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No. 2

The Teachings of Jesus According to St. John

**Adult and Young People's
Quarterly**

INTRODUCTION

In this quarter of lessons, we will be studying some teachings of Jesus, as recorded by John, the apostle. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome. He, along with his brother James, worked with his father in the fishing business. After his calling, John traveled with Jesus, saw Him work His many miracles, and listen to Him as He taught the people, as well as the disciples.

John was one of the three who saw the transfiguration on the mount, and heard the voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

John also saw the Lord as He hung on the cross, and heard His words, "It is finished." He saw the soldier pierce His side with the spear. It was John that Jesus appointed to look after His mother, and John was one of the first disciples at the empty tomb. So it is evident that John was present at most of the things related by him in his "Gospel."

In I John 1:3-5 we read, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Thus John did not write from mere hearsay, but from personal knowledge, and in addition, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit in what he wrote.

I trust the study of these lessons will prove to be a blessing to each student. Do not study them just to increase your knowledge, but to increase and enrich your spiritual life.

God bless you.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR APRIL 5

JESUS CHRIST—THE WORD MADE FLESH

Scriptures: John 1:1-5, 10-14, 17.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name.

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.—Matthew 1:23.

Aim: To show that Jesus Christ was Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

Isaiah 9

Thursday

John 8:31-58

Tuesday

Hebrews 1

Friday

Hebrews 13

Wednesday

Colossians 1

Saturday

John 17

INTRODUCTION

“That there is one God who is a person and that the Father is that one person is allowed by all theists. ... Also the personality of Christ is generally admitted. ... The important and vital question concerning Christ in the Trinitarian discussion is concerning whether or not He is God in the highest sense of the term. ... That Christ was truly human was denied by the ancient Gnostics, but today almost all classes allow He was man.

“One of the methods by which the Scriptures teach the divinity of Christ is by calling Him by the various names of deity. Certain terms are commonly used in the Bible to denote the Divine Being and these are used of Christ in the same sense. Nothing can be more reasonable than to understand that His being called God implies that He is God.

“When the apostle Thomas, who had doubted Jesus’ resurrection, saw the Master in His resurrected form he exclaimed, ‘My Lord and my God’ (John 20:28). ... ‘But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever’ (Hebrews 1:8). ... ‘God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the

Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory' (I Timothy 3:16). This verse is true only of Christ, not the Father. Therefore Christ is here called God."—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

MEDITATIONS

THE WORD WAS BEFORE ALL THINGS—John 1:1, 2—In the beginning—God had no beginning, the Word had no beginning, so John speaks of the beginning of creation, just as we read in Genesis 1:1. This fully shows that the one we know as Jesus Christ was not created, as He existed before any created thing existed. The Word—Greek *Logos*—was with God, and Logos was God. "Therefore no subordinate being, no second to the Most High, but the supreme eternal Jehovah."

CREATOR GOD—John 1:3—All things—"There is no way Jesus Christ, the eternal Logos, could have had a beginning, for all things were made by Him! That includes the angels in heaven as well as the material universe. John declares, 'And without him was not anything made that was made.'" The apostle Paul tells us, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17).

GIVER OF LIFE—John 1:4—In Him was life—To accept this fact is to do away with the evolution theory! Life comes from life. Life does not evolve. However, the real import of this verse is that spiritual life, eternal life, comes through Jesus Christ which He revealed to the world. **Verse 5**—The light of truth has shone down through the ages, but so many have continued on in darkness, partly because they were not willing to come to the light because their deeds were evil.

THE LIGHT COMES INTO THE WORLD—John 1:10—He was in the world—Here again John points out that the eternal Logos created the world, then came into the world, but the world knew Him not. How sad! But we would have to say that many still do not know Him. **Verse 11—He came unto His own**—This verse, of course, speaks of Christ coming to the Hebrew people, and even though their prophets had told of His coming, even where He would be born, yet when He came they received Him not.

SONS OF GOD—John 1:12, 13—But as many—Though the nation as a whole did not receive Him, there were a few who did, and to them He gave power to become the sons of God. It took faith for them to believe this "man" was the promised Messiah, and it still takes faith. John does not speak of physical birth when he speaks of becoming sons of God, for being a literal Hebrew did not make them sons of God; it took being born of God. It takes the same today.

GOD COMES TO EARTH—John 1:14—The Word was made flesh—Down through the ages men have tried to make themselves God, and even in our day it has been tried, but John declares God

came to earth. God made Himself man and dwelt among us! This is a great mystery, but it is truth. He was the only “begotten of the Father.” This was the beginning of the physical man Jesus when the virgin Mary conceived, but not the beginning of the Word, for He had no beginning. Why is He called the “Word”? He was the spokesman for the Godhead. He was the very embodiment of truth. Why did He come? Because souls are so precious in the sight of God, and no one, nor anything, could redeem them from the bondage of sin. He came to bear witness to the truth. He came to reveal the Father. He came to give eternal life. **Verse 17**—The law was given to help mankind understand what sin was, but the law could not save from sin. It takes the grace of God, and “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

OUR MEMORY VERSE—Matthew 1:23—God with us—“Many eminent Jews are willing to concede that Jesus Christ was a great prophet and the best Jew that ever lived. The ancient Arians regarded Christ as the greatest of all creatures. Modern Unitarians praise Christ as the perfect teacher and are willing to call Him divine. However, their idea of divinity is not the same as that of the Trinitarian. They believe all men are divine in a measure but that Christ was divine in the superlative degree; therefore He differs from us in degree, not in kind. Nevertheless, much as they praise Christ, none of these is willing to admit His deity. But herein is the crux of the matter; for if Christ is not deity, as He claimed to be, He is not even good, but a base deceiver and a blasphemer, as the ancient Jews accused Him of being. There can be no middle ground. Either He is God or He is the world’s greatest deceiver. How could one so great and good be so base a deceiver?”—A. F. Gray, *Christian Theology*, Vol. 1.

CONCLUSION

It is my understanding that when Mary conceived the baby Jesus in her womb, there was no new soul created by God, who is the Father of spirits, but rather, the second person in the Godhead, the one we know as Jesus Christ, the eternal Logos, left the glories of heaven, the presence of the Holy Father and the worship of the angels, and took up His abode in that conception, thus became “flesh.” The word *Emmanuel* means “God with us.” So God, the Word, came to earth in human form. No wonder John said, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (I John 3:1).

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is meant by “in the beginning”?
2. Who created all things?
3. Why did the Hebrew nation reject Jesus as their Messiah?
4. Why did the eternal Logos come into the world?
5. Do you believe that Jesus Christ was Divine?
6. Have you received Him as your Savior and Lord?

LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR APRIL 12

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Scriptures: John 3:1-11.

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Memory Verse: Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.—John 3:7.

Aim: To emphasize the necessity of being born again to enter the kingdom of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Psalm 87

Tuesday John 4

Wednesday I John 3

Thursday I Peter 1

Friday Titus 3

Saturday Ephesians 2

INTRODUCTION

Down through the ages mankind has sought to worship something. God made us to worship! But as we study the Scriptures and read history, we see that worship has been false and misdirected in most cases. Cain worshiped like Abel, but his sacrifice was not accepted.

Much false worship and pagan ideas came after Nimrod's wife tried to make him a god. After building the first Babylon, the people then started building a tower, trying to make their own way to heaven. The apostle Paul tells us this condition came about "because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (Romans 1:21-24).

God called Abraham out of an idol worshiping people to start another “nation,” a people for Himself. However, the Hebrews were not always faithful. They, too, turned to idols and false worship.

Jesus came declaring, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). No sinner can worship God as the Scriptures teach. True worship starts with being born again.

MEDITATIONS

JESUS HAS A VISITOR—John 3:1—There was a man—“Nicodemus was a nationally-known religious leader. He was not only a Pharisee but a member of the Sanhedrin, the council of the seventy most outstanding Jews.” “Of the three prominent societies of Judaism at the time of Christ—Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes—the Pharisees were by far the most influential.” Paul tells us they were the “straightest sect” or most strict of the various religious groups.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW—John 3:2—We know—Bible students have, and continue to ponder over why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. What difference does it really make? The important thing is he came, and in coming to Jesus he came to the right One to teach him what he needed to know. Nicodemus may have been uninformed about some things, but one thing he knew that was very important, and that was, Jesus was “a teacher come from God.”

JESUS THE TEACHER—John 3:3—I say unto you—Jesus knew the spiritual state of Nicodemus, as He does all mankind, and He wasted no time in getting to the need of this man. “I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This statement is also understood as, a man must be born from “above”; and this is important, for the Jews supposed every baptized proselyte had a “new birth,” for they held that the Gentile who became a proselyte was like a child newborn. The experience Jesus spoke of was from above, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

NICODEMUS DOES NOT UNDERSTAND—John 3:4—How can—Although Nicodemus did understand that Jesus was not talking about meeting the requirements of a proselyte, he did not understand being “born from above.” “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” The carnal mind does not understand spiritual things, that is why the people need to be taught by teachers who come from God.

SPIRITUAL BIRTH—John 3:5—Except a man—Jesus is here speaking of the soul, or spirit, in man being born again. And since He is, we do not understand this verse to speak of literal water, but to symbolize the Word. Peter tells us, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (I Peter 1:23). Literal water cleanses the flesh but does nothing for the soul. Water baptism is for those who have been born again, converted, their sins blotted out. It is an outward testi-

mony to an inward work: you have died to sin and been made alive in Christ. This is the only way into the kingdom of God. **Verse 6—That which**—Jesus explains to Nicodemus that He is not speaking of being born the second time of the flesh (such was not possible), but being born of the Spirit, born from above.

YE MUST—John 3:7, 8—Ye MUST be born again! Why? Because the sinner is dead. The only way he or she can ever have life is by being born again, because that is the only way out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God. It is the only way to become a member of God's church, to be a child of God. It is the only way to have power to overcome the world. It is the only way to get in the place where you can present yourself a living sacrifice and be filled with the Spirit in sanctification. Again, Jesus speaks of the birth of the soul, or spirit in man. Just as you cannot see the wind, but can see the effects, so you cannot see the soul being born, but you will see the effects. One who is truly born again will live a different kind of life. You will not see them continuing a life of sin. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."—I John 3:9.

MUST BELIEVE—John 3:9—How can these things be?—Jesus had explained how a person must be born again, yet Nicodemus did not seem to understand. Possibly, being a Pharisee, his religion hindered him, but there comes a time when one must believe! We will never fully understand everything; only God knows everything, but if we will believe and act on what we know, it will open the door to greater understanding of spiritual things. Jesus points out to Nicodemus, in effect, that he really had no business being a "Master in Israel" if he did not know these very important truths. How many religious leaders today are in the same state? We would hope Nicodemus did come to understand, and there are some indications in the Scriptures that he did.

CONCLUSION

Jesus told Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again.*" So the teachings of the new birth are among the most important in all the Bible. Sin brings death to the soul. It separates one from God, the source of life, and starts them on the broad road to destruction. The only way to get off the broad road and onto the strait and narrow way is by being born again. Being born again is the only way into the Church. It is the only way to get your name in the Lamb's book of life and to make heaven your eternal home. The question is not, Have you joined church? The question is, Have YOU been born again?

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus?
2. Does water baptism give spiritual life to the soul?
3. What does it mean to be born from above?
4. Why is being born again so important?
5. How will one live after he has been born again?
6. When one is born again, what is he born into?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR APRIL 19

LIVING WATER

Scriptures: John 4:7, 9-14, 19, 23, 24, 28, 29; 7:37, 38.

John 4:7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in

him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Memory Verse: Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.—John 4:10.

Aim: To show that living water comes through Jesus Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Isaiah 35**
Tuesday **John 7**
Wednesday **I Corinthians 3**

Thursday **I Corinthians 6**
Friday **Revelation 22**
Saturday **Isaiah 55**

INTRODUCTION

After Solomon's death Israel divided into two kingdoms: the Northern kingdom was known as Israel, the Southern kingdom was known as Judah. King Omri, about 880 B.C., started the city of Samaria to be the capital of Israel. His son, Ahab, finished the building of the city. The city fell to the Assyrians in 722-721 B.C. Most of the leading citizens of the Northern kingdom were deported.

Sargon replaced the Israelites with foreign colonists (II Kings 17:24). These newcomers intermarried among the Israelites that were left in the land. Later their number was increased. These people took the name Samaritans. However, they did not fear the Lord and He sent lions among them (II Kings 17:25). This caused them to send word to Assyria asking for a priest to be sent to teach them about the God of that land (II Kings 17:27). After this the Samaritans worshiped God, after a form, while they continued their idolatry (II Kings 17:29).

We see from this that the Samaritans were not only a mixed race, but their religion was mixed! In the due course of time, the Samaritans built a temple on Mount Gerizim and made animal sacrifices there. They accepted the first five books of the Bible and ceased much of their Pagan ways. During these years the breach between the people of Judah and the Samaritans widened, and it came to the place where the Jews considered the Samaritans as dogs, and would have nothing to do with them. In John four we find Jesus preparing to leave Judea and return to Galilee, so, let us accompany Him.

MEDITATIONS

A WELL NEAR SYCHAR—John 4:7—There cometh a woman—Jesus, having traveled from Judah, came to “Jacob’s well,” and by this time He was weary, so He sat down to rest. Sychar is the same as Old Testament Shechem. The remains of Joseph were buried nearby, as Jacob had given this area of the land to him. The disciples had gone into the city to buy some food for the noon meal, so Jesus was left alone. While resting there, “a woman of Samaria” came to draw water. As far as we know, this was not the usual hour for women to come to the well to draw water. And different ideas have been advanced as to why this woman came at this hour, but for her, it proved a great blessing that she did, for Jesus said to her, “Give me to drink.”

THE WOMAN WAS SURPRISED—John 4:9—How is it—This woman was aware of the feeling between the Jews and the Samaritans, and, for some reason, possibly, because of His speech, she knew He was a Jew, so she was surprised when He spoke to her. He not only spoke to her, but He asked her for a drink. This she could not understand, “for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.”

A GIFT—John 4:10—The gift of God—Jesus replied to her remark, “If thou knewest the gift of God.” A *gift* is something that is given for which there is no equivalent thing required in return. Jesus was God’s gift to this lost and dying world, and through Him comes full salvation and eternal life. Jesus went on to say, “And who it is that saith to thee.” She knew of the books of Moses, she knew He was a Jew, but she had no idea who He really was. But if you knew, “thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Literal water is so important to physical life, but water has been used symbolically down through the ages. Old Testament Israel had to wash their bodies and their clothes to “sanctify” themselves. Water is used to symbolize the Word and also the Spirit. Jesus, of

course, was not speaking of literal water when He spoke of “living water.”

STILL PUZZLED—John 4:11, 12—Thou hast nothing to draw with—The woman of Samaria was still thinking in literal terms, not understanding what this Man was saying to her. You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep, how could you give me “that living water”? Are you “greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle”? In her eyes, Jacob was a great man, but it is questionable as to whether she was of his line, being a Samaritan. But who is this Man?

JESUS LOVINGLY INSTRUCTS—John 4:13, 14—Jesus answered her—Jesus points out to her the water of Jacob’s well quenched the thirst for only a short time, and then they would thirst again: But if one drank of the water that He had to give, he would “never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” This great salvation, obtained only through Christ, satisfies the soul. That does not mean we are not to hunger and thirst after righteousness, but it does mean salvation changes the heart, life, and desires. We no longer thirst after this world’s sinful pleasures, for they did not satisfy. Jesus satisfies every longing of the righteous soul.

EYES OPENED—John 4:19—Thou art a prophet—The woman, still thinking of literal water, asked Jesus to give her the water so she would not have to come to the well to draw. At this point, Jesus asked her to go get her husband, and when she replied, “I have no husband,” Jesus told her she had had five husbands, and the one she had now was not her husband! She did not take offense but rather concluded that He was a prophet, seeing that He knew this about her. She points out that “our fathers worshipped in this mountain and ye say that Jerusalem is the place to worship. So who is right, what is right?” “You really don’t know what you worship”—isn’t that sad? Is it not true of millions today?

TRUE WORSHIP—John 4:23, 24—They that worship—Jesus did not dispute her statement that people worshiped in that mountain, nor did He deny that people worshiped in Jerusalem, but He did point out that “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” No one can truly worship God until he is saved from a life of sin, for worship means more than just giving praise. It also includes *servicing* God with all your heart. Adam Clarke wrote on this verse, “A man worships God in *spirit*, when, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he brings all his affections, appetites and desires to the throne of God; and he worships him in *truth*, when every purpose and passion of his heart, and when every act of his religious worship, is guided by the Word of God.”

SALVATION IN THE HEART—John 4:28, 29—Left her water-pot—The living water that Christ gives is not carried in a five gallon

jar! The woman left her waterpot and went into the city and began to tell of her experience at the well, and she invited them to come and “see a man, which told me all things I ever did: is not this the Christ?” Many heeded her invitation, went out and heard Him for themselves, and believed on Him because of her saying and because of what they heard, and they said, “This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (verse 42).

FULL SALVATION—John 7:37, 38—If any man drink—As literal water is absolutely necessary to sustain natural, or physical life, so is “living water” absolutely necessary to have and sustain spiritual life. It is not only God’s will for us to be saved from all our committed sins, but it is His will after we are saved to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only comes into our hearts when we are sanctified, but He gives us power to continue in the grace of God. Jesus told the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. We have this treasure in “earthen vessels.” That is, we are to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit—I Corinthians 6:19, 20, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Please notice that Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” This wonderful, full and free salvation is offered to one and all. The teaching that only certain ones have been chosen to be saved, while all others cannot be, is not taught in the Word of God.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual heart is pictured as a desolate desert by Isaiah the prophet, but the same prophet said the time would come when the tongue of the dumb would sing: “for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes” (Isaiah 35:6, 7). The same prophet in 55:1 said, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” In chapter twelve, and verse three, we read, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Who were the Samaritans?
2. Why did Jesus stop at Jacob’s well?
3. Why did the woman conclude He was a prophet?
4. Do you think she came to understand “living water”?
5. Why did she go into the city to tell others?
6. Who can have this “living water”?
7. What did Jesus mean when He said one who drank this water would “never thirst again”?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR APRIL 26

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Scriptures: John 5:21, 24-29; Ephesians 2:1-6.

John 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life;

and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Memory Verse: And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.—Ephesians 2:1.

Aim: To set forth the truth in regard to the first resurrection.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Ephesians 2	Thursday	Colossians 2
Tuesday	John 11:1-27	Friday	Colossians 3:1-17
Wednesday	Ephesians 5:1-14	Saturday	Revelation 20:11-15

INTRODUCTION

Our lesson today deals with the thought of “The First Resurrection.” There can be no resurrection until there is first a death! Adam and Eve were given not only physical life but spiritual life. They were children of God. They had fellowship with God. God was their Father. They were told not to eat of the forbidden fruit, for if they did they would die. They ate, they died spiritually. Sin brings death to the soul. “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a). The soul that is dead must be resurrected before it can have life again.

In the religious world today, there is so much false doctrine being taught about the first resurrection, how the righteous will be physi-

cally resurrected a thousand and seven years ahead of the wicked, how they will be caught up in the air in a secret rapture for seven years, then return to this earth for a thousand years reign with Christ; all of it false! Nowhere does the Bible speak of a secret rapture. In fact, the Bible declares when Christ comes, "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (Revelation 1:7). Further, the Scriptures declare, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: ..." (I Thessalonians 4:16). How do you get a secret rapture out of that?—a trumpet blowing, a shout! Yes, Paul did say in that verse "the dead in Christ shall rise first," but he did not say it would be before the wicked were raised. They would be raised before those that were alive at His coming were caught up, so that ALL could be caught up together (verse 17), "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Nowhere does the Bible teach a literal kingdom of a thousand years' duration. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

It is of the utmost importance that we understand what the first resurrection is, and that we obtain the experience.

MEDITATIONS

FEW RAISED FROM THE DEAD—John 5:21—The Father—We read of a few during the Old Testament times who were raised from the dead. God used Elijah to raise the widow's son—I Kings 22:22. He used Elisha to raise the Shunammite's son—II Kings 4:32-35. Jesus declares He had the power to do the same, and He did in His earthly ministry. The time will come when He will raise all.

CONDITION FOR BEING RAISED—John 5:24—He that heareth—In this verse Jesus could not be speaking of those who were physically dead being raised to life again, because those who were physically raised did not have to *believe*; they really had nothing to do with it, but here the Master says, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." Jesus speaks of people who were alive physically but dead spiritually, *hearing the word of God and believing* what they heard, including believing on the Father who sent Him. Those who heard and believed, Jesus said "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." When one passes from death unto life, is that not a resurrection?

SAME TRUTH REPEATED—John 5:25—Now is—Notice how Jesus uses the word *hear* in this verse: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Many hear in their ears the gospel preached, but only those who hear in the heart—obey—are made alive, are resurrected. Notice, Jesus speaks of those that are "dead"—imputed sin brings death to the soul. Jesus came that we might have life. Just as soon as

Adam and Eve died, they needed to be resurrected. Just as soon as a soul dies today he needs to be resurrected. That is why the gospel needs to be preached to every creature. It is the power of God unto salvation, to resurrection, to life.

AUTHORITY TO ACT—John 5:26, 27—So hath he given to the Son—God had no beginning and He gives “to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). Jesus says the same about Himself, and adds that the Father has given Him the authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man, because He is the Messiah. Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant. He came to do the will of the Father. He humbled Himself and became obedient, even to the death on the cross, thus the Father has made Him “Lord of all,” and committed to Him the government of men, and finally the judgment of all mankind.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION—John 5:28, 29—Marvel not—Here Jesus Christ declares the time will come when “all that are in the graves shall hear His voice.” There can be no mistaking this statement. The spirit does not go to the grave; it is the physical that returns to the dust. Note also, Jesus said, “ALL,” not the bodies of the righteous alone, not the bodies of the wicked alone, ALL! “shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.” When shall this be? There are scriptures that speak of Christ “*coming*” that does not refer to the end of the age. There is but one personal coming of Christ in the future, and when He does it will be the end of this age, which is the last age. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God” (I Corinthians 15:22-24a). When Christ comes “all shall be made alive,” “all that are in the graves shall come forth.” When Christ comes, “then cometh the end,” and “before him shall be gathered all nations” (Matthew 25:31, 32). “They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” If this does not show that the righteous and wicked shall be resurrected at the same time, then what does it show?

PAUL EXPLAINS—Ephesians 2:1—You hath he quickened—The gospel had been preached in Ephesus to people who were spiritually dead, for Paul said of these, “Who were dead in trespasses and sins.” “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). So Paul was writing to people who had been dead, separated from God, but they heard the gospel, they believed. So Paul says, “You hath he quickened.” The word *quicken* means, “to make alive; the spiritual life with Christ, imparted to believers at their conversion.”—*Vine’s Expository Dictionary*. “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Colossians 2:13).

SIN BRINGS DEATH—Ephesians 2:2, 3—Wherein in time past—Paul reminds the saints at Ephesus that at one time they were dead in trespasses and sins. He did not do this to throw up their past to them, but to bring out truth that He was teaching them. In the state of sin they walked according to the course of this world, they were *alive* to sin, so they lived after the flesh and were by nature the children of wrath.

THE GOSPEL COMES THEIR WAY—Ephesians 2:4, 5—But God—God in His great love and mercy gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross for all mankind, and in His love and mercy He sent His messengers to tell these dear ones of salvation, or how they could be resurrected from the dead and have eternal life. Again, if there be no death there can be no resurrection. So Paul reminds them while they were “dead in sin” the gospel came their way, they heard, they obeyed, and they were quickened. Now Paul leaves no doubt that this quickening and salvation are one and the same, “Hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”

THE FIRST RESURRECTION—Ephesians 2:6—Raised us up—Salvation raises you from death to life, and it enables you to “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Those who have part in the first resurrection are blessed and holy, and they are NOW reigning with Jesus Christ. If you are not reigning with Him, it is because you are still in your sins and need to have part in the first resurrection. There is nothing in a physical resurrection that makes one “blessed and holy.”

CONCLUSION

This lesson has dealt with the thought of “The First Resurrection,” which is salvation from sin and life in Jesus Christ. We have also had verses dealing with the physical resurrection of the dead and judgment. Unless you have part in the first resurrection, you will be eternally lost. The Word of God declares, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power” (Revelation 20:6). Spiritual death separates the soul from God; physical death separates the soul from the body. The second death separates you from everything that is good, pure and holy, and this separation is eternal. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14, 15).

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is the first resurrection physical?
2. What is the first resurrection?
3. Who can have part in the first resurrection?
4. Will there be two physical resurrections a thousand and seven years apart?
5. What will happen at the second personal coming of Jesus Christ?
6. Have you had part in the first resurrection?

LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR MAY 3

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Scriptures: John 6:32-35, 51, 52, 57, 58, 60, 66-68.

John 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among

themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Memory Verse: I am that bread of life.—John 6:48.

Aim: To show who is the bread of life, and the results of eating it.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I Corinthians 10:1-12

Tuesday Exodus 12:1-20

Wednesday Matthew 16:1-12

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Matthew 26:1-30

I Corinthians 10:14-33

I Corinthians 11:17-34

INTRODUCTION

Bread played an important role in Old Testament Israel's worship. During the celebration of Pentecost they were to offer a "new meat offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenths deals: they shall be fine flour: They shall be baked with leaven; they are the first fruits unto the Lord." These loaves were to be offered with a number of animals—see Leviticus 23:16-18.

After the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, the priests were to bring twelve loaves of UNLEAVENED bread into the first room of the tabernacle, one for each of the twelve tribes. Six loaves were placed at one end of the table, called the table of shew bread, and six loaves at the other end. "On each of these rows was laid frankincense. When fresh loaves were brought each Sabbath, the former loaves were eaten, in the holy place, by the priests, while the incense was burned upon the golden altar near at hand.

"The twelve loaves did not symbolize the twelve tribes, but were symbolic of something for the tribes. The priests were representatives

of the tribes, therefore their eating the loaves symbolize ALL of the people eating them.

“The loaves of the shew bread typified the same spiritual food as is symbolized by the bread of the communion supper in the New Testament church. The one pointed forward to it, the other points backward to it. Jesus is the bread on which the soul of the regenerated feasts. He satisfies every hunger of the heart. As natural bread sustains the life of the body, so He sustains the life of the soul.”—R. R. Byrum, *Shadows of Good Things*.

The prophet Micah tells us the Saviour was to be born in Bethlehem. The word “Beth” means *house* and the rest of the word means of *bread*, so Bethlehem means *house of bread*, and that is where Jesus, the bread of life, was born.

MEDITATIONS

BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS—John 6:32—Moses gave you not—Jesus had fed the multitude with five loaves and two small fishes. When He perceived they would try to force Him to become their king, He departed from them. That night He had walked on the water to the boat where the disciples were. The next day the people came looking for Him and He told them they should seek for the “meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.” They asked Jesus for a sign so that they might believe on Him. They did not accept the feeding of the multitude as being proof enough, saying, in effect, Moses feeding the children of Israel for forty years was greater than His miracle. That is why they believed in Moses. Jesus responds by correcting them, “Moses did not give your fathers that bread from heaven, but God gave it to them, neither was it the TRUE bread, but a type of it. Now the Father is giving you the true bread from heaven.” **Verse 33—The bread of God**—The children of Israel had eaten the manna in the wilderness and had died; it sustained physical life for awhile, but did nothing for the soul. Now God was offering them the true bread “which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” Life for the soul can be found in Jesus Christ and in no other!

MATERIALLY MINDED—John 6:34—Evermore give us this bread—It seems that many Jews expected the Messiah to come and rule over a literal kingdom, giving them all kinds of material blessings; much like the literal kingdom teachers of today, but they were mistaken. Jesus did not come to set up a literal kingdom. “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight” (John 18:36). He did not come to give them literal bread. Neither will He set up a literal kingdom when He comes the second time, for the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom and has already been set up with Christ as its King.

THE TRUE MEANING—John 6:35—I am the bread of life—“I am the food that you must ‘eat’ to have eternal life. He that receives My doctrine, believes in Me as the Saviour of the world, shall be per-

fectly satisfied, his soul shall be fed and have eternal life." The true bread is not some loaf made of flour, not manna that falls from the sky, but the Word of God—the Word that was made flesh.

"Through the incarnation of Christ, God has come to dwell in our midst. Through the life and ministry of Jesus, a unique and final revelation of God has been given—one superior to the revelation given through the law and the prophets. In Christ the Word of God, God's plan and purpose for mankind is clearly revealed."—*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

AGAIN THE STATEMENT IS MADE—John 6:51—I am the living bread which came down from heaven—In verse 42 we read, "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it that he saith, I came down from heaven?" In the face of their disbelief Jesus declares again, "I am that living bread which came down from heaven." Even though their prophets had told them how the Messiah would come, be born of a virgin, still they did not believe! "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever"; "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How? "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jesus gave His life so we could have life.

THE JEWS DISCUSS THIS AMONG THEMSELVES—John 6:52—How can this man give us his flesh to eat—The carnal mind does not understand spiritual things. The Master's words were to be understood as figurative, not that they were to eat His literal flesh. He was to give His flesh, His body, to be crucified, not to *them to eat*. The Roman Catholic Church makes a serious mistake when they claim their priests turn the bread into the actual flesh of Jesus. They, like the Jews spoken of in this verse, understand not the truth of the Lord's teachings. The body of Jesus came out of the tomb on the third day, and as He returned to the Father it was changed. The literal body of Jesus does not exist today, and no man has the power to turn a wafer into literal flesh. In verse 53 and 54 Jesus speaks of drinking His blood! Even under the old law they were not to drink the blood of an animal, much less the blood of a human, so Jesus had no reference to drinking His literal blood.

MUST CONTINUE TO EAT—John 6:57, 58—He that eateth me—Jesus Christ gave Himself on the cross, shed His blood to save us from a life of sin. To eat His flesh is to receive Him, to receive His teachings, and THEN we must live His teachings out in our daily lives. We must be doers of the Word and not just hearers. "Man shall not live by bread alone [not just part of the Word], but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Just as the physical man must continue to eat to live, so the spiritual man must continue to eat to live.

MANY TURN BACK—John 6:60, 66—This is an hard saying—Again, the carnal mind does not understand the things of the Spirit.

Jesus was telling them of the true way to life, eternal life, yet they said it was a hard saying; it was impossible to do what this Man was teaching. So from that time on, many went back and followed, or, “walked no more with him.” How many in the religious world today say the way of holiness is impossible? That the standard of the Word of God is too high? “Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord forever.”

JESUS DISAPPOINTED—John 6:67—Will ye also go away?—Jesus had been true to these precious people. He had told them what they needed to know, how they could have eternal life, and yet they, like the rich young ruler, went away. Surely Jesus felt a sense of disappointment, for it is not God’s will that any be lost. He then turns to the twelve and asks them if they were going to leave Him. He did not offer to change the message just because some went away, and He will not change it today.

A TRUTHFUL ANSWER—John 6:68—Thou hast the words of eternal life—Peter first responded with a question of his own, “Lord, to whom shall we go? If we leave You, to whom shall we go?” Ponder this question! If you refuse the teachings of Christ, if you reject His Word, to whom are you going to turn to save you? No church can save, no mere religious leader can save. As Peter said to the Master, “You are the One who has the words of eternal life!”

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ is that living bread that came down from heaven. He is full of grace and truth. He is the way, the truth, and the life. If we eat of Him, if we continue in His Word, then we will be His disciples indeed; and we shall know the truth and the truth will make us free.

Jesus warned His disciples about the “leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” The disciples thought He spoke of literal bread, but He let them know He spoke of the “doctrine,” the teachings of these religious sects. Make sure the bread you eat is the truth.

The Passover was followed with the feast of the Unleavened Bread. This feast lasted for seven days. During this time there was to be no leaven in the homes of the Israelites. This symbolizes getting rid of sin out of your life through Christ our Passover Lamb, and then living a righteous holy life from then on, as seven is a perfect, or complete number. Those who teach we must sin more or less every day do not understand the truth these holy seasons symbolized.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why did bread play such an important part in the holy seasons and offerings of the Israelites?
2. What was the manna in the wilderness a type of?
3. Why did the Jews not understand the words of Jesus when He told them He was the living bread that came down from heaven?
4. What does it really mean to “eat” His flesh?
5. How did Jesus give His flesh for us?
6. Have you gotten all leaven out of your life?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR MAY 10

SIN NO MORE

Scriptures: John 8:3-11, 31-36.

John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Memory Verse: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?—Romans 6:1, 2.

Aim: To show that Christ gives power to live holy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

Psalm 1

Thursday

Romans 6

Tuesday

Ezekiel 33:1-16

Friday

Romans 8

Wednesday

II Corinthians 5

Saturday

Titus 2

INTRODUCTION

“Since we shall be judged in the last day by the law of Christ, it is evident that it is the law of Christ that we are now held responsible to obey. But God is just; therefore our responsibility is limited to our degree of enlightenment, there being in the New Testament no such thing as sin in total ignorance of God’s requirements. ‘If ye were blind [spiritually] ye should have no sin’ (John 9:41). ‘If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not come, they had not had sin’ (John 15:22). ‘Sin is not imputed when there is no law’ (Romans 5:13). ‘For where no law is, there is no transgression’ (Roman 4:15). There must be some knowledge of our obligations, so that the will is involved, oth-

erwise we are not reckoned transgressors. "Therefore to him that *knoweth* to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). So also, on this principle, to him that knoweth that he should not do evil, and then doeth it, to him it is sin.

"When we die to the world we 'put on Christ.' Then we can say with the apostle Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me' (Galatians 2:20). Our whole desire is to manifest Christ in the world. Being 'risen with Christ' we 'seek those things which are above' (Colossians 3:1). We 'put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering' (verse 12). The graces of the Spirit implanted within find outward expression in 'the fruit of the Spirit. ...'

"Oh, how much it means to serve God without fear, 'in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life' (Luke 1:75)!"—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*.

MEDITATIONS

CERTAIN MEN—John 8:3-5—Scribes and Pharisees—The scribes were those who studied the Scriptures and served as copyists, editors, and teachers. The Pharisees, according to Paul, was the straightest sect of the Jews religion, and they insisted that the law be observed as the scribes interpreted it. It is said that adultery was common at this time, "so common that they had ceased to put the law in force against it."—Adam Clarke. These men, however, had a purpose in bringing this woman to Jesus, and they said to Him, "This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act." Since the law was the same for the man as the woman, why did they not bring both? These men went on, "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned! but what sayest thou?" The law did not require stoning in all cases of adultery; the law says they shall be put to death—Leviticus 20:10. If a woman was what we call engaged, "betrothed," but not married, she was to be stoned. If she was the daughter of a priest, she was to be burned to death—Leviticus 21:9. Since these men said she should be stoned, it is possible she was betrothed, but they wanted to know what Jesus had to say.

THEIR REASON—John 8:6—This they said, tempting him—They brought this woman to Jesus to try to get something on Him. At this time the Romans had taken the right to put one to death away from the Jews. For Jesus to say to stone her would bring Him into conflict with the Roman rulers. For Him to say she should not be put to death, they could have accused Him of deciding contrary to their law. So their real purpose in bringing this woman to Jesus was not to see the law carried out, but to get something they could accuse Jesus of. This gives us a view into the spirit world and how Satan uses people to oppose the truth. Jesus did not respond at first, rather, He "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."

There are various ideas as to what Jesus wrote on the ground. It is possible He could have listed some of their sins, but the Bible does not say, so we really do not know.

THE MEN INSIST ON AN ANSWER—John 8:7—They continued asking him—These men were determined to get an answer from Jesus, to get something on Him! If they wanted the law carried out, they did not have to know what He thought; they knew what the law of Moses said, and told Him what it said. We see here a sectish spirit as it opposes the very Son of God; men, doubtless, who were offended at His teachings, trying to get something on Him that they might use it to keep others from listening to Him. As they kept pressing for an answer, Jesus said to them, “He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her.” Jesus knew their hearts; He saw the sin that was there.

THE WORD AND SPIRIT CONVICT—John 8:8, 9—Being convicted—Having told them, the one that was without sin to cast the first stone, He again stooped down and wrote some more on the ground. These were religious people, but they still had sin in their hearts, and Jesus knew it. Again, what He wrote on the ground we do not know, but they were convicted. The Spirit worked on their conscience, and they went out one by one, until there was none but Jesus and the woman left. We are not to take from this that all are sinners. These men were, but salvation saves one from sin.

GOD’S LOVE REVEALED—John 8:10, 11—Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more—Jesus arose and said, “Hath no man condemned thee?” “No man, Lord.” “Neither do I condemn thee to die.” We are not to suppose that Jesus put His approval on her sin. He did not condemn her to die, but He did tell her to go and sin no more. Now if it is impossible for a person (a saved, redeemed soul) to live a life free from sin, Jesus made a very unreasonable demand of her. This He did not do! What the Lord requires He gives grace to do. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1, 2).

MUST WALK IN THE LIGHT—John 8:31, 32—If ye continue in my word—Having an intellectual knowledge of the letter does not set one free from the bondage of sin. If we are to be true disciples of Christ, we must not only be learners, but we must be doers of that which we learn. As the light of the gospel shines on our pathway, we must walk in that light. “If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7). It is the truth obeyed that liberates.

TAKES MORE THAN BEING ABRAHAM’S SEED—John 8:33-35—Whosoever committeth sin—Never been in bondage! Literally, they were in bondage to the Romans. However, that was not their only bondage. Being Abraham’s seed did not free them from sin, only the Son

of God could do that. Jesus put it to them plain and simple, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." That is still true today! Notice also, the servant of sin does not abide in the house, the house of God, which is the church of the living God. You must be a son to abide in the house, and you must live a life free from all known sin.

TRUE FREEDOM—John 8:36—If the Son—Satan has lied to people all down through the ages telling them that God's way is bondage, his way is freedom. Jesus sets the record straight. Sin is bondage. He who is living in sin is a slave. It is only the true child of God who is actually free, free from sin, free to serve the true and living God. This freedom comes only through the Son of God, and we maintain this freedom by continuing in His Word.

CONCLUSION

Some who insist that no one can live a holy life refer to Paul and Romans 7. But in this chapter Paul speaks of his experience as a Pharisee, trying to keep the law, not as a Christian. If you want to see Paul, the Christian, look in Romans 8: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (verses 1-3).

Others refer to Romans 3:10, where we find the words written, "There is none righteous, no, not one." But we need to take that statement in its proper context. First, notice Paul said, "As it is written." If you will turn back to Psalm 14 where "it is written," you will read these words, "The fool hath said in heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (verses 1-3). Speaking of Christians? NO! Return to Romans 3, and read on through verse 18: "Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they use deceit; their mouth full of cursing and bitterness; their feet swift to shed blood; there is no fear of God before their eyes," etc.—a description of Christians? NO!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is sin?
2. If there is no law, can there be transgression?
3. Did Jesus make an impossible demand of the woman brought to Him?
4. What did Jesus say we must do to be His disciple indeed?
5. Did being Abraham's seed ever save anyone?
6. What is true freedom, and how is it obtained?
7. Is it possible to live a holy life in this present world?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR MAY 17

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Scriptures: John 10:1-5, 8-11, 14-16.

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

Memory Verse: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.—John 10:11.

Aim: To set forth truth in regard to the good Shepherd and His sheep.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Psalm 23
Tuesday Ezekiel 34
Wednesday I Peter 5

Thursday Jeremiah 23:1-6
Friday I John 4
Saturday John 21:1-17

INTRODUCTION

Sheep receive more attention in the Bible than any other animal. They were important in the domestic, civil, and religious life of Israel.

“This is only natural since the Hebrew people were known early in their history as a race of wandering herdsmen. Even in the days of the kings, the simple shepherd’s life seemed the ideal calling. The Bible makes many comparisons between the ways of sheep and human beings. The New Testament church is often compared to a sheepfold.

“By nature, sheep are helpless creatures. They depend on shepherds to lead them to water and pasture, to fight off wild beasts, ... Sheep are social animals that gather in flocks, but they tend to wander off and fall into a crevice or get caught in a thorn bush. Then the shepherd must leave the rest of his flock to search for the stray. Jesus used this familiar picture when He described a shepherd who left ninety-nine sheep in the fold to search for one that had wandered off.

“A unique relationship existed between shepherds and sheep. He knew them by name, and they in turn recognized his voice. Sheep

were models of submissiveness.”—*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

MEDITATIONS

JESUS SPEAKS WITH AUTHORITY—John 10:1—I say unto you—The family of God are the sheep! Every true child of God is a sheep in this family, regardless as to what country they may live in, the color of their skin, rich or poor, male or female. Every true child of God is a sheep in this family. There are millions who profess to be Christians who have joined church by one method or another. Church joining does not make you a Christian, but on the basis of the Master’s words, we conclude it makes them thieves and robbers, for they are trying to climb up some other way. Speaking especially of false ministers, I would say they are thieves and robbers because they are leading souls astray, robbing souls of true salvation. You have nothing so valuable as your soul.

UNDER SHEPHERDS—John 10:2—The shepherd of the sheep—According to verse six, this is a parable Jesus gave, but the people did not understand what was meant by it. Sheep, with their shepherds, were very common in Israel, and there were many flocks with a shepherd for each one. Using that thought for this verse, no man is in a position to be an undershepherd until he first enters in through the door, and even then he must have a divine call to the work. How important it is that the sheep be fed on the truth of God’s Word and be led in the pathway of holiness! For a minister to fail to do this is to have the people’s blood on his head.

NOT ALL SHEPHERDS OWNED THE SHEEP—John 10:3, 4—The porter openeth—Here we see the *porter* opening the door for the shepherd. Pastors of flocks must always keep in mind the sheep belong to God. The Holy Spirit opens doors of opportunity and service, and the pastor needs to follow His leading. As he leads the sheep, the sheep of his flock, they hear his voice, they recognize his voice, they trust him to lead them right, and to protect them from the “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” He goes before them—sheep were led, not driven—also, as the shepherd led he could see whether there was danger ahead. What a solemn responsibility. Let me point out, however, that no pastor can lead one who is not willing to follow! Some want to be their own pastor, and they cause problems not only for the pastor, but for the entire flock.

BE CAREFUL WHO YOU FOLLOW—John 10:5, 8—A stranger—There are many ministers in the religious world who claim to be of God but are not. The Bible exhorts us to “try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts

20:29, 30). Follow the true shepherd as he follows Christ, but reject the “stranger.” There were many false prophets before Christ, there were some during His earthly sojourn, and there are many yet today. Whatever the age, the sheep were not, are not, to follow those who are thieves and robbers. A thief tries to come unknown, unexpected. A robber can take from you while you face him.

THE TRUE WAY—John 10:9, 10—I am the door—A door serves more than one purpose. It is opened to permit entry, and it is closed for protection of those in the house. Jesus declares, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” You cannot join the Church of God! Christ is the door, and the only way into the sheepfold is through Him. When you enter through Him you leave your sins outside. Once inside you have the greatest safety you can ever find, for Christ protects His sheep. The thief, whether you speak of Satan himself or one of his agents, comes to steal away your affections, to get them on things of this earth. He comes to kill—to kill the soul, to kill spiritual life, and to destroy your soul in a lost eternity. Jesus came that we could have life, and have it more abundantly.

THE DOOR, THE SHEPHERD—John 10:11, 14, 15—I am the good shepherd—In verses seven and nine Jesus said He was the door. Now He says He is the good shepherd. Different symbols are used to convey different lines of thought. In describing Himself as the good shepherd, He speaks of what He was going to do for the sheep, “The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” Jesus gave His life on the cruel cross of Calvary so that every soul could be saved. He did not die for just a select few, He died for the “whosoever will.” He is the Chief Shepherd, and He knows those that are His, and they know Him. Yes, if you are a child of God, He knows you and you know Him. He is not someone you just read about or heard someone speak of.

GENTILES INCLUDED—John 10:16—Other sheep—Again, Jesus did not die for a predetermined few, He did not die just for the Hebrews; He died for all. When Jesus died on the cross the Old Covenant ended, the New came into force. The middle wall was broken down. The gospel was to be preached to all nations. The apostle Paul wrote, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Ephesians 2:15-17).

CONCLUSION

I would like to quote from Matthew Henry for our conclusion:

“The church of God in the world is a *sheepfold*, into which the *children of God* that were scattered abroad are gathered together. ... This fold is well fortified, for God Himself is as a *wall of fire* about it, Zechariah 2:5. This sheepfold lies much exposed to thieves and rob-

bers; crafty seducers that debauch and deceive, and cruel persecutors that destroy and devour; *grievous wolves* (Acts 20:29); thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from Him, to sacrifice them to devils, or steal their food from them, that they might perish for lack of it; wolves in sheep's clothing, Matthew 7:15. The great Shepherd of the sheep takes wonderful care of the flock and of all that belongs to it. ... The undershepherds, who are entrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the discharge of that trust; magistrates must defend them, and protect and advance all their secular interests; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests, must *feed their souls* with the Word of God faithfully opened and applied, with the gospel ordinances daily administered, *taking the oversight of them.*"

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why are sheep used as a symbol of Christians?
 2. Why is Christ called the "Lamb of God"?
 3. In what way is Christ the door to the sheepfold?
 4. Why are pastors called "undershepherds"?
 5. Are the sheep to follow the leadership of undershepherds?
 6. Is the sheepfold and the Church of God one and the same?
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LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR MAY 24

LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

Scriptures: John 14:1-6, 11-15, 27; 16:33.

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Memory Verse: Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—John 14:1.

Aim: To teach that we can have peace in a troubled world.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Matthew 11:25-30	Thursday	James 3
Tuesday	Hebrews 3	Friday	Hebrews 12:1-14
Wednesday	Hebrews 4	Saturday	Romans 5

INTRODUCTION

The word *trouble* means, in part, “to disturb or agitate; to cause mental agitation to; worry; harass; vex; to cause pain or discomfort to; to cause difficulty or inconvenience to; to pester, annoy, tease, bother, etc.”—*Websters New World Dictionary*. There is a lot of trouble in the world: wars, famines, murder, rape, abused children, abused wives, abused parents, poverty, hunger, broken homes, prisons filled with overflowing, etc. Christians live in this world. We are not to partake of the spirit of the world, we are not to take part in the evil of the world, but we do live in this troubled world.

Our lesson is entitled, “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled.” Jesus was not telling His disciples not to cause trouble, not to disturb or cause pain, but for them not to be troubled, though living in a troubled world.

Many times people are troubled by worry, going by their feelings, doubts, and being influenced by what *seems* to be.

One writer has said, “The difficulty with feelings is that they are taken as indicating our real state, whereas in reality our feelings may be wholly deceptive. ... Depending on feelings leads inevitably to discouragement.”

MEDITATIONS

WHY TROUBLE—John 14:1—Let not—Jesus had told them He must leave them. He had told them one of the twelve would betray Him. He told Peter he would deny Him. What next? We might say, Why wouldn't they be troubled? Being a Christian does not mean you will not face problems, it does not mean everything will go the way you desire, but it does mean you have One to help you. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” We must not act as though there is no God. We must *believe*, we must have faith in Him, and know that He is a present help in every time of need. Believing in God is the way to keep your heart from being troubled.

A PLACE PREPARED—John 14:2, 3—I go—Another reason the disciples were not to let their hearts be troubled, even though Jesus had said He must leave them, was that would not be the end. “I will come again.” Jesus first went to the cross to prepare a place for us in His church, which is the “house of God”; then He returned to the Father to *prepare* a place in that eternal home for all who love His appearing. “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (II Corinthians 5:1). Do not look for

streets of gold! Our eternal home will be so much greater that the mind cannot now grasp it.

JESUS IS THE WAY—John 14:4-6—I am the way—Thomas may have thought Jesus spoke of some journey He must make, some place He must go there in Judah, but Jesus did not speak of an earthly journey, or literal way. He told them of eternal life, of His coming death and resurrection; now He told them of an eternal home. He responded to Thomas' question, "How can we know the way?" by saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus is the WAY that leads to the Father, the TRUTH that teaches the knowledge of God and directs in that way, and He is the LIFE that animates those who seek and serve Him. He is the only way to the Father. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (I John 2:23a).

FAITH REQUIRED—John 14:11, 12—Believe me—In John 10:30 Jesus told the disciples, "I and my Father are one." In this chapter Jesus tells them, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus came to do the will of the Father. He came to "reveal" the Father, to show what the Father was like. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Therefore believe what I say unto you. The works that I do are proof that I am in the Father and the Father in me." Jesus goes on to say to them, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." With such great and precious promises, why should their hearts be troubled? Much has been written about the "greater works," but let me just say, Jesus limited His ministry primarily to His own people in Galilee and Judah. The disciples preached the gospel in many countries; they saw many more converted than Jesus did. Jesus never struck one with blindness, He never sent out cloths and aprons, His shadow never healed anyone, and He never ministered the Holy Spirit to anyone, although He could have done all these things.

THERE IS POWER IN THE NAME OF JESUS—John 14:13-15—Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name—Whenever we pray, we need to ask of the Father in Jesus' name, and we need to ask for that which is His will and to His glory. There are some powerful promises given in these short verses. It is evident that the disciples believed, for signs and wonders followed their ministry after the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost. All power was given unto Jesus, and He in turn gave power to the disciples. He is just the same today. Jesus also told them that if they loved Him, they would show it by keeping His commandments. This is very important if we are going to have a heart free from worry and trouble. We prove our love by obeying Him.

PEACE BANISHES TROUBLE—John 14:27—Peace I leave with you—Christ is the Prince of Peace! He and He alone can give this peace: peace with God, peace with one another, and peace in your

own heart. The unsaved will never know this peace until they turn from a life of sin, repent and believe to the salvation of their souls. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). When you are at peace you can live in peace.

PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD—John 16:33—In the world
—The Word of God must be taken seriously; it must be obeyed if we are to have the benefits of it. “These things have I spoken unto you. I have told you how to live, what to do. If you will do them then you shall have the peace I give you. In the world you shall have tribulation, opposition, trials, but if you will obey, you will overcome even as I have.” “There is peace in the midst of the storm.”

CONCLUSION

Peace is one of the greatest blessings one could have. Peace with God is possible through Jesus Christ. The reason there is so much trouble in the world is because there is an absence of this peace in the heart. The world cannot give that which it does not have, and it does not have peace for the soul. To maintain this peace, we must have a living faith in God and in His promises. A form of godliness will not produce it.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why were the disciples troubled?
2. Why is there so much trouble in the world today?
3. How can one have true peace?
4. Can one have peace with God and still manifest ill toward others?
5. Is God still answering prayer for His people?
6. Is it possible to see miracles in our day?

LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR MAY 31

THE COMFORTER HAS COME

Scriptures: John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter

will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Memory Verse: Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.—John 16:7.

Aim: To reveal the work of the Holy Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Joel 2	Thursday	John 15
Tuesday	I Corinthians 12	Friday	Acts 2
Wednesday	Ephesians 4	Saturday	Acts 15:1-31

INTRODUCTION

“*Comforter* is the most tender and affectionate title given to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was nearing the close of His incarnation, He looked with tender pity on His few disciples and began to speak words of cheer and comfort to them. ... Even the tender love of mother for her child could not compare with the tender compassion manifested by Jesus for His disciples, who were soon to be bereaved of their Teacher, Guide, and spiritual Father.

“The word *comfortless* ... is from the original word *orphanous*, which literally means orphans. ... Jesus, like some other Hebrew teachers, called His followers His children; hence when He left them they were orphans: but He promised not to let them remain so.”—D. O. Teasley, *The Holy Spirit*.

MEDITATIONS

THE DISCIPLES WERE NOT LEFT ALONE—John 14:16, 17—**I will pray the Father**—While Jesus was with the disciples He was their *Comforter*, but it was necessary for Him to return to the Father. This, of course, made them sad, but they are given the promise of another Comforter, and Jesus tells them this Comforter would abide with them “for ever; Even the Spirit of truth.” Further, Jesus informs them the world—the world of unsaved people—cannot receive the Spirit of God, because they do not know Him. The disciples had been born again, their names were written in the Lamb’s book of life, so they had the Spirit with them. They knew Him, “for he dwelleth with you, but the time will come when He shall be IN you.” This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

THE TEACHER—John 14:26—He shall teach you—Jesus Christ was the greatest teacher to ever walk this earth! Yet, the disciples did not understand all that He told them, so Jesus tells them, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Just hearing something preached, or taught, does not mean you understand it. The Spirit gives understanding to those who really WANT to know.

A WITNESS—John 15:26—He shall testify of me—The Comforter was, is, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, and He bears witness to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior of the world, and what He taught was the truth. The Word and the Spirit agree. In verse 27 Jesus tells the disciples that they too shall bear witness because they had been with Him from the beginning of His ministry. Is it not marvelous that we have access to the same precious Holy Spirit that Peter, John, and James, as well as the rest of the disciples, had?

JESUS MUST LEAVE THEM—John 16:7—It is expedient—Jesus Christ, the eternal Locus, came to earth in physical form. He got hungry, tired, sleepy, just as humans did. Now He must be crucified for the sins of the whole world. There was no other way for mankind to be reconciled to God. On the third day He would come out of the tomb. God did not intend for Him to remain on this earth; He MUST return to the Father. In God’s plan, the Holy Spirit would not come to abide IN the children of God until after the Son returned to heaven.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—John 16:8-10—When he is come—Very briefly Jesus outlines the work the Holy Spirit would do when He came. He had already told them the Spirit would be their Comforter, that He would teach them and witness to their hearts of the truth. Now, He adds to that: the Spirit will reprove the world of sin. The only way an unsaved person can come to Christ and be saved is for the Holy Spirit to convict and draw him. The Spirit will point out what is right, and He will see that proper judgment is rendered. The transgres-

sion of the Word of God is sin, and all known acts of disobedience become imputed sins. For one to have peace with God he must repent of and forsake his sins. Righteousness is simply doing what is right, and when one is led by the Spirit of God, he will be led to do what is right. All will be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

TRUTH REVEALED LATER—John 16:12—I have yet many things—Jesus did not say what these things were, but we must remember, He and the disciples were then living under the Old Covenant; but when the Savior died on the cross, it would expire and the New would come into effect. How would the disciples have reacted if Jesus had told them at that time that the Gentiles were to be a part of the Church of God, that they too would have the same access to the Holy Spirit, etc.? We find Peter given a vision of clean and unclean animals to help him to see this truth. We see a conference being held at Jerusalem to settle certain matters that some Jewish believers thought was still binding on them under the New Covenant. It seems clear the disciples were not prepared for these things yet.

NOT ALL TRUTH LEARNED AT ONCE—John 16:13, 14—Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come—Jesus did tell the disciples He had other sheep that He must bring, and He told them other things that laid the “ground work,” but it was not until the “Spirit of truth” came that they were guided into an understanding of these things. The Spirit brought back to their minds things that Jesus had said to them, and then He revealed to them the meaning of what the Master had said. The Spirit did not come representing Himself, He did not come teaching things contrary to what Christ taught, but He came to confirm in their minds the truth they had been taught and to help them understand it more fully.

CONCLUSION

The Comforter has come, and the saved and sanctified have Him abiding in them. Paul tells us, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). So the Spirit came not only to convict sinners of their sins, not only to sanctify the justified, but He came to lead the children of God in their daily living. It means much to be led by the Spirit in all things. This does not make the Christian infallible! We are still human, and we can and do make mistakes, but if we will follow the leading of the Holy Spirit He will keep us from all sin. The Spirit will never lead us to disobey the Word of God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Consider the meaning of the word “Comforter.”
2. Why cannot the world receive the Holy Spirit?
3. Why did Jesus have to return to the Father before the Spirit came to abide IN the disciples?
4. Name some of the works the Spirit does.
5. Are you being led by the Spirit?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR JUNE 7

THE TRUE VINE

Scriptures: John 15:1-8, 16; Galatians 5:22, 23.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the

fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Memory Verse: I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.—John 15:5.

Aim: To impress the student of the source of eternal life and the necessity of being a fruit-bearing Christian.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I Corinthians 13

Tuesday I Corinthians 6

Wednesday Luke 11:29-54

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

John 7:1-26

I Samuel 16

Ecclesiastes 12

INTRODUCTION

So far in this series of lessons we have studied scriptures that spoke of Christ as the *Word*, the living *water*, the *Bread* of life and the good *Shepherd*. Now we have a lesson, "The True Vine." The fact that these various lessons point to One and the same Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, should not be surprising! There is only one name given under heaven whereby we may be saved, Jesus Christ. He is the One who came to make it possible for us to have life and to have it more abundantly.

Jesus took various natural things of life to present precious spiritual truths. Many of these things were common and well-known in Galilee and Judah, yet many did not grasp the truth the Master was presenting.

The soil and climate of Palestine was well-suited for vineyards where grapes were grown. They were cultivated here long before the Israelites

occupied the land (Genesis 14:16). The vineyards of Palestine produced immense clusters of grapes (Numbers 13:20, 23, 24).

Let us see, as we study this lesson, what Jesus was teaching when He said, "I am the true vine."

MEDITATIONS

MORE THAN ONE VINE—John 15:1—I am the true vine—If there was only one vine, religiously, people could become connected to, Jesus could have just said, "I am the vine"; but we note that He said He was the true vine. It naturally follows that all true Christians are branches and life is found in Him alone. The "Father is the husbandman."

MUST BEAR FRUIT—John 15:2—He taketh away—There are those in the religious world who teach "Eternal security," meaning once you become a Christian you can never be lost, regardless of what you do. It is evident such people do not understand these words of the Master. Here Jesus said, "Every branch IN ME that beareth not fruit he taketh away." You would have to be in Him before you could be taken away. If you were taken away, you would be separated from the source of life, for there is no spiritual life outside of Christ. Jesus goes on to say, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The Church of God has taught through the years that this purging is the cleansing work done in sanctification.

FREE FROM ALL COMMITTED SIN—John 15:3-5—Ye are clean—These disciples were free from all their committed sin. They were in Christ because they had obeyed the Word He had spoken unto them. The Master exhorts them to abide in Him, to continue in Him. The reason? The branch cannot bear fruit of itself! The only way they could bear fruit was by staying connected to the Vine. This is just as true today as it was when Jesus spoke it to the disciples. He assured them that if they would abide in Him, and He in them, they would be able to bring forth much fruit.

THE TRUTH REPEATED—John 15:6—If a man abide not—"Our Lord in the plainest manner intimates that a person may as truly be united to Him as the branch is to the tree that produces it, and yet be afterwards cut off and cast into the fire; *because he has not brought forth fruit to the glory of God*. No man can cut off a branch from a tree to which that branch was *never united*: it is absurd, and contrary to the letter and spirit of the metaphor, to talk of being *seemingly* in Christ—because this means nothing."—Adam Clarke. To be cast into the fire means to be eternally lost.

GREAT BLESSINGS COME FROM ABIDING IN CHRIST—John 15:7—Ask what ye will—How could Christ make such a statement? Because He has all power in heaven and earth. There is nothing impossible with Him. We need to abide in Him, let His Word abide in us, and believe what He has promised. We need to see more answers to prayer, and this is how it is possible.

REASONS FOR BEARING FRUIT—John 15:8—Much fruit—We must bear fruit or be cut off. So we must bear fruit for our own soul's sake, and we are to bear fruit to glorify God. Paul said whatever we do, do all to the glory of God. Christians are not to live for "self." The self life leads to destruction. This is God's world. He is the One who has given us life, and we are to bear much fruit for His honor and glory. "So shall ye be my disciples."

A CHOSEN PEOPLE—John 15:16—I have chosen you—God has always had a separate people, called out of a sinful world to serve Him. Here Jesus speaks to the disciples and tells them they did not choose Him as their teacher, which was the custom in those days, but He had chosen them, not only to teach them, but to ordain them to go forth preaching and teaching what He had taught them. As a result they would see "fruit for their labor," souls being saved. In their being faithful in the work He had ordained them to do, they would have the help of the Father, "that whatsoever ye ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Every child of God can, and must, bear fruit for God, not just those called to preach the gospel.

INDIVIDUAL FRUIT BEARING—Galatians 5:22, 23—The fruit of the Spirit—You cannot have the Spirit of God ruling in your life and bear just part of what is mentioned here. If one is living in the Spirit he will bear the fruit of the Spirit in his personal life. It is true that these can increase, as one continues in the Vine. With the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, one will find joy in living for the Lord, and there will be peace in the heart. God's love will enable you to suffer long and still be gentle. Faith in God is what brings *victory*. A meek and quiet spirit is in God's sight of great price. With God in control of our lives we will be temperate; that is, keep the body under control. Paul says there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit; bear just as large, just as much as possible. "Herein is my Father glorified."

CONCLUSION

The Scriptures use trees to symbolize people. Trees bear fruit. Every person, saved or unsaved, is bearing fruit. The Christian is bearing good fruit; the unsaved are bearing the "fruit" Paul speaks of in Galatians 5:19-21, the "works of the flesh." We need to remember, they that live after the flesh perish. If you desire eternal life you must be connected to the true Vine that gives life, and you must bear fruit to remain in Him.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why did Christ say He was the TRUE vine?
2. Can one have spiritual life and not be connected to the true Vine?
3. Can one lose spiritual life?
4. Who chooses the true ministers of the gospel?
5. What does the word *purge* mean?
6. What kind of fruit are you bearing?

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR JUNE 14

CONTINUE IN HIS LOVE

Scriptures: John 15:9-13, 17; 13:34, 35; I John 4:7-12.

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are

my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Memory Verse: And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.—I Corinthians 13:13.

Aim: To emphasize the need of keeping ourselves in the love of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Psalm 119:1-32

Tuesday I Corinthians 13

Wednesday Proverbs 3

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Psalm 119:105-128

I John 4

Romans 5

INTRODUCTION

Paul places love at the top of the list when it comes to Christian graces. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Corinthians 13:13).

"Two distinct Greek words for love appear in the Bible. The word *phileo* means 'to have ardent affection and feeling'—a type of impulsive love. The other word *agapao* means 'to have esteem' or 'high regard.' ...

"The warm word *agape* is the characteristic term of Christianity. This word for love is used several different ways in the Bible.

"1. *Agape* love indicates the nature of the love of God toward His beloved Son (John 17:26), toward the human race generally (John 3:16; Romans 5:8), and toward those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:21). 2. *Agape* love conveys God's will to His children about their attitude toward one another. Love for one another was a proof to the world of true discipleship (John 13:34, 35). 3. *Agape* love also expresses the essential nature of God (I John 4:8). Love can be

known only from the actions it prompts, as seen in God's love in the gift of His Son (I John 4:9, 10). ...

"The Greek word translated as brotherly love implies more than love for one's 'blood brothers,' as in pagan writings; it means love for the broader brotherhood of true believers, for the members of the church, the 'household of faith' (Galatians 6:10) and 'of God' (Ephesians 2:19; also I Peter 2:17; 3:8; 5:9).

"A Christian's love should extend beyond the Christian brotherhood, however, to all people. ... The Christian is called not only to love his neighbor and his brother but also to love his enemy (Matthew 5:44)."—*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

MEDITATIONS

CHRIST'S LOVE GREAT—John 15:9—As the Father hath loved me—Can you grasp how great God's love for His Son was? Can you grasp how great Christ's love for YOU is? We should not find it hard to love One who loved us so much. That love must continue for us to continue in His love.

LOVE SHOWS—John 15:10—Keep my commandments—It is easy, I suppose, for people to say, "I love the Lord," but the way we show the Lord we love Him is by living in obedience to His Word. This is the only way we can really abide in His love! Millions have a form of godliness, while choosing their own way, but one who really loves God and abides in His love will seek the will of God in all things. Jesus obeyed the Father, He set the example. We are to "walk as he walked."

THERE IS JOY IN THE LORD—John 15:11—My joy—There is much heartache in the world, much unhappiness and sorrow, but God did not ordain it to be so. God's will is that we be happy, that we have true joy, and that we live "quiet and peaceable lives." Sin is what brings misery and woe. "That your joy may be full." Just as a jar is filled to the brim, the Lord would have us be filled with His joy. "The religion of Christ expels *all misery* from the hearts of those who receive it in its fullness. It was to drive wretchedness out of the world that Jesus came into it."—Adam Clarke.

THE LAW OF CHRIST—John 15:12—My commandment—No longer an eye for an eye. Our love for God, His love IN us, reaches others. "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." How much was that? "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Do we *really* love one another that much? This is what Jesus taught. **Verse 13—Greater love hath no man**—Usually one's life is the most precious thing he has, other than his soul, and he wants to hold on to it as long as possible. This is natural. Here Jesus tells us there is no greater love we can have for others than to lay down our lives for them. Jesus laid down His life for us; there is no greater love.

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMAND—John 15:17—I command you—Jesus must have felt strongly about this, for this is the second

time in these verses that He *commands* us to love one another. If there was no devil in the world, if there was no evil in hearts, this might be easy to do, but we live in a world that has much evil. There are people who hate one another, there are those who seek to do you evil, so it takes effort. It takes grace to love, as the Scriptures teach, in a world such as we live in today.

SOMETHING NEW—John 13:34—A new commandment I give unto you—“In what sense are we to understand that this was a new commandment? *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, was a positive precept of the law, Lev. XIX, 18, and it is the very same that Christ repeats here; how then was it *new*? Our Lord answers this question, *Even as I have loved you*. Now Christ more than fulfilled the Mosaic precept; He not only loved His neighbour as *Himself*, but He loved him **MORE** than *Himself*, for He laid down His life for men. In this He calls upon the disciples to imitate Him; to be ready on all occasions to lay down their lives for each other. This was, strictly, a *new* commandment: no system of morality ever presented anything so pure and disinterested as this. Our blessed Lord has outdone all the moral systems in the universe in two words: 1. Love your enemies; 2. Lay down your lives for each other.”—Adam Clarke.

A SIGN OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY—John 13:35—By this—We hear often, “You shall not judge.” The Scriptures do speak against the wrong kind of judging, but there are some things we are to know; and when people hate one another, despise one another, do things intentionally to hurt one another, it is not judging to say they are not true Christians. Jesus said this is the way people will *know* you are My disciples, “If ye have love one to another.” If you do not, then what? Can you still say of a truth you are a disciple of Christ? This verse says, “Love one **TO** another.” Someone has said that means *you get it to them!*

LOVE IN ACTION—I John 4:7, 8—Love is of God—“Love can be known only from the actions it prompts,” so love in word alone is not really love. Love for one another means you are ready to promote other’s welfare, both temporally and spiritually. You are not envious of them, you are not jealous of them, you do them good. The one who loves God and his neighbor, as before described, and keeps Christ’s commandments is born of God. The one who does not, does not know God, is not a disciple of Christ, is not a true Christian. That is not what this writer said; this is what verse eight says.

GOD’S LOVE SHOWN—I John 4:9—In this was manifested—God could not have shown His love for fallen humanity in a greater way than He did! Jesus Christ coming into this world, giving His life so that we could have life, is the greatest of all manifestations of love. No wonder John said for us to stop and consider “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (I John 3:1).

NOT OUR LOVE FOR HIM—I John 4:10—Not that we loved God—It was not because we loved God that He sent His Son into the world, for sinful man does not, and really cannot love God. It was not because of any merit of ours that Jesus came to propitiate the Father, it was because of His love, and because He first loved us. Through His redeeming grace we can love Him. **Verse 11—If God so loved us**—Again, we are made to see that it is important for us to love one another. With God loving us so much, though unworthy, it is only reasonable that we should love one another. If God’s love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, how could it be otherwise?

GOD IS REAL—I John 4:12—No man hath seen God—There are expressions by some in the Old Testament, after having been visited by an angel, that they had seen God. That is the way they felt, but John says no one has seen God; however, that does not mean He is not real. There is a God in heaven, as Daniel said. If we love one another, as these scriptures have stated, then, John says, God dwelleth in us. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (I John 4:20). What an honor to have the eternal God “dwell in us.”

CONCLUSION

I think it is good to read I Corinthians 13 from time to time, that we be reminded what love WILL do and what it will NOT do. Faith is very important. Without it you cannot please God, you cannot be a true Christian. Yet, Paul says, “Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing.” Beginning with verse four, Paul tells us what love will do and not do. In verse eight he declares, “Charity never faileth.” There are few things in this world that *never* fails, but love is one of them. People fail to manifest it. Some have lost it out of their heart, some have *left* it, but love has never failed.

Families will stay together, husbands and wives will love one another, children will love and honor their parents, Christians will keep the commandments of Christ, Christians will love one another, they will love their enemies, as long as the love of God rules in their hearts.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the most important Christian grace?
2. What commandments did Christ say we should keep?
3. How did God show His great love for us?
4. What is the greatest way we could show our love for our “friends”?
5. How is love to be shown?
6. Is the love of God ruling in your life?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR JUNE 21

THAT THEY ALL BE ONE

Scriptures: John 17:1-11, 20-23.

John 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have

believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Memory Verse: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

—John 17:20, 21.

Aim: To set forth the truth that Jesus prayed for His disciples to be one.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Acts 20	Thursday	Galatians 1
Tuesday	Ephesians 4	Friday	I Timothy 4
Wednesday	I Corinthians 1:1-13	Saturday	Titus 1

INTRODUCTION

“Christian unity is inconsistent with human ecclesiasticism. To have the former, the latter must be rejected. To reject this means for Christians to separate themselves from humanly organized churches, or to cease to be members. Such is the only attitude they can take that is consistent with the teaching of the Scriptures. Those who so separate themselves stand where salvation placed them and where the early

church stood. When a company of them associate themselves for worship they constitute a true local church of God and any other Christian who likewise repudiates human ecclesiasticism will find no walls about the local church which in their nature excluded him. He can subscribe to their creed, which is the Scriptures. He can approve their church government, which is by the Holy Spirit.”—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

MEDITATIONS

THE LORD’S PRAYER—John 17:1—Father, the hour is come—The Lord was always serious as He went about His Father’s business, but facing the cross, feeling the burden of the sins of the world, I feel, He was more serious at this hour than ever before. “Glorify Thy Son. Let the world know that I am the Savior, that I came to do Thy will. May you be glorified through My death, may Thy law be respected and obeyed among mankind, may they see Thy love through My death.”

POWER TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE—John 17:2, 3—Know thee—God’s plan was, and is, that through Jesus Christ salvation would be made available to all mankind. Those who will accept Christ in reality as Savior and Lord can have eternal life. Eternal life comes through knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

CHRIST HAD A WORK TO DO—John 17:4, 5—I have finished the work—Jesus came to do the will of the Father, to preach the gospel, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to suffer stripes for our healing, and to die on the cross for our salvation. We note from verse five, the One we know as Jesus Christ really had no beginning. He was “Emmanuel.”

JESUS REVEALED THE FATHER—John 17:6-8—I have manifested thy name—Jesus revealed the Father to those who believed on Him. How sad that so many did not believe and continued on in darkness, even though they had a form of godliness. Those who did believe were delivered out of the world of sin and obeyed the Word of God. Divine revelation, through the Holy Spirit, is the way one comes to know the truths of the Word. Those who fight and oppose the truth will go on in their deception. Christ delivered to them the Word of God.

A PRAYER DIRECTLY FOR THE BELIEVERS—John 17:9, 10—I pray not for the world—At this point in His prayer, Jesus was praying for the disciples that He had at that time, and not for the unsaved, or for the disciples of the future. “All mine are thine, and thine are mine.” What a privilege to be a servant of Christ. You cannot be a servant of God without being a servant of Christ. The idea that one can be of God while rejecting Christ is not supported by the Scriptures.

NOTE WHAT CHRIST PRAYED FOR—John 17:11—Keep through thy name—Christ prays as though He had already died on the cross, knowing He soon would, knowing also that He would be

returning to the Father and leaving the disciples behind. He prays for the Father to keep them in His name. We understand this to mean, keep them in the doctrine, the truth of the one true and living God; keep them from the sinful world that You have delivered them out of—people who think they can serve God and the world at the same time are deceiving themselves; keep them together, “that they may be one, as we are.” As long as people believe and live the true doctrine of Christ, being led by the Holy Spirit, why should they not be one? Truth does not divide God’s people! The Holy Spirit does not divide saints of God.

A BROADER PRAYER—John 17:20—Neither pray I for these alone—Here Jesus begins to pray for those who would believe on Him through the preaching of His disciples. That comes on down to us today. Jesus prayed for those of us who have believed on Him through the Word of God that His disciples were inspired to write.

NOTE HIS PRAYER—John 17:21—That they may be one—So it was not just for the disciples of that present time that He prayed they be one; it was, and is, His will for His disciples of all ages to be one. The devil hates true Bible unity, and how he has worked to divide and scatter God’s people. Why? To hinder their work, to make void their testimony, and to kill them spiritually. Divide and conquer, divide and kill. That works in literal warfare and it works in spiritual warfare. Jesus tells us why we are to be one. Why do many not believe Christ is the Son of God, the Savior? Because professed Christians are so divided and are teaching such conflicting doctrines, while claiming to be teaching the very things Christ taught, that many say there is nothing to any of it. “Is Christ divided?” NO!

WE MUST TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY—John 17:23—I in them—This is the Lord’s prayer. He prayed for His disciples to be one. “That they may be made perfect in one.” Something is lacking when Christians are not in unity. Jesus prayed for that oneness that would make the world to know “that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

CONCLUSION

The early morning church was one. A departure from truth brought spiritual darkness and division. The church went into the “wilderness,” but, thank God, she was to come out, and she did!

Get rid of false doctrines, reject the spirits of error, follow the Scriptures and the leading of the Holy Spirit and you will have oneness. This is what Jesus prayed for.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is there so much division in the world?
2. Can one be a part of the world and be a true disciple?
3. Is *union* between religions the *unity* Jesus prayed for?
4. Why does Satan oppose unity among God’s people?
5. Is unity among the saints possible?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR JUNE 28

THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD

Scriptures: John 17:12-18; 15:18-20; I John 4:4-6.

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

I John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Memory Verse: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.—John 17:16.

Aim: To show that God's people are a separate people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Isaiah 3**

Tuesday **II Corinthians 6**

Wednesday **I Peter 3**

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

I Timothy 2

I John 2

Isaiah 35

INTRODUCTION

“Since sin in its various forms has become universal, surrounding us on all sides, as real as nature itself, the Bible writers often refer to it as ‘the world.’ This includes not only the grosser forms of sin, but all manner of disobedience to God of whatever nature or extent. God’s people must be free from all these things. ...

“That our separation from the world in this sense is to be real, is shown by the words of Christ, ‘If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you’ (John 15:19). ...

“According to the principles of truth already laid down, it is evident that the holy people of God cannot go to and participate in those amusements whose direct object is to cater to the spirit of foolishness, vanity, and sin. ... How many are the forms of worldly amusement that

have been devised and that serve this purpose!—shows, festivals, races of various kinds, card-parties, prize fights, theaters, etc. These things ‘are not of the Father, but are of the world’...”—F. G. Smith, *What The Bible Teaches*.

MEDITATIONS

ANOTHER PART OF THE LORD’S PRAYER—John 17:12, 13—**I kept them in thy name**—While Jesus was with the disciples in the world He kept them in the truth. He was their Comforter. He gave them power to live holy. Why then was Judas lost? Because he *chose* to do wrong! He did not *have* to betray Christ, but because of his covetous spirit, he sold the Master for 30 pieces of silver. Acts one tells us he *fell* by transgression. There is joy in the Lord! O yes, there are battles, trials and tests, but there is victory in Jesus, and victory brings joy. We are to enjoy our salvation, not endure it.

THE WORLD IS NOT YOUR FRIEND—John 17:14-16—I have given them thy word—Obedience to the Word of God separates you from the evil of this sinful world. Living a holy, godly life does not mean you will have the favor of the unsaved. Jesus said the world hated His disciples. Why? “Because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” You do not wait until you are sanctified to be saved from the world. Loving the world is sin, and when you are saved from sin you are saved from the love of the world. We still live in the world. Jesus did not pray the Father to take them out of this world, but to keep them from the evil in the world.

ANOTHER EXPERIENCE—John 17:17, 18—Sanctify them—I realize there is more than one meaning to the word *sanctify*, but that does not do away with the truth of Holy Spirit baptism, where the Holy Spirit comes in to abide and cleanse, or remove the depraved nature, which is called “native depravity” by some. The disciples were saved. They were not of the world, and yet Jesus prayed for them to be sanctified. This experience is for those who are members of the Church, not for sinners—see Ephesians 5:25-27; I Thessalonians 4:3. Jesus saved them out of the sinful world, then sent them back into the world—the world of people—to preach the gospel. Jesus told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with the Holy Spirit’s power.

MUCH HATRED IN THE WORLD—John 15:18, 19—If the world hate you—The *world* hated Jesus, the very Son of God, the One who went about doing good; no evil, only good. They hated Him so much they crucified Him. This being true it should not be surprising that His disciples were also hated and numbers of them were put to death. We understand that only one of the twelve died a natural death. The world loves its own, but because you have left the sinful world and are living a holy life, which is a rebuke to them in their sinful ways, they hate you.

WE ARE TO REPRESENT CHRIST—John 15:20—The servant is not greater than his lord—Jesus had told the disciples the

servant was not greater than their lord, and now He reminds them of that fact again, saying, in effect, "If they have persecuted Me, they will do the same to you. Expect it, for it will come."

THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW—I John 4:4—Ye are of God—In the first verse of this chapter, John says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." There are many religious groups in the world; there are many who have little or no standard at all. Those who are of God are separated from the world. They need not only to know they are of God, but they need to know who is not of God, for the two cannot have true fellowship. **Verse 5—They are of the world**—Paul, in II Timothy 3:1-5, speaks of those who are lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, etc. Then he says of these people, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." As John says, "They are of the world." God's people are not of the world, and they are not to fellowship those who are of the world, even though they have "a form of godliness."

WHERE DO YOU STAND?—I John 4:6—We are of God—What a wonderful thing to know! and you can know. Salvation is a know-s experience. Notice what else John said, "He that knoweth God heareth us." The Spirit of God using a God-called minister will preach people the truth, and those who have the same precious Spirit will "hear" what the man of God is preaching; for John goes on to say, "He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

CONCLUSION

"When we die to the world, we 'put on Christ.' Then we can say with the apostle Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me' (Galatians 2:20). Our whole desire is to manifest Christ to the world. ... Our aim in life is to always have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man. But even in this we do not allow the voice of conscience alone to dictate in matters of religious faith, but we render loving and willing obedience to all the commandments of our Lord and require our conscience to come into line with what the Word plainly says. Thus our lives are free and happy, and are made a blessing to all around us."—F. G. Smith, *What The Bible Teaches*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why must God's people be separate from the world?
2. Why cannot a Christian love the world?
3. What is the "world" of which we speak?
4. Why does the Christian suffer persecution?
5. How can a Christian overcome the world?
6. How can we know we are of God?

Name _____

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The Teachings of Jesus According to St. John

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

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