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The Steps of the Righteous

Adult and Young People's Quarterly

INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning of time, there has been a life and death struggle between the forces of righteousness and evil. God's one requirement through the ages has been the same and will never change—that we be obedient to His revealed will.

There was not so much required of Adam and Eve in the way of moral law, but God demanded absolute obedience to the law He gave them. The objective of Satan has always been to get mankind to disobey the revealed moral law, for it is man's disobedience to God that gives Satan pleasure.

Through Christ has been revealed the fulness of the gospel, or the entirety of the moral law of God. Now as at the beginning of the gospel age, the just must walk in the law of God if he is to have God's favor.

We are seeking in these lessons to give to the student some of the details of life God intends for the righteous. We would encourage you to study not only with the aim of gaining knowledge, but also with the purpose of practicing the teachings herein set forth. Formal religion has laid aside many of the requirements of the gospel to the damnation of the souls of men. Religious leaders are satisfied with a mere form of godliness, not entering the kingdom of God themselves and hindering those who would enter.

We commend these lessons to you with a sincere desire that they will enrich your life and help you to spread abroad the true understanding of the gospel that others may be saved.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR JULY 2

WATER BAPTISM

Scriptures: Matthew 3:5-9, 13-17; 28:19; Mark 16:16.

Matthew 3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest

thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Memory Verse: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

—Matthew 28:19.

Aim: To obtain the Bible understanding of the ordinance of baptism.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Matthew 3
Tuesday Matthew 28
Wednesday Mark 16

Thursday John 3:1-10
Friday I Corinthians 1:12-31
Saturday I Peter 3:15-22

INTRODUCTION

Man keeps peace and favor with God as he walks in the light of the commands God gives by His written Word or by direct revelation. Among the things God requires of every Christian is baptism. We are unable to give you every detail of the reason why God requires this of His newly born children; nevertheless, we all must say, "Amen," to this command if for no other reason than that the Lord gave it. His wisdom will never allow Him to do anything wrong or detrimental to the welfare of His children.

There is no power in the water to wash away even the smallest sin (Only the blood of Jesus can do that.), but baptism is intended as a testimony to the world that the candidate has forsaken sin and accepted Christ.

“Baptize” in its original Greek meaning is to immerse or bathe (in). Bible examples indicate that immersion was the method used by the early church, and Bible authorities refer to baptism as a burial.

MEDITATIONS

JOHN INAUGURATED THE RITE OF BAPTISM—Matthew 3:5—Then went out ... Jerusalem—Water baptism was not required of the Jews under the law. Perhaps circumcision served in its place. However, a Gentile who decided to accept the Jews’ religion had to submit to baptism; he also had to be circumcised. Therefore, it would have taken strong, Spirit-filled preaching to have brought these Jews to the place where they would submit to water baptism. **Verse 6—Confessing their sins**—Baptism without an attendant break from sin would be valueless, for baptism is an outward symbol of an inward work. John had the fire of heaven, and his preaching proved successful, for large numbers of Jews responded, became convicted of their sins and were constrained to confess and forsake them.

BAPTISM WITHHELD—Matthew 3:7—Generation of vipers—This was very strong language, and it was directed toward religious professors who were presenting themselves for baptism simply because it seemed popular to do so at the time, and not because they had a sincere desire to please God. **Verse 8—Fruits meet for repentance**—Here is strong evidence that God requires true repentance and its accompanying works to precede water baptism. John refused to baptize unless the applicant had forsaken sin.

AFFILIATION NOT SALVATION—Matthew 3:9—Abraham to our father—These Pharisees and Sadducees were resting their hope of spiritual security on the fact that they were descendants of Abraham, which was of no avail to them in this circumstance. Repentance was their great need. Reader, are you counting on church membership to get you to heaven without having been born again? Jesus told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE—Matthew 3:13—To be baptized of him—Jesus was of the house of David and a Jew, yet in the presence of a great crowd, He submitted to baptism. **Verse 14—John forbade**—John had the unusual qualification of being filled with the Holy Ghost from before his birth; even so he knew himself to be greatly inferior to Christ and was reluctant to immerse Him. **Need to be baptized of thee**—We have no record that John was ever baptized. **Verse 15—Fulfill all righteousness**—Jesus was not baptized as a symbol of His salvation, for He had done no sin from which to be redeemed. He was baptized to set an example for all who would follow Him.

MODE OF BAPTISM—Matthew 3:16—Went up ... out of the water—Jesus in His example was immersed. He and John would not have walked down into the Jordan River merely for the purpose of John’s sprinkling water on Jesus’ head or pouring a cupful of water on Him. They went down into the water so that Jesus could be “buried” under the water. He then “went up straightway out of the water.” Every Christian should desire to walk in the steps of Jesus. **Verse 17—Well pleased**—Here is a strong declaration of God’s approval being upon the practice of baptism. We know that the Father is also well-pleased today when any newborn son of His submits to baptism.

BAPTISM IN THE LAST COMMISSION—Matthew 28:19—Name of the Father ... Son ... Holy Ghost—Even though there are three Personalities in the Godhead, there is only one God. There is never any difference between the three; if one acts, it is the same as if the other two had done so. One immersion then (not three) is all that is needed to satisfy God. This was the last commission of our Lord—“Go ye, preach the gospel, baptize,” and is the will of God for all men of all ages.

FAITH, A NECESSITY—Mark 16:16—Believeth and is baptized—The act of believing must precede the rite of baptism. This eliminates infant baptism, for it is impossible for infants to believe. They have no committed sins from which to be forgiven, no knowledge of right and wrong, and if they die they go to heaven.

CONCLUSION

Even though it does not have power to wash away sin, baptism is not optional; it is essential because God requires it.

One should be baptized as soon as possible after conversion, and if no opportunity be offered him, he should request the administration of this sacred rite. Acts 16:33 tells how Paul took the Philippian jailer out the same night he was saved and baptized him. (Note that the jailer believed before being baptized.) I Peter 3:21 declares baptism to be “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” In other words, baptism follows the reception of a good conscience by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the purpose of water baptism?
2. Does it have any power to cleanse from sin?
3. What method of baptism was used by the early church?
4. Why did John the Baptist refuse to baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees, as related in Matthew 3?
5. Why was Jesus, who had never known sin, baptized?
6. Does it make any difference by what method we are baptized?
7. Have you been baptized?

LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR JULY 9

THE BAPTISM OF THE CONVERTED EUNUCH

Scriptures: Acts 8:26-31, 35-39.

Acts 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired

Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Memory Verse: And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.—Acts 8:38.

Aim: To set forth a Bible example of water baptism.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Acts 8:26-40

Tuesday Acts 10:30-48

Wednesday Acts 16:25-40

Thursday Acts 19:1-10

Friday Acts 19:11-20

Saturday I Peter 3:15-22

INTRODUCTION

All truths are not learned from the Word of God by clear and plainly stated facts; however, through an earnest, honest study of the Bible, under the inspiration of the true Spirit, one can gain much light.

There is no scripture which instructs us to go down into a river or pool and there have our bodies “buried” for a moment beneath the water in order to fulfill the command of baptism, but by examining the methods of the early church—who had been taught by Jesus Himself—we learn that immersion is the proper mode.

Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary states: “Immersion ... depicts more clearly the symbolic aspect of baptism since its three steps of IMMERSION—going into the water, SUBMERSION—going under the

water, and EMersion—coming out of the water, more closely parallel the concept of entering into the death of Christ, experiencing the forgiveness of sins, and rising to walk in the likeness of Christ's resurrected life (Romans 6:4).”

MEDITATIONS

DIVINELY LED—Acts 8:26—Angel ... spake—Philip was one of the seven men appointed to look after the material affairs of the early church (Acts 6). Being filled with the Spirit, he was also used mightily in the ministry. Following his successful revival among the Samaritans, Philip, through an angel of the Lord, was sent on a journey toward the south. Proverbs 3:5, 6 encourages us to believe that God will direct our paths too if we will sincerely acknowledge Him in all our ways.

TO A SEEKING SOUL—Acts 8:27, 28—Eunuch ... who ... had come ... to worship ... was returning—The evangelist was prompt in obeying, which is always necessary when God speaks, for He has been working at the other end. To delay will mar His plan. This servant of Queen Candace of Ethiopia had a thirst for God, and the Scriptures were attractive to his soul. The high position he held did not hinder him in his search for truth. We must be of the same mind if we would be entrusted with the rich treasures of the hidden wisdom of God. **Read Esaias—**During his visit at Jerusalem perhaps the eunuch had heard Isaiah and his writings discussed. He was trying to get a better understanding, so he read as he journeyed homeward. It is only reasonable to suppose he was also calling upon God for assistance.

GOD'S PLAN WORKING—Acts 8:29—Go near—Foreseeing the eunuch's hunger for truth, God had prepared Philip to minister to him at the appointed time. Unannounced he joined himself to the chariot. Why did not God teach the eunuch directly what he desired to know? He could have, but as a rule, it is God's will to reveal the plan of salvation through the “foolishness of preaching” (I Corinthians 1:21). **Verse 30—Heard him read, ... and said, ... Understandest thou?—**Philip was well-acquainted with the reading that fell upon his ears, and he knew its meaning, which was hidden and needed enlargement. **Verse 31—Some man should guide me—**To the eunuch the passage was merely a group of words which neither fed his soul nor enlightened his mind. How blessed he was to have Philip, a man of God, to guide him! One great hindrance in getting the truth to people today is that their minds have been darkened by the errors of false religion.

JESUS, HUB OF ALL CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY—Acts 8:35—Preached unto him Jesus—Philip made the proper application of the prophecies concerning Christ from the book of Isaiah, the passage

we know as Chapter 53. The center of all preaching and Christian endeavor today should be the Man Jesus, but since it is not, we see a grave departure from holy and righteous living.

THE EUNUCH SEEKS TO BE BAPTIZED—Acts 8:36—What doth hinder me to be baptized?—The message of Philip had accomplished the purpose God intended. From the Gospel of the Old Testament, as Isaiah is called, enough truth had been revealed to convict and save this treasurer of Queen Candace.

BELIEVING COMES FIRST—Acts 8:37—If thou believest—Philip would baptize the eunuch under one condition only—that he actually believe first that Jesus was the Son of God. Head knowledge is quite different from heart belief. One who believes in his head only will go on living a life of sin; he who believes in the heart as well as the head, will allow his life to be changed by Christ's doctrine. This man believed in his heart and confessed with his mouth, which Paul tells us (Romans 10:9, 10) is salvation.

FULFILLING THE COMMAND OF BAPTISM—Acts 8:38, 39—Went down both into the water—Here again we catch a glimpse of the method used by the early saints in baptism. The evangelist Philip and the converted eunuch “went down both into the water” for the purpose of having plenty of room for the “burial.” **On his way rejoicing—**What joy must have filled the heart of this babe in Christ as he emerged from the water, having fulfilled Christ's command!

CONCLUSION

He who has embraced the gospel of the Lord Jesus is “dead” to the world, and dead things should be buried. So as a symbol of the spiritual burial of one who has died to sin, God has instituted the ordinance of baptism. Since the newborn child of God is dead to the world, and he is also to walk in newness of life unto Christ, it is necessary then that he be raised from the watery “grave” to serve the Lord.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. From what source did the eunuch learn the truth about salvation and baptism?
2. Why was it so necessary that Philip obey promptly the leadings of the Spirit?
3. Compare this with our Christian experience today.
4. Why did not God instruct the eunuch directly rather than using Philip?
5. By what method was the eunuch baptized?
6. Of what is baptism—the burial in and resurrection from the water—symbolic?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR JULY 16

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Scriptures: Matthew 26:17-20, 26-30.

Matthew 26:17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took

bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Memory Verse: And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.—Matthew 26:26.

Aim: To show the purpose and place of the Lord's Supper in the life of a Christian.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Exodus 12:1-10

Tuesday Exodus 12:20-51

Wednesday II Chronicles 35

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Matthew 26:1-30

Mark 14:1-26

I Corinthians 11:23-34

INTRODUCTION

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage is of great historical significance, the popularity of its often-told story being greater than of other important events in history. The Passover, instituted just prior to this miraculous deliverance, commemorated the passing over by the death angel of the firstborn of the Hebrews, who had put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts, according to Moses' instruction. Once each year the Jews observed the Feast of the Passover (also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the two forming a double festival), and it was for this event that Jesus and His disciples were assembled in the story of today's lesson.

As a Jewish family observed the Passover, it was customary for them to recount this marvelous liberation, the story usually being related by the youngest son, or if there were no son, by the youngest daughter. Today, as followers of Christ, we recount as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, the great sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who shed His life's blood for our redemption from sin.

MEDITATIONS

THE PASSOVER SUPPER—Matthew 26:17—Where wilt thou ... eat the passover?—Jesus was very faithful in observing all the law; it was in force until the day of His death. **Verse 18—The Master saith**—Could He not rightfully refer to Himself as “Master”? Indeed so, for He had all power in heaven and in earth! **At thy house**—The need of a room for a feast was quickly taken care of, for it was a practice for the Jews to give to anyone who asked for accommodations for such an occasion. **Verse 19—Made ready**—The paschal lamb was to be without blemish and large enough to meet the need of the family killing it. Two families, if they were small enough in number, might eat one lamb together. Jesus and His disciples constituted a family unit, and for this feast they purchased or were given a lamb. Unleavened bread (such as was prepared for the Israelites’ flight from Egypt) and bitter herbs (perhaps to call to mind the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage) were to be served with the roasted lamb; whatever remained of the meat after the meal was to be burned. The skin, we are told, was to be left for the owner of the house.

THE LORD’S SUPPER—Matthew 26:20—He sat down—This would be the last Passover God would recognize, for, according to the divine plan, Christ would at this time institute the corresponding ordinance which we now know as the Lord’s Supper, or communion. The Jews of course still observe the Feast of the Passover, but since they reject Christ, it is of no spiritual value.

THE SYMBOL OF THE BREAD—Matthew 26:26—This is my body—What a fitting symbol! Bread is regarded as the staff of physical life; Christ is the Bread of life spiritually. John 1 pictures Him as the Word, and Matthew 4:4 tells us that man does not live by bread alone but by every word of God. The unleavened bread of communion is intended to remind us of the broken body of our Lord, who endured the cross that He might bring us salvation.

THE SYMBOL OF THE FRUIT OF THE VINE—Matthew 26:28—This is my blood—The New Testament is the will that Jesus left for His followers, and of necessity no testament or will is of any force until the testator dies. Literally, the New Testament was sealed with the blood of our Savior. When we partake of the Lord’s cup in communion (We use unfermented fruit juice.), we are reminded of the blood that was shed for us. What greater gift was ever given to mankind? To die for one’s friends is heroic; to die for one’s enemies is divine!

THE PLAN COMPLETED—Matthew 26:29—I will not drink—After the severe test of Calvary and His resurrection that followed, being beyond the reach of mortal hatred and power, His work in the great plan of redemption completed, Christ could drink of the cup

anew with His disciples in His Father's kingdom. **Verse 30—Sung an hymn**—The Passover Supper having been interrupted for a brief period while the Master set forth the way in which His disciples were always to remember His passion, a parting hymn was rendered according to the custom of the Passover. What we know as Psalms 113-118 were the passages sung. Read them that you may catch a glimpse of the sentiment that prevailed as the disciples went out.

CONCLUSION

As is the case with nearly every true teaching of the Scriptures, false doctrines and practices surround the subject of the Lord's Supper. Among them is transubstantiation, a Catholic theory which declares that the communion "elements at their consecration [that is, when blessed by the priest] in the mass [are changed] from the substance of bread and wine to the [actual] substance of the body and blood of Christ, with only the ... taste, color, shape and smell of the bread and wine remaining." Actually the bread and wine are symbolic only, and the "eating of the flesh" and "drinking of the blood" of Jesus applies to the Christian's daily walk in the commandments of God. Then there is the teaching that the clergyman officiating must drink all the wine; whereas Jesus had said to His disciples, "Drink ye all of it." Every Christian at the appointed time should in great reverence drink of the Lord's cup. Some teach that communion is to be kept every Lord's Day. Although I Corinthians 11:25 lets us know it should be often, in observing it as often as every week there is danger it will lose its sacred significance and become a mere form.

Communion is not offered for the purpose of satisfying physical hunger. (See Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 11:34.) This solemn ordinance must not be entered into lightly and should never be partaken of by those who are not born again, for we are carefully warned in I Corinthians 11:27-29 that whosoever eats or drinks of the Lord's cup unworthily shall heap upon himself damnation. Paul also states in the same chapter, Verse 30, that because of a laxity in properly observing this sacred rite, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," or have completely lost out with the Lord.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. State the similarity of the Passover of the Jews and the Lord's Supper of the New Testament and the purpose of each.
2. Of what is the communion bread symbolic? The wine?
3. Who alone may lawfully partake of the Lord's Supper?
4. What is the danger in partaking of communion "unworthily," that is, without a clear Christian experience?
5. How often should the Supper be observed?
6. Is the Supper intended to satisfy hunger?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR JULY 23

THE ORDINANCE OF FEET WASHING

Scriptures: John 13:3-15, 17.

John 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not

my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Memory Verse: For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.—John 13:15.

Aim: To establish in our minds the true understanding of the doctrine of feet washing.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Genesis 18:1-10	Thursday	John 13:1-20
Tuesday	Genesis 19:1-10	Friday	John 13:21-38
Wednesday	Genesis 24:30-49	Saturday	I Timothy 5:1-16

INTRODUCTION

It is a simple matter for those who so desire, to rearrange the Scriptures in any way that suit their beliefs or is convenient to their doctrines. Thus we have many different conceptions of the Bible. When it comes to the subject of today's lesson, it is often brushed aside as being only an eastern custom. The thought is also advanced that feet washing is not a doctrine but rather meant to be only a symbol of humility: if a brother were ill, another would care for him, even to bathe his feet if necessary. But it is much more than that! What of the widows in Paul's ministry (I Timothy 5:10) who were not to receive of the church's charity unless they had, among other things, "washed the saints' feet"? This indicates something deeper than an act of mercy, a custom, or a symbol.

MEDITATIONS

DIVINE PERSUASION—John 13:3—Jesus knowing—Jesus knew well His calling, and He carried it out fully. His setting forth the doctrine of feet washing was at the instruction of His heavenly Father, and we will do well to obey it.

LEADING THE WAY—John 13:4—Girded himself—The supper Jesus and His disciples were eating here was the Feast of the Passover. The towel must have been of sufficient length to reach nearly to the floor after Jesus had tied it around Himself, His outer garments having been laid aside. **Verse 5—Began to wash—**Considering the dignity and personality of Jesus, we can see readily what a notable act of true (not symbolic) humility this was. Jesus did not hesitate to do whatever was necessary to accomplish the Father's will. May we also be of the same mind!

PETER'S REMONSTRANCE—John 13:6—Dost thou wash?—It was hard for Peter to imagine what Jesus was doing here, for he had never seen Him so markedly humble. His impulsiveness and feelings of unworthiness forced him to remonstrate. We see no other disciple taking this attitude.

JESUS' ANSWER—John 13:7—What I do—Here again it is made evident that Jesus was setting forth a divine ordinance and not following an eastern custom, for He would not have needed to say that the disciples did not understand what He was doing; they would have been well-informed if the washing were to remove dust from their feet. He assured them they would know the reason for His act.

A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP—John 13:8—Hast no part—Peter, becoming very positive in his assertion that Jesus would never wash his feet, was told plainly by the Master that unless he submitted to the will of God he could have no part with Him.

PETER'S SUBMISSION—John 13:9—My hands and my head—When the Master made the situation plain to Peter, he very quickly submitted, being not only ready to have his feet washed but also his hands and face.

JESUS TEACHES—John 13:10—He that is washed—In preparation for the Feast of the Passover, everyone had cleansed himself and was, as Jesus said, "washed" already, and doubtless had done the extra cleansing of washing the dust from his feet as he first entered the room. Thus the disciples were "clean every whit." **Clean, but not all—**Here a spiritual application is made; though all were clean physically, this was not so spiritually. Jesus was of course referring to Judas who would betray Him. It would seem that such humbleness and love demonstrated by Jesus would have so melted Judas' covetous heart that he would have repented on the spot.

AN IMPORTANT COMMAND—John 13:14—Ye ought—If it was right and expedient for Jesus to wash His disciples' feet, it certainly followed that they were to wash one another's feet. "Ought" doesn't mean to do or not to do as one may desire; it means "duty bound." Therefore, we are obligated to carry out this command of our Lord.

A PROPER EXAMPLE—John 13:15—Given you an example—*Example* is defined as "conduct inducing imitation." It is the will of God that this ordinance be practiced by all the disciples of Jesus Christ, for He, on this Passover evening, had set a precedent, according to His own words.

A SOURCE OF HAPPINESS—John 13:17—Happy are ye—The entire value of this observance is on the spiritual side. Happiness is the direct result of obedience to the will of God found in His Word.

CONCLUSION

Feet washing is not for the purpose of cleanliness; it was not instituted to strengthen a custom of the East. Since it is so easy for the flesh to assert itself and so human to bestow honor upon those who are great, the principle of washing one another's feet is much needed in the Christian society. When anyone compares himself with the Master, he will see immediately that he himself is nothing. Feet washing encourages a spirit of humility and tends to remind us of our proper places, at our brother's feet and not above him.

This command, like the Lord's Supper, should be observed at frequent intervals, the brethren being gathered in one room waiting upon one another, the sisters in another location doing the same. It seems proper to hold such a service in connection with the Lord's Supper, since both these ordinances (the supper and the feet washing) were instituted by Jesus at the same event.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Explain the difference between the customary Jewish feet washing and the feet washing Jesus instituted for His church.
2. What is the meaning of "example" as used by Jesus in our lesson, and why did Jesus personally give us this example?
3. Why did Peter object to the Master washing his feet? What changed his attitude?
4. Is feet washing a test of fellowship? In what way?
5. What is the true purpose of this ordinance?
6. Mention one strong point Jesus advanced to prove the disciples should wash one another's feet.
7. Explain why biblical feet washing is something more than an act of mercy or a symbol of humility.

LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR JULY 30
THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

Scriptures: Matthew 3:11; John 14:15-17, 26; 20:21-23; Acts 1:8; 2:37-39.

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

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 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he

breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Memory Verse: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

—Matthew 3:11.

Aim: To stress the importance and true character of Holy Ghost baptism.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Matthew 3:1-11**
Tuesday **John 20:1-23**
Wednesday **Luke 3:1-7**

Thursday **Mark 1:1-11**
Friday **Acts 2:22-39**
Saturday **Acts 1:1-11**

INTRODUCTION

“The baptism of the Holy Ghost taught in the New Testament is a special endowment of the Spirit of God in the heart of His believing and obedient children. Different expressions are used to convey this idea—baptism of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11); the Holy Ghost given (John 7:39); receiving ‘the Spirit of truth’ (John 14:17; 16:13); ‘Comforter’ (John 14:16, 26; 15:26); receive the Holy Ghost (John 20:22;

Acts 8:17; 10:47); ‘filled with the Holy Ghost’ (Acts 2:4; 4:31); ‘gift of the Holy Ghost’ (Acts 2:38); the Spirit poured out upon men (Acts 2:17; 10:45); etc. These expressions all refer to one and the same thing. They simply represent different aspects of the one subject, just as the different expressions used for the first work of grace convey various shades of meaning, though meaning essentially the same thing. But it must be regarded as *a definite experience in the believer*, for in the apostolic church it was a reality, the Holy Ghost being received some time subsequent to regeneration. The statements of Christ to His apostles that the Holy Ghost ‘shall be in you,’ that He shall be a Comforter that will ‘abide with you forever’—these and other expressions show that it is a *personal reality*, not simply ecstatic feelings on the part of the individual.”—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches* pages 182, 183.

MEDITATIONS

THE TRUE MISSION OF JESUS—Matthew 3:11—He shall baptize you—The true purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus was to make it possible for mankind to be restored spiritually to the relationship with God that Adam and Eve first enjoyed in the Garden. John was successful in his preaching of repentance and water baptism, but Jesus had a greater work; He made it possible for man to receive the Spirit, although He Himself did not baptize anyone with the Spirit during His earthly ministry. **The Holy Ghost**—The word, “ghost,” means spirit. The Holy Ghost is known by several different titles, among which are the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Prophecy, etc. He is the third Person in the Godhead and is co-existent with the Father and Son. In the first verse of the Bible, the fourth word, God is introduced in the plural form, which includes the Spirit. In the second verse, the Spirit is introduced by Himself as the Agent who shaped the earth for habitation. The Holy Spirit has had a very important part all the way through the Scriptures in carrying out the plan of God. With the Holy Ghost comes the fire of heaven. This is a purifying agent. As natural fire cleanses all material things, so the fire of the Holy Ghost makes a perfect cleansing of all things spiritual.

THE PROMISE OF THE MASTER—John 14:15—If ye love me—If we have a real love for Christ, we will put forth every effort to be true to His teaching. Why must Jesus give commandments? There is an evil force in the world that would have us to do things that are injurious to our well-being, physically and spiritually. God’s way leads to life and peace; the ways of Satan lead to sorrow and death. **Verse 16—Give you another Comforter**—When Jesus was on earth He was the Comforter of the disciples. They could come to Him for help in any way and receive it, but His time came to leave the world. The disciples would still need comfort as much as ever, so Jesus promised to

petition the Father to send another Comforter in His place, who would not be leaving but would abide forever. It is a great consolation to us as Christians to know that One so great as He will ever be present to assist us by His gracious power in any way we have need. How foolish for anyone to lean on the weak arm of flesh or upon the undependability of material things when all can have the Spirit! The constant abiding presence of evil in the world makes the necessity of the constant abiding presence of the good Spirit of God in our lives. **Verse 17—Whom the world cannot receive**—“The world” refers to the sinners. It is impossible for sinners to receive the Spirit, because first there must be a change effected in their lives. Jesus said that the world knows not the Spirit of God. However, the disciples knew the Spirit, for He was dwelling with them (through Jesus), and at the appointed time (the day of Pentecost) He would come into their hearts. By the process of the new birth, men are inducted into the family of God and are no longer of the world. Then they are eligible for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. **Verse 26—But the Comforter**—From this verse we learn that the “Comforter” Jesus promised to send in His Father’s name was the Holy Ghost. After He came, He taught the disciples deeper truths and brought to their remembrance what Jesus had taught them. He still will comfort and teach anyone who will receive Him.

THE SUPREME NEED OF THE SOUL—John 20:21—As my Father hath sent me—On the same basis which Jesus came to the world and did His work, so must the disciples be sent into the world. **Verse 22—Receive ye**—Jesus did not at this time impart to them the Holy Ghost; He merely expressed the yearning of His heart that they submit to the Spirit and receive Him at the appointed time. **Verse 23—Whose soever sins**—With the power of the Spirit in their lives, the disciples would be preaching only the message the Spirit ordained, and it would fit the occasion in which it was given, either delivering or binding the listeners, according to the reaction to the message.

ENDUED WITH POWER—Acts 1:8—Ye shall receive power—To live a life like Christ ordained in this wicked world demands power; not power to do weird things, to act in a supernatural way, but power to say no to sin, power to be a good citizen in any community. Furthermore, he who receives the Spirit will have power to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad. The world today is dying for the want of the true witness of Jesus.

ARE ALL CANDIDATES FOR THIS BAPTISM—Acts 2:37—Brethren, what shall we do?—Here is a clean-cut example of the preaching of the gospel under the direction and anointing power of the Spirit. Just moments before Peter had been filled with the Holy Ghost, His fiery message convinced the listeners, Jews out of every nation, of their error. It is a glorious day for any man when he is convicted of his

sins by the Spirit and yields to His wooing. **Verse 38—Gift of the Holy Ghost**—Peter had the correct answer. He told these Jews to repent that their sins might be remitted. Then they would be in line for the very same gift the disciples had received so shortly before. The act of repentance does not automatically give to the believer the gift of the Spirit; sanctification, or the infilling of the Spirit, is an act of faith just as justification. **Verse 39—As many as the Lord ... shall call**—God has called all men to repentance; therefore, all men are also called to receive the Spirit. Now the “Gift of the Spirit” is not one of the several spiritual gifts with which God embellishes His church; it is the Spirit Himself who comes into the heart to abide forever.

CONCLUSION

The receiving of the baptism of the Spirit is definitely an act of faith, as is proven by these words found in Luke 11:13, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” No true parent will withhold anything from his children that is for their good and at stated times will show special affection by the bestowal of gifts. If such be the generosity of earthly parents toward their children, how much more will God give the Spirit to them who ask for Him!

The baptism of the Spirit should follow as closely as possible the experience of regeneration. The word, “baptize,” here as in the case of water baptism, is to be understood as an immersion or a hiding away from sight, a very fitting meaning. In the battle of life our common enemy is so strong it is impossible to win unless hidden away in God, having the unparalleled assistance of the Holy Spirit. Not only does the Spirit of God act as our Comforter and a Protector from our enemies, but also He empowers us to witness in our respective communities that we may help to deliver other precious souls from satanic slavery. Now, of all times, men need the power of the Spirit in their lives. The perilous times foretold by Paul (II Timothy 3:1) are here, and the peril is not to life and limb but to the soul. It is of the greatest importance that we be baptized by the Spirit of God and walk daily in all the light that shines on our pathway.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the thought expressed by the word, “baptize,” in reference to the Holy Ghost?
2. Why is Holy Ghost baptism absolutely necessary and how is it obtained?
3. Name two things Holy Ghost baptism does for a Christian.
4. What was the “promise of the Father”?
5. By what different names is the Holy Ghost known?
6. Why cannot “the world” receive the Spirit?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR AUGUST 6

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT ON PENTECOST

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-8, 12-18.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our

own tongue, wherein we were born?

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Memory Verse: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:4.

Aim: To get a clear picture of the first outpouring of the Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Luke 11:1-13
Tuesday John 14
Wednesday John 10:1-14

Thursday John 17
Friday Acts 2
Saturday Acts 8

INTRODUCTION

The coming of the Spirit on Pentecost is one of the most outstanding and spectacular accounts that we find in the Word of God. Before this time, such a thing had never happened. The nearest to it perhaps was the occasion when God put His Spirit upon the seventy elders in Numbers 11:25. Moses had the gift of prophecy, and God gave the elders the same gift. We read in Genesis 1:2 that the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In Genesis 6:3 we read that the Spirit of

God “will not always strive with man,” which proves that at that early date the Spirit of God was working with the hearts of men, endeavoring to get them to obey the high God of heaven. However, the Spirit of God was poured out in a miraculous way at Pentecost in a manner unknown before that time. The office and mission of the Spirit, though existing before, had, to a great extent, been kept secret.

MEDITATIONS

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER FULFILLED—Acts 2:1—Pentecost was fully come—Pentecost was a feast day of the Jews commanded in the law (Deuteronomy 16:10), which occurred 52 days after the Passover (the day which commemorated the children of Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage). Upon the arrival of this day, which was ten days after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, the disciples of Christ were found assembled together and were agreed upon the doctrines of the Lord. There was no division there. Acts 1:15 declares that there were 120 of them. **Verse 2—There came a sound from heaven**—Jesus had instructed them to tarry. We make a wrong application of this scripture if we instruct seekers to “tarry” now. The only reason that Jesus instructed them to tarry was because the time for the pouring out of the Spirit had not yet arrived. Now that the Spirit has been poured out and is freely working everywhere, all the converts need to do is to believe the Word of God in Luke 11:13, where we read, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” He who is truly saved from sin and asks in faith is certain to receive the Spirit of God, for God is more willing to give than man is to receive. **Verse 3—Cloven tongues like as of fire**—God, by no means, gives a demonstration of fire at all times when He appears, but does on some occasions. When He appeared to Moses to appoint him to deliver Israel, He appeared in the burning bush. On Mount Sinai when the law was given, there was a great demonstration of fire, so intense that the mountain seemed to be on fire. Fire is a cleansing agent and could signify the great power to cleanse the heart from the effects of the fall in the Garden of Eden. It is well to remark here that the disciples on this initial outpouring of the Spirit were “sitting,” not lying on the floor, as seems to be the position of some religious professors today when they receive the power, falsely so called. This was not “wild fire.” **Verse 4—They were all filled with the Holy Ghost**—Each disciple had reached the place where he was ready to receive the Spirit of God. They were all entirely submitted to the will and purpose of God. The Spirit came into their lives and took full and complete control. Directed by the Spirit of God, some began to speak in other languages that they had not learned.

Their speaking in tongues was not an evidence of Holy Ghost baptism. They received the Spirit first. Then He imparted this gift to fill a special need at this particular time. All 120 were filled with the Spirit, but only the ones spoke, to whom God “gave utterance.”

Verse 5—Devout men—These were men who loved the Lord, who to the best of their ability kept the law. **Verse 6—The multitude came together**—Something new had happened, and their curiosity brought the people together. God had given the gift of languages to the disciples, and they were able to speak all the languages of those present. **Verse 7—Were all amazed**—Nothing like this had been seen or heard of before. They who spoke were all Galilaeans (that is, from Galilee); yet every man was able to hear the gospel in the language that he knew. All speaking in tongues that is ordained by God has an interpretation and is in some language used on the earth.

A STRANGE THING HAPPENED—Acts 2:12—What meaneth this?—Being astonished at this sudden happening, the onlookers were made to wonder what the meaning of such an event could be and what could be expected to happen next.

DOUBTERS AND SCOFFERS—Acts 2:13—Others mocking said—The devil is always present to discredit the work of God if he can get some person to believe his lies. God never does anything wrong, and the devil never does anything right. Our senses should be highly developed in detecting the voice and hand of God and the voice and hand of the devil.

UNITY BRINGS POWER—Acts 2:14—Peter standing up with the eleven—Here is a real picture of unity and enthusiasm. Peter was the speaker, but all eleven of these newly baptized men were solidly behind him. “One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight.” How we do need unity today as we face the awful forces of sin and Satan! Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed.

AN EFFORT TO DISCREDIT THE WORK OF GOD—Acts 2:15—These are not drunken—There is an immense difference between a man who is filled with the Spirit of God and one who is filled with wine. (Paul commanded us not to be filled with wine, but to be filled with the Spirit.) It seems that unless someone was actually looking for something to discredit the work of God, such a gross misrepresentation could not have been made.

PETER SPEAKS WITH CONVICTION—Acts 2:16—This is that—Peter was acquainted with the prophecy of Joel and knew its proper interpretation. To know the true meaning of the Word of God is the only way to get a sure foundation upon which to build our Christian experience. **Verse 17—I will pour out of my Spirit upon**

all flesh—To “pour out” leaves one with the understanding that the Spirit of God is to be given in abundance. In this age we are to have enough power to accomplish everything that is required of us in the Word of God and more. God is going to give unto His people, not only His Spirit, but also the gifts of the Spirit to embellish the church. This blessing is for all who will accept it. (Of course, there are conditions to be met before God will bestow His priceless gifts upon anyone.) Men and women, boys and girls, old and young, Jews and Gentiles are eligible under the gospel plan. Here is adequate proof that it was God’s will that women preach. No longer could it be said that there was no open vision. God now was going to reveal Himself and His truth to the world by prophecy, by visions and by dreams. He is still doing these things. The reason that we do not have more of it is because of unbelief and love for ease and the material things of this time world.

CONCLUSION

Here we have a clear picture of the baptism of the Spirit of God. However, this account in its entire setting cannot be bound upon believers as a pattern. Some have done this and resorted to the teaching that unless a believer speaks in tongues he has not received the Spirit. Peter, in giving an account of the baptism of the Spirit in the household of Cornelius (Gentiles), declared that at that time, which was sometime later, the Spirit of God fell upon the household of Cornelius as it did upon them (the Jews) at the first. It is evident this is only the second time such a marvelous demonstration had occurred, once for the convincing of the Jews of the reality of the new system and once to convince the Jews and Gentiles that the new plan was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Not always does God impart a gift at His coming. Of course, the greatest of all gifts is the Spirit Himself; but some make the mistake of thinking that when God said He would give us the gift of the Spirit, He meant He would give us the gift of tongues. The purpose of the coming of the Spirit of God into the human heart is to enable that soul to use every faculty of the body as God ordained when He created man.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What was unusual about the happening on the day of Pentecost?
2. Was the Spirit of God in the world previous to the coming of the Lord Jesus?
3. What was the promise of the Father?
4. Why were the disciples required to tarry in Jerusalem?
5. Can we predict in detail beforehand how a person will act when he receives the Spirit of God?
6. What did the cloven tongues signify?
7. Why did God give the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR AUGUST 13

THE BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS BY THE SPIRIT

Scriptures: Acts 10:1-6, 42-48.

Acts 10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of

quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Memory Verse: Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

—Acts 10:34, 35.

Aim: To further impress the student with the true Bible teaching of Holy Ghost baptism.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Acts 10:1-10

Tuesday Acts 10:11-20

Wednesday Acts 10:21-32

Thursday Acts 10:33-48

Friday Acts 11:1-11

Saturday Acts 11:12-30

INTRODUCTION

God had sought to keep His people under the law age separate from all other people and had commanded them not to associate with them, making it a very serious offense if they should intermarry, as Solomon did. Many years of this kind of instruction raised a barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles, the Jews considering themselves above the Gentiles. However, it was the plan of God in the gospel age to bring all people under the power, influence, and blessing of the gospel. Peter was the man whom God had chosen to carry the first

message to the Gentiles; but Peter, being a Jew, considered it improper to go unto the Gentiles, so it was necessary for God to give some unusual manifestation to convince Peter of His intentions. Therefore, Peter was given the vision on the housetop of the animals let down in a sheet from heaven, and he, being hungry, was commanded to slay and eat. From this he learned that all men were precious in the sight of God and none should be called common. The test of fellowship was their devotion to the law and will of God. So it is today that in all nations any man who will do the will of God is acceptable with Him.

MEDITATIONS

A MAN OF RESPONSIBILITY—Acts 10:1—A centurion—“Centurion” denotes that Cornelius had under his jurisdiction one hundred soldiers, so he had to be a man of some ability. But if there is anyone who needs the gospel, it is the man or woman who has responsibility. God has instructed us to pray for the rulers of our land, promising us if we do that, we shall live in peace; therefore, we see that our peace and prosperity to a great extent is controlled by those we have elected to fill public office.

A DEVOUT MAN—Acts 10:2—One that feared God ... gave much—The description of Cornelius makes it plain to any honest student that Cornelius was a saved man. His influence had been a power in changing the lives of all his house. Also, generosity toward those who were in need was a very good indication that Christ was in the heart. **Verse 3—Saw in a vision—**It is evident that Cornelius, having known the joy of sins forgiven, sought a deep walk with God, and in his efforts to obtain it, he actually prayed down an angel from heaven. **Verse 4—Prayers and thine alms are come up—**In John 9:31 we read that God doesn't hear sinners, but if any man be a worshiper of God and do His will, God will hear him. This was the state of Cornelius, for God heard him and answered his prayer. Cornelius was fearful here, but this is not uncommon. Heavenly beings vested with mighty power and about whom we know so little cause great concern to weak humanity.

MEN, NOT ANGELS, ARE THE GOSPEL MESSENGERS—Acts 10:5—Send men to Joppa—Peter had been through the experience of Pentecost and knew what it took to complete the experience of man with God. He would be well able to give the instruction that Cornelius needed. Peter was an ignorant and unlearned man in worldly affairs; nevertheless, he had what it took to meet the spiritual requirements of God. **Verse 6—He lodgeth with one Simon—**Simon was a tanner. In this kind of work the odor is offensive, so he was required to locate his business away from the public, along the seashore. It seems that this would have been a stumblingblock to the

men who called for Peter. The world would say, "Why should such powers be entrusted to a man who associated with one who was so little esteemed?" But God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

A SOLEMN THOUGHT—Acts 10:42—Judge of quick and dead—There is great need that we impress deeply upon the hearts of men that the life we have lived in this world must be faced again. We read in Matthew 12:36, 37 that we shall give account at the judgment of every idle word that we have spoken, for by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned. The "quick" are they who are born again of the Spirit; they shall give account of their deeds, which will be easy. The "dead" are those who are lost in sin; they must give an account of their deeds, which will be difficult.

A GRACIOUS PROMISE—Acts 10:43—Receive remission of sins—We cannot help the past, but we can make sure of the future. In the name of Jesus, all sins are wiped out if we believe on Him. Christ was the One who the prophets spoke as the hope of mankind.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT—Acts 10:44—The Holy Ghost fell—The household of Cornelius were gathered together and were deeply sincere to obey whatever they should hear from the mouth of God's servant Peter. They were promising prospects for the truth of the Word of God. Their eagerness to believe made it easy for the Spirit to come. Some seem to think it necessary to tarry a long time and to struggle a great deal in order to receive the Spirit of God, but this is not true. God is more willing to give us His Spirit than we are to receive Him, but He will not come into our lives until we have completely surrendered the whole of our being unto Him. He must have absolute control of our lives if He is to abide with us.

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT IS FOR ALL BELIEVERS—Acts 10:45—Were astonished—The Jews were of the opinion that the blessings of the gospel were for the Jews only. It is evident that they did not understand the promise of God to Abraham when He said that in Abraham all the nations of the earth should be blessed. With God there is no respect of persons. Any man anywhere who will do the will of God shall have the blessings of God.

A SUPERNATURAL DEMONSTRATION—Acts 10:46—Heard them speak with tongues—Tongues is one of the gifts of the Spirit but is not the gift of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself. The true gift of tongues is the power granted by the Spirit of God to an individual to speak a language that he has never learned in the natural way. Because a person can speak in tongues is no indication that he has the Spirit of God, for it is possible for the devil to give a false gift of tongues. The very worst of sinners may

have power from Satan to speak in a language that he has never learned. In this last day it is necessary that we be very careful of what we believe and with whom we associate, for the devil is transformed as an angel of light and is deceiving many.

WATER BAPTISM ESSENTIAL ALSO—Acts 10:47—Forbid water—Water baptism has no power within itself to cleanse the soul from sin. It is symbolical of a work that has already been wrought in the heart; and since God has commanded it, the believers will gladly obey. In this instance, water baptism followed Holy Ghost baptism, which proves beyond doubt that such procedure is acceptable with God. The apostle Paul was also baptized with the Holy Ghost previous to water baptism. **Verse 48—Tarry certain days**—They were desirous of knowing more about the new experience that they had just received, so they besought Peter that he would stay awhile with them. Some resort to the practice of baptizing in the name of Jesus only because of the statement of Peter here, but such is contrary to the last commission of the Lord Jesus when He declared that His followers should baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”

CONCLUSION

This was an unusual occasion, as was the first baptism of the Spirit on Pentecost. The first occasion inaugurated the incoming of the gospel dispensation, and the baptism of the house of Cornelius marked the advent of the Gentile people into the grace of God. Up to the time of the baptism of Cornelius, there had been no demonstrations as had happened at Pentecost, for Peter said in Acts 11, when telling of the baptism of Cornelius, that God poured out the Spirit upon Cornelius as He did upon them at the beginning (Acts 11:15). It is the purpose of God to give every believer the gift of the Spirit, but it is not His purpose to make all people act alike when they receive the Spirit. Our emotional make-up has much to do with the way we act when we are baptized with the Spirit. When the Spirit comes into our hearts, He bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Give the reasons why we know that Cornelius was a saved man before he received the baptism of the Spirit.
2. Why was it necessary for Cornelius to send for Peter to find out what he wanted to know?
3. What was it that yet remained for Cornelius and his house to do?
4. What is the difference between the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost?
5. Are tongues an evidence of Holy Ghost baptism?
6. Why should all believers be baptized with the Holy Ghost?

LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR AUGUST 20
EVIDENCE OF HOLY GHOST BAPTISM

Scriptures: Acts 1:8; 6:3-10; 7:54-60.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of

the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

Acts 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Memory Verse: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—Acts 1:8.

Aim: To help the student to know if he has received the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, into his life.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Acts 1
Tuesday Acts 6
Wednesday Acts 7:1-14

Thursday Acts 7:15-43
Friday Acts 7:44-60
Saturday Acts 8:1-17

INTRODUCTION

It is not only necessary that we should set before the people the pure truth of the Word of God, but it is also necessary that we should give

instruction in regard to some of the wiles of the devil, since it is his business to deceive and lead astray from the Word of God. Being so cunning and so crafty, he has been successful in making many counterfeits of God's truth, and he endeavors to give it to the people as the truth of the Word of God. Since there is so much said about the evidence of Holy Ghost baptism today, it seems that it would be well to give Bible instruction on this very important point.

MEDITATIONS

THE PROMISE OF POWER—Acts 1:8—But ye shall receive power—Man is very small within himself. Left alone he would not be able to stand, for the devil would sweep him off his feet. However, the believer is promised in this scripture, an abundance of power after the Holy Spirit is come into his life. The main power that a Christian receives when the Spirit comes in is to live above sin, saying no to the devil and his temptations.

SPIRIT-FILLED MEN NEEDED—Acts 6:3—Full of the Holy Ghost—At that time when it came to choosing men to minister to the material needs in the church, it was required that those chosen be filled with the Spirit. However, it is possible for men to have the Holy Spirit and still not have sufficient wisdom. Wisdom comes in answer to prayer and a close walk with God. We should seek a closer walk with God every day.

PRAYER INDISPENSABLE—Acts 6:4—We will give ourselves—It was the apostles who were speaking, and they knew well the need of keeping in close contact with God. We have a strong and merciless enemy to meet, and it is only by the power of God that we can meet and defeat him; therefore, it is necessary that we pray continually in conjunction with the study of the Word.

SPIRIT-FILLED MEN—Acts 6:5—A man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost—How did the people know these men were filled with the Spirit? Because of the works that followed them. Anyone who is filled with the Spirit is going to demonstrate the "fruit of the Spirit," which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23). It is evident that these men demonstrated these attributes in their everyday lives. Stephen demonstrated the power of the Spirit in his life in performing many miracles. Not everyone who is filled with the Spirit will perform miracles, but everyone who is filled with the Spirit will bear the fruit of the Spirit. **Verse 6—Laid hands on them**—These were holy men, and they laid hands on the seven. God heard their prayers and poured out His blessing. He will do the same thing now if we will live the same kind of lives that the apostles and early Christians did.

GOD'S KINGDOM ADVANCES—Acts 6:7—The disciples multiplied—The clear gospel message anointed by the Holy Ghost brought even the leaders of the people to the cross. We cannot win people, especially the leaders, to the divine Church of the living God by compromising the gospel. We must set it forth in its purity and power so that people may see the truth and be privileged to choose for it or against it. A compromise message cannot open the eyes of the people.

STEPHEN FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT—Acts 6:8—Did great wonders—The things that Stephen did were of a nature that would be a blessing to mankind. He did not walk over benches or pick up hot irons or handle poisonous snakes. He healed the sick and ministered to the needs of a sin-sick people. A man of God will do the same today.

THE SUPREME POWER—Acts 6:10—Were not able to resist—There was power that attended his words that was more than human. It was the power that was contrary to the power that filled the lives of the accusers of Stephen, so they were made angry and sought to get revenge by physical force. If God is permitted to have His way in our lives, we are certain to come into conflict with the forces of evil. Victory is always certain if we stay with God and obey Him. This does not mean that we will not have any suffering, for suffering is a part of our inheritance. If we would reign with Him, we must also suffer with Him.

UNGODLY ARE AROUSED—Acts 7:54—Cut to the heart—Stephen did not hesitate to uncover the people's sin and guilt. Since they had no intention of repenting and turning from their evil, they sought to take vengeance on Stephen. The devil hated Stephen and stirred up his followers to do him bodily harm, thinking that by doing so he would remove this godly man from the field of battle. Their actions here reveal deep-seated hatred and carnal degeneration.

GOD IS WATCHING—Acts 7:55—Jesus standing—It seems that this extraordinary event brought Jesus to His feet, for He is usually pictured as sitting at the right hand of the Father. Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, walking in all the light that God had given to him, being fully obedient. So at this dark hour, God encouraged him by the revelation of His divine glory. **Verse 56—I see the heavens opened**—The dealings of God with Stephen were marvelous, and these sinners could not comprehend such, for their eyes could not behold what the eyes of Stephen had just seen.

HATRED TURNED LOOSE—Acts 7:57—Stopped their ears—The words and actions of Stephen were about to overwhelm them. So that they might not hear more, they put their fingers in their ears and rushed upon him.

A DISTINGUISHED ONLOOKER—Acts 7:58—Whose name was Saul—Saul was the Jewish name for Paul, so it was the apostle Paul who was holding the clothes of the murderers, and, without doubt, he was cheering the persecutors on. There can be no doubt that Saul's watching the victorious death of Stephen brought conviction to him that was instrumental in winning him later.

COMPOSURE IN THE FACE OF DEATH—Acts 7:59—Receive my spirit—The greatest victory that any man ever won was to die in such a way that he could call upon God to receive his departing spirit. There is no way to describe the darkness of the hour to the man who must leave this world and fall into the hands of the merciless demons of hell. To die in Christ Jesus is worth any price that it may cost.

DEFINITE INDICATIONS OF HOLY GHOST BAPTISM—Acts 7:60—Lay not this sin to their charge—Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, was able to the very last to exhibit the fulfillment of the teachings of the Master in his life. His sincere desire was that these men might not have to suffer for the sin that they had committed against him, for he realized that it was not really they who were doing it, but they were blinded by the devil, and it was his wicked will they were doing. How beautiful it is never really to die but only to fall asleep in Jesus!

CONCLUSION

Satan makes it his business to deceive people. He will try to convince the Spirit-filled Christian that he has not been sanctified, he will try to convince the justified he does not need to be sanctified. He has convinced many that they must speak in some "unknown tongue" as an evidence they have received the Spirit, which the Bible DOES NOT teach, for we can find no verse of scripture in the Bible that says "tongues" are an evidence of Holy Ghost baptism. In other words, Satan will confuse and deceive any soul he can, to keep them from knowing the truth. We receive and keep the Spirit by faith and obedience. The evidence of Holy Ghost baptism is the witness of the Spirit within, and the fruit that is borne.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Who is it who may receive the baptism of the Spirit?
2. What will the power that is received at the time of Holy Ghost baptism cause a believer to do?
3. Why did the church seek men who were filled with faith and the Holy Ghost to care for the widows and unfortunate?
4. Why does it take Spirit-filled men to advance the Church of God?
5. Why did the Jews stop their ears as Stephen gave his testimony?
6. Do you think the godly death of Stephen had any effect on Paul?
7. Have you received the Spirit since you believed?

LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR AUGUST 27

THE SPIRIT WORKS WITH JACOB (Part I)

Scriptures: Genesis 28:10-22.

Genesis 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that

which I have spoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Memory Verse: And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.—Genesis 28:15.

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

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Genesis 27:1-14	Thursday	Genesis 28:1-9
Tuesday	Genesis 27:15-29	Friday	Genesis 28:10-22
Wednesday	Genesis 27:30-46	Saturday	Genesis 29:1-20

INTRODUCTION

The Spirit of the living God has been a force for good in the earth from the beginning of time, endeavoring to lead men in the way that would be for their good. The only way that God can carry out His plan in the earth is through the lives of men, and He is constantly seeking those who will

do His will. There is no greater calling than to the service of God, and there is no occupation that pays so well. With our social, economical, and spiritual situation such as it is today, there is great need that we be led by the Spirit of God. Jacob's life was blessed because he yielded to the voice of the Spirit. Likewise every man today who yields to the Spirit shall be blessed.

MEDITATIONS

JACOB'S SIN CAUSES HIM TO FLEE—Genesis 28:10—Jacob went out—By stealth Jacob had taken the birthright and blessing from his brother Esau. It greatly stirred Esau's anger, and he vowed that after his father died he would kill Jacob. His mother concluded that it would be good to send Jacob away under the pretense of getting a wife. So today's lesson finds him running for his life. **Verse 11—Lay down**—His sins were finding him out. Weary and worn physically he laid down to rest.

Genesis 28:12—And he dreamed—Angels going up and down would be indicative of heavenly beings traveling between heaven and earth to carry out the will of God. Such a picture would have a very sobering effect upon Jacob, especially since he was guilty of doing wrong to his brother.

DIVINE PROMISE—Genesis 28:13—I am the Lord God—Even though Jacob was made to run from his brother because of sin, God knew that he would repent of this; therefore, He was able to tell him the things that should come to pass in the future. **Verse 14—As the dust of the earth**—His offspring was to be very great. This, no doubt, was of great significance to Jacob, for in those days the Jews regarded large families as a great blessing from God. It was through the seed of Jacob that the gospel was to come in the gospel age.

GOD'S PRESENCE PROMISED—Genesis 28:15—I will not leave thee—We have Jesus' promise for our day in the last commission when He said that He would go with us, even unto the ends of the earth. This is a great blessing, for He is all-powerful and all-wise. He is the great Physician and never knows a disease or sickness that He cannot heal. We should be a happy and prosperous people indeed. It was the very same God who promised to be with Jacob, and surely this would have been a source of great encouragement to him at this time.

A DREADFUL PLACE—Genesis 28:16—The Lord is in this place—When Jacob laid down his head that night, it never occurred to him that the presence of God might be there, for he was too much engrossed with his own personal situation. How often the very same thing fills the lives of people today, and they cannot enjoy divine fellowship because their own personal ambitions are first in their lives. **Verse 17—The house of God**—The pureness of the personality of God and the wickedness of Jacob did not make for peace, but fear, in the heart of Jacob.

JACOB'S HEART IS CONVICTED—Genesis 28:18—Jacob rose up early—It is good to arise early and pray. It seems that Jacob had not prayed before retiring. Other things were filling his mind, but the dream had made a great impression upon him, and he realized that the eyes of Almighty God were upon him. He did not rebel, but rather arose early from his bed and began to make approaches to the God who had visited him in the night. **Verse 19—Bethel**—In later years this place was the scene of many spiritual occurrences, some of them in connection with idol worship.

JACOB TAKES INVENTORY OF THE PAST—Genesis 28:20—Vowed a vow—His life had not been what it should have been, although his teaching at home had been such that he knew what was right for his generation and what God had expected of him. He also knew that he was dependent upon God and that every good and perfect gift came from above. He had not been properly grateful for these things. **Verse 21—Then shall the Lord be my God**—Jacob knew that the God to whom he was talking now was able to do the things that he had asked Him. It was this God that Jacob was choosing for life. **Verse 22—Give the tenth unto thee**—Jacob, it would seem from the reading of this scripture, was behind in his tithes. In the matter of performing spiritual requirements, it seems that the divine requirement in regard to the giving of money was heaviest upon his mind. The law had not yet been given in written form. Where did he learn about the responsibility to God of paying tithes? He had learned it from his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham.

CONCLUSION

The life of Jacob was somewhat different from now on. God did go with him and prospered him in his way. Jacob will not be judged in the last day according to the standard that we have; neither will we be judged by the standard that God gave for Jacob in that day. We are blessed in that the light of the gospel shines clearly and beautifully in this our day. Thus, since we have but one God and one faith, we, of necessity, in all ages who are children of God belong to the one great and gracious family of the living God and truly shall, as Jesus said, come from the east and the west and sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why was Jacob making the trip in which he had the dream about the ladder?
2. Consider the meaning of the words of the Lord when He said that He would be with Jacob.
3. What did Jacob mean when he awakened from his dream and said, "This is an awful place"?
4. Why did Jacob vow to the Lord that if God would prosper him he would pay tithes?
5. How many families does God have, and how are members added?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR SEPTEMBER 3

THE SPIRIT WORKS WITH JACOB (Part II)

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other

company which is left shall escape.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Memory Verse: And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.—Genesis 32:28.

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

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Genesis 31:36-55**

Tuesday **Genesis 32:1-12**

Wednesday **Genesis 32:13-32**

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Genesis 33:1-10

Genesis 33:11-20

Genesis 35:1-15

INTRODUCTION

We see evidences of a great change in the life of Jacob in the study of today's lesson. He had shown much weakness in the affairs of his life up to this time, but something happened here that gave him courage, strength, and confidence. If there ever was a time the men of the earth needed these attributes, it is now. We live in a world that is beset with the most awful forces of sin and deception that were ever known. If men continue to meet the issues of life in their own strength, there can be but one result, and that is disaster. Jacob came to a place where he knew he could not handle his own affairs any

longer without facing disaster. His brother Esau was traveling toward him with a band of men who could destroy him. Jacob took a wise course. He brought his situation before the Lord and prevailed in prayer. God will do the same for any man today who will trust Him fully. I hope that God will give us a real insight into the meaning of this lesson and enlighten our souls in regard to its great truth. No one can have a stronger assistant than the great Spirit of the living God. Let every student seek to make Him Guide of his life.

MEDITATIONS

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

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

power with God. However, we see in the working of the Spirit of God that not infrequently He allows deep stress to come upon those He loves in order to bring them to the place where He can accomplish the will of God in their lives.

JACOB'S DISTRESS DRIVES HIM TO HIS KNEES—Genesis 32:24—Jacob was left alone—Jacob was not satisfied with the defense that he had at his disposal. He could not see how he could successfully meet the band of four hundred men, so he separated himself from the company and poured out his heart before God. This should have been done sooner, then he would have been prepared when the test came. Oftentimes we are too satisfied with things as they are and do not make the effort that should be made in advancing our spiritual lives. Every day should find us advanced beyond our experience of yesterday. The man with whom Jacob wrestled was a heavenly being, either having taken upon himself an actual physical body or having moved upon the imagination of Jacob so perfectly in every detail that Jacob could say with all honesty that he wrestled with a man.

MAN CAN PREVAIL WITH GOD—Genesis 32:25—Saw he prevailed not—There is no doubt that the angel could have instantly inflicted terrible physical defeat to Jacob, but physical strength was not what determined the victory. There was also a spiritual battle, and it was the spirit of Jacob which was determined not to lose at any cost, that won for him the physical battle. Although we are all much weaker than God in every way, we can win if we exert our spiritual strength, for our spiritual strength is always sufficient to move God if we obey His Word. Even so, the angel did let Jacob feel his power and superior strength by inflicting him in the thigh. In Hosea 12:3, 4 we get a little clearer picture of this experience. There the prophet says that he wept and made supplication to God. Let us also remember when we prevail with God that it is not because of superior strength on our part; it is the mercy and goodness of God that allows us to win. It was the fear of his brother Esau that caused Jacob such effort in wrestling with the angel.

DETERMINATION BRINGS VICTORY—Genesis 32:26—I will not let thee go—The heart of Jacob was not satisfied. He did not have down in his heart that soul peace that he longed for. He would not let the angel go until he was satisfied. Many times Christians give up when the victory is just ready to come. Jacob did not hold the angel by physical strength, but by spiritual strength. **Verse 27—What is thy name?**—The angel already knew what the name of Jacob was. He was desirous of making an impression upon him, so the angel sought to get his attention centered upon his name. **Verse 28—Called no more Jacob**—The name Jacob meant supplanter, which described the character of Jacob. He was to be a new man because he had wres-

tled and prevailed with God, and his new name, which meant “the man who has prevailed with God,” described his new character. A prince, in the true sense of the word, is one who rules with power and justice. So Jacob had used his God-given power in a very wise and commendable way, and God rewarded him for it. So will He reward every man who will make use of the faith and power that God has put into his hand. It is a very blessed thing to have power with God. He who has power with God will be able to overcome any trial or situation of life. If God be for us, who can be against us?

CONCLUSION

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

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

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

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR SEPTEMBER 10

THE SPIRIT WORKS WITH SAMSON

Scriptures: Judges 13:3-5, 24, 25; 14:5, 6; 15:14-19.

Judges 13:3 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.

25 And the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 14:5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his

mother what he had done.

Judges 15:14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi.

18 And he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

19 But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakore, which is in Lehi unto this day.

Memory Verse: And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

—Judges 14:6.

Aim: To give an insight into the dealings of God with the early saints.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Judges 13:1-14	Thursday	Judges 14:11-20
Tuesday	Judges 13:15-25	Friday	Judges 15:1-10
Wednesday	Judges 14:1-10	Saturday	Judges 15:11-20

INTRODUCTION

The activities of Samson are very unique, and we find no other character in the Bible with whom the Spirit of the Lord worked in like

manner. Samson was born a Nazarite, which was a life of separation unto God. He was to drink no wine, nor eat anything that came from the vine. He must not eat any unclean thing, and he must let his hair grow and must not touch the dead. To make his separation complete, his mother was required to observe the same things while she carried him. God had a very special work for Samson to do and separated him unto that work.

MEDITATIONS

DIVINE VISITATION—Judges 13:3-5—We know not how long this couple had been married, but the woman was barren, and the angel came with the good news, “You shall bear a son.” The angel further instructed her, as to her own conduct, to take no strong drink, to eat nothing unclean, for her son was to be a Nazarite unto God. A Nazarite was one who consecrated himself to God. Samson was to be a Nazarite all his life.

GOD’S WORD FULFILLED—Judges 13:24—The Lord blessed him—Samson started out his life in a commendable way, for the Lord was able to bless him. So will He bless any man who will wholeheartedly do His gracious will. **Verse 25—Move him at times**—The Spirit of the Lord began to cause him to do things that were very much out of the ordinary. No doubt the things he did, for the most part, involved the use of his great strength, for it seemed that the Spirit of God used him extensively in a physical way.

SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH—Judges 14:5—Young lion roared against him—Being conscious of his great strength, doubtless, he had great boldness and thought little of the danger that would be associated with the attack of the lion. Rather than taking precaution against stirring up the lion, he would provoke him. **Verse 6—And he rent him**—Thus did God, by His Spirit, work with Samson in a very unusual way. **Judges 15:14—Philistines shouted against him**—The Philistines seemed to be unable to learn that they were not fighting against Samson but against God. As far as the natural eye could see, Samson was definitely under control, but the strong cords became as nothing when the Holy Spirit began to move. The great need of nations today is not material strength, but the strength of the Spirit. **Verse 15—Found a new jawbone**—A “green” jawbone would be heavier than one that had aged in the sun, thus being more deadly when wielded by one so powerful as Samson. If Samson had slain on the average of one man every ten seconds, he would have been engaged in strenuous effort for almost three hours. This was indeed a remarkable feat that would have required great strength and unusual endurance. The natural man would have worn down long before the length of time would have expired. His weapon was indeed very crude

and cumbersome, drawing greatly upon his physical strength, demanding no little skill. **Verse 16—Heaps upon heaps**—It is hard for us who know the standards of the gospel age to understand how the Spirit of God could bless the efforts of a man who was engaged in such terrible slaughter, but his age was not characterized by the standards that we know, and he was responsible only for the light that God caused to shine on his pathway.

HUMAN STRENGTH EXHAUSTED—Judges 15:18—I die for thirst—According to his statement, he was so weakened by the need of water that there was danger of his being overcome by the Philistines. We see from this picture that God used the natural strength of Samson as far as it would go in accomplishing His purpose and added to it when it was necessary. So it is today. God does not impart strength until it is needed; but if we trust Him, strength will always be given to perform the task that He has in mind for us to do.

AN ASTONISHING MOVE BY THE SPIRIT—Judges 15:19—Came water thereout—There is no use to try to explain this by natural means, for this is definitely an astonishing miracle performed by the great hand of God. He who spoke the mighty oceans into existence with their almost unbelievable expanse of vastness, how very simple it would be for Him to speak a few pints of water into existence and have them to issue forth from a piece of bone! God could have quenched the thirst of Samson by merely speaking the word, but Samson desired actual water to satisfy his thirst; so God gave him the water.

CONCLUSION

Samson found himself in some very trying situations, and as long as he stayed in the will of God, he found deliverance from every enemy and every difficult circumstance. However, when he disobeyed the Word of God, he was in a very serious situation that resulted in great disaster. The very same principles apply well today. In Jesus Christ we have complete victory over all sin. No one can touch us; but if any man departs from the will and Word of God, he at once becomes a slave indeed, having lost his place of kingship with God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What was the particular avenue in Samson's life in which the Spirit of God expressed Himself?
2. Why was it that the angel forbade Samson's mother to drink wine or strong drink?
3. What is a Nazarite?
4. If the Spirit of God was upon Samson, why did he get thirsty with his great exertion?
5. How do you explain the issuing of the water from the jawbone?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR SEPTEMBER 17

THE SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH DAVID

Scriptures: I Samuel 16:11-13; 17:37, 40, 45-50.

I Samuel 16:11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

I Samuel 17:37 David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

45 Then said David to the Philistine,

Memory Verse: Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.—Psalm 51:11.

Aim: To give an insight into the dealings of God with the early saints.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

I Samuel 16

Thursday

I Samuel 17:32-58

Tuesday

I Samuel 17:1-11

Friday

Psalm 37

Wednesday

I Samuel 17:12-31

Saturday

Psalm 51

INTRODUCTION

It would seem as if people today think that whatever comes into their hands by any means is theirs and they have a perfect right to do whatever they desire with it. This is not true and indicates that they have lost consciousness that there is a God and that some day they must give an account to Him. In the third verse of today's lesson, we

are told that the Spirit of God came upon David from that day forward. As a result of this, we find him doing some very wonderful things. If Christians will always obey the still small voice, life's pathway will be filled with much more fruitfulness. Neglect of prayer and study of the Word of God will dull our spiritual sensibilities, making it difficult to hear the voice of God. Any soul who does not have the guidance of the Spirit of God is indeed in a dangerous place. We cannot see into the future, not even one second. We know not how to direct our own path.

MEDITATIONS

LEAN NOT TO YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING—I Samuel 16:11—Remaineth yet the youngest—It is natural for men to draw conclusions from what they can see and feel. So was it in this case. David was young, and it did not seem at all probable that he would be the one God would call to fill the place of such importance. God's ways are not our ways, and He has instructed us that if we will acknowledge Him, He will direct our path. Walking by faith is walking when we cannot see what lies ahead of us; but perfect faith in God causes us to believe and know that if we walk, the way will be prepared ahead of us by God, and we shall not stumble or fall.

DIVINE AUTHORITY—I Samuel 16:12—And the Lord said—When David was brought in from the field, the Lord said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." The Lord saw in David one He could use in His service. May the Lord help us all to be one He can use.

ANOINTED FOR SERVICE—I Samuel 16:13—The Spirit of the Lord came—This was the Holy Ghost who came into the life of David to empower him for the work that God had called him to do. We must recognize the fact that there are two spiritual forces in the world. All of mankind is under the influence of either one or the other. God is the one Almighty force and is absolutely morally pure. Satan is the other (second) power and completely degenerated. Men who are under the complete control of God are fortunate indeed and are certain to reflect the life of Christ in the world. This now became the job of David, to reflect the beauty and glory of God in the world. It was this spiritual power in his life that gave him the ability to pen so many beautiful Psalms. It was the Spirit of God in his life that enabled him to play the harp so well which temporarily drove the evil influences away from Saul (I Samuel 16:23).

FAITH IN GOD—I Samuel 17:37—The Lord that delivered me—As in the case of Samson, so also in this case with David, it was the power of God that enabled him to fight against a wild beast that was much stronger than he. Read Verses 33-35 of this same chapter. Please note that David did not take the honor unto himself but gave

the honor to God, where it belonged. David reasoned that the same God who delivered him when he was attacked by the bear and lion would deliver him from the attack of the Philistine giant. Likewise, we all may reason if God delivered David out of the hand of the Philistine and gave him a great victory, he will also deliver us out of the hand of any enemy we may face. We must make a practical application of this truth to our own lives; otherwise, it is of no use to study it.

UNDAUNTED COURAGE—I Samuel 17:40—Chose him five smooth stones—Only by the presence of the Spirit of God in his life could anyone have displayed such great courage as David did before this giant. He chose five stones for the fray, not knowing whether some unexpected thing might happen with the first four attempts. Evidently, he was confident that in five attempts he was certain to be successful. The 151st Psalm, which is not in the accepted Bible, declares that David hit the giant with the third stone. (You can find this Psalm in *Clarke's Commentary* at the close of the book of Psalms.) David did all that he knew to do and trusted the rest in the hands of God. This should be the practice of every one of us in this life.

A POWER UNRIVALED—I Samuel 17:45—In the name of the Lord of hosts—The outcome could not be judged by the two forces that appeared on the field of battle. There was an invisible force on the field that no one could see, and that force was on the side of David and his sling. This giant in defying David was defying Almighty God. Had he known this, without doubt he would have withdrawn his threat.

MAKING GOD KNOWN—I Samuel 17:46—The earth may know that there is a God in Israel—We see very readily here that the ambition of David was not to make a name for himself, although he did do that very thing. He was interested in letting the world know that God was still on His throne and that He rewarded the man and nation who put their trust in Him. David's faith took in a great deal of territory here, and he proved to the world that God was able to perform all that His good Word had promised. Many a soldier of the cross has received courage and gone on to fight the battle through after reading about this battle of David's. Let us show the world a mighty God.

GIVING PROPER RECOGNITION—I Samuel 17:47—The battle is the Lord's—Here is a very great truth that needs to be preached to the nations of the earth. While many people are working hard to make weapons of defense and destruction, it still remains a fact that the battle will go the way the Lord determines, and he who has his trust in the Lord is certain to win. David, as young as he was, recognized this fact and prospered by it. If God be for us, who can be against us?

DAVID'S WORDS BACKED UP WITH ACTION—I Samuel 17:48—David hasted, and ran—David was speaking by the power of the Spirit of God and was backed up with the power of heaven. Every Holy Ghost-filled Christian has access to the very same power.

HIS WORD VINDICATED—I Samuel 17:49—Took thence a stone—The equipment of David was indeed very humble, but it accomplished the purpose as well as if it had been the very best that the day could offer. Though we have little in our hands, yet it is impossible to state what great things may be done if it is consecrated to God. Undaunted, David hesitated not, but hastened on to do his very best with what he had, and God saw him through. Let us take courage and press on with what we have, to accomplish the task God has set before us.

PREVAILING BY THE SPIRIT—I Samuel 17:50—So David prevailed—Again, it was the Spirit in the life of David that gave him the victory in this most unusual circumstance. The Spirit is never late; we need never fear to trust Him.

CONCLUSION

This is indeed a very miraculous working of the Spirit of God as revealed in the life of David. But we serve a miraculous God. He is all-powerful and delights to show Himself strong in behalf of them that fear Him. There is a great need for a David today to go forth and to meet the awful giant of false religion that is threatening the forces of the living God. This enemy today is dressed in the clothes of an angel of light and has deceived millions of the people of the earth. If we are not successful in uncovering him and revealing his real identity to the people of the earth, it is certain that all true faith will vanish from the earth, which means that the end of time will be ushered in at once.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why should people be made to realize that the world and all that in it belongs to the Lord?
2. What two forces in the world exert constant influence upon the men of the earth?
3. Why is it not safe to lean upon our own understanding?
4. Why can Christ speak with such great authority?
5. Where did David get the courage to go ahead when to the natural eye all looked so impossible?
6. Why was not the whole army of Israel equipped with slings?
7. Why do material things become a hindrance to winning a spiritual battle?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR SEPTEMBER 24

THE SPIRIT WORKS WITH ISAIAH

Scriptures: Isaiah 6:1-10.

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Memory Verse: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.—Isaiah 6:8.

Aim: To give an insight into the dealings of God with the early saints.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Isaiah 1**
Tuesday **Isaiah 2**
Wednesday **Isaiah 6**

Thursday **Isaiah 9**
Friday **Isaiah 11**
Saturday **Isaiah 53**

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah was a very outstanding prophet. The book of Isaiah is called the “gospel” of the Old Testament. The presence of God in Isaiah’s sinful state caused him much concern, and he at once concluded that he was undone, not knowing but fearing what the immediate future might mean to him. However, we find in him a readiness to obey the will of God; and when the Spirit called for a volunteer, Isaiah at once responded, “Here am I; send me.” God is still calling. However, the material blessings of today’s material world have so thoroughly captured the hearts of the people that they content themselves with a mere form of godliness and leave God’s call unheeded. Happy is the man who can say unto God, “Here am I; send me.”

MEDITATIONS

OUR GOD, AN EXALTED GOD—Isaiah 6:1—High and lifted up—Why should He not be when He has demonstrated so much wisdom, power, and kindness in creating the world and placing man over the work of His hands? He is greatly to be praised, and the earth is full of His glory. It is a small thing for His train to fill the temple, for He told Solomon when he finished the temple that the heaven and heaven of heavens could not hold Him, so how could he build a house for that purpose? In most cases, I think, we have too small a conception of the might and greatness of God. **Verse 2—Above it stood the seraphims**—These angels were very majestic and powerful and presented a picture that added to the awe that filled the mind of Isaiah. How often men have trembled in the presence of beings who made their appearance from the heavenly realm!

OUR GOD IS HOLY—Isaiah 6:3—Holy, holy, holy is the Lord—The angels are here speaking of Christ, but holiness is equally attributed to all three in the Godhead. Christ, according to the writings of Paul and John, is the Creator of the entirety of creation. These apostles declared it was created for Him; so it can be truthfully said that the earth is full of the glory of the Lord. Holiness is the state of sinlessness. It is impossible for God to sin. He cannot be tempted to sin. He had decreed that we, His children, also be holy, for we read in Ephesians 1:4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

HIS VOICE IS MIGHTY—Isaiah 6:4—Moved at the voice of him—It was the same voice that spoke to the winds and waves and there was a great calm. The same marvelous voice today speaks to affliction and disease, and they disappear. What a privilege it is to be in such a place that the voice speaks in our behalf and not against us! Satan cannot resist the voice of God but flees when He speaks.

ISAIAH UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LORD WAS KING—Isaiah 6:5—Have seen the King—We need to understand that Jesus Christ is King of the entire universe. Sun, moon and stars obey Him. He is not a king who is to receive a kingdom or produce a kingdom in the future, for He is King right now and is reigning over the natural elements and in men wherever He can get them to open the door of their heart and let Him in. Isaiah understood that his people had been sinful and rebellious, and this appeared to him as a sign that God was going to visit them with some awful catastrophe.

ONLY THE FIRE OF GOD CAN DESTROY SIN—Isaiah 6:6—A live coal—Fire is a powerful cleansing agent; and when it is allowed to have full sway, it will destroy every bit of filthiness. Such is the power of the Word of God. It is a fire that destroys every vestige of sin

and leaves the heart clean and pure. **Verse 7—Sin purged**—Holy Ghost fire is much needed in the world today. People need not only to be saved from all their committed sins, but also to be purged, or cleansed, from inbred sin and filled with the Holy Spirit, which will enable them to say no to sin and the temptations of the devil. This is the kind of experience Jesus Christ purchased for all when He died on the cross. A consecrated heart will be able to hear the call of God. (Wildfire, rolling on the floor and indecent acts are of the spirit of Satan and not of God.)

GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE—Isaiah 6:8—Who will go for us?—The great eye of God is continually running throughout the whole earth, searching out those who will go for Him. He does not come as a mighty thunder but speaks in gentle tones. Not everyone can hear, and not everyone responds who does hear. He who is called of God is a fortunate individual indeed, and we should answer yes to His every desire, for it means life and peace here and eternal life in the world to come. No one ever made a mistake in saying yes to the Spirit of the living God. Isaiah's heart was changed. His will now was the will of God. He was ready for service as far as his will was concerned. **Verse 9—And he said, Go**—Of course, his commission was to preach the Word of God, and he was to preach as long as there were any inhabitants left. **Verse 10—The heart fat**—God had been made angry many times by the waywardness of the Israelitish nation. He would have destroyed them had not Moses intervened. They still continued to depart from the ways of the Lord. They continued hardening their hearts against the gospel, making it impossible for them to be saved. Nevertheless, the gospel must be preached, and to this end Isaiah was called out, that from this nation should be saved a remnant.

CONCLUSION

We are now in a time that compares very well with the time in which Isaiah lived. The people today are turning their backs on the true gospel of the Lord. They are satisfied with a form of godliness, for that will permit them to partake of the world and its pleasures as much as they wish. Nevertheless, every true servant of Christ is called to tell the story without ceasing, to carry it to every creature under heaven.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How does Isaiah 1:18 and Isaiah 55:6, 7 compare with the gospel message of the New Testament?
2. Why was Isaiah fearful when the angels appeared in the vision?
3. By what means only is it possible for any man to be saved?
4. Why is it proper to exalt the name of our God?
5. Why do you think that the posts shook and the house was filled with smoke because of the presence of God?
6. What is the greatest calling man can have?

Name _____

Class _____

The Steps of the Righteous

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

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