

The Way of Truth

Vol. 82

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

No. 11

December 2024

"Keep the Lower Lights Burning"

Message begins on page 13

THE OLD, OLD STORY STILL BRINGS JOY

IN THE MIDST of all the hustle-bustle surrounding the modern Christmas holiday is hidden a great truth. That truth is revealed in the old story of the biblical account of the coming of Christ into this world. It was the fulfillment of prophecy resulting in great joy in the heart of the believer. This is not a short-lived giggle of a child's reception of a toy or the gratification of the giving of gifts. It is rather in having an understanding of the gift of God to the family of man. As the apostle declared, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."—II Corinthians 9:15.

Let us rehearse the scriptures: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:1-14.

His gift? Great joy which produces peace on earth and good will toward all men. Oh, if the world could grasp what could be if men would just humble themselves to accept God's unspeakable gift!

JOY IS A WONDROUS VIRTUE—It is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. It is expressed by rejoicing. It puts a smile on your face. It makes life worth living.

A MESSAGE OF JOY WAS DECLARED—Great joy was brought to the family of man—"I bring you good tidings of great joy."

BY WHOM WAS THE MESSAGE GIVEN? An authorized messenger from heaven. Prophets foretold the good news but it was an angelic being who was dispatched on location of the fulfillment of the promise.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."—John 3:17.

TO WHOM WAS THIS GREAT MESSAGE DECLARED? Humble shepherds on the hills of Judea—God still takes time to reveal Himself to the meek and humble. The shepherds were afraid at the sight, but they did not need to be, for the angel cried, "Fear not." This message was for all people—it was for the entire world. That includes you and me!

THE JOY WHICH THE ANGEL DECLARED—WHAT IS IT? It is "great joy"—"good tidings of great joy." Earth's joy is small, but heaven has sent us joy immeasurable. This message will never be reversed. We can say that it is a lasting joy, a joy which will ring all down throughout all ages. For when God sent forth the angel in His brightness to say, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which be to all people," He did as much as say, "From this time forth it shall be joy to the sons of men."

THE MESSAGE THAT BROUGHT JOY—"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour." This was a fulfillment of prophecy! Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And Isaiah 7:14 foretold, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

The joy announced by the angel of the nativity is as pure as it is lasting, as holy as it is great. The shepherds were aware that there had been promises made of old which had been the hope and comfort of believers in all ages, and these were now to be fulfilled. Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

A MESSAGE FOR LOST HUMANITY—Rejoice, you who feel that ye are lost; your Savior comes to save you. Be of good cheer ye who are in prison, for He comes to set you free. The God who made you, and against whom you have offended, has come down from heaven and taken upon Himself your form that He might save you. He has come in the fullness of His glory and the infinity of His mercy that He might redeem you. Do you not welcome this news? What! will not your hearts be thankful for this? Does this matchless love awaken no gratitude? Beloved, shall the joy begin with you today? For it little avails you that Christ was born, or that Christ died, unless unto you a child is born, and for you Jesus bled. "But I am poor," you say. So were the shepherds.

THE GREATEST JOY—The greatest joy known to man is to those who know Christ as Savior. Unto US indeed a child is born, if we can say that Christ the Lord is our Savior.

REPENTANCE BRINGS JOY ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN—The Bible says when Philip went down to

ABOUT THE COVER

On our cover is a picture of a lighthouse letting its light to shine both from the upper lights and the lower lights revealing the rocks and shoals. We, as Christians, must see our duty of letting our lights shine perpetually.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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Vol. 82 December 2024 No. 11

Devoted to the gospel of our loving Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave freely His life-blood, to save us from our many sins, to sanctify our fallen nature and to bring into one body all true believers, by whose stripes we are healed.

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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

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*No more let sin and sorrow grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.*

If you find that joy is missing in your life, let me point you to the Lamb of God. Open the door of your heart and let Him rule there, and I guarantee you will be filled with joy unspeakable. As I Peter 1:8 says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

*If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy,
Let Jesus come into your heart. †*

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Samaria to preach the gospel, salvation was wrought and "there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8). And in Luke 15:10, we read, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST BRING JOY IN ITS FULLNESS—John 15:11 says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

LIVING OUT THE WRITTEN WORD BRINGS JOY IN ITS FULLNESS—I John 1:4, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD BRINGS JOY—Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

BELIEVING BRINGS JOY—Romans 15:13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." And notice I Peter 1:8, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

JOY TO THE WORLD

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.*

*Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy!*



Dear Young People,

Greetings in the name of the Lord! This month's article is a continuation of the Fruits of the Spirit. We trust you will be blessed by the thoughts on "joy" shared by Sis. Jessica Swain.

Bro. Doug

When we walk in step with the Spirit, joy becomes a natural fruit in our lives. Philippians 4:4 says: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

This joy isn't based on circumstances; it is based on our position in Christ. We can experience this joy by maintaining a strong, prayerful relationship with God, meditating on His Word, and trusting in His promises. Psalm 16:11 echoes this truth: "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The more time we spend in God's presence, the more His joy becomes our strength.

In conclusion, joy as a fruit of the Spirit is not just an option—it's essential for the Christian life. The joy that only God can give will help us to be strong and courageous, even when circumstances are hard.

As believers, we are called to live in this joy, not just for our own benefit, but so that others can see the difference God makes in our lives. Remember the words of John 15:11: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

So I encourage each of you today to seek the joy that only comes from God. Cultivate it through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship with the Holy Spirit. As you do, you will not only experience joy yourself but become a light of joy to those around you. †

JOY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

By Sis. Jessica Swain

IMAGINE living in a state of continuous joy—joy that isn't dependent on circumstances, but joy that remains through trials and victories alike. I'm not talking about fleeting happiness that fades, but a deep, abiding sense of contentment and gladness. That joy is available to all of us, and it is one of the fruits of the Spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22, 23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."



Today, we are going to explore the nature of joy as a fruit of the Spirit, how it differs from worldly happiness, and how we can cultivate it in our lives.

Now, let's focus on what we mean by "joy as a fruit of the Spirit."

Joy in the biblical sense is not just an emotion but a supernatural state of being. While happiness comes and goes based on external circumstances, joy is rooted in our relationship with God. This joy is a gift from the Holy Spirit that grows as we grow in our faith.

Biblical joy is mentioned numerous times in Scripture. For instance, Nehemiah 8:10 reminds us: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." This suggests that the joy that comes from God can give us resilience even in the hardest times. As Christians, our lives are not promised to be without difficulty, but we are promised joy in the midst of it.

Now, why should this matter to you? Many people today confuse joy with fleeting pleasures. They chase after temporary happiness through materialism, success, or relationships, only to feel emptier when those things don't last. We see it all around us—people trying to fill the void with money, possessions, or even social media validation. But, the truth is, none of these things can give us lasting joy. In Romans 14:17, we read: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

If we continue to seek fulfillment from the world, we will always come up short. But God offers a solution: real, lasting joy through the Holy Spirit.

So how do we resolve this gap between worldly happiness and true joy? The answer lies in our relationship with God and the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

HONORING THE CHRIST-CHILD

Radio Message by Bro. Greg Tyler

IWOULD like to call your attention to the very first chapter of St. Matthew. I want to begin reading from verse 18: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Now, I want to read, beginning with the first verse of chapter 2: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then

Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.”

I'd like to entitle our few thoughts, “Honoring the Christ-child.” I read in your hearing from the Word of God that the Holy Ghost moved on Mary, and she conceived and bore a son. That Son, we all know, grew up to bear our sins on the cross of Calvary.

A lot of celebration is made at this present time about Christmas and the meaning of Christmas. I doubt very much if some people truly know what they are talking about. First of all, Jesus was not born on December 25. He was born, the best that theologians can research and discover, some time in the fall of the year—late September or early October. But what time of the year Jesus was born is not the most important thing, as far as I'm concerned. It's not so important when He was born, but it is important that He did come to earth.

If we're going to honor the birth of the Son of man, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, then Beloved, we should honor Him. Any honest individual must admit that much of the carrying on of the world at this time is not truly honoring the Christ-child.

We need to teach our children about Jesus. We need to point out to them why He came into the world. As parents, we need to honor Him with our lives. We need to set an example before our children. Beloved, we should not lie to our children and tell them of some make-believe man who is going to come down the chimney and give them a bunch of presents. No, we should be true to our children. We should honor the Christ-child.

I read in your hearing about the wise men. When they came in and found the Child with Mary, His mother, they fell down and worshiped Him. How many people are truly worshipping Christ? How many people have it in their hearts to honor Him, to glorify Him, to live for Him, to worship Him, even as the wise men did? The wise men didn't come to the stable where Jesus was born. They didn't find a manger. No, it was some months later when the wise men followed the star and found Mary. The Bible says that they came into the *house*. At that time, Mary and Joseph were living in a house, and the Child was not a newborn. It was some time later. The wise men didn't bring Him birthday presents. They brought Him presents as kings unto kings. They worshiped Him. This, I believe, is what God desires from us. He desires for us to worship Him.

When Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, the heavens opened up, and God spoke and said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove came and rested upon Him. We know Jesus is the Son of God.

A lot is made over Santa Claus in the world, even in the religious world, but this figure is a made-up figure. We all know there is no real man such as this, and yet some think it is important that children believe it. Not only do many children believe in a jolly old man, but they think that he knows when they're sleeping, when they're awake, and when they're good or bad. Listen, Beloved, people are making that jolly old man a god. It's a god men have created, and more to-do is made over him than over the true Son of the living God. I challenge my listeners to love the truth, to buy the truth, and sell it not, and to honor the Christ-child. Matthew 1:21 says, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” This is the reason Jesus came into the world.

The songs on this broadcast tonight were not about make-believe, Beloved. They were not about reindeer. They were not about Santa Claus and elves. The songs were about Jesus Christ and His birth: “He Became Poor,” “Wonderful Gift of God's Love,” and “Silent Night.” Listen, Dear Ones, this is the message that should be resounding through the world, not only during this last month of the year, but throughout the year. The truth concerning God's love for humanity, God's will for mankind, His desire that we be delivered from sin are the things that should matter to us. These are the things that should count. These are the things which should draw our attention.

Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Do we find it that way? I'm talking about being a giving person. I'm talking about finding joy in giving of yourself. This is the will of God. This is what should prevail in the hearts of men: a spirit of giving. Giving for the sake of giving. Giving because there's a greater blessing in giving than there is in receiving.

I am not condemning the thought of exchanging gifts in the spirit of goodwill at any time of year. But ignoring Christ is wrong. I sincerely love the Son of God. I rejoice at His birth. Oh, as the angel cried out, “Behold, this day is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord!” My soul thrills at that message that was given. I read it in the Word of God. My soul thrills at the reality of the birth of Christ, His life, death, and His resurrection. These are the things that burden my heart. The world is wasting away. Sin is on every hand, and it is my job as a minister of the gospel to proclaim the truth of God's Word to the world.

We want you to know that God is not pleased with all the drinking of alcohol and the carrying on that goes on in the world at this time of year. God is pleased with that humble man or woman who will honestly and sincerely strive to serve God and to honor the Christ-child.

Are you honoring Him? Does He have preeminence in your life? Let this Christmas season be a time of worshipping the King of kings and Lord of lords! Let the imaginary beings associated with this holiday take a backseat to the living Son of God who gave His life for you.

Please consider these thoughts in your meditations in the spirit of love with which I have tried to present them. God bless you. †

HAGERSTOWN FALL REVIVAL

From notes taken by Sis. Sarah Arch

Our fall revival in Hagerstown with Bro. David Shaw from Jamaica was held October 4-6, 2024. This was the first time that Bro. Shaw held a revival here. His messages were an inspiration to us. We were glad that his wife, Sis. Maxene, was able to accompany him, and also Sis. Carol Sue Barnaby, a member of the congregation there.

We will share a few excerpts of Bro. Shaw's messages:

The message on Friday night was entitled, "Serve the Lord With Gladness." Text: Psalm 100:2. *How can we encounter life as it changes? We are serving a God who never changes, so we should be happy and praising Him. It is the saints' duty to let the world know He is everything to us. Think upon psalms and hymns and spiritual songs when you are going through hard times and troubles. The people that serve God should be happy. We have something and Someone the world does not have. We have freedom from sin. Our gift to God must be our entire being. If someone asks us the way to Christ, we must be perfectly able to tell them. We should not carry a dull countenance. The world is searching for an answer, and the answer is only in Jesus.*

Saturday night's message was entitled, "God's Protection in Evil Days." Text: Psalm 90:10, 11. This message begins on this page.

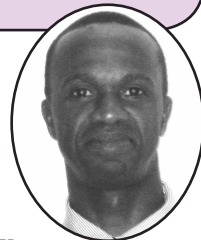
Sunday morning's message was entitled, "Giving God the Best Part." Text: Mark 12:28-34. *Unless you give God the best, you can't serve Him as you ought. You cannot serve two masters. How much do we love God? We are indebted to Him—a life of freedom from sin, peace, and happiness when we didn't deserve it. The more we know Him, the more we will love Him. He is due our love in its fullness. Jesus' command deserves our attention. Our purpose to our Creator is to love the Lord God with all our soul, mind, and strength. Jesus also said that we are to honor and respect one another. This love does not look for benefits. Grow to understand who God is so we can be better individuals. Our neighbor is one who needs our help. Be kind to those that we don't even know. A word of comfort may be a great help. The only way we can be of benefit to others is to give of our best to the Master. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice. It's dangerous to tell the Keeper of your life that you are not ready to serve Him. When we give God first place in our hearts, we will make wise decisions.*

Sunday night's message was entitled, "The Way of Life and the Way of Death." Text: Matthew 18:28-30. *Sin is a burden, but Christ came to call us out of darkness into light. The world is concerned with the here-and-now and not the future. We are beings made to worship either God or Satan. Jesus said, "I am the way." The other way is the way of death.*

The revival was a real blessing to the congregation, and we want to thank Bro. David Shaw for his faithful efforts. We want to thank the Lord for all that was done, and we feel that we are on higher ground because of the revival. †

GOD'S PROTECTION IN EVIL DAYS

2024 Fall Revival Message
by Bro. David Shaw



I WOULD LIKE for us to look at Psalm 90, verses 10 and 11: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." The title of the message tonight is, "God's Protection in Evil Days."

We have a God in whom we can rely on. He's one who never fails and who promises that down through the ages, He'll be the Guide and Protector of those who trust in Him.

If we would bring our minds back to the early days of the children of Israel when they lived in Egypt, we will remember that they went through sorrows, heartaches, and griefs on a daily basis, but in the midst of all of those things, they prayed to God. The time was then fulfilled when God sent His servant Moses down to Egypt to tell Pharaoh, "Let my people go, that they might serve me." Pharaoh was not willing and would not allow himself to be obedient to God, but God showed him that He was God, and he (Pharaoh) was man. So God intended to protect His children and give them the blessing that they were seeking for. We need to know that whatever time God gives us, it is in His hand. It is important that we know that He is always listening to our cries.

God has promised that He will show forth His wrath to the nations who fear Him not. He showed wrath to Pharaoh to let him know that He was God, and then He brought His children out of bondage. Not many days after, the children of Israel grieved God, but yet He loved them.

Moses wrote in Psalm 91, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." He declared to us that God is able to preserve and protect. He will not allow evil to befall us. "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Therefore, we will not be overtaken by the wiles of the enemy.

We are in a time and in a season when we see that evil is growing rapidly. More and more people are disbelieving that there is a God. They are cleaving to the evil surroundings and denying the Word of God. Men's hearts are becoming hard. Many are becoming stiff-necked. They are rejecting the Word of God and are leaning towards what man declares unto them, but here

and now as time rolls on, God is saying that He is the only Preserver and the only Protector.

The children of Israel fought many enemies, but God promised them that He would bring them out into a time when their enemies would all cease, and they would have a life of peace.

SAVED FROM SIN

I want us to look back at the time we were living in sin and realize now that we are enjoying life after turning from sin unto righteousness. The greatest havoc in the world today is sin. All that we are beholding around us is all because of sin. It's because man has denied God's Word and is leaning unto his own understanding. Man is refusing to acknowledge God in all his ways. In all areas where God is denied, failure is the result.

Again in Psalm 91 it says: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." As we trust in God, let us feel safe as we go through a world of chaos. Evil is taking hold of the lives of millions. When you are in the hand of God, you are preserved and protected. There is no fear of what man can do to you. God is willing to take care of His children as we ponder our path on a day-to-day basis. That is why it is so important as individuals that we seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

It is sad to see the world that we are living in today, where so many are failing to understand the genuineness in God and know that He is caring and is concerned about us. But day by day many ignore and reject the voice of God as He calls unto them, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Evil is plaguing our land, and we are seeing where many are falling in evil. Our young people are being captured in so many ways by pleasures and the desires that are around them.

When I look at the young people here tonight, my heart rejoices that they have escaped the pollution of this world. They have found a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. They are able to tell the world around them that there is something better in Jesus than what is in the world. Certainly, young women and men are called upon to "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). We see a world that is really wanting the guidance of God, but they are rejecting the offer that is given.

Look into the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 33, verse 27, and we'll see where Moses declared unto the children of Israel the blessings God intended for them to enjoy as they lived, and how well He would preserve and protect them: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them." I believe Moses used the term *eternal* because there were other gods whom many others believed in. Moses wanted them to know that there was only one eternal God, and only He alone could preserve

the life of His people. Beloved Ones, the devil would like to snatch every one of us. He's no respecter of persons. He would like to rob us of the blessings that God promised to us, but what Moses said to the children of Israel has been handed down to us.

Do you know what I am thankful for? The promise to us that "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." As Christians, being satisfied by the power of God, we are preserved, we are kept, and we are secured by night and by day. Therefore, we don't have to fear what the enemy can do, because he cannot pass the hedge. God preserves His people and has set a hedge around them. He made the devil know that even Job, His servant, was one who feared Him. The devil told God that if He moved the hedge and allowed Job to be disturbed, Job would curse Him to His face. God gave the devil the authority to do with Job what he wanted, but He told the devil not to touch his soul. We know that Job held his integrity before God.

GOD'S GRACE IS SUFFICIENT

Yes, Beloved Ones, we will have tests, trials, and hardships as we go through life, but in the midst of them, God says, "My grace is sufficient for you." Because Job knew on whom he believed and was persuaded that God was able, he kept his integrity. Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). When we trust in God, we need to understand that there's no other avenue. There is just one God in whom we can trust.

Moses said, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord." The Lord preserves the lives of all those who trust in Him, so we can find in God all that we need. Israel dwelt in the blessings of God. The children of Israel were chosen of God as the saints are the chosen of God today. As He cared for Israel, taking them across Jordan, through the Red Sea, kept and preserved from their enemies, and took them to the Promised Land, He has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us. All that we go through as Christians, we have the assurance He will give us sustaining grace to run the Christian race successfully.

Israel, whom God chose as a people, were the ones that He depended on. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deuteronomy 33:29). Although we are living in evil days, there is a God who promised to securely guard and preserve us. We need not worry. We can find confidence and trust in God. We must seek Him for all that we need and find strength to carry on the tasks He has given unto us.

As Christians, we are called upon to identify our God to the world and give them an assurance that the God we speak about is the God in authority. In Psalm 23, the Psalmist said in verse 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." To mention that scripture is more than just words. We must have a trust. We must have an assurance. We must have confidence that He is. More so, He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Down through the years of time, we can see that the saints have trusted the Lord and were victorious.

The church today is against evil, even as the apostles in their days had encountered evil. I want us to remember as a church that the devil is seeking all he can to have us cast down and be destroyed. Don't think that he forgets that we are around. In the days of the apostles, we learned of Peter who was placed in prison, but even then the Lord was with him. I love the fact that the saints of God continued to pray for Peter while he was in prison. While they prayed, at midnight something happened. Evil was upon him, but in the midst of the evil, the saints prayed. The Lord sent His angel to unlock the door and let Peter out. Although Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, God put the soldiers to sleep. What a mighty God we serve! He put the soldiers to bed. While they were sleeping, Peter got up and followed the angel. Oh, I love the fact that God had a remote control, as it were, for the iron gate! That iron gate was locked. God didn't need a key to unlock it. He just opened the iron gate freely for Peter as he and the angel walked through. Peter thought he saw a vision.

SOMETIMES THINGS LOOK IMPOSSIBLE

Have you ever encountered a situation that was answered by prayer and you wondered if it was real? Have you ever had that experience? Have you ever found yourself in a situation where things looked altogether impossible, but all of a sudden there arose a dawning and a brilliant light on your pathway? God is able to deliver in any situation though we are in an evil world. I am concerned about the evil world we are living in because it has struck disaster on the nations, but as Christians we know on whom we believe, and we are persuaded that God is able.

So Peter walked out and went to the house where the saints were praying. Rhoda saw him and she ran back to tell the others, "Peter is at the door." They said to her, "Thou art mad." It didn't seem real because they knew Peter was in prison, but she insisted that Peter was at the door. Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door, they were astonished. Peter explained to them what had happened. He told them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.

Paul and Silas were in a similar situation. At midnight, they sang praises to God. I mentioned last night that we must serve the Lord with gladness. We might think it is altogether impossible to do so, but can you imagine singing praises behind prison doors? Paul and Silas had scars from the lashes that they received on their bodies, but yet singing praises? What hinders our praises? I want to admonish us: the more we praise, the better the results. The more we give God thanks, the better the results, because in thanksgiving to God, we always receive a blessing. God wants to try us to prove if we really love Him. So when we praise God in the midst of our difficulties, we are telling Him, "Lord, I love you with all my heart, with all my strength, and with all my mind." When we can prove to God that we love Him to that degree, He will always come through for us. I thank God we have record of Him working with the saints there and then, and we know that He will work for us today in like manner.

Paul and Silas were able to be freed from prison. Do you know the magistrates wanted to let them out privately? Paul and Silas said, "No, we were placed here publicly. Why take us out privately?" They were told not to preach any more in the name of the Lord, but later they were still found preaching.

THE EXAMPLE OF DANIEL

Do you remember the story of Daniel in the Old Testament? Daniel was told not to pray for thirty days by the decree of King Darius. What an evil decree! Beloved Ones, Daniel, who knew that his God would deliver in the time of evil, went into his house, and his windows being open, he turned his face toward Jerusalem, knelt, and prayed as he always did. He did not pray secretly. His enemies on the outside heard him. They knew Daniel was a prayer warrior. They went to the king with the report that this Daniel whom he loved and honored so much was disobeying his decree. Daniel stood the test. Yes, evil was upon Daniel, but he stood the test. He was determined to die for the Lord if need be.

We are in a time where we may have to make some decisions because we are in a world where evil ones might walk in and demand that we close the doors. The evil we see approaching today, the ungodliness that is taking place in our land, who knows they won't walk in and say, "Close the doors"? Because of preaching holiness, godliness, and righteousness, they might want the doors closed. There's so much evil today that we need to fight against as Christians because our children are at stake. We need to fight for our wives, for our husbands, for our children, and for our grandchildren. The battle is hot, and we must be willing to fight. We can get on our knees and ask God for the strength and the courage to fight evil forces that we are encountering today.

Beloved Ones, we know Daniel was determined to stand, and God certainly delivered Daniel though he was thrown into the lions' den. You might wonder why God allowed Daniel to be thrown into the lion's den. Had he not been thrown in there, the king and those in authority wouldn't have been convinced that Daniel's God was a God of miracles, of power, of might, and one who delivers in any situation. We want to make our run successful as saints of God, and we are in a time when we have to stand and be assured of the faith we possess in God.

In Joshua, chapter 5, verse 13, let us hear what Joshua says: "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Why was Joshua so concerned? The Israelites were in a battle. They were fighting evil forces that were against them. So Joshua saw this man and thought it was an enemy. But, Beloved Ones, God is always sending someone to help us in the time of need.

Whenever we face an evil and think we cannot make it, we can call upon His name. Make our request known, and when we pray for one another, we are praying down the power of God. We are praying against the power of

evil surroundings and for victory. Thank God for the praying church. It is by prayer that we are overcomers. We can find a place to hide in God as we pray the power down. Joshua faced that man without fear. Do you know why? Because God told Joshua, "No man can stand against you. No man can hurt you." Joshua did not go to battle forgetting what God told him.

Saints, we are told today that once we give our hearts to God and serve Him in sincerity, He will preserve us. Don't be fearful tonight, My Beloved Brethren. God is able, and He cares for you, no matter what may be the circumstances. There are things that we have to bear. If we go through life happy-go-lucky, we will forget what we really ought to do. We find ourselves in situations where only God can help us. We are human beings, and we easily forget. We easily go carefree, but God wants us to be conscious of Him and stick by Him, so He brings us things to draw us nearer to Him. He puts us in situations where we must depend on Him solely for all that we need.

WE ARE IN A TIME OF EVIL

If you are here tonight and you have not found the Lord as your personal Savior, it is very important that you make your calling and election sure. In this evil world you are living in, I implore you to seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He's near. Don't wait until your back is against the wall. Make sure you seek Him now while the opportunity is yours. Don't allow fear to drive you to God. Come, because He's the God to be served. Seek a heart to love Him and to obey Him. He's calling, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The time of evil is certainly upon us, and I believe as individuals as you go around your locality, you are seeing the awful changes that are taking place. I say *awful* because the evil is so uncomely. The things that are happening are all amazing. It makes you wonder if these things are real. When you hear some things, it makes you wonder if these things are real. Yes, they are real, because the devil is successful in sowing the seed of evil into men's hearts, and the seed grows. Men are now turning to evil more than they are turning to good, and the Bible declares in Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil." These things are now upon us.

As parents, we are having a hard job with our children. Our children have to mix with society. It is sad at times to see, as they grow into teenage years, that they begin to adapt to the principles in society that are ungodly. We have to work hard in reminding them that what they were taught in Sunday school, and from the Holy Bible, is to be accepted as the law and commands of God. God has the right to direct man. Man cannot direct himself, because in many instances he is prone to go astray. The Word of God needs to be our guide. I am thankful for the godly parents who are making all the efforts they can to plant a seed of righteousness in the hearts of their children that they will grow and bring forth fruit and mature into spirituality that they will be able to avoid the evil and cleave to righteousness.

The devil has been bringing ideas in the minds of people to make them think that their ideas can compare with what God requires. Their opinions, it seems, can be mingled with God's Word and it's okay. So it's no more black or white, but they put black and white together, and they get purple. With some people it's not wrong or right. They are left wondering. Can anything be like this? What an evil when people are made to think it's not wrong and it's not right! They start to form their own opinions.

Some people say that men wrote the Bible. Yes, it was written by men that were inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Bible tells us who God is. It reveals God to man. It makes us to understand who we are as individuals and our responsibility to God. Solomon said, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

If keeping God's commandments was the motive of our people, our world would be a better place, but it is not so. Man is still resisting the Word of God. That's why Joshua had it so hard with Israel. The nations around them were so ungodly. Oh, they were evil in their doings, and Israel were the ones God sought to guide. In many instances, do you know Israel became evil in their doings? It grieved God. Sometimes they died by the hundreds, because they sinned against God. They tried to copy from the nations around them. They were warned before by God—"When you go into the land that I give unto you, do not learn the ways of the heathen." They were told that they were a special people unto God and not to go after those who served idols. But, Beloved Ones, they rebelled. They did exactly what they were told not to do, so the evil got hold of them.

WE MUST CRY OUT AGAINST EVIL

As a church, may God help us as we go through life, and we see the evil around us that we won't turn a blind eye to it. We must cry out against evil. Fearlessly, cry out against evil, because we must stand as God's witnesses. The church is what God depends on to carry out His truth to a dying world that men might know and understand that He is to be feared, because He's the God who is in authority. We are reminded that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Let's be not weaklings, but stand in the gap, and find ourselves trusting in God fearlessly, not regarding what man can do unto us. We are seeing in our time and age that the gospel needs to be established. It is time that we get on the battlefield for the Lord. Let the world know God is to be served, and that there is no God like the God of Jacob.

Deuteronomy 1:28 says, "Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there." This was after Joshua sent a few brethren to spy out the land that God promised them. Do you see where the evil was coming from? There were twelve spies sent. Ten came back to tell the congregation, "We just can't destroy these people. We can't take the city, because there are giants in the city, and we are like grasshoppers in their sight." Two said to them, "Though we are like grasshoppers, we can take

the city." Ten brought back an evil report. Can you see the danger of allowing evil to take hold? It brought stress and hardship on the church. It caused God to get upset, because God intended for His people to identify Him as the everlasting God. Although those people were chosen, they were not all true. They doubted the God they served. There are many people who don't even know whom they're serving.

Do you know what Job said? "I know on whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded." Paul also declared that he knew his God was able, and he was willing when he went up to Jerusalem that he would stand the test. He was ready both to be bound and to die. When you have confidence unshaken, it means a lot, Beloved. Don't allow the storms that linger to shake your confidence in God. Don't allow situations to dwindle your faith in God. Don't allow the height of giants to dwindle your faith in God. The spies saw those giants stout and large, and they thought they were too small to gain the victory over them. They didn't believe the promise of God. There were those who were encouraged to go. Those who were fearing were discouraged.

Beloved Ones, we need to be careful. We can cause people to become discouraged. That was what happened to Israel, and they thought they weren't going to make it. Verses 29 and 30 of Deuteronomy 1 say: "Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes." Sometimes we fall into situations and forget the past victories. Let us not be forgetful. Keep remembering what the Lord has already done for us. When faced with a new situation, remember He's the same as He was back then. In Egypt, God's people faced evil. They were treated badly by their taskmasters, and they suffered for many years, but they cried unto God, and He sent deliverance by the hand of Moses and Aaron. I believe when they came to the Red Sea, and it parted, it sealed in them a complete confidence in God. Seeing the sea parted, and walking through on dry land, Moses said to them before they entered, "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." They looked around and saw the waters come back together and drowned the Egyptians. Yet, a few days after, they forgot the God who brought them through.

WHERE ARE YOU STANDING?

Where are we standing tonight, Church, while facing the evil world around us? I'm certain you listen to the news. You hear what is taking place. We're in a time when it is so awful. It makes you marvel at what you hear. My only reason I want to hear the news is to know what's happening around me, because I'm responsible. I'm on the watchtower, and I must be able to cry out against evil. I must listen to the news, read the news to warn my people against the evil. We have some alarming issues. Some of the news is shocking. It makes you wonder. But I want us as a church to keep our stand. Don't be fearful. We are going from victory unto victory.

Though the children of Israel sinned, and God was grieved, He had a servant who was caring. Moses said, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

What a love! The Lord said unto Moses, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

As we face an evil world, let us ask God to help us to be courageous as we go from strength to strength in the Lord. The battle is the Lord's.

When Jesus was born, He faced evil. Herod heard that a King was born, and he became troubled because his kingdom would be in jeopardy. He inquired of the wise men, "Who is this King? Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." Herod was full of evil. He wanted to kill the King. Do you know what God did? He told them that they should not return to Herod, but go into their own country another way. When Herod found out, his evil wasn't fulfilled. He made a law that all the children two years and under should be killed. But the 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 bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

When God hides you, you're properly hidden. I believe the God we serve hides the church under the shadow of His wings. The Psalmist said, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." We must not be fearful of what is happening around us. We must preach the truth unshaken.

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ encountered many evils. He was hated, even unto death. They thought when He died that it was finished, but praise God, He died to live. On the third day, He arose. The stone was rolled away. The angel said to Mary, "Whom seek ye? He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Up from the grave he arose,

With a mighty triumph o'er his foes;

He arose a victor from the dark domain,

And he lives forever with his saints to reign.

He arose! He arose!

Hallelujah! Christ arose!

My Friend, because Christ is alive, we need not fear. Amen. †

2024 HAGERSTOWN FALL REVIVAL CD'S

We have available CD's of our Fall Revival with Bro. David Shaw. These include singing and messages. Price \$3.00 each or the complete set of all four is \$10 postpaid. Please write in the blank how many you would like to receive. Send check or money order to: The Way of Truth CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088. (No international orders, please).

___ CD #1645 Serve the Lord With Gladness

___ CD #1646 God's Protection in Evil Days

___ CD #1647 Giving God the Best Part

___ CD #1648 The Way of Life and the Way of Death



These questions and answers are taken from *The Way of Truth Answer and Question Book 1946-2001*.

QUESTION: Jesus said that anyone that breaks any of His commandments shall be called least in the kingdom (Matthew 5:19). Also, in Matthew 18:4, Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” From these statements, can you say whether there are such positions like the least and the greatest in the kingdom of God?

ANSWER: In regard to Matthew 5:19, Adam Clarke says, “Shall have *no place* in the kingdom of Christ here, nor in the kingdom of glory above. That this is the meaning of these words is evident enough from the following verse.”

On Matthew 18:4, Clarke comments, “Thus our Lord shows them that they were all equal, and that there could be no superiority among them, but what must come from the deepest humility; he intimates also, that wherever this principle should be found, it would save its possessor from seeking worldly honours, earthly profits, and from seeking to be a ruler over his brethren, or a lord in God’s heritage.”

To understand Clarke’s reasoning, note verse one of this chapter: “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

You can read this further on in Matthew 23 where Jesus tells the disciples not to be called “Rabbi” because one was their Master, Christ, “and all ye are brethren” (verse 8).

QUESTION: How many hells are there in the Bible?

ANSWER: The word *hell* in the King James Old Testament generally comes from the Hebrew “Sheol,” which simply means the place of the dead, without reference to happiness or torment.

In the New Testament we have at least two words translated hell from the Greek: *Hades*, which means more or less the same as *Sheol*, and *Gehenna*, which means the place of retribution for evil deeds. This is the same as “the lake of fire” that the Bible speaks of as “the second death,” and what is commonly called “hell” or “hell fire.”

Of course the word *Sheol* could cover “hell,” as it means the place of the dead, but many verses where the word is used do not refer to the place of torment.

QUESTION: A radio preacher once said that the two pence in the parable of the good Samaritan represents the two works of grace. What do you say about this?

ANSWER: There are those who try to use the inn (where the Good Samaritan took the wounded man) as

a type of the Church of God, but I fail to see that this is proper. A person has to get saved to enter the church (Acts 2:47). This man was in the inn for a day and a night before the two pence was paid. Not only that, but once he was well, he was to leave the inn! Are we to leave the church once Jesus has made us whole? The doctrines of justification and sanctification can be taught properly by using other plain scriptures without symbolizing this parable. Jesus makes it plain that the purpose of this parable was to teach who was our neighbor (see verses 27 and 36) and what our conduct should be, “Go, and do thou likewise” (verse 37). I can’t buy justification or sanctification for anyone.

QUESTION: Revelation 21:2 says, “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Can you please explain this scripture?

ANSWER: This has no reference to a literal city coming down, as some literal kingdom teachers teach. The holy city that John saw was the Church of God. There is only ONE true bride. The angel said to John, in verse nine, “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” What he showed him was the “holy Jerusalem” which was and is, the bride of Christ, the Church. This same city is spoken of in Hebrews 12:22, 23, “But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.” Her coming from heaven simply means that she is of God, being built by God, owned by God, controlled by God, empowered by God and doing the work of God. This is in contrast to the great “city of Babylon” pictured elsewhere in Revelation as being a “habitation of devils.”

QUESTION: Colossians 2:18 says, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” How does a man worship an angel?

ANSWER: Nowhere in the Word of God are we instructed to worship angels. In fact, in verses that speak of men starting to do so, they were told by the angel not to. We are to worship God, no one else.

Adam Clarke paraphrased this verse thus: “Let no man spoil you of the prize adjudged to you, who delights in mortifying his body, and walking with the apparent modesty of an angel, intruding into things which he has not seen; and, notwithstanding his apparent humility, his mind is carnal, and he is puffed up with a sense of his superior knowledge and piety.”

Clarke is of the opinion that Paul is referring to the Essenes, a religious sect that lived down near the Dead Sea in his day.

QUESTION: If Satan was never in heaven, where was he?

ANSWER: He was, and is, in the place God prepared for him. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). †



ALL HAIL, IMMANUEL! **Israel Smalling**

All hail to Thee, Immanuel,
The mighty Prince of Peace!
Wonderful, Counselor, and Guide!
Thy praise shall never cease.

Almighty God, we worship Thee
Through Christ Thine only Son;
All praise to Thee, Immanuel,
For that which Thou hast done!

We thank Thee for Thy humble birth—
Humility complete.
A pattern for Thy people, Lord,
Who worship at Thy feet.

Give us that willing, lowly mind
To do Thy Father's will,
To follow in Thy footsteps, Lord,
Oh, keep us from all ill!

THAT NIGHT **Author Unknown**

That night when in the Eastern skies
The mystic star dispensed its light,
A blind man moved in his sleep—
And dreamed that he had sight.

That night when shepherds heard the song
Of hosts angelic choring near,
A deaf man stirred in slumber's spell—
And dreamed that he could hear!

That night when in the cattle stall
Slept Child and mother cheek by jowl,
A cripple turned his twisted limbs—
And dreamed that he was whole.

That night when o'er the newborn Babe
The tender Mary rose to lean,
A loathsome leper smiled in sleep—
And dreamed that he was clean.

That night when to the mother's breast
The little King was held secure,
A harlot slept a happy sleep—
And dreamed that she was pure!

That night when in the manger lay
The Sanctified who came to save,
A man moved in the sleep of death—
And dreamed there was no grave.

SHOULD THE ANGELS COME TONIGHT **F. W. Davis**

Did you hear the angels' message
Of our blessed Savior's birth,
As it rang across the hilltops
From His glory down to earth?
Did you understand the meaning,
"Peace on earth, good will to men"?
Has the Christ Child of the manger
Saved you from a life of sin?

Should the angels come at midnight,
Or the early morning hour,
With the King, the Prince of heaven,
In His glory and His power,
Would you welcome such an advent—
Greater still, than Bethlehem—
Christ, with all His holy angels,
Bringing time on earth to end?

THE HOPE OF ALL MANKIND **Edward M. Brandt**

O, precious Babe of Bethlehem,
Thou bright and morning Star,
All people seek and yearn for Thee,
Whom shepherds sought from fields afar.

O, cherished Child of angels' song,
The hope of all mankind,
We worship and adore Thee, Christ,
With joyful soul and mind.

O, Holy One of glorious birth,
Who lives within our heart,
May we to all men everywhere,
Thy wondrous love impart. †

Glory to the King of kings!

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



INVITING

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

“Please clear your desks except for your pencils,” said my first grade teacher, Miss F. “You will need all of your desktop space to do today’s phonics worksheet. Will someone please help pass out the scissors?”

All of us first graders raised our hands. We liked giving out supplies because it gave us the opportunity to get up and walk around the classroom for a few minutes.

Miss F gave each of us a worksheet. I looked at my worksheet. The title at the top of the sheet read “Which Consonant Is It?”

This will be easy and fun, I said to myself. *I like matching pictures with sounds.*

“Be sure to follow the directions at the top of the worksheet,” said Miss F. “First, you will cut on the solid lines around each rectangle. Next, you will look at the object pictured on each rectangle and think about the consonant that object begins with. Finally, you will paste each picture under the correct consonant letter.

“We don’t have enough jars of paste for each student to have one,” continued Miss F, so I will come around and give each of you a little scrap of paper with some paste on it. You can use your finger to spread the paste on the backs of your rectangles. The paste will make your fingers sticky, but you can wash your hands in the restroom sink when you have finished the worksheet.”

I started cutting out rectangles with my scissors. While I was cutting, Miss F came by, as she had said she would, and placed a scrap of paper on the top corner of my desk. On the scrap of paper she piled a clump of sticky, white paste.

As I continued cutting, I glanced from time to time at the clump of paste. It looked moist, shiny, and inviting. It smelled minty and delicious.

Paste isn’t food, I said to myself. *It should not be eaten.* I shook my head and continued cutting rectangles.

At last, all my cutting was finished. I lined up the rectangles in their appropriate columns and reached for the paste. One by one, I coated the back of each rectangle with a generous helping of paste and secured it in place with the heel of my hand. Paste leaked out from the edges of the rectangles as I smoothed them, and my hands grew stickier and stickier.

Without thinking, I put one finger to my lips and licked the paste from it to take away the stickiness. The paste tasted just as minty as it smelled. It tasted a little bit like the teaberries that grew in the woods behind my grandmother’s house.

That didn’t taste too bad, I thought to myself. I licked the paste from my other fingers. I thought for a moment, and then I purposefully stuck my finger into the paste and put a whole glob of it into my mouth.

Although the minty flavor was inviting, the paste didn’t satisfy like real food. It left a strange taste in my mouth after I had swallowed it. *I don’t think I want to eat any more paste,* I said to myself after a moment.

When I got home from school that evening, I told my mother about the paste, and how it smelled good enough to eat. I told her I had tried it, but that I didn’t like the aftertaste.

“Let that be a lesson to you,” my mother said. “Just because something seems inviting doesn’t mean it’s always good for you.”

My mother was right. As I grew older, I understood more and more the wisdom of her words. I learned that the wrong road can often look more attractive than the right road.

There are things in this world that appear inviting, and we may be tempted to try them. But if we have been told by our parents, or by the Word of God that these things are not good for us, then we need to stay away from them.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 22:5, which says, *Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.*

A “froward” person is headstrong and stubborn, not willing to take advice from parents, teachers, ministers, or the Word of God. That person will find thorns and snares in his pathway. In other words, he will have a hard and bitter life.

No matter how inviting a temptation may be, we must ask God to help us resist it.

Activity

We read in the Bible about how Eve yielded to temptation when something looked inviting to her. See if you can fill in the blanks to complete the story. If you need help, you can look in Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Genesis.

God created ____ and ____ and placed them in the beautiful Garden of _____. He told them they could eat the fruit from every ____ in the garden except for the Tree of ____ of ____ and _____. God told them that if they ate ____ from that tree, they would _____.

Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a _____. He told her not to ____ God. Satan told Eve that she would not ____ if she ate fruit from the forbidden tree. Eve thought the fruit from the forbidden tree looked _____. She did not ____ temptation. She ate some of the fruit, and she gave some to _____, and he ate it.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed ____ and ate the forbidden _____, their _____ died. They were no longer God’s _____. Adam and Eve needed to be _____ so their _____ could be alive again to God.

Answer to Last Month's Activity

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life ... (Psalm 23:6).

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth ... (Psalm 25:10).

Fear God and keep his commandments ... (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Enter ye in at the strait gate ... (Matthew 7:13). †

STEPS HEAVENWARD

By the late R. L. Berry

Chapter XVIII

Conformity to Jesus

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (I Peter 2: 21, 22). And Paul says we were foreordained to “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29). “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18).

Nothing is plainer in the Bible than that the Christian is to be like Jesus. Look at the apostles! When they first came into contact with Jesus, they were not very much like Him. Every now and then in their association with Him we see the contrast. Once in a storm they saw Jesus coming on the water and they thought it was a ghost, and they cried out for fear. Once they wanted to call fire down from heaven to kill some Samaritans. And they quarreled about getting the chiefest place in the kingdom. They were not just like Jesus; there were some differences in the point of view and in the disposition of heart. But after three years of looking at Jesus and especially after Pentecost the apostles became like Jesus. They were brave, they were kind and full of love, they bore persecution humbly like Jesus, and nearly every one of them died for Jesus. The transforming power of Christ made them act like Jesus.

Jesus is the Christian's great pattern, the one perfect model and example. A Christian is a *Christian*, a follower of Jesus, one who learns of Him and lives like Him. Young converts are called to live again in a sinful world the life of Jesus. Young converts, like the apostles, cannot at once live just like Jesus, they have begun to live as He lived, but there must be considerable correcting before they become full men in Christ. But the young babe in Christ is a son of God, and that divine life will most surely produce a mature Christian by and by. Everything that lives must have time to grow, and all things that begin must be given time to come to perfection. Babies are perfect babies but not perfect men; so a new convert is a perfect babe in Christ, but he will become more like Christ as he continues to view in the mirror the glory of God.

The important thing to do is to keep our promise to the Lord to live for Him. He will see to the keeping of us, and our life will be more and more like His.

To be like Jesus we must have a clear idea of whom Jesus is. The picture of Him must be clear. Where do we obtain that picture? You have seen photographs that were taken on a cloudy day or in places where the light did not shine upon the object being photographed. The result was a blurred, dim picture. Some people's picture of Jesus seems to have been taken in the dark, in the gloom, and not in the clear light of the gospel.

We obtain a true picture of Jesus in the New Testament. The light of him shines forth from it. The young convert should take pains to read the New Testament thoroughly. Its meaning may not always be plain, and you will find obscure passages, but the more you read and meditate the clearer becomes the meaning and the brighter becomes the picture of Jesus. Always remind yourself that you are the Lord's never to turn back, and always keep in mind that you are to be a Bible Christian, like Jesus, not a mere average Christian as we see them today.

There are only two possibilities on this line of conformity. We shall either be conformed to Jesus or be conformed to the world. We cannot be conformed to both at the same time. One excludes and drives out the other. And more than this, young Christian, the tendency of your life, now, since you are saved, will be one way or the other. You will be conformed either more and more to Jesus or more and more to the world. And if you become so conformed to this world that you become like it, Jesus Himself would not know you as a Christian if He should see you. Take great care which way you are going.

If a farmer or a plowboy wants to make a straight furrow, he marks something across the field to look at. From that object he does not take his eye. If the newborn babe looks steadfastly to Jesus, he will see more and more the beauty of Jesus, and that seeing will make him more like Jesus. He will be changed into the same image. But if he gets his eyes on the world, he will become more and more worldly, he will be changed into the same image as the world is. Alas! many young converts get their eyes on the wrong image.

There is a secret about this seeing Jesus and being conformed to Him. When Christians in olden times were burned at the stake, the spectators and executioners wondered from whence came the sustaining grace to those martyrs. Jesus said we should pray to the Father in secret and He would reward us openly. The Christ-like life manifest to the world must feed in secret upon spiritual food. The Christian must find his strength renewed by constantly looking to Jesus.

We become like those we associate with, and if in the secret closet we hold intimate conversation with Jesus, drink of His Spirit, gain His view of life, become filled with His love—we shall be conformed to Him. The measure of our conformity is the measure of our usefulness. Strive to represent Jesus to the world by close conformity to Him. †

**BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF
HIS SON!**

KEEP THE LOWER LIGHTS BURNING

2024 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Terry Deville



WE WILL TURN in our Bibles to I Timothy, chapter 1, verses 18 and 19: “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.”

At many harbors along America’s beautiful coastlines, there’s a lighthouse. But, along with the lighthouse, there are what is called the *lower lights*. Have you heard of that? In the old days especially, not only did they depend on the lighthouse, they depended on the lower lights to make sure the pilot could steer his ship safely into the harbor. Without the lower lights, the pilot couldn’t tell where the danger was at night. In many places, there were large rocks along the entrance. The lower lights were placed at different intervals along the shore so that when the captain saw the lighthouse and started to go into the channel, the lower lights would send a gleam across the waves. It would illuminate the danger or the obstacles along the shore and help the pilot to see that there was danger in the dark places. Try to visualize now the lower lights beaming across on each side of the channel. If there were rocks and obstacles, the lights told the pilot to stay clear of them and stay in the channel.

Have you ever heard the song “Let the Lower Lights Be Burning”? I always wanted to hear the story behind that song. Philip Bliss heard the following story and wrote that song:

One dark stormy night on Lake Erie, the winds were howling and the rain was relentless. The waves rolled like mountains and not a star in the sky could be seen. A ship was rolling with the huge waves and was trying to make its way into Cleveland harbor. At last, the captain saw the lighthouse for Cleveland harbor, but he could not see the lower lights.

The captain said to the pilot, “Is that Cleveland Harbor?”

The pilot responded, “Yes sir, it is Cleveland Harbor.”

“Where are the lower lights?” the captain asked.

“They must have gone out, sir,” said the pilot.

“Can you make it into the harbor without the lower lights?” asked the captain.

“We must, sir, or we will perish in this storm!” was the pilot’s reply.

With a strong hand and with a brave heart, the pilot turned the ship’s wheel toward Cleveland Harbor, but the ship missed the channel and crashed on the rocks. The boat sank and over 200 people lost their lives.

After hearing this story, Philip Bliss wrote the words and music to the beautiful hymn, “Let the Lower Lights Be Burning.”

We are the lower lights. There’s a storm in this world. It’s raging. “Why do the heathen rage, and the

people imagine a vain thing?” (Psalm 2:1). There’s a raging spirit in this dark, dark, dangerous world, and it’s closing in, and getting closer and closer. We live out in rural Deville, and we’re sort of separated from the big cities, but it’s getting closer and closer. Can you sense the evil in this world? The days are evil. The message tonight is to make sure that some lost seaman who’s out there will make it home to Christ’s harbor.

JESUS IS THE LIGHTHOUSE

The Lighthouse will always be there. We don’t have to worry about the Lighthouse being there. Jesus is the Lighthouse, and nothing is going to put the Lighthouse out. Nothing! But He gave us the responsibility and the job of keeping the lower lights burning. That’s what Jesus is saying to us. It’s a great honor, Saints, that we can be lights to help precious souls, not only into the channel, but all the way safely to the harbor.

Here are two verses and the chorus of the song I just mentioned:

*Brightly beams our Father’s mercy
From His lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.*

*Dark the night of sin has settled,
Loud the angry billows roar;
Eager eyes are watching, longing,
For the lights along the shore.*

*Let the lower lights be burning!
Send a gleam across the wave!
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.*

Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Eager eyes are watching. Those dark areas are real obstacles for people trying to make it to the harbor. Can you visualize those dark areas tonight? Jesus once said, “Some will strive to enter in, and shall not be able.”

The way we keep the light burning is to make sure we lift up Christ every day in our lives. Do you remember the old saints and how brightly their lights shone? I remember them: Bro. Raib, Sis. Colberg, Bro. Alvin, Bro. Ollen, my grandmother and grandfather, my father and mother. Bro. Ben Lewis was a bright light to me. They were all lower lights to help me get to the harbor, and warned me of the dangers. The Bible says, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” To me, the light is still shining from them. I haven’t forgotten that. When I leave this world, I want people to remember that I was a light to them.

Brethren, my burden is real tonight, because there are just a few lower lights left burning. Let me say out of a heart of love, a form of godliness does not reveal any danger along the way. A form of godliness is what is in the religious world today, but it won't get you to the harbor. It won't warn you about the obstacles. It misleads you. It misguides you. Some of the greatest obstacles they say are, "We have to live that way anyway. Don't worry about it. If you were once saved, you're always secure." Dear Ones, those are obstacles. Let me tell you, I keep up with the religious world. It must make God ashamed the way people worship Him today. I'm not cutting any slack. I love people, but I don't love sin, and I don't love the way some people live, because they're not warning the generations and the millions and the billions of people out there of the dangers.

SALVATION APPEARS TO ALL MEN

The Bible says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Do you believe that? All men! "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." This will get you to the harbor, Dear Ones. This is Church of God teaching. I still believe in living free from sin, don't you? I still believe Jesus' blood was powerful, not only to cleanse me of all my committed sins, but to cleanse me from that old Adamic nature that ruined my life. I think only the Church of God teaches that we can be cleansed from the Adamic nature.

I'm amazed sometimes when people get saved and say, "Unless the Spirit leads me, that's the way I'll do it." The next step is sanctification. The devil can make you fearful. Fear is an obstacle to you surrendering your life totally to God. I'm here to tell you, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). We have power over the spirit of fear. Even now, the spirit of fear comes to me, and I have to deal with it. It's real. Whatever Satan is trying to do to make me fearful and anxious about, God said that Satan is a liar, so I tell him, "Get thee behind me, Satan." That's the way he's defeated. You take the Sword out of the sheath, and the devil will start running right way. Are you hearing me? He is real, and he'll come to us all.

How many times has the Bible said, "Fear not"? The Bible talks about two sparrows being sold for a farthing. It says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without [being noticed by] your Father." Is this the mighty God?

Do you know what else Jesus said? "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Do you believe that? Jesus said it. He knows how many hairs are on your head. I found a scripture not too long ago speaking about white hair. The Bible calls it "the hoary head." I'll have to paraphrase it. He says, "When your hoary head becomes white, I'll be right there to carry you." Did you hear me? We're getting feeble, but the Lord said He'll be there to carry us, to bear us up, and to bear with us. I'm glad God bears with us because He understands we're old. I can't handle things like I used to, but I still can let my light shine. "Let the lower lights be burning! Send a gleam across the wave! Some poor fainting, struggling seaman, you may rescue, you may

save." It is not difficult when you have light in you to let it shine.

WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN?

When Bro. Doug Koerner asked certain ones today *what love means to them*, some said, "My mother, my parents." Do you know why? They were bright, lower lights. My mother was one of the brightest lights I've ever had in my life. She was a straight shooter. She told it how it was. But there was no doubt she loved us. She would do anything in the world for us. Many times she had to put Naomi, Danny, Judy, and me in our place. I appreciate one time what she said to one of her children, "You don't have any grounds for divorce." Well, they sought to work it out, and they did.

Husbands and wives, we can work it out. When we work it out, we're showing other people how to work it out. I want you to think of all the bright, lower lights in your families. You're not going to help anyone by letting down on the standard. You're not going to help anyone by getting into false religion. It has to be God's way, and God's way is the best way. It's a highway, the highway of holiness.

God is the most advanced Being that there ever was or will be. He's one who had no beginning, and He has no end. He's been from everlasting to everlasting. He's far more advanced than you realize. Do you know what God did? He gave us the most advanced way to live. Don't go around hanging your heads. You're living the most advanced way to live in this world. It's so advanced that the wise and the prudent don't understand it, but if we trust in God as little children, He said, "I'll bring you into it and reveal unto you this wonderful and beautiful advanced way." Job 12:10, "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." Our very breath is in His hand. That's far more advanced than we can comprehend.

Psalm 33:6, 8, 9: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." That's telling us how to live. Do you think God would give us an inferior way to live? You're living the most holy, high, and rich life that is possible to mankind, because our Creator is the only God. "The God of the Mormons," they say, "came from another planet." That's their own words.

I like Indians, but the thrust of the matter is, they worship false gods. That's just the truth. The Nauvoo Indians believe that their god came up out of Mother Earth. Some believe the sun is their god. Some Jupiter, Mars, and on and on. Dear Ones, our God created all of this by the breath of His mouth. Job 26:7, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." It is in God that we live, move, and have our being. Look to God! He has the solution for every issue in this world. I'm proud of my God. I'm thankful for my Savior.

God delivered a wretch like me. I can see myself out on the raging storm. Several times I came close to going into eternity unprepared. Raging! It was tearing me apart. Listen, Dear Ones, the storm out there will tear

you apart. I decided one day that I had enough. Thank God, I knew where to go. I didn't run to some false religious teaching that you can't be delivered from sin. I went where I knew those lower lights were burning. I knew where to go, and did I go! But the old devil tried to keep me from entering in.

I had some lower lights to help me to get safely into the harbor. Many tonight don't have those lower lights. That's just the truth. They're being told that they have light, but Jesus said, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" He said to the Pharisees, "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." In other words, convincing them in the Pharisee religion.

Do you know there is a Pharisaical spirit in the world today? Listen, Dear Ones, I've been around a lot of spirits since I've been saved. There's nothing that can imitate God's love. God's love is not harsh. Hear me! Jesus went out looking for that one sheep that went astray from the fold of ninety-nine. Harshness would say, "Well, it had no business running way." But that's not the love of Jesus. Are you all getting this love? He left the ninety and nine and went after that one.

An under shepherd will go after that one lost sheep because he has the love of God in his heart. He'll put away hurt feelings or disappointments, and he'll go to him and plead with him, "You need to come back. We love you. God loves you. You're important to us, and there's no issue God can't solve." We've had our issues. Every congregation does, but we've found out the power of God's love. It can break down every barrier. Every barrier!

WE NEED TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE

God has put His love in our hearts, and along with this great love that God has put in our hearts, it needs to be shared. If someone does you wrong and your feelings are hurt, didn't God say you have to love them? How about your enemy? An enemy is your enemy because he's your enemy. Your enemy doesn't want any good for you. I won't do anything to cause my enemy to be lost. That's an expression of love. We must have a will in our hearts to love our enemy. Everyone has a will. When you learn to submit that will to loving anybody, even your enemy, this love is so powerful that you will love them anyway.

Sometimes there may be a little friction. That's all your mind can think about over and over and over. Do you know what I'm talking about? You wish it could stop. You try to make it stop. You try to give the benefit to them, but over and over you think about it. Finally, you pray and pray for God to get you out of it, but no matter what someone may have said or done, all you have to do is to love them and pray earnestly for them. The love that God has put in our hearts begins to work.

A lot of times, we want to hold on to that hurt. "They did me wrong. They talked bad about me." They talked about Jesus, Dear Ones, and He loved them. The first Christian martyr, Stephen, loved his enemies. How did he do that? His will. "I'm going to love them, no matter

what." Listen, Saints, think about it. This is the love of this most advanced Being that there is. He is Lord. He put that great love into your heart. It's a powerful thing. Love is the most powerful thing on Earth. All we have to do is put ourselves aside. Get self out of the way. Be willing to forgive and love them.

I'll end with this. The most beautiful, powerful beam is the beam of love. It's bright. It's a reflection of God's love. When nothing else will work, love works. We're here to win souls. Jesus didn't condemn the world. He loved them into the kingdom. He still loved the woman who was caught in the act of adultery. I'm afraid a lot of us would have had to fight that attitude. But if we make up our minds to love them, we'll be surprised how much we can treat them like Jesus did.

I want to be like Jesus, don't you? God so loved us that He gave us His only begotten Son. I want to really be like Jesus. You have something powerful and precious. It came from the most advanced Being ever. It's called the love of God. It's in your heart. It can solve anything. I want my babies to make it. I'm old now, so I want my grandchildren and great-grandchildren to make it to the harbor. I love them. I want them to make it. I want them one day to remember the bright light of Paw-paw, the bright light of my mama and papa. There is no doubt I loved them, but there was no doubt to them whom I loved the most. By loving God the most, my light shone brighter. Get things in order so other things can fall into place.

*Let the lower lights be burning!
Send a gleam across the wave!
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.*

*Dark the night of sin has settled,
Loud the angry billows roar;
Eager eyes are watching, longing,
For the lights along the shore.*

*Trim your feeble lamp, my brother,
Some poor sailor, tempest-tossed,
Trying now to make the harbor,
In the darkness may be lost.*

Trim the wick; clean the globe, and make sure you're full of oil.

Be a wise virgin. That's in Matthew, chapter 25—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." The five wise kept their lamps burning. They kept them burning! The foolish let their lamps go out. Jesus said in Matthew 24:12, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

CONCLUSION

We have the power of God's love which binds us all together. No pow'r of earth or hell can rend us from each other. Is that your attitude? We're really that city that Jesus said sits on a hill. "Ye are the light of the world." Let those lower lights keep burning for yourself and for those we want to see make it. I know you love

them just like I do. Keep the lower lights burning, no matter what.

“Lord, give me more oil, give me more love. Give me more of whatever will give me more light and let it shine.” It will work. It cannot fail. That’s how advanced and mighty this God is. He will reward your labor. He will not forget your labor of love. Press on, and one day the battle will be won. I love you.

God bless you. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE STEPS OF THE RIGHTEOUS THE SPIRIT WORKS WITH JACOB (Part II)

Scriptures: Genesis 32:3-8, 24-29.

Genesis 32:3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

Memory Verse: And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

—Genesis 32:28.

Aim: To give an insight into the workings of the Spirit with the early saints.

INTRODUCTION

We see evidences of a great change in the life of Jacob in the study of today’s lesson. He had shown much weakness in the affairs of his life up to this time, but

something happened here that gave him courage, strength, and confidence. If there ever was a time the men of the earth needed these attributes, it is now. We live in a world that is beset with the most awful forces of sin and deception that were ever known. If men continue to meet the issues of life in their own strength, there can be but one result, and that is disaster. Jacob came to a place where he knew he could not handle his own affairs any longer without facing disaster. His brother Esau was traveling toward him with a band of men who could destroy him. Jacob took a wise course. He brought his situation before the Lord and prevailed in prayer. God will do the same for any man today who will trust Him fully. I hope that God will give us a real insight into the meaning of this lesson and enlighten our souls in regard to its great truth. No one can have a stronger assistant than the great Spirit of the living God. Let every student seek to make Him Guide of his life.

MEDITATIONS

A GATHERING STORM—Genesis 32:3—Jacob sent messengers—Jacob’s unfairness to Esau was still bothering him. Had all been well between him and his brother, there would have been no concern in his heart, and he could have faced his brother with ease. He now was a great company and had much responsibility, so he must take precaution for the family’s sake. God had forgiven Jacob for what he had done, but he did not have faith as yet to trust God for the ordeal that he thought was ahead of him. It is not enough to make our wrongs right with God, but wherein we have wronged our fellowmen we must also straighten up with them. **Verse 4—Thy servant Jacob**—It appears at the moment that Jacob had decided for safety’s sake to grant unto Esau the place that he had by birth. But God had planned differently. He ordained that the elder should serve the younger. The disposition of Esau was such that God had to reject him, and Jacob was to fill his place. Had God been permitted to have His way, He would have worked it out in a way quite different from the way that Rebekah and Jacob did it. **Verse 5—I have oxen**—Jacob was far from a pauper, for God had richly blessed him. Doubtless, he sought to impress his brother by the prosperity that had been his.

THE STORM INTENSIFIES—Genesis 32:6—Four hundred men with him—After the servants had informed Esau of the approach of Jacob and his great company, it is evident that old memories were quickened, and ire was aroused. Esau quickly gathered together a band of four hundred men for the purpose of avenging himself. He would not have needed any such band to meet Jacob in peace. **Verse 7—Jacob was greatly afraid**—Jacob’s experience with God was not deep enough to sustain him in this dreadful situation, and he had to seek defense in the material advantages that he had. Such is a pitiful plight of our nation today that is seeking to build, with military might, a defense against the pagan forces that threaten us. How futile and worthless is the weak arm of military might when God is not in it! **Verse 8—And smite it**—It seems that Jacob had forgotten for a moment that God had promised to bring him in safety back to his father’s

land. His faith was at least wavering, for he needed more power with God. However, we see in the working of the Spirit of God that not infrequently He allows deep stress to come upon those He loves in order to bring them to the place where He can accomplish the will of God in their lives.

JACOB'S DISTRESS DRIVES HIM TO HIS KNEES—Genesis 32:24—Jacob was left alone—

Jacob was not satisfied with the defense that he had at his disposal. He could not see how he could successfully meet the band of four hundred men, so he separated himself from the company and poured out his heart before God. This should have been done sooner, then he would have been prepared when the test came. Oftentimes we are too satisfied with things as they are and do not make the effort that should be made in advancing our spiritual lives. Every day should find us advanced beyond our experience of yesterday. The man with whom Jacob wrestled was a heavenly being, either having taken upon himself an actual physical body or having moved upon the imagination of Jacob so perfectly in every detail that Jacob could say with all honesty that he wrestled with a man.

MAN CAN PREVAIL WITH GOD—Genesis 32:25

—**Saw he prevailed not**—There is no doubt that the angel could have instantly inflicted terrible physical defeat to Jacob, but physical strength was not what determined the victory. There was also a spiritual battle, and it was the spirit of Jacob which was determined not to lose at any cost, that won for him the physical battle. Although we are all much weaker than God in every way, we can win if we exert our spiritual strength, for our spiritual strength is always sufficient to move God if we obey His Word. Even so, the angel did let Jacob feel his power and superior strength by inflicting him in the thigh. In Hosea 12:3, 4 we get a little clearer picture of this experience. There the prophet says that he wept and made supplication to God. Let us also remember when we prevail with God that it is not because of superior strength on our part; it is the mercy and goodness of God that allows us to win. It was the fear of his brother Esau that caused Jacob such effort in wrestling with the angel.

DETERMINATION BRINGS VICTORY—Genesis 32:26—I will not let thee go—

The heart of Jacob was not satisfied. He did not have down in his heart that soul peace that he longed for. He would not let the angel go until he was satisfied. Many times Christians give up when the victory is just ready to come. Jacob did not hold the angel by physical strength, but by spiritual strength. **Verse 27—What is thy name?**—The angel already knew what the name of Jacob was. He was desirous of making an impression upon him, so the angel sought to get his attention centered upon his name. **Verse 28—Called no more Jacob**—The name Jacob meant supplanter, which described the character of Jacob. He was to be a new man because he had wrestled and prevailed with God, and his new name, which meant “the man who has prevailed with God,” described his new character. A prince, in the true sense of the word, is one who rules with power and justice. So Jacob had used his God-given power in a

very wise and commendable way, and God rewarded him for it. So will He reward every man who will make use of the faith and power that God has put into his hand. It is a very blessed thing to have power with God. He who has power with God will be able to overcome any trial or situation of life. If God be for us, who can be against us?

CONCLUSION

Jacob's actions were very different after the incident related in today's lesson. Before he wrestled with the angel, he had decided to send those he least loved ahead to meet his brother Esau; and if Esau and his men made an attack, he and those he loved the most might escape. After he wrestled with the angel, he, being a new man, went at the head of the family and was the first to meet and face his brother, whom he had treated unjustly. But he was not alone, for the high God of heaven was with him and was on his side. Anyone who has God is in the majority in any way you desire to look at it. God had changed the purpose and intent of Esau, causing him to disregard the things that had happened in the past and to receive his brother with grace and consideration. It is the greatest blessing that anyone can have when the Spirit of God abides in the heart. His presence is worth any price that it can cost. God by His Spirit worked with Jacob, and you may be sure that the very same Spirit is working with men in the earth today. Yes, He works with every man who comes to the earth for the purpose of making him a prince that he may rule and reign with Him in this life and in long eternity. Such an experience cannot be gained by the following of modern religions which have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. Therefore, it is very necessary that we who know the truth hold up the true standard for the world.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why was Jacob called Jacob?
2. Why was his name changed to Israel?
3. Why was Jacob so fearful of his brother Esau?
4. Explain the reason why Esau approached Jacob with a band of four hundred men.
5. What changed the mind of Esau?
6. Explain why Jacob so suddenly changed his mind and decided to go at the front of his family.
7. How is it that any man can, if he will, prevail with one so great as God? †

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ARE THE WICKED PREDESTINED TO BE LOST?

BY THE LATE H. C. GARDNER

IN WHAT SENSE are the wicked predestined to be lost? This is a question over which there has been much controversy. It is important to get a proper understanding of this matter of predestination.

When the apostles were praying for guidance from God as to who should serve in Judas' place, they said, "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25). Some take the position that if God means for them to be saved, He will save them, and if He means for them to be lost, there is no salvation for them.

Now, it is true that the wicked are predestinated to be lost and the righteous are ordained to be saved. But it is also true that no particular individual is predestined either to be saved or lost.

As individuals, every man has freewill choice and is at liberty to accept or reject salvation. When Joshua long ago uttered the words, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," he gave a pattern of truth that the forces of evil have never been able to erase. The last great invitation of the sacred Scriptures says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The universality of the atonement argues against the predestination of the individual. We have such grand statements of Scripture as the following, which stand like heralds of hope and truth: "He tasted death for every man." "He gave himself a ransom for all." "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

If the final destiny of the individual is fixed for him, then these beautiful scriptures that invite all men to Christ are meaningless. But a person's destiny is not fixed. Every individual is invited to come and partake of the gospel of Christ. It is not His will that any should perish.

But now I must clear a statement which I have made. I said that the wicked are predestinated to be lost and the righteous are ordained to be saved. This refers to classes of people. There is the immense company of the lost, and there is the great host of righteous people in the world. We may by free choice join ourselves with either of these classes of people.

We must remember that the destiny of the wicked group is destruction, while the destiny of the righteous is life and peace evermore. Are you not glad it is that way? One's state would be pitiful indeed if he were predestined to be lost, and if no mercy were offered to him. But as it is, even if one is today in the company of the lost and headed for destruction, he may through the mercy of God leave the company of the lost and come into the kingdom of God through the door, Jesus Christ.

To say that some people are predestinated to be lost would be charging a righteous God with rank unfairness. I do not believe that God has foreordained that a single individual soul should be lost, and those who are eternally lost will know they are lost by their own freewill choice. They will be lost against God's will, by ignoring His loving invitation to all men to accept the salvation offered by His Son Jesus Christ.

In I Peter 3:9, we are told that God is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Christ Himself said in John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." †

—Reprinted from the June 1991 issue

QUOTES

"THE BIRTH OF JESUS MADE POSSIBLE NOT JUST A NEW WAY OF UNDERSTANDING LIFE BUT A NEW WAY OF LIVING IT."

—FREDERICK BUECHNER

"THERE WAS NO POMP AND CEREMONY IN CONNECTION WITH THE BIRTH OF JESUS—RATHER THE OPPOSITE: IT TOOK PLACE IN SIMPLICITY AND IN POVERTY."

—KEITH O'BRIEN

"THE BABY MARY CARRIED WAS NOT A CAESAR, A MAN WHO WOULD BECOME A GOD, BUT A FAR GREATER WONDER—THE TRUE GOD WHO HAD BECOME A MAN!"

—KENT HUGHES

"JESUS HAD TO BE OUR IMMANUEL TO BE OUR SAVIOR AND ONCE HE BECOMES OUR SAVIOR HE BECOMES OUR IMMANUEL."

—RANDY SMITH

"CHRIST TOOK UPON HIMSELF THIS HUMAN FORM OF OURS. HE BECAME MAN EVEN AS WE ARE MEN. IN HIS HUMANITY AND HIS LOWLINESS WE RECOGNIZE OUR OWN FORM. HE HAS BECOME LIKE A MAN SO THAT MEN SHOULD BE LIKE HIM."

—DIETRICH BONHOEFFER



SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE GLORY OF GOD

Radio Message by Bro. Doug Shenberger

I WOULD LIKE to share some thoughts about the glory of God, who God is, and what He is. And I will start by reading Psalm 19, and bring a few thoughts about the author of this Psalm. King David brought out some beautiful thoughts in this Psalm. *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they*

than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”

As I thought about the messages that are contained in this Psalm, I thought about David. We’re familiar with David and his life and how he grew up. He was a young shepherd boy out on the hillside watching and tending to the sheep.

In the first verse, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork,” I just felt like David was speaking from his experience out there with the sheep. Maybe it was in the evening and it was time for the sheep to rest for the evening. He was probably preparing his supper as night was falling. As he looked at the sunset, he was made aware of the glory and the majesty of God and His creation. David was able to see the beauties of nature that God created and enjoy it. He marveled in his heart that even the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. I believe David had opportunity to learn something special about God. I think it is important for us that we endeavor to grasp the truth that God is almighty and that He created this world that we have to live in and enjoy. Sometimes we get so busy and rushed with so many things to do that we don’t take the time to stop and consider God’s creation. How beautiful and mighty God is to have been able to create this world that we live in!

Verse 2: “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” From day to day, God’s creation shows people, if they’ll see it, that He is the great Creator.

Verse 3: “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” All people can see and know the greatness and the majesty of God if they’ll just behold His creation and have a desire to learn about Him. I’m so thankful that we have that opportunity. We have the privilege of being able to learn about God, the beauties of creation, and all that He has done. If you learn to love God and appreciate who He is, and see what He has done, and your heart becomes aware of how mighty He is, and how much He deserves glory and honor, then I think that you’ll be able to see some of the latter verses why you would want to fear the Lord and have confidence in His statutes.

Verse 7: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” God does have a law that He’s placed in effect in this world. He’s created this world. He created man and created laws for man to live by. That’s for every person in the world. He wants them to abide by His laws and His rules. He didn’t create this world and put people and animals on it and said, “Run wild, and do whatever you want.” He created nature and laws. He created moral laws for man to live by. There is no error in the law of the Lord. It is the ideal way to live

GROWTH IN GRACE AFTER SANCTIFICATION

By the late C. E. Byers

in this world. It will convert the soul. If you will follow the law of the Lord, you will be converted to His way, to His plan of salvation, and to His plan for your life. The law of the Lord will convert you to that.

Verse 8: "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." How true that is! If you will follow the statutes of the Lord, they are so right they will clear your conscience. They will bring joy and peace to your heart. You'll be able to rejoice in your heart. The commandment of the Lord will enlighten your eyes. You'll be able to see the beauty of life as God has planned it. You'll be able to see that life is designed to be a wonderful thing.

Verse 9: "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." His judgments are true and fair and right. He doesn't make a mistake in judging of what is right or wrong.

Verse 10: His judgments are "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." I wonder how many people really believe that His judgments, His statutes, and His plans are more desired than gold. They should be more desired than fine gold. They are also sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. God's commandments and laws aren't bitter or bad for people. They are sweet and special. Verse 11: "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

I'd like to skip down to the last verse. Verse 14: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." If you have accepted and believe that God is a God of power, might, and glory, how ideal it is to be able to feel and see that, and to think and pray that the words of *my* mouth and the meditation of *my* heart will be acceptable in His sight! We're not a worthy or a deserving people, but what a precious thing it is to think that He loves us so much that He has a plan whereby, if we give Him control of our lives, the words of our mouth and the very meditation of our heart can be acceptable in His sight, and He would be pleased with us. Truly, that is the highest goal in life to be able to achieve. I encourage each one of us to strive for that in our lives. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Greetings in Jesus' name,

How I thank the Lord for your paper each month! It means so much to me. I pray for your work. God bless you all.

—M. G., Pennsylvania

I just want to say "thank you" for your magazine. I really enjoy it, and to send you this offering of \$— to help with the postage so you can continue to sustain the ministry of God's Word.

—P. B., Virginia

MANY THEORIES prevail today about sanctification as to how and when man shall come into possession of the experience, and the effect it produces in the soul and life of mankind. Some teach that we come into the experience at the hour of death, just when the soul is leaving the body and departing for the spirit world. Others teach that we receive the experience at the time of conversion. Others teach that it is a second work of grace subsequent to conversion. Some believe that the experience of sanctification is attained by growth, that it is an experience reached by self-denial, self-development, and suppression of the depraved nature.

Regardless of the conflicting theories of men, the Bible teaches sanctification to be an experience that men can attain through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, now, in this life.

It is the will of God that His children come into the possession of this experience, for Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, saying, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3).

Just before Jesus went to the cross to die for a lost world He prayed for His disciples thus: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. ... I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth. ... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:11-19).

The writer of the Hebrew letter said, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). Again in Hebrews 10:12-14 the writer said, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. ... For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Paul addresses the Church of God at Corinth thus: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (I Corinthians 1:2). These words of Paul to the saints at Corinth were written in the present tense. Sanctification with them was not something for them to attain in the future not to grow into but actually to be possessed.

Jude opens his epistle with these words, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." These words are also in the present tense, denoting that the persons to whom Jude wrote were then the possessors of the experience of sanctification.

When Christ offered Himself on the cross, He not only made possible our justification wherein we are

washed from our sins in His blood but He made it possible that the eternal Spirit of God might sanctify us also by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, purging our hearts from the evil nature.

The Scriptures definitely teach that sanctification is a second work of grace wrought in the heart following the new birth or the regeneration. In Matthew 19:27, Peter asked Jesus this question, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus answered and said, "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Jesus here acknowledges that the disciples had followed Him in regeneration. This was conversion; this produced the new birth. This was justification unto spiritual life.

The disciples, however, did not receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost until on Pentecost, which followed Christ's crucifixion and ascension (Acts 2:1-4).

Philip went from Jerusalem to Samaria and preached to the people of that city. Seeing the miracles and signs that Philip did by the power of the Holy Ghost, many believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and were baptized, both men and women (8:12-15). When the news reached Jerusalem that a great revival had broken out at Samaria under the preaching of Philip, the apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to help Philip. And when these brethren came to Samaria, they laid their hands on the new converts who had been saved, and they received the Holy Ghost, who is the Sanctifier (Romans 15:16).

When Peter answered the call to preach the Word of God to the household of Cornelius, he went. And while he was preaching, the Holy Ghost fell upon all the believers present. It was impossible for these people to receive the Holy Ghost without receiving the experience of sanctification, for Paul said "that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

The disciples at Pentecost received the baptism of the Holy Ghost suddenly, instantaneously, as did the twelve disciples whom Paul met in the upper coast of Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), the believers in the household of Cornelius (10:44-48), and those at Samaria.

Surely these scriptures teach that the experience of sanctification is not attained by growth but instantaneously, by the baptism or outpouring of the Holy Ghost. While the experience of sanctification is not attained by growth, yet there is a development of the soul after one has been sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Growth never changes the nature of anything. Growth develops, enlarges, and increases that which already exists. Kind always produces the same kind. The law of kind was fixed at creation by the hand of God. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so."

One can never cross species and get a different kind of anything. The botanist may cross the different kinds of iris and get a different species of iris but never a different kind of flower. He cannot produce a rose from any kind of iris. Growth can produce only more of the same kind.

So it is spiritually. An unsanctified man cannot grow into a sanctified man. Neither can a sinner grow into a saint. A sinner can grow and develop into a greater sinner, and the unsanctified man may grow and develop his unsanctified nature into a more unholy nature; but if ever an unsanctified man becomes sanctified, that must be accomplished by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, who is the Sanctifier.

Once a man is sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having then received a new nature (II Peter 1:4), he may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and become more and more like Him who did no sin.

Just as the human body grows and is developed by the thing which it feeds upon, so it is with us spiritually. Peter instructs us as newborn babes (spiritually) to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. Just as the body must have food for its development, so the soul of man must have spiritual food.

The child that is born into this world healthy and normal craves natural food. The soul that is born of the Spirit of God will in like manner crave the Word of God. What bread is to the body, the Word of God is to the soul. The reason why many newborn babes in Christ do not grow and develop spiritually is because they do not feed upon the proper food spiritually.

No sanctified soul can live, grow, and develop while he feeds upon unholy literature, worldly amusements, and the lusts of the flesh. Paul said in Romans 8:13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." †

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