

Bible Lessons



**“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

Volume 47, No 3

July • August • September

Quarterly Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 47

July August September

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BIBLE LESSONS, THIRD QUARTER, 2015

For our Bible Lessons for this quarter we are presenting the wonderful words written by our beloved Brother Peter. We have been greatly inspired through the years in reading and studying the truths that are contained in these two epistles. May the Lord bless and enlighten our hearts with revelations and insights from the writings of this dear disciple of our Saviour.

—Brother Leslie Busbee

July 5, 2015

THE BLESSINGS OF HOPE AND VICTORY IN CHRIST

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

MEMORY VERSE: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. — 1 Peter 1:3, 4

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Almighty God, our Creator, has made available for us to be delivered from sin and this evil world, and to be able to live a life of holiness in preparation for everlasting life in the world to come.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 1:2, “sanctification”: Holiness of life and character. “sprinkling”: Personal application and obedience.

Ver. 3, “begotten us again”: Brought us to live anew in godliness and spiritual life. “lively hope”: Hope and earnest expectation of eternal happiness with Jesus in the world to come.

Ver. 4, “inheritance incorruptible”: blessings and treasures that will never pass away.

Ver. 5, “through faith”: By means of one’s own confidence and assurance. “in the last time”: At the end of this present world.

Ver. 7, “trial of your faith”: The proving of one’s faith through difficult and heavy adversity. “tried with fire”: put to test by hot flaming adversity and opposition. “might be found”: Will bring full proof of reality.

Ver. 12, “the things”: The blessings of eternal spiritual values. “angels desire to look into”: The angels in Heaven look upon with deep wonder and interest.

Ver. 13, “gird up the loins of your mind”: Draw into control and fasten your interests and thoughts. “at the revelation of Jesus Christ”: By the spiritual insight of Jesus Christ by the inner man.

Ver. 14, “not fashioning yourselves”: Not going after the worldly ways.

Ver. 15, “be ye holy”: Be pure and sinless in all of your habits, talk, and actions.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have for our series of Bible Lessons for this Quarter the inspiring epistles of one of our Lord Jesus’ disciples, Simon Peter. He opens this epistle as an apostle of Jesus Christ writing to the strangers (or those afar) who were living in various parts of Asia, the area north of the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. Peter entitled them as “elect,” which means they were part of the faithful men and women who were true partakers of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, according (or truly in line with) the foreknowledge of God the Father. What a wonderful blessing they were in line to receive; with which blessing we, in our day and time, desire true fellowship! Notice that Peter said that it was through sanctification of the Spirit. They were partakers of

the holiness that Christ died for them to possess, through obedience and application of the blood that Christ had shed for them. Jesus paid the price for all of us to attain to these wonderful blessings. We can and must be holy as Peter states in verses 15 and 16.

Peter goes on to declare what we are begotten to in Christ and by His resurrection: a lively hope! This is not just a fancy of the mind, but a living and blessed expectation of an everlasting inheritance, pure and reserved in Heaven for all who are being preserved, by the power of God through faith, unto the final work of His salvation to be accomplished in the last time, that is, at the dawn of eternity.

Along with this blessed hope, Peter noted that these dear saints were also experiencing heaviness because of many different burdens and weighty trials. So it is today for all who are partakers of this wonderful grace and salvation of Jesus; however, notice that Peter declares that the trial of their faith was more precious than earthly wealth (gold that perishes). Though it is now in the heated furnace of suffering, it will be found unto eternal glory when Jesus comes in His everlasting glory.

Reminding them of the blessings they had received, and the anticipation of more to come, Peter charged them to gird up their minds, to be faithful, and hope to the end. Receiving his counsel today, we thank God for His mercy, grace, salvation, strength, and overcoming victory that we can all have abundantly.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What has God made possible for the soul of man to abundantly have?
2. Describe what that lively hope, given in Christ, means to you.
3. What can we expect to meet and endure before His appearing?
4. How will the trial of our faith be transformed at His appearing?
5. What can we, who do not see Him now, expect if we faithfully believe?
6. What kind of children must we endeavor to be in all manner of life?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Let us notice in our lesson, in verses ten through twelve, how this great salvation, given us through Christ, was inquired of and searched diligently for by the prophets in the Old Testament. Peter states that they prophesied of this grace and testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Oh, how wonderful that the Spirit revealed to them this great salvation that was to come to us in Christ, hundreds of years before it came to pass! We need to recognize that God was designing and planning this great salvation long before Jesus brought it to us, and is able to make it fully available to us today! This shows how true and unfailing was the grace that God brought to us in the life, death, and resurrection of His blessed Son, our gracious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

“. . . Begotten us again unto a lively hope,” are words, I am sure, that were etched on the apostle's soul through experience. For over three years, they had closely followed their Savior. They ate together, prayed together, slept together and worshipped together. All too suddenly came the betrayal, Peter's denial, the mockery of a trial and, fatally, the crucifixion. They beheld the One Who loved them give up the ghost.

Peter went out and wept bitterly and all of them were overcome with grief, confusion and hopelessness—“We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”

To know that Jesus loved us enough to die for us is an important piece of the whole; however, we also need to know the plan didn't end with the grave. Jesus conquered death, rose from the grave, and entered his glory, and ever lives for us.

All their grief, confusion, and hopelessness gave way unto a lively hope as they saw his wounds and talked with him—Christ was revealed unto them.

We, too, can be begotten again unto a lively hope! Life's battles, afflictions, disappointments and death can confuse and discourage us, just like it did the disciples. But Christ “ever liveth,” and when he is revealed to us personally, it restores a lively hope. We are begotten again and again—refreshed, restored, renewed. “Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

—Bro. Bob Wilson

JULY 12, 2015

BEING BORN AGAIN BY CHRIST'S BLOOD AND GOD'S WORD

1 Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached

unto you.

2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: —1 Peter 1:18, 19

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because we have been delivered from the power of sin and eternal damnation by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood, we must diligently lay aside all ungodliness in obedience to His Word, and walk in love and obedience to God faithfully.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 1:17, “without respect of persons”: Not judging by outward appearance. “pass the time of your sojourning here”: Live in this earthly pilgrimage. “in fear”: With due respect and reverence before God.

Ver. 18, “vain conversation”: Worldly life and conduct. “tradition from your fathers”: Copying the life style shown by your kinsmen.

Ver. 19, “precious blood”: No other blood could avail for our salvation.

Ver. 20, “verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world”: Truly was planned and purposed from eternity.

Ver. 23, “born again”: Spiritually born from above. John 3:3-7

Ver. 25, “gospel”: The good news and glad tidings of salvation.

Chapter 2:1, “malice”: Ill-will and hatred. “guile”: Deceitful ways and conversation. “hypocrisies”: Deceitful actions under pretence. “envies”: Ill will and jealousy.

Ver. 2, “sincere milk of the word”: The true basic principles of God’s word.

Ver. 3, “gracious”: Kind, useful, beneficial, and lovingly helpful.

Ver. 4, “disallowed”: Refused and rejected. “precious”: Honorable, dear, and of great value.

Ver. 5, “lively stones”: Members who are spiritually alive and quick to do, strong and steadfast. “spiritual house”: A holy dwelling of faith and eternal life. “spiritual sacrifices”: Offerings of honor and worship to God and obedience to His word regardless of the cost.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a continuing on of Peter's wise counsel in his epistle. It had been brought out in previous verses how this great salvation had been inquired of and searched diligently by the prophets who prophesied of the great grace that was to come to us through Christ. It was even stated that the angels desire to look into these wonderful blessings, and, seeing the earnest desire of the prophets and the angels, we also ought to give earnest thought and consideration. We must set our hearts on these wonderful treasures of eternal wealth, forsake the ways of worldly lust and earthly vanity, and seek earnestly to be holy in all of our ways of life. Peter quoted from Leviticus 11:44 and 45, stating that we should be completely holy in all manner of conversation. He urges us to pass the time of this earthly pilgrimage in godly fear, a vital and important admonition to which we should take heed.

He states that our redemption was not by the vanities of wealth and worldly wisdom. The price paid for our salvation was the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. Jesus allowed those wicked men to nail Him to the cross, where He was lifted up to be seen by mankind, a plan ordained before the world was created. It came to pass in God's purposed time for us and all humanity. By Christ, we believe in God who raised Him from the dead to eternal glory. Seeing that we have gained this purity of heart and soul from Him, as an example of love to humanity, we must now be diligent to love one another with a pure heart fervently. What a wonderful privilege we have to take advantage of what Christ has accomplished and provided for us! How diligent and earnest we need to be in our loving service to Him, Who is the living Stone, rejected of men, but chosen and so precious to God!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we need to live our earthly lives in godly reverence and fear?
2. What price was paid for our deliverance from sin and death?
3. Who was it that paid so willingly and faithfully that awful price?
4. Because of that price, what steps should be taken in our hearts and lives?
5. How can we truly purify our souls, and what are the wonderful results?
6. Why was Christ so disallowed and rejected by mankind?
7. How can He be accepted, honored, and so precious to us?
8. What is our future as mortals if we are not born again?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, how wonderful is this great plan of salvation that Christ accomplished for us by His willing death on Calvary! If we will take heed to the truth of the Bible concerning Christ and what He suffered for us, think what gain and benefit we will have! We will save our precious inner being from eternal ruin and loss! This earthly life is just a short sojourn. Even if we live a hundred years it will soon be over. Think of the millions of people who have lived on earth down through the ages! We need to wake up to the truth of our existence! We are mortals, and our earthly days are passing so swiftly! Oh, there is something in the inside of a human

being that is yearning and reaching for hope and a brighter future. Can we believe it? Why can't we? The Holy Spirit of God is everywhere, knocking at the hearts of humanity. The gospel of Christ has been brought forth and made fully known. How much more can be done or said?

We realize that God is not going to force Himself on us. There are other attractions that work against His wonderful appeal. The world, the flesh, riches, pleasure, and other allurements work against the appeal of the grace of God. So sad, so sad it is that the majority of society is carried away and deceived! Things seen and felt by fleshly appetites have the pre-eminence, but we know that the Spirit of God can help us to be drawn to His grace.

We can look back down the journey of this earthly tread and rejoice in the goodness and drawing power of His love and grace. We have the Holy Bible that contains the heart-drawing message of declaration and attraction. There are godly and holy people who are inspired and used of God to hold forth the message of His great love and salvation. In the days of youth a person needs to get serious about his or her eternal welfare—the sooner one can make that wise decision, the better off he or she will be!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

It is always fascinating to look at a globe of the Earth and observe all of the various continents separated by vast bodies of water. Then, it is always interesting to find the country in which you live and then be able to point to your area of residence. It is mind boggling to think about the fact that this planet Earth is home to over seven billion people: and our Lord created each one of them and knows them by name. He even knows the thoughts and intents of the heart of each soul.

Then think of Calvary and the crucifixion of Christ and all that was accomplished there. The Lord Jesus Christ provided the perfect sacrifice of redemption for all mankind. This great salvation was not reserved for just those people born in the first one hundred years after Christ's birth. Nor has it expired in this, the twenty-first century. The precious blood of Jesus was shed for all people regardless of their gender, race, culture or location. He was the perfect sacrifice to take away the sins of the whole world: for all sins, for all time, for all people. The power of the blood is not diminished by the sins of seven billion people. It is still able to save to the uttermost.

Is it any wonder that the Apostle Paul described this as a great salvation? It brings a clearer meaning of the most quoted scripture in the Bible "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16. We praise the Lord for this plan of salvation!

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

JULY 19, 2015

SHOWING FORTH THE PRAISES OF GOD TO HUMANITY

1Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

MEMORY VERSE: But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. —1 Peter 2:9

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We, as the people of God, holy, chosen, and separate from this evil world, must be diligent and faithful to glorify Him before all humanity around us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 2:6, "elect": Counted and selected as the best. "confounded": Cast down or put to shame.

Ver. 7, "disallowed": Rejected, refused to be accepted or honored.

Ver. 8, "stumble": Strike away or turn against. "were appointed": Made their choice.

Ver. 9, "peculiar": Special for and worthy of honor and preservation.

Ver. 11, “strangers and pilgrims”: People who are foreigners and contrary to this wicked world.

Ver. 12, “day of visitation”: The final day of judgment.

Ver. 13, “ordinance of man”: Law or established rule.

Ver. 16, “cloke of maliciousness”: Covering or excuse for wrong.

Ver. 18, “froward”: Perverse and crooked.

Ver. 20, “buffeted”: Accused and scolded.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Peter is speaking in this epistle to the souls of men who have been changed from the sinful, worldly way of life to the holy and godly life of a born again child of God. He mentions things that we must definitely lay aside and participate in no more. In this new, spiritual birth we have come to “a living stone,” which is the Lord Jesus Christ, a solid Rock of truth and holiness, well pleasing unto the LORD God Almighty. He is rejected of proud, worldly, and ungodly men, but received by sincere, honest, humble, and earnest souls who are seeking contact and fellowship with God. Such are lively stones, built up a spiritual dwelling of the Holy Spirit, a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices, acceptable and well-pleasing to God. He then quotes from Isaiah 28:16 about God laying in Sion, the New Testament Church, for a foundation a precious corner stone, and that he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. He states that Christ becomes a “stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” to those who are not obedient to Him. This is a quotation from Isaiah 8:13, 14 where we are told to sanctify the LORD of hosts and let Him be our fear and dread; He will be for us a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and rock of offense to others. He also quotes from Psalm 118:22, that that Stone which the builders disallowed has been made the head cornerstone. Oh, how vital it is for us to recognize the great Author of our Salvation and make Him our hope and foundation of our faith!

Being called out of darkness into His marvelous light, we are, as strangers and pilgrims on earth, to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the safety of our precious souls. Peter then counsels us to keep our way of life honest and obedient, and to respect and be submissive to the ordinances and laws of those in authority, namely the king and governors. If the laws of men do not conflict with the laws of God and His Son Jesus, we should be diligent to respect and obey. In addition to our fear of God, he spoke of others we should honor and love. We are reminded that it is praiseworthy for us to endure and take patiently all grief which we wrongfully suffer. This, he states, is acceptable with God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of stone did God lay as a foundation for His Church?
2. Who is that precious corner stone on which we must build to be saved?
3. Why is that Stone a stone of stumbling and rock of offense to some people?
4. What can we be if we will believe in Christ and build upon Him?
5. Why are those who believe and follow Christ referred to as pilgrims and strangers?
6. Why should we be submissive to the ordinances of earthly kings?
7. Name the four whom we are to honor, love, and fear.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, how wonderful that God has worked out and provided a Blessed Rock and Foundation upon Whom to build our faith and hope of eternal life and salvation! Jesus Christ came into this world conceived and brought forth by the power of God by a young virgin who was chosen of God. The New Testament account shows our Saviour teaching and working the goodness, wisdom and power of His Heavenly Father. He was crucified by evil men and rejected by the people who were supposed to be the Nation of God, but then we have the glorious declaration of His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to the right Hand of God in the heavenly places!

We can clearly see how Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies, and what it has accomplished for our eternal welfare. There is no reason or true cause for us to doubt and discredit this wonderful Gospel of our eternal salvation! It can and will be, by the grace and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a solid Rock upon which we build our eternal hope and happiness.

We can believe and trust in the atonement brought to us by His shed blood, and have great confidence in the future glorious coming of our Saviour and King. Let this old world, with all of its pride and vanity, pass away, and hold no more our love and affections! May the Lord strengthen our faith from day to day until He calls us from this life to that blessed eternal world to come.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

What does it mean to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and to show forth the praises of God? As Christ has made us spiritual priests (Revelations 5:10), we are now to offer acceptable offerings in righteousness to God (Malachi 3:3-4), which the Hebrew writer explains are the fruits of our lips—thanksgiving and sacrifices of praise (Hebrews 13:15).

A quote written on this page in my Bible illustrates this concept in a touching way: Sis. Karen LaCroix, who bore a great load of affliction to her death said: *“Go forth; praise the Lord while bearing His reproach or affliction!”* During her last months, she made it quite clear that she wanted to glorify and praise the Lord unto her dying hour, and that we were to sing praise songs at her funeral. This is a poignant example of a “sacrifice of praise.”

Our lesson brings out other ways in which we show forth God’s praises: by denying fleshly desires; by being honest and dependable in all our business dealings; by being good citizens in whatever country we as Christians live.

Talk to any server in a restaurant, and you’ll probably find they hate serving the “church” crowd. Their reasons? Church people, they say, are usually loud, don’t control their children, leave a big mess, are demanding, and worst of all, seem to be disgruntled that they gave their money away at church, so they don’t bother to leave a tip. What a sad report! By such obnoxious manners, professing Christians have not only failed to show forth Christ’s praise, but they are turning people away from the Lord.

It is important that we realize that by showing fervent love to our Christian brothers and sisters and giving service, respect and decency to every human being, regardless of nationality, color, age or gender, we bring glory to our Lord in as great a way as raising our hands and shouting praises in worship.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

JULY 26, 2015

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH -- HUSBANDS AND WIVES

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

MEMORY VERSE: Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. —1 Peter 3:7

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, set an example for us to follow in being meek, loving, merciful, patient, and humble; and by allowing Himself to suffer the awful death on the cross. This attitude of kindness and mercy to others must be applied in marriage and family relationships, as well as in all our relationships with humanity.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 2:21, “hereunto were ye called”: Counseled to be patient in suffering as Christ did.

Ver. 22, “guile”: Deceit or trickery.

Ver. 23, “reviled”: Accused of evil. “threatened not”: Did not promise to do evil.

Ver. 24, “tree”: The cross of Calvary. “stripes”: Wounds and bruises.

Ver. 25, “Bishop”: Overseer.

3:2 “chaste conversation”: Holy conduct and behavior.

Ver. 3, “adorning”: Beauty of decoration or arrangement. “plaiting”: Elaborate braiding of the hair. “apparel”: Fine clothing.

Ver. 4, “hidden man of the heart”: The inward spirit or the seat of one’s affections. “not corruptible”: Not fleshly or physical. “meek”: Mild, humble, and gentle.

Ver. 6, “lord”: One higher in authority and power. Genesis 18:12 speaks of Sarah calling her husband Abraham “lord”. “amazement”: Alarm, terror, dismay.

Ver. 7, “according to knowledge”: In or with understanding. “honor”: Rightful esteem.

Ver. 8 “courteous”: Kind and friendly.

Ver. 9, “railing”: Slander or evil accusation. “contrariwise”: Instead. “blessing”: Words of kindness.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today contains some more vital and important counsels for us as Christians and saints of the most High God to diligently follow with regard to our relations with our brothers and sisters in Christ and our fellow creatures of earth. Our Lord Jesus set the perfect example of proper and holy relations to others. When we read of the terrible way our Lord was treated by the Jewish leaders and men of His day, we are moved with admiration of our Saviour’s meek and lowly attitude and spirit. They reviled Him, but He did not threaten them in return. Jesus committed himself to His Father, the Almighty God and Creator of the Universe, and retained a loving and merciful attitude and spirit toward all of His accusers. Because of this wondrous example on the part of our great Redeemer, we are called and counseled to have the same spirit and loving kindness toward all of our kindred and associates of earth. If our Lord Jesus had not possessed this meek and lowly attitude toward his accusers, we would not have the confidence afforded by Him of our everlasting salvation and hope.

This loving attitude of mercy and kindness is applied in our lesson to our relationship with our families and close kin. Wives are to be in subjection to their own husbands, maintaining love and warm affection even to the troublesome and problem-makers. Manifesting this loving and humble spirit will help stir the troubling ones to awareness of better attitudes. Notice especially in this lesson the counsel to women to have and maintain inward adorning of the mind and spirit rather than the vain outward adorning, fancy hairstyles and fashionable clothes that are paramount in the world. Husbands must show love and honor to their wives and treat them in a godly manner. This can help the home to be a peaceful and happy place where prayers are effectual and unhindered, a place with wonderful blessings for all to enjoy!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of example did Christ leave for us to follow?
2. How did He react to the horrible way He was treated?
3. How should we live and treat others who persecute us?
4. Why should wives seek to be in subjection to their husbands?
5. What kind of adorning and apparel should a woman wear?
6. How should husbands treat their wives?
7. How can we hope and expect to inherit the blessings of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus Christ, our precious Saviour and Lord, came down from eternity to take upon Him human flesh with all of its temptations, sorrows, suffering, and death. He manifested the great Almighty power of His Heavenly Father before us. He had power to heal all kinds of sick and afflicted people. He had power to walk on the water of the sea and still the raging storms that blew there. He healed those possessed with devils and unclean spirits. Along with all of this, He manifested a kind, gracious and merciful spirit to humanity and held high the counsels and doctrines of truth, godliness, humility, love, mercy, forgiveness and every other spirit of goodness that people needed to behold.

After so many days of the healing of the sick and manifestation of the power of God, Jesus became subject to the darkened minds and hearts of the professed people of God in that He allowed them to put Him through a mock trial and condemn Him to the horrible death of the cross. He rebuked Peter for trying to defend him, for He could have called for multitudes of angels to come to His defense; instead, He chose to obey His Father and fulfill the prophecies that had been written before of Him by godly men of old. His was an example for all of us to follow. We must be humble, meek, loving, forgiving, and merciful to others as He was. No matter how mean and cruel people can be against us, we are to maintain the loving and forgiving attitude that Jesus fully possessed and showed.

We are then given wise and holy counsel concerning the relationship between husbands and wives. We live in a world and society that is destitute of the true happiness and blessing God designed for the home life. The many divorces, broken homes and disappointed lives reveal the vanity and pride that rule the hearts and lives of so many people. Oh, may God help us all to bear in mind all the guidance and counsel of the Holy Spirit, that we may attain to His precious life!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

ORDER: God is a God of order and intentional design. He is not a God of chaos or random thought.

Counting to ten – 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 – is something we learn early on. One can walk into a math classroom feeling happy, sad, disgruntled, or confused, but the order of numbers (and order of operations) do not change based on one's feelings or opinions of them!

Likewise, the order, balance, beauty, and harmony of God's creation does not change. If the moon forgot its place and randomly decided to rise one morning and be our "main light" of the day instead of the sun, it would be so abnormal as to be terrifying. Why? Because God said the "greater light" was to rule the day and the "lesser light" was to rule the night; that was the order he gave to the lights of the heavens. When God looked at all of His creation and the order of it, He said, "It is good."

If we will follow the Biblical template and God-ordained order governing our relationships, it will yield forth rich dividends in our lives and likewise be "good"! Jesus was our prime example. Under the most extreme pressure, He suffered, He didn't talk back, He wasn't deceitful, and He bore His burden. He unselfishly loved us. He committed Himself to His Father, a righteous judge. We each one have variables in our lives and in our relationships. While we cannot control the actions of others, our best hope for a good relationship in our marriages and with our fellow man is to stay within the confines of God's order and the example He set for us without regard for personal or societal opinion. In marriage, this is God's order: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." In our other relationships, we are to all be of one unselfish mind one toward another. HIS order is the right order; as we willingly subject ourselves to it, God can behold our obedience and say, "It is good."

—Sis. Julie Elwell

AUGUST 2, 2015

BEING SAVED FROM SIN AND READY FOR THE JUDGMENT

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

MEMORY VERSE: For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. —1 Peter 3:12

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Just as God waited patiently for Noah to prepare to ride out the flood and escape the wrath of God, so is He now giving mankind time to prepare to meet Him in His final day of judgment and escape the destruction of eternal damnation to all who refuse to turn away from their sins.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 3:10, “refrain”: Quit and bring to an end.

Ver. 11, “eschew”: Shun. “ensue”: Pursue and strive for.

Ver. 13, “who is he that will harm you?” If we be faithful to God and follow that which is good, whatever harm anyone would throw on us will be but temporal and we will overcome it!

Ver. 15, “sanctify”: Possess in holy love and worship. “meekness”: Mild and gentle humility.

Ver. 19, “spirits in prison”: The souls of humanity in the prison house of sin who hear the gospel of Christ; if they are obedient and faithful they will enjoy the blessed liberty of salvation.

Ver. 20, “sometime were disobedient”: People in other past ages who had opportunity to escape the judgment of God and refused to submit to the will of God. “the longsuffering of God”: God’s patience in holding back His judgments to give people a chance to be saved. “waited in the days of Noah”: God was ready to destroy the wicked world, but He favored Noah and gave him time to build the ark in preparation for the flood God was to send. Noah was toward 500 years old when God decided to destroy the earth with a flood. And the flood came when Noah was 600 years old. (Genesis 7:6). We do not know the exact number, but we can be confident that it was a goodly number of years that God was suffering with sinful humanity as He gave Noah the space of time to build the ark. “wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water”: It was Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives who were carried safely through the flood waters. We are confident that this family was faithful and diligent to warn the surrounding humanity of the coming judgment of Almighty God.

Ver. 21, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us”: The salvation of Noah from the destruction of the flood is greatly similar to the salvation that baptism represents. We and all the faithful in Christ will escape the destruction of this world by being accounted worthy to be resurrected from death, the grave, and mortal vanity and to meet Him in the air as He comes in power and glory. This is what water baptism is pointing to as a like figure. One who partakes of water baptism is submerged under the water and brought up again. This is a type of all the truly saved who die, and in the resurrection come back to live again in eternal life.

Ver. 22, “Who is gone into heaven”: Jesus Christ ascended to the right hand of God to intercede for us for our victory, salvation and privilege to be in that eternal world with Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Verses 10-12 in our lesson are a clear quotation from the precious words in Psalm 34, verses 12 to 16. These scriptures manifest the wonderful grace of the salvation we can have and enjoy in our blessed Lord and Saviour! They list several wonderful blessings and benefits of the true life of a sincere, godly Christian, and correspond with the remaining verses of this precious chapter in the Peter's first epistle.

Verse 13 asks the question, "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" History proves that the true godly Christians down through the ages have suffered much physical harm, and many millions have been martyred because of their stand for Christ and His gospel. The harm they have suffered is but temporary; all who have drawn back from the way of Christ, to escape the suffering and shame thereof, are the ones who will really be harmed and suffer evil. As verse 14 declares, "If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye!" Thus, we must sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and not be afraid to testify of His grace and hope. While keeping a good conscience before God, we can prove that it is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil doing.

We know that our Lord and Savior once suffered and died on the cross to bring us to God, but He was made alive by the powerful Holy Spirit. He has been preached in this world to the spirits in the prison house of sin, and, though many are disobedient and have rejected Him, there is that number pictured in Revelation 7:9-17 that no man can number! Oh, how we long and earnestly desire to be in that blessed number that will be led "unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must a person do who would love life and see good days?
2. How will we be blessed if we will thus faithfully follow the Lord?
3. Can we be happy even if we are suffering for righteousness' sake? How?
4. Why is it better to suffer for well-doing than for evil doing?
5. How did Christ set a good example of suffering for well doing?
6. How did Noah and his family set a good example for us today?
7. In what way does being baptized in water speak as a testimony for us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We have the testimony that has been brought forth down through the ages, of the blessing of being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ even in the time of suffering. The testimony of men and women and boys and girls have echoed and re-echoed in wonderful tones of love and sweet victory. Perhaps to the eyes of carnally minded people the Christian profession is empty and of no avail. But that is because they are looking at things seen and temporal. But, as 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18 declares: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things

which are not seen are eternal.” How blessed it is to be so sweetly inspired and enlightened by the Holy Spirit to know that our real treasures and possessions worthy of our desire and labor are not these old earthly vanities! No, the true treasures are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God! We are so thankful that God has drawn us to His kingdom and made us to realize what and where the true wealth and worth while possessions are!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

The Great Judgment Morning

Verse 1:

I dreamed that the great judgment morning
Had dawned, and the trumpet had blown;
I dreamed that the nations had gathered
To judgment before the white throne;
From the throne came a bright, shining angel,
And he stood on the land and the sea,
And he swore with his hand raised to Heaven,
That time was no longer to be.

Refrain:

And, oh, what a weeping and wailing,
As the lost were told of their fate;
They cried for the rocks and the mountains,
They prayed, but their prayer was too late.

Verse 2:

The rich man was there, but his money
Had melted and vanished away;
A pauper he stood in the judgment,
His debts were too heavy to pay;
The great man was there, but his greatness,
When death came, was left far behind!
The angel that opened the records,

Not a trace of his greatness could find.

Verse 3:

The widow was there with the orphans,
God heard and remembered their cries;
 No sorrow in heaven forever,
God wiped all the tears from their eyes;
The gambler was there and the drunkard,
And the man that had sold them the drink,
With the people who gave him the license,
 Together in hell they did sink.

Verse 4:

The moral man came to the judgment,
But his self-righteous rags would not do;
 The men who had crucified Jesus
 Had passed off as moral men, too;
The souls that had put off salvation—
“Not tonight; I’ll get saved by and by,
 No time now to think of religion!”
At last they had found time to die.

By Bertham H. Shadduck 1894

—Bro. Bob Wilson

AUGUST 9, 2015

LIVING NOT TO THE FLESH BUT TO GOD

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6 For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

MEMORY VERSE: Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. —1 Peter 4:12, 13

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Being a true follower of Jesus Christ in the blessed hope of eternal life puts us at variance and ways contrary to the sinful vanity of the world around us. But, while this brings adversity and persecution, we must look beyond this fleeting earthly realm and rejoice in our future with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 4:1, "Forasmuch": Indeed since. "same mind": Identical outlook and attitude. "ceased from sin": Stopped going sinful ways. Even though the holy life brings adversity and persecution, we can rejoice that we are overcoming the sinful way of living.

Ver. 3, "suffice": Was enough for us and we do not want any more of it. "lasciviousness": Uncontrolled passions of the body. "banquetings": Drinking liquor parties. "abominable idolatries": Wicked and ungodly idol worship.

Ver. 4, “excess of riot”: Uncontrolled indulgence in ungodly passions.

Ver. 5, “ready”: Fully prepared and qualified.

Ver. 7, “sober”: Having a sound and rightfully sane mind and purpose. “watch unto prayer”: Be prayerfully on guard against the enemy.

Ver. 8, “charity”: The divine love of God.

Ver. 9, “without grudging”: Not grumbling nor complaining.

Ver. 10, “steward”: Worker or overseer. “manifold”: With many various benefits and blessings.

Ver. 11, “oracles”: The holy messages of truth.

Ver. 12, “Beloved”: Dearly and greatly loved.

Ver. 14, “reproached”: Persecuted or condemned.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have the direct and unfailing counsel of being aware of the dangers we face in life. From the beginning of creation we can see the trap in which Satan caught Adam and Eve. God created the world and everything in it. But the Creator gave a limit, a law of control, a restriction to what man had privilege to partake of. Man could freely partake of the many trees in the garden and their wonderful fruit. There was only one tree that God plainly made man know he was to not partake of. The lie Satan presented to mother Eve was that partaking of the forbidden tree would be beneficial to her and Adam. She was deceived by his lies, ate of the forbidden fruit, and got Adam to partake of it with her. This was the entry of sin and transgression into the world.

The history of mankind shows the terrible consequence of fulfilling the lusts and appetites of the body over and above pleasing man’s Maker. During His earthly life and ministry, our Lord Jesus faced that same temptation and was, as our Savior, triumphant and victorious over it all. He was tempted in all points like we are tempted, yet never yielded. He can help us if we will be willing and obedient to Him and seek His guidance and wisdom to keep us in the way of life. The way of living holy and bringing our appetites and desires into complete submission to the good pleasure of God is truly the way in which we desire to be obedient.

In Galatians 5:16-13 Paul listed the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. True godly wisdom will help us to avoid and triumph over the works of the flesh, which have a strong influence particularly in youth, and to diligently pursue the fruit of the Spirit. May the Holy Spirit of God help us all to be enlightened and warned to resist the temptation of the flesh and sow to the Spirit so that we can reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:7,8).

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the mind Christ had with which we need to arm ourselves?
2. What are some of the attractions of the flesh that we need to resist?
3. How can we overcome the flesh and live according to the Spirit of God?
4. What are some of the fiery temptations that we can and will meet?

5. How can we be a partaker of Christ's sufferings?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

1 John 2:15-17 has some worthy and valuable counsel to which we should take diligent heed: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." We can see these three things in the temptation that the devil presented to Eve about the forbidden tree. As it says in Genesis 3:6, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (the pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat."

Our Lord Jesus faced the same allurements in His temptation, as is portrayed in Matthew 4:1-10: Commanding stones to be made bread (lust of the flesh), casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (lust of the eyes), and seeing all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and having them if he would worship the devil (the pride of life); here are these three attractions again. Let us be wise to resist the devices and allurements of Satan in our day! Jesus overcame it in His day, and when facing the horrible suffering of the death of the cross, He resisted any thought of saving Himself, but gladly gave Himself to death. It pays to deny the flesh and be willing to bear the cross that Jesus bore.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Our memory verse says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:12,13

Apostle James encouraged us to "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." He went on to say, "Behold, we count them happy which endure." The Apostle Paul testified of his thorn in the flesh experience that "[he] would rather glory in [his] infirmities. . ." He also admonished the saints to be "patient in tribulation."

Think about those words for a minute: 'rejoice', 'joy', 'happy', 'glory', 'patient'. These words do not describe the usual sentiments in the middle of heartache and devastation when all we want is for the trial to end and be over with as soon as possible. But there is a valuable lesson here that can be gleaned if we will open our hearts and minds to understanding. Paul and Silas tapped into this secret treasure when they were in the depths of the prison after being beaten and chained. They learned to rejoice because they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Paul found this also because he went on to say, "I would rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

This takes every burden, every trial, every temptation, and every tribulation to a whole new level. We get to serve the Lord in a capacity as never before. In our disappointments and hard trials, we have a chance to prove faithful to a Savior who was ever faithful to us. Praise the Lord. This is why we can sing "The Pilgrim's Confidence":

*"Welcome the storms, my hope is abounding,
Let the waves come, my anchor is sure.
Fixed in the rock on which I am standing,
How can I fall when all is secure?
Wonderful peace in thee I'm possessing,
Victory thro' Christ I ever shall sing;
Let the rain fall in showers of blessing,
Homage and praise to Thee I would bring!"*

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

AUGUST 16, 2015

BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD IN TEMPTATION AND TRIAL

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. —1 Peter 5:5

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We have been called, by the God of all grace and salvation, to share with Him and His blessed Son, our Saviour, eternal glory and happiness in the eternal world to come. Let us therefore be diligent to follow and obey Him in all the truth of His holy Word, with love to one another and to all men.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Peter 4:15, “busybody”: Meddler, looking into other people’s affairs.

Ver. 16, “on this behalf”: Or for his good and eternal welfare.

Ver. 17, “judgment must begin at the house of God”: Of all men, we who partake of God’s salvation are most responsible to faithfully obey His Word and do His will.

Ver. 18, “scarcely be saved”: Will be saved with adverse difficulty in trials and tests.

Ver. 19, “suffer according to the will of God”: Endure faithfully the temptations and trials that God permits to come our way. “commit”: Entrust into God’s loving grace and care.

1 Peter 5:1, “elders”: Leaders such as pastors, teachers, and ministers,

Ver. 2, “oversight”: Watchful and loving care and protection. “not by constraint”: Not just because you have to. “filthy lucre”: Unholy, worldly riches. “ready mind”: Faithfully determined to be true and obedient.

Ver. 3, “lords”: Big demanding bosses. “ensamples”: Good and faithful patterns for people to follow of godliness, holiness, and patience in heart and life.

Ver. 4, “chief Shepherd”: The Lord Jesus Christ, Shepherd over all.

Ver. 6, “exalt you”: Lift you up to spiritual blessings and power.

Ver. 7, “casting all your care”: Committing fully your safety and protection.

Ver. 8, “sober”: Solemn, earnest, diligent, and fully aware of the extent of your responsibility. “vigilant”: Very watchful, careful, and fully on your guard.

Ver. 10, “stablish, strengthen, settle”: Confirm and set you solidly and fast in the right direction.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have come to the closing chapter of this inspiring and beneficial epistle of our dear brother Simon Peter. He states in verse 12 that he wrote this, “exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God.” His counsels in this epistle are encouraging and strengthening to our hearts. He states that our suffering must not be because of ungodly and sinful behavior, but because of our Christian faith that is at variance with the sinful world around us. And, if we suffer because of our faith and holy behavior, we need not be ashamed, but give God the glory and continue on in the true religion that Christ has brought to us. We are bearing judgment established by our Heavenly Father through His Son, Jesus; so we must be brave, courageous, and commit to God the keeping of our souls in well doing.

We have Peter’s counsel to the elders and leaders of the congregations of saints, given as from him who was also an elder, being a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Yes, Peter was an eye-witness of what our Lord Jesus went through. It was a difficult thing for him and the other disciples to witness the arrest, mock trial, and horrible sentence of death on the cross. We have read how Peter denied his faith as one of Christ’s disciples and also tried to defend Him by wielding with the sword and cutting off a man’s ear. However, after our Lord was risen from the dead, we find Peter being given a leading place in all He was directing His disciples to do, receiving the blessed Holy Spirit and preaching with power the message that we have on record in Acts 2.

So Peter encourages us in his two wonderful epistles to be strong and not afraid to suffer for the sake of the gospel of Christ. He joyfully points us to the crown of glory we all, who are faithful and accepted of Him, will receive when He shall appear in glory at the end of this fleeting world. Oh, how wonderful are his counsels in these epistles! Let us all be steadfast and unmovable in the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, as Luke 21:36 says, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we not be ashamed to suffer as a Christian?
2. How can we be fully prepared to stand before Him in the final judgment?
3. What will the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?
4. What can we do if we suffer for Christ according to the will of God?
5. What is the duty and responsibility of being an elder for the gospel?
6. What do we hope to receive when the chief Shepherd shall appear?
7. What does it mean to be clothed with humility?
8. What can we do if we become heavy with care and sorrow?
9. Why should we be sober, watchful, and vigilant?
10. What will God faithfully do for us if we faithfully suffer for Him?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

History reveals that many, many Christians have given their lives and died because of their faith and testimony for Christ. In this present day, we are hearing of men and women being persecuted and many dying because of their faith. It is traditionally reported that all twelve apostles of Christ were sentenced to die, and all except John laid down their life for the Saviour. The account is that John was cast into boiling oil, but he came out unhurt. He is the only one of the twelve that died a natural death. It is said that Peter was trying to escape martyrdom in Rome, when he had a vision of Christ, Who said to Peter, "I am going down to give my life at Rome." Peter turned around and went back and was arrested and sentenced to be crucified. Peter requested that he be crucified head down, for he did not feel worthy to be crucified as Christ was. So we see that Christ has made it clear that we are living for Him, not for the preservation of this life and the vain substance of this world. Our hopes are on things eternal. Let them cut off our heads or throw us to the lions, or burn us at the stake. We know that Jesus said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:25)."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

I have recently read of the severe persecution going on in northern Nigeria. A militant Muslim group, Boko Haram, (meaning "Western education is forbidden") had attacked one village eleven times between January 2012 and September 2013. During one of the attacks, a pastor was ordered, "Denounce Christ if you want to be spared." "No," he declared, "How can I denounce Christ if I was the one teaching others not to deny Him?" Miraculously, at this point, his persecutors were interrupted and his life was spared. He said later, "One thing that keeps on strengthening me not to give up is the voice of the Lord that speaks to my inner mind. That's why I stand firm, not minding how my life will end."

Another man told his wife, who stood by crying with fear and grief, "Don't worry—the death of a Christian is a great gain, not a loss." He was then shot in the face and left for dead. As his wife cried over his body, she heard him gasp. Although he wasn't given medical aid until the next morning, God miraculously spared him and healed his wounds. Today he says, "Since that day, I pray, 'God, forgive them.' My prayer is that that they will be saved. . . I love them. . . If I have the opportunity to see them, I will hug them and forgive them."

Still another, after watching his young wife suffer and die, burying his brother, whose head had been shot off by the insurgents, and learning that his father had also been killed, said, "My internal joy remains constant. I always thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to partake in Christ's suffering; I don't mind even the hardest."

May this challenge us to love Christ enough to suffer and die for Him.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

AUGUST 23, 2015

GAINING ABUNDANT ENTRANCE UNTO LIFE ETERNAL

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. —2 Peter 1:10

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Besides obtaining the precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and power to partake of the divine nature; and escaping the corruption of this evil world, we must add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

WORD DEFINITIONS

2 Peter 1:1, “obtained like precious faith”: Taken hold of the same valuable confidence and assurance.

Ver. 4, “divine nature”: The basic principle of a holy heart and mind. “having escaped”: Been truly delivered. “corruption”: Decay and ruin. “lust”: Uncontrolled and impure appetites and desires.

Ver. 5, “beside this”: In addition to this. “add”: Fully and abundantly supply. “virtue”: Manliness and

excellence. “knowledge”: Scientific truths about God: His love, power, holiness, goodness, mercy, purpose, benefits, and blessings.

Ver. 6, “temperance”: Self control. “patience”: Strong and cheerful endurance. “godliness”: Piety; deep reverence and respect toward God.

Ver. 7, “brotherly kindness”: Fondness and affection toward others. The Greek word is “philadelphia”. William Penn named the city he established “Philadelphia”, meaning “The City of Brotherly Love”. “charity”: Divine love, affection, and inclination to be good and kind.

Ver. 9, “cannot see afar off”: Near-sighted, just limited to earthly, fleshly things.

Ver. 10, “Wherefore the rather”: For this cause do the better. “give diligence”: Make earnest effort.

Ver. 11, “For so”: Because by these things. “entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly”: You will have sure and unfailing opening to enter.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today contains the extremely valuable counsels of one of Christ’s faithful disciples. Let us notice first to whom Peter was writing. It was to those who had obtained the identical faith that he possessed and it was obtained through the righteousness of Almighty God and His beloved Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Far, far beyond and more valuable and beneficial than all this fleeting world’s treasures is this glorious mine of everlasting riches that is ours to possess! Peter willed that grace and peace would be multiplied unto us according to what Christ’s divine power had given and supplied for us. It is through the personal knowledge and fellowship with Him who has called us from, and helped us to escape from, the vanity, pride and lusts of this ungodly world, that we can be partakers of His holy nature!

Peter counsels us to be very diligent to add—*abundantly add*—to the grace and salvation we have obtained through Christ. The first is virtue to add to our faith. In other words, be a man about your faith. Be full grown and fully developed in your confidence and trust.

Then we need to add to our manly faith knowledge. There are many valuable lessons and truths we must learn and be taught of through His blessed Word and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

To knowledge we need to add temperance. Temperance means self control. It involves the control of our mind and thoughts, control of our eyes and what we look at, and what we listen to with our ears. Then there is the control of our appetites, passions, and physical desires. Perhaps the most serious is the control of our tongue.

We also must add patience, which not only means the ability to wait, but the quality of cheerful endurance. “In your patience possess ye your souls” Luke 21:19).

We need then to add godly fear and reverence, and the last two vital ingredients of brotherly kindness and fervent love. Notice what Peter says of the importance of these things. To have them and abound insures that we will not be barren nor unfruitful in the Lord. And the final thought is having, by these things, an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour! Oh, the blessed recipe of goodness!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. To whom was Peter writing this wonderful epistle?
2. What did he desire to be multiplied to us and through what?
3. What has God's divine power given to us?
4. Of what can we be partakers through His promises?
5. What seven things are we to add to our lives?
6. In what will these things make us to be fruitful?
7. In what condition is he who lacks these things?
8. What will having these things enable us to have?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson today is parallel to the counsel Paul gave in Philippians 3:7-11 concerning being able to attain unto the resurrection of the dead: "To win Christ, to be found in him with the righteousness of faith, to know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death [to die as Christ died]."

Peter gives the list of things that we should faithfully abundantly add to our faith. It will pay great eternal dividends to our souls if we will diligently work at applying these things to our hearts and lives! Each one of these things listed by Peter are unfailingly expedient and vital for us to have in our hearts and lives. It takes diligence and earnest effort and endeavor, with fervent prayer and petitioning to our gracious Heavenly Father through the gracious help of His Son at His right hand interceding for us. If we can fervently and prayerfully obtain these vital things working in our hearts and lives we will never fail to please the Lord, and we will have an abundant entrance ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour! Oh, the value and benefit that we can possess and enjoy in these blessings that God has provided us! But they do not come without us seeking earnestly in prayer and carefully guarding our conversation and ways of life and conduct. Oh, it will mean so much to our eternity bound souls to be able to have abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

Reflections

In Jeremiah 29:11 it reads, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." How wonderful that God thinks of us in a good way. He has great and marvelous plans for each of our lives and expects us to endure till we experience a great end. Everything He allows to come our way is to build a relationship with us and draw us to His heart. He is preparing us to go to a beautiful place where we will dwell with Him eternally. He is earnestly desires for us to make it there successfully. He gave His life for us to be saved and sent His Holy Spirit to accompany us on our journey. He plans a grand entrance for us into His heavenly home. I imagine angels singing and our loved ones gathered around us eager to show us every beauty they enjoy. "What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see"; when I look upon His face—the One who saved me by His grace. . ."

—Bro. James Bell

AUGUST 30, 2015

A VALUABLE BLESSING TO KEEP IN REMEMBRANCE

2 Peter 1:12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

MEMORY VERSE: We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. —2 Peter 1:19

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Peter earnestly desires that we remember the truth that he brought forth in this epistle, for he was making known what he was an eyewitness of: that is the honour and glory Christ received from God the Father when God spoke to Him on the mount of transfiguration that Christ was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. But Peter also desires us to receive the word of prophecy that shines as a glorious light in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

WORD DEFINITIONS

2 Peter 1:12, “not be negligent”: Not fail. “these things”: The eight vital functions for spiritual success, namely: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. “present truth”: The gospel truth revealed through Christ.

Ver. 13, “meet”: Right and so very needful. “this tabernacle”: His mortal earthly body.

Ver. 14, “put off”: Depart from by death. “as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me”: John 21:18, 19 has Christ’s own words to Peter: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou was young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.”

Ver. 15, “my decease”: My death.

Ver. 16, “cunningly devised fables”: Man-made ideas and beliefs. “coming”: Christ’s second coming in glory at the end of this world.

Ver. 17, “excellent glory”: The spiritual heavenly realm.

Ver. 18, “the holy mount”: The mountain where Jesus was seen speaking with Moses and Elias, as recorded in Luke 9:28-36. It is also recorded in Matthew 17:1-7 and Mark 9:2-8.

Ver. 19, “a more sure word of prophecy”: The word of prophecy confirmed and shown to be fulfilled. “the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”: This is fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 4:2, “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings”.

Ver. 20, “private interpretation”: Its own loosing or opening up of the truth. Verse 21 explains that the prophecy in old time did not come by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Truly, it also takes the Holy Spirit to open it up and make it known to the heart of man.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Peter desired that those to whom he was writing this epistle would be always in remembrance of the truth that He was bringing forth to them. He mentioned five times of the value and importance of “these things.” If “these things” would be in them and abound, if they would do them, and if they would have them always in remembrance, they would never be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. He also declared that he that lacketh “these things” would be blind and forgetful of being saved from his old sins. So we see that Peter was very earnest in his desire for us to keep in mind and be diligent to have these things abounding in our hearts and lives. The reason Peter was so concerned that we remember and diligently keep these things abounding, was our eternal welfare. So it is with all of the blessed counsels and teachings of the New Testament.

Peter then declared that he was not following the teachings of men, but was holding forth the true doctrine of Christ. He was making known to them the power and the promised coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, being one of the eyewitnesses of His majesty—the power and glorious majesty of which he and James and John had borne witness in the mount of transfiguration. Luke 9:28-36 pictures it so vividly. It shows Moses and Elias talking with Jesus, and speaking of His death which He would accomplish at Jerusalem; and he brought out how God spoke and declared that Jesus was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. Matthew 17:5 adds that God said, “Hear ye Him!” It was a wonderful experience that Peter cherished in his heart’s memory.

Peter declared that we also have a more sure word of prophecy. This word of prophecy is that which is revealed to the heart and soul of man by the Holy Spirit, and is truly the light that will be the dawning of the “day star” in our hearts. Oh, how so wonderful is the revelation and opening up of the scriptures to our hearts! It is an experience that is more wonderful than all other good things that one can in this life treasure

and possess.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Peter so earnestly desire for us to remember “these things”?
2. What are “these things” that he desired for us to remember and follow?
3. What was the wonderful glory that Peter saw in the holy mount?
4. Whose voice spoke from Heaven and what did He say?
5. What is that “more sure word of prophecy” that we can also have?
6. What will it be to us if we will take heed to its wonderful message?
7. How did the prophecy come to man in the times of old?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Peter believed that the time of his sojourn on earth was drawing to a close. And he wanted these precious truths and counsels to be kept in our hearts and minds. Oh, let us notice the earnest desire and purpose that was burning in his very soul! This blessing of the Holy Spirit inspiring and writing upon our hearts this more sure word of prophecy should be the very center of our hungering and thirsting in life! What the Holy Spirit reveals to our innermost being is truly the Rock, Christ Jesus, the foundation of the Church which Christ purchased with His own blood, as Jesus declared to Peter in Matthew 16:17, 18. To have Christ revealed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit truly *is* the unfailing stone on which we can and must build our hope of eternal life!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Over and over, the Lord wanted His children to remember what He had done for them and what His will was concerning them. One example of this is found in Exodus, chapter 12, concerning the Passover. Verses 25-28: “...Ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians . . .” (Joshua 4:6-7).

Another example was when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River. The Lord told Joshua to take twelve men, one from each tribe, and gather a stone “out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm.” “That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, what mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant. . .”

The ark, the jar of manna, Aaron's rod that budded . . . all were reminders of God, the covenant, the promises, and their identity as a separate, chosen, and peculiar people. I think about the verse that says, “Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set (Proverbs 22:28). Sis. Margaret Eck had the

same burden when she wrote “Lest We Forget”. She wanted her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to remember the Lord's working.

An old chorus still rings in my heart: “Roll back the curtain of memory now and then; show me where You brought me from and where I could have been. Remember I'm human, and humans forget—so remind me, remind me, dear Lord.” (by Dottie Rambo).

—Bro. Bob Wilson

SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

CONVERSATION AND WAYS OF THE UNGODLY, PART 1

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. —2 Peter 2:9

CENTRAL THOUGHT: All down through the ages of time there have been rebellious and lustful

people who have taken the path that leads to everlasting destruction before the Almighty God. However, it is good to note that there have been those who earnestly sought to please God and turned from the ways of sin and disobedience and escaped the destruction of the wicked. Today we can be of that number who will turn from sin and the world and find grace and victory to live holy and righteous before God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

2 Peter 2:1, “privily”: Secretly and under pretence. “damnable heresies”: Destructive false doctrines that lead men away from the real truth.

Ver. 2, “pernicious”: Destructive.

Ver. 3, “feigned”: False and deceitful. “make merchandise”: Make effort to get financial benefits. “judgment lingereth not”: Will certainly be poured out. “damnation”: Eternal destruction.

Ver. 4, “angels”: We do not believe that angels in heaven are meant here, but rather beings on earth before Noah’s time. Gen. 6:2 speaks of the sons of God, seeing that the daughters of men were fair, took them wives of all which they chose. It was then that the wickedness of man began its rapid growth and by the time of Noah was so great that God purposed to destroy the earth with a flood.

Ver. 5, “spared not the old world”: Condemned it to be destroyed with a flood.

Ver. 6, “with an overthrow”: Destroyed with fire.

Ver. 7, “vexed”: Grieved and oppressed.

Ver. 10, “despise government”: Disregard those in authority, both spiritual and earthly powers.

Ver. 11, “angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord”: While these presumptuous ungodly people lift up their words against those in authority, Jude 8, 9, and 10 speaks of the same thing, “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Now I do not know all about this affair, but I believe it is showing that being quick to condemn and contest those in authority is a manifestation of an ungodly spirit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today deals with the sad state into which many have fallen through the years of history. False prophets and false teachers who are filled with their own ideas and thoughts void of inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit have stained the history of mankind. Many have followed their destructive ways and have brought swift destruction upon them. Even more sadly, so many times the trouble caused by false teachers is backed by covetousness and the love of material wealth.

Peter speaks of Noah, labeling him as a preacher of righteousness. Now we are certain that Noah was that, and as he and his sons worked to build the ark according to God’s instruction, he preached and proclaimed to those of the world looking on just what he was doing, and why he was doing it. How tragic that *no one* of the world took heed and responded in faith and obedience. Just Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, were the only ones who found refuge from the awful flood that destroyed humanity.

Peter then mentioned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha and how Lot, vexed with the ungodly people

around him, was delivered. It tells in Genesis 19 how Lot escaped from the condemned city of Sodom with his wife and two daughters. Sadly, his wife did not heed the counsel of the angels and looked back from behind him, and became a pillar of salt. Oh, it was a hard thing to leave his home and worldly possessions to escape the judgment of God. Our lesson is speaking of these two incidents of old where people escaped the destruction of the ungodly.

So it is yet today. We are facing the destruction of this present heaven and earth. It will mean so much for us to fully trust and obey the Lord and His Word and be accounted worthy to escape the terrible day of destruction that is yet to come!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How was Noah and his family saved from the destruction of their day?
2. What did Lot have to deal with in the wicked city of Sodom?
3. What is going on and is so prevalent in our wicked society today?
4. How are we going to escape the destruction of this world soon to come?
5. Why should we give due respect to the faithful godly ministers of today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Almighty God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein. He created man in His own image and, as Genesis 1:28 says, God said unto the male and female: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it”. He wanted man to have the rule over everything. This included not just a literal, outward control, but it also included the control of one’s mind, spirit, and affections. It was in the affections where Satan got the advantage and drew man’s thoughts in the wrong direction. Sin came into the world when Adam disobeyed God and, sad to say, sin has multiplied and taken over the hearts and affections of mankind ever since.

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to bring about a salvation that will give mankind victory and peace and fellowship with God again, but God will not force His will in any way and on any person. There must be a willing and obedient heart and mind in man to enable him to overcome the temptation of Satan and the flesh. Jesus overcame it and He can help us to overcome it, also.

We are going to have to be diligent and earnest with all of our hearts to be a partaker of the happiness that comes by being obedient and holy before God; however, the controlling influences of the world are those who do not make this purpose in their hearts to please God. A person must weigh this matter deeply and earnestly in their heart and mind and come to a firm decision. God is able and willing to help us to do that, but we must be faithful in our own responsibility. The results of sin and ungodliness all around us spell the truth that it is better to turn from sin, give our hearts to God and be faithful and fully obedient to Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Christ said, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." (John 17:15) While our sojourn here is surrounded by the enemy and all of its evil forces, it is profitable to practice fixing our sights on heaven. There are active choices we can make that not only sharpen our vision for eternity but can keep our hearts and minds pure while living in this present evil world:

1. "Gird up the loins of your mind" - I Peter 1:13: Learn to discipline your thought patterns to think on those things that are good, clean and wholesome. The Lord made us with intellectual abilities and there are plenty of good books, articles, and a wealth of information that is edifying to the mind and spirit. The old saying, "You are what you eat" is also true for the mind. You are what you feed your mind.

2. "But by love serve one another" - Galatians 5:13: Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the needs that are around you. Find something positive for your hands to do and do it with all your might. There is always a "Lazarus" at your door if you will be receptive to the opportunities.

3. "Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" - I Peter 5:10: Develop more fully your relationship with the Lord. Set aside time in each day to talk with the Lord and meditate/memorize the Word of God.

As you can see, there are plenty of ways to keep us safe in this wicked time; despite all of the worldly influences that seem to surround us. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:11-13 .

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

CONVERSATION AND WAYS OF THE UNGODLY, PART 2

2 Peter 2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption:

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

MEMORY VERSE: For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. —2 Peter 2, 20

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The sad account in history is that all down through the ages there have been souls who have once believed in Jesus Christ, but have been led away from the faith by the influence of the wicked and lustful world around them.

WORD DEFINITIONS

2 Peter 2:12, “natural brute beasts”: No higher in true godliness than the animals. “taken”: Caught in the traps of sin and ungodliness.

Ver. 13, “riot in the day time”: Transgress God’s word with no regard to His Light. “blemishes”: Noticeable marks of ungodly behavior. “sporting”: Reveling and showing off.

Ver. 14, “eyes full of adultery”: Literally, “eyes of an adulteress.” Seeking to seduce and snare. “cannot cease from sin”: Incessant; not abandoning or giving up sin. “beguiling unstable souls”: Enticing ignorant, unbalanced people. “exercised with covetous practices”: They have allowed their heart to be drawn to worldly riches. “cursed children”: Souls under God’s curse of displeasure.

Ver. 15, “the way of Balaam”: This is spoken of in Numbers chapters 22-24. Balaam was supposed to be a man of God, but yielded to the request of God’s enemies to come and curse Israel because of their offer for financial gain. Such is the way of many people down through the ages who fell victim to the alluring trap of material wealth. Balaam’s way, or *counsel*, was for the Moabites to entice the Israelite young men with beautiful women, that they might commit idolatry.

Ver. 17, “mist of darkness”: The gloom of eternal damnation.

Ver. 18, “wantonness”: Fully controlled by fleshly lusts.

Ver. 22 “the dog is turned to his own vomit again”: This is a quotation from Proverbs 26:11.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is the continuation of Peter's report of ungodly and unfaithful people who were bringing in heresies and false doctrines among the Christian congregations. He was fearful and very grieved of the degrading influence of these false teachers. He labels them as "natural brute beasts," declaring that their end would be destruction, and warning everyone of this woeful danger. They shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, he stated. They are bold and proud, "sporting" themselves with no fear nor shame. Oh, the awful condition that their covetous practices were bringing about! He spoke about the people who take heed to these false preachers as being like Balaam of old. Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness," being influenced by financial gain promised him if he would support the cause against the people of Israel who were trying to follow God's leadings. Peter spoke of how Balaam was rebuked for his iniquity by his donkey, and how the donkey spoke with a man's voice against him. Later, at Balaam's counsel, the Moabites and Midianites set for their young women to lure the young men of Israel into idolatry. What a terrible and destructive way in which the enemy of our souls sets his traps and seeks to deceive and lead people away from the truth of the gospel!

If such terrible conditions and influences against the true way of the Lord were exercised back then in Peter's time, how much more are they still working today! Oh, how we need to be on our guard and be diligent to hold fast to the true, holy, faithful, and godly teachings of the Word of God in our time! Holiness, freedom and victory over the world, sin, and transgression of God's Word; and humble, loving, kind, meek, and obedient attitudes of heart and life—we must be faithful and true to God in these things if we purpose and desire to be accounted worthy to attain to eternal life and the resurrection of the dead!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Peter label these false teachers?
2. What will be their final end if they do not reform?
3. What are some of the false doctrines that we have in our day?
4. How does the love of money and the lure of fleshly appetites affect people?
5. What measures can we take to not be deceived by false doctrine?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our day we have encountered many false doctrines and beliefs generated by people who have no vision of what is good and acceptable with our Creator. One of the greatest of these wrong conceptions of what the Bible teaches is the teaching that we cannot live free from sin. They teach that we have to confess our sins daily, and that we cannot live a holy and righteous life, free from sin and ungodliness. Then there is the teaching that we must speak in other tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost. It is also taught and believed that a man or woman can marry someone else after they are separated from their first husband or wife. It is taught that you must go and join the church of your choice to be what God wants you to be. Then there is the teaching that women can cut off their hair (which is given them for a covering), wear clothes that reveal parts of the body, and that they can wear rings, necklaces, and other ornaments of pride. Oh, how

sad that the church world is so stained with false teachings and worldly adornment! How faithful we need to be to seek the Lord in earnest prayer to be led by His Word and the Holy Spirit, and not the ideas and opinions of fleshly minds and hearts!

God wants our inner man adorned with the “ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, not the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel [fine clothing]” 1 Peter 3:3, 4. Also, 1 Timothy 2:9,10 teaches “that women adorn themselves in modest [decent, proper] apparel with shamefacedness [reverence, bashfulness] and sobriety [moderation, self-control, soundness of mind] and not with broided [elaborate and embellished] hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works”. Eph. 5:3,4 says, “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints [holy people]; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting [vulgar, coarse, crude joking], which are not convenient [fitting or proper]: but rather giving of thanks. He goes on to say in verse 5, “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” May God help us!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

The heresy against which the apostle warned the people was no doubt the Gnostic philosophy, an ancient pagan-turned-Christian belief system that embraced, among other unbiblical teachings, a dualism between spirit and matter, a “salvation” through a higher, deeper knowledge of God, and a teaching that anything done in the body, even sin, has no meaning, because life exists only in the spirit realm.

As Peter stated, they believed and taught that Jesus did not come to die for our sins, but was a human Messiah, an example for how we should think and believe. (“...denying the Lord that bought them...” II Peter 2:1)

Peter describes them as following the way, or doctrine, of Balaam, which, as described by Jesus, is “to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication” (Revelation 2:14).

The doctrine of a sect of the Gnostics, the Nicolaitans, is also condemned by Jesus, Who said He “hated” this doctrine. (Rev. 2:15).

Do these ancient heresies exist today? Yes, and more widely than you might think. The doctrine that just “believing” is sufficient, and that we are no longer required to be “doers of the Word”; that it doesn’t really matter what you do in the body, you are “under grace”—is just a modern form of the Gnostic/Nicolaitan doctrine, which was comfortable and fine with mixing occultic paganism, sexual immorality, and idolatry with “Christianity”.

Modern Gnostics believe in the power of prayer and in an all-loving, all-merciful and benevolent God, who loves unconditionally and equally; however, they also believe in finding their own truth, and don’t believe in hell or sin.

It’s the *mixture* of beliefs that is so deceptive; hard to put your finger on it, but there it is, a heretical strand in a bundle of “good” teachings. Let us beware.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN, PART 1

2 Peter 3:1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. —2 Peter 3:10

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the King of glory, will come again in great power to destroy this present earth and heavens and bring all mankind to the final judgment. We should be fully prepared to meet Him in holiness, godliness and righteousness; in peace without spot, and blameless.

WORD DEFINITIONS

2 Peter 3:1, “beloved”: Dear, precious, and greatly loved and cherished.

Ver. 3, “scoffers”: False teachers; those who deride, mock, and reject the true gospel and teachings of Christ. “walking after their own lusts”: Living according to their own fleshly desires.

Ver. 5, “willingly are ignorant”: Have no desire to learn or be taught. “of old”: Created in the beginning of time.

Ver. 7, “kept in store”: Preserved and held together. “reserved unto fire”: Kept ready for destruction by fire. “against”: Until. “perdition”: Eternal punishment and destruction.

Ver. 9, “not slack”: Not dull or uncertain. “some men count slackness”: Humanity doubts if Jesus really is going to come the second time.

Ver. 10, “burned up”: Completely destroyed.

Ver. 11, “be dissolved”: Be loosened. The atoms and elements are held in shape by the Word of God. In that last day at the Lord’s coming the Word of God will be withdrawn from their substance and will cause them to pass away to nothing.

Ver. 12, “hasting”: Desiring it to hurry up and come. “elements”: What all that the heavens and earth are made up of.

Ver. 13, “Nevertheless”: Not fearing that coming day of destruction.

Ver. 14, “seeing that ye look for such things”: Being fully aware of this destruction that is to come. “be diligent”: Be earnest, steadfast, and faithful to live well pleasing before God. “without spot and blameless”: In perfect holiness and full acceptance by God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the last two lessons we learned much about the error and ungodly ways of so many false prophets and deceived souls in worldly and ungodly lusts. Such were going strong in our beloved Brother Peter’s day. In this his second epistle Peter desires to stir up our pure minds to remember and keep in mind the words spoken by the holy prophets and the commandments and teachings of him and the other apostles of the Lord and Saviour. He then brought out about some other lustful people who were questioning if the Lord was truly going to come again as had been declared. Peter, labeling them “willingly ignorant,” recalled how that it was by the Word of God that the earth was formed and shaped as it was, and that some of the earth was built up above (out of) the water, while the rest was in (beneath) the water. He reminded how that the world perished, being overflowed with water. That was in Noah’s time. Peter then brings out that the present heavens and earth by the same Almighty Word of God are being reserved in preparation for the final destruction which

shall be by fire. We are still living in this world that is destined to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. He reminds us that time has no bearing with God, and that He is not slack concerning His purpose to destroy the earth, but is longsuffering to us humans, not desiring us to perish, but that we would get down to business with Him and repent of sin and be saved.

Peter declares that the final day of the Lord's coming will arrive in a time unexpected and not looked for. It will come with a great noise. The elements of the universe will melt with horrible burning heat and all things will be burned up and destroyed. He warns us to be diligent in holy conversation and godliness. We need to be looking earnestly for and wanting that day to hurry and come! All of this material earth with its houses, roads, highways, bridges, huge buildings, and all else of man's work will pass away in an instant. Oh, how we need to receive the knowledge of this final destruction of earth and its vanities! It should be in our prayers night and day that God will help us to be diligent and ready to meet that final day and "be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless"!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Of what things does Peter want us to be mindful?
2. What were the things that scoffers were going to be saying?
3. Of what things are these people willingly ignorant?
4. How did Peter say that the earth and heavens of old were shaped?
5. What happened that caused humanity to perish in those days of old?
6. What destruction will come to the earth and heavens at the end?
7. What kind of persons ought we to be in preparation of that day?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, how we need to be mindful of the fact that we are nearing the end of this present evil world! Jude 14 quotes from Enoch of old, the seventh from Adam, and his prophecy: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard [harsh and critical] speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Then he says in verses 20 and 21, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Oh, let us take heed to the wise and solemn warnings of our lesson today!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

We have all heard this warning, "Be ready the Lord is coming!" "You better be prepared!" As a boy in

the early 60's, we visited my grandparents in Greenwood, Arkansas, every summer. We loved going there and seeing our cousins, aunts, and uncles. But one thing we all despised was those late night trips to the old cellar when a storm was coming, because it was damp, musty, and full of cobwebs. We would get wet walking through the rain, and then go inside and sit on a little crowded board and wait, and wait.

It was a ritual you just had to get used to because Granny didn't give you a choice. If a storm was coming, she made everyone get up and go across the yard to the cellar. My Dad bucked up a few times and there were a few snappy words, but Granny usually won and off we would go. In times when we weren't there, she would march out by herself and spend hours in her underground "fraidy hole" till the storm passed over.

One day on April 12, 1968 a huge tornado came through her town destroying the old home where they had lived and killing thirteen people, including my Grandpa's mother; but my Granny was spared safely in her little cellar. You could have tried selling her two more cellars and she would have bought them.

It just seems fitting to me to compare Granny's warning to our lesson today. Be ready! The Lord is coming! Don't give up waiting. In 1975 late one night, the Lord spoke audibly to me saying twice, "Luke 21:22." I got up, looked it up, and read, "For these be the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled." God's vengeance is coming on this world. He will not return as a savior, but as a judge—condemning the wicked and all those who fear him not. We see wars, earthquakes, famine, and signs of the times all around. Surely the Lord is coming shortly. Let us all be ready at any cost!

—Bro. James Bell

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN, PART 2

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of dark-

ness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

2 Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

MEMORY VERSE: And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ will soon come in power and glory to raise the dead and gather His chosen saints unto Him, raising from the dead those who died faithful to Him, and those who are yet alive, casting away the wicked unto everlasting destruction and taking His faithful saints to be with Him forever.

WORD DEFINITIONS

1 Thessalonians 4:13, “asleep”: Those who have passed away in death.

Ver. 14, “will God bring with him”: God will raise the dead who are saved as He raised Christ.

Ver. 15, “not prevent”: Not come forth ahead of the dead.

Ver. 16, “the trump of God”: God’s call to the dead to be risen to life.

5:2 “as a thief in the night”: Suddenly and unexpectedly.

Ver. 3, “when they shall say, peace and safety”: When people of the world think that everything is just fine and ideal. “sudden destruction”: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52); just that sudden will the Lord appear in final judgment.

Ver. 6, “be sober”: Be self controlled, ready, and on our guard against the devil.

Ver. 8, “of the day”: In the glorious light of Christ.

Ver. 9, “not appointed us to wrath”: Not sentenced us to destruction.

2 Thessalonians 1:6 “recompense”: Repay and return trouble to those who make trouble.

Ver. 7, “rest with us”: Deliverance from destruction with all the faithful and true. “revealed from heaven”: Suddenly appear in power and glory.

Ver. 8, “flaming fire”: The consuming fire of God’s wrath “taking vengeance”: Pouring out His wrath.

Ver. 10, “glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe”: Worshipped, adored, praised, and joyfully welcomed.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our final lesson in this series we will continue from our last lesson and consider, along with Peter’s warnings, some of Paul’s writings concerning the coming of the Lord in that last great day. And, as we survey and meditate on the wonderful truth of the coming of the Lord, our hearts are filled with joy and gladness. We have a blessed hope and a very precious future to look forward to!

Our first thoughts in this lesson are about the dear ones who have passed from this earthly life who were truly saved and lived godly, holy lives. We have wonderful tidings about what we can look forward to! God is going to resurrect them to immortal bodies and everlasting life. They are going to rise up from the graves (the earth they were buried in will have passed away) and we are going to join with them and be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. Oh, what a sight that will be! “So shall we ever be with the Lord!” But then, as we joyfully think of these things, there is the sad picture of destruction coming upon the ungodly and those who are not prepared. It surely pays to get right with our Creator and live in readiness for that great day to come!

Our lesson portrays the coming of the Lord as with His mighty angels. Just how that will be we may not be able to comprehend, but it will be also in flaming fire. This is not literal, earthly fire, but the powerful destructive fire of God’s wrath. And it will fall on all who do not have fellowship with God and have not obeyed the gospel of Christ. They will be punished with everlasting destruction from His presence, but He will be glorified, praised, worshipped, and admired by all who received the testimony of His grace and salvation and prepared to meet Him. Oh, what a joyful meeting that will be! Lord, help us all to be faithful and be accounted worthy to escape the destruction of the wicked and to stand accepted with Him!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What will take place when Jesus comes again in power and great glory?
2. What will it be to be caught up together with the departed saints?
3. How will it be with those who are not prepared for that day?
4. What must we do to be fully prepared to meet the Lord?
5. In whom will He be glorified by whom will He be admired?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The studies of this series of lessons has covered a good number of subjects. In it all is set forth the wonderful salvation that has been brought and made available to us through the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God into this earthly state, and the great grace and salvation that He has provided for us to have and enjoy. Through the virtue and power of the salvation Christ brought, we can be saved from the power of sin and the transgression of the holy Word of God. It can be completely defeated and destroyed out of our hearts and lives. We can turn away from the ways of lust, pride, foolishness, hatred, strife, and all other ungodly paths that are offered to us from this wicked world and society.

I can look back in my youth and remember the influence and drawing that prevailed over my heart and mind, causing me to have habits and ways that were sinful and very displeasing to God and the teachings of the Bible. I thank the Lord for a godly mother and godly saints who helped to influence me to turn away from sin and to seek the grace and salvation that Jesus Christ suffered and died to bring to us. God blessed and saved me in my 18th year and I have had a happy and successful life in His will and in His service. I would like to encourage all young people to take the course that I took, for it has brought me much happiness and a bright and blessed hope and anticipation of eternal joys and blessings. The world holds out its charm and attractions, but there lurks behind its attractions the sad truth of its sad and bitter end. May the Lord bless these wonderful Bible truths to every one, is my prayer.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

The second coming of Jesus Christ is an event none of us have yet experienced.

We have attended many different kinds of events -- birthday events, wedding events, and yes, maybe even funeral gatherings. We usually have a pretty good idea of what to expect when it comes to proper attire and conduct, but if we are unsure about details there is usually someone we can ask who is more knowledgeable and can give us more information.

I have thought about this event of Jesus' second coming and wondered. What will it be like? What will the sounds be? Will I know what is going on around me or will I only be looking at Jesus? So many questions cross my mind. I only have one source to turn to learn about that last and final day – the words recorded in the Bible. Not one person on this earth can “clue me in” on what to expect. And yet. It will be the event of all events. The culmination of all things and peoples of this world from all ages of time. It is almost beyond comprehension to think of such a day.

God doesn't “spring surprises” on us, though. He has given us a pretty detailed narrative on what we can expect to happen. He then adequately instructed us on how to live so we will be prepared for the event of His second coming. Do we believe that day will really come? Are any details of life more important than these? Comfortingly, we have a wondrous opportunity today to know Jesus before He comes back – to know the warmth of His love and to experience His compassion and mercy in every event, situation, and circumstance of our earthly lives. While we might have questions and wonder about His second coming, we need never wonder about Jesus Himself. The last words in red we have recorded in the Bible are these: “Surely, I come quickly.” Let us take heed.

—Sis. Julie Elwell

