John 20) that there were several days between the resurrection of Christ, and this meeting in Galilee. We are not told exactly when this meeting was held, nor the exact mountain on which Jesus met his disciples; but we do know that he made arrangements for the meeting before his crucifixion. (Cf. Mark 14: 27, 28.) Judas, the apostle who betrayed Jesus, was now dead; and he was therefore no longer numbered with the twelve: hence *the eleven*.

This meeting of Jesus with his dis-

ciples is generally supposed by Bible students to have been identical with the one referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. 15: 6, where he says that Christ "appeared to above five hundred brethren at once." If one will examine the records of all the other appearances of Jesus, he will easily see that at no other time or place among them was such a meeting as the one referred to here likely, or even possible. While on the other hand, Matthew's testimony apparently paves the way for thinking that it would have been extremely improbable that only the eleven were there. After reporting that the angel who had rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and had sat upon it; and had told the women that Jesus had been raised from the dead, said also unto them, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me." (Matt. 28: 7-10.)



We do not know who the "doubters" were among the Lord's disciples at this time; but since some of the apostles themselves had previously doubted that Jesus had been raised from the dead (cf. Luke 24: 36-41; John 20: 24, 25), it would not be unusual to find some of the other disciples who had not been fully convinced of the Lord's resurrection.

Jesus himself was commissioned to endeavor to win the world from Satan's control, and deliver it back to God (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 24-28); and it was for this reason that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to him. (cf. 1 Pet. 3: 22.) Robertson observes that Jesus spoke as if he were already in heaven, with a world-wide outlook and the resources of the universe at his command. He further notes that this is the sublimest of all spectacles, to see the risen Christ without money, army, or kingdom, charging this band of five hundred men and women with world conquest, and bringing them to believe that it was possible for them to undertake the mission with serious passion and power. Pentecost was yet to come, but dynamic faith was then in evidence on that mountain in Galilee!

The term "disciple" literally means a *learner*, in contrast to the *teacher*; and that without reference to the subject matter taught. A disciple of Christ is one who accepts and puts into practice his teaching. Jesus came to make known the will of the Father, and he makes it crystal clear that only those who do that will have a promise of a home in heaven. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day [that is, the judgment day], Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7: 21-23; cf. 25: 11, 12.)

The people who are commissioned of Christ to "make disciples" are themselves already his disciples; and this is evangelism in its truest sense; and not merely the efforts which are put forth in "revival" meetings. There were no doubt many men who

spent their full time in the work of gospel preaching; but the matter of getting the gospel before the people who were lost was considered the duty and privilege of all the Lord's followers. (Cf. Acts 8: 4.)

When Jesus says to baptize "them," the reference is to the disciples who are made, and not to the *nations* as such. This is rendered certain by the grammatical construction which is used in the passage, namely, the pronoun "them" is masculine, while the noun "nations" is neuter. The people who are taught concerning Jesus, and who wish to be his followers, are the subjects of baptism; and Jesus says that they are to be baptized *into* the "name" of the Sacred Three. Robert Milligan points out that in the Hebrew and Greek languages, the term *name* implies more than an abstract designation of the person represented. On the contrary, it very often means the person himself, as he is revealed in the Scriptures. He then goes on to say that this is manifestly the meaning of the *name* in the commission which Christ gave to his disciples. Or, to be more specific, "It means simply the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit themselves, revealed to us in the Holy Bible, as one eternal and immutable *Eloheem Jehovah*; the Creator, Preserver, and Upholder of all things."

While not necessarily different from the view just presented, but rather supplementary to it, McGarvey thinks that the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit signifies the combined authority of all the manifestations of God. Thus, to be baptized into this authority, is to be brought into actual subjection to it. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.) All people, then, who are baptized in this manner are thereby made subject to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and as a result of this subjection, they receive the remission of their sins and are made partakers of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Acts 2: 38.)

Those who use the King James Version of the Scriptures will note that the term "teach" occurs twice in Matthew's record of the commission, namely, "teach all nations," and "teaching them to observe," etc. The American Standard Version, however has *make disciples* in the place of teach, but *teaching* in the second in-

stance. This distinction is also made in the Greek, where we have *mathēteusate* (make learners), and *didaskontes* (instructing or, which is the same thing, religious education). (Cf. Acts 2: 42; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) A statement of one's faith which is not reduced to action is worthless (cf. James 2: 14-26); and conduct which is not informed and regulated by scriptural authority is unworthy of a child of God.

The adverb "always," in the closing words of the Lord's commission to his disciples, separates him from every other teacher the world has ever seen. He is, indeed, not here in person; but he is as truly with his people now, as he was when he was upon the earth. This promise therefore should be regarded as a source of great encouragement to every child of God. The marginal reading for "always" is *all the days*, while that for "the end of the world" is *the consummation of the age*. All the days include bad days as well as the good ones; and there is therefore no time when Christians cannot depend upon the Lord. The final victory of Christ is certain, and the promise which he made here is both precise and detailed; and so, however long and perilous the journey, the Lord's people can always count on having the presence of their Divine Leader with them.

### The World-Wide Mission of the Apostles

(Mark 16: 14-16)

*And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*

It is generally thought by Bible students that this appearance of Jesus to his disciples was the same as that recorded in Luke 24: 36-42; and John 20: 19-23. If this is true, then it is easy to understand why Jesus reproved them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. (Cf. Luke 24: 21-25.) It was at this meeting, as we

saw in last week's lesson, that Jesus asked for food, and ate it in order to convince the disciples that he was indeed their Leader, and not merely a spirit. It was also at this meeting that he gave the commission to them, as recorded by John.

As one reads this section of the lesson text, and the next one, it would not occur to him that Jesus did not give the commission to the disciples at the time he met with them at meat, and upbraided them because of their unbelief; but when verses 19 and 20 of this chapter are read, it seems almost certain that verses 15-18 were spoken by the Lord on the day of his ascension. Verses 19 and 20 read as follows: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen." But, as McGarvey notes, this is only one among the many instances in which details, not essential to an understanding of the chief thought to be conveyed, are omitted from one narrative, but found in another.

We are told in Heb. 2: 9 that Jesus tasted death for every man, and both Paul (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4) and Peter (2 Pet. 3: 9) make it plain that God wants every person to be saved; and these are the reasons why Christ commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature: and it is both interesting and encouraging to read that this very thing was done within the short period of approximately thirty years. (Cf. Col. 1: 23.)

The conditions of salvation, set forth in this record of the Lord's commission to his disciples, are simple enough to be understood without comment, if people would only listen to the inspired penman, rather than to those who insist that baptism is not essential to the remission of sins. The principal clause in the first part of the statement is this: "He . . . shall be saved," but when we ask, What "he" shall be saved? the answer is clear and unmistakable, namely, [he] "that believeth and is baptized." The principal clause is limited or modified by the words which name the conditions of salva-

tion. If some one should say, "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive five thousand dollars," no one would misunderstand that statement; and we are, in the fear of God, compelled to say that people do not *misunderstand* that which Jesus says; they simply do not believe it.

Baptism is an act of faith, and no one is scripturally baptized who is not a believer. "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) And so, when Christ tells the fate of the disbeliever, it was not necessary for him to say, "He that disbelieveth *and is not baptized* shall be condemned;" for disbelief alone is sufficient to condemn a man. "He that believeth on him is not judged [condemned]: but he that believeth not is judged [condemned] already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3: 18; cf. verse 36.) This last verse plainly shows that "saving faith" includes obedience. (Read James 2: 14-26; 2 Thess. 1: 6-9.)

### Accompanying Miracles

(Mark 16: 17, 18)

*And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name they shall cast out demons; they shall*

*speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

There are those who contend that the passage just quoted teaches that every believer in Christ will have the power to perform the miracles which are mentioned in it; but that is not what the passage says. The original word for "accompany" (or *follow*, King James Version) is *parakolouthēō*, and its metaphorical meaning is, according to Thayer, "to be always present, to attend one wherever he goes." (Cf. Arndt-Gingrich, et al.) It was never necessary for every individual believer to have miraculous power, in order for this prediction to be true. *The Living Oracles* renders the passage in these words: "And these miraculous powers shall attend the believers."

The idea which Jesus evidently meant to convey is this: The gospel would be preached wherever believers were; and since it was God's will that his word be confirmed (Mark 16: 20) there would always be available those who had miraculous power, and who could confirm the gospel message. This, of course, was limited to the age of miracles; for when the word of God had been duly confirmed, there was no further need for such signs. (Cf. 1 Cor. 13: 8; Eph. 4: 11-16.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

In what manner is the Lord's final commission set forth in the New Testament?

Why was it probably stated in that way?

How alone may we learn the full meaning of the commission?

Illustrate the proper manner in going about and pursuing such a study.

How do we know that the *Great Commission* is self-perpetuating?

#### The Golden Text

What characteristic of Mark do the words of this text illustrate?

Why was it essential that the word which was preached be confirmed?

Why isn't confirmation of the gospel message needed today?

#### The Tryst in Galilee

What is known, as well as not known, about the meeting of this section of the lesson text?

Why were the apostles spoken of as "the eleven"?

Who apparently were present on the mountain in Galilee? Give reasons for your answer.

Who probably were the "doubters"?

What "picture" of Jesus do we see in this narrative and why did he give a commission?

What is the meaning of the term "disciple"?

How are disciples made and what did Jesus say regarding them?

What is true evangelism? Give reasons for your answer.

What does it mean to be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

What is the difference between "making disciples" and "teaching them to observe" that which the Lord has commanded?

What gracious promise did Jesus make to all his followers?

#### The World-Wide Mission of the Apostles

When and under what circumstances did Jesus manifest himself to the eleven disciples?

At what time did he give the commission, as reported by Mark, to them?

Why did Jesus command that the gospel be preached to the whole creation?

Why do so many people try to show that baptism is not a condition of salvation, as set forth by Jesus in this section of the lesson text?

Why didn't he say, "He that disbelieveth *and is not baptized* shall be condemned"?

### Accompanying Miracles

Why do some people insist that this passage teaches that all believers will have miraculous power?

What did Jesus actually say? Give reasons for your answer.

What, then, is the meaning of "the signs shall accompany them that believe"?

When did such miraculous power cease to be given to people?



## FOURTH QUARTER

### GOD IN THE MAKING OF A NATION

*AIM.—To learn and consider carefully those events in the history of Israel which revealed God's hand in the making of a nation; to recognize the people's duty and responsibility therein, and thus to learn more of our duty and responsibility to God in the church and in the Christian Dispensation today.*

**Lesson I—October 2, 1966**

### A CRY FOR RELIEF

#### Lesson Text

Ex. 1: 6-14; 2: 23-25

6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

7 And the children of Is'-ra-el were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose a new king over E'-gypt, who knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Is'-ra-el are more and mightier than we:

10 Come let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pha'-raoh store-cities, Pi'-thom and Ra-am'-ses.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and

the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Is'-ra-el.

13 And the E'-gyp'-tians made the children of Is'-ra-el to serve with rigor:

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

23 And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of E'-gypt died: and the children of Is'-ra-el sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with I-saac, and with Jacob.

25 And God saw the children of Is'-ra-el, and God took knowledge of them.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—*"And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."* (Isa. 65: 24.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Ex. 1: 1-5; 2: 1-22.

#### Daily Bible Readings

Sept. 26. M.....	...Extreme Oppression (Ex. 1: 6-14)
Sept. 27. T.....	...A Cry for Help (Psalm 94: 1-14)
Sept. 28. W.....	...Deliverance Assured (Psalm 107: 1-9)
Sept. 29. T.....	...A Prayer of Faith (Psalm 3: 1-8)
Sept. 30. F.....	...Prayer in Affliction (Psalm 142: 1-7)
Oct. 1. S.....	...God Hears (Ex. 2: 23-25)
Oct. 2. S.....	...Prayer Avails (James 5: 13-18)

**TIME.**—B.C. 1604-1531.

**PLACE.**—Egypt.

**PERSONS.**—Jehovah, the Israelites, and the Egyptians.

#### Introduction

It is generally understood by Bible students that Moses wrote the first

five books of the Sacred Scriptures; and if one will read them carefully.

he will find that Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers, are largely historical. Leviticus is devoted, on the whole, to the worship and ceremonies, authorized by the law of Moses, while Deuteronomy is a kind of restatement of the law by Moses, in the form of three major addresses, which also contain some pertinent comments by the great lawgiver. Both Leviticus and Deuteronomy contain some historical matter, and Exodus, in addition to its history, is the book which records God's giving of the law, usually spoken of as the law of Moses; because it was to him that Jehovah gave the ten commandments on the two tables of stone, and through him that he spoke the other parts of the law.

And so, instead of looking upon the Old Testament Scriptures as simply a collection of literary writings, we should think of them as the inspired record of the historical events which cover a long period of time. It is in those events that we can see God at work, carrying out his purposes and revealing his nature and attributes by that which he did. And as we begin the study of the lesson now before us, we should remember that Jehovah selected one man with whom to start the unfolding of his great purpose of redemption, which, of course, is the supreme purpose of the remainder of the Bible. God does not want any one to be lost, and it will be plain, as we watch his plans and purposes unfold themselves, that

he is ever working toward the salvation of every one who will respond to his call.

The one man whom Jehovah selected to begin the unfolding of his purpose and plan for the salvation of mankind was Abram, whose name was later changed to Abraham; and it was to him that God said, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12: 2, 3.) The story of Abraham and his family is given in the remaining chapters of the Book of Genesis; and when we reach the end of that portion of God's inspired record, the chosen family was settled in the land of Egypt, in a general state of peace and security, because of the high regard which had been accorded Joseph, as the governor of that country. However, it was never God's purpose for his people to remain permanently in the land of the Pharaohs; and so the time eventually came when they must leave their homes there. Their going out, that is, their *exodus*, is what gave the name to the book we are now studying; and the record contained in it has been compared to a drama; and when the book is read, it will be seen that the action is both arresting and edifying.

### The Golden Text

*"And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear "* This language was spoken in connection with Jehovah's promise to "create new heavens and a new earth;" which, as the context shows, has reference to the Christian dispensation. (Read Isa. 65: 17-25; 66: 22-24.) This message was given through Isaiah long after Israel had become a nation, and following their checkered history for several hundred years. They had almost completely failed to please God; but better days were ahead for them. This is in keeping with a statement often made in the Scriptures, to the effect that God will not cast off his people for ever. He does, indeed, often cast them down, but he will

never cast them away, as long as there is any hope for their salvation.

Discipline is always a vital part of salvation of those who are acceptable to God; and this is the way that the Bible speaks regarding it: "My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reproved of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12: 5b-8; cf. Prov. 3: 11, 12.) There is no person in the world who is wise enough to meet the Lord's approval

without divine correction. The apostle Paul wrote these words to his son in the gospel, Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

But when people respond favorably to God's discipline, and show a disposition to do that which he commands, he is, to use a human expression, more than willing to hear their call for help, and to bestow his blessings upon them. If one is disposed to interpret the passage which serves

as the golden text literally, he would, of course, be compelled to admit that no answer to a call could be made, before the call was given; and it is for that reason that we must regard this passage as a figurative expression. The idea is that Jehovah's care for his people is such that he will not always wait until they ask, before bestowing his blessings; for he already knows the things which they need. Jesus, as all Bible readers know, taught this same truth in his sermon on the mount. (Sec Matt. 6: 8, 31, 32.) When the Lord's people show a disposition to trust him, he is ever ready and willing to respond to their cries unto him.

### The Text Explained

#### The Beginning of a New Era

(Ex. 1: 6, 7)

*And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.*

Thus, with a few strokes of the pen, the inspired writer covered the history of the Israelites for about two hundred years—all in two short sentences. Paul says that it was four hundred and thirty years from the time the promises were spoken to Abraham, to the giving of the law (Gal. 3: 16, 17); and any one who will take the time to consider the facts in the case, will find that it was approximately two hundred and fifteen years from Abraham to the time of Israel's going into Egypt; and that means that they were in that country the same length of time. But at the time of this lesson, all the people who belonged to Joseph's generation were gone, and a new day had dawned for their descendants.

And while the Israelites were dying, the Egyptians who knew Joseph were also passing on; and when the time of this lesson arrived, the kindly feeling which had been manifested toward Joseph's people had also died, as we shall see in the next section of the lesson text. This has always been the experience of the human race; or, to express the same thing in another way, the passing of the generations of men, and the progress of the world, have always resulted in new and different situa-

tions and outlooks on the part of those who come later. William Cullen Bryant, in his stately poem *Thanatopsis*, expresses the same idea in this way:

All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the  
tribes  
That slumber in its bosom . . . .  
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou  
withdraw  
In silence from the living; and no  
friend  
Take note of thy departure? All that  
breathe  
Will share thy destiny. The gay will  
laugh  
When thou art gone, the solemn  
brood of care  
Plod on, and each one as before  
shall chase  
His favorite phantom; yet all these  
shall leave  
Their mirth and their employments,  
and shall come  
And make their bed with thee.

There are four terms used in verse 7 to indicate the rapid growth of the children of Israel during the years which they spent in Egypt, namely, (1) they were fruitful, (2) increased abundantly, (3) multiplied, and (4) waxed exceeding mighty. Historians and commentators tell us that it was not unusual for women in that country to bear two or more children at a time; and we should not forget that Jehovah had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendants would be greatly multiplied. (See Gen. 22: 17; 26: 4; 28: 14; 46: 3.) However, we are not to



understand that the birth rate among the Israelites was due to miraculous interference; but rather to God's providential care for his people. There were a few more than seventy Israelites who went into Egypt to make their home; but when the time came for them to leave, their number had grown to more than six hundred thousand men twenty years of age and older, who were able to bear arms; besides the older men, women, and children. (See Ex. 12: 37, 38; Num. 1: 46; 2: 32, 33.) It is altogether possible that the over-all number of the people who left Egypt was close to three million; and this was in marked contrast with the increase of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob during the first two hundred and fifteen years of their existence. (Cf. Gen. 46: 26, 27; Acts 7: 14.)

#### The Changed Attitude of Egypt toward Israel

(Ex. 1: 8-14)

*Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it came to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.*

It appears that the new king who was then ruling over the Egyptians did not *approve* or *acknowledge* the type of administration which characterized Joseph's administration as the governor of the country. It should be kept in mind that Joseph had all the authority of the pharaoh, except that he was not the pharaoh in fact; or, to state the same thing in another way, he did not occupy the throne. (See Gen. 41: 37-44.) One has only to look at our own country, in order to see how the administration and attitude of one president may change *from* and *toward* that of another such ruler.

And so the pharaoh and his advisers decided that the time had come for them to do something about the potential danger which was growing out of the rapid growth and multiplication of the people whom they

were holding in bondage; and which threatened the peace and security of the Egyptians themselves. Careful observers of contemporary history are aware of the fact that history has a way of repeating itself; but it is exceedingly difficult for those in power to realize that God's inexorable law is that men are going, eventually, to reap that which they sow. (Cf. Gal. 6: 7, 8.) God created man in his own image (Gen. 1: 26, 27); and it was from the first human pair that the entire human race descended (Acts 17: 26). God is no respecter of persons, and he wants every person to have an opportunity to become that which he is capable of being. It is true that not all people take advantage of their opportunities; but there are many who are in deplorable conditions through no fault of their own.

President Lincoln, at the outset of the Civil War, addressed a message to the congress, in which he outlined some of the principal objectives of government, namely, (1) to elevate the condition of men; (2) to lift artificial weights from their shoulders; (3) to clear the paths of laudable pursuits for all; and (4) to afford an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life. Most any thoughtful people would regard the things just mentioned as being just and right, if they concerned them; but it so happens that the same people will, in effect, deny them to others. (Cf. Matt. 7: 12.) If the Egyptians, who were concerned about their own peace and security, had tried to make life richer and fuller for the people who were among them, they probably would not have had any cause for being alarmed at that which might happen to them.

*Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.*

The "taskmasters" were the men who appointed the work for the people of Israel to do, and who saw to it that they did it. The work itself was oppressive, but it appears that the manner in which it was exacted of them was even more so. Clarke, Jamieson, and other commentators, are of the opinion that in addition to the fact that the Israelites were worked unmercifully; they were also required to pay an exorbitant tribute at the same time. This is implied in the term "burdens." In other words, they had to work as slaves, and pay taxes too. Although the Egyptians were not without fault in their treatment of the Hebrews, it is a well known fact that God took the situation which they created, and made it into a type of the manner in which sin enslaves and abuses those who are under its dominion. (Cf. John 8: 34; Rom. 6: 16; 1 Cor. 10: 1-4.)

The store-cities which are mentioned in the text are evidently cited as examples of the forced labor which the Israelites were compelled to perform. Josephus says that the Egyptians required the children of Israel to "cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities and ramparts, that they might restrain the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating, upon its running over its own banks: they set them also to build pyramids." Adam Clarke notes that if the history of the pyramids of Egypt is not found in the Book of Exodus, it is nowhere else extant; and if their origin is not alluded to here, it is lost in antiquity. Robert Jamieson says that all the public buildings in Egypt were built with slave labor, and that on some of the buildings inscriptions were placed to the effect that no free citizen was engaged in the servile employment.

In addition to the public works program which the king of Egypt and his advisors inaugurated, for their own benefit, it is altogether probable that they felt that their "shrewd and sagacious" treatment of the Israelites would have the effect of breaking their spirit and curbing their rapid growth. But what they did not realize was that their "astute" action was in direct defiance of the living God who was watching over his people. And it was, literal-

ly, from this point and onward a "contest" between the purpose and will of Pharaoh and his people, and the purpose and will of the God of the Hebrews for his people. Pharaoh's aim was to prevent the Israelites from going "up out of the land," and to use them as slave laborers to further his ambitious program; while God's aim was to mold Israel into a great nation.

The text now under consideration gives a picture of the life of hardship and suffering which the children of Israel were required to endure, prior to their deliverance from the land of Egypt. It was, as already indicated, a life of the most painful servitude. Oppression, in and of itself, is bad enough; but when one considers the cruel manner in which the people were treated while performing their menial labors, the situation becomes almost unendurable. Jehovah, however, knew that this would happen to his people, and he revealed it to their father Abraham more than four hundred years before it came to pass. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. 15: 12-14.)

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, their history during the wilderness wandering, and their entrance into the land of Canaan are all a type of the salvation, both present and future, which is wrought by Christ; and since Christianity, as revealed in the New Testament, is the very complement of its typology, we know that it must be the religion which is now pleasing to God. It was no accident therefore that the Israelites were placed in the land of Egypt, where they were enslaved, oppressed, and corrupted; for their deliverance and subsequent history furnish one of the clearest types of the salvation made possible by Christ to be found

in all the Bible. (Cf. Heb. 3: 6-4: 11.)

## The Dawning of a Better Day

(Ex. 2: 23-25)

*And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God saw the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them.*

When the record in Exodus is read along with Stephen's address in Acts 7, it will be seen that several years had passed, since the cruel bondage in Egypt began. Jamieson notes that although a single king is spoken of as the oppressor of the people of the Lord, it is very evident that the expression denotes the powers which ruled Egypt during the period referred to. In other words, according to Jamieson, the oppressors included Rameses, the king who began the oppression, and his grandson who followed the reign of the "daughter of Pharaoh," that is, the one who found Moses, and her husband.

According to the authority we are now considering, the oppression of Rameses was somewhat mitigated

during the mild and liberal reign of his daughter Thuoris, the royal patroness of Moses, and her husband Si-Ptha, *the king who died*, as mentioned in the passage now before us. But when Thuoris' nephew and successor Sethos, the grandson of Rameses, ascended the throne, the oppression was renewed in all of its fury. This latter king is described as "a grovelling, dissolute, profligate, and at the same time a merciless tyrant, who, on finding in his new dominions the alien race of Israel, whom his grandfather had tried in vain to crush, increased in numbers, and swarming everywhere, resolved to revive the grinding policy of his great ancestor. The most grievous labors were imposed, and their servitude was harder than ever, their wages being principally paid by the bastinado," that is, the beating with a stick, usually on the soles of the feet. It is easy to see therefore why they sighed by reason of the bondage; and we can well understand why they cried unto God. But if this terrible distress had not come upon them, they probably would have been reluctant to leave Egypt. (Cf. Num. 11: 4-6.) The attitude of Jehovah toward his afflicted people is expressed in four ways, namely, (1) God heard; (2) God remembered; (3) God saw; and (4) God took knowledge. This should be of great encouragement to us.

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What is the general content of the five books which were written by Moses?  
What is the general purpose of the Old Testament Scriptures?  
In what way did God begin the unfolding of his purposes and plans for human redemption?  
Why is the second book of the Bible called "Exodus"?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?  
What had been the general attitude of the Israelites throughout their history?  
Why is discipline so essential to the welfare of those who are pleasing to God?  
What is God's attitude toward his people when they show a disposition to obey him?  
Tell something of the nature of this book.

### The Beginning of a New Era

Discuss the skill of the writer of this section of the lesson text.

How do we arrive at the conclusion as to the time Israel spent in Egypt?  
What brought about this new situation in the lives of the Lord's people?  
Why is the same condition usually true in the lives of each succeeding generation?  
What is said about the rapid growth of the Israelites and what evidently caused the increase?  
What were the approximate numbers of the people when they went into Egypt and came out?

### The Changed Attitude of Egypt toward Israel

In what sense did the new king of Egypt not know Joseph?  
Why was not this an unusual attitude on the part of the pharaoh?  
What did the Egyptian ruler and his advisors decide to do about the situation?  
What great lesson should we learn from this?  
Why does history so often repeat itself?  
What great mistake did the Egyptians make with reference to their captive people?  
What is God's inexorable law of the harvest?

What is his attitude toward all of his people? —

What are some of the principal objectives of human governments and what do people usually think about them?

Who were taskmasters and what were their principal duties?

In what ways were the people of Israel made to suffer and what were some of the works they were made to accomplish? —

What did the king of Egypt and his advisors hope to accomplish by their "wise treatment" of the Israelites?

What use is made of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their other experiences?

### The Dawning of a Better Day

What signified the approach of this better day for the Israelites?

Why was their terrible oppression begun anew?

What was Jehovah's attitude toward his people at the time of this lesson?

## Lesson II—October 9, 1966

### A LEADER SELECTED

#### Lesson Text

##### Ex. 3: 1-12

1 Mo'-ses was keeping the flock of Je'-thro his father-in-law, the priest of Mid'-i-an: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto H6'-r6b.

2 And the angel of Je-ho'-vah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3 Arid Mo'-ses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when Je-ho'-vah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said Mo'-ses, Mo'-ses. And he said Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of I'-saac, and the God of Jacob. And Mo'-ses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And Je-ho'-vah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in E'-gypt, and have heard

their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the land of the E'-gyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the 'Ca'-naan-ite, and the Hit'-tite, and the Am'-or-ite, and the Per'-iz-zite, and the Hi'-vite, and the Jeb'-u-site.

9 And now, behold, the cry of the children of Is'-ra-el is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the E'-gypt'-ians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pha'-raoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Is'-ra-el out of E'-gypt.

11 And Mo'-ses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pha'-raoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Is'-ra-el out of E'-gypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of E'-gypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Golden Text.—"Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3: 10.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 2: 16-21.

### Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 3. M.....	Early Life of Moses (Acts 7: 20-28)
Oct. 4. T.....	Childhood and Education of Moses (Ex. 2: 1-10)
Oct. 5. W.....	Accepting Responsibility (Heb. 11: 23-27)
Oct. 6. T.....	Moses in Midian (Ex. 2: 15-22)
Oct. 7. F.....	Moses Parents (Ex. 6: 20)

Oct. 8. S..... Jewish Home Training (Deut. 6: 4-15)  
 Oct. 9. S..... Timothy's Training (2 Tim. 1: 3-14)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—In the wilderness, near mount Horeb.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and Moses.

## Introduction

There were approximately forty years between this lesson and the last one; and the scene was changed from the land of Egypt to the wilderness in the vicinity of mount Sinai, that is, mount Horeb. It is not entirely clear as to why these two names were given to the mountain in question; but it has been suggested that the difference may have been due to the preferences of people in different locations. This, of course, is not an important question, and the thing that counts is that we understand that both names are used to indicate the mountain on which the law of Moses was given. This mountain was located in the southern portion of the peninsula between the Red Sea (Arabian Gulf) and the Persian Gulf. These two bodies of water are also known as the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akabah, Aqabah. (See map.) The names *Akabah* or *Aqabah* should not be confused with "Arabah." The latter was the name of a *wadi*, that is, a valley, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah or Aqabah. Different Bible geographies have various spellings for the same name, hence the two terms Akabah and Aqabah.

The story of the birth, early childhood, and the reason for Moses' flight from Egypt are set forth in the second chapter of Exodus, which should be carefully read, along with the words of Stephen regarding Moses in the seventh chapter of Acts. The paragraph in Exodus, which concerns us most in this lesson, reads as follows: "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well." (Ex. 2: 11-15.)

Stephen, in commenting on the smiting of the Egyptian, says that Moses "supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not." (Acts 7: 25.) And so when Moses saw that his life was in danger, he knew that he could no longer remain in his native land; and he, accordingly, fled to the land of Midian. Midian was the name of one of the sons of Abraham, by his wife Keturah, whom he married after the death of Sarah (Gen. 25: 1, 2; 1 Chron. 1: 32); and it appears that the term "Midian" was given to the section of the country where the descendants of Abraham's son by the same name dwelt. The Midianites were, seemingly, nomads, at least mostly so; and they evidently dwelt in the wilderness of Sinai, because of the pasture land. The Biblical narrators do not often go into detail regarding itineraries; and we do not, accordingly, have any information about the journey of Moses to that country. (Read Ex. 2: 16-22.)

## The Golden Text

"Then Samuel said, *Speak; for thy servant heareth*" The circumstances leading up to the passage just quoted, which was also, in

effect, the calling of a person who would be the leader of God's people, is as follows. Samuel, as a child, was ministering in the house of Je-

hovah before Eli the high priest. And since there were no *widely spread* (marginal reading) prophetic visions, the word of Jehovah was precious in those days. It was in this setting that the voice from Jehovah came to Samuel. "And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was; that Jehovah called Samuel: and he said, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place." (Read 1 Sam. 3:1-9.)

It was then that Jehovah called to Samuel again, and gave him a message which made the child afraid to disclose it to Eli. However, Eli insisted that Samuel tell him everything which Jehovah had revealed to him; and the child Samuel kept back nothing from the aging priest, al-

though it concerned the final destruction of the letter's house. And it was from this beginning that Samuel went on to become one of the great men of the Old Testament. He was, as we know, the last of the judges of Israel, and the first of a long list of prophets. There is nothing said in the Old Testament record regarding the number of prophets between Moses and Samuel; but, so far as the record goes, Samuel was the next prophet of distinction after the law-giver. He was in fact, as already indicated, the first of a line of prophets which continued throughout the remainder of the Old Testament period. (Cf. Acts 3: 24.)

The principal point which should be emphasized here is the difference in attitude toward the Lord's call, which was displayed by Moses and Samuel. Moses was hesitant, and endeavored to make every excuse he apparently could think of; while Samuel listened meekly to the voice of Jehovah, and then faithfully spoke that which had been revealed to him. The record says, "And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah." (1 Sam. 3: 19, 20.) The lesson which we should learn from this is. When the Lord calls us through his word, or providentially, we should not hesitate, but enter wholeheartedly into whatsoever he has for us to do; while all the time trusting him to supply whatever we may have need of, in order to accomplish that which he wants us to accomplish. (Cf. Phil. 4: 13, 19.) We know from Rom. 8: 28 that God has a *purpose* for each of us.

## The Text Explained

### The Appearance of the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:1-3)

Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a burning bush: and he looked, and, behold,

*the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.*

The record in the preceding chapter tells how Moses came to be associated with Jethro; and the fact that the latter was a priest, shows that the Midianites were religious people. "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to wat-

er their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to-day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and moreover he drew water for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." (Ex. 2: 16-22.)

The record of the life of Moses is divided into three equal periods of forty years each. The first was spent in Egypt, in the palace of the pharaoh; the second, in the wilderness of Midian, with the family of Jethro, also as we have just seen, called Reuel; and the third in the work of the exodus, in receiving the law at Sinai, and in the wilderness wanderings. James Hastings says concerning him, "The general impression left on our minds by the life and character of Moses, regarded as a whole, is unquestionably one of extraordinary, almost solitary, grandeur, dignity, and elevation. Wordsworth's line describes it best:

Thy soul was like a star, and  
dwelt apart.

"There is not a single character in the Old Testament that will bear comparison with it—for purity, for elevation, for power, for pathos. There is only one character in the whole range of history that overtops it; and *that is more than human*—the character of our Lord Jesus Christ." The ability of Moses, under God, to lead from two to three million slaves out of the land of Egypt, mold them into a great nation, and prepare them for entrance into a new land, is one of the greatest examples of leadership on record. And there is not a civilized nation on earth today, which has not felt the impact of the moral and legal code, which he was privileged to give to the children of Israel.

Moses is an example of the many people today who prematurely try to do their life's work. He thought he

was ready, while yet in the land of Egypt; but that was forty years before God knew that he was even ready to begin his specific training for the task which he had in mind for him. And so, for four decades, Moses was thoroughly trained and experienced as a shepherd, before he was ready to undertake the great work of leading people. And it came to pass in God's own good time, that Moses was at the right place, at the right moment, when Jehovah was ready for him to begin his greatest work, that of being a "shepherd," not to sheep, but to people, who are often described as the sheep of God's pasture.

Some eminent Bible students (see Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Adam Clarke, et al) hold that the expression "the angel of Jehovah" is sometimes used to indicate a manifestation of God himself. (See, in addition to the text now before us, Gen. 22: 11, 12.) This same idea is also seen in Gen. 18: 2, 22; 19: 1; 32: 24, 30, where Jehovah was apparently manifested in the form of a man. The angel who was called Jehovah was very probably the "Word" (John 1: 1), that is, the *Manifester* or *Revealer* of God. (See John 1: 14, 18.) The appearances which have just been referred to are regarded as foreshadowing the Incarnation.

The attention of Moses was arrested by the sight of a burning bush, which was not consumed; and when he turned aside to see it, he heard the voice of Jehovah speaking unto him. God never appeared to any one for a purpose, without disclosing what the purpose was; and the same principle is true with reference to his appearances to people who read his inspired record. Furthermore, no one can ever know what God's purpose and plan are for him, if he never hears that which Jehovah has to say. There is, of course, no reason for any one's thinking that the Lord will appear to him miraculously; but there is every reason for his expecting to hear his voice in his revealed will, and his providential ministrations.

**God's Message to Moses**  
(Ex. 3: 4-9)

*And when Jehovah saw that he  
turned aside to see, God called unto*

*him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.*

The wonder of the burning bush was sufficient to attract the attention of Moses; and when he turned aside to concentrate his mind upon it, he was richly rewarded. It is indeed a pity that more people today are not attracted by the wonders of God's revealed word; for it is certain that there are no greater wonders to be seen anywhere, than in that wonderful Volume. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm 119: 18.) The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, when she listened to that which Paul spoke; and he will do the same thing for us, if we will only listen to that which he has revealed. (See Acts 16: 14; cf. Luke 24: 45.)

In the preceding section of the lesson text, it is said that "the angel of Jehovah" appeared to Moses, but in this section he is plainly called "Jehovah," and this seems to confirm that which was said earlier, to the effect that the angel of Jehovah did sometimes indicate a manifestation of God himself. The first thing which Jehovah did after getting the attention of Moses, was to teach him a lesson of reverence; and there is no greater lesson which we need to learn today than respect for God and his word. There are all too many

people who approach the Bible much like they do a secular book of some kind, or a newspaper. And with that kind of an attitude, it is not surprising that they do not see or learn any more about the Word of the Lord, than they do. No one who does not show respect for that which the Scriptures say, or, who is not in sympathy with them, is going to learn much of their true meaning. (Cf. John 7: 17.)

And when Moses was ready to listen reverently to that which Jehovah had to say, he learned first of all about God's concern for his suffering people. The compassion of the Lord for suffering humanity is a basic factor in every effort which he has ever made to save them from their bondage, whatever the nature of the bondage may have been. All that one needs to do in order to see that this is true, is to read that which is contained in the Bible. And if this was true with reference to the physical suffering of his people, such as their oppression in Egypt, then what must be his concern for those who suffer because of their bondage to sin? We, of course, know something of the answer to this question; for it has been revealed to us in the New Testament. (Read John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-8; Luke 15: 1-32.)

### **Jehovah's Commission to Moses to Deliver Israel**

(Ex. 3: 10-12)

*Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee; when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.*

Anything pertaining to God's dealings with his people is, of course, of interest to Bible readers; but our greatest benefit from this study will be the typical import regarding the deliverance of people from sin through Christ. Moses was commissioned to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, while Jesus was



commissioned to save his people from their sins. (Cf. Matt. 1: 21; Luke 19: 10.) After telling Moses that he had come down for the purpose of releasing his people from this cruel bondage and suffering, Jehovah next told Moses that he was to be the instrument for that mighty service. Not only was Moses sent as a prophet to preach deliverance to the people of Israel; he was also sent as an ambassador to Pharaoh to entreat him to let them go. God has always used the principle of mediation in seeking to bless his people. Even now he speaks to men and works for their best interests, to a large extent, through the instrumentality of men. Christ, of course, is the one mediator between God and men; but chosen agents (notably the apostles) have been called into the inner circle of Divine favor to learn the will of God; and then to relay it, along with the Divine character, to the people. (Cf. 2 Cor. 4: 7.)

Judging from the action of Moses while he was yet in Egypt (Ex. 2: 11, 12; cf. Acts 7: 23-29), it would be natural to assume that he would welcome the opportunity to be employed in the national emancipation of his people; but his forty years of meditation in the wilderness had evidently affected his thinking. When Moses volunteered his services as the patriotic defender of his people in Egypt at the age of forty, he acted, not from deep conviction and because he had been duly authorized by properly constituted authority, but rather from impetuosity of temper. And now, at the age of eighty, he felt himself wholly unfitted for the enormous task which the commission which Jehovah was giving him involved. This was not only true of Moses, but has generally been true of other pious men. (Cf. Judges 6: 11-16; 1 Kings 3: 4-9.)

There is another important lesson which is suggested here which most of us miss, especially as it is related to human nature. It frequently happens that a person may say or do something, which he felt to be right at the time and under the circumstances; but which he would be entirely opposed to saying or doing, under the same circumstances later on in life. It is not right therefore to say that a person is always necessarily committed to that which he

might have said or done, when he was more or less immature. The application of this principle is in keeping with the spirit of the golden rule.

Not only did Moses enter his demur at the time Jehovah first made known to him the fact that he had been selected for the great work of leading the Israelites out of Egypt; it appears that he continued to make excuses for his unwillingness to accept the responsibility which the mission involved. (See Ex. 4: 1, 10-14; 6: 12.) But Moses was not the only man who made excuses to try to avoid doing that which the Lord wants done (cf. Matt. 25: 24, 25); there are people today who are doing the same thing, and they seemingly have never learned that the Lord, when once a duty has been made known to a person, will not accept his excuses. (Cf. Matt. 25: 26-30.) This is true because God never sends any one on a mission, which involves more than human wisdom and strength is able to accomplish, without supplying the divine assistance which is needed. (Cf. Josh. 1: 5, 6; Matt. 28: 19, 20.) No one therefore should ever be afraid to undertake any task which God has imposed upon him. Here is further assurance, "And as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33: 25b); and, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13).

The point regarding the "token" in the passage now before us is not clear. According to the arrangement of the verse, and particularly its punctuation, it appears that the fact that they would worship God in the mountain where Moses then was, that is, in Horeb or Sinai, would be the token. But it is difficult to see how that could be a token or sign to stimulate Moses to undertake the work of the exodus. *The Complete Bible—An American Translation* has this rendering: "I will be with you," he said, "and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you bring the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God at this mountain." Thus, according to the rendering just quoted, something else, namely, the *burning bush* was the token; and God further assured him that they would worship him where

they then were, that is, at the mountain, when they came out of Egypt.

This is also the view of Adam Clarke.

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

How many years had elapsed between the last lesson and this one? Give reasons for your answer.

Where was Moses at the time of this lesson and what was he doing?

How did he come to be in the land of Midian and how did the country get its name?

What is known, if anything, regarding the journey of Moses to that country? Give reasons for your answer.

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text spoken?

Who was Samuel and how did he come to be with Eli?

What was the attitude of Samuel toward his religious obligations?

Why was he especially fitted for the office of a prophet?

What does the Bible teach regarding Samuel's place in the line of the prophets?

What important lesson should we learn from the attitude and character of Samuel?

#### The Appearance of the Burning Bush

How did Moses come to be associated with Jethro at the time of this lesson?

Into how many periods was the life of Moses divided?

What is the general impression which the record of Moses makes upon the minds of people?

What are some of the ingredients of greatness in the life of Moses?

What premature characteristic did he manifest?

What later training did he have which

proved a great blessing to him and why?

What apparently is sometimes meant by the expression "the angel of Jehovah"?

What was the purpose of the burning bush, and what application does the principle have today?

#### God's Message to Moses

Why did Moses "wonder" at the burning bush and what lesson should we learn from it?

In what way does the Lord open the hearts of people today?

What confirmation do we have in this section of the lesson text regarding the angel of Jehovah?

What was the first thing that Jehovah did after getting the attention of Moses?

Why is reverence for Jehovah and his word so important?

What message did Jehovah speak to Moses, when the latter was ready to listen?

What impression should the principle of this message make on us and why?

#### Jehovah's Commission to Moses to Deliver Israel

What is the important lesson regarding this for us today?

What particular work was Moses expected to do in this great endeavor?

Show how Jehovah has always employed the principle of mediation in dealing with men.

Why was Moses so hesitant about accepting the assignment, especially in view of his action while yet in Egypt?

How did he go about trying to keep from accepting the commission?

Why do so many people of this age endeavor to follow his example?

What is the attitude of the Lord regarding such matters?

What "token" was referred to in this section of the lesson text? Give reason for your answer.

## Lesson III—October 16, 1966

### MOSES ENCOURAGED

#### Lesson Text

Ex. 3: 13-16; 4: 10-16

13 And Mo'-ses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Is'-ra-el, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Mo'-ses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is'-ra-el, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And God said moreover unto

Mo'-ses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is'-ra-el, Je-ho'-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I'-saac and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go, and gather the elders of Is'-ra-el together, and say unto them, Je-ho'-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of i'-sSac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you,

and *seen* that which is done to you in E'-gypt:

10 And Mo'-ses said unto Je-ho'-vah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And Je-ho'-vah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh *a man* dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Je-ho'-vah?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.

13 And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

14 And the anger of Je-ho'-vah was kindled against Mo'-ses, and he said, Is there not Aar'-on thy brother the Le'-vite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."* (Phil. 4: 13.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 6: 1-8.

## Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 10. M.....	God Calls Moses (Ex. 3: 10-15)
Oct. 11. T.....	Aaron Assists Moses (Ex. 4: 10-17)
Oct. 12. W.....	Moses Returns to Egypt (Ex. 4: 18-23)
Oct. 13. T.....	Moses Before Pharaoh (Ex. 5: 1-9)
Oct. 14. F.....	Israel's Burdens Heavier (Ex. 5: 10-19)
Oct. 15. S.....	God Reassures Moses (Ex. 6: 1-8)
Oct. 16. S.....	Moses Before Pharaoh (Ex. 7: 1-25)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—In the wilderness, near mount Horeb.

PERSONS.—Jehovah and Moses.

## Introduction

Moses was pre-eminently a man of faith, as may be seen by reading the summary of his life in Heb. 11: 23-27; but that was not always true of him. We saw in last week's lesson, as we shall see in this one, that he apparently tried every way he knew to persuade Jehovah to relieve him of the responsibility of returning to Egypt for the purpose of leading his brethren from the house of bondage. But God knew the kind of man Moses was capable of becoming, and he, accordingly gave him the kind of encouragement which would enable him to undertake the task which had been assigned him, and to go on to become one of the greatest leaders of men the world has ever seen. If one should read through the Bible with this aim before him, namely, to see how much of it is given to the record of the encouragement which God has given to his people, he would find it, in one way

or another, in all sections of the Sacred Volume.

In writing of the great faith of Moses, the inspired penman says, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11: 24-27.) The words just quoted reveal the secret of the great success which this man of God was able to achieve; and no one can

read them without realizing something of the goal which he was able to see in the distance.

If one is asked, How did Moses come to make his great decision? the answer is, first and foremost, because of the encouragement which God gave him, which resulted in his undying faith. This faith gave substance to the things he hoped for; because it rested on God's word, and not man's. It also unlocked the treasures of God to him, and resulted in his acquiring a motive which was his constant inspiration throughout his life. And because of all of this, he had a clear eye for distinguishing

right from wrong; and he did not therefore let the fact that he was considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and, consequently, an heir to the throne, or the example of Joseph's remaining in Egypt, and serving his people, influence him. God was calling him, and his own duty had to be considered apart from anything else. If one should stand by Moses in Egypt, he might think that his choice was foolish and absurd; but when he stands by the glorified Moses on the mount of transfiguration, he knows that the choice which the great lawgiver made was the only wise one he could have made.

### The Golden Text

*"I can do all things in him that strengthened me"* Christianity has been defined as the reproduction of the life of Christ in the human soul; and while this is evidently true, any thoughtful person knows that such an accomplishment requires both encouragement and strength which can only come from above. Some one else, in giving his definition of Christianity, has said, "I link my earthly feebleness to thine almighty power." These words do, at least, suggest the manner in which we may be certain of the strength which we need; and that must have been the way in which Paul felt about the matter, when he wrote the words of the golden text now before us to his beloved brethren in Philippi. When one in deed and in truth links his life with the Lord's life, he puts himself in touch with unlimited power; and that means that such power will be available for whatever the need may be. (Cf. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

The words of the golden text are rendered in The *New English Bible* in this way: "I have strength for anything through him who gives me power." Phillips: "I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within me." *The Twentieth Century New Testament*: "I can do everything in the strength of him who makes me strong!" *Living Letters* (The Paraphrased Epistles): "For I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power." This is what is meant by "Christian Omnipotence"; and in

the words of John Allen Chalk, "Unlimited power in every area of life awaits the Christian. Paul's statement in our text is the unrefuted claim of 1900 years of Christianity. It is a pity that Twentieth Century Christians, surrounded by power, fail to see the dynamite available to them. This failure results in lost souls, ruined lives, and a weak, ineffective, unprogressive, unproductive church."

When God therefore gave his encouragement to Moses, he was, in effect, putting him in touch with all the power he needed for the great task which was before him. Moses evidently realized this; and we are not surprised to read that "the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (See Num. 12: 3.) When the child of God is aware of the source and the magnitude of the strength which is available to him, he does not have any need whatsoever of trying to emphasize himself. (Cf. Matt. 11: 29.) Jesus, in fact, says, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24.) The original term for "let him deny himself" is *aparneomai*, and it is defined by Greek scholars to mean to renounce, disregard, give up one's personality, and act in a wholly selfless manner. And that Moses followed this plan for his life is unmistakable, as may be seen by reading the account of the wilderness wanderings. (Cf. Ex. 32: 7-14, 30-35; Num. 14: 13-19.)

## The Text Explained

### Moses Requests Further Instruction

(Ex. 3: 13-16)

*And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt.*

Heathen people during the time of this lesson were wont to give names to their gods, which no doubt included the Egyptians; and it is not surprising therefore, when we consider the long association which the Israelites had had with the latter people, that they, too, would want to know the name of the God whom they were being called upon to heed and serve. It is also reasonable to suppose that they had forgotten the God of their fathers during their long period of slavery, being as they no doubt were, without faithful teachers of the true religion. The view just expressed appears all the more reasonable, when we consider the fact that many people today who have the advantage of congregational teaching every Lord's day, by the most competent and faithful preachers and teachers of God's word, know little or nothing about many of the most basic doctrines of Christianity. (Cf. Heb. 5: 11, 12.)

It was evidently such a condition which was described in the preceding paragraph that caused Moses to anticipate the reaction of the Israelites to his claim of having been sent

by Jehovah to lead them out of Egypt; but there is another lesson which we may learn, and which should prove vital to us. The suggested lesson is this: Those who expect to please the Lord should make certain that anything which is presented to them as a way of life is, without a doubt that which comes from God's revealed will; for this is the plain and simple teaching of the New Testament, as may be seen from the following scriptures, namely, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4: 1.) "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false." (Rev. 2: 2.) "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." (Acts 17: 11.) It should be observed that the people just referred to did not seek out their favorite preacher or teacher, and take his word for the answer to the question before them; they searched the Scriptures until they learned the truth.

Bible students, generally speaking, have never been able to agree fully upon the true meaning and significance of the expression "I AM THAT I AM," other than that they certainly point to the fact that God is self-existent and eternal. Matthew Henry observes that the expression denotes that which Jehovah is within himself. He is not dependent upon any other source for his being and power, which is in marked contrast with the best of men who must say, "It is by the grace of God that I am what I am." And since Jehovah is the Self-existent One, he is both Self-sufficient and All-sufficient; and the source of everything which is good in the universe. (Cf. 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16.) And in the words of Robert Southey, "As sure as God is good, so surely there is no such thing as necessary evil." The message which Jehovah gave to Moses regarding his name should certainly have been

good news to the enslaved people in the land of the pharaohs; just as it is to the people today, who believe the message of his revealed word to men.

*Jehovah* is the proper name of the God of the Bible; and it was the most holy, as well as the most significant, of all the names which designate Deity, so far as the Israelites were concerned. The term originally was made up entirely of consonants—IHVH, the Tetragrammaton, that is, the four consonants which formed the Hebrew "incommunicable name" of the Supreme Being. The true pronunciation of the term was lost; and it was not until A. D. 1520, the time of the Reformation, that the modern pronunciation came into use.

Inasmuch as the pious Jews considered it unlawful to pronounce the name of Jehovah, when reading the Hebrew Scriptures, the term *Adonai* [Lord] was substituted for it, except when the name IHVH preceded or followed *Adonai* in the text, in which case the name *Elohim* [the plural for God] was read in its stead. In the course of time, the vowels of *Adonai* or *Elohim* were combined with the consonants of IHVH to form *Yehovah*, or, according to a later system of transliteration, *Jehovah*. This form, with the anglicized pronunciation, entered the English Bible; and has come into general use as one of the names—the proper name—of God. It is well to note, however, that many modern Bible students are of the opinion that *Yahweh* comes nearer than *Jehovah* to being the correct spelling of the term now under consideration. (Cf. Ex. 6: 2, 3.) It might be pointed out that neither term (*Jehovah* nor *Yahweh*) is found in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

The further information regarding the identification of Jehovah, which he gave to Moses, was intended for the encouragement of the children of Israel. It reads as follows: "And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Inasmuch as Jehovah is the God of their fathers, that should have been sufficient to

the people in Egypt that he was also interested in them, who were the children of those worthy patriarchs. Moses was instructed to proclaim this truth to the oppressed people. In speaking of the expression "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations," Adam Clarke notes that the Holy One may be known as Jehovah God, or Lord God, as in the King James Version, from the creation (cf. Gen. 2: 4), until the present. Even the heathen nations knew this name of the true God, as may be seen by considering such terms as Jove, Jao, and Jeve. The expression "for ever" refers to eternity, while "all generations" is probably limited to time, as we know it.

Equipped with the instruction which Jehovah had given to him, Moses was told, "Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt." The great liberator therefore was backed by the God of the universe, and he had all the authority of Jehovah to free the people from their bondage; and when they came forth from the land of Egypt, they "were all baptized unto [margin, Greek into] Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. 10: 2; cf. Matt. 28: 18-20.)

#### Moses' Farther Reluctance and Jehovah's Reply (Ex. 4: 10-12)

*And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.*

Excuse-making for a failure to do one's duty is one of the common practices of men everywhere. It was true of Moses at the time of our lesson, as it had been with Adam in the garden of Eden, and has been on down through the ages until this

day. One can hear excuses wherever he may chance to be, and regarding practically anything which involves the duty of people. But an excuse for a fault is not a sound reason; it is only an attempt at partial justification for wanting to go one's own way. Any man who makes an excuse for his failure to do that which God wants him to do knows that he cannot justify himself before his Maker.

A classic example of the sort of thing which is being discussed here is found in the case of the one-talent man. The lord in question had called his servants to him, and delivered unto them his goods. "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey." (Matt. 25: 15.) It can be seen from the statement just quoted that each of the three servants who are mentioned in the text had the ability to use properly that which he received; and that each of them was responsible for that which he had received. The first two went to work immediately, and made a one hundred per cent return on their investments; "but he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money."

In due time, the lord of those servants returned and called them to him for an accounting of the manner in which they had used his money. The first two made cheerful reports, and received hearty commendations from their master. But there was a different story, so far as the third man was concerned. The text says, "And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo thou hast thine own." This was the manner in which the servant sought to excuse himself from doing his duty; but that excuse did not satisfy his lord, as may be seen by the following statement: "But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money

to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." (Read Matt. 25: 14-30; cf. 13: 12.)

The long residence of Moses in the land of Midian, and his absence from public life, may have had an effect on his speaking ability; and it is possibly correct to say that he was giving a true estimate of his qualifications for the task to which he was being called, that is, from his point of view. But what Moses needed to learn, as do we, is that Jehovah is able to supply any deficiency which any one, regardless of his ability, may have. Stephen says that Moses was "mighty in his words and works," which apparently referred to the time he was in Pharaoh's court; but if the reference was to his work in the exodus, then the matter can be explained by the fact that Jehovah was with him.

All men, whatever their status or condition, owe their origin and natural circumstances to God; and he is able to make any whom he chooses for any mission effective in that undertaking. (Cf. 1 Cor. 1: 26-31.) The principle just stated is well illustrated in the life and experience of the apostle Paul. "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelation, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

Moses and Paul, as we can see

from the facts in their cases, had exact Opposite attitudes toward the Lord; and this should be an impressive lesson to us. The Lord has work for all of us to do, and he will always do for us, and with us, that which we are unable to do ourselves. And so, "according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet. 4: 10, 11.)

We have in the statement, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak," the true meaning of what it means to be a prophet, that is, one who speaks for another. And it has always been true that when men are sent on a mission by divine authority, they are taught what to say, either directly or through inspired revelation. (Cf. Matt. 10: 19, 20; 2 Tim. 4: 1, 2.) It is not difficult for any true child of God to learn his duty; and if he sincerely wants to discharge it faithfully, he can always depend upon the Lord to do that for him which human effort is unable to accomplish; and this does not mean miracle working either. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28; Heb. 4: 14-16.)

#### God's Anger Aroused and His Final Word to Moses

(Ex. 4: 13-16)

*And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I*

*pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God.*

In saying, "Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send," it appears that Moses was only asking Jehovah to send a better man than he was; but even in that, he was still challenging the wisdom of God. Matthew Henry notes that "an unwilling mind will take up with a sorry excuse rather than none, and is willing to devolve those services upon others, that have anything of difficulty or danger in them." Jehovah, however, continued to answer all the excuses Moses offered, although he apparently let it be known that he was displeased with him. About this time Aaron, the older brother of Moses, appeared on the scene; and God told the latter what the arrangements would be; and so far as the record goes, the matter was then settled. Aaron was to become the prophet of Moses, while Jehovah would teach Moses what they both should do. (Cf. Ex. 7: 1.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

How was faith related to the life of Moses?

Why did Jehovah continue to insist that Moses accept his commission while the latter continued to offer excuses?

What great lesson should we learn from this?

What are some of the things which the Bible says regarding the faith of Moses?

Why did he make his great decisions of life?

What do you consider his greatest decision? Give reasons for your answer.

#### The Golden Text

What are some good definitions of Christianity?

Why is the child of God able to accomplish so much and what is Christian omnipotence?

Why is the man who realizes the source of his strength a humble man?

#### Moses Requests Further Instruction

Why did Moses think that the Israelites would ask for the name of Jehovah?

Why did they not know him and his name already?

Why are so many people in the church today so ignorant of many basic teachings of the Bible?

What do those who are interested in learning God's will always do?

What appears to be the significance of the expression "I AM THAT I AM"?

What effect should this have had on the enslaved people of Israel?

What was the origin and what is the meaning of the name "Jehovah"?



In what way did Jehovah authorize Moses to encourage the people of Israel to believe him?  
How was Moses told to proceed with his work when he reached Egypt?  
What authority did he have for accomplishing his task in leading the people out of bondage?

Moses' Further Reluctance and Jehovah's Reply

In what way has "excuse-making" characterized the human race?  
What is implied and accomplished by such a practice?  
In what way does the "one-talent" man illustrate this principle?  
What lesson should we learn from his attitude?  
Why did Moses think he could not speak well and what lesson did God teach him about that?

Discuss the difference in the attitudes displayed by Moses and Paul in this respect.  
What important lesson should we learn from this?  
What is the true meaning of being a "prophet" and what will God always do for his people?

God's Anger Aroused and His Final Word to Moses

What was the next excuse which Moses offered for not wanting to go to Egypt?  
What was the reaction of Jehovah toward that excuse?  
What do unwilling minds nearly always do as it respects their obligations?  
In what way did Jehovah finally settle the question, so far as Moses was concerned?  
What did he say would be the roles of Moses and Aaron in Egypt?

Lesson IV—October 23, 1966

THE PEOPLE PREPARE TO LEAVE EGYPT

Lesson Text  
Ex. 12: 21-28

21 Then Mo'-ses called for all the elders of Is'-ra-el, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover.  
22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.  
23 For Je-ho'-vah will pass through to smite the E-gyp'-tians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Je-ho'-vah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.  
24 And ye shall observe this thing

for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.  
25 And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Je-ho'-vah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.  
26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?  
27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Je-ho'-vah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Is'-ra-el in E'-gypt, when he smote the E-gyp'-tians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.  
28 And the children of Is'-ra-el went and did so; as Je-ho'-vah had commanded Mo'-ses and Aar'-on, so did they.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession"* (Deut. 7: 6.)  
DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 11: 4-10.

Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 17.	M.....	A People Prepared (Ex. 12: 21-28)
Oct. 18.	T.....	First-born Warned (Ex. 11: 4-10)
Oct. 19.	W.....	Passover Instructions (Ex. 12: 1-11)
Oct. 20.	T.....	First-born of Egypt Dead (Ex. 12: 29-36)
Oct. 21.	F.....	Passover a Memorial (Ex. 13: 3-10)
Oct. 22.	S.....	Christ, Our Passover (1 Cor. 5: 6-11)
Oct. 23.	S.....	Israel, God's People (Deut. 7: 1-6)

TIME.—1491 B.C.  
PLACE.—The land of Egypt.  
PERSONS.—Moses and the Israelites.

## Introduction

The passover, which had its origin on the occasion of this lesson, was one of the three great annual feasts which Jehovah authorized the Israelites to observe. The other two were the feast of weeks (called Pentecost in the New Testament), and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year. The passover was the first of the three feasts just referred to; and it came during the first month of their religious year. The Israelites were about to embark on a new epoch of their existence; and in keeping with that idea, the calendar month (Abib), which was the seventh month of their civil year, now became the first month of their *religious* year. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Ex. 12: 1, 2; cf. 13: 3, 4; Deut. 16: 1.) The month Abib corresponds to the last half of our March and the first half of our April.

The law regarding the three annual feasts of the people of Israel is briefly stated in the following passage: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib (for in it thou earnest out of Egypt); and none shall appear before me empty: and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou sowest in the field: and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord Jehovah." (Ex. 23: 14-17.) It should be observed that these three feasts are not always called by the same name. We learn from the chapter from which our lesson text for today is taken, and the entire chapter should be read before this lesson is studied,

that only unleavened bread could be eaten by the Israelites, with Jehovah's approval, during the seven days which followed the actual passover feast; and it was for this reason that the entire period was referred to as both the feast of passover, and the feast of unleavened bread. The second feast was called the feast of harvest (Ex. 23: 16), the feast of weeks (Ex. 34: 22), the feast of first-fruits (Num. 28: 26), and Pentecost (Acts 2: 1). The third feast was called the feast of ingathering, and the feast of tabernacles. (See Ex. 23: 16; Lev. 23: 34.)

On the eve of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, Jehovah gave unto them specific instruction regarding the feast of the passover, in these words: "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household: and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses where-in they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it . . . Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (Ex. 12: 3-8, 15.)

## The Golden Text

*"Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession."* The full context of the golden text is as follows: "For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen

thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were

the fewest of all people: but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations, and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them." (Duet. 7: 6-11.)

The idea set forth in the passage just quoted is precisely the same as that which is expressed in the New Testament by the term "church," namely, the called out, or the separated ones. The Israelites are, in fact, referred to as the church in the wilderness. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us." (Acts 7: 38.) When Balaam undertook to curse Israel for Balak, he was divinely compelled to bless them instead; and in his first prophecy regarding them, he said, in Num. 23: 9,

"From the top of the rocks I see him,

And from the hills I behold him:

Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone,

And shall not be reckoned among the nations."

This plainly shows what is meant by the statement that God chose Israel for his own possession; they were called out to God, separated from all other peoples, and were not numbered with the nations of the earth.

And when God selects a people for his own possession, we can be certain that he has a special work for them to do. The apostle Paul says that Jehovah entrusted his word to the people of Israel (Rom. 3: 1, 2); and in performing their work for him, one of their obligations was to keep alive the idea of the one true God, and thereby combat idolatry. And, too, they were to remain a separate people, until Christ should come. But, what is more important to us, we who are in Christ are no less a people for God's own possession. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." (Tit. 2: 11-14.) "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2: 9.)

### The Text Explained

Preparation for Observing the  
Passover and Its Purpose

(Ex. 12: 21-23)

*Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth*

*the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*

Any one who stops to think about the occasion now before us, must realize that much time and effort were required to get the word regarding the preparation for the passover to the host of Israel, so that every family could do that which Jehovah required of them. It is hardly possible that everything connected with this proclamation and preparation could have been done in a sin-

gle day, without Divine intervention; and there is no evidence that anything like that took place. But if the chapters between the last lesson and this one are read, one will have a better idea of the situation of the Israelites, on the eve of the first passover and the exodus; and, after all, we should be interested in getting a better understanding of the teaching of the Bible as a whole, rather than simply that which may be found in a single or isolated lesson.

We have, beginning with chapter 5, the account of the efforts of Moses and Aaron to get Pharaoh to permit the children of Israel to leave the land of Egypt, and go three days journey into the wilderness to worship Jehovah. Their pleas to the king of Egypt were summarily rejected, and the burdens and misery of the people of Israel were greatly increased. Moses and Aaron were then given the power to perform miracles in the presence of Pharaoh; but inasmuch as his magicians duplicated some of them with their enchantments, or secret arts, the heart of the king was hardened, and he continued to refuse to let the people go out from his country.

In addition to turning Moses' rod into a serpent, a series of plagues was sent upon the land of Egypt through the instrumentality of Moses and Aaron, the first three of which apparently fell upon both the Israelites and the Egyptians. But beginning with the fourth plague, that of the flies, there was a distinction made between the Lord's people and those of Egypt, with the result that only the latter suffered from them. "And I will set apart in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end that thou mayest know that I am Jehovah in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: by tomorrow shall this sign be." (Read Ex. 8: 20-23.)

While there is no definite proof to substantiate the claim, it has been estimated that the period of time, during which the ten plagues took place, was approximately one month. There is, of course, sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that several days did elapse; and since the Israelites themselves were not affected by the last seven of the

plagues, it is reasonable to suppose that preparation was being made among them for their final days in Egypt. The further fact that the passover lamb had to be selected on the tenth day of the month, whereas, the passover itself was on the fourteenth day, is sufficient evidence to show that some advance notice of the feast was given to the people.

It should be observed that specific instruction was given to the elders, regarding the preparation which the people should make, by Moses. The expression "Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families" is apparently used in the sense of *go, and select suitable lambs*. (See marginal reading and cf. Job 41: 1, where the same original word for "draw" is used. "Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fishhook.") According to the families means according to the needs of the families. (See Ex. 12: 3, 4.) In telling the Israelites to "kill the passover," the lamb was used for the institution. The kind of lamb to be selected is explained in verse 5, of the chapter from which the lesson text is taken.

The "hyssop" plant is mentioned in the Bible for the first time in the passage now under consideration; and a brief reference to its nature is found in 1 Kings 4: 33, where the inspired narrator gives some indication of the wisdom of Solomon: "And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." (Read 1 Kings 4: 29-34.) While Bible students are aware of the prominent role which hyssop played during the age of Moses, it remains a fact that botanists, even those who are specialists in the study of Bible plants, have never been able to identify completely the hyssop plant. It appears quite possible that reference is made in the Scriptures to more than one species of the plant now under consideration. The "hyssop" referred to in the text now before us was some kind of bushy plant which could be used to sprinkle the blood of the passover lamb on the parts surrounding the doors of the houses in which the people of Israel lived, that is the side-posts and the horizontal part above. The use of the blood around their doors was designed as a **symbol** for their protection; and they were

assured that they would be safe, if they remained within the blood-stained house. This became a type of the blood of Christ which saves those to whom it is applied from sin and destruction, provided they remain within its confines. (Cf. Rev. 1: 5; Acts 20: 28.) Christ is our pass-over. (See 1 Cor. 5: 7.)

The picture which is portrayed in the section of the lesson text now under consideration, is one which can be understood by any responsible person; but the practical benefit to us, as has just been indicated, is not so much as to what took place when the first passover feast was being observed, but in its typical import. We do not depend upon the blood of a fleshly paschal lamb upon the doors of our literal houses; but upon the blood of the lamb of God, which was shed for the remission of our sins. No lost person can be saved from his sins, except as he is washed and cleansed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that is done only as he comes to the laws and institutions which have been divinely appointed for applying that blood. (Cf. 1 John 1: 5-7; Rom. 6: 3, 4; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29.)

### A Perpetual Obligation

(Ex. 12: 24-27a)

*And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.*

This section of the lesson text makes it clear that the observance of the passover by the Israelites was, by the commandment of Jehovah, made a matter of continuous obligation. The expression "for ever" was used in the sense of *age-lasting*, which was another way of saying that as long as the law of Moses continued to be in force, the people who lived under it would be required to observe the passover. "For ever" must

always be understood as being coextensive with the age to which it is applied. The recollection of this principle will be of invaluable aid in the study of the Bible; for the expression, in one way or another, is found in practically all parts of the Scriptures.

The instruction regarding the continuous observance of the passover was intended to apply to the people, after they reached the land which had been promised to them for an inheritance; and it was given, as we can plainly see, before the first passover was observed. This was part of the preparation which was essential, before the people could know that which was expected of them; and it would serve as a guide to them in all subsequent observances of the feast. It is interesting to note that the Lord has always told his people just what he expects of them; and if they are willing to listen to that which he says, they will never be in doubt about their duty.

There is in this vivid Old Testament narrative now before us a sorry commentary on human frailty, namely, our proneness to forget that which we ought to remember. But there was also something about it which would stimulate the curiosity of their children—something which would always make it necessary to teach those who needed to know the lessons which the passover feast had for God's people. God has always encouraged the use of reminders, both for those who probably would forget, and for those who would need to know that for which the memorial stood. Both are powerful motives for observing any ordinance or commemorating any institution which has been authorized by the Lord.

But, notwithstanding the plainness of Jehovah's commands regarding the passover, and the impressive manner in which he ordained that his people should observe it, the time came when the entire institution was almost completely forgotten. This was particularly true prior to the great reformation by Josiah. (Read 2 Chron. 35: 1-19.) The last passover which was authorized by the law of Moses was observed, along with many other pious Jews, by Christ and his apostles; and it was at the close of that feast that

Jesus instituted the supper which is to commemorate his great sacrifice for the salvation of the human race. He gave specific instruction regarding it; but how often is it forgotten by his people today! How can enlightened people forget Christ, and that which he did for them; but they do! And so it is that monuments, memorials, reminders, celebrations have their warrant in the melancholy fact that we are a forgetful people; but if we forget the Lord, we should not be surprised if he forgets us. (Cf. Prov. 1: 24-32; Heb. 2: 1-3.)

### The Immediate Reaction of the People (Ex. 12: 27b, 28)

*And the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.*

When people manifest a worshipful attitude toward the Lord, it is not difficult for them to do that which he commands; but when they do not show a spirit of reverence toward him, it is easy for them to disobey that which he says. When Peter was called to the house of Cornelius, and had learned something of that which had taken place there, he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10: 34, 35.) To "fear" God is to respect him, that is, reverence him, while to "work righteousness" is to do that which he commands. (Cf. Psalm 119: 172; Matt. 3: 15; Rom. 1: 16, 17; 10: 1-3.) The reaction of the Israelites to that which they had heard from the Lord was precisely the reaction which Peter says is acceptable to him; and if they had continued to manifest that attitude toward God, they would not have fallen into sin. Why is it that we cannot learn this lesson today?

It is refreshing to know that the

people of Israel did not try to find some excuse for not doing that which Jehovah commanded them to do. So far as the record goes, there was not one of them who said, "We have escaped most of the plagues which were sent upon the Egyptians, without observing the passover; so why should we be required to do anything like that now?" And it is also a noticeable fact that no one objected to the ordinance on the ground that the blood around the door would have no effect in keeping death from the family within. Those people in Egypt had seen and heard enough since Moses and Aaron had been among them to convince them of the faithfulness of God, in doing exactly that which he had promised to do. And so, when Moses spoke God's will unto them, "they bowed the head and worshipped," and they also "went and did" that which Jehovah had commanded them through his messengers to them. All of this was but an expression of their confidence in Jehovah; and it is not out of place to say of the people, that which Paul said of Moses, "By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them." (Heb. 11: 28.) The faith of the children of Israel was likewise manifested by their deeds. (Cf. Heb. 11: 6; James 2:14-26.)

No better comment can be found to bring to a close this lesson, than the next two verses of the Sacred Text: "And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. (Ex. 12: 29, 30.) That was a terrible night; but there is a greater and more terrible day coming. (See Rev. 20: 11-15; cf. 6: 12-17.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today's study?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

What was the "passover" and when did it occur?

What other annual feasts did the Jews observe and what was the law regarding them?

What instruction did Jehovah give the Israelites concerning the passover on the eve of their departure from Egypt?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of this text spoken?  
 What is the principal idea which is set forth in the golden text, so far as we are concerned?  
 What is always true when God selects a people for his own possession?  
 What does the New Testament teach with reference to us in this respect?

### Preparation for Observing the Passover and Its Purpose

Why would much time and effort be required for the people to get ready for this passover?  
 Why should the chapters between this lesson and the last one be read?  
 What are the principal facts contained in those chapters?  
 Why did Pharaoh refuse to allow the Israelites to leave his country?  
 What plagues were sent upon the Egyptians and what distinction was made between them and the Israelites?  
 Give some idea of the length of time which elapsed in the preparation of Israel to leave Egypt.  
 What specific instruction was given to Israel as they began to get ready for the passover?  
 What was "hyssop" and what use was made of it?  
 Why was blood placed on the posts and lintels of the doors of the Israelites?  
 What was the typical import of this?

### A Perpetual Obligation

What further command did Jehovah give regarding the observance of the passover?  
 What was meant by the expression "for ever"?  
 What important lesson should we learn regarding this?  
 What does the Lord always do regarding any duty which he requires of his people?  
 What important commentary do "memorial institutions" offer with reference to human nature?  
 What further opportunity would the observance of the passover give the people?  
 What is known regarding the faithfulness of the Israelites with reference to the passover?  
 At lesson should we learn from man's proneness to forget the things which God does for him?

### The Immediate Reaction of the People

What attitude did the people of Israel manifest when they heard the words of Moses and Aaron, and what lesson is there in it for us?  
 With what kind of spirit and attitude is God always well pleased?  
 Why were the Israelites so willing to do that which they were told to do?  
 In what way did they manifest their confidence in Jehovah and how alone can we?

## Lesson V—October 30, 1966

## DIVINE DELIVERANCE

### Lesson Text

Ex. 13: 17-22; 14: 10-15

17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to E'-gypt:

18 But God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Is'-ra-el went up armed out of the land of E'-gypt.

19 And Mo'-ses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Is'-ra-el, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20 And they took their journey from Suc'-coth, and encamped in E'-tham, in the edge of the wilderness.

21 And Je'-ho'-vah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light;

that they might go by day and by night:

22 The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.

10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Is'-ra-el lifted up their eyes, and behold, the E'-gyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Is'-ra-el cried out unto Je'-ho'-vah.

11 And they said unto Mo'-ses, Because there were no graves in E'-gypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of E'-gypt?

12 Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in E'-gypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the E'-gyptians? For it were better for us to serve the E'-gyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

13 And Mo'-ses said unto the peo-

pie, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Je-ho'-vah, which he will work for you to-day: for the E-gyp'-tians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

14 Je-ho'-vah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

15 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mó'sés, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Is'-ra-el, that they go forward.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“The *salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah*” (Psalm 37: 39.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 37: 1-7.

### Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 24. M.....	Divine Security (Psalm 37: 1-7)
Oct. 25. T.....	A Song of Triumph (Ex. 15: 11-21)
Oct. 26. W.....	Directed by Jehovah (Ex. 13: 17-22)
Oct. 27. T.....	Fear and Faith (Ex. 14: 10-14)
Oct. 28. F.....	Egyptians Destroyed (Ex. 14: 23-31)
Oct. 29. S.....	Deliverance at the Sea (Ex. 14: 15-22)
Oct. 30. S.....	Song of Deliverance (Ex. 15: 1-10)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—On the way from Egypt to the Red Sea.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

The dramatic account of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt is set forth in the twelfth chapter of Exodus, in the following words: “And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, and serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We are all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they

asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals. Now the time that the children of Israel had dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto Jehovah for bringing them out the land of Egypt: this is that night of Jehovah, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations.” (Ex. 12: 29-42.)

The thrusting out of the Israelites by Pharaoh was in marked contrast with the efforts which he made at compromising, during the earlier days when Moses and Aaron were trying to get him to listen to the words of Jehovah. The messengers of God had informed the king that he wanted his people to go three



days journey into the wilderness, where they were to hold a feast unto him. This did not appeal to Pharaoh, as may be seen from the following words: "And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go." (Read Ex. 5: 1-9.) But when the power of God began to be brought to bear on Pharaoh, he changed his attitude somewhat, and began a series of compromises, namely, (1) "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land"—

read Ex. 8: 25-27; (2) Don't "go very far away"—Ex. 8: 28; (3) Leave the children behind—Ex. 10: 8-11; (4) "Only let your flocks and your herds be stayed"—Ex. 10: 24-26. But, as we have seen in the passage quoted above, the time came when not only did Pharaoh meet all the requirements of Jehovah through Moses; but even the people were glad to give the Israelites of their possessions, only for the asking. Or, to express the same thing in another way, all of the people of Egypt were anxious for the children of Israel to leave their country.

### The Golden Text

"The *salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah*." The words just quoted are taken from one of the psalms of David, namely, the thirty-seventh; and it is one which should be read often by the Lord's people. The title of this psalm, as found in the American Standard Version, is "Security of Those Who Trust in Jehovah, and Insecurity of the Wicked." This psalm was written by David during his latter days (verse 25), and is to some extent autobiographical. In commenting on its subject matter, Spurgeon says, "The great riddle of the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous, which has perplexed so many, is here dealt with in the light of the future; and the fretfulness and repining are most impressively forbidden. It is a psalm in which the Lord hushes most sweetly the too common repinings of his people, and calms their minds as to his present dealings with his own chosen flock, and the wolves by whom they are surrounded. It contains eight great precepts, is twice illustrated by autobiographical statements, and abounds in remarkable contrasts."

The Bible is full of the promises of God to his people; and while many comments could be made regarding the salvation of the righteous, it is doubtful if any thing better could be said than that which is contained in the psalm itself. The style is poetic, but for the lack of space, the two quotations which follow are given in prose. Great benefit will be derived from this reading, if the contrast between the righteous and the wicked is carefully noted.

The first quotation is from the first part of the psalm, while the second is from the last part, which also contains the words of the golden text.

"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in Jehovah, and do good: dwell in the land, and feed on his faithfulness. Delight thyself also in Jehovah; and he will give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto Jehovah; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass. And he will make thy righteousnessness to go forth as the light, and thy justice as the noonday. Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil-doing. For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be." (Psalm 37: 1-10.)

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil. But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for there is a happy end to the man of peace. As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the sal-

vation of the righteous is of Jehovah: he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. And Jehovah helpeth them, and rescueth them: he rescueth them

from the wicked, and saveth them, because they have taken refuge in him." (Psalm 37: 35-40; cf. 34: 7; Heb. 1: 13, 14.)

## The Text Explained

### The Way of the Journey and the Manner of Guidance

(Ex. 13: 17-22)

*And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; that they might go by day and by night: the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.*

The reason which is assigned for the direction of the journey of Israel, as Jehovah led them out of Egypt, sets forth one of the great lessons of life which we should learn well. It is God who does the leading, but man's mental and emotional powers must not be suppressed. Man's whole being must be trained to rely upon God, not because he has no choice in the matter, but because he has learned that that is the best possible course for him to follow. The Israelites had not been accustomed to war; and inasmuch as they were, at the time of this lesson, in the very beginning of their experience as a separate people, it was essential that they be given an opportunity to learn gradually from the realities of life what it means to be able to endure. Thus, the reason for not leading the people into the conflict of a hardened world at first, although the way which is mentioned in the text

was nearer to their promised destination, and, we are told, had a good road over which the people could have travelled, was both psychological and strategic; or, to state the matter in the language of the text, lest the people see war, and regret that they ever left their homes in Egypt, with possibly a desire strong enough to cause them to return to the land of the Pharaohs. And so, instead of taking the northeasterly route toward the land of Canaan, Jehovah led his people almost due east, "by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea." (See map.) Although the people were "armed" when they left Egypt, they were not yet prepared for warfare.

The reference to Joseph's charge to his brethren regarding his bones is found in the closing part of the Book of Genesis. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (Gen. 50: 24-26.) The faith of Joseph was fully justified, as may be seen, not only from the text now before us, but from the "roll call" of the faithful, in the New Testament. "By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." (Heb. 11: 22.) The final disposition of the bones of Joseph is made known in the closing part of Joshua. (See Josh. 24: 32.)

When Jehovah led his people out of the land of Egypt, he not only designated the way in which they should travel; he also provided for their guidance, both by day and by night. The pillar of cloud which went before them was not an ordinary rain cloud, but a miraculous manifestation of Jehovah's leader-

ship; and it appears that that same cloud became a pillar of fire by night. The arrangement also provided protection for the people of God, when they needed help; and was one of the "elements" for the baptism of the Israelites into the authority of Moses. (See Ex. 14: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 10: 1,2.)

### Israel's First Great Crisis and the Encouragement by Moses

(Ex. 14: 10-14)

*And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

It appears from the preceding paragraph of the chapter from which this section of the lesson text is taken, that the test of Israel's faith in the leadership which had been provided for them was purposely planned by Jehovah. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea. And Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he shall follow after them; I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah. And they did so." (Ex. 14: 1-4.) The map which gives the journey of Israel should be carefully considered at

this point, in order to see something of the perilous situation in which the Egyptians thought Israel had placed themselves.

Although there were more than six hundred thousand men of the Israelites who "were able to go forth to war," they were not sufficiently trained nor armed to meet the great host of the Egyptians; and it is easy for us to imagine, looking at the matter from the human point of view, something of how they must have felt, when they learned that the host of their former rulers was approaching their camp. It appears that as soon as Pharaoh had time to recover from the shock of the destruction which was wrought by the destroying angel, he realized what they had done in permitting the Israelites to leave the land of Egypt; and he immediately ordered his army to follow them and return them to their former places. (Read Ex. 14: 5-9.)

The entire lives of the children of Israel had been spent in Egyptian servitude; and they had doubtless lost all the courage they ever possessed. This kind of a situation therefore was a terrible experience for them. The chariots and horsemen of the Egyptians were getting closer and closer to them; and they realized that they were without adequate military protection. The sea was before them and they had no way to cross it. This was indeed a great test of their faith. The Israelites may have greatly outnumbered the Egyptian armed forces; but they were no match for their former masters in military power. The only thing which was left for them to do was, of course, the right thing, that is, call upon Jehovah; but the subsequent record shows that they did not do that because of a deep trust in him. Here is an important lesson for us, namely, Before we criticize the Israelites for their lack of trust in God, let us examine our own selves. How often do we, when faced with overwhelming odds, and out of a deep reverence for God, call upon him for his help, and thereby make it possible for him to fulfil his promise of such assistance? (Cf. 1 Cor. 10: 13; Heb. 4: 14-16.)

But instead of relying upon the power of God to deliver them, the

Israelites began to talk about their graves, while reminding Moses that they had urged him to let them alone in their servitude to the Egyptians. But it should also be noted that their attitude, even in this, was not a unique experience with them: it is typical of human nature. Any one who is acquainted with the facts in the case, knows that the Lord's way is always best; but how many people prefer to be left alone, so that they may follow after the ways of the world! Such people as Matthew Henry points out, manifest a sordid contempt toward their liberty, and especially their freedom in Christ. They profess to prefer servitude, because true liberty is attended by some difficulties; but any one who will stop to think knows that there is no comparison between the two ways of life. The apostle Paul who suffered in Christ, perhaps more than any one else, says, "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4: 16-18.)

Moses himself was severely tried on the occasion now under consideration, as the people spoke against him; but it is encouraging to note that his composure was unruffled, and his meekness unaffected. His magnanimous attitude presents one of the sublimest examples of moral courage on record; and it is a noteworthy fact that he maintained this attitude toward rebellious Israel, on the whole, throughout his relationship with them. Even when Jehovah threatened their destruction, Moses prayed that they might be spared, although God had said that he would make a great nation out of him. (See Ex. 32: 7-14; Deut. 9: 6ff.)

It is evident, from the text now before us, that Moses firmly believed that Jehovah would lead his people out of their difficult situation, for he had, in effect, been told that (cf. verses 1-4; Rom. 10: 17); but it ap-

pears also true that he did not know just how the salvation would be accomplished. His advice to the people therefore was not to fear, but to wait for Jehovah to act. He knew that God was stronger than Pharaoh and his army; and he was confident that utter destruction awaited the Egyptians. But people in all ages of the world, generally speaking, have never learned to trust God implicitly; notwithstanding the fact that God has always required that his people trust him. The writer of Hebrews says, "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.)

#### The Way of Escape Provided and Made Plain

(Ex. 14: 15)

*And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.*

The record does not say that Moses prayed unto Jehovah, but it is implied from the passage just quoted that he did. God always wants his people to pray (cf. Luke 18: 1); but prayer alone is not enough: there must also be action. It is always right to pray, let it be repeated; but when Jehovah grants the petition, it is time then to act. God, as we have already seen, had promised to save the people, and it was not necessary to continue to cry unto him for that deliverance. It was time for his people to move.

This is one of the reasons why it is out of place for people out of Christ to ask God to save them, that is, to continue to pray for that salvation. All the necessary preparations for their redemption have been perfected; and any one who desires that salvation should obey the gospel at once. (Cf. Heb. 2: 9; 5: 8, 9; Mark 16: 15, 16; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.) It is true that Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius prayed before they were Christians, and their prayers were heard; but they were not praying for God to do for them that which they knew to do. They needed light, and as soon as it came they promptly obeyed.

The people of Israel were told to

go *forward*, but they could not at the time see how that could be done; for the Red Sea was in front of them. But when God gives a seemingly impossible command, the way to complete the obedience to it will be made both possible and plain. Jehovah wants his people to believe in him; and he never therefore makes it impossible for them to do that which he says. "Forward" has always been the watchword for people who are pleasing to God. We can profitably look back on the past, only if we seek lessons for the future—lessons which will bring to our

hearts greater hope, power, zeal, and devotion to God and his will. No one should ever be afraid to go forward at the command of God. In the words of M. Louise Haskins,

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown!"

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known

way."

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Discuss the account of the Israelites' leaving Egypt.

Why were Pharaoh and the Egyptians so insistent that Israel leave their country?

What preparation did the people make for their journey?

In what way was the night of their departure from Egypt regarded by the Lord's people?

What great change had come over Pharaoh since Moses first spoke to him about permitting the people of Israel to take their journey into the wilderness?

What compromises did he offer to Moses and Aaron?

What are some of the things we should learn from those compromises?

Why did the Egyptians give of their possessions so freely to the Israelites?

### The Golden Text

What is the setting for the words of this text?

What great encouragement should we get from this statement?

How only may we be sure of our salvation?

### The Way of the Journey and the Manner of Guidance

Why did Jehovah lead the Israelites in the way which they went?

Why didn't he want them to see war and what lesson should we learn from this?

What was the direction of their journey?

Why did Joseph give a charge to his brethren regarding his bones, and what done with them?

In what manner did Jehovah provide leadership for his people's journey?

What other uses were made of the cloud?

### Israel's First Great Crisis and the Encouragement by Moses

What test was made of Israel's faith and who planned it?

Discuss the details of this test.

How large was the host of Israel and why were they so fearful of the Egyptians?

Why did Pharaoh and his army pursue Israel, after letting them go?

Why did the Israelites put such little trust in God and what lesson should we get from this?

What was the reaction of the people of Israel to the threat of danger before them?

Why can it safely be said that their experience then was not unique?

Why do so many people today want to be left alone?

What is the great defect in their thinking?

In what way was Moses affected by the attitude of the people whom he was trying to lead?

Why can't people, generally, see the need for putting their trust in Jehovah?

### The Way of Escape Provided and Made Plain

How do we know that Moses must have prayed unto Jehovah?

What was Jehovah's response to him and why?

What is necessary in such circumstances in addition to praying?

In what way is the principle applicable to people today?

What were the people of Israel told to do and what should we learn from it?

## Lesson VI—November 6, 1966

# MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS

## Lesson Text

Ex. 16: 11-20; 17: 3-6

11 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mó'-ses, saying,

12 I have heard the murmurings

of the children of Is'-ra-el: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall

be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Je-ho'-vah your God.

13 And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoarfrost on the ground.

15 And when the children of Is'-ra-el saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they knew not what it was. And Mo'-ses said unto them, It is the bread which Je-ho'-vah hath given you to eat.

16 This is the thing which Je-ho'-vah hath commanded. Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an o'-mer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent.

17 And the children of Is'-ra-el did so, and gathered some more, some less.

18 And when they measured it with an o'-mer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

19 And Mo'-ses said unto them, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Mo'-ses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and Mo'-ses was wroth with them.

3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Mo'-ses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of E'-gypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

4 And Mo'-ses cried unto Je-ho'-vah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me.

5 And Je-ho'-vah said unto Mo'-ses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Is'-ra-el; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go.

6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Ho'-reb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Mo'-ses did so in the sight of the elders of Is'-ra-el.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Give us this day our daily bread."* (Matt. 6: 11.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 6: 32-40.

### Daily Bible Readings

Oct. 31. M.....	Israel Murmurs (Ex. 16: 1-3)
Nov. 1. T.....	God Feeds Israel (Ex. 16: 11-20)
Nov. 2. W.....	Manna and the Sabbath (Ex. 16: 21-30)
Nov. 3. T.....	Manna a Memorial (Ex. 16: 31-36)
Nov. 4. F.....	The Bread of Life (John 6: 32-40)
Nov. 5. S.....	Living Bread (John 6: 48-59)
Nov. 6. S.....	Bread for All (John 6: 5-14)

TIME.—1491 B.C.

PLACE.—The wilderness of Sin, Rephidim, and Horeb.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

Those who study these lessons should never lose sight of the fact that they are intended to increase our faith; and that is exactly what this one will do, if we can enter into the spirit of it. Not only has Jehovah ordained that his people should follow his direction, so far as their daily living is concerned; he has also pledged himself to do for us that which we are unable to accomplish ourselves. The lesson now before us sets forth one of the many examples

of the Lord's care for his people. The sun may shine, or the shadows may grow deep; but whatever the circumstances may be, God is always there to care for and bless his people. This is a lesson of trust, and it is emphasized throughout the Bible. The New Testament says, "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11: 6.) God never

fails to bless them that put their trust in him.

The principal benefit of a lesson like this to us is found in the fact that it is an example which shows us how Jehovah deals with his people in their time of need. The apostle Paul says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4.) If God met the needs of his people in the days of their wilderness wanderings, we may be sure that he will not fail his people now. But there is another important lesson to remember in this connection, namely, God wanted his people then, as he does now, to learn that there are more things involved than simply supplying their food and clothing. "And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee

with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live. (Deut. 8: 2, 3; cf. Matt. 4: 4.)

When God leads his people into any situation, or commands them to do something which may turn them away from the material things of life, he wants them to know that he will take care of them, if they will do his will. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-with shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 31-33; cf. Phil. 4: 19.) A failure to trust in God for the material needs of life, while doing the best that we can, springs for exactly the same sinful attitude which characterizes the avaricious man in his quest for riches; both manifest a lack of trust in God.

### The Golden Text

*"Give us this day our daily bread"*  
This statement, as all Bible students know, is from the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to pray, or, more correctly, the model which he gave them, so that they would know how to approach the heavenly Father in prayer. After telling his disciples not to pray as the Gentiles do; because "your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him," he continued, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (See Matt. 6: 7-13.) Not only is the Lord's model prayer a brief one; it is also comprehensive. The words of the prayer are simple; but they cover the vital relationships between God and man, man and man, as well as a wide range of human needs.

There have been Bible students who have looked upon Jesus as a dreamer and an idealist; and, as such, they have considered him an impractical visionary. But if one is willing to engage in an intimate study of him and his teaching, he will be convinced that such is not the case; for no one can consider all the facts concerning Jesus, without reaching the conclusion that he was deeply concerned with everything which has to do with human life and human need. His audience on the occasion of his teaching regarding prayer was made up, not of temple doctors and the scholars of the day, but largely of his unschooled followers; and with that character of hearers before him, it is not at all strange that he faced problems to which common men with untutored minds are heirs.

It is doubtful if there are many who study this lesson today who have ever uttered the petition regarding his daily bread, on the morning of a day when they did not really know where the bread for

that day was to come from. And with this all but universal attitude toward the petition now under consideration, it is in order to ask, Does Jesus mean for all of his disciples to utter it. The obvious answer is Yes; for we are all, whether we realize it or not, dependent upon God: and only the frailest wall of his providence, at any time, stands between us and want. No one can please God who does not recognize and acknowledge his dependence upon him. James says that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1: 17.) Therefore, to put our trust in riches, or

any other source, for our daily bread, is to manifest a lack of trust in God. (Cf. Matt. 6: 24; Heb. 11: 6.) The central thought in the petition which serves as the golden text for today is that we must look to God for our daily needs; and with this view of the subject before us, we can easily see that we are not only praying for bread, but also for peace of mind. No one can do his best in life without this feeling; but lest he should become satisfied, and cease to depend upon God, he is taught to pray, not for an abundance for the future, but only for the present—"Give us *this day* our daily bread." (Cf. Deut. 32: 10-15: Prov. 30: 7-9; 1 Tim. 6: 17.)

## The Text Explained

### The People Murmur and Food Is Provided

(Ex. 16: 11-15)

*And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God.*

It is a recorded fact, as may be seen by reading their record, that the Israelites were characterized by murmurings throughout their forty years of wilderness wanderings. They began their grumbling before they crossed the Red Sea; and they never ceased thereafter. It would be an interesting study to consider all of their experiences, and observe the various things about which they complained. For example, they were not satisfied with the provisions which were made for their safety; and they did not like the leadership which had been provided for them. They were dissatisfied with their food; and, in short, just about everything which came their way. Moses told the people, in the verses which precede this section of the lesson text, that their murmurings were not against him, but against Jehovah. That is always true, when complaints are made against that which the Lord has ordained; but that usually does not have much effect on those who are doing the murmurings.

But Jehovah is always gracious,

and does not generally deal with his people according to their deserts. This is especially true, when they need to be taught the lessons of life. The people of Israel had been accustomed to living at home in Egypt, where they could obtain their food in a normal manner; but at the time of this lesson they had no permanent homes, and were put to the necessity of relying upon Jehovah for all their needs. Moses, as has already been pointed out, told the people that God suffered them to hunger, and fed them; so that they could demonstrate what their attitude toward him was. But, as in all cases, both then and now, God never suffers his people to be tempted beyond their ability to bear; he always makes the way of escape for them. (See 1 Cor. 10: 13; cf. James 1: 2-8.)

This is the manner in which Moses placed the case before the people: "And Moses said, This shall be, when Jehovah shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that Jehovah heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah. (Ex. 16: 8.) This was to inform them that their needs would be met in the wilderness, just as they had been met in their homes in Egypt. And in addition to having their needs supplied, they would learn that Jehovah could take care of them under any and all circumstances. This, as has already been



noted, was a part of the training which they needed, and received, at the beginning of their journey toward the land of Canaan.

*And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat.*

Those who are acquainted with the Bible are aware of the fact that many of the inspired writers often discussed and commented on other portions of the Scriptures. One of the psalmists, for example, has this to say about Israel's asking for bread: "And they tempted God in their heart by asking food according to their desire. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? . . . Therefore Jehovah heard, and was wroth; and a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also went up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation. Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; and he rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them food from heaven. Man did eat the bread of the mighty: he sent them food to the full. He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens; and by his power he guided the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as the dust, and winged birds as the sands of the seas: and he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled; and he gave them their own desire." (Psalm 78: 18-29; cf. John 6: 31; Neh. 9: 15.) The food referred to on the occasion now before us was miraculously given; but the same thing is done by God year by year through natural and providential means. (Cf. Matt. 6: 25-34; 2 Kings 6: 24-7: 2; Mal. 3: 7-12.)

We learn from the closing part of the chapter from which this portion of the lesson text is taken, that "the house of Israel called the name there-

of Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." (See Ex. 16: 31.) And again. "And the manna was like coriander seed, and the appearance thereof as the appearance of bdellium. The people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it." (Num. 11: 7-9.) Coriander was a small annual plant, which bore small spicy seeds that were used as seasoning and medicine; while bdellium probably refers to color. Bible students, however, are not agreed as to the identity of bdellium, whether a precious stone or a gum. (Cf. Gen. 2: 12.)

#### Directions for Gathering the Manna

(Ex. 16:16-20)

*This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded. Gather ye of it every man according to his eating; an omer a head, according to the number of your persons, shall ye take it, every man for them that are in his tent. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said unto them, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and Moses was wroth with them.*

An omer was approximately from one half gallon to three quarts; and that was the amount each person was to have for his daily ration. We are not told just how it came to pass, that every man had just the right amount when it was measured; but from Paul's use of the incident in 2 Cor. 8: 15, it is possible that those who may have gathered a surplus, gave the extra amount they had to those who were unable to gather as much as they needed. The gathering had to be done at the proper time; for "when the sun waxed hot, it melted." (Ex. 16: 21.)

The daily gift of the manna was doubtless meant to teach the Israelites the lesson of dependence upon God for their needs. It taught them that their heavenly Father cared for them; and the requirement regarding taking too much, apparently emphasized the idea of having a feeling for their neighbors. These messages were to be spoken to them daily, through the voice of the manna, throughout their years in the wilderness. Some one has said that there is always enough for gratitude, but never enough for greed. God's rule is, A daily supply for daily needs, while tomorrow must wait until it comes. This is the lesson of the golden text, as we have already seen.

The fact that the Israelites were not permitted to keep any of the manna until the next morning, further emphasized the fact that they were to depend upon God for their daily needs. The idea was not that they were to be indifferent toward such things; but rather that they should follow the Lord's leading. Jehovah ordained, following the fall of man, that he must eat his bread in the sweat of his face (Gen. 3: 19); but that does not mean that man, without the help of God, can meet his own daily needs. It has already been pointed out in this lesson that every good gift and every perfect gift comes from God. (See James 1: 17.)

The conduct of the people in trying to keep some of the manna until the morning was a manifestation of their distrust in Jehovah, which probably grew out of covetousness and a sinful curiosity, and thereby causing them to make trial of the Lord. But the people who disregarded the instruction which they had received soon learned that God cannot be mocked; for, as Adam Clarke points out, they had a mass of the most loathsome putrefaction for their pains. Thoughtful students of the Bible frequently observe that Jehovah makes disobedience and sin irksome to the transgressor; and this is apparently true, because God wants men to see that it is better to serve him, than it is to follow the evil one.

The Lord wants his people to have what they need; but he does not want them to trust their own wisdom and material possessions, instead of

him. The divine philosophy for trustful living is set forth by Jesus in some of the most beautiful and attractive language ever spoken, namely, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 24-34.)

No one can please God who will not trust his promises, whether with reference to material needs, salvation from sin, or daily guidance. Our lesson text for today makes it very plain that Jehovah promised to supply the daily needs of his people; and told them not to trust in one day's surplus for the next days' needs: but notwithstanding the plainness of the instruction which they received, they did not hearken unto Moses, who was speaking <sup>for</sup> God. But before we criticize the Israelites too severely, let us examine ourselves and see if we are doing

any better. Jehovah knows our needs, and he has specifically promised to supply them, as we have just seen, namely, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." *These things* are food, drink, and clothing. And after making this gracious promise, Jesus then cautions us, just as Moses did the children of Israel, not to be anxious for the morrow; for, says he, "the morrow will be anxious for itself." (Cf. Phil. 4: 10-13.) And so, in the words of Charles Kingsley, "Do today's duty, fight today's temptation, and do not weaken and distract yourself by looking forward to things which you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them."

### The Miraculous Supply of Water

(Ex. 17: 3-6)

*And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and*

*thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

The two preceding verses of the chapter from which this section of the lesson text is taken give the setting of the miraculous supply of water. "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, by their journeys, according to the commandment of Jehovah, and encamped in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people strove with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why strive ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt Jehovah?" The site of "Rephidim" is not definitely known; but it was apparently in the general vicinity of mount Horeb. It was at Rephidim that the battle between Israel and Amalek took place. (See Ex. 17: 8-16.)

If we look only at Israel, it is difficult to understand how they could continue to distrust God, after seeing the miracle of the manna and the quails; but such is human nature, which has changed little, if any, since the beginning of time. The only way to overcome human nature is to become partakers of the divine nature. (See 2 Pet. 1: 3, 4.) The psalmist who spoke of the manna in the wilderness, also sang of the water from the rock. (See Psalm 78: 15-17, 20.)

### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

What is one of the principal purposes of a lesson like this one?

Why is faith in God so essential?

How can a lesson like this one be of benefit to us?

Why should people read the Old Testament frequently?

How can people learn to trust Jehovah?

Into what category does a failure to trust God for material necessities fall and why?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text spoken?

How do we know that Jesus was a practical teacher?

Why should all of God's people ask him for their daily bread?

The People Murmur and Food is Provided

What does the Bible teach with reference to the murmurings of the children of Israel?

Mention several things about which they murmured and give the meaning of murmuring. See your concordance and your dictionary.

What do people do who murmur against the leaders who are doing God's will?

Why does the Lord permit his people to murmur and how did Moses deal with the situation?

What is the value of inspired comments on various parts of the Bible?

What did the people call the bread which God gave them and what was it like?

#### Directions for Gathering the Manna

How much manna was each individual entitled to for the day and how was it measured?

What lesson is taught by the daily limit and why were they not allowed to keep it longer?

What did the conduct of those who tried to keep it demonstrate?

What great lesson does Jesus teach regarding this principle?

What does it mean for one to trust in God's promises, and why can not those who do not trust him please him?

Discuss the conduct of the Israelites in this respect in the light of our general practices.

Why does not the average Christian put more trust in God with reference to his daily needs?

The Miraculous Supply of Water

Where were the people of Israel at the time the water was provided for them?

What other important event took place at that camp site?

How do you account for the murmurings of Israel after their miraculous feeding?

What is the only way to overcome human nature?

How did the psalmist evaluate the murmurings of the children of Israel in the wilderness?

What important lesson should we learn from all of this?

What effect do you feel that this lesson has had on you?

## Lesson VII—November 13, 1966

# THE GIVING OF THE LAW AT SINAI

## Lesson Text

Ex. 20: 1-17

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am Je-ho'-vah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for

I Je-ho'-vah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me.

6 And showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of Je-ho'-vah thy God in vain; for Je-ho'-vah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor, and

**Golden Text.**—*"Knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly."* (1 Tim. 1: 9.)

**DEVOTIONAL READING.**—Deut. 5: 1-21.

## Daily Bible Readings

Nov. 7. M.....	The Ten Commandments (Deut. 5: 6-21)
Nov. 8. T.....	.....Duties to God (Ex. 20: 1-11)
Nov. 9. W.....	.....Duties to Man (Ex. 20: 12-20)
Nov. 10. T.....	.....Childrens' Duties (Eph. 6: 1-9)
Nov. 11. F.....	.....Social Duties (Col. 3: 18-4: 1)
Nov. 12. S.....	.....Perfect Law (Psalm 19: 7-14)
Nov. 13. S.....	.....Law of Liberty (James 1: 19-27)

**TIME.**—1491 B.C.

**PLACE.**—Mount Sinai.

**PERSONS.**—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

## Introduction

The most awe-inspiring experience the children of Israel had, during their march from Egypt to the land of Canaan, was at mount Sinai. It was pointed out in an earlier lesson that Horeb and Sinai were apparently used interchangeably; but if there was a difference between them, then Horeb was the range of mountains, while Sinai was its highest peak; or, if not the highest, then certainly among the highest. The exact location of mount Sinai is not definitely known today. The inspired record says, "In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." (Ex. 19: 1-6.)

The scene before us at Sinai may very properly be described as the setting for making Israel into a nation, separate and apart from all other peoples. They had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, baptized into the authority of Moses, in the cloud and in the sea; and now, as the scenes at Sinai began to unfold, we shall see them become the first theocracy the world had ever known. The greater part of the nineteenth chapter of Exodus tells of the preparation which had to be made

by the people of Israel, before they could meet Jehovah and hear his voice. "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up." (Ex. 19: 16-20.)

The majestic voice of Jehovah, in the midst of the terrifying sights and sounds, caused the people to fear greatly; and they besought Moses that he, rather than Jehovah, would speak unto them. "And all the people perceived the thunders, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." (Ex. 20: 18-21.) These were the circumstances under which the law was given to Israel; and the expressed purpose was to generate in the people a feeling of awe and reverence; so that they would have a suitable and adequate motive for doing the requirements of the law.

## The Golden Text

*"Knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly"* A passage of scripture can usually be best understood in the light of its context;

and that is true of the statement which serves as the golden text for today. Some years before Paul wrote these words to Timothy, he had told the elders of the church in Ephesus

that an apostasy was in the making. His words to them were, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20: 28-30.)

After Paul made the statement just quoted, he went on to Jerusalem, where he was arrested; and within a relatively few days, he was transferred to Caesarea and imprisoned there for two years. He was then sent to Rome, where he remained in prison for another two years. (Read Acts, chapters 20-28.) Sometime after his release from his Roman imprisonment, he went to Ephesus; and when he felt that he should go elsewhere, he left Timothy there to deal with some unruly teachers in the church. "As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith; so do I now." (1 Tim. 1: 3, 4.) The false teachers to whom Paul referred may have

been the very men he spoke to in his address to the Ephesian elders, quoted above; and if so, his prediction had already come to pass. (Cf. 1 Tim. 1: 18-20; 2 Tim. 2: 14-18.)

Paul then went on to say, "But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned: from which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking; desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly." (1 Tim. 1: 5-11.) The context of the passage now under consideration clearly shows that the false teachers did not understand the purpose of the law, which evidently was the law of Moses, that is, that was the law which Paul had in mind. That law, he says, is good, if it is used lawfully, that is, according to its design, or in harmony with the spirit in which it was enacted. The true purpose of the law of Moses is expressed in such passages as Gal. 3: 19-24; Rom. 7: 12, 13. Any law, then, such as the law of Moses, was never intended to make men righteous, or, which is more to the point here, to govern those who are righteous: it is for the lawless and unruly. (Cf. Gal. 2: 12; 3: 21.)

### The Text Explained

#### The Ten Commandments Were Spoken by God (Ex. 20: 1, 2)

*And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

Although the Bible teaches that the law of Moses was ordained by or through angels, and spoken by them (see Acts 7: 53; Gal. 3: 19; Heb. 2: 2), the section of the lesson now under consideration seems to indicate that it was Jehovah himself who did the speaking. This is also the idea which is set forth in Deut. 4: 12, 13, 32, 33: "And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his Covenant,

which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments: and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. . . . For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?"

The law which was given was the law of Jehovah for the Israelites, and it had to be obeyed on penalty of death. The writer of Hebrews says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the thing? that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word

spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2: 1-3a.) The "word" spoken through angels was the law of Moses; and the people to whom it was addressed were held accountable for every transgression and disobedience.

The words of verse 2, of the passage now under consideration, have been referred to as the Law-Giver's preface. It is in this statement that he asserts his own authority to enact the law for his people; and he makes it plain to them that he is the sole object of their religious worship, and assigns three reasons for it, namely,

(1) he is the Self-Existent One; (2) he is *their* God; and (3) he brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and thereby become their Redeemer. This is a vital lesson for us to learn and remember; for it is the same principle by which the Lord claims the right to rule over his people today. Any man who has been redeemed by Christ owes his life to Christ. "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.)

### The Laws Governing Their Relationship to God (Ex. 20: 3-11)

The Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone; and inasmuch as they are divided into two classes, it is thought by some that one table contained the laws which stated the duties of the people toward God, while the laws on the other table gave their duties toward their fellow men. The first four of these commandments pertained to God, and they gave, as the reader can see, the true view which his people should have of his divine nature, the reverence which they should manifest toward him, and the kind of obedience which they should render to him. The other six commandments set forth the duties which they owed to their fellow men. It is thought by some Bible

students that the law was given at mount Sinai fifty days after the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, and that that was the origin of the day which we know as pentecost.

Any one who will study the Ten Commandments carefully will be able to see that they are an expression of the eternal moral nature of Jehovah; and that they embody the basic principles which govern a life of faith, which must issue forth in loyalty to and reverence for God, and moral responsibility toward men. They were never intended to serve as a basis for man's self-justification, as many people during the days of Christ and the apostles supposed; but only as a guide for God's people who loved him and wanted to do his will. It has already been pointed out that the high standard of the law would enable people to see the enormity of sin; and would eventually lead the thoughtful to realize their need for a Saviour. (Read Gal. 3: 1-29.) When the law of Moses had served its purpose, the commandments themselves were taken out of the way (cf. Col. 2: 14; Rom. 10: 4); but the repeal of the statutes in no way affected the principles upon which the laws were based. *Statutes* are enacted and can be annulled; but *principles* are eternal and cannot be destroyed or rendered useless.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

This is the first commandment in the Decalogue; and it prohibits every species of mental idolatry, as well as all attachment, for the purpose of worship, to earthly and sensible things. The marginal reading for "before" is *besides*; and that plainly shows that the Israelites were to have no other gods *in addition to* Jehovah. It has been observed that the very first commandment of the whole series was divinely calculated to prevent man's misery and promote his happiness, by removing him from all false dependence and leading him to the one true God, who is the source of all good. (Cf. James 1: 17.)

*Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou*

*shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*

The aim of the prohibition contained in the second commandment was not to forbid the making of images *per se*; for Moses himself was instructed to make many in connection with the tabernacle service and the experiences of the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings. (See Num. 21: 8, 9; cf. 2 Kings 18: 1-4.) The children of Israel were forbidden to make any image of any thing for the purpose of worship. They had lived in idolatrous Egypt all of their lives; and it would therefore, speaking from the human viewpoint, be natural for them to do the forbidden thing. And if we continue our reading, we will see that that was exactly what they did do, even before Moses returned to them with the two tables of the law. (See Ex. 32: 1ff.)

The term "jealous," in and of itself, may be used in a good or in a bad sense; but we know that it was used in a good sense here: for Jehovah is good and only good. (Cf. Ex. 34: 14.) The idea is that God will not tolerate a rival. This is true and right, not only for God's own honor, but also for the good of his people; and what was true of the Israelites is also true of us: God is no respecter of persons. Jehovah will not suffer any evil influence to mar the righteous character of those who are his. A debasing effect is always seen in the lives of those who worship inferior gods; and the history of idolatrous Israel shows how God visited iniquity upon the successive generations of those who followed that practice, by withdrawing his divine presence and delivering the people into the hands of their enemies. The opposite was also true of those who were faithful to him. (Cf. Ezek. 18; and the Book of Judges.)

*Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

To take the name of God in vain is to use it in a way which is contrary to his will. This certainly pre-

cludes all profanity, as well as the careless and irreverent use of his name as a byword. But there are other ways of taking the name of God in vain; as, for example, when we profess to honor him, but do not live up to that profession. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2: 19.) T. Q. Martin observed that we are living in a rather flip-pant age, and that man is disposed to take nothing very seriously, but himself. When any one loses the overwhelming sense of holiness, majesty, and greatness of Jehovah, he has lost the greatest force which would hold him back from a course of folly. No man will have reverence God's word who has lost reverence for the Author of that word.

It will make no difference in the judgment day what the guilty may say regarding their vain use of the Lord's name, as, for example, that they meant no harm in that which they said and did; for God will not hold them guiltless. (Cf. Matt. 12: 36, 37.) In the words of Adam Clarke, Is it necessary to say to any truly spiritual mind that all such interjections as *O God! my God! good God! good Heavens!*, et cetera, et cetera, are formal positive breaches of the law now under consideration? How many who pass for *Christians* are highly criminal here! God himself will be the Avenger of those who take his name in vain; and they will find that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (See Heb. 10: 30, 31.)

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.*

People today should try to distinguish between the sabbath as an institution, and the application of the principle of the sabbath to a given people. When Jesus said that the sabbath was made for man, that is, for the human race (the article "the" is before man in the original, and that, according to Greek scho-



lars, means mankind or the human race), he was talking about the *principle* of the sabbath, rather than of its application to a given people. (See Mark 2: 27, 28.) So far as the record goes, no other people were required to keep the sabbath in the same manner, as the Jews were; and certainly not from the same motive. (Cf. Deut. 5: 15.) It does not follow, however, that no one else was ever required to sanctify a portion of his time to the Lord. The very expression "Lord's day" indicates that the time embraced in the period belongs to the Lord in a peculiar sense.

### The Laws Governing- Their Relationship to Men

(Ex. 20: 12-17)

*Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.*

The apostle Paul calls this the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6: 1, 2); and something of its greatness can be seen, when one takes into consideration the place which his parents have in his life. Adam Clarke notes that for a considerable period of time, the parents stand, as it were, in the place of God to their children. The honor therefore which is due them is great; and it not only includes respect and obedience, but also material assistance, if and when they need it. (See Mark 7: 10-13.)

*Thou shalt not kill.*

The term "kill" is evidently used here in the sense of murder, and is so rendered in some versions; and the reference, of course, is to human beings. Jesus, however, taught that it is not necessary for the overt act to be committed, in order for one to be guilty of murder. (Cf. Matt. 5: 21-26; 1 John 3: 15.)

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

It should be observed that the command which protects the family and asserts the sanctity of the marriage relationship, immediately follows the one which safeguards human life. (Cf. Matt. 5: 27-32.)

*Thou shalt not steal.*

To steal is to deprive one of that which rightfully belongs to him, whether by stealth or taking advantage of his ignorance and inexperience. Stealing is possible in every field of human endeavor, and he is a thief who deprives another, without proper compensation.

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

Jehovah will not permit his people to deprive another of his good name, any more than he will permit them to take his material possessions. Bearing false witness against one's neighbor can be done by actually giving false testimony, or by withholding the truth when such will result in injury. This command prohibits all half-truths, as well as falsehoods.

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*

To covet is to have an inordinate, unregulated, or unrestrained desire for that which is another's. Covetousness has been called the mother of theft; because, like hatred or a lustful look, it may, and often does, lead to the overt act.

It has been correctly said that a man's social relationships are the sphere of applied religion; and that his religion becomes practical when it rules his conduct in everyday living. (Cf. 1 John 4: 20, 21.)

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What do you think was the most awe-inspiring experience of Israel? Why?  
Where was mount Sinai and when did the people of Israel reach that place?  
Discuss the various conditions under which Israel was made into a nation.  
What preparations were made before the people could meet with Jehovah?  
What meaning should this have to us?  
How were the Israelites affected by the voice of Jehovah?

Why was the law given to them under such circumstances?

### The Golden Text

What is the best way for people to understand a given passage of scripture?  
Under what circumstances did Paul write the words which serve as the golden text?  
What reasons do we have for thinking that his prediction regarding an apostasy had come to pass?  
What had the would-be teachers failed to understand?  
What is the over-all purpose of law?

### The Ten Commandments Were Spoken by God

What does the Bible teach with reference to the actual giving of the law? Give reasons for your answer.

What was Jehovah's requirement concerning it?

Why has verse 2 of this section of the lesson text been called the Law-Giver's preface?

What assertions did Jehovah make in that statement?

What is our greatest obligation with reference to serving the Lord today?

### The Laws Governing Their Relationship to God

What probable reason did Jehovah have for putting the law on two tables of stone?

Tell something of the nature and purpose of the Ten Commandments.

What was the relationship of these commandments to principles of truth or what is the difference between statutes and principles?

Why were all graven images forbidden?

In what sense is Jehovah a jealous God?

What is the meaning of taking the name of God in vain?

What was the Jewish sabbath?

### The Laws Governing Their Relationship to Men

What comment did Paul make regarding the first of these commandments?

What does it mean for one to honor his parents?

What "killing" did the Decalogue forbid?

In what way can Christians be guilty of this crime?

Why was adultery forbidden and what is the application of the principle to us?

What is the meaning of stealing and what are some of the ways of accomplishing it?

What does it mean to bear false witness against one neighbor and what are some of the ways in which this may be done?

What does it mean to covet and why is covetousness forbidden?

When does one's religion become practical?

## Lesson VIII—November 20, 1966

### WORSHIP IN ISRAEL

#### Lesson Text

Ex. 25: 1, 2, 8, 9; 29: 43-46; 40: 34-38

1 And Je-ho'-vah spake unto Mó'-ses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Is'-ra-el, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering.

. . . . .

8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

9 According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it.

43 And there I will meet with the children of Is'-ra-el; and *the Tent* shall be sanctified by my glory.

44 And I will sanctify the tent of meeting, and the altar: Aar'-on also and his sons will I sanctify, to minister to me in the priest's office.

45 And I will dwell among the children of Is'-ra-el, and will be their God.

46 And they shall know that I am Je-ho'-vah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of E'-gypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Je-ho'-vah their God.

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Je-ho'-vah filled the tabernacle.

35 And Mo'-ses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Je-ho'-vah filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Is'-ra-el went onward, throughout all their journeys:

37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

38 For the cloud of Je-ho'-vah was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Is'-ra-el, throughout all their journeys.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let its go unto the house of Jehovah"* (Psalm 122:1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 122: 1-9.

#### Daily Bible Readings

Nov. 14. M.....A Building for Worship (Ex. 30: 1-10)

Nov. 15. T.....Tent of Meeting (Ex. 31: 1-11)

Nov. 16. W.....	Sacred Meeting Place (Ex. 29: 38-46)
Nov. 17. T.....	Glory in the Tabernacle (Ex. 40: 34-38)
Nov. 18. F.....	Joy in House of God (Psalm 122: 1-9)
Nov. 19. S.....	Safety in the House of God (Psalm 5: 1-7)
Nov. 20. S.....	Acceptable Worship (John 4: 19-26)

TIME.—1491, 1490 B.C.

i PLACE.—In the wilderness before mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

We learn from the Books of Exodus and Numbers that the children of Israel remained in the wilderness of Sinai eleven months and twenty days. "In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai." (Ex. 19: 1.) "And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel set forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran." (Num. 10: 11, 12.) The wilderness of Paran was between the wilderness of Sinai and the land of Canaan. (See map.) Further light is thrown on the journey from Sinai (Horeb) by the following statement: "Jehovah our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the hill-country of the Amorites, and unto the places nigh thereunto, in the Arabah, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and in the South, and by the sea-shore, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them." (Deut. 1: 6-8.) This is sufficient to show that Jehovah meant for the children of Israel to go directly from Sinai to the promised land, in which case they would not have been required to cross the river Jordan.

It was during their long stay before mount Sinai that the Lord's people received the law of Moses, as we saw in the previous study, the law which was to govern them throughout the Jewish dispensation,

and built the Tabernacle, which was to be the central place of their worship, until they were settled in the land to which they were going, and which was to be their permanent home. Those who are familiar with the history of the Bible are aware of the fact that when Jehovah gave a law for the government of all his people, he always required that they maintain a central place for their worship. This does not mean that people could not worship at other places, such as their homes; but it does signify that they were under obligation to assemble at stated times for public worship. (Cf. John 4: 19-24.) It is true that an assembly of the Lord's people today may be maintained at any convenient place, it is also true that they are warned not to forsake their "own assembling together." (See Heb. 10: 25, 26.) The idea that Christians are not required to assemble with other Christians, when such is possible, is in direct conflict with the teaching of the New Testament.

If the Lord's people, generally speaking, understood the meaning of worship, they would never absent themselves from the assembly of the saints, when it is possible for them to be there; unless they have an acceptable reason for not being there. (Cf. Matt. 9: 13.) Man is by nature a creature of worship; and it is as natural for him to worship, as it is for him to eat. The truth is, it is impossible for him to live and not worship. He may not always worship the right object, or in the right way; but he will worship, nevertheless. Worship is not simply the performance of certain acts; instead, it is something which takes place in the heart, namely, "the adoring reverence of the human spirit for the divine." But before there can be any true worship, the emotions must be aroused; and that is accomplished by the knowledge of who and what

God is, and what he has done for us. When one has the proper feeling toward God, that feeling always seeks an outward expression; and when one is properly instructed, the outward expression will conform to the revealed will of God. (Cf. John 4: 24.) One worships in spirit when he has a spiritual sense of the object of his worship and a spiritual commun-

nion with him; and he worships in truth when he is guided by the truth which has been revealed, and is therefore free from false conceptions, resulting from imperfect knowledge. True worship always includes a truthful conception of the object of worship; and this truthful conception can only be gained by learning the truth.

### The Golden Text

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah"* The psalm from which the words just quoted are taken belongs to a group of psalms (120-134), which are called *songs of ascents*; and they were probably sung by pilgrims who were going up to Jerusalem for the annual feasts, or ritually on one of the stairways in or near the temple. David was the author of the psalm from which the golden text for today is taken. Not only did the words which he wrote express his own sentiments; they were also suited to the needs of others, both then and now. A suitable song, which is properly sung, will often do more for a spiritually-minded person, than the same idea which is expressed in prose will do. And it is for this reason that we are exhorted to speak "one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with" our hearts to the Lord. (See Eph. 5: 19.) The house of Jehovah about which David spoke, in the passage now under consideration, was doubtless the place of worship during his day; but the words can be extended, without doing violence to the Scriptures, to include the church of our day. (Cf. 1 Tim. 3: 14, 15.)

The reference just cited says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God." But in spite of the plainness of the language just quoted, there are some brethren, including preachers, who apparently have not learned that the church is made up of the people of God, and is not merely the building in which they meet. It is evident that many brethren feel that the building is the church; for they are always talking about what brethren

may or may not do in the church building. Isaiah, looking down through the centuries, prophesied, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2: 2, 3.) The question which the Lord's people should be concerned with is, What should be done in his spiritual house, and not simply what may be done in the building.

The words of the golden text set forth the spirit which should characterize God's people when they enter the place of worship. Such a privilege was to the psalmist a matter of gladness and thanksgiving; and that is the way in which we should feel about such an opportunity today. And if that were true, we would make every effort to be present whenever the saints assemble for worship, if at all possible for us to be there. The Speaker's Bible points out that in the church of the New Testament the emphasis is on the spirituality of the worship, since the presence of God is no longer limited or localized, as it was during the Old Testament period. (See again John 4: 19-24.) To quote further from The Speaker's Bible, "And so we find the Christian Church coming to birth at Pentecost, and wherever the gospel was received believers gathered into groups for corporate worship. H in time some grew negligent the apostolic injunction was given, 'For-sake not the assembling of your-

selves together,' for a solitary Christian was barely conceivable. If he did exist he was, at least, an improv-

erished creature, cut off from the highest privileges of the Christian life."

## The Text Explained

### The Offering for the Sanctuary Enjoined

(Ex. 25: 1, 2, 8, 9)

*And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering.*

The Lord's people were, at the time of this lesson, his church (see Acts 7: 38); and he made it plain to them that it was their obligation to provide the material things which were needed for the place and equipment of worship. And it is altogether probable that their offerings came from the gifts which they received from the Egyptians, at the time they were leaving that country. Any man who is fair and honest with himself will readily admit that, in the final analysis, he is dependent upon God for all his blessings, including all of his possessions. No man could live in this world a single hour without Jehovah's benefits. Yet, in the face of all this, it is a noticeable fact that most people are apparently not satisfied with the things which God so graciously bestows upon them. (Cf. James 1: 17.) A thoughtful consideration of these truths should cause all people, and especially Christians, to realize that they have the wrong attitude toward God, and should move them to be more grateful to him.

The things which Jehovah was asking his people for, at the time of this lesson, are revealed in the following verses: "And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate." (Ex. 25: 3-7.) The response of the people to Jehovah's call through Moses is graphically described in Ex. 35: 20-29, which should be read by those who

study this lesson. And then, further on, we read: "And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they wrought; and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Jehovah commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Ex. 36: 4-7.) It is good to know that this same spirit of sacrificial giving characterized some of the early churches, as may be seen by reading 2 Cor. 8: 1-5.

*And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it.*

Jehovah always has a definite plan for all offerings which he authorizes; and if one will only familiarize himself with the record of his revelation, he will always know what should be done with them. The sanctuary or tabernacle was a material structure, but that was the work which the people of Israel were concerned with; whereas, the sanctuary of the New Testament, with which we are concerned, is a spiritual house. But in both instances God gave specific directions for the work to be done; and those directions must be carefully followed, if we are to please him. (Cf. Heb. 8: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 3: 10-15.)

### Where Jehovah Met His People

(Ex. 29: 43-46)

*And there I will meet with the children of Israel; and the Tent shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tent of meeting, and the altar: Aaron and his sons will I sanctify, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell*

*among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Jehovah their God.*

The words just quoted are the closing part of a paragraph, which begins with verse 38; and the entire paragraph should be read before proceeding with the explanation of the section of the lesson text now before us. Jehovah ordained that there should be a perpetual daily service at the altar; and he assured the people that it was at the altar that he would meet with them. And inasmuch as the entire service of the tabernacle, including the priests would be sanctified, that would enable Jehovah to dwell among them. Although recurring throughout the Bible, this is one of the great truths of the Scriptures which many people have failed to recognize and appropriate to themselves, namely, that God dwells only in sanctified places, and among people who are consecrated to him. Thus, when the antediluvians rebelled against God, they were all destroyed' except Noah and his family; and when Israelites departed from the ways of Jehovah, they were cast out of his sight. (Cf. 1 Kings 9: 6, 7.)

It should also be kept in mind that men and things can be sanctified or set apart only as God directs. (See John 17: 17; cf. 15: 3; Eph. 5: 25-27.) But when his word is followed, his people have the assurance that God is among them; and "if God is for us, who is against us?" Or, to state the same thing in another way, If God is among us, what does it matter who is against us? Jehovah is able to make all things, both the good and the bad, work together for our good (see Rom. 8: 28, 31). "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame

who revile your good manner of life in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." (1 Pet. 3: 13-17.)

In commenting on the words of the text, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel," Adam Clarke says, "This is the great charter of the people of God, both under the Old and New Testaments. (See Ex. 25: 8; Lev. 26: 11, 12; 2 Cor. 6: 16; Rev. 21: 3.) God dwells among them: he is ever to be found in his church to enlighten, quicken, comfort, and support it; to dispense the light of life by the preaching of his word, and the influences of his Spirit for the conviction and conversion of sinners. And he dwells in those who believe; and this is the very tenor of the New Covenant which God promised to make with the house of Israel. (See Jer. 31: 31-34; Ezek. 37: 24-28; Heb. 8: 7-12; and 2 Cor. 6: 16.) And because God had promised to dwell in all his genuine followers, hence the frequent reference to this covenant and its privileges in the New Testament. And hence it is so frequently and strongly asserted that every believer is a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2: 22). That the Spirit of God witnesses with their spirits that they are the children of God (Rom. 8: 16). That the Spirit of Christ in their hearts enables them to call God their Father (Gal. 4: 6). And that if any man have not this Spirit, he is none of his (Rom. 8: 9). And hence St. Paul states this to be the sum and substance of apostolical preaching, and the riches of the glory of the mystery of the gospel among the Gentiles, viz., Christ in you the hope of glory: whom, says he, we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col. 1: 27, 28)."

Furthermore, Jehovah wanted all of his people to know why he was bestowing his blessings upon them, and was dwelling among them: "And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them: I am Jehovah their God." There are too many people who forget that they have been redeemed by the Lord; and when that happens they are

soon back again in the quagmires of sin. After telling his readers how to develop the Christian character, Peter says, "For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins." (2 Pet. 1: 9.) The terrible consequences of such a condition is also set forth by that apostle: "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. 2: 20-22.) But if people will only remember that which the Lord has done for them, these terrible things will never happen to them. Thoughtful people are thankful; but the thoughtless are ungrateful and rebellious.

### Divine Approval and Guidance Demonstrated (Ex. 40: 34-38)

*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys: but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of Jehovah was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

If one will read all of the record between the first and last sections of the lesson text for today, he will see that the directions for building the tabernacle and its furnishings were first given in detail, and then the actual building was completed. The last section of the lesson text tells what happened when the work was

finished; and, as The Wycliffe Bible Commentary observes, "The fulfillment of God's commands culminated in the sanctifying by God's visible presence of all that had been dedicated unto him. For Israel and for all ages to come, these chapters clearly teach the lesson that the way of blessing is the way of obedience and faith."

It has always been impossible for mortal man to see the face of Jehovah and live (cf. Ex. 33: 17-23; 1 Tim. 6: 16); but that does not mean that God did not manifest his presence to his people. That was the purpose of the cloud and the fire, which not only showed that God was there; but that he also approved the work which had been done in constructing the tabernacle and its furniture. The fact that Moses was unable to enter into the tabernacle while the cloud was upon it shows that it was more than an ordinary cloud; and if we will read the record regarding the dedication of the temple which Solomon built, we will see that the same thing happened then. (See 1 Kings 8: 10, 11.) It appears that the "cloud" and the "glory" of Jehovah were used interchangeably; but if they were not the same, then the glory of Jehovah may have been indicated by some light or brightness, which man could not look upon in his physical state.

The tabernacle which we are considering at this time was the place where the worship of Jehovah was conducted, and it should not be confused with "the tent of meeting" (Ex. 33: 7), which Moses pitched without the camp, following the transgression with reference to the golden calf. God withdrew his presence from the people at that time (cf. Ex. 33: 1-6); and that apparently accounts for the fact that the tent of meeting was pitched outside the camp. But there is every reason for thinking that the tabernacle for worship was pitched in the midst of the camp. (Read Num. 2, where the plan of the camp and the order of march are given.)

An extended statement regarding the camping and the marching of the children of Israel is found in the closing part of the ninth chapter of Numbers, which should be read. (See Num. 9: 15-23.) Jehovah has

never left his people without proper instruction regarding that which he wanted them to do. That was true of Israel, and it is also true of us today. If people will familiarize themselves

with the New Testament, they will never be in doubt regarding their duty; but that requires more than a mere reading of the record; God expects his people to study his word.

### Questions for Discussion

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

ing his people to make an offering?  
How do you know?

#### Introduction

How long were the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai? How do you know?  
Under what circumstances did they leave there and where was their next stop?  
How long did Jehovah originally plan for Israel to be on the way to Canaan?  
What did the Israelites do while they were in the wilderness of Sinai?  
What was the purpose of the tabernacle?  
What is the purpose of worship and what should be the Lord's people's attitude toward it?  
What does it mean for Christians to worship in spirit and in truth?

Where Jehovah Met His People  
At what place did Jehovah say that he would meet with his people?  
Where alone is God willing to dwell, so far as his people are concerned?  
How has the Lord demonstrated his unwillingness to dwell anywhere else?  
What is the meaning of sanctification and how alone may that be accomplished?  
What should it mean to every child of God for him to dwell among them?  
What does the New Testament teach on this subject?  
Why does Jehovah bestow his blessings upon his people?  
Why are people so prone to forget all his benefits?  
What is true of those who do forget that they were redeemed by God's great mercy?  
Why are thoughtful people thankful?

#### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances were the words of the golden text written?  
In what sense may the words be applied to us?  
What is the house of the Lord and how should all of the Lord's people feel toward it?

#### Divine Approval and Guidance , Demonstrated

The Offering for the Sanctuary Enjoined  
Why are the people of the Lord under obligation to make provisions for his work?  
What should our attitude be toward our material possessions?  
What did Jehovah ask the Israelites for and where did they probably get many of those things?  
How did the people respond to the call for the offering and what lesson is there here for us?  
Does God always have a reason for ask-

What do we learn from the record between the first and last sections of the lesson text?  
In what way did Jehovah show his approval of the work which had been done on the tabernacle?  
Why can not mortal man look upon the face of God and live?  
How did Jehovah manifest his presence at the time of the completion of the tabernacle?  
What was the difference between the tabernacle and "the tent of meeting"?  
Where was each of these two tents placed?  
What was the Lord's signal for the people to march and to encamp?

### Lesson IX—November 27, 1966

## THE SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU

### Lesson Text

Ex. 24: 1-3; Lev. 10: 1-7

1 And he said unto Mo'-ses, Come up unto Je-ho'-vah, thou, and Aar'-on, Na'-dab, and A-bi'-hu, and seventy of the elders of Is'-ra-el; and worship ye afar off:

2 And Mo'-ses alone shall come near unto Je-ho'-vah; but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go up with him.

3 And Mo'-ses came and told the people all the words of Je-ho'-vah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and

said, All the words which Je-ho'-vah hath spoken will we do.

1 And Na'-dab and A-bi'-hu, the sons of Aar'-on, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Je-ho'-vah, which he had not commanded them.

2 And there came forth fire from before Je-ho'-vah, and devoured them, and they died before Je-ho'-vah.



3 Then Mo'-ses said unto Aar'-on, This it is that Je-ho'-vah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aar'-on held his peace.

4 And Mo'-ses called Mish'-a-el and El'-za-phan, the sons of Uz-ziel the uncle of Aar'-on, and said unto them, Draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.

5 So they drew near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Mo'-ses had said.

6 And Mo'-ses said unto Aar'-on, and unto E-le-a'-zar and unto Ith'-a-mar, his sons, Let not the hair of your heads go loose, neither rend your clothes; that ye die not, and that he be not wroth with all the congregation: but let your brethren, the whole house of Is'-ra-el, bewail the burning which Je-ho'-vah hath kindled.

7 And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest ye die; for the anointing oil of Je-ho'-vah is upon you. And they did according to the word of Mo'-ses.

Golden Text.—*"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."* (1 Sam. 15: 22.)

Devotional Reading.—1 Sam. 15: 1-23.

### Daily Bible Readings

Nov. 21.	M. ....	Vain Worship (Matt. 15: 1-9)
Nov. 22.	T. ....	Will Worship (Col. 2: 20-22)
Nov. 23.	W. ....	Ignorant Worship (Acts 17: 16-31)
Nov. 24.	T. ....	Acceptable Worship (John 4: 19-26)
Nov. 25.	F. ....	Example of Disobedience (2 Sam. 6: 1-11)
Nov. 26.	S. ....	Presumptuous Sin (Psalm 19: 1-13)
Nov. 27.	S. ....	Saul's Great Sin (1 Sam. 15: 1-31)

Time.—1490 B.C.

Place.—In the wilderness before mount Sinai.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and others.

### Introduction

Sin is the greatest blight which has ever struck the human race; and it is, of course, the result of the influence of Satan who, so far as is known, was the first to sin against Jehovah. We have no way of knowing when that first violation of God's will took place; but we do have a record of the first time the devil induced the human race to act contrary to that which Jehovah ordained. (See Gen. 3: 1-8.) The entire history of the Bible, from that day until its close, is a record of the struggle between righteousness and wickedness; and the Book of Revelation, in projecting the future, enables Bible students to have some idea of the continual struggle between the good and the bad, until time shall be no more. If people would only try to see something of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" (see Rom. 7: 13), they not only would try to avoid it themselves; but would also make every effort they could to keep it out of the lives of others.

The Bible is not a book of

definitions nor a dictionary of terms, as those terms are usually understood; but we can easily learn something of what God thinks about anything concerning which he has spoken: and that, of course, includes sin. Jehovah has, indeed, revealed himself with reference to sin; and, while no formal definition is given, we can, nevertheless, know what he says sin is, and what his attitude is toward it. His standard of judgment is always correct; and any deviation from it on the part of man is wrong. If we would see things as God sees them, then we must learn to think after him; and the only way this can be done is to read that which is found in his revelation to mankind.

While keeping in mind that there is no formal definition of sin, in the commonly accepted meaning of that expression, there are many statements in the Scriptures from which we can see manifestations of sin. The following references are given as illustrations, namely, (1) "But he that doubteth is condemned if he

eat, because he eateth not of faith; and *whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" (Rom. 14: 23.) If the whole fourteenth chapter of Romans is read, it will be seen that the contrast is between faith and doubt; and the idea is that if any one attempts to serve God in anything about which he has doubts, is to be guilty of sin. The apostle is not talking about the faith of the gospel, but of the Christian's own faith (or lack of it) as to the religious propriety or rightfulness of the particular act which he has in mind. Thus, for one to entertain doubt with reference to such matters, but goes ahead just the same, is to be guilty of sin. Such an attitude and such action is sin because it is both reckless and presumptuous—reckless, in that it is rash and careless; and presumptuous, in that it is performed unto God without being fully convinced that it is right.

(2) "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and *sin is lawlessness.*" (1 John 3: 4.) The original term for "lawlessness" is precisely the same as that which is rendered "iniquity" in Matt. 7: 23. The word describes, according to Thayer,

"1. the condition of one without law,—either because ignorant of it, or because violating it. 2. contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness." Arndt-Gingrich note that the lawless deeds which are committed originate in such a frame of mind. The deeds which were done by the people of Matt. 7: 21-23 were not vicious, but rather unauthorized by the Lord. (3) "*All unrighteousness is sin*: and there is a sin not unto death." (1 John 5: 17.) "Unrighteousness," as Thayer points out, is "a deed violating law and justice;" and it includes every breach of duty and every thing else which comes short of the requirements of justice. (4) "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to *him it is sin.*" (James 4: 17.) Some one has said that "unused knowledge of one's duty is sin, the sin of omission" (Heb. 2: 1-3), while A. R. Fausset points out that "nothing more injures the soul than wasted impressions. Feelings exhaust themselves and evaporate, if not embodied in practice. As we will not act except we feel, so, if we will not act out our feelings, we shall soon cease to feel." (*In loco.*)

### The Golden Text

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken *than the fat of rams.*" It was while the Israelites were encamped in Rephidim, soon after they had left the land of Egypt, that the Amalekites made an attack upon them. Moses commanded Joshua to get an army together, and go out and fight Amalek. (This is the first time that Joshua's name appears in the Bible.) This was done, and as long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites prevailed; but when Moses let his hands down, the Amalekites prevailed. When Moses could no longer hold up his hands unaided, Aaron and Hur held them up for him; "and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun." Joshua was successful in his defeat of Amalek; and the whole incident makes it clear that the victory was made possible by Jehovah.

After Israel had overcome Amalek. in this their first military battle, "Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua:

that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi; and he said, Jehovah hath sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Ex. 17: 14-16; read the entire paragraph, beginning with verse 8.) The fulfillment of this promise by Jehovah is one of the impressive illustrations in the Bible of the statement by Peter, "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3: 8); the meaning of which is, that God is master of both time and space, and he will execute his promise *when* and *where* it fits into his over-all plan and purpose for governing the world.

It was more than four hundred years after the pledge to destroy Amalek, that Jehovah commissioned king Saul to perform that task. "And Samuel said unto Saul, Jehovah sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now there-

fore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (1 Sam. 15: 1-3.) There was

nothing ambiguous about this charge, but Saul and the people decided to save the best of the animals for a sacrifice unto Jehovah. They meant to kill them, to be sure, but they planned to do it *their* way. (Cf. Isa. 55: 8, 9.) But Saul learned to his eternal sorrow that there is no substitute for God's way. That is the lesson of the golden text for today, and it appears that it is needed now as much as it was then.

### The Text Explained

#### God's Covenant With Israel Ratified

(Ex. 24: 1-3)

*And he said unto Moses, Come up unto Jehovah, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off; and Moses alone shall come near unto Jehovah; but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go up with him. And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do.*

After Jehovah had spoken the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20: 3-17), Moses penned this record: "And all the people perceived the thunders, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." (Ex. 20: 18-21.)

It was then that Jehovah gave to Moses the ordinances which are found in Ex. 20: 22-23: 33; which is the section of the inspired record, immediately preceding the text now under consideration. Verse one of the section of the lesson text now before us evidently implies that Moses had been sent down from the mountain for some purpose, probably to communicate to the people the ordinances which he had received from Jehovah; and then, after performing the duty with which he had

been charged, he was again commanded to re-ascend the mountain, this time in company with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders; but he alone was permitted to go near unto Jehovah. It is possible that the purpose of having the leaders who are named here accompany Moses was to inspire general confidence on the part of the people; and to add prestige to them as teachers of the law, and weight to their official duties as priests and elders. (Cf. Josh. 3: 7; 4: 14.) The covenant was formally approved, when the people agreed to obey all that Jehovah had spoken. After the ordinances had been recorded in "the book of the covenant," it was formally dedicated with blood. (See Ex. 24: 4-8; cf. Heb. 9: 18-20.)

#### The Sin and Death of Nadab and Abihu

(Lev. 10: 1, 2)

*And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah.*

It appears that the incident of this section of the lesson text occurred, if not at the beginning of the Levitical system of worship, soon thereafter; and it seems almost certain that this was the first sin under that order of service. And it is interesting to observe in this connection that the first sins which were committed in various ages of God's people, after men began to worship, as that term is generally understood, were with reference to offerings. The first sin which was committed after men be-

gan to worship at the altar was that of Cain; and it was with reference to an offering. (Gen. 4: 1-5.) The first sin under the Levitical system of worship, the sin of Nadab and Abihu, was with reference to an offering. (Lev. 10: 1, 2.) The first sin which the children of Israel committed after they reached Canaan, that of Achan (read the sixth and seventh chapters of Joshua), was with reference to an offering, that is, that which should have been consecrated to Jehovah. (Josh. 6: 18, 19.) And the first recorded sin in the church of the New Testament was with reference to an offering, that of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5: 1-11.)

It seems fair to assume from the record that specific instruction had been given to the priests with reference to the fire which should be used by them in burning the incense. The last verse of chapter nine says, "And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: and when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces." This implies God's approval of that which they were doing. (Cf. 1 Kings 18: 30-39.) And now turning to Lev. 16: 11-14, we read, "And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: and he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat on the east; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times."

It appears from that which is said about Aaron's taking the fire from off the altar, which was evidently the brazen altar, that that was the place where Nadab and Abihu should have obtained theirs. (Cf. Lev. 6: 8-13.) At least they should have followed the divine instruction relative to the source of their fire.

But instead of doing that, they offered "strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them." The term "strange" is from the Hebrew word *zawr*, or simply *zur*, and it is defined by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, as used in the text now before us, to mean "strange to the law," or, which is the same thing, foreign to that which God had spoken. (Cf. Ex. 30: 9; Num. 3: 4; 26: 61.)

This presumptuous and flagrant violation of Jehovah's law, on the part of Nadab and Abihu, resulted in their immediate and dramatic death; and the incident should serve to impress upon our minds one of the most important lessons which the Bible teaches. Inasmuch as Jehovah "had not commanded them" to offer fire to him which was "strange to the law," it was wrong for them to do it. There are people who are wont to use things in service to God, concerning which God has not commanded; and they seem to be perfectly satisfied to go on with their unauthorized practices, on the theory that he did not say "not to do it." (Read again Matt. 7: 21-23.) The principle which should guide us in all of our service to God is this: It is not necessary for the Lord to say "do not do something" in order to make it wrong to do it, if it relates to questions about which he has given instruction; or, which is the same thing, we must learn to respect his silence when he reveals his will to us. (Cf. 1 Cor. 4: 6; 2 John 9.)

In commenting on the expression "which he had not commanded them," Adam Clarke offers these judicious words: "Every part of the religion of God is Divine. He alone knew what he designed by its rites and ceremonies, for that which they prefigured—the whole economy of redemption by Christ—was conceived in his own mind, and was out of the reach of human wisdom and conjecture. He therefore who *altered* any part of this representative system, who *omitted* or *added* any thing, assumed a prerogative which belonged to God alone, and was certainly guilty of a very high offence against the wisdom, justice, and righteousness of his Maker. This appears to have been the sin of Nadab and Abihu, and this at once shows the reason why they were so severe-

ly punished. The most awful judgments are threatened against those who either add to, or take away from, the declarations of God." (See Deut. 4: 2; Prov. 30: 5, 6; Gal. 1: 6-9; Rev. 22: 18, 19; cf. Deut. 29: 29.)

### A Solemn Pronouncement and Some Other Directions (Lev. 10: 3-7)

*Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. So they drew near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Let not the hair of your heads go loose, neither rend your clothes; that ye die not, and that he be not wroth with all the congregation: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which Jehovah hath kindled. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest ye die; for the anointing oil of Jehovah is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.*

We do not know, of course, just why Nadab and Abihu offered fire which was contrary to God's will on the occasion now before us; but, judging from the next paragraph, it has been thought by many Bible students, and probably rightly so, that they were under the influence of intoxicating liquor. The next paragraph reads as follows: "And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, saying, Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, that ye die not: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses." (Lev. 10: 8-11.)

Now with the words just quoted in mind, read the first verse of the sec-

tion of the lesson text now before us: "Then said Moses unto Aaron, This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace." The basic meaning of sanctify is to set apart; and it appears that its practical meaning here is that Jehovah demands that those who come into his presence in worship must have the proper respect for and attitude toward him. This, of course, was not true on the part of Nadab and Abihu, if they were actually under the influence of strong drink. Men in such a condition as that cannot have the proper respect for God, and he will not tolerate such an attitude. Aaron, whose heart must have been deeply grieved because of the violent death of his two sons, attempted no reply to the words which Moses spoke unto him. He evidently knew of the presumptuous conduct of his sons, but he also knew that he had an obligation to remain loyal to God. (Cf. Matt. 10: 37; Luke 14: 25, 26.)

To be under the influence of intoxicating beverages, however, is not the only way in which people can manifest disrespect for God, that is, fail to sanctify him. The identical root word for "sanctify" is used in the following passage: "And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice: and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Num. 20: 10-12; read the preceding paragraph; cf. 27: 12-14; Psalm 106: 32, 33; Deut. 3: 23-29.)

The truth which we are considering here is essentially the same as that which Jesus set forth in John 4: 24, namely, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The term "must" has been described as the strongest word in the English language; it admits of no exception.

When God says that something must be done, there is then no alternative. This means therefore that worship of God must be characterized by two specific elements: (1) it must be in spirit, that is, there must be in the worshipper a spiritual sense of God and spiritual communion with him, thus rendering their devotion sincere and heartfelt; and (2) it must be in truth, that is, guided by the truth and therefore free from false conceptions which result from imperfect knowledge. This truthful conception can come only from learning the truth.

The lesson before us today is another of the many examples in the Old Testament from which we can learn soul-saving lessons (cf. Rom. 15: 4); for if we do not learn to have the proper attitude toward and respect for God, we will have no chance of being saved in the world to come. We learn from the Old Testament examples how God dealt with his people then, while in the New Testament we have his perfect law which must find application in our lives; and we should always keep in mind that he is no respecter of persons. (Cf. Acts 10: 34, 35.) This is to say that God will not condemn the people of a former age for a sin, while excusing us for a similar offense.

The fact that the bodies of Nadab and Abihu were carried from the

sanctuary "in their coats" to a place without the camp, shows that the destroying fire from Jehovah did not consume either their clothing or their bodies. The root meaning of the Hebrew word for "devour" (*akal*) is to eat, consume, devour; and its evident practical application with reference to Nadab and Abihu was to their *lives*, rather than to their bodies.

Another valuable lesson here is with reference to the attitude and conduct of people who are engaged in the Lord's work. It is true that Jesus teaches that God desires mercy, rather than sacrifice (cf. Matt. 9: 13); but that does not grant liberty to professed followers of Christ to abandon his work, on any kind of a pretext. (Cf. Ezek. 24: 18.) If people would only seek to inform themselves concerning the meaning of the Scriptures with reference to such issues, they would have a better conception of their duty toward the Lord; and if they would ask themselves the following question and be honest with God and themselves in their answer, they would stop and think before treating lightly the service of the Lord. The question: "What would I do about forsaking the work of the Lord, for any cause, if I knew that I would die or the Lord would come while I was away?"

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

Why is sin the greatest blight which ever struck the human race?

Who, apparently, committed the first sin against Jehovah? Give reasons for your answer.

How did sin enter into the human family?

What has always characterized mankind from that day until this, and will to the end of time?

How can we know what sin is and what are some of the prominent manifestations of sin?

Why is it a sin to the person who knows to do good and does not do it?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Samuel speak the words of this text?

Why did Jehovah want the Amalekites destroyed?

What important lesson do we learn here about Jehovah's attitude toward "time," as we know it?

Show how this principle was applied with

reference to the destruction of the people of Amalek.

Why did Saul disobey Jehovah and what lesson is there in this for us?

### God's Covenant with Israel Ratified

What happened at mount Sinai following the giving of the Ten Commandments?

What were the ordinances referred to in Exodus immediately preceding this section of the lesson text?

Whom did Jehovah command to accompany Moses into the mountain, and for what apparent purpose?

When was the covenant ratified and dedicated?

### The Sin and Death of Nadab and Abihu

When, apparently, did the events of this section of the lesson text occur?

Discuss some of the "first sins" in various ages of the world.

What was the sin of Nadab and Abihu?

In what sense was the fire which they offered "strange"?

What happened to the two brothers when they thus sinned against Jehovah?

What does the Bible say about the fire which they offered?

What is significant about the expression

that Jehovah "had not commanded them" and what lesson should we learn from it?

A Solemn Pronouncement and Some Other Directions

What was the probable reason for the sinful action of Nadab and Abihu?

In what sense is Jehovah "sanctified" in them who come before him?

Why did Aaron hold his peace when he heard the pronouncement of Jehovah?

What other ways may people fail to sanctify Jehovah before the people?

Show that Jesus himself taught the same essential truth that this lesson sets forth.

What is the significance of the term "must"?

What does it mean to worship Jehovah in spirit and in truth?

What is the value of the lesson for today to us?

In what sense did the fire from Jehovah "devour" Nadab and Abihu?

Discuss the attitude which the Lord's people should manifest toward his work.

What question would help them to realize their responsibility to him?

Lesson X—December 4, 1966

LAWS OF JUSTICE

Lesson Text

Lev. 19: 9-18, 32-37

9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shall thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am Je-ho'-vah your God.

11 Ye shall not steal; neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another.

12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Je-ho'-vah.

13 Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind; but thou shalt fear thy God: I am Je-ho'-vah.

15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Je-ho'-vah.

17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

18 Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Je-ho'-vah.

. . . . .

32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God: I am Je-ho'-vah.

33 And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong.

34 The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of E'-gypt: I am Je-ho'-vah your God.

35 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity.

36 Just balances, just weights, a just e'-phah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am Je-ho'-vah your God, who brought you out of the land of E'-gypt.

37 And ye shall observe all my statutes, and all mine ordinances, and do them: I am Je-ho'-vah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6: 31.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Amos 8: 4-8.

Daily Bible Readings

Nov. 28. M..... Duties to Others (Gal. 6: 1-10)

Nov. 29. T..... Duties to God (1 John 2: 14)

Nov. 30. W.....	Duties to Each Other (Lev. 19: 9-18)
Dec. 1. T.....	Respect for Parents (Lev. 19: 32-37)
Dec. 2. F.....	Christian Justice (Phile. 8-20)
Dec. 3. S.....	Reconciliation (Matt. 18: 21-35)
Dec. 4. S.....	Judgment on Unjust (Amos 8: 4-8)

TIME.—1490 B.C.

Place.—In the wilderness before mount Sinai.

Persons.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

## Introduction

The Book of Leviticus is the third in the list of the five books which are ascribed to Moses; and they are, as all Bible readers know, the first five books of the Bible. There is less historical data in the Book of Leviticus, than in the other four books of this group; and when the late J. W. McGarvey prepared his famous *Class Notes on Sacred History* for use in his classes in Sacred History in the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, he devoted only a single page to the Book of Leviticus. This was due to the fact, as has already been indicated, that very little purely historical material is contained in that book, and to the further fact that Professor McGarvey's work in these particular classes had to do mainly with the *history* of the Bible.

There is, of course, some historical information in the Book of Leviticus, and Bible students should be familiar with it; but the book is primarily concerned with the *laws* which were given to the children of Israel, and which were, to a large extent, administered by the Levitical priesthood. We have already seen in a previous lesson that the Ten Commandments, which may be described as the Constitution of the Law of Moses, and many of the ordinances, were given during the period which is covered by the Book of Exodus; and it is in that way that we have the historical setting for the law. But it appears that the main purpose of the Book of Leviticus was to go more into detail regarding their purpose and administration. The Peo-

ple's Bible Encyclopedia summarizes the book now under consideration in the following words: "Leviticus is the third book of the Pentateuch, and it is so called because it delineates the legislation concerning the priests and Levites—their character, their consecration, and their duties. It is the book of worship, describing the sacrifices, the feasts, and the fasts. It foreshadows the Gospel truth of the recovery of guilty man to holiness and God by blood."

A part of the lesson text for last week was taken from the Book of Leviticus, but it was largely historical, namely, the history of the sin of Nadab and Abihu, and some of its consequences. The lesson for today deals almost exclusively with the law of the covenant, and it is therefore in order to get a general idea of the over-all plan and purpose of the book itself. The book is divided into the following parts or sections: (1) The Laws Regarding Sacrifices, 1: 1-7: 38; (2) A Historical Section, 8: 1-10: 20; (3) Laws Concerning Purity and Impurity, 11: 1-16: 34; (4) Laws of Distinction between Israel and Heathen Nations, 17: 1-20-27; (5) Laws Concerning Priests, Holy Days, and Festivals, 21: 1-26: 2; (6) Promises and Threats, 26: 3-46; and (7) Laws Concerning Vows, 27: 1-34. Following his Notes on the Book of Deuteronomy, Professor McGarvey gave a summary of the various laws of Moses, which will prove very helpful to those who study the Five Books of Moses.

## The Golden Text

"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

This, as Bible readers know, is Luke's version of the Golden Rule; and it should be considered in the light of Matthew's fuller statement of the same teaching, namely, "All

things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets. (Matt. 7: 12.) The reason why this precept is called the Golden Rule is because it embraces in few words



the underlying and governing principle of all morality. The Fourfold Gospel points out that this rule contains all the precepts of the law with regard to man, and all the amplifications of those precepts which were given by the prophets. It teaches us to put ourselves in our neighbor's place; and then direct our conduct accordingly. It assumes, of course, that when we put ourselves in our neighbor's place, we are wise enough not to make any foolish wishes, and good enough not to make any evil ones.

It is certain that Jesus himself is the only person who fully manifested a living demonstration of the teaching which is contained in the Golden Rule; but any one who understands the basic meaning of the spirit of Christianity, knows that every follower of Christ is expected to do his best to make the principle of this precept the dominant factor in his dealings with his fellow men. This means that we must begin the practice of its application with ourselves, rather than to expect that it be applied to us by others. *As ye would that men do to you, you do to them.* The apostle Paul gives substantially the same teaching in Rom. 12: 10, where he says, "in honor preferring one another." The original word for "preferring" occurs only here in the New Testament, and its primary meaning is to "go before as a guide . . . leading the way in showing the honor that is due" (Vin-

cent). Thus, those who would like for others to treat them with justice and kindness, should take the lead in dealing with them in the same manner.

The great idea of the Golden Rule has long been appreciated by the human race, and many great leaders have attempted to give expression to it; but it remained for Jesus to state the ideal in the most comprehensive terms possible. It is easy to see that the sentiment of this rule which was given by Jesus is echoed throughout the New Testament. (Cf., in addition to the example from Paul already cited, Rom. 13: 8, 10; Gal. 5: 14; James 2: 8.) One of the most striking characteristics of the teaching of Jesus is its practicableness. There is nothing about his program for his people which is impossible to be put into practice. The Lord's purpose in teaching was not to satisfy intellectual curiosity, by unveiling divine mysteries; but rather to give guidance for daily living. Religious knowledge, if God is to be pleased, must issue forth in genuine goodness of character and conduct. (Cf. John 13: 17; James 4: 17.) The ideal expressed by Jesus in the Golden Rule can be of real benefit to us, only as we are willing to apply it in our lives. We must learn to live daily by this standard, which means that we must develop the practice of ordering all of our social relationships according to its spirit.

## The Text Explained

### Consideration for the Poor and Afflicted

(Lev. 19: 9-14)

*And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am Jehovah your God.*

A, fuller statement of this law is found in Deut. 24: 19-26: "When thou reapest thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the sojourner, for the

fatherless, and for the widow; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it after thee: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing."

One of the finest examples of the implementation of this law is found in the Book of Ruth. Ruth, as all Bible readers know, was the daughter-in-law of Naomi, who in company

with her husband and two sons, had left the land of Judaea during a famine, and sojourned in the land of Moab. Sometime after reaching the land of their sojourn, Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died; and the two sons married women of that country. After about ten years in the land of Moab, both of the young men died, with the result that three widows were left behind. Naomi concluded that she had sinned against Jehovah in leaving her homeland, and she resolved to return immediately. Both of the daughters-in-law decided to go with her; but after some discussion of the situation, only Ruth accompanied her mother-in-law: "and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest." And then follows the lovely story of how the young widowed sojourner went out into the fields of her adopted country, and gleaned for the support of Naomi and herself.

These two lonely women were able to have their immediate needs met, because the law of Moses provided for the liberal treatment of the poor during the harvest seasons. It appears that the privilege of gleaning after the reapers was conceded, not so much as a matter of right, but rather as a favor granted to particular persons whom the owner of the field desired to befriend. It did not, however, require any special interest to obtain this favor; for Naomi could scarcely have suggested it in the first place, and if she had, Ruth might have hesitated to apply for it to a stranger. The record simply says, "And Ruth the Moabite said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech." (Ruth 2: 2, 3.)

Jamieson notes that this was the earliest law for the poor which we read of in the code of any people; and it combined in admirable union the obligation of a public duty with the exercise of private and voluntary benevolence at a time when the hearts of the rich would be strongly inclined to liberality. This appears to have been particularly true in the

case of Boaz, as may be seen by reading the story of Ruth. It should also be observed that following each of the laws in the lesson text before us are the words: "I am Jehovah;" and they suggest at once his authority to issue the commands, and his ability to bless them when they obeyed him. The two motives for complying with the laws with reference to the poor, as given in Deuteronomy, are (1) "That Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands"; and (2) "And thou shalt remember that thou wait a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing." It is true that people today are not required by specific command to permit "gleaners" to come into their premises; but as quaint old Matthew Henry says, we should not be covetous and griping, and greedy of everything we can lay any claim to; nor insist upon our right in things small and trivial. Such a spirit is foreign to the teaching of the Golden Rule and the entire New Testament. In the words of an inspired man who sought to make a practicable application of the principles of Christianity, "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1: 27.)

*Ye shall not steal; neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah.*

Any thoughtful observer knows that men, all through the ages, have sought to take advantage of their fellows. This is confirmed by history, both sacred and secular, and may be observed in contemporary human relations. Three methods of this unholy practice are mentioned in the text now before us, as may be seen in the threefold prohibition, namely, (1) stealing, (2) dealing falsely, and (3) lying. Some people who would not resort to outright stealing, or deliberate lying, do not hesitate to deal falsely with their fellow men, and especially with those who are weak and unsuspecting, or who are not in position to do anything about it. Such people should remember that God is Jehovah, and that he will deal with all such ungodliness in the

day of judgment. (Cf. Rom. 12: 19; Acts 17: 30, 31; Heb. 10: 30, 31.)

When people swear falsely by the name of Jehovah, they are profaning his name; and that is equivalent to talking his name in vain, a practice which is specifically condemned by the third commandment of the Decalogue. "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (Ex. 20: 7.) The people of the Old Testament period were taught to swear by the name of Jehovah (cf. Deut. 10: 20); but they were required to keep their word faithfully (cf. Psalm 15: 4). The teaching of Jesus on the subject of swearing is in Matt. 5: 33-37.

*Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.*

Moses spoke of this same question in his second discourse in Deuteronomy (4: 44-26: 19), and his further elaborations on the subject should lead us to a better understanding of it. His words are, "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates: in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it); lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee." (Deut. 24: 14, 15.)

If one did not know something about human nature, it would be difficult to think that a man who is capable of conducting a business would have to be told to be kind to a poor and helpless working man. But it frequently happens that people who are poorly fed, poorly clothed, and poorly housed, have to work for the more fortunate, without the benefit of that which rightfully belongs to them. It will not help any one to say that what is said in this lesson applied to a former age; for the same principle is plainly taught in the New Testament. "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony

against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." (James 5: 1-6.)

*Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind; but thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.*

To curse the deaf and put a stumblingblock before the blind is to speak evil of and do that which helpless people cannot reply to or avoid. For example, a deaf man cannot hear the evil things which are spoken against him, and cannot therefore vindicate his own character; and the blind man cannot avoid the hindrances which are placed before him, and cannot therefore escape the injuries which will come to him as a result of them. Adam Clarke notes that he who is capable of doing such things to the helpless, must have a heart cased with cruelty. The spirit and design of these precepts are, that no man shall in any case take advantage of the ignorance, simplicity, or inexperience of his neighbor; but in all things do to his neighbor as he would, on a change of circumstances, that his neighbor should do to him.

#### A Righteous Attitude Must Be Maintained Toward One's Neighbor

(Lev. 19: 15-18)

*Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Jehovah.*

The commandment regarding righteous judgment was applicable to the properly constituted judges in the courts of law, or to those private citizens who might be called upon to referee or arbitrate a dispute between men. In either case, those who are hearing the case, and are being called

upon to try to arrive at a just decision, must always maintain an impartial attitude toward those who are involved in it. They must not allow their pity for the poor man, or the popularity of the mighty man, to influence their judgment: a sincere effort must be made to see to it that each man is judged according to the merits in the case.

A talebearer is one who travels about and deals in rumors, scandals, and false reports, to the detriment of others; or obtains secrets regarding individuals and families, and retells them whenever and wherever he has the opportunity. "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." (Prov. 11: 13.) "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; therefore company not with him that openeth wide his lips." (Prov. 20: 19; cf. 1 Tim. 5: 13.) To "stand against the blood" of a neighbor was to act as a false witness against him, and thereby contribute to his getting the death sentence, when he was not guilty. It is easy to see that these sundry laws were statutes which were intended to apply the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel.

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.*

The principles which underlay these statutes are clearly applied to people today by the teaching of Christ. (Cf. Matt. 5: 23-26; 18: 15-17.) No one should allow the sin of one of his brethren to cause him to sin by holding a grudge, and thereby lose his own soul. It is better to tell him about it, and make an effort to get the matter settled. See the application which Jesus made of Lev. 19: 18, by reading Matt. 22: 34-40.

**Honor to Whom Honor Is Due, and  
Just Weights and Balances**  
(Lev. 19: 32-37)

*Thou shalt rise up before the  
hoary head, and honor the face of*

*the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.*

One has only to look about him today, in order to see how little regard the average person has for this precept. (Cf. Gen. 48: 8-12; Prov. 16: 31; 20: 29.)

*And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God.*

The people of Israel were taught to hold out encouragement to strangers, so that they would want to settle among them; and thereby have the opportunity to be taught the truth about Jehovah. And if the people of Israel would manifest the right attitude toward them who were strangers among them, they would, of course, have a better chance of getting them to listen to them. This should be an impressive lesson to all of us; for it is an indisputable fact that some people probably will never be reached by the gospel, because of the unchristian attitude which some professed followers of Christ have shown toward them. (Cf. Matt. 5: 43-48; Rom. 12: 17-21; Tit. 3: 1-3.)

*Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. And ye shall observe all my statutes, and all mine ordinances, and do them: I am Jehovah.*

The injunctions just quoted, if properly obeyed will insure the proper relationships between a man and his neighbors. And if a man treats his fellows as he should, he will certainly have peace with God, even if others are not as considerate of him as he is of them. Attention is here called again to the oft-repeated statement: "I am Jehovah." It is as if God had said to his people, "I am your Creator, your Deliverer from the house of bondage, and your Sovereign Ruler, who has the wisdom to establish laws, the power to sustain all who obey them, and the power to punish those who violate them."

## Questions for Discussion

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

### Introduction

What is the nature of the Book of Leviticus?  
In what way is it related to the other four books of Moses?  
Give a brief outline of the contents of the Book of Leviticus.

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Jesus speak the words of the golden text?  
Why are these words sometimes called the *Golden Rule*?  
What use does the Lord expect us to make of this rule?  
In what way did the apostle Paul express the same truth?  
How do you feel that the average Christian feels toward the Golden Rule? Give reason for your answer.

### Consideration for the Poor and Afflicted

What additional information did Moses give regarding this law in Deuteronomy?  
Show how this statute was obeyed in the case of Ruth.  
What was the primary reason for giving this law?  
What two motives did Jehovah mention for complying with it?  
What is the lesson in it for us today?  
What is said regarding the matter of being honest with one's neighbor?  
In what way are stealing, dealing falsely, and lying related?

What did Jehovah say about swearing falsely?  
In what way would such a practice profane his name?  
What was Jehovah's law to Israel regarding an employer's attitude toward a working man?  
What does the New Testament teach on this subject?  
What does it mean to curse the deaf and put a stumblingblock before the blind?

### A Righteous Attitude Must Be Maintained toward One's Neighbor

To whom was the command regarding unrighteous judgment applicable?  
What should a judge always do in such cases?  
What application does that have to us?  
Who is a talebearer and what is the Lord's attitude toward him?  
What attitude should one always manifest toward his brother?  
What does the New Testament teach regarding this subject?

### Honor to Whom Honor Is Due, and Just Weights and Balances

How should the Lord's people regard an old man and why?  
What did Jehovah say with reference to strangers or sojourners among his people?  
Why did he want them to manifest that kind of an attitude toward them?  
What lesson is there in this for our day?  
Why do so many of the professed followers of Christ disregard this teaching?  
Why should the Lord's people always have just weights and balances?

## Lesson XI—December 11, 1966

## DUTIES OF PARENTS

### Lesson Text

Deut. 6: 6, 7; 11: 18-25

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart;

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

19 And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

20 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates;

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Je-ho'-vah sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth.

22 For if ye shall diligently keep all this commandment which I command you, to do it, to love Je-ho'-vah your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

23 Then will Je-ho'-vah drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves.

24 Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be

yours: from the wilderness, and Leb'-a-non, from the river, the river Euphra'-tes, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border.

25 There shall no man be able to

Golden Text.—*"Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it."* (Prov. 22: 6.)

Devotional Reading.—Prov. 20: 1-11.

## Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 5. M.....	Godly Parents (2 Tim. 1: 3-6)
Dec. 6. T.....	Religious Family (Luke 2: 41-51)
Dec. 7. W.....	Spiritual Training (Eph. 6: 1-9)
Dec. 8. T.....	Happiness at Home (Prov. 17: 1-8)
Dec. 9. F.....	Gentleness at Home (Prov. 15: 1-9)
Dec. 10. B.....	Bible Taught in Home (Deut. 6: 1-9)
Dec. 11. S.....	Obedying God's Laws (Deut. 11: 18-25)

TIME.—1451 B.C.

PLACE.—In the land of Moab.

PERSONS.—Moses and the children of Israel.

## Introduction

There are few things in human relationships which have more far-reaching consequences, than that which parents have toward their children. Who has not heard the words of Wm. Ross Wallace,

They say that man is mighty,

He governs land and sea,

He wields a mighty scepter

O'er lesser powers that be;

But a mightier power and stronger  
Man from his throne has hurled,  
For the hand that rocks the cradle

Is the hand that rules the world.

While the reference in the words just quoted is primarily to the influence of the mother, we should not get the idea that the father should leave the responsibility of rearing children entirely to the mother. Paul makes that plain in his exhortation to fathers in Eph. 6: 4, namely, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." (Cf. Heb. 12: 9, 10.) Ashley Montagu notes that "when men abandon the upbringing of their children to their wives, a loss is suffered by everyone, but perhaps most of all by themselves. For what they lose is the possibility of growth in themselves for being human which the stimulation of bringing up one's children gives."

In voicing a complaint that for hygienic reasons, he was not allowed to play with his grandchild in the old-fashion way, Bishop Doane, in *What*

stand before you: Je-ho'-vah your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath spoken unto you.

*Might Have Been*, is given credit for the following words:

"The hand that rocks the cradle"—but there is no such hand.

It is bad to rock the baby, they would have us understand;

So the cradle's but a relic of the former foolish days,

When mothers reared their children in unscientific ways;

When they jounced them and they bounced them, those poor dwarfs of long ago—

The Washingtons and Jeffersons and Adamases, you know.

This is not to suggest that parents should be careless about the health of their children, but neither should they try to shield them from those influences which are almost sure to make them better able to care for themselves, and to develop the kind of character which can withstand the many difficult situations that flesh is heir to.

Parents should feel that they are stewards of God, in the matter of rearing their children; for all souls belong to him, and he has simply placed in our keeping, for a brief time, the greatest possible treasure. The psalmist expressed the matter in this way:

Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah;

And the fruit of the womb is his reward.

As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,

So are the children of youth.

Happy is the man that hath his  
quiver full of them:  
They shall not be put to shame,

When they speak with their enemies  
in the gate. (Psalm 127: 3-5; cf.  
Matt. 16: 26.)

### The Golden Text

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." E. Mellor, in *The Hem of Christ's Garment* (p. 52), has some excellent ideas regarding the training of children. He points out that it is well to remember the general truth that all life can be trained; but that dead substances cannot be trained. The higher one goes in the scale of life, the wider is the scope and the possibility of training. Children are not only capable of being trained; they will be trained in spite of us. This means, of course, that if we do not take them in hand, and with a very definite end in view, which we pursue with inflexible purpose and unflagging constancy—an end not lower than heaven, not narrower than eternity, and not meaner than their salvation—another process will assuredly be going on which, in a very short time, will fill us with dismay. We must know that the children are always in school, even when they seem to be away from it; for they are always learning.

What, then, is the meaning of training up a child in the way in which he should go? There are many examples of this in the Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testaments. When it was revealed unto Manoaah and his wife that they were to become the parents of a son, who became Samson, the former said to the angel who made the revelation, "Now let thy words come to pass: what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall we do unto him?" (See Judges 13: 12.) That is the spirit in which parents should approach this great question; and when they do, and maintain a willingness to learn from the Lord, they will not be left in the dark regarding this subject. Hannah promised Je-

hovah, even before the birth of Samuel, that he would be given to the Lord all the days of his life (see 1 Sam. 1: 9-11); and Paul reminded Timothy that "from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3: 15).

The verses which follow the statement just quoted from Paul, while referring to the training of any Christian, may also be used as a pattern for the training of children. Those verses are, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) The four things which are needed in training any one toward a noble end, including children, are (1) *Teaching*, which may be done by both word and example. No one can do that which he should do, until he learns what it is. (2) *Reproof*. It is not enough to tell children what they should do; it is also necessary to point out to them that which they may be doing which is not right. (3) *Correction*. It is relatively easy to tell children that which they should or should not do; but it is something else to see to it that they change their course, insofar as any wrong which they may be doing is concerned. (4) *Continuous instruction in the way of righteousness*. To borrow an expression from Lowell, "New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth; they must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth." In other words, there must be no relaxation in teaching that which is good.

### The Text Explained

#### The Urgency of the Situation (Deut. 6: 6, 7)

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt

talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

All three sections of the lesson text for today are taken from the

second discourse which Moses delivered to the children of Israel in the land of Moab; and while the same idea of diligence is emphasized in this and the next section of the text, it is well to keep in mind that Moses made the repetition, and so should we. The late Hall L. Calhoun used to tell his classes that there are three basic laws of learning, namely, Repetition! Repetition! Repetition! There is one thing certain, and that is this: godly parents will never have the urgency of their responsibility toward their children impressed upon their minds too often. And what is true of them should certainly be true of all other parents; for the time is coming when they are going to see and realize what is meant to have children placed within their care.

The immediate context of the section of the lesson text now under consideration is as follows: "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." (Deut. 6: 4-9.)

There are national sentiments and traditions which every nation carries, as it were, in its heart; but what treasure could be greater than the word of God itself. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart." We are told that there is no word from God which is void of power (Luke 1: 37); and that means that if we really have the word of God in our hearts, nothing can harm us permanently. And if we sincerely want the best for our children, then we must give all diligence to see to it that they, too, know what it means to be governed entirely by divine truth. The psalmist joyfully sang,  
Wherewith shall a young man  
cleanse his way?

By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought thee:

Oh let me not wander from thy commandments.

Thy word have I laid up in my heart,

That I might not sin against thee.

Blessed art thou, O Jehovah:

Teach me thy statutes.

With my lips have I declared

All the ordinances of thy mouth.

I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,

As much as in all riches.

I will meditate on thy precepts,

And have respect unto thy ways.

I will delight myself in thy statutes:

I will not forget thy word. (Psalm 119: 9-16.)

### The Method of Procedure

(Deut. 11: 18-21)

*Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth.*

The thoughtful student will recognize both literal and figurative language in the passage just quoted. People can actually make the word of God a part of their thinking, and they can figuratively have it always at their hand and before their eyes. Many people actually have some of the word of the Lord placed upon their walls and other parts of their building in the form of mottoes. The whole idea is to make the word of God the central part of our thinking and acting. And the lesson which we should learn is that God's law must be taught to our children with all diligence, and every effort must be made to get them to understand it. It is a historical fact, as every Bible student knows, that the children



of Israel were driven out of their land because they refused to heed the word which Jehovah commanded them. It was bad for them to lose Canaan, but it will be infinitely worse for people to be denied an entrance into the heavenly realm.

In commenting on the duty of parents to teach their children the truth, Adam Clarke says, "A most injurious and destructive maxim has lately been advanced by a few individuals, which is to be hoped is disavowed by the class of Christians to which they belong, though the authors affect to be thought *Christians*, and *rational* ones, too; the sum of the maxim is this: 'Children ought not to be taught religion for fear of having their minds biased to some particular creed, but they should be left to themselves till they are capable of making a *choice*, and *choose* to make one.' This maxim is in flat opposition to the command of God, and those who teach it show how little they are affected by the religion they profess.

"If they felt it to be good for any thing, they would certainly wish their children to possess it; but they do not teach religion to their children, because they feel it to be of no use to themselves. Now the Christian religion properly applied saves the soul, and fills the heart with love to God and man; for the love of God is shed abroad in the heart of a genuine believer, by the Holy Ghost given to him. These persons have no such love, because they have not the religion that inspires it; and the spurious religion which admits of the maxim above mentioned, is not the religion of God, and consequently better untaught than taught. But what can be said to those parents who, possessing a better faith, equally neglect the instruction of their children in the things of God! They are highly criminal; and if their children perish through neglect, which is very probable, what a dreadful account must they give in the great day! PARENTS! hear what the Lord saith unto *you*: Ye shall diligently teach your children that there is one Lord, *Jehovah, Elohim*; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and that they must love him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might."

## God's Gracious Promise to the Faithful

(Deut. 11: 22-25)

*For if ye shall diligently keep all this commandment which I command you, to do it, to love Jehovah your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; then will Jehovah drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess nations greater and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border. There shall no man be able to stand before you: Jehovah your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath spoken unto you.*

The term "diligent" has been defined as thoughtful activity, or to interest oneself most earnestly in the accomplishment of the task before him. This signifies, of course, that when the Lord commands his people to do something, the responsibility for its accomplishment becomes theirs. This was true in the case of the children of Israel; and it is also true in our case. A lesson which we should always remember is that God never gives a command or a duty to perform which is beyond the ability of the people or individuals involved to comply with. "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, *ministering as of the strength which God supplieth*; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet. 4: 10, 11.)

Both the Old and the New Testaments affirm over and over again that God will enable his people to overcome any obstacle, whether animate or inanimate, which may be in their way of reaching the blessing which he has promised them, if only they will remain faithful to him. During the course of his prayer at the dedication of the temple, Solomon said, "If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatsoever way thou shalt send them,

and they pray unto Jehovah toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name; then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause." (1 Kings 8: 44, 45.)

There was no nation among the peoples of Canaan who could withstand the children of Israel, as long as they walked according to his commandments. Gideon, for example, was permitted to have only three hundred unarmed soldiers, when he was sent against the host of the Midianites, who were without number; and, so far as the record goes, the Lord's people did not lose a single man in battle. (Read Judges, chapters 6, 7.) Jeroboam was promised the Lord's blessings, if he would obey him; but when he turned away from God, he was powerless against his enemies, although his army greatly outnumbered theirs. On one occasion he decided to go against the kingdom of Judah. Abijah was king of Judah at that time, and he had an army of four hundred thousand picked men; "and Jeroboam drew up his line of battle against him with eight hundred thousand picked mighty warriors." Abijah tried to keep Jeroboam from coming against him; and this is the way he addressed him:

"And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of Jehovah in the hand of the sons of David; and ye are a great multitude, and there are with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made you for gods. Have ye not driven out the priests of Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made you priests after the manner of the peoples of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. But as for us, Jehovah is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and we have priests ministering unto Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites in their work: and they bum unto Jehovah every morning and every evening burnt-offerings and

sweet incense: the showbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of Jehovah our God; but ye have forsaken him. And, behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with the trumpets of alarm to sound an alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

"But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them. And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind them; and they cried unto Jehovah, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah; and God delivered them into their hand. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, *because they relied upon Jehovah, the God of their fathers*" (2 Chron. 13: 8-18; cf. 25: 5-9, 17-24.)

It is relatively easy for people today to look back upon such events as the one just described, and believe that they actually took place, because that was the age of miracles; but what they fail to understand is that Jehovah's promise to his people in Christ is as certain of fulfillment, as his promise to Israel ever was. This is true, let it be said again, because "no word from God shall be void of power." (See Luke 1: 37.) The care of Jehovah for his people, in such passages as Rom. 8: 31-39, is as clearly and specifically affirmed, as in any passage in the Old Testament. (Cf. Rom. 8: 28; Phil. 4: 13; 2 Cor. 1: 20.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject for today?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

Introduction

Give some idea of the far-reaching conse-

quences of the relationship of parents toward their children.

What usually happens when fathers leave the rearing of children to the mothers?

What is the teaching of the New Testa-

ment regarding this question?  
 What are some of the things which should be taken into consideration for character building?  
 How should people feel toward their children and how should they regard them?

#### The Golden Text

Why is it absolutely essential that children be trained?  
 What does it mean to train a child in the way he should go?  
 What are some of the guide-lines for the proper training of children?

#### The Urgency of the Situation

Under what circumstance were the words of the lesson text spoken?  
 What is the value of "repetition" in the process of learning?  
 How did Moses go about impressing the urgency of the situation upon the people?  
 Why should the heart of children and young people be filled with the word of God?  
 In what way did the psalmist illustrate this truth?

#### The Method of Procedure

Discuss the use of literal and figurative language in this section of the lesson text.  
 What was the aim of Moses in saying these things?

Why were the children of Israel driven out of the country which God gave to them?

Discuss the idea that parents should allow their children to make their own decisions.

Why would any parent subscribe to such an idea?

What will happen to parents who do not train their children in the right way?

What is the central requirement which Jehovah has made of his people?

#### God's Gracious Promise to the Faithful

What is the meaning of the term "diligent"?

Why is diligence in child training so essential and what does it imply?

What has God always done with reference to any requirement which he has made of his people?

What encouragement should this give to all of us?

What are some of the ways in which God supplies strength to his people?

Why should the faithful followers of Christ fear any obstacle which may be before them?

What promise was given to Israel regarding the nations which inhabited the land which had been promised to them?

Give some examples of how this was literally fulfilled.

Why do people today have difficulty in relying upon similar promises which God has made to us?

## Lesson XII—December 18, 1966

# REMEMBERING JEHOVAH

### Lesson Text

Deut. 8: 11-20

11 Beware lest thou forget Je-ho'-vah thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his ordinances, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

12 Lest, when thou has eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

14 Then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Je-ho'-vah thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of E'-gypt, out of the house of bondage;

15 Who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirsty ground where was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with man'-na, which thy fathers knew

not; that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end:

17 And lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou shalt remember Je-ho'-vah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day.

19 And it shall be, if thou shalt forget Je-ho'-vah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

20 As the nations that Je-ho'-vah maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish; because ye would not harken unto the voice of Je-ho'-vah your God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come."* (Eccles. 12: 1.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 51: 1-8.

## Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 12. M.....	First Things First (Matt. 6: 28-34)
Dec. 13. T.....	Remembering God (Eccles. 12: 1-13)
Dec. 14. W.....	Warning of Forgetting God (Deut. 8: 11-14)
Dec. 15. T.....	God Gives Ability (Deut. 8: 18)
Dec. 16. F.....	God Loves a Cheerful Giver (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
Dec. 17. S.....	God Blesses the Liberal Giver (Mal. 3: 7-12)
Dec. 18. S.....	Treasures in Heaven (Matt. 6: 19-24)

TIME.—1451 B.C.

PLACE.—In the land of Moab.

PERSONS.—Moses and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

The fourth chapter of Joshua gives an account of that which happened after the children of Israel had passed over the river Jordan. Among other things, Jehovah charged Joshua to have twelve men, one from each tribe, to take twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, "out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm," and carry them to the place where the people would make their first encampment in Canaan, which was Gilgal. The closing paragraph of the chapter reads as follows: "And the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, did Joshua set up in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For Jehovah your God dried up the waters of the Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as Jehovah your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were passed over; that all the people of the earth may know the hand of Jehovah, that it is mighty; that ye may fear Jehovah your God for ever." (Josh. 4: 19-24.)

The vivid Old Testament narrative which has just been quoted is a sorry commentary on human frailty, namely, our proneness to forget that which we ought to remember. How could the children of Israel ever forget their passing through the Jordan on dry land? but they did. How could their fathers forget their deliverance from the cruel bondage of Egypt, their passage through the Red Sea on dry land, or the beneficence

of their Deliverer? but they did. How can enlightened people, and especially those who have been redeemed by his blood, forget Jesus Christ? but they do. Monuments, memorials, reminders, celebrations—all have their warrant in the melancholy fact that we are a forgetful people. Jehovah has always encouraged the use of reminders, that is, the ones which he approves, for the purpose of helping his people to remember that which they should not forget.

The entire Bible is filled with exhortations to remember Jehovah and that which he has done for us. Nehemiah exhorted his people with these words, "Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible." (Neh. 4: 14.) "Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." (Isa. 46: 8, 9.) In one of his addresses in which he sought to make people see the absolute necessity of faithfulness, Jesus exhorted, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17: 32.) The apostle Paul, in what he thought was his final appeal to the Ephesian elders, said, "In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20: 35.) And as he was nearing the close of his epistle, Jude wrote, "But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 17.) We should be grateful today for anything which will help us to remember the Lord and that which he has commanded us to do.

## The Golden Text

*"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come . . ."* The adverb "also," in the passage just quoted, implies that something else had been said to those for whom the words were intended—"Remember also thy Creator," etc. The reference was evidently to the closing paragraph of the preceding chapter, namely, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity." (Eccl. 11: 9, 10.) If the words just quoted are read as if they were a part of chapter 12, or, which is the same thing, if there were no chapter division where chapter 12 begins, the writer's message to young people would be more apparent.

The term "remember," as used in the passage which serves as the golden text for today's lesson, means to keep God in mind, with a view to serving him; and it is an impressive illustration of the lesson text itself, as we shall see further on in this study. When one recalls who God is and what he has done for him, it will be much easier for him to depend upon him in all the relationships of his life. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in Jehovah for ever; for in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is an everlasting rock." (Isa. 26: 3, 4; cf. 2 Tim. 1: 12.)

There are some fundamental reasons why young people should remember Jehovah. For example, (1) he is their Creator, and they are therefore not their own. No one has

the right to ignore the master to whom he belongs. (Cf. Rom. 6: 15-23; 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). In addition to being their Creator, Jehovah is also their Preserver and Benefactor. (Cf. Acts 17: 26-28.) Furthermore, he has made it possible for them to know, love, and serve him. (2) Notwithstanding the fact that they are young, they have no guarantee of the future. *Now* is theirs; *tomorrow* may never be. (Cf. Prov. 27: 1; James 4: 13-17.) With these facts before them, young people should avail themselves of every opportunity to serve their Creator, not only because he made them, but also because he made it possible for them to prepare themselves for an eternal abode with him. (3) And too, the older they get, the more difficult it will be for them to break away from sin and begin serving God. There are two reasons why this is true, namely, (a) the infirmities of the flesh, which are described in the verses which follow the golden text; and (b) the hardening of the human heart (cf. Heb. 3: 13; 4: 7).

The motive which the writer of Ecclesiastes gives for remembering one's Creator is "before the evil days come, and the days draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." This is followed by a picture of the winter of old age, in contrast with the spring of youth. J. Lawrence Eason points out that "the writer, in one of the famous passages of the Old Testament, gives this symbolic and poetic description of creeping old age, and its infirmities, as a contrasting picture with youth and its disregard for the counsel of the wise. And it is one of several beautiful passages which add weight and substance, and value, to the Book of Ecclesiastes." (*The New Bible Survey*, p. 251f.)

## The Text Explained

An Admonition against Ungratefulness because of Prosperity

(Duet. 8: 11-13)

*Beware lest thou forget Jehovah thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his ordinances, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest, when thou hast eaten*

*and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied.*

The entire lesson text for today can best be understood in the light of the previous paragraph from

which it is taken: "All the commandment which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. And thou shalt consider in thy heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so Jehovah thy God chasteneth thee. And thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper. And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee." (Duet. 8: 1-10.)

It is easy to see from the opening words of the section of the lesson text now before us, that one forgets Jehovah when he fails to do that which he is commanded to do. As long as one keeps his mind on Jehovah, and sincerely tries to realize something of who and what he really is, it will not be easy for him to be guilty of the sin against which Moses warned the children of Israel. This is just one of the many reasons why preaching the gospel is so essential today; and why those who listen should take advantage of the opportunity of having their minds refreshed by the pure word of God. "This is now, beloved, the second

epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the Lord and Savior through your apostles." (2 Pet. 3: 1, 2; cf. 2 Tim. 4: 1-5.)

But, as is so often the case, worldly prosperity brings dullness of perception, and a listless attitude. In explaining to his disciples why he spoke to the multitudes in parables, Jesus said, "Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13: 13-15.)

In addition to the three addresses of Moses, the Book of Deuteronomy, beginning with chapter 31, contains some miscellaneous matters, with which every Bible student should be familiar; for it is one of the great odes of all time. This song of Moses is particularly appropriate just here; for it gave a prophetic commentary, as it were, on the section of the lesson text now before us. Jeshurun, meaning the upright or the righteous one, was apparently a poetical name for Israel (cf. Isa. 44: 2); and here is what Moses predicted concerning him:

But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked:

Thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek;  
Then he forsook God who made him,  
And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

They moved him to jealousy with strange gods;  
With abominations provoked they him to anger.  
They sacrificed unto demons, which were no God,  
To gods that they knew not,  
To new gods that came up of late,

Which your fathers dreaded not.  
Of the Rock that beget thee thou  
art unmindful,  
And hast forgotten God that gave  
thee birth.  
And Jehovah saw it, and abhorred  
them,  
Because of the provocation of his  
sons and his daughters.  
And he said, I will hide my face  
from them,  
I will see what their end shall be:  
For they are a very perverse  
generation,  
Children in whom is no faithful-  
ness.

(Deut. 32: 15-20.)

The preceding excerpt from the Song of Moses, which Adam Clarke says is so thoroughly poetic that even the dull Jews themselves found that they could not write it in prose form, shows what happens to pious people, when prosperity tends to fill them with pride. (Cf. 2 Chron. 26: 1-21, which sets forth an example, showing that obedience brings a blessing, while pride, even at God-given success sometimes causes both disregard for the divine will and tragic failure. See also Rev. 3: 17.) Jehovah told Moses what would happen to Israel after his passing; and it was for that reason that he told him to write the song, and teach it to the children of Israel. "And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach thou it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel." (Deut. 31: 18, 19; read also verses 14-23.)

#### Jehovah's Gracious Dealings Recalled

((Duet. 8: 14-17)

*Then thy heart may be lifted up,  
and thou forget Jehovah thy God,  
who brought thee forth out of the  
land of Egypt, out of the house of  
bondage; who led thee through the  
great and terrible wilderness, where-  
in were fiery serpents and scor-  
pions, and thirsty ground where was  
no water; who brought thee forth  
water out of the rock of flint; who  
fed thee in the wilderness with man-  
na, which thy fathers knew not; that*

*he might humble thee, and that he  
might prove thee, to do thee good at  
thy latter end; and lest thou say, in  
thy heart, My power and the might  
of my hand hath gotten me this  
wealth.*

Those who have studied the previous lessons in this quarter should be familiar with the wilderness wandering; and they should be aware of the fact that it was never God's will and plan for his people to spend forty years in that terrible place. It was pointed out in an earlier lesson that it was approximately two years from the time when they left the land of Egypt, till they reached the southern border of the land of Canaan. "And we journeyed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which ye saw, by the way to the hill-country of the Amorites, as Jehovah our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the hill-country of the Amorites, which Jehovah our God giveth unto us. Behold, Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, take possession, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee; fear not, neither be dismayed. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search the land for us, and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up, and the cities unto which we must come." (Duet. 1: 19-22; cf. Heb. 3: 12-4: 3.)

Jehovah granted the request of the people to have spies sent into the land first; but not even after their report was made were the people willing to go in and possess the land. It was then that the host of Israel was turned back into the wilderness, and compelled to wander for thirty-eight more years. They had already been two years in the wilderness; but since they would have to remain there a total of forty years, that meant that they would have thirty-eight more. (Read Num. 14: 26-38; Deut. 2: 14.) It is interesting to note that the word "terrible" in the expression "the great and terrible wilderness," is from exactly the same Hebrew word from which we have "reverend" in Psalm 111: 9.

It seems wholly incredible that the children of Israel could ever forget their experiences in the wilderness,

but they did. However, as has already been pointed out, that is simply characteristic of our fallen nature. We are nearing the end of another year; and in order to impress the truth of this lesson upon us, let each of us look back upon the months which have passed, and ask ourselves which of our experiences stand out most prominently before us, namely, the ceaseless mercies of God which have attended us every day, or the disappointments, sufferings, and injuries we have had to endure? One week of illness is fresher in the mind of the average person, than fifty-two weeks of unbroken and vigorous health. Why do we so easily forget the benefits of God? The answer is, we have grown accustomed to them, and our hearts have become hardened. What would happen if the stars should cease to shine for ten years, and then suddenly flash out again? Just so with our blessings. No one should ever forget God to the extent that he thinks that he is himself alone responsible for the good which comes to him. (Cf. James 4: 13-17.)

#### A Solemn Exhortation and a Grave Warning (Duet. 8: 18-20)

*But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day. And it shall be, if thou shalt forget Jehovah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations that Jehovah maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish; because ye would not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah your God.*

Adam Clarke, in commenting on verse 18, says, "Who among the rich and wealthy believes this saying? Who gives wisdom, understanding, skill, bodily strength, and health? Is it not God? And without these, how

can wealth be acquired? Whose is providence? Who can give fertility to the earth? And who brings every proper purpose to a right issue? Is it not God? And without these also can wealth be acquired? No. Then the proposition in the text is self-evident: it is God that giveth power to get wealth, and to God the wealthy man must account for the manner in which he has expended the riches which God hath given him." Jehovah had promised his people a home in Canaan which would be free from want; and it was essential therefore that he give them wealth in order to fulfill that promise. But after many centuries of unfaithfulness to God, and as the kingdom of Israel neared its end, Jehovah caused Hosea to utter these significant words: "For she did not know that I gave her the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold, which they used for Baal." (Hos. 2: 8.) The question for us is, What use are we making of our God-given possessions?

J. H. Jowett notes that "in Southern France, where attar of roses is distilled, a very curious ailment imperils the workers. The very abundance of the rose-leaves induces a sort of sleeping-sickness. And surely it is even so in the abundances that are sometimes given to man. They are prone to sink him into the sleep of spiritual forgetfulness.

"A man's devotion is apt to dwindle as he becomes more successful. Our piety does not keep pace with our purse. Absorption in the bounty makes us forgetful of the Giver. We can be so concerned in the pasture that the Shepherd is forgotten. Our very fullness is apt to become our foe. Our clearest visions are given us in the winter-time when nature is scanty and poor. The fullness of the leaf blocks the outlook and the distance is hid. And the summer-time of life, when leaves and flowers are plentiful, is apt to bring a veil. And the very plentifulness impedes our communion." (*Things That Matter Most*, p. 34.)

#### Questions for Discussion

What is the subject?  
Repeat the golden text.  
Give time, place, and persons.

#### Introduction

What are some of the methods which Je-

hovah has used to help his people remember him?  
Discuss some of these examples.  
Why do people need such aids to assist them in remembering Jehovah and his blessings?



What are some of the things which we are called upon to remember?

#### The Golden Text

What is implied by the term "also" in the passage which serves as the golden text?

What does it mean for one to remember his Creator?

What are some of the fundamental reasons why young people should remember Jehovah?

What motive does the writer of Ecclesiastes assign for this?

#### An Admonition against Ungratefulness because of Prosperity

What reasons did Moses assign for the admonition which he gave in this part of the lesson?

What does it mean for one to forget Jehovah?

What important lesson should we learn from this and what attitude should it inspire in us?

What is the usual effect of worldly prosperity on people?

In what way did Jesus illustrate this truth?

What prophetic commentary did Moses write regarding this issue?

How did he come to write it?

#### Jehovah's Gracious Dealings Recalled

What were some of the outstanding experiences which Israel had during the wilderness wanderings?

How long did Jehovah originally plan for their stay in the wilderness? Give reasons for your answer.

How long did they actually stay in the wilderness and why the extra thirty-eight years?

Why were the children of Israel in danger of forgetting their wilderness experiences?

In what way is this lesson applicable to us?

#### A Solemn Exhortation and a Grave Warning

Why do successful people in material things, as a rule, not believe that God gives them the power to accumulate their possessions?

What are the reasons for thinking that he does give the power?

What does he actually say about the matter?

What solemn truth did Jehovah announce to the children of Israel through Hosea?

What great question should this inspire in us?

Discuss the reason why the abundance of material blessings so often hinders rather than helps their possessors.

### Lesson XIII—December 25, 1966

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT WAY

### Lesson Text

Deut. 11: 8-12, 26-32

8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandment which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to possess it;

9 And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Je-ho'-vah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of E'-gypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs;

11 But the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys and drinketh water of the rain of heaven,

12 A land which Je-ho'-vah thy God careth for: the eyes of Je-ho'-vah thy god are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse:

27 The blessing, if ye shall hearken

unto the commandments of Je-ho'-vah your God, which I command you this day;

28 And the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Je-ho'-vah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

29 And it shall come to pass, when Je-ho'-vah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Ger'-i-zim, and the curse upon mount E'-bal.

30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Ca'-naan-ites that dwell in the Ar'-abah, over against Gil'-gal, beside the oaks of Mo'-reh?

31 For ye are to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Je-ho'-vah your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein.

32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."* (Josh. 24: 15.)  
 DEVOTIONAL READING.—Josh. 24: 1-15.

### Daily Bible Readings

Dec. 19. M.....	Blessings of Obedience (Deut. 11: 8-12)
Dec. 20. T.....	Blessing or Curse (Deut. 11: 26-32)
Dec. 21. W.....	A Right Choice (Ruth 1: 11-18)
Dec. 22. T.....	A Wise King (1 Kings 3: 4-14)
Dec. 23. F.....	A Nation's Choice (Josh. 24: 14-18)
Dec. 24. S.....	Final Triumph of Faith (Psalm 116: 12-19)
Dec. 25. S.....	The Faith of Moses (Heb. 11: 23-31)

TIME.—1451 B.C.

PLACE.—In the land of Moab.

PERSONS.—Moses and the children of Israel.

### Introduction

This is the last lesson for 1966, and this should be a good time to look back over the year's study and ask ourselves, What have we accomplished by way of increasing our knowledge of God's word? We began our study with the very beginning of the Book of Genesis, and traced the progress of the human race, both for good and for evil, to the time of the flood. After the great deluge, we saw the human race start anew from the three sons of Noah and their wives; but it was not long until the same conditions began to prevail, which characterized the descendants of Adam and Eve, that is, a relatively few people were trying to please God, while the majority were walking in the evil ways of Cain. Jehovah, however, had solemnly promised that he would not again destroy the world by a flood. (Cf. Gen. 8: 20-22; 9: 11; 2 Pet. 3: 5-7.) And in keeping with the earliest gospel message (Gen. 3: 15), God chose a single man and his wife, Abram and Sarai, through whom the salvation of the race would, in time, be made possible by the sacrifice of Christ. The first quarter's lessons closed with Jehovah's covenant with Abraham, or Abram as he was then called, and the foretelling of the Egyptian bondage. (Gen. 15: 1-15.)

The second and third quarters were concerned with studies in the life of Christ. This, to borrow a thought from Robert Browning, was the part "for which the first was made." No one can understand the New Testament without some knowledge of the Old; and, by the same token, no one can understand the Old Testament without some knowl-

edge of the New. In the words of Alexander Campbell, "Every one, then, who would accurately understand the Christian institution must approach in through the Mosaic; and he that would be proficient in the Jewish must make Paul his commentator. While the mere politician, moralist, or religionist contemplates the one without the other, though he may find much to admire in both, he will never understand either. A veil, thick as that which concealed the glory of the face of Moses from the Israelites, will hide the glory of the Jewish and Christian institutions from his view."

In the words of David Lipscomb, "When we dissever and dissociate the teachings of the New Testament and those of the Old, we disjoin what God has joined. He has given the two as successive and united developments to man. No man from the Old Testament can ever learn the full and perfect lesson that God has conveyed to man. Neither if he takes the New Testament alone can he ever fully appreciate the will of God as revealed to man and his dealings with man. They are complements one of the other, and as necessary to each other as the two blades of a pair of shears. . . . We are taught in the Old Testament how God applies his laws; in the New Testament the perfect laws are given." These are some of the reasons why the lessons for the year are found in both the Old and the New Testaments.

The studies in the life of Christ begin with his birth, and include some of the outstanding events of his life, along with his teaching with

reference to many of the fundamental issues of our earthly existence, and end with his giving the great commission to his disciples. Any one therefore who has been diligent in these studies will have a comprehensive knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus. The fourth quarter begins with the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage, in keeping with the revelation which Jehovah gave to Abraham in the last lesson of the first quarter. We then followed the events which led to their liberation,

the giving of the law at Sinai, the wilderness wanderings, some of the many ordinances which were given for their observance, and some excerpts from one of the three addresses of Moses contained in the Book of Deuteronomy. If the teacher has been awake to his opportunities, those who have studied these lessons have been introduced to, or have had their minds refreshed concerning, the structure and purpose of the first five books of the Old Testament, and the first four of the New.

### The Golden Text

*"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."* The lesson text for today is from one of the farewell addresses of Moses, while the words which serve as the golden text are from the farewell address of Joshua, the man who succeeded Moses as the leader of the children of Israel. No one can read these farewell addresses, or in fact any farewell address from a well known person, without being deeply moved, especially if they are delivered near the close of one's life. (It is, of course, possible for one to deliver a "farewell address," and then live in seclusion for many more years.) But when the words are the last utterances of a man whose earthly life has almost run its course, and who speaks from the commanding eminence which looks at once upon the clearness of the earthly past and the dimness of the future, with wisdom of aged experience and the awe of approaching death, the impression is deep and lasting upon the thoughtful.

As Joshua spoke the words of our golden text for today, he was, to the people who heard him, a monumental relic of times pushed back, by a stirring century of change, into remote history. He had toiled as a slave in Egypt, had crossed the Red Sea on dry ground with the host of Israel, and had beheld the terrors of Sinai. And he knew far more of the idolatrous inclinations of the people to whom he spoke, than they thought; and he made it crystal clear to them that no half-hearted renunciation of the gods of the land in which they dwelt would be acceptable. As he viewed the matter, they would have to be for God or against him. (Cf. Matt. 12: 30.) The full

context of the golden text is as follows: "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." (Josh. 24: 14, 15.)

There are three things in Joshua's plea to the people of Israel which should be emphasized here, namely, (1) a choice had to be made; (2) the time of the choice; and (3) the object of the choice; and what was said to the people then is equally applicable to us today: for the force of that appeal can never be spent. It continues to ring in every man's ears; and it brings hope to every person who does not want to be a slave of the evil one. Jehovah is always ready to bless those who want to serve him in sincerity and in truth. However, the time element is essential (cf. Isa. 55: 6); for it is a well known fact that the passing of time closes some doors to free choice. When a young man, for example, graduates from college, he may experience difficulty in choosing from among several different fields of activity which are open to him; but after twenty or thirty years have passed, he would not be free to choose some of the professions in which he could have succeeded, had he made the choice earlier. The same principle holds true with reference to the spiritual life. (Cf. Heb. 4: 7.)

The noblest choice which any person can make is, of course, with ref-

erence to the service of God. (See Matt. 6: 33; 16: 24-26.)

## The Text Explained

### Reasons for Obeying the Commandments of Jehovah

(Duet. 11: 8-12)

*Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.*

If the preceding paragraph of the chapter from which the lesson text is taken is read, in keeping with the idea suggested by the word "therefore," it will be seen that obedience to Jehovah's command was essential; because he not only is able to execute such terrible judgments as those which he performed in Egypt, but has also made it abundantly clear that he will punish any impenitent disobedience on the part of his people, as he so clearly demonstrated during the wilderness wandering. Robert Jamieson, in commenting on that which the great lawgiver was saying to the Israelites at this time, says:

"Moses is here giving a brief summary of the marvels and miracles of awful judgment which God had wrought in effecting their release from the tyranny of Pharaoh, as well as those which had taken place in the wilderness; and he knew that he might dwell upon these, for he was addressing many who had been witnesses of these appalling incidents. For it will be remembered that the Divine threatening, that they should die in the wilderness,

and its execution, extended only to males from twenty years and upward, who were able to go forth to war. (See Num. 14: 28-30; 16: 49.) There might, therefore, have been many thousands of the Israelites at that time of whom Moses could say, 'your eyes have seen all the great acts which he did,' and with regard to those, the historic review of Moses was well calculated to stir up their minds to the duty and advantages of obedience."

It is sometimes difficult for us to understand why people like Adam and Eve would listen to any one who would turn them away from God, who had given them such a wonderful home in the garden of Eden; but they did. And the Israelites, who could be unfaithful to him, in the face of the promise which he made to them concerning their long life in such a marvelous land as Canaan; but that is exactly what happened to them. But we never seem to think of ourselves in a similar situation. God has solemnly promised us a life of fellowship with him and his people here, and an eternal home in the world to come; but how few there are who are faithful to him here, and who will enter the home over there when this life is over! (Cf. Matt. 7: 13, 14.)

The description of the land of promise, contained in this section of the lesson text, is in contrast with the land of Egypt. It appears that the portion of Egypt which was cultivated was low and level, and which received little if any natural rainfall. The moisture which was needed for the growth of vegetation was supplied by the overflow of the river Nile, and by irrigation with water from that same course. George Rawlinson, in speaking of the manner and method of irrigating the crops, points out that the Egyptian government had general "control over the main cuttings," opening and closing them according to certain fixed rules, which had for their object the fair and equitable distribution of the water supply over the whole territory. Each farmer received in turn sufficient to fill his own reservoir,

and from this by a network of watercourses continually diminishing in size the fluid was conveyed wherever needed, and at last brought to the *very roots of the plants*. The removal or replacing of a little mud, with the hand or with the foot, turned the water hither and thither, at the pleasure of the husbandman, who distributed it as his crops required." (*History of Ancient Egypt.*)

The land of Canaan would never need that kind of artificial watering. It would be exceedingly difficult, in fact impossible, to find a greater and more satisfying description of a country in which to live, than what is said here about the land of Canaan. (1) All foreign enemies, regardless of their greatness, would be driven out. (2) Their borders would be extended to include all the territory from the wilderness on the south to Lebanon on the north; and from the river Euphrates on the east to the Mediterranean sea on the west. Furthermore, no man would dare to attack the Israelites; for the fear and dread of them would be on all the surrounding people. (3) The country was ideally suited for vegetation, both with reference to the land itself and the necessary water supply. (4) It was a land "which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Read Deut. 11: 10-25.)

The only condition which Jehovah required of his people for a long life in that land was faithfulness to him. "Therefore shall ye keep all the commandment which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey." The children of Israel, however, were fully warned that if they did not obey the commandments of Jehovah, the exact opposite would be their lot, as we shall presently see.

#### The People Were Required to Make Their Choice (Deut. 11: 26-28)

*Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if*

*ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I command you this day; and the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.*

After going into great detail regarding the blessing which the people would enjoy, if they were faithful to Jehovah their God, Moses solemnly warned the children of Israel that a curse would be their lot, if they chose to disregard that which had been spoken unto them. Jehovah had said earlier, "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely."

"But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall reject my statutes, and if your soul abhor mine ordinances, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant; I will also do this unto you: I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and make the soul to pine away; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. . . . And I will break the pride of your power: and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass; and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruit." (Lev. 26: 3-5, 14-16, 19, 20; Deut. 28: 1-68; Mal. 3: 7-12.)

The principle of blessing for obedience, and a curse for disobedience, is emphasized over and over again throughout the entire Bible (cf. 1 Sam. 8: 1-22); and the apostle Paul says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4; cf. 1 Cor. 10: 6, 11.) If we will take seriously the Old Testa-

ment record of how Jehovah dealt with his people, and then remember that he is the same "yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8), and that he is no respecter of persons (cf. Acts 10: 34, 35), we should be prepared in heart and mind to know that we are under the same obligation for making a choice, as the people of Israel were. (Cf. Heb. 3: 12-4: 7.)

The perfect laws of Christ are set forth in that part of the Bible which we call the New Testament; and the same principle with reference to the blessing and the curse are detailed therein. For example, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1: 6-10; cf. 2 Thess. 1: 7-9; Heb. 10: 26-31; Rev. 22: 18, 19.)

### The Responsibility of Choice Dramatized

(Duet. 11: 29-32)

*And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? For ye are to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you, and*

*ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.*

The two mountains which are named here were in what was later known as the territory of Manasseh; but if one looks at the map, as the country was divided during the time of Christ, he will find the mountains in question in Samaria. Gerizim was south of Ebal, and the town of Shechem was more or less in between them. The mountains were close enough to each other for voices from either to be heard on the other, and the valley in between them provided a natural amphitheatre, with wonderful acoustic properties. (See the New Bible Dictionary, article Ebal.) This same dictionary says that there is a ledge halfway to the top of mount Gerizim which is popularly called "Jotham's pulpit," from which Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon (Jerubbaal, Judges 7: 1) spoke his famous fable to the men of Shechem, concerning his half brother whom they had made king. (See Judges 9: 1-21.) It was also on mount Gerizim that the Samaritans maintained their place of worship, as may be seen by reading John 4: 19-22.

After the children of Israel had entered the land of Canaan, the sacred historian says, "Then Joshua built an altar unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man had lifted up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, and sacrificed peace-offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote, in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, as well the sojourner as the homeborn; half of them in front of mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded at the first, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the

blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners that were among them." (Josh. 8: 30-35; cf. Deut. 27: 1-26.)

The dramatic manner in which the

children of Israel were told to emphasize the blessings and the curses, for obedience and disobedience, is another of the many ways in which Jehovah has endeavored to impress upon the peoples of the earth the necessity of keeping his commandments, or suffering the consequences of eternal punishment. (Cf. Matt. 7: 24-27.)

## Questions for Discussion

What is the subject of this lesson?

Repeat the golden text.

Give time, place, and persons.

### Introduction

What is the advantage in taking a brief review of the year's study which has been accomplished?

Discuss the main events which were covered during the first quarter.

To what point did that quarter's studies take us?

What is the advantage of studying both the Old and New Testaments in the year's work?

In what did the studies in the life of Christ consist and what was their purpose?

At what point in the sacred history did the fourth quarter begin?

What events in the life of Israel were covered and what are some of the great teachings set forth in that part of our studies?

### The Golden Text

Under what circumstances did Joshua speak the words which serve as the golden text?

Why do farewell addresses have such a profound effect upon those who listen to them?

How did the people of Israel feel toward Joshua and why?

What was he trying to impress upon the people?

What three things did he emphasize?

### Reasons for Obeying the Commandments of Jehovah

What is suggested by the term "there-

fore" with which this section of the lesson text begins?

What motive did Moses give for obeying the commandments of Jehovah?

What lesson should we learn from this?

Why do people allow the evil one to turn them away from the words of God?

What did Moses tell the people about the land into which they were going?

In what way did it differ from the land of Egypt?

### The People Were Required to Make Their Choice

Why were the people required to make a choice and how was the matter placed before them?

In what way is that principle emphasized throughout the Bible and how is it applied to us?

Show what the New Testament teaches regarding blessings and curses.

### The Responsibility of Choice Dramatized

In what way was this dramatization to be carried out?

Where were the two mountains located?

Tell something of their history.

What reference is made to mount Gerizim in the New Testament and under what circumstances?

When and in what manner was the instruction of Moses regarding the blessing and curse carried out?

In what way must the people have been impressed?

What lesson is there in this for us?

In what way did Jesus emphasize the same principle?