

- b. Will we give them a Spiritual heritage in which the lukewarm is the normal and considered to be the average?
- c. Will we give them a heritage in which we rely on tricks rather than on substance to win interest in the gospel of Christ?
- d. Will they be ignorant of God's word because we have been so little concerned about it?

CONCLUSION:

1. God did not disown and utterly forsake his people, but they began to live on a lower spiritual plane.
2. The people of the days of the Judges gave to the people of the times of the kings less of a heritage than they had received from the days of Joshua.
3. Many serious tragedies befell the Jews in later history that had their roots in the period of the Judges.
4. "If we are insistent that we be a lukewarm, uncommitted people, God will give us up. In so doing, we will make the decision to spiritually impair the heritage which we give to our children. Ours is the responsibility!"

INTRODUCTION

1. Ruth, the book of our present study, is one of undying loveliness and charm. It makes such an impression upon the poet Keats that he alluded to it in his Ode To A Nightingale.
2. Dr. Johnson, on one occasion, read it to an enthralled London Club, making out that it was some new work, finally telling them that it came from a book that many of them despised - The Bible.
3. Benjamin Franklin once read this story to a group of skeptics in Paris, France. At the conclusion, they remarked that it was the most marvelous story they had ever heard and suggested he have it printed. He revealed to them that it had already been printed.
4. The events recorded in the book of Ruth took place during the days of the judges.
Judges 1:1.
 - a. "The Book of Ruth is a love story told in four chapters. It gives us a glimpse of every-day life in Bethlehem; in home and in harvest-field, in its general gossip and its law suits, more than three thousand years ago." (Sermon Outline Bible, p. 406)
 - b. After the spectacle of every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, it is refreshing to read this lovely incident that took place in "the midst of spiritual, moral and political confusion and lawlessness that we saw recorded in the book of Judges." (Hayden)
 - c. The two books make an interesting contrast. "The book of Judges reveals a famine of faith; whereas Ruth unveils a fortune of faith. Judges reveals apathy under providence. Ruth reveals action amid famine." (Paul Southern)
5. The chapters in Ruth have been described in the following ways:
 - a.) Campbell describes them thus:
 - (1) The Choice of Faith. **Chapters 1 & 2**
 - (2) The Venture of Faith. **Chapter 3.**
 - (3) The Reward of Faith. **Chapter 4.**
 - b. Southern puts them like this.
 - (1) **Chapter one** is Ruth resolving.
 - (2) **Chapter two** is Ruth rendering.
 - (3) **Chapter three** is Ruth Resting.
 - (4) **Chapter four** is Ruth Rewarded.
6. The key words of the book might be love and faith and the key verse—**Ruth 4:14.**
7. With these introductory thoughts in mind, let's consider:

DISCUSSIONI. THE STORY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH.

- A. The events connected with Elimelech and Naomi as they leave Palestine, sojourn in Moab and Naomi returns. **Chapter 1.**
 - B. Ruth gleanes in the field of Boaz and it seems to be "love at first sight."
Chapter 2.
 - C. Naomi instructs Ruth in carrying out the requirements of the law on marriage.
Chapter 3.
 - D. Boaz meets requirements of the law and marries Ruth. **Chapter 4.**
- II. THE CHIEF CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK AND GOD'S OVER-RULING PROVIDENCE IN THEIR LIVES.
- A. Naomi - Mara.
 1. The word "Naomi" means "pleasant."
 2. Upon returning to Bethlehem, she refused to be called this name because she said, "I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty."
(**Ruth. 1:20**)
 3. She asked to be called "Mara" which means "bitter."
 4. "Naomi and her family left because of a famine, but left with abundance; now she returns empty. How often this is the case! We leave true riches in the search of something that looks more promising, but find that what we are seeking is all in vain. Yet, even in this, we see the providence of the Lord! Had Naomi and her husband found riches and prosperity in the land of Moab, and had Elimelech lived, probably neither she nor Ruth would have been blessed with the distinction which they now enjoy. Truly, Naomi returned home empty in order that she might be made full of the Lord!" ("The Old Test-

B. Ruth, blessed of the Lord.

1. Ruth became a widow at an early age. She became "a widow in order that she might become a mother in Israel and in the lineage of Jesus, the son of God." **Ruth 1:4,5.**
2. Ruth's love, devotion and depth of conviction are stated in **Ruth 1:16,17.**
3. The providence of God led Ruth to "light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz." **Ruth 2:3.**
4. "Who could know, gleaning in that gleaning field what that union of two righteous souls in the quiet stately march of history would bring! And yet, out of that, after the flesh, came Jesus." (Campbell)

C. Boaz, a Man of Stature.

1. He was a mighty man of wealth and of the family of Elimelech. **Ruth 2:1.**
2. He was a man of high moral character or else he would have taken advantage of Ruth when she came to him by night. **Ruth. 3:1-15.**
3. He was an honest man or else he would have trampled the right of a kinsman nearer than he was. **Ruth. 4:1-12.**
4. The providence of God had cast Ruth into his life but he still followed lawful procedures to triumph.

D. God's action in the lives of all these individuals shows that God rules in the affairs of men.

1. He is not an unconcerned by-stander
2. Ample proof of the providence of God and the fact that he is dutifully concerned with the affairs of men.

III. MORE VALUABLE TRUTH GLEANED FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

A. God is no respecter of persons.

1. By the acceptance of Ruth into the lineage of Christ, God showed that He is not and has never been, a respecter of persons.
 - a. To the Jew, a few centuries later, Ruth would be just another Gentile on the level with the beast.
 - b. Racial prejudice is still one of the curses that lingers to haunt mankind.
2. It took a miracle to convince Peter that God is no respecter of persons. **Acts 10:34,35.**
3. The principles and recompense of righteous dealings are not dependent upon race, but are as valid for a Moabite as for a Jew.

B. Circumstances neither make nor destroy believers.

1. Boaz had all opportunity and wealth, but was faithful and true.
2. Ruth had no opportunity or childhood training, but nevertheless became glorious in character.
3. Any individual can rise to great heights when God is his environment.

C. Ruth's choice sets before us a great example.

1. She chose the true God. "Thy God shall be my God." **1:16c.**
2. She chose the right paths. "Whither thou goest I will go." **1:16b.**
3. She chose a godly home. "Where thou lodgest I will lodge." **1:16a.**
4. She chose godly associates. "Thy people shall be my people." **1:16d.**
5. She made a wise choice because it was right and because of consequences.
6. She made a personal choice - no one persuaded her to make it, no kinsmen set the example for her - of her own accord.
7. She made a determined choice. She refused to allow Orpah's return to move her or Naomi's entreaty.
8. She was rewarded for her choice and her name has a permanent place in history.

D. Another important aspect is the genealogy listed in **Chapter 4** of David's descendents.

1. About 1,000 years earlier Abraham had been chosen of God to found a nation through whom the Savior would come. In the book of Ruth, we have the founding of the family within that nation.
2. David's great grandfather was half Canaanite (Boaz, son of Rahab **Mt. 1:5**) and his great-grandmother (Ruth) was Moabite - a foregleam of a Messiah for all nations.

CONCLUSION

1. The book of Ruth occupies a very prominent place in the word of God. It acts as a transition between Judges and 1 Samuel.
2. Just as Ruth had to make a choice so you must make one - the God of heaven or the god of this world.
3. Make a choice like Ruth, and you'll be rewarded.

Introduction.

1. Our world is truly an age of change and no man of intelligence can deny it.
 - a. We now have aircraft that can fly over 1800 miles per hour.
 - b. We have landed instruments on the moon.
 - c. Instead of riding a horse to preach the gospel we now ride powerful jets.
 - d. A thing that is here today may be changed tomorrow.
2. In the midst of all these changes there is the cry that we need a new gospel or the gospel needs to be changed to be relevant.
 - a. The modernistic cry has long made this plea.
 - b. The Presbyterian Church recently changed here creed to suit the desires of the people by denying the inspiration of the Bible.
 - c. The Unitarians have changed their religion to suit the desires of the people by denying there is a personal God and in Dec. 1967, one of their leading preachers abandoned prayer entirely.
 - d. Some members of the church are now advocating that we need a more relevant gospel.
3. But if the gospel needs to be changed then it means that one or more of the following things have changed.

Discussion.I. HAS SIN CHANGED?

A. Where is the man that will affirm that sin has changed?

1. Sin has always been, and is now, the transgression of God's will. 1 Jn. 3:4.
2. The sin of omission has always been failure to do. Jas. 4:17.
3. The sin of commission has always been overt acts contrary to God's will. 1 Jn. 5:17.

B. Where is the modernist that will affirm that the sins of the past are not the sins of today?

1. Some seem to think that the sin of homosexuality is new today, but it is as old as Sodom.
 - a. Homosexuality has to do with sexual desire toward, and sexual activity with, one's own sex.
 - b. The men of Sodom refused the daughters of Lot and desired the men in his house. Gen. 19:5,8; Rom. 1:27
2. Some seem to think that the "hippie" movements and similar movements where men and boys have qualities more characteristics of women than men are new things, but there were the effeminate in Corinth. 1 Cor. 6:9.
3. Paul gives a whole list of sins which the Gentile world was guilty of and they remind us of today. Rom. 1:29-32; 1 Cor. 6:9,10. They were changed by the gospel. 1 Cor. 6:11.

C. The gospel came to answer once and for all the problem of sin. Sin has not changed nor will it ever change. The next question would be, if sin has not changed then

II. HAS MAN CHANGED?

A. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament abound with examples to show that man has not changed.

1. Pride and desire for unlawful knowledge caused the downfall of the first home. Gen. 3:1-6.
2. Strong drink caused Noah to curse his own descendants. Gen. 9:24,25.
3. The desire for worldly gain brought shame to the family of Lot just as it does many today. Gen. 13:11-13.
4. Adultery brought David to his saddest hour. 2 Sam. 11.
5. Failure to restrain his children caused the house of Eli to be cut off. 1 Sam. 3:13.
6. 1 Cor. 10:6. says we are not to lust after these things as they did.

B. Jeremiah, 700 years before Christ stated that man cannot guide his own steps without divine guidance. Jer. 10:23.

1. World conditions today show that man is still unable to direct his own steps.
 - a. When we are not safe to even walk the streets of some cities at night who will say that man has improved?
 - b. We are involved in war today that is far above the power of mere man to solve.

2. Man is as helpless and hopeless without Christ today as he has ever been.
C. Man has not changed. He is the same weak creature he has always been.

III. HAS GOD CHANGED?

- A. God has not changed. Jas. 1:17.
B. God still has the same attitude towards sin and the sinner.
1. Sin still separates man from God. Isa. 59:1,2.
2. The sinner will still be separated from God in eternity. 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

IV. HAS SATAN CHANGED?

- A. Where is the man who believes the Bible at all who will affirm that the Devil is getting better or that he is dead?
B. Is there any evidence that Satan has ceased to tempt man?
C. Is there still evidence of his work in a world torn by bloodshed and strife?
D. The thinking man can still see the influence of Satan and knows he is still walking about as a roaring lion. 1 Pet. 5:8.

Conclusion.

1. If SIN has not changed then the gospel is still need as the cure for sin. If MAN has not changed he is still subject to sin. If GOD has not changed he still condemns sin and longs to save man. If SATAN has not changed he still has to be overcome by the gospel of Christ.
2. If all these have not changed, and they haven't then there is no need to change the gospel.
3. We dare not change the gospel because even a little change makes a tremendous difference. "Once in a little village there lived a man who had lost his health and his wife. All he had left of his family was one daughter. She remained single in order to be near her father in the lingering years of a severe illness. He finally got better and one thing that the doctor said would help him was to go abroad, go to some health resort in Europe and stay several months. This he did leaving his daughter at home. She had lost her health nursing her father. When the ship, on which her father was returning, was a few hours out from shore he decided to send his daughter a message and it is the way it read: "PAPA WELL ON BOARD---HAVE BEST HORSE TO MEET HIM." The operator who received the message said: "It has been misspelled, that isn't what it means" and so this sad and tragic change was made: "PAPA FELL OVERBOARD---HAVE BEST HEARSE TO MEET HIM." When they brought the message to the daughter delicate in health, her heart failed and she fell dead. When the ship landed the sad news was brought to her father that his daughter had died instantly. Upon going to the home they found her lying on the floor with the message in her hand stating that "papa fell overboard." What did it? The operator on the shore who heanged the message." THE GOSPEL MUST NOT BE CHANGED BECAUSE IT DOES NOT NEED TO BE CHANGED.

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is probably no book in the Bible with more familiar stories than the book of our present study, and each story illustrates in graphic terms messages that are fresh and vital to us today.
2. The times of Eli and Samuel is an era of transition from the days of the judges to the kings of Israel.
 - a. The story of Eli serves as a background for the ministry of Samuel.
 - b. The story of Samuel serves as a preparatory stage for Israel's demand of a king.
3. The events in 1 Samuel cover a period of some 100 years in the history of Israel from the birth of Samuel to the death of Saul.
4. The key word of the book might be obedience and the key verse would be 1 Sam. 15:22.
5. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

A. Samuel.

1. The birth of Samuel. 1 Sam. 1-2:11, 18-21.
 - a. Hannah prays for a son. 1:1-11.
 - b. Eli assures her that God will grant a son. 1:12-19.
 - c. Samuel is lent to the Lord by his mother. 1:20-21.
2. The call of Samuel. 3:1-18.
 - a. God calls to Samuel at night. 3:1-10.
 - b. God gives Samuel a terrible message about Eli's house. 3:11-18.
3. The ministry of Samuel.
 - a. He is established a prophet in Israel. 3:19-21; 4:1.
 - b. He judges Israel 40 years. 4:2-7:17.
 - (1) Battle with the Philistines, Eli's sons slain, ark lost, Eli dies. 4:2-22.
 - (2) Many evils befall Philistines because of the ark. 5:1-6:21.
 - (3) Samuel pleads with Israel to obey God and pleads for victory over the Philistines. 7:1-17.
 - c. Samuel anoints Saul as king.
 - (1) Israel asks for a king. 8:1-22.
 - (a) Because Samuel was old and his sons walked not in his ways. 8:1-5.
 - (b) God instructs Samuel to give them a king but point out what he'll do to them. 8:6-18.
 - (c) They desire to be like the nations about them. 8:19-22.
 - (2) Saul is selected as the first king. 9 & 10
 - (a) Saul comes to Samuel while seeking his father's asses. ch. 9
 - (b) Saul anointed with oil. ch. 10.
 - d. Samuel reasons with Israel and admonishes them. 1 Sam. 11 & 12.
 - e. Samuel reproves Saul.
 - (1) For offering an offering upon the altar. 1 Sam. 13.
 - (2) For failing to obey God in the matter of the Amalekites. 1 Sam. 15.
 - f. Samuel anoints David as king. 1 Sam. 16.

B. Saul. First king of Israel.

1. He was of the tribe of Benjamin. 1 Sam. 9:21.
2. Physically he was higher than any of the people. 1 Sam. 10:23.
3. Saul is successful as a warrior until he begins to disobey God. 1 Sam. 11, 15.
4. Saul becomes jealous of David and seeks to kill him the rest of his life.
5. Saul kills himself after injury from Philistines. 1 Sam. 31.

C. David.

1. David is anointed king by Samuel at Bethlehem. 1 Sam. 16:1-13.
2. David plays the harp for Saul. 1 Sam. 16:14-23.
3. David slays Goliath. 1 Sam. 17.
4. David and Jonathan are close friends. 1 Sam. 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42.
5. David marries Saul's daughter, Michal. 1 Sam. 18:17-30; 19:11-17.
6. David flees from Saul into the wilderness. 1 Sam. 19:18-20:1; 21-31.

II. SOME MESSAGES FOR US FROM THE BOOK OF 1 Samuel.

A. It is possible for great men to fail as fathers.

1. Eli and Samuel were both great men as far as their performance of religious duties were concerned but they both largely failed as fathers.
2. The historian relates incidents in life of Eli's sons and then says, "and the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord." 1 Sam. 2:17. Why did he fail?
 - a. He appears to have largely ignored them while tending to other duties.
 - (1) Eli "heard all that his sons did unto Israel." (2:22b) A father that has to hear what his children are doing is not watching very effectively!
 - (2) "Eli was very old" (2:22a) which may indicate he had waited too long to train them.
 - b. He lightly rebukes their sins. "Why do ye such things?...for it is not good report that I hear." (2:23,24) "...notwithstanding they harkened not unto the voice of their father." (2:25)
 - (1) There is a time to be lenient, but it was long past with Eli's sons.
 - (2) Like so many modern parents Eli appears to have thrown up his hands "there's nothing I can do with these boys. I can't make them do right."
 - c. Eli rebuked his sons, he argued with them, but "he restrained them not" when he knew they were doing wrong. (3:13)
3. Samuel failed to learn a lesson from Eli.
 - a. He grew up in the same home with the boys.
 - b. He personally received the message of God against the boys.
 - c. He personally knew or saw the punishment that came.
 - d. The blot against Samuel's record is that "his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre..." (1 Sam. 8:3,5)
4. There is more involved in child training than to ask "Why did you do that?"

B. This book also proclaims the fact that great advantages and remarkable opportunities do not guarantee success.

1. Saul started out with God on his side. 1 Sam. 10:7.
2. Samuel was on his side. 1 Sam. 10.
3. All human history fails to record a greater failure than Saul - a man that could have been so great. "Saul's history is a stern warning of the fatal consequences of uncontrolled self-will, of the inevitable descent of an unrepentant heart from bad to worse, of the hopeless hardening which results from neglect to use grace given." (The Cambridge Bible, "Samuel I" Int., p. 37)
4. Regardless of opportunities and advantages the heart must be firm and steady in its allegiance to principle and its loyalty to God.

C. Man co-operates in the growing purpose of God. This is seen in two ways:

1. The career of Saul showed the people the folly of wanting a king like other nations.
 - a. God hoped to dissuade Israel from a king by showing them the manner of a king. 1 Sam. 8:6ff.
 - b. But when they kept clamoring for one God gave them a king that they might learn the folly and wickedness of the thing asked.
 - c. Be careful about clamoring for something in God's presence - He may give it to you when you don't need it.
2. The career of David pointed out how God would give them an ideal king and gave them a higher conception of their coming king.
3. God's purpose is set forth in both the success and failure of men.

D. God's victories are accomplished through the Disobedient and obedient alike.

1. It is not God's victory that is determined by man's attitude, but man's place in that victory.
 - a. Samuel and David were obedient and were used and saved.
 - b. Saul was disobedient and was used, but destroyed.
2. Man's attitude toward God does not affect his victory, but does determine man's destiny.
 - a. Loyal souls aid the final victory and then share in the raptures of that victory, and
 - b. Rebellious souls aid the final victory and then share in the wreath of that victory

- E. There is not anything that will take the place of obedience to God. 1 Sam. 15:22.
 - 1. Saul thought sacrifice would be just as good.
 - 2. Jesus said those that do his father's will, will enter the kingdom of heaven.
- F. There are certain parallels in the life of Samuel with that of Christ.
 - 1. The birth of both was foretold to their mothers. 1 Sam. 1:17; Lk. 1:31.
 - 2. Both of them were early found in the House of the Lord. 1 Sam. 1:24ff; Lk. 2:4ff.
 - 3. Almost identical expressions describe their growth as boys. 1 Sam. 2:26; Lk. 2:52.
 - 4. Both were faultless in the eyes of their fellowmen. 1 Sam. 2:26; 12:5; Lk. 23:42.
 - 5. Both spoke the word of God. 1 Sam. 3:10ff; Jn. 12:49.
 - 6. Both were men of prayer. 1 Sam. 7:5; 12:23; Lk. 6:12.
 - 7. Both trained others to follow in their steps. 1 Sam. 19:20; Mk. 3:14.
 - 8. Samuel typified Christ's work as:
 - a. Prophet - 1 Sam. 9:19; Acts 3:22,24.
 - b. Priest - 1 Sam. 10:8; Heb. 8:1.
 - c. Judge - 1 Sam. 7:15; Acts 17:31.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The experience of the past is made to afford lessons of warning and encouragement for the present.
- 2. History becomes the means of calling man to a sense of their high duty to God and being warned of the inevitable consequences of disobedience to Him.
- 3. 1 Samuel fits into the great message of the Bible - the glory of God and the salvation of man.

1. There is no mystery here will take the place of obedience to God. I Sam. 13:22.
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7. Almost identical expressions describe their growth as boys. I Sam. 2:26; Lk. 1:52.
8. Both were forbidden to see the eyes of their fellowmen. I Sam. 2:26; Lk. 1:52.
9. Both spoke the word of God. I Sam. 3:10; Lk. 12:12.
10. Both were men of prayer. I Sam. 7:9; Lk. 6:12.
11. Both trained others to follow in their steps. I Sam. 19:20; Lk. 9:14.
12. Samuel typified Christ's work as:
- a. Prophet - I Sam. 9:19; Acts 13:22, 24.
- b. Priest - I Sam. 10:8; Heb. 8:1.
- c. Judge - I Sam. 7:15; Acts 17:31.

CONCLUSION:

1. The experience of the past is made to afford lessons of warning and encouragement for the present.
2. History becomes the means of calling man to a sense of their high duty to God and fellow men.
3. I Samuel fits into the grand message of the Bible - the glory of God and the salvation of man.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Second Samuel covers a period of approximately 40 years in the history of Israel - nearly all of David's reign as king.
2. "The story of the second book of Samuel is one of triumph and tragedy, the rise and decline of King David, the triumph of his public life and the tragedy of his private one." (Hayden)
3. The key word of the book might be "sin" and the theme "The exceeding sinfulness of sin."
4. The key text might well be **2 Samuel 12:13** - "And David said unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.'"
5. It shall be our purpose to review the history of the book, note some practical lessons, and show its relation to the general theme of the Bible.

DISCUSSION:I. THE BOOK OF II SAMUEL DIVIDES ITSELF INTO THREE PARTS.

- A. David is established as king of Israel. (**II Samuel 1-10.**)
 1. The story opens with David receiving word of the death of Saul and Jonathan and he lamented over them. **ch. 1**
 2. David is then set up as king over Judah (**2:10**) and reigned $7\frac{1}{2}$ years in Hebron. (**5:5**).
 3. At the same time Abner who had been captain of Saul's army set up Ishbosheth to be king (**2:8-10**) over the rest of Israel.
 4. Finally David was made king over all Israel and reigned in Jerusalem for 33 years (**5:5**).
 - a. As king over all Israel he rapidly gained victories over the Jebusites, Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites. (**Chs. 5,8,10**).
 - b. He also moved the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. (**Ch. 6**)
- B. The second division - David sins and many calamities follow. (**Chapters 11-18**)
 1. David commits adultery with Bathsheba. (**Ch. 11**)
 - a. He has Uriah murdered to cover his sin.
 - b. Nathan rebukes David. (**Ch. 12**)
 2. Absalom conspires against David. (**Ch. 15**)
 - a. Absalom wins the hearts of Israel through some powerful political means. (**15:1-6**)
 - b. Absalom is defeated when his head got caught in a giant oak and Joab killed him. (**18:9,14**)
- C. The third division shows David repenting, being forgiven and his kingdom established. (**Chas. 19-24**)
 1. Sheba rebels against David and is beheaded by his people. (**Ch. 20**)
 2. There was three years of famine because Saul had slain the Gibeonites. (**Ch. 21**)
 3. David speaks a long psalm in praise of God. (**Chs. 22,23**)
 4. David sins in numbering Israel, God sends a pestilence, and David buys Araunah's threshing floor. (**Ch. 24**)

II. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THESE 40 YEARS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

- A. The first lesson is God's providential care in the life of David and the nation of Israel.
 1. God exalted David from the sheepcote to be ruler over Israel. **2 Sam. 7:8.**
 2. David, on several occasions, recognizes God as the one that exalted him to be ruler over Israel. (**2 Sam. 6:21; 7:18.**)
 3. God rules in the kingdoms of men. **Dan. 4:17, 25, 32.**
 4. God's providence works in our lives. **Rom. 8:28.**
- B. The second lesson is the folly of division.
 1. During the time that David reigned at one place and Ishbosheth at another, Israel was weak.
 2. Jesus said that a house divided against itself cannot stand. **Mt. 12:25.**
 3. Division and friction will sap the strength of any church. **cf. Psal. 133:1.**
 4. Two major causes of division:
 - a. Taking matters of faith (questions on which the Lord has legislated) and relegating them to the level of opinion and judgment.
 - b. Taking matters of judgment and elevating them to the level of faith or law.

- C. The third lesson is on the folly of fleshly lusts.
 - 1. David gave in to his fleshly lusts and, even though forgiven, suffered consequences the remainder of his days.
 - a. The child died. 12:18.
 - b. His daughter Tamar was raped by her half-brother Amnon. 13.
 - c. Amnon was killed by Absalom. 13:28,29.
 - d. Absalom led a rebellion against his father. 15:1ff.
 - e. His wives were violated publically. 16:21-23.
 - 2. James warns of the consequences of fleshly lusts. Jas. 1:14,15.
- D. A fourth great lesson to be gained is the importance of proper attitude of heart before God.
 - 1. David sinned on more than one occasion, but when made conscious of it confessed "I have sinned." (12:13; 24:10,17).
 - 2. Godly sorrow must characterize the heart of every individual that would please God. 2 Cor. 7:7-11.
- E. A fifth lesson is the emphasis on God's grace and mercy.
 - 1. When David truly repented God forgave him which shows his willingness to forgive.
 - 2. God's grace and truth are even more fully revealed in the gospel. Jn. 1:17.
- F. The sixth lesson is on consecration and devotion to God's service.
 - 1. David did much to exalt the worship in Israel.
 - a. He moved the ark to Jerusalem. 6:12.
 - b. He desired to build a temple. 7:1,2.
 - c. He wrote many psalms used in worship.
 - d. He refused to give to God that which cost him nothing. 24:24.
- G. Other thought provoking lessons from select verses.
 - 1. David recognized the chief good even in his enemies. 2:33,38.
 - 2. The contents of a prayer from a sincere and thankful heart. 7:18-29.
 - 3. Proper attitude in the death of a child. 12:22,23.
 - 4. The kind of friend that no one needs. 13:1-3.
 - 5. The feelings of old age. 19:35.
 - 6. When it is better to fall into God's hands rather than men. 24:14.

III. II SAMUEL IS RELATED TO THE OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE.

- A. There are some prophetic statements in II Samuel that refer to Christ.
 - 1. Chapter 22 is almost identical with Psalms 18.
 - 2. II Samuel 7:14 is quoted in Heb. 1:5, and applied to Christ.
 - 3. II Samuel 22:50 and Psalms 18:49 are quoted in Rom. 15:9 as "prophetic of the times when the Gentiles would glorify God for his mercy."
- B. II Samuel tells of the establishment of David's throne in Israel. II Sam. 7:12-14,16.
 - 1. This was typical or representative of the throne on which Christ would reign.
 - 2. The angel announced that Christ would sit on David's throne. Lk. 1:32.
 - 3. James quotes Amos 9:11 (Acts 15:16,17) to show that Christ is now on David's throne.
 - 4. "Possibly this is the most significant way that II Samuel is related to the unfolding of God's plan and to the overall purpose of the Bible. It records the establishment of David's earthly throne, which was typical or representative of the spiritual throne on which Christ reigns. David is both the fleshly and the royal progenitor of Christ." (Frank Van Dyke)
- C. It records events in an important period of Israel's history and shows how the purposes of the law of Moses were being accomplished.
 - 1. The worship of Jehovah, the one true God, was preserved and idolatry was prevented from spreading.
 - 2. It was also helping prepare the way for Christ by showing man the exceedingly sinfulness of sin and that he could never save himself by the strict demands of a legal system.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. II Samuel is a rich book, both in its contents and its relation to the overall picture.
- 2. We need to learn well these lessons from II Samuel as they help us to grow and appreciate God's purpose for man in so many ways.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of 1 Kings plays an important part in the development of the overall purpose of the Bible: "the glory of God and the salvation of man through Jesus Christ our Lord."
2. Just as 1 & 2 Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew text so were 1 & 2 Kings.
 - a. The two books of Kings continue the record begun in Samuel and complete the story of the Hebrew Kingdom. They cover the rise, glory, division and apostasy of the Jewish Kingdom.
 - b. "Where, however, the two books of Samuel cover only one century of history, the two books of Kings cover four - with the result that less detail is given." (Hayden, "Preaching Through The Bible," p. 58)
3. The key word of the book might well be "glory" and the theme "the Lord reigneth."
4. The key text could well be 1 Kgs. 8:10,11.
5. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:I. THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF I KINGS.

- A. The death of David and the reign of Solomon. 1 Kgs. 1-11.
 1. It has been pointed out that the book is "bounded by death" - David at the beginning and Ahab at the end. 2:10; 22:40.
 2. Solomon is established as king "on the throne of David his father." 2:12.
 - a. He had Adonijah put to death. 2:13-25.
 - b. He replaced Abiathar as priest. 2:26.
 - c. He had Joab put to death. 2:28-34.
 3. Solomon prays for wisdom and manifests it. 1 Kgs. 3.
 4. Solomon builds the temple of the Lord and dedicates it. 1 Kgs. 4-9. (Key verses - 6:1,7,37,38; 7:1,51; 8:9,21,23,56; 9:3-5.)
 5. Solomon receives royal visitors and his wealth increases. 1 Kgs. 10.
 6. Solomon's wives turn him from the Lord and failures begin. 1 Kgs. 11:1,4,6,9,11,13,42,43.
- B. The Kingdom is Divided. 1 Kgs. 12:16.
 1. Rehoboam refuses the demand of the people and ten tribes revolt. 1 Kgs. 12:1-19.
 2. Jereboam begins to reign over the ten tribes. 1 Kgs. 12:20.
 - a. He builds two calves of gold. 1 Kgs. 12:25-33.
 - b. He is rebuked by the young prophet from Judah. 1 Kgs. 13.
 - c. He continues to sin and God punishes him. 1 Kgs. 14:1-20.
 3. Other kings that reigned during this time were:

<u>JUDAH</u>	<u>ISRAEL</u>
a. Abijam - 15:1-8	a. Nadab - 15:25-32.
b. Asa - 15:9-24	b. Baasha - 15:33-16:7.
c. Jehoshaphat - 22:41-50.	c. Elah - 16:8-14.
	d. Zimri - 16:15-20.
	e. Omri - 16:21-28.
	f. Ahab - 16:29-22:40.
	g. Ahaziah - 22:50-53.
- C. Elijah and some of the outstanding events of his life. 1 Kgs. 17-22.
 1. Elijah is fed by the ravens and later by the widow of Zarephath. 1 Kgs. 17-22.
 2. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. 1 Kgs. 18.
 3. Elijah flees for his life from Jezebel. 1 Kgs. 19:1-14.
 4. Elijah receives a threefold job:
 - a. Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. 1 Kgs. 19:15.
 - b. Anoint Jehu to be king over Israel. 1 Kgs. 19:16a.
 - c. Anoint Elisha to be prophet in his place. 1 Kgs. 19:16b-21.
 5. Elijah rebukes Ahab for taking Naboth's vineyard. 1 Kgs. 21.
- D. "If the New Testament is accepted as the word of God, so must 1 Kings be accepted. The New Testament writers and speakers place their approval on 1 Kings, including the supernatural portions.
 - a. Jesus mentions the glory of Solomon. Mt. 6:29.
 - b. Jesus mentions the Queen of Sheba. Mt. 12:42.
 - c. Jesus mentions the widow of Zarephath. Lk. 4:26.
 - d. Stephen mentions the temple that Solomon built. Acts 7:47.

- e. The activities of Elijah are named. **Rom. 11:3,4; Jas. 5:17.**
- f. Jezebel is named. **Revelation 2:20.**
- E. Archaeological findings confirm the contents of 1 Kings.
 - 1. The invasion of Judah by Shishak in Rehoboam's reign (**1 Kgs. 14:25**) is proved by the inscription of Karnak.
 - 2. The stables of Solomon's horses in Megiddo (**10:26,28; 9:15,19**) have been discovered.
 - 3. Omri, king of Israel (**16:21-28**) is mentioned by the Moabite Stone in 850B.C.
 - 4. Many others could be named.

II. SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM I KINGS.

- A. David's advice to his son Solomon is good advice for every father to give his son. **1 Kgs. 2:1-3.**
- B. Solomon prayed for wisdom just as we may pray for wisdom.
 - 1. Solomon asked for wisdom because he recognized his own inability for the task. **1 Kgs. 3:5,7,9.**
 - 2. James says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God..." (**Jas. 1:5-7**)
- C. Solomon spared no expense in building God the finest house man could build where his glory might dwell.
 - 1. It was the glory of God filling the house that made it so great. **1 Kgs. 8:10,11.**
 - 2. Just as the glory of the Lord dwelt in the temple built by Solomon so the spirit of God dwells now in his temple (the church **1 Cor. 3:16**) and in every Christian (**1 Cor. 6:19,20**).
- D. Solomon's apostasy stands as a warning against marrying outside the children of God.
 - 1. Solomon's wives turned his heart away from God. **1 Kgs. 11:4.**
 - 2. Likewise many today are turned away from the truth by the influence of a husband or wife.
 - 3. The influence of one's companion is great. **cf. 1 Kgs. 21:25.**
- E. Jereboam introduces convenient religion to Israel and it has been with us ever since. **1 Kgs. 12:28.**
- F. A warning against being deceived under the guise of religion is gained from the experience of the young prophet.
 - 1. Just because one claims to be a servant of God doesn't make him one. **1 Kgs. 13:18.**
 - 2. Just because one claims to be telling the truth doesn't make it the truth. **1 Kings. 13:18.**
- G. God's people must be completely on his side as the contest at Carmel shows. **1 Kgs. 18:17-21ff. cf. Mt. 6:24; Mt. 12:30; Jas. 4:4.**
- H. All of us, like Elijah, have times when we go sit under our juniper tree.
 - 1. He reached the point where he thought he was the only one faithful to God. (**1 Kgs. 19:4,10**) just as we may do.
 - 2. It's easy to become discouraged and be ready to quit.
- I. Grown men and women can sometimes act like children. **1 Cor. 14:20.**
 - 1. Ahab pouted when he didn't get his way. **1 Kgs. 21:1-14.**
 - 2. Many today in the church pout and are immature.
 - a. Pout when they don't get their way.
 - b. May not quit the church but participate less.
- J. God helps those believe a lie that desire to do so.
 - 1. Paul said God sends a strong delusion to those that love not the truth. **2 Thess. 2:10-12.**
 - 2. The example of Ahab and Jehoshaphat with the prophet Micaiah illustrates how God does this. **1 Kgs. 22:1-36.**
- K. Children usually follow the example of their parents as Ahaziah followed Ahab and Jezebel. **1 Kgs. 22:51-53.**

CONCLUSION:

- 1. It may be said that 1 Kings stands all tests as an "authentic production of inspired literature and is truly a part of God's Holy Word.
- 2. It shows the fulfillment of God's promise to preserve the seed of David until Christ should come.
- 3. It's contents contain some of the most moving, exciting and spectacular stories ever written. It's teaching is of great practical value to the modern day Christian.
- 4. "Therefore, may 1 Kings never be looked upon as a book of dry Jewish history, but rather let it be counted as one of the great important portions of the Greatest Book on earth, the Bible." (Stewart, "The O.T. Books and Their Messages In The Christian Age," p. 143)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Have you ever sat down with one of your children to explain an arithmetic problem or a history question? When finished the child asks, "What does that mean?" you ask, "Why can't you see that?"
2. Have you ever studied with an individual about some religious question and when finished he still seems perplexed. You are ready to ask, "Why can't you see that?"
3. During the past two weeks, we have learned that there is a way that is right and cannot be wrong. We have compared God's way and man's way. Several of you have expressed by a statement or question, the thought as to "why the religious world can't see that."
4. With these thoughts in mind, let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. HOW THE WORD SEE IS USED IN THE BIBLE:

- A. It means physical sight. "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see." Mt. 11:4.
- B. It means mental sight. "See thou tell no man." Mt. 8:4.
- C. It means perception or understanding.
 1. "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." Mt. 13:14
 2. "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Mk. 8:17,18.
 3. Jesus said to the Pharisees "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sins remaineth." Jn. 9:41.

II. SOME REASONS WHY PEOPLE DO NOT SEE (perceive).

- a. Some do not have the mental capacity and are therefore not responsible.
- B. Some fail to see because of a lack of attention. Mt. 13:13,19.
- C. Some have closed their eyes, Mt. 13:15.
- D. Some have some kind of veil over their eyes when they read or hear. 2 Cor. 3:14; 4:4.
- E. Some "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." 2Thess. 2:10.

III. WHY CAN'T THE RELIGIOUS WORLD SEE THESE THINGS?

- A. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." Mk. 16:16. They may read this verse with the veil of "baptism is not essential to salvation" over their eyes.
- B. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" Eph. 4:4. "One church is as good as another" blinds many.
- C. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Eph. 5:19. Some have hardened their heart with "But God didn't say not to use the piano."
- C. Speaking in tongues has ceased. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." 1 Cor. 13:8.

IV. WHY CAN'T MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH SEE THESE THINGS?

- A. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. 6:33.
- B. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Mt. 22:37.
- C. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. 2:2. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15.
- D. "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16:2.
- E. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." H eb. 10:25.
- F. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Jas. 2:17. "But wilt thou know, o vain man, that faith without works is dead." Jas. 2:20.

CONCLUSION:

1. God has revealed his way through Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6) unto man.
2. All men that would be saved must follow God's directions. Mt. 7:21-23.
 - a. One that builds on God's word is like a house built on a solid foundation. Mt. 7:24,25.
 - b. One that does not build on God's word is like a house built on Sand. Mt. 7:26,27.

JAMES MEADOWS

Introduction.

1. The book of Kings belongs to "the great period of oral prophets and oral prophecy."
 - a. The form of the book is historical, but "it is history from the prophetic standpoint."
 - b. In the period covered in 2 Kings such prophets as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, "were faithfully testifying of the moral foundation of the nation, vindicating the righteousness of God and rebuking sin and upholding the divine ideal to which God's people as a nation has been called." (The Old Testament Books", p. 147)
2. Charles H. Roberson, said that "the chief aim of 'Kings' is didactic, the imparting of great moral lessons backed up by illustration from the nation's history and from the lives of its heroes and leaders."
3. The key test of the book "The Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as he had said by His servants the prophets." 2 Kings 17:23.
4. The key word might be downfall or desolation and the theme "the casting off of restraint."
 - a. 21 times we read that "So-and-So" did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but only 8 times do we read that "So-and-So" did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.
 - b. "A period of history of approximately 265 years is recorded with the downfall described, its causes listed, and a solemn warning put forward for the benefit of others." (Hayden, p. 62)
5. With these thoughts in mind let's consider:

Discussion.I. THE CONTENTS OF II KINGS.

- A. "2 Kings opens in the midst of an account of the reign of Ahaziah over Israel and ends with the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah and the desolation of Jerusalem, and the burning of the temple, followed by a notice of liberation of Jehoichin from his Babylonian prison."
 1. The kingdom of Israel came to an end when its capital, Samaria, was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., after lasting 250 years. 2 Kgs. 17.
 2. The kingdom of Judah lasted nearly 150 years after Israel came to an end when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. 2 Kgs. 25.
- B. Elisha, the prophet, and his work. 2 Kgs. 1--13:21.
 1. Elisha is associated with Elijah in his last days. 1--2:12.
 - a. Elijah and his last association with the king of Israel.
 - b. Elijah visits the prophets with Elisha and he is then taken into heaven. 2:1-12.
 2. Elisha performs many miracles in Israel. 2:13-13:21.
 - a. He parted the waters of Jordan. 2:13-15.
 - b. The spring of waters is healed at Jericho. 2:19-22.
 - c. The denouncing of the mocking youths (there were delinquents in the land) 2:23-25.
 - d. The victory over the three kings of Moab. 3:1-25.
 - e. Oil is provided for a widow to pay her debt. 4:1-7.
 - f. The birth, death, and restoration of the son of the Shunammite woman. 4:8-37.
 - g. The healing of the poisoned pot. 4:38-41.
 - h. The multiplying of the loaves to feed many. 4:42-44.
 - i. The healing of Naaman the leper. 5:1-19.
 - j. The smiting of Gehazi with leprosy. 5:20-27.
 - k. The causing of the iron to swim. 6:1-7.
 - l. The horses and chariots of fire in the mountains. 6:8-17.
 - m. The smiting of the Syrians with blindness. 6:18-23.
 3. The death of Elisha. 13:14-21.
- C. Many of the kings of Israel and Judah are named in the book (also 1 Kings) and their reigns and associated events are described.

1. Israel had 9 dynasties and 19 kings.

Jereboam---22 Years---1 Kgs. 14:20.
 Nadab-----2 Years---1 Kgs. 15:25.
 Baasha-----24 Years---1 Kgs. 15:28,33.
 Elah-----2 Years---1 Kgs. 16:6.
 Zimri-----7 Days---1 Kgs. 16:10.
 Omri-----12 Years---1 Kgs. 16:23.
 Ahab-----22 Years---1 Kgs. 16:29.
 Ahaziah-----2 Years---1 Kgs. 20:51.
 Jehoram-----12 Years---2 Kgs. 3:1.
 Jehu-----28 Years---2 Kgs. 9:10:36.

Jehoahaz---17 years---2 Kgs. 13:1.
 Jehoash---16 years---2 Kgs. 13:10.
 Jereboam 2-41 years---2 Kgs. 14:23.
 Zechariah---6 Mo.---2 Kgs. 15:8.
 Shallum---1 Mo.---2 Kgs. 15:13.
 Menahem---10 Yrs.---2 Kgs. 15:14.
 Pekahiah---2 Yrs.---2 Kgs. 15:23.
 Pekah---20 yrs---2 Kgs. 15:27.
 Hoshea-----9 yrs---2 Kgs. 17:1.

2. Judah has 1 dynasty, 19 kings and one queen.

Rehoboam---17 yrs---1 Kgs. 14:21.
 Abijah-----3 yrs---1 Chron. 13:1,2
 Asa-----41 yrs---1 Kgs. 15:20
 Jehoshaphat---25 yrs---2 Chron. 17:1;20:31.
 Jehoram-----8 yrs---2 Kgs. 8:16.
 Ahaziah-----1 yr---2 Kgs. 8:25,26
 Ahtaliah-----6 yrs---2 Kgs. 11:1-3
 Jehoash-----40 yrs---2 Kgs. 12:1
 Amaziah-----29 yrs---2 Kgs. 14:1
 Azariah-----52 yrs---2 Kgs. 15:1

Jotham-----16 yrs---2 Kgs. 15:32
 Ahaz-----16 yrs---2 Kgs. 16:1
 Hezekiah---29 yrs---2 Kgs. 18:1
 Manasseh---55 yrs---2 Kgs. 21:1
 Amon-----2 yrs---2 Kgs. 21:19
 Josiah---31 yrs---2 Chron. 34:1
 Jehoahaz---3 Mo.---2 Chron. 36:2
 Jehoiachim---11 Yrs---2 Chron. 36:5
 Jehoiachin---3 Mo.---2 Chron. 36:8,9
 Zedekiah---11 Yrs. 2 Chron. 36:11

D. The downfall of Israel.

1. The reasons why Israel fell are given by God. 17:6-17.

- Sinned against the Lord their God. v. 7.
- Walked in the statutes of the heathen. v. 8.
- "Did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God." v. 9.
- Set up images, idols, and high places. vv. 10-12.
- Rejected the warning of the prophets. v. 13,14.
- Rejected statutes and left commandments of God. v. 15,16.
- Offered their children as burnt offerings. v. 17.

2. The nation that carried them into captivity was Assyrian 17:3,6,23.

E. The downfall of Judah.

1. Some of the reasons for Judah's fall are listed.

- Did more evil than the heathen nations about them. 21:9,11,15.
- Manasseh shed innocent blood in Jerusalem. 21:16.

2. Babylon carried Judah into captivity for 70 years. 2 Chron. 36:21-23.

- The first group in 606 B.C. 24:1ff.
- The second group in 597 B.C. 24:10ff.
- The third group in 586 B.C. 25:1ff.

II. SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM II KINGS.

A. The tremendous influence and power of an example vividly illustrated.

- Ahaziah, the king with which 2 Kings begins, the son of Ahab and Jezebel, "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kgs. 22:52a). He "walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jereboam . . ." 1 Kgs. 22:52b.
- Elisha recognized the tremendous power of Elijah when he said "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." 2 Kgs. 2:12; cf. 13:14.
- Hoshea, the father of Hezekiah, did evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kgs. 17:1, 2) but Hezekiah "did that which was right in the sight of God." (2 Kgs. 18:1-3)
 - Despite his father's wickedness he must have had a godly mother.
 - Timothy had such a grandmother and mother. 2 Tim. 1:4,5.
- Jesus emphasizes that we are to be the preserving power of the community where we are. Mt. 5:13-16.

B. The essentiality of doing what God says do is illustrated by Naaman. 2 Kgs. 5:1-14.

- Naaman was cured when he completed what God required and not before.

2. There are three valuable lessons to be gained in noting why Naaman did not at first obey God.
 - a. It was different from the way he thought. 5 :11.
 - b. He thought one place and one way was just as good as another. 5 :12.
 - c. It was too simple. 5:13.
- C. Our responsibility and opportunity today is like that of the four lepers.
 1. The four lepers had good tidings that needed to be told. 7:1-9.
 2. We have good tidings that need to be told. Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 2:10.
- D. It is dangerous to trust in bruised reeds. 18:21.
 1. Despite the warnings of the prophets Israel trusted in the bruised reed of Egypt to save them from Assyria.
 2. Many today are ~~trusting~~ in bruised reeds--doctrines of men, power, money, etc.
- E. "What have they seen in thine House?" 20:15
 1. Hezekiah showed representatives from Babylon everything in his house when they came to visit.
 2. What do people see in your house and mine in the way of:

a. Authority	d. Love
b. Literature	e. Religion
c. Happiness	

Conclusion.

1. "2 Kings is valuable for its deep religious teaching and the insight which it gives us into God's providential and moral government of the world."
 2. It is a rich treasury for admonition and learning.
 3. The references to 2 Kings in the New Testament are striking evidence of it being a part of God's word.
 4. It confirms such statements as "Godspoke by the mouth of his holy prophets . . ."
- 1 Pet. 3:21.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Emphasize **Rom. 8:37** - "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." A number of years ago William Hendricksen wrote a book on Revelation and entitled it "More Than Conquerors."
3. In the midst of a world of uncertain Christians - young and old, mature and immature - are often asking and wondering if there is really certainty.
4. In the midst of a world of war, turmoil, hatred, racial prejudice, distrust, and general unhappiness the Christian needs and can have something that enables him to be ~~what~~ God wants him to be.
5. In the text of the morning are four statements: (1) "And we know that all things work together for good..."; (2) "If God be for us, who can be against us..."; (3) "We are more than conquerors"; (4) "I am persuaded."

DISCUSSION:

- I. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. **Rom. 8:28.**"
 - A. "And we know."
 1. In a life speculation, supposition, imagination, etc., it's a genuine comfort to find a man who says, "I know."
 2. How many of us often quote these words, not so much because we believe them, but because we want to believe them?
 3. The expression "I know" was often on the tongues of the apostles. **Rom. 8:22,23; 2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Jn. 2:3.**
 - B. "All things work together for good."
 1. First, Paul does not assert that all things that happen to the Christian are good, but "that all things work together for the ultimate good."
 - a. "Something that occurs to-day may be the beginning of a series of circumstances which will not come to fruition for the next twenty years, but the next twenty years will prove how essential the almost unnoticed circumstance was for our later good. One of the most interesting features of history is to observe how things of an apparently opposite nature have worked together for some universal benefit - things which at first sight could scarcely have been believed to have any possible connection with each other. And yet they have been as closely connected as the links of a chain or the cog-wheels that work into each other in a piece of machinery." (Great Texts, Vol. 14, p. 92)
 - b. When the physician has prescribed some medicine, we go to the chemist to have it made up; and he takes one ingredient from this phial, and another from that, and another from elsewhere; any one of these taken alone might kill as outright, but when they have well compounded and mixed, they work together for a perfect cure.
 2. Second, we must make no mistake about what Paul means by "good."
 - a. Good in God's sense of the word.
 - b. Good here does not mean unsullied and unmixed joy and happiness. If one thinks that all things work together to give the godly man all he desires, keep him free from trials, etc., he'll be disappointed.
 - c. The good to which all things work together is the end or purpose God has in mind.
 - (1) This world is a training place for character.
 - (2) To be in the image of Christ. **2 Cor. 3:18.**
 3. "All things" include:
 - a. The hope set before us. **Rom. 8:24,25.**
 - b. The help of the Holy Spirit. **Rom. 8:26.**
 - c. The eternal purpose of God. **Rom. 8:28c.**
 - d. God uses man's evil to bring good. **Gen. 50:20.**
 - e. The afflictions of life worketh for good. **2 Cor. 4:17.**
- II. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? **Rom. 8:31.**

A. God is for us.

1. God gave his Son to die for us even while we were sinners. **Rom. 8:32a; 5:8.**
2. If God gave his Son then he surely will never withhold any of the lesser things. **Rom. 8:32b.**

B. Since God is for us observe what is true and what cannot happen?

1. No one can lay a charge against God's elect and make it stick because "it is God that justifieth" and he is for us. **v. 33.**
2. The only one that can condemn us is God. **v. 34.**
 - a. Christ died and arose and ascended to remove the only thing that would cause God to condemn.
 - b. If we sin He is at God's right hand to intercede for us. **V. 34b.**
3. Nothing can separate us from "the love of Christ." **v. 35.**
 - a. "The love of Christ" here is his love for us, not our love for him.
 - b. When affliction, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword arise God's children seem to get the impression that He has forsaken them, but the sufferings are rather proof of his presence than his absence.

III. "Way in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loveth us."
Rom. 8:37.

A. A conqueror is "one that conquers; one that wins or overcomes an adversary."

B. Since the Christian is more than a conqueror several things must be true:

1. The Christian overcomes the trials of life.
2. The Christian not only overcomes them but he rises above them.
3. The Christian is more than a conqueror because he uses the very things that are trials to strengthen his character.
4. We not only overcome our enemies, but even makes them fight on our side.
cf. Acts 16:35-40; Rev. 3:9.
5. The final victory is when we pass into heaven.

C. The Christian is "more than conquerors" "through him that loved us." **v. 37b.**
Why?

1. I am free from sin in Him. **8:2.**
2. I have all spiritual blessings in him. **Eph. 1:3.**
3. He strengthens me. **Phil. 4:13.**
4. I am complete in Him. **Col. 1:10.**

IV. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,..." **Rom. 8:38.**

A. All things - earthly and heavenly - can never separate us from God's love.

B. Paul had the strength of persuasion that all men must have to please God.
cf. Rom. 4:20,21.

CONCLUSION:

1. What peace the Christian can enjoy if he'll only believe these promises.
2. Only our own apostasy can separate us from the love of God and with such assurance what does the Christian have to fear?

THE BIBLE - EZRA
JAMES MEADOWS

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther all belong to the same period of time.
 - a. The first group of Jews was carried into captivity about 606 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar. **2 Kgs 24:1; Dan. 1-5.**
 - b. The second group of Jews was carried into captivity about **597 B.C. 2 Kgs. 24:10.**
 - c. The third group was carried into captivity in 586 B.C. and Jerusalem was destroyed. **2 Kgs. 25; 2 Chron. 36:14-21.**
 - d. These books are a continuation of the history begun in Kings and Chronicles. The events of Esther occur between the last verse of Ezra 6 and Ezra 7:1.
 - e. These three books cover a period of some 100 years (538 B.C. - 440 B.C.), although events of only about 40 years are actually stated.
2. It was 70 years from the time the first group was carried into captivity (606 B.C.) until the Jews returned in 537 B.C.
 - a. Jeremiah has prophesied they would be in captivity 70 years. **Jer. 25:11; 29:10.**
 - b. The writer of Chronicles has mentioned that in Judah's going into captivity for 70 years the words of Jeremiah were fulfilled. **2 Chron. 36:21.**
 - c. God, through Isaiah the prophet, prophesied that Cyrus, when he came to power, would allow the Jews to return home. **Isa. 44:28; 45:1.**
 - d. Ezra begins with the words that Cyrus gave the decree for the Jews to return. **Ezra 1:1.**
3. The key text of the book is **Ezra 6:14.**
4. The key word would be reconstruction and the theme "overcoming opposition."
5. The purpose of the book is "to show that God fulfilled His promise to restore His exiled people to their land. It shows how God did this through the instrumentality of the great heathen monarch and through chosen men from the people as Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Ezra, etc.... The Jews were restored to their land that they might bring forth Christ." ("Old Testament Books," p. 186-187)
6. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

- I. THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL. Ezra 1:1-6:22.
 - A. Cyrus gives the decree that all the Jews that desire may return home. **1:1-4.**
 - B. Approximately 50,000 Jews with many of the vessels of the temple prepare to return. **1:5 - 2:70.**
 - C. The building began in the 7th month after their return. **3:1-13.**
 1. The altar of burnt offering is built first. **3:1,2.**
 2. The foundation of the temple was begun in the 2nd month of the 2nd year. **3:8-13.**
 - D. The work is hindered and stopped for some 16 to 18 years. **4:1-24a.**
 1. Zerubbabel refused the help of the Samaritans in the land and they "troubled them in building." **4:1-16.**
 - a. They hired counselors against them. **4:5.**
 - b. They wrote an accusation against them to Ahasuerus and later to Artaxerxes of Persia. **4:6-16.**
 2. The king sends a letter to Rehum and Shimshai of Samaria to stop the work of the Jews. **4:17-24a.**
 - E. The work is resumed again during the 2nd year of the reign of Darius. **4:24b - 6:22.**
 1. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah rose up to stir up the people. **5:1,2; 6:14.**
 2. The Samaritans once again try to stop the work by sending a letter to Darius. **5:3-17.**
 3. Darius finds the decree of Darius and sends a letter back to "let the work of this house of God alone." **6:7.**
 4. The temple is finished on the "third day of the month Adar, which was in the 6th year of the reign of Darius." **6:15.**
- II. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA. 7:1 - 10:44.
 - A. Ezra.
 1. Ezra was a "ready scribe in the law of Moses." **7:6.**
 2. Ezra had prepared his heart: **7:10**
 - a. To seek the law of the Lord.
 - b. To do it
 - c. To teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

- B. Ezra led the second group of Jews back to Jerusalem to restore the law and the worship.
 - 1. The king gave a decree that Ezra was to receive all the help he needed. **7:11-28; 8:36.**
 - 2. Ezra and all the company gather by the river Ahava to fast and pray before they begin the journey. **8:1-30.**
 - 3. They left Babylon on the 1st month in the 7th year of Artaxirxes. **7:7-9; 8:31-35.**
- C. Ezra finds a need of many reforms when he arrives in Jerusalem.
 - 1. The people and the priests have intermarried with the inhabitants of the lands. **9:1,2; 10:18-44.**
 - 2. Ezra prays to God before the people and it results in confession and repentance on the part of the people. **9:3-15; 10:1-17.**

III. SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM EZRA.

- A. God uses both the righteous and unrighteous to accomplish his purposes.
 - 1. Cyrus, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes were heathens, but they became instruments in the hands of God. God called Cyrus "my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure." **Isa. 44:28.**
 - 2. Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah were righteous and used by God.
- B. There can be no compromise with the forces of evil in the Lord's work.
 - 1. The Samaritans offered their help in building the temple. **4:2.**
 - 2. Zerubbabel said, "You have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God." **4:3.**
 - 3. ~~There can be no compromise with evil today.~~ **2 Jn. 9-11.**
- C. Discouragements and oppositions will come in many forms to any good work.
 - 1. The old men who had seen the first temple took part of the joy out of this work by their tears when they compared the two. **3:11-13.**
 - 2. The Samaritans hired evil men to frustrate their purpose. **4:5.**
 - 3. The Samaritans made accusations against them. **4:6.**
 - 4. Some of the greatest discouragements to good works are members of the church.
- D. God's people can become so involved in "building their own houses" that they neglect the Lord's work. **4:24; 5:16.**
 - 1. Haggai told the people that they had time to build their ceiled houses but "this house lieth waste." **Haggai 1:3-6.**
 - 2. Jesus said some Christians would get so busy that they would neglect his work. **Mt. 13:22.**
- E. Preparation is essential to success in any endeavor.
 - 1. Ezra had prepared his heart "to seek the law of the Lord..." **Ezra 7:10.**
 - 2. Ezra prepared the people for the journey to Jerusalem and the work upon arrival. **7:28; 8:15, 21.**
 - 3. John the Baptist preached "Prepare ye the way of the Lord..." **Mt. 3:1,2.**
 - 4. Some try to enter life's work before they are prepared.
- F. The power of fervent prayer cannot be overestimated. **Jas. 5:16.**
 - 1. Ezra's prayer is truly an example to us.
 - a. He was truly burdened when he approached God - "I arose up from my heaviness." **9:5a.**
 - b. He approached God reverently - "I fell upon my knees." **9:5c.**
 - c. He recognized his own sins and those of his people - "I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God..." **9:6.**
 - d. He recognized God's goodness and mercy toward him and the people. **9:7-9.**
 - e. He confessed the sins they had committed. **9:10-15.**
 - 2. Ezra's prayer brought results in the people.
 - a. They confessed their sins before God. **10:1,2.**
 - b. They resolved to separate themselves from their sins. **10:3,11-14.**
- G. The power of God's word is recognized and given emphasis throughout the book.
 - 1. Cyrus' decree was fulfillment of the word of the Lord. **1:1.**
 - 2. Haggai and Zechariah speaking the word of the Lord stirred the people to action. **5:1; 6:14.**
 - 3. They builded and finished the house "according to the commandment of the Lord." **6:14b.**
 - 4. Ezra was guided by the law of the Lord (**7:10**) and when he taught that word a great reformation followed.
 - 5. The people trembled at the word of the Lord. **10:3,9.**

CONCLUSION:

1. The book of Ezra fits marvelously into the overall purpose of the Bible as it reveals God bringing the people, through whom Christ would come, back to their land.
2. God's mercy, righteousness, and goodness is truly manifested toward those that do his will.

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FATHERS

INTRODUCTION.

1. Did you know that America stands alone among modern societies that pay special honor to fathers?
 - a. The designation of a specific Father's Day is a 20th Century one.
 - b. "When President Richard Nixon signed a Congressional resolution in 1972, establishing permanently the third Sunday of June as Father's Day, he eliminated the need for an annual Designation." (Dennis Loyd)
2. Prior to 1972 an official proclamation was issued each ^{year} setting the time.
 - a. President Calvin Coolidge refused to give the day official sanction on a national basis.
 - b. But in 1924 he offered his personal support by saying, "The widespread observance of this occasion is cultivated to establish more intimate relations between fathers and their children and also to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligations."
3. He offered two rationales for observing such a day:
 - a. The ten commandments which requires people to honor father and mother. (Ef. Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)
 - b. It is a time of ~~gratitude~~ gratitude.
4. But for fathers it is a time of reflection and self-examination:
 - a. Did my children see how much I loved their mother?
 - b. Did they sense how deeply I cared for their development?
 - c. Did they feel they could come to me without being cut off or put aside?
 - d. Did they know how often I prayed for them?
 - e. Did they see Christ living in me at home as well as at church?

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INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text with emphasis on verse 4.
2. Bro. Shepherd, one of the elders at Highland Avenue in Memphis runs the Harding Book Store, and conducts teacher's training sessions, recently said, "Unless parents accept a greater and closer working responsibility with teachers, the time is not far in the future when we may have to pay someone to teach many of our classes."
3. Some congregations are already experiencing a "walk out" of teachers because of impossible discipline.
4. Two of our teachers have quit and two or three more are ready to quit because of discipline problems in classes.
5. So our study today is "Parents accept your responsibility."

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS REVEALED BY OUR TEXT?

A. "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

1. "Provoke" means to "irritate beyond measure," "to incite to anger."

2. Parents are not by harsh, critical treatment to cause their children to grow angry and rebellious.

B. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

1. Bring them up ("nurture" ASV). There is a

a. There is a molding as well as a controlling.

b. God commended Abraham because he knew he would bring his children up properly. Gen. 18:19.

2. "in the nurture" ("chastening" ASV). It means the training of a child.

Prov. 22:6.

3. "And admonition of the Lord."

a. The word here literally means "a putting in mind." Put your children in mind of the Lord.

b. It refers to exhortation, urging, warning. We must not only teach children the truth, but urge them to live it.

C. Your responsibility and mine is clearly before us and

II. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF GREAT REASONS WHY PARENTS MUST ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITY.

A. God expects it of us.

1. The responsibility of parents was clearly emphasized under the law of Moses.

Deut. 6:6-9; 30:15,16; 32:46,47;

2. We live under a greater law and are warned about no escape if we neglect this solemn responsibility. Heb. 2:1-4.

B. So many have paid so much to make it possible for us to train our children in the way of the Lord.

1. God gave his Son to make it possible for man to have his truth. Jn. 1:17; Rom. 5:8

2. The apostles suffered so much to reveal and teach that truth to men. 2 Cor. 11;

3. The reformers paid such a high price to get the Bible back to the people. John Wycliff, John Hess, Martin Luther, etc. 23-28

4. The restorers risked their very life to teach people the way of truth. Barton W. Stone, "Raccoon" John Smith, etc.

5. People are literally begging in some places for the word of God, while we have "Bibles to burn" and are indifferent about it.

C. Continued neglect of the word of God brings tremendous loss.

1. It brings loss of desire for study just as continuous refraining from food limits one's capacity for intake.

2. It brings destruction because of lack of knowledge. Hos. 4:6.

3. It can bring a famine of God's word or God literally taking it from us. Amos 8; 12

D. A failure to assume the responsibility to train our children in the way of the Lord leaves the impression that His way is not too important.

1. When a mother spends hours preparing for a wedding, birthday party, PTA meeting, etc. what conclusion does the child draw?

2. When Dad spends a great amounts of money to accomplish some purpose, hours on some projects, hours studying for activity in some civic club, the child concludes Dad thinks it's important.

3. When parents spend little or no time in Bible study, preparing for the services, etc., the child concludes its not too important.

4. "Christian parents should specially be careful how they strive for the worldly advancement of their children at the hazard of their spiritual interests. It fills one at times with a kind of despair to see how those who profess to regard religion as all-important subordinate it to almost every other thing in life; how educational accomplishments, and choice of pursuits, and friendships, and alliances, are discussed and fixed without ever coming into serious view. Were it bodily infection, it would fill them with alarm, but spiritual danger is lightly passed by. It is one great reason why Christianity makes so little progress, and why Christian families are constantly melting away into the worldliness around them; while the parents have to see their children lost, not only to vital religion, but even to that strength of mind and steadiness of purpose which are necessary to any firm position in life. Both worlds frequently slip from the grasp in the miserable attempt to gain the false glitter of the present, and the bitter waters of disappointment sweep, like the Sea of Sodom, over the ruins of fortune and fame coveted at the cost of consistent principle. Let the kingdom of God and his righteousness be sought and maintained in the first place; if worldly position follows, it will be honorably borne and usefully employed, and if God does not see fit to give it, there will be sufficient compensation in the pure and imperishable treasures with which He can fill the soul." (Butler's Bible Work, page 441)

E. It's a responsibility that can't be shifted.

1. We live in an age when we think we can pay someone else to do everything.
 - a. Some think their responsibility ends when they send money to an orphan home.
 - b. Some think when they place their mother or father in a rest home and pay their way they are through.
 - c. Some buy their children everything they want and think all is well.
2. Parents think they can let someone else teach their children.
 - a. The Bible teacher can help but she can't do it for you.
 - b. The elders can help but just so far.
 - c. The Christian schools can help but they cannot do our job for us.

F. It's obvious that some are not accepting their responsibility.

1. The fact that we are now having so many problems in our classrooms show this. (How many classes have problems this morning?)
2. The fact that so many of our children don't have their lessons is obvious that some of you are not. (How many had their lesson this morning?)
3. The fact that so many adults come to class without having even studied shows the failure.

CONCLUSION:

1. There are some things you can do:
 - a. Expect your child to behave in class.
 - b. Be sure they have their lesson before they come to class.
 - c. Study your own lesson and set the right example.
 - d. Make sure your child, by your actions know Bible Study is important.
2. Children are not just to enjoy and caress, but to train for life here and hereafter.
 - a. Will they thank their parents for spiritual instruction?
 - b. Or will they grow up thirsting for the word of the Lord which their parents did not give them? **1 Peter 2:1,2.**

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THE BIBLE—NEHEMIAH
JAMES MEADOWS

Introduction.

1. The book of Nehemiah must be classed among the truly great historical records of the Old Testament.
 - a. It sheds great light on an important period in Israel's history.
 - b. It is a most wonderful autobiography of a great man.
2. M. Norval Young says "All young ministers should read this book and read it often. All those Christians who wish to serve God in troubled times need to read this book and read it often. Those elders who wish to lead the people of God courageously need to read this book and read it often." ("Old Testament Books", p. 194)
3. The key word of the book is "restoration" and the key text is **Nehemiah 4:9**.
 - a. Nehemiah's work of rebuilding the walls is emphasized.
 - b. He placed absolute faith in the power of prayer, but he also recognized the need of man's part. As Oliver Cromwell would have put it: "We trust in God and keep our powder dry."
4. Let's consider:

Discussion.

I. THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

- A. The first section gives an account of the circumstances which led to the appointment of Nehemiah, his royal commission, and journey to Jerusalem. **1:1--2:11**.
 1. News of conditions in Jerusalem brought to Nehemiah by returning Jews. **1:1-3**.
 2. Nehemiah's weeps, mourns, fasts, and prays. **1:4-11**.
 3. Nehemiah is given permission to return by Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign. **2:1-8**.
 4. The journey is made to Jerusalem. **2:9-11**.
- B. The second section records the building of the walls in 52 days despite the opposition of Sanballat and his followers. **2:12; 6**.
 1. Nehemiah inspects the situation and presents the picture of need to the people. **2:12-18**.
 2. Nehemiah organizes and makes assignments for repairing. **3:1-32**.
 3. Opposition from Sanballat and followers. **4:1; 6**.
 4. Opposition in the camp is overcome and the wall is finished. **5:1-19; 6:15,16**.
- C. The third section relates the means used by Nehemiah to improve the religious character of his people. **Chap. 7-12**.
 1. There is a register of the people who first returned from Babylon with their obligations to the temple. **Chap. 7**.
 2. There is the reading of the law by Ezra, the preaching and explaining of the law and its effect on the people. **Chap. 8**.
 3. There is the appointment of a solemn fast and humiliation of the people, and their renewal of the covenant with God. **Chaps. 9,10**.
 4. There is a record of those who dwelt at Jerusalem and other cities. **Chap. 11**.
 5. There are the names of the priest and the dedication of the wall. **Chap. 12**.
- D. The fourth section "gives an account of his visit to Babylon, his return to Jerusalem, and the second reformation which effected mainly by his piety and zeal. **Chap. 13**
Four abuses confronted Nehemiah when he returned:
 1. Eliashib the priest had given a place to Tobiah within the temple itself. **13:1-9**.
 2. The Levites were not given their share and were therefore forced to work in the fields to the neglect of the temple service. **13:10-14**.
 3. The Sabbath day was being violated. **13:15-22**.
 4. The people were once again engaging in mixed marriages. **13:23-31**.

II. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SUCCEEDED IN REBUILDING THE WALL AROUND JERUSALEM BECAUSE SEVERAL FACTORS WERE PRESENT THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS.

- A. They believed God was with them and He would bless their work with success.
 1. "... according to the good hand of my God upon me." **2:8c**.
 2. "Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me . . ." **2:18a**.
 3. "The God of heaven, he will prosper us . . ." **2:20b**.
 4. "... Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord . . . And God had brought their counsel to nought." **4:14,15**

- B. The people were united in the work.
1. "Let us rise up and build." 2:18b.
 2. "So we build the wall." 4:6a.
 3. " . . . everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work . . ." 4:17b.
 4. The early church succeeded because they were united (Acts 2:46; 4:32) and we are to be of one mind. (1 Cor. 1:10)
- C. The people prepared for the work they were to do.
1. First, Nehemiah surveyed the work and laid the plans before them. 2:12-18.
 2. "So they strengthened their hands for this good work." 2:18d.
 3. Christians are to prepare themselves for the work of the Lord." 2 Tim. 2:20,21.
- D. The people had a mind to work. 4:6b.
1. A man that does not have a mind to work is of little value anywhere.
 2. A discouraged man does not have a mind to work.
- E. They made their prayer unto God. 4:9.
1. They realized the essential need of the strength from God.
 2. Christians must pray regularly. Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6.
- F. They were on constant watch against their enemies.
1. They set a "watch against them day and night." 4:9.
 2. They buildt with one hand and held a weapon with the other hand. 4:17.
 3. We are told to watch at all times. Mt. 24:42; 1 Thess. 5:6.
- G. They had a great leader-----Nehemiah.
1. Any organization is but the shadow of its leadership.
 2. Nehemiah was a great leader for the same reasons that any leader can be great.
 - a. He was able to sympathize with his people. 1:4.
 - b. He was able to inspire the people to work. 2:17,18a.
 - c. He was sincere and enthusiastic about his work.
 - d. He was willing to give time and thought to his work.
 - (1) While other slept he was looking over the city. 2:12.
 - (2) In the same way elders and leaders must lead.
 - e. He refused to be stopped by opposition that came in several forms:
 - (1) Scorn. 2:19,20.
 - (2) Mockery. 4:1-6.
 - (3) Threat of war. 4:7-23.
 - (4) Effort at Compromise. 6:1-4.
 - (5) Accusation of treason. 6:5-9.
 - (6) Effort to place fear in him through a false prophet. 6:10-14.
 - (7) Opposition from some of his own brethren. 6:17-19.
 - f. He was a great leader because he was greatly concerned about his own spiritual welfare and that of his people, which is seen in several ways:
 - (1) His regular prayers to God. 1:5; 4:4,9.
 - (2) His refusing to take bread from the governor in order to be an example to his people. 5:1-19.
 - (3) His having Ezra to read and explain the law to the people. 8:1b,2,3,5,7,8.
 - (4) His zeal for removing violations of God's law from their midst. 13:4,10,15,23.

III. SOME ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRAYER ARE VIVIDLY MANIFESTED IN THIS BOOK.

- A. Prayer is an audience with God. "We made our prayer unto our God." 4:9a.
- B. Prayer is to be earnest. "Nevertheless . . ." 4:9a.
- C. Prayer is to be continual. "We made our prayer . . . and set a watch . . . day and night." 4:9b. Pray without ceasing. 1 Thess. 5:17. "because of them"
- D. Prayer is to be definite. They made their prayer ~~against them~~. 4:9b.
- E. Prayer is not only individual but a corporate thing. "We made our prayer." cf. Acts 12:5
- F. Prayer should be linked with activity. "We . . . set a watch."

Conclusion.

1. The church will always need men with vision and ability to call us to duty and inspire us to do it.
2. "But the Book of Nehemiah is more than the record of one man---it is a tribute to a people who did "have a mind to work" and who couple with their energy with earnestness despite all opposition." (M. Norval Young.)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of **Esther** is the second book in the Bible that bears the name of a woman, the other one being **Ruth**.
 - a. The name of God is not found in the book of Esther and the Song of Solomon.
 - b. It has been said, however, that if "the name of God is not here, His finger is."
2. "The book of Esther is as the name Esther signifies, a 'Star.' It is the gem of the Old Testament Scriptures." (Old Testament Books, p. 206).
3. The Biblical record is almost completely silent concerning the Jewish state at Jerusalem from the time of the completion of the temple in the sixth year of Darius (515 B.C.) to the reign of Artaxerxes I beginning in 464 B.C. The story of Esther constitutes the main biblical source for this period. Historically it is identified with the reign of Ahasuerus, or XerXes (485-465 B.C.) and is restricted to the welfare of the exiles who did not return to Jerusalem." ("The Old Testament Speaks," (Schultz, page 261).
4. The key word of the book would be the "providence" of God and the key verse is **Esther 4:14**.
5. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

- A. Some scenes in an Oriental Court. (Chapters 1 & 2).
 1. King Ahasuerus gives a great feast **1:1-22**.
 2.
 - a. In the first feast he invites his princes. **1:1-4**.
 - b. Another feast follows in which everyone is invited. **1:5-8**.
 - c. Vashti gives a feast for the women. **1:9**.
 - d. Vahsti refuses to present herself in the presence of the king and his drunken lords. **1:10-12**.
 - e. Upon the advice of his seven leading princes, Vashti is removed as queen and warning letters sent to all wives throughout the provinces. **1:13-22**.
 2. Esther is chosen to take Vashti's place. **2:1-20**.
 - a. All young virgins in the provinces were to be gathered to the capital Shushan and spend a year preparing for the king. **2:1-11**.
 - b. Esther is chosen above all the maidens and a feast is given in her honor. **2:12-20**.
 3. Mordecai discovers a plot to kill the king, reports it, it is stopped and record of it placed "in the book of the chronicles before the king." **2:21-23**.
- B. Haman seeks to destroy the Jews. (Chap. 3)
 1. Haman is advanced about all the princes. **3:1,2a**.
 2. Haman hates Mordecai because he refuses to bow to him. **3:2b-6**.
 3. Haman gets the king to sign a decree that all Jews were to be killed on the 13th day of the 12th month. **3:7-15**.
- C. Esther intercedes for her people. **4:1**.
 1. Mordecai cries for his people and there was great mourning which Esther didn't understand. **4:1-4**.
 2. Esther sends Hatach to find out the trouble and Mordecai tells her, with advice as to what to do. **4:5-17**.
 3. Esther approaches the king and risks her life for her people. **5:1-14**.
- D. The triumph of the Jews. **6:1-10:3**
 1. Mordecai receives royal honor from the king. **6:1-11**.
 2. Esther intercedes - Haman hanged. **6:12-7:10**.
 3. Mordecai promoted. **8:1-17**.
 4. The Jews fight against their enemies and win. **9:1-15**.
 5. The feast of Purim is instituted. **9:16-32**.
 6. Mordecai continues to receive high honor. **10:1-3**.

II. GREAT AND PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

- A. There have always been individuals willing to stand for a principle even at risk of their life.
 1. Vashti
 - a. Vashti's Persian name means "beautiful or excellent woman" and such she was.
 - b. When commanded to appear before the king and his drunken princes to display

her beauty she refused. 1:10-12.

- c. "Her courage was equal to her modesty - she resisted the royal mandate rather than violate her own chastity."
- 2. Mordecai. He refused to pay to Haman homage that belonged only to God. 3:2.
- 3. Esther. She said "if I perish, I perish." 4:16d.
- B. Esther is an example of one of humble means rising to a place of great prominence.
 - 1. She was an orphan. 2:7.
 - 2. She was fair and beautiful. 2:7.
 - 3. She listened and obeyed her uncle. 2:20.
 - 4. She gained favor of those about her. 2:9, 15c.
- C. God will get his work done either by us or by someone else.
 - 1. At the time the Jews were threatened Esther had a work she could do for God.
 - 2. But Mordecai told her that if she did not "then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place." 4:14b.
- D. Every opportunity is a special call.
 - 1. "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this." 4:14d.
 - 2. Just as there was a work that only Esther could do to save her people so there is a work the church must do.
 - a. Make known the manifold wisdom of God. Eph. 3:8-11.
 - b. Be truly the foundation of truth. 1 Tim. 3:14, 15.
 - c. "The answer to our present desperate situation in the world does not lie with the educationalist or economist, the politician or philosopher, the scientist or social worker - it lies with us who are in the kingdom." (Hayden, p. 83).
- E. We may fail in our duty simply by being silent.
 - 1. At first Esther thought to remain silent because she feared to go before the king. 4:10, 11.
 - 2. She failed to realize that her silence would not only destroy the Jews, but herself as well. 4:13.
 - 3. The four lepers at first thought to remain silent. 2 Kgs. 7:9.
 - 4. Too many times we remain silent when we should be speaking.
- F. The truth of two or three scriptures are vividly illustrated by Haman.
 - 1. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov. 16:18.
 - 2. "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein..." Prov. 26:27.
 - 3. "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming." Psa. 37:12, 13.
- G. Even though God's name is not mentioned in the book there is no book in which he is more keenly felt.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" (Psalm 21:1.)
- 2. "...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Mt. 28:20b)
- 3. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5).
- 4. God watches over his children and Esther well illustrates this.

1 546
2 548
3 550

Int.

1. The question and answer system has long been one of the most interesting and successful ways to study.
 - a. Socrates used the method quiet often.
 - b. Jesus often asked a question in order to answer a question.
 - (1) Mt. 21:23-25—"The baptism of John, whence was it?"
 - (2) Lk. 10:23-37—"The certain Samaritan."
 - c. The apostles often asked questions and then answered them. 1 Cor. 9; 15.
2. It shall be my purpose in this study to let you ask questions and I shall endeavor to answer them. Some suggested rules of procedure:
 - a. One question to a person.
 - b. The answer may not satisfy you but if you have further questions, then see me privately.
 - c. Everyone is encouraged to feel free to ask questions.
3. As introductory material we notice this question:
 - a. "Why is the Christian name so misused, as applying to schools, college, homes, etc, Since the Bible only applies it to people that have obeyed the Gospel. If it isn't right to call the church, Christian Church, what makes it right to apply it to anything other than a Christian or group of Christians? I realize that Christians are a Holy people, but they are a holy people because they are members of the Lord's church, not because they belong to another organization." (Billy Young)
 - b. Answers:
 - (1) The term Christian appears three times in the Bible. Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 3:16.
 - (2) It is true that in these three instances it is used as a noun but does it violate scriptures to speak of Christian homes, Christians colleges, etc?
 - (3) The name Christian Church would not be parallel to Christian Homes, Christian Education, etc.
 - a. Christian Church refers to another institution and is a recognition of one being a Christian because he belongs to such. On the other hand a home is a Christian homes because it is made up of Christians, but one is not a Christian simply because he belongs to this other institution, the home.
 - b. In the same way one is not a Christian because he belongs or is a prt of a College, but it can properly be called a Christian College because he belongs to it and conducts it along the lines of Christian principles.

Dis.

1. QUESTION I-----1 Tim. 2:9—"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or told, or pearls, or costly array;". What does this mean?
 - A. "modest"-----"Orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest. . . "The well-ordering is not of dress and demeanour only, but of the inner life, uttering indeed and expressing itself in the outward conversation."
 - B. "shamefacedness"-----"A sense of shame, modesty, is used regarding the demeanour of women in the church . . . that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the church."
 - C. "sobriety"-----Denotes soundness of mind it is that habitual inner self-government."
 - D. "Broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" is the outward in contrast to the inward.
 1. Do not be overly concerned about the outward, but be more concerned about the inward.
 2. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-7.

II. QUESTION II-- Explain: *Clifford Jones*

A. Ebon Pinion---"Night with ebon pinion . . ." First words of Song No. 131, Christian Hymn No. 2.

B. Rose of Sharon---"I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys." Song of Solomon 2:1.

1. Sharon was the name applied to a strip of land between the mountains and the Med. Sea. It was very fertile and the flowers were rich and beautiful there.
2. It is figurative language here as Solomon talks about the beauty of his wife or lover.

C. Ebenezer---1 Sam. 7:12.

1. This is mentioned as all Israel was gathered to Mizpeh and overcame the Philistines.
2. After the battle Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen, and "called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

III. QUESTION III---Why is it important for me to attend all services of the church? *James Spencer*

A. It shows my love for God. Jn. 14:23.

B. It is essential to my growth. Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:122

C. I am obeying a plain command of God. Heb. 10:25.

D. It sets a good example before others. Mt. 5:13-16.

Int.

1. Read or quote **Gen. 1:1; Psa. 14:1; 19:1; Rom. 1:18-20.**
2. The Atheist says "There is no God."
3. The Agnostic says "I cannot understand, therefore I do not believe."
4. In the very beginning of our study "from where did God come" we lay down two statements that are true:
 - a. Every man must have a God. If he rejects the true God, he must make a God for himself.
 - b. Therefore most every human being accepts the idea of some kind of God.
5. Let's consider:

Dis.

I. SOME NON-BIBLICAL VIEWS OF GOD.

A. Atheism.

1. This is the absolute denial of any kind of Divine Being.
2. This view, there is absolutely no God, was so much detested by the ancient Greeks, that they considered Atheism synonymous with wickedness.
3. It has often been said, and not without evidence, that Atheism as a full conviction never really existed in any human breast.
4. A man does not become an Atheist from a logical deduction from premises.
 - a. The common source of all infidelity is "the desire of the heart." The fool hath said, not in his reason, nor in his understanding, but in his heart, "There is no God."
 - b. He first wishes it were so; and then he believes it to be so. **Cf. Rom. 1:28.**
5. The Atheist said "But you cannot prove there is a God." But neither can he prove there is not.
 - a. Before one can say there is no God he must know all there is to know.
 - b. To affirm that no God exists a man must be omniscient and omnipresent, that is, he himself must be God.

B. Materialism.

1. Materialism is the twin brother of Atheism for he who denies the existence of God cannot maintain the spiritual personality of man.
2. Materialism merges God in matter, nothing at all exists apart from matter--- it is the absolute deification of matter.
3. Some questions and points:
 - a. So materialism asks us to believe that dead matter started every thing.
 - b. Yet they fail to explain how matter that has no consciousness is able to create consciousness in man.

C. Pantheism. Derives its name from the motto, One and All.

1. According to Pantheism God is the universe itself, "beyond and outside the world. He does not exist, but only in the world.
2. But if God is nothing more than the world then how does one explain the personality of man from an impersonal world.

D. Deism.

1. To the Deist God is a Personal Being that created the world and then went off and left it without further direction from him.
2. The Scriptures show that God is still at work among men. **Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 9:8.**

II. ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

A. The Cosmological Argument.

1. This argument is simply that since our universe is here it must have been caused by some great force.
 - a. The Scriptures affirm that all things have a builder. **Heb. 3:4.**
 - b. Every effect has a cause great enough to produce the effect.
 - (1) A pulpit had to have a cause to produce it.
 - (2) This building had to have a cause great enough to produce it.

2. Thus one accepts the fact that the earth has always been, that it started itself or that a greater force started it.

B. The Teleological Argument holds that since our universe is highly designed and organized there must be a designer.

C. Now these two arguments only prove God's existence and give us a limited view of him; "Revelation must complete that view."

III. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS NOTED.

A. "I find it hard to believe in God because I can't understand."

1. The astronomer doesn't understand all the stars, but he doesn't deny there are stars.

2. The electrician doesn't understand all about electricity, but he knows not to touch certain wires.

3. Man believes in his fellowman but who will affirm that man understands the body of his fellowman.

B. Another says, "I can't see, hear, taste, smell, feel God."

1. You can't see electricity, but you accept it as a reality.

2. One may not be able to taste his brain, but he believes he has one.

3. Since God is not a material object it is not possible for man to "know" him as he knows a material object.

C. But it requires a "leap of faith" to accept God.

1. Everything we do requires a leap of faith to a certain extent because one can never know the certainty of his endeavor.

2. In religion likewise it is right to expect some necessity of faith.

6666
1. In answering the question "from where did God come" one must conclude that God has always been.

2. One accepts the above conclusion or accepts dead matter as in the beginning.

3. Since nothing comes from nothing then something has always existed.

4. The Bible says "In the beginning God." **Gen. 1:1.**

I. WILL THERE BE DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT IN HELL AND WHY?

- A. Don't know of any verses that say one way or the other but I do know that several imply this.
- B. Luke 12 the man that knew and did not do . . ."
- C. Mt. 25: 36 describes it.
- D. Either way it doesn't matter.
- E. The smallest degree of Hell will be worst than anything we can imagine here.
- F. The world fair example (book, etc.)
- G. There are degrees of maturity and could well be degrees of happiness or punishment.

II. IS IT WRONG FOR A CHRISTIAN TO BEAR ARMS IN WAR?

- A. In answer, I will present two or three thoughts: (1) there are many areas in which the Christian could serve even in war time, such as the medical corp. (2) The Lord said and the Sermon on the Mount taught "thou shalt not kill". Much misunderstanding comes about by making a blanket statement that the Bible condemns all killing. Then God is contradicting himself, because he commanded certainto be stoned. This kill means murder. I believe the Bible teaches capital punishment. Does God expect a Christian to fight for his family or allow bodily harm to come to them. If a person broke into my home and tried to do bodily harm to my wife or children, should I protect them? If an army was coming across this country, killing everyone they could get their hands on, should I protect them? I think there are areas in which a Christian can serve and if he can keep from bearing arms then it is good. Teaching is the only power to stop war but until you can stop them you can't teach them.

III. JAMES 5: 14.....

- A. In the first century there were elders who received gifts of miraculous power. It seems this refers to them, but elders do not have that power today. It is applicable to us, we are still to pray and use medicine. All healing is divine healing, but not miraculous. God placed the ingredients of medicine here anyway. God had a part in it since we pray. This suggests that we call for the elders. Most often today people call for the preacher instead.

IV. SHOULD A WOMAN WEAR A VEIL IN WORSHIP?

- A. I Cor. 11: 1-16. The principle was that the woman was to be in, and show subjection to the man.
 - 1. The custom of wearing the veil supported this principle.
 - 2. It would be artificial to create a custom to support the principle today.
 - 3. The principle can be supported by the distinctive marks of our culture, just as it was by the requirements of Paul's day.

V. OF WHAT RACE WAS ADAM?

- A. I don't know.

VI. WHAT WOULD BE THE DIFFERENCE IN USING A PIANO TO GET THE PITCH OF SONG THAN USING THE PITCH PIPE?

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- A. 1 Cor. 11: 1-16. The principle was that the woman was to be in, and show submission to the man.
 1. The custom of wearing the veil supported this principle.
 2. It would be artificial to create a custom to support the principle today.
 3. The principle can be supported by the distinctive ways of our culture.
- Just as it was by the requirements of Paul's day.

V. OR WHAT RACE WAS ADAM?

- A. I don't know.

VI. WHAT WOULD BE THE DIFFERENCE IN USING A PIANO TO GET THE PITCH OF SONG THAN USING THE TITHE BIBLE?

INTRODUCTION

1. Read or quote the texts.
2. Miracles are very much a part of both the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - a. There are 54 miracles recorded in the Old Testament.
 - b. There are 34 miracles recorded as performed by our Lord.
 - c. There are 26 miracles recorded as performed by angels, the apostles and certain disciples.
3. The importance of studying miracles can be easily seen.
 - a. They are the very heart of Christianity.
 - (1) "...with the truth of miracles the entire citadel of Christianity stands or falls. For its beginning is a miracle, its author is a miracle, its progress depends upon miracles...If the principle of miracles be set aside, then all the heights of Christianity will be levelled with one stroke, and naught will remain but a heap of ruins. If we banish the supernatural from the Bible, there is nothing left us but the covers." (Modern Doubt and Christian Belief, p. 286)
 - (2) "A Christianity without the confirmation of miracles, the tokens of God's approval, is one without a spinal column." ("For This Cause," Sayers, p. 128).
 - b. Many people have a vast misunderstanding of miracles, their nature, their purpose, etc.
4. Let's Consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

- A. A tremendous amount of wrangling is usually indulged in over a suitable definition of a miracle. But one can "accept any definition of a miracle which will distinguish God's special, supernatural manifestations from things which occur by natural force or law, or by a fixed spiritual law." (Sayers, p. 15)
- B. "An extraordinary divine causality, and not that ordinary which we acknowledge everywhere and in everything belongs, then, to the essence of the miracle. The unrelenting activity of God, which at other times hides and conceals itself behind the veil of what we call natural laws, does in the miracle unveil itself; it steps out from concealment, and the hand which works it is laid bare." ("Notes On The Miracles Of Our Lord," Trench, p. 10).
- C. "An event or effect brought about by an extraordinary interposition of divine power." (System Bible Study, "Historical Digest," p. 225).
- D. "A miracle is a work out of the usual sequence of secondary causes and effects, which cannot be accounted for by ordinary action of these causes." (The Gospel Miracle In Their Relation To Christ And Christianity, Taylor p. 173).
- E. "Miracles are events in the external world, wrought by the immediate power of God and intended as a sign or attestation. They are possible because God sustains, controls, and guides all things, and is personal and omnipotent." (Westminster Dictionary Of the Bible).
- F. "...the laws of nature are nothing else than the common operations of divine power in the government of the world, which depends entirely for their existence and continuance on the divine will; and a miracle is nothing else than the exertion of the same power in a way different from that which is common; or it may be a mere suspension of that power which is commonly observed to operate in the world." (Evidences Of Christianity, Alexander, p. 67,68).

II. IS IT REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN MIRACLES OR DID SUCH MIRACLES AS THE BIBLE DESCRIBES REALLY HAPPEN?

- A. "There are some who would tell us that the alleged miracles were merely misunderstandings on the part of a primitive, superstitious people of the distant past."
 1. It's difficult to think of Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Matthew, Luke and the brilliant Saul of Tarsus as such individuals.
 2. Their lives, work and writings prove them to be competent and well-informed.
 3. Their writing still have a relevancy far superior to writings of our own generation.
- B. "Others tell us that the miracle stories in the Bible were out-and-out deceptions."
 1. This is harder to believe because, whatever else may be said about them, they were good men.
 2. Whatever charge one might make against such men as Daniel, Paul, James, John, it's utterly impossible to describe them as dishonest deceivers.

C. "Another view is that the miracle stories of the Bible are simply legends, which grew from almost nothing into towering miracle stories."

1. This view holds that Christ had a great personality, had great impact on people, stories were told about him and these grew into legends.
2. This is impossible to believe since the writers were not telling what they had been told, but what they had actually seen. 1 Jn. 1:1-3.

D. "Still others say that Miracles contradict universal experience, in other words, what has never been experienced can never be believed."

1. To pronounce an event incredible because it appears to contradict the laws of nature is to assume knowledge of all laws of nature.
2. To pronounce an event incredible because it seems to contradict the testimony of all men is to assume a knowledge of all testimony.
3. To pronounce an event incredible because it is contrary to one's own experience and observations is to assume such experience and observation is supreme, and to discount the experience and observation of "others at all times and in all places, and this is extreme folly."
4. "For one to base objections to a miracle on the ground that it is contrary to all experience is to assume universal experience - by all men, at all times, and in all places." ("Bible Vs. Modernism, p. 104").
5. According to this hypothesis a man would be obligated to reject everything that did not come within the range of his own experience and knowledge, even though a thousand witnesses might testify to the truthfulness of the event.

E. Miracles are reasonable and the miracles described in the Bible really did happen.

1. God did create this universe (Gen. 1:1) and everything about it cries out of the infinite skill of the creator God.
2. God not only created it but he continues to sustain or operate this world through what we usually call "laws of nature."
3. God sometimes "steps in" or the manner in which God performs miracles.
 - a. The law of gravity demands that any object be pulled to the ground or fall, but man has the power to override or suspend that law by tossing a rock into the air. Similarly, God when He wishes can suspend or override a law of nature.
 - b. "Another means of conveying what God does in the performing of miracles is in imagining an intricate, elaborate model railroad, such a one in the museum just off the lake in the city of Chicago. There were many tracks, several trains operating at the same time, mountains, tunnels, and all the rest that goes to make up an elaborate model railroad system. Everything was functioning properly and the man who was controlling the entire system stood in the corner of the giant display at the control center. He pressed a lever and a train moved. He touched another lever and a train went onto a side-track. Cars were uncoupled; other cars were attached; trains reversed their directions; and all the rest that goes to make up the activities of a fine model railroad. Occasionally, however, the operator would move into the system manually and lift a locomotive from its track by hand. While normally he operated the entire system from the control center, occasionally he intervened directly. This is what God does when he performs a miracle. He intervenes in our world, superseding the normal functioning of the laws of nature, for a purpose. It is not incredible or unreasonable to believe that the God who created our world, who installed its various laws, might occasionally, for a purpose, suspend some of its laws and operate directly in the affairs of men."
4. When God performed a miracle he did "close and small" (C. S. Lewis) what he regularly does on a universal basis.
 - a. Jesus fed 5,000 with 5 loaves and two fishes, it was totally different from the way God usually does it, but He is supplying food all the time. (Jn. 6:1ff)
 - (1) A handful of grain is planted in the ground and many bushels of grain are harvested a few months later.
 - (2) The only difference that that Jesus did "close and small" before a multitude that which he normally does less obviously.
 - b. Is it unreasonable to believe that God who made and sustains the universe did step in and intervene in miracles?

III. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLE MIRACLES.

- A. They exhibit the character of God and teach truths about God. (Constructive, healing, and not immoral or unethical).

- B. They are in harmony with established truths of religion.
 - 1. They never contribute to dishonest purposes, nor fight against the good.
 - 2. They are consistent with the ethical principles which we read in the Bible.
- C. There is an adequate occasion for them (religious purpose).
 - 1. They are always designed to do something.
 - 2. They serve as "signs" as stated by John. **Jn. 20:30,31).**
- D. They are established, not by the number of witnesses, but by the character and qualifications of the witnesses.
 - 1. They were seen. **Ex. 7:9; Lk. 23:8; Jn. 6:2,14; Acts 8:13.**
 - 2. They weren't hidden and testified to by incompetent witnesses.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. To doubt the miracles of the Bible is to destroy the very heart of Christianity.
 - a. The central miracle of all was the coming of the divine Son of God to live in human form among men.
 - b. It denies the divinity of Christ, the existence of God and the angelic host, heaven, hell, etc.
- 2. It leaves a religion void of its strength and power.

QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE ANSWERED #3

- I. Please explain the difference between tongues and unknown tongues?
- A. The King James translation uses the term "unknown" in I Cor. 14: 6-4.
1. The word "unknown" is in lighter print showing it was not in the original Greek but was added by the translator.
 2. The American Standard has "For he that speaketh in a tongue."
- B. A "tongue" is a "language."
1. The apostles on Pentecost began to speak in "tongues." Acts 2: 4
 - a. "Every man heard them speak in his own language." Acts 2: 6.
 - b. "How hear we every man in our own tongue?" Acts 2: 8.
 2. Thus there is no such thing as an unknown language because if it is a language then somebody knows it or it wouldn't be a language.
- C. A tongue is unknown only in the sense that it is unknown to certain people or cannot be understood by someone that hears it. It is known though by the speaker. Cf. I Cor. 14: 5.
- II. How did Adam die?
- A. The Bible says, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." Gen. 5: 5.
- III. How did the church of Christ get its name?
- A. The church got its name from Christ.
1. He is its builder. Mt. 16: 18.
 2. He is the foundation under it. Mt. 16: 18; Eph. 2: 19.
 3. He is the head of it. Eph. 1: 22, 23.
 4. He is the Savior of it. Eph. 5: 23.
- B. It is called the Church of Christ. Rom. 16: 16.
- IV. What does the term "Selah" mean which is found numerous times in Psalms?
- A. It appears 71 times in the Psalms.
- B. "It is rendered in the LXX by diapsalms which either means louder playing, forte or, more probably, an instrumental interlude." (ISBI)
- V. To what extent are women to keep silent in the churches?
- A. Scriptures--I Cor. 14: 34, 35; I Tim. 2: 11, 12.
- B. Use prepared paper on this.
- VI. Do you think the use of "birth control" pills is contrary to the will of God?
- A. Show purpose of marriage--I Cor. 7: 1-5. No different than other contraceptive.
- VII. Do you think a Christian can and should become involved in the affairs of the community?
- A. God advice to Israel through Jeremiah. Jer. 29: 4-7.
- VIII. What dispensation between crucifixion and Pentecost?
- IX. Should we swear on the Bible in court?

INTRODUCTION:

1. In our first lesson, we observed that it is reasonable to believe in miracles and that the miracles recorded in the Bible really did occur.
2. But the question of miracles is still confusing to many folk today.
 - a. "There are countless numbers of people in the world today, representing many religious organizations, who claim to believe that miracles are currently being performed by the power of God." ("Have Miracles Ceased?" Tract by James Tolle, p. 3)
 - b. Many others can't seem to distinguish between some of the "so-called" miracles today and that done by the apostles.
3. Since miracles play such an important part in the entire Bible story it's most essential to get the issue clearly before us.
4. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. SOME THINGS THAT ARE NOT A QUESTION IN THIS ISSUE.

- A. It is not a question of whether or not they were performed yesterday.
 1. Christ and his apostles did perform miracles. ~~Acts 4:16~~ **5:12; 9:4:16**
 2. It is not what they did, but where is the passage that says they are for today?
- B. It is not a question of power.
 1. God has power enough to do anything he chooses, but it is not what God can do but what does God do?
 2. God can make peas grow on a rosebush, but His law is that they grow on a pea vine
 3. It is not what God can do, but what is His law concerning that particular thing?
- C. It's not a question of prayer for the sick.
 1. Certainly the Christian believes that the "effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." **Jas. 5:16.**
 2. We all believe that we must pray for the sick, but we also believe that God has certain natural laws in regard to the sick.
 3. We are to pray for our daily bread (**Mt. 6:11**) but we don't expect God to hand us a loaf of bread while we disregard His natural law.
- D. It is not a question of whether or not God heals.
 1. All healing is divine healing but not all healing is miraculous healing.
 2. All bread is divine, but not miraculous like Israel in the wilderness. One must plant, harvest and make.
- E. It's not a question of what history says about it, but what does the Bible say about it?
- F. It is not a question of whether any sort of healing ever occurs in modern healing revivals.
 1. Some extremists frequently deny that any sort of healing ever occurs in a healing campaign.
 2. There is some healing that goes on in these campaigns, but "these healings are not produced miraculously by the influence of divine power."
 3. The field ~~hof~~ of medicine has long recognized the power of certain psychological factors in relation to health, sickness, etc. The two most common are:
 - a. Suggestion which is "the arousing of ideas, or a thought pattern, in one's mind by another."
 - b. "Autosuggestion would be the same process self-induced."
 4. Yes, certain functional and hysterical maladies have been helped through suggestive methods employed by faith healing, but no genuine cures of organic disturbances have been wrought.

II. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES OR WHY WERE THEY PERFORMED?

- A. Miracles in God's plan were provisional.
 1. "Miraculous power in creation was no part of the things created, but the means by which they were created" (Wallace). (They were provisional and temporary and ceased when God's creative work ceased.)
 2. The same principle is seen in God's revelation to man.
 - a. The message dwelt in the inspired man before the Bible was complete. **2 Cor. 4:13**
 - b. When the Bible was complete there was no longer any need for inspiration.

3. "There was a time when this nation was governed under the Articles of Confederation. Under this form of government our fathers selected a constitution-making body. This body, in convention, gave us the constitution of the United States. The people ratified the constitution and organized a government under it. When our fathers had made the constitution, their power in this matter ceased. Miraculous power was constitution-making power. Our constitution, the New Testament, has been made, and therefore the constitution-making power ceased by divine limitation. Thus when miraculous power had given us the Book (the Bible, the constitution) miraculous power ceased." (G. K. Wallace; Page 4).

B. The purpose of the miracles of our Lord are clearly stated.

1. He performed miracles in order to demonstrate that He could forgive sins.

Mt. 9:6.

2. He also performed miracles in order to prove that He was sent of God and that He was the Christ. **Jn. 5:36; 10:25; 36-38; Jn. 20:30,31.**

C. The apostles also performed miracles and their purposes are stated.

1. When Jesus appointed the twelve He gave them miraculous power. **Mt. 10:5-8.**

2. God bore the apostles witness by the miracles which He wrought through them that their testimony was true. **Heb. 2:4.**

3. God confirmed the word which they preached by the miracles. **Mk. 16:19,20.**

4. The apostles performed miracles in order that those who heard them preach might not place their faith "in the wisdom of man but in the power of God." **1 Cor. 2:5.**

5. The miracles were signs or evidence of their apostolic office and authority in the kingdom of God. **2 Cor. 12:11,12; Rom. 15:19; Acts 2:43.**

D. Some of the early disciples had miraculous powers and their purposes are stated.

1. Paul states that spiritual gifts were given unto men. **1 Cor. 12:1-11.**

2. The word was confirmed by the miracles. **cf. Mk. 16:19.**

3. Another purpose of miracles was to edify the church. **1 Cor. 14:26.**

4. Tongues were a sign to the unbeliever. **1 Cor. 14:22.**

5. Furthermore they were to protect the church against false teachers until the truth was completely revealed. **Eph. 4:7,11,14.**

E. Miracles are not essential to anything God wants His children to do in the world today.

1. Miracles were essential in creation but they are not essential in procreation.

2. Miracles were essential in revelation but they are not essential in the proclamation or reading of the word.

CONCLUSION:

1. Too many people, the ability to work a miracle would be the most wonderful thing in the world.

2. But every disciple by preaching and teaching is doing a greater work than the Lord could do. **Jn. 14:12.**

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote text.
2. The Bible clearly reveals that Christians are referred to as children of God.
 - a. Followers of God as children. Eph. 5:1.
 - b. Walk as children of light. Eph. 5:8.
 - c. As obedient children. 1 Peter 1:14.
 - d. Children of God manifest. 1 John 3:10.
3. The Bible also clearly reveals how one becomes a child of God. Gal. 3:26,27.
4. The Bible also clearly shows that one become a child of God because:
 - a. He recognizes he is a sinner and needs God. Rom. 3:23; Acts 2:37.
 - b. He knows that God gave his son that man might be reconciled to Him. 2 Cor. 5:17-21.
 - c. He wanted to become a child of God.
 - (1) Psa. 110 deals with many prophecies about Christ and it states "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power..." (Psa. 110:3a).
 - (2) A principle about giving in 2 Cor. 8:12 is very applicable in our service to God.
5. With these thoughts in mind, let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

- I. GOD EXPECTS THE CHRISTIAN TO PAY THE PRICE TO SERVE HIM.
 - A. Jesus made it very clear that it does cost something to be a Christian. Lk. 14:25-33.
 - B. Jesus explained that one's own family may become his foes if one follows Him. Lk. 12:51-53.
 - C. It may cost some persecution and suffering. 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-16.
- II. GOD EXPECTS THE CHRISTIAN TO LIVE FOR HIM.
 - A. Christians are not to henceforth live unto themselves, but for Christ. 2 Cor. 5:13-15.
 - B. We are to use our bodies in such a way that God may be glorified. 1 Cor. 6:19,20; Rom. 12:1,2.
 - C. The life that we live should be Christ living in us. Gal. 2:20.
 - D. We should live soberly, righteously, and godly. Tit. 2:11,12.
- III. GOD EXPECTS US TO RESPECT HIS AUTHORITY AND THAT OF HIS SON.
 - A. God is the Supreme Being of The Universe and the heavens.
 - B. Jesus Christ has been given all authority at God's right hand. Mt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22.
 - C. One of the best ways to show respect for God and His authority is to respect His word.
 1. The Psalmist said, "...when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Psalm 119:1-6, 117.
 2. The Bible teaches that the happy man is one that respects and meditates on God's word. Psa. 1:1,2.
 3. The Bible also teaches that merely hearing God's word is not enough, but we must do it. Jas 1:21-27. Let's see if we just hear or if we do:
 - a. Eph. 5:19. Do you sing in the worship?
 - b. Eph. 4:32. Are you kind to others?
 - c. Heb. 10:25. What about your attendance?
 - d. Mt. 22:37. How much do you love God?
 - e. Eph. 6:1. Do you obey your parents?
- IV. GOD EXPECTS US TO TAKE A STAND FOR HIM.
 - A. One cannot serve two masters at the same time. Mt. 6:24; 12:30.
 - B. One cannot be lukewarm and please God. Rev. 3:14-17.
 - C. One cannot halt between two opinions. 1 Kgs. 18:17-40.
 - D. One must take a stand and not be easily swayed. Jas. 1:8; Eph. 4:14; 1 Cor. 16:13.

CONCLUSION:

1. God has the right to expect this because we belong to Him. 1 Cor. 6:19,20.
2. We love Him because He first loved us. Rom. 5:6-8; 1 John 4:19.

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 - B. We are to be dead to ourselves in such a way that God may be glorified. 2 Cor. 8:19, 20; Rom. 12:1, 2.
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"MIRACLES, No. 3"

Eph. 4:8-16

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. From the April, 1968, issue of "Full Gospel Native Missionary" comes this story: "As I talked to Ralph's father, he told me a story of God's grace and a man's faith that made me humble myself and pray. Ralph was struck down by a speeding car. The auto sped away into the night leaving Ralph a crumpled, bleeding form. His skull was ripped open, his shoulder and side was smashed and broken. The bones were a gritty mess. Finally an ambulance arrived, screaming into the night toward the Parkland Hospital. "Daddy" Hart and Ralph's mother rushed to the hospital. Ralph was not cleaned nor the blood washed from his face which oozed from eyes, nostrils and mouth. His scalp was matted with blood. His bones in his shoulders and ribs had not been touched. HE WAS PRONOUNCED DEAD ON ARRIVAL. Even if he could have lived he might be an idiot or a helpless cripple because of massive brain damage. The doctor met the Harts upon arrival and said the boy was pronounced Dead on Arrival. The policeman had already told them Ralph was dead. Brother Hart prayed, there returned a breath of life in him. Too hopeless even to wash his face... That spark of life was expected to fan out. The doctor said, he is hurt so badly he has no chance to pull through. Ralph's mother began to cry saying, "I DON'T KNOW IF RALPH IS SAVED OR NOT, HE CANNOT DIE." At that time Daddy Hart heard the audible voice of God saying, "BE NOT AFRAID, ONLY BELIEVE." He spoke to Sister Hart, saying, "God is going to take care of Ralph, now is the time we must trust Him and pray." They prayed, Sister Hart began to wash Ralph's face of blood and dirt. As Daddy Hart prayed Ralph began to breathe. This excited the doctor who screamed for the nurse to take him to the operating room. Brother Hart stood in his way telling him that God was going to heal Ralph, that the doctors had done all they could and not even washed the blood from his face. He warned the doctor not to disturb Ralph that God was healing him. He left to call the Christians to prayer. When he returned he was blocked by doctors and police who demanded he sign papers for Ralph to be immediately operated upon. Brother Hart pushed his way up the stairs because they refused to let him on the elevator. THEY REFUSED TO ALLOW DADDY HART TO PRAY FOR RALPH IN THE HOSPITAL. The hospital staff, the doctor and policeman attempted to prevent Brother Hart from removing Ralph and taking him home where the Christians could pray. The power of God visibly threw the policemen aside when he attempted to handcuff Daddy Hart. Ralph was taken by ambulance home where reporters and others waited to criticize and write of the religious fanatics who killed their son by removing him from a doctor's care...

Brother and Sister Hart entered a fast and the Christians prayed. The unbelievers wrote of that crazy preacher... Ralph regained consciousness. His mother asked "Ralph, how is it with your soul?" Ralph prayed and asked Jesus to forgive him and promised to live for him as long as he lived. Daddy Hart prayed again, God healed Ralph. The flesh instantly covered the bare skull, all swelling disappeared, the crushed bones of the shoulder mended instantly, leaving no trace, all pain left and he was healed completely... As Daddy Hart finished telling this he said to me, "Brother Buchanan, excuse me, but I must pray." He went across the room and knelt by a chair as the room full of people continued their visiting. He prayed. I wonder how many have died because they refused to give their case to God but gave it to unbelieving doctors who are derisive of God's healing power."

3. The above story illustrates the thinking of many today, not only those that are members of such groups, but some of the most prominent religious are willing to receive and uphold those that practice such into their midst. On May 27, 1968, Oral Roberts will be officially ordained into the Methodist Church.
4. Some members of the church have been heard to say "Certainly I believe that miracles like the apostles are still being performed today."
5. In the midst of such confusion, we must turn to God's word and see what it says about the duration of miracles.
6. In this study let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. THE WAY IN WHICH MIRACULOUS POWERS WERE CONFERRED HAS CEASED.

- A. Jesus had the Spirit without measure.
- B. The apostles were given miraculous power when ordained to their apostolic office (Mt. 10:5-8) and when the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 2:1-4).

C. But how did the early Christians receive miraculous power?

1. The apostles laid their hands on the seven appointed at Jerusalem and the Bible specifically states that Stephen "did great ~~wonders~~ and miracles among the people." (Acts 6:5-8).
2. Philip, another one of the seven upon whom the apostles had laid their hands went down to Samaria and the people "hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." (Acts 8:5-8).
3. The apostles, Peter and John, laid their hands on the Christians at Samaria and "they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts 8:14-18).
 - a. Philip had the power to perform miracles but could not give that power to anyone else. If so, why did the apostles come down?
 - b. Since laying hands on the Christians is what the apostles did when they came to Samaria, it's obvious that this was the purpose of their coming.
4. When Paul laid his hands on the twelve at Ephesus "the Holy Ghost came upon them." (Acts 19:6).

5. Timothy received a gift, Paul said, "by the putting on of my hands." 2 Tim. 1:6.

D. Since miraculous power was bestowed by the laying on of apostles' hands; then when the last apostle was dead, miracles ceased because the source through which miraculous power was bestowed was no more. "The reason why the laying on of hands ceased, by which the special gifts were imparted, is because the things given ceased - that is, the charisma ceased with the last inspired man who could impart the gifts."

II. MIRACLES HAVE CEASED BECAUSE THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES HAS CEASED.

A. Miracles were not merely to accommodate the sick.

1. Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick (2 Tim. 4:20).
2. Timothy was not healed, but told to take a little wine for his stomach. 1 Tim. 5:23.
3. Today's "so-called" miracles are merely to accommodate the sick.

B. Miracles were given to confirm the truth and once that truth was perfect and confirmed then no more miracles.

1. Our text (Eph. 4:7-14) reveals several things about the duration of miracles.

- a. When they were given - "When he ascended upon high." 4:8a.
- b. To whom they were given - apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors. 4:11.
- c. Why they were given - "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." 4:12.
- d. How long they were to last - "Till we all come in the unity of the faith..." 4:13.
 - (1) The word "till" marks duration.
 - (2) The "unity of the faith" means the completed revelation.
 - (3) The gifts would last until revelation was completed whereby a man might have a complete knowledge of God's will and be the complete stature of what a Christian is to be.

2. 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14, also deals with spiritual gifts and their duration.

- a. Chapter 12 tells what spiritual gifts are.
- b. Chapter 13 tells when spiritual gifts are to end.
- c. Chapter 14 tells how spiritual gifts are to be used.
- d. 1 Cor. 12:31 says there is a more excellent way than the spiritual gifts and 1 Cor. 13:13 reveals that way as faith, hope and love.
- e. 1 Cor. 13 also reveals that prophecies, tongues, knowledge, (spiritual gifts 12:8-10) "that which is in part" (13:10) would be done away "when that which is perfect is come." 13:10a.
 - (1) "That which is perfect" does not refer to Christ or it would read "He which is perfect."
 - (2) "That which is perfect" refers to completed revelation - "The perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25) cf. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Jude 3.
- f. In 1 Cor. 14:6, Paul clearly declares that there "could be no profit in the exercise of the gift of tongues, or of any of the special endowments, except for the purpose of completing divine revelation; therefore, there is no need, purpose or reason, for the existence of such gifts today." (Wallace).

C. Some conclusions from these premises:

1. If miracles have not ceased, then we do not have the complete, confirmed truth, even though it claims to be complete.
2. If miracles have not ceased then the words of the apostles are not true, and, if we can't believe them here, where can we believe them.
3. If miracles have not ceased then Christ has not been proven to be the Son of God, but still needs to be, and God has altogether changed the purpose and form of miracles today.

III. SOME PROOF TEXTS NOTICED.

A. Heb. 13:8 - "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

1. Faith healers contend this means that Christ still works in the same way and does things like he once did.
2. But this proves too much because God no longer creates man of dust, etc.
3. It also means that since he healed men yesterday he must do it today, but also forever which would put sickness in heaven.

B. Mt. 28:18-20 - "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

1. But is performing a miracle the only way the Lord can be with us?

C. Mk. 16:17 - "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues,"

1. Isn't it strange that faith healers just pick healing out of this verse and not snake-handling and poison drinking?
2. "The following explanation by G. Greenwall plainly shows the absurdity of the assertion that Mark 16:17 applies to believers today: "It has often been urged, that in the grand commission there is a promise running thus: 'These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, etc.'... If we are not to confine the promise to the apostolic era, but must consider it as absolute and universal in its aspects, the case will stand thus: 'If there have been believers in all ages without super-natural power, the promise in the commission has been falsified. On the other hand, if the promise has not been verified, because the conditions of belief and obedience have been absent, then we are forced to the dreadful conclusion that there have been no believers since apostolic days!' ... This choice of impalement is offered to all who are looking for...miraculous power. On one of these horns they must be tossed; and so far as a matter of comfort is concerned, it matters little which.' The reader can plainly see the embarrassing position men are placed in who believe that the application of Mark 16, 17, 18 is to believers of all ages; for to consistently prove themselves believers in Christ, according to their own application of this passage, they must be able to cast out demons, speak with new tongues, take up serpents and drink any deadly thing without being HURT. Without this proof they unwittingly mark themselves as unbelievers. We doubt that any of the contemporary performers of MIRACLES will demonstrate their would-be miraculous power by drinking any deadly poison submitted to them. They are most bold and brazen to assert their claims of miraculous power but utter helpless in practicing what they preach." (Have Miracles Ceased, James Tolle, page 19, 20).

CONCLUSION

1. Bible believers accept the fact that miracles have ceased.
2. We do not need more miracles but we need to believe the miracles written to convince us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Jn. 20:30,31).
3. Many of those that claim to perform miracles, reject some of the very truths the word of God teaches about miracles.

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INTRODUCTION:

1. "Search the long annals of proud Rome and Greece,
The tombs of war, the chronicles of peace,
Ransack the old and modern rolls of fame,
To fit the brightest splendor on a name
The name above all names is Mother." *(The System Bible Study, p. 754)*
2. "The greatest word is God. The deepest word is Soul. The longest word is Eternity. The swiftest word is Time. The nearest word is Now. The darkest word is Sin. The meanest word is Hypocrisy. The broadest word is Truth. The strongest word is Right. The tenderest word is Love. The sweetest word is Home. The dearest word is Mother." *(ibid, p. 754)*
3. George Herbert once said: "A good mother is worth one hundred school masters." How true when we realize that the greatest letters ever written, measured by influence, were written by a mother's hand; the mightiest prayers every offered have been made by Christian mothers; the greatest influence is the influence of a Christian mother, and the only absolutely unselfish, God-like love is a mother's love.
4. Kipling wrote: "If I were hanged on the highest hill,
I know whose love would follow me still;
If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
I know whose tears would come down to me;
If I were damned in body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole.
Mother O'mine! Mother o'mine!"
5. Over 290 times the word mother appears in the Bible. Paul said: "Honor thy father and mother..." (Eph. 6:2) Paul meant more than sending them a card or paying them a visit, or even setting aside one day each year to give them special honor. Since the world is today possibly thinking more about mother than other times, it seems appropriate to study about God's woman; God's mother in the hope that it will help you to be a better mother and will help us all to have greater respect for our mother.

6. Let's consider

DISCUSSION:

I. MOTHERHOOD IS A HIGH CALLING.

- A. God made woman and gave her the ability to reproduce. **Gen. 1:28.**
- B. When woman sinned, God said "in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." **Gen. 3:16.**
- C. But the joy of motherhood makes a woman forget the pain of birth. **Jn. 16:21.**
- D. A woman's salvation is connected with motherhood as she continues faithfully in all else that God commands. **1 Tim. 2:15.**
- E. "God made the streams that gurgle down the purple mountainside;
He made the gorgeous coloring with which the sunset is dyed:
He made the hills and covered with glory, and he made
The sparkle on the dewdrops and the flecks of light and shade.
Then, knowing all earth needed was a climax for her charms,
He made a little woman with a baby in her arms!

He made the arching rainbow that is thrown across the sky;
He made the blessed flowers that nod and smile as we go by;
He made the gladsome beauty, as she bows with queenly grace;
But the sweetest of them all, He made the love-light in the face
That bends above a baby, warding off the world's charms—
That dainty little woman with a baby in her arms." *(Author Unknown)*

II. MOTHERHOOD IS A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. Sons and daughters will be like their father and mother. **Ezek. 16:44.**
 1. Ahaziah, the son of Ahab and Jezebel "did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother." **1 Kgs. 22:52.**
 2. Josiah "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of David his father..." **2 Kgs. 22:2.**

3. Timothy was a man of unfeigned faith but it dwelt first in his mother and grandmother. **2 Tim. 1:5.**
4. Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am, or can be, I owe to my angel mother."
- B. The Bible reveals some of the reasons why mothers may fail in this great responsibility.
 1. Rebekah, the mother of Jacob, failed because she was partial. **Gen. 25:28.**
Because she was partial she taught her son:
 - a. Lying and deception. **Gen. 27:6-29.**
 - b. Jacob practiced the same at other times.
 2. Herodias, mother of Salome (Josephus gives her this name) used her own daughter to accomplish her own ungodly purposes. **Mt. 14:1-8.**
 3. Some mothers fail because they become unconcerned about their children and their responsibility.
 - a. During the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah said, "the daughter of the people is become cruel..." **Lam. 4:3; Job 39:13-18.**
 - b. Paul spoke of some (mothers, fathers, children) without natural affection. **Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3.**
- C. The Bible also reveals why mothers succeed in the great responsibility.
 1. They have great faith in God. **Heb. 11:11.**
 2. They ask for God's help and keep their promises to Him. **1 Sam. 1:10, 11; 24-28.**
 3. They depend upon the word of God as their guide. **2 Tim. 3:15; 1:5.**
 4. They are willing to bear trials and afflictions for their children's welfare like Jochobed, the mother of Moses. **Ex. 2:1, 2.**

CONCLUSION:

1. The mother is the soul of the home. Only she knows what a load it takes to make a house a home.

<p>"Nobody knows the work it takes To keep the home together. Nobody knows of the steps it takes. Nobody knows but mother.</p> <p>"Nobody listens to childish woe Which kisses only smother. Nobody's pain by naughty blows Nobody, only mother.</p> <p>"Nobody knows of the sleepless care Bestowed on baby brother. Nobody knows of the tender prayers Nobody, only mother.</p>	<p>"Nobody knows of the lessons taught Of loving one another; Nobody knows of the patience sought, Nobody, only mother.</p> <p>"Nobody knows of the anxious fears Lest darlings may not weather The storms of life in after years. Nobody knows but mother.</p> <p>"Nobody kneels at the throne above To thank the heavenly Father For the sweetest gift - A mother's love Nobody can but mother." <i>(Author Unknown)</i></p>
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2. You will not expect the impossible of mother - she is only human. Mother will be strained, tested, tried, nerves keyed up ready to snap. There will be much noise "but she will try to remember that in the home too much noise is better than too much silence." It's better to have muddy shoes on the carpet than cleaned and laid away.

<p>("The little toy dog is covered with dust, But sturdy and staunch he stands, And the little ten soldier is heavy with rust And his musket molds in his hands.</p> <p>"Time was when the little toy dog was new And the soldier was passing fair. But that was the time when our Little Boy Blue Kissed them and put them there.</p> <p>"Now, don't go till I come," he said, "and don't you make any noise, So, toddling off to his trundle bed, He dreamt of his pretty toys.</p>	<p>"And as he was dreaming, an angels song Awakened our Little Boy Blue. Ah! the years are many, the years are But little toy friends are true, long,</p> <p>"Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they Each in its same old place, stand, Awaiting the touch of a little hand, And the smile of a little face.</p> <p>"And they wonder, as waiting the long years through. In the dust of that little chair, What has become of our Little Boy Blue Since he kissed them and put them There?"</p>
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3. Son or daughter, thank God for your mother. "It's the holiest name in human speech except the name of God, who pities like a father, who comforts like a mother and who loves like both."

h. Obedient to their own husbands. Eph. 5:22.

Conclusion.

Yes, there is much work in the church for the woman to do. No reason any woman can not be busy. Enough work in this community and in your home to keep you busy.

h. Obedient to their own husbands. Eph. 5:22.

Conclusion.

Yes, there is much work in the church for the women to do. No reason any women can not be busy. Enough work in this community and in your home to keep you busy.

BOOK

BOOKS & PERSE "MOLES" (B)

(B)

1. The vineyard placed a very importance part in the economy of Palestine. The foxes would sometimes spoil the vineyard.
2. This is just one of the many places in the Bible where animals are used to teach us valuable lessons.
 - a. Isaiah uses the ox. Isa. 1:3.
 - b. Solomon uses the ant. Prov. 6:6.
 - c. Jesus used the birds of the air. Mt. 6:26.
3. In the Old Testament Israel is often compared to a vine or to a vineyard. Psalms 80:15; Isaiah 5:7
4. In the New Testament figures of vine, branches, and vineyard are used to describe the kingdom or church of the Lord. Matthew 21:28,33; John 15:1,2. MT 20:1
5. Solomon was speaking of literal foxes that spoiled the vineyard, but there are little foxes (little sins) today that spoil the vineyard.

Discussion.

I. ONE LITTLE FOX IS IRREVERENCE.

- A. Irreverence is lack of respect, fear, or reverence toward God and our fellowman.
- B. Irreverence can be manifested in a number of ways:
 1. The use of filthy language by a Christian is irreverence toward God. Eph. 4:29; 5:4.
 2. Lightly esteeming something divine is profanity.
 - a. Esau is called a profane person because he lightly esteemed a divine blessing. Heb. 12:15-17.
 - b. The Corinthians lightly esteemed the Lord's Supper just as some do today. 1 Cor. 11:20,21,30.
 - c. Somewhat esteem the assembly of God's people and all kinds of deeds are carried on.
 - (1) Worship is an "act of reverence whether paid to a creature or to the Creator."
 - (2) We all recognize that the building where we meet to worship is not holy but "the reason we come to that building is holy" (Marge Green) and the assembly is holy.
- C. The Christian must give reverence to God and ^{NOT} allow the little fox of irreverence to spoil the vineyard. Heb. 12:9,28.

II. ANOTHER LITTLE FOX IS PRIDE.

- A. Pride is inordinate self esteem; an unreasonable conceit of superiority; a sense of one's own worth and abhorrence of what is beneath or unworthy of one's self." (Webster)
- B. Pride has no place in God's way for man. Prov. 16:18; Lk. 1:51; Phil. 2:3.
- C. The little fox of pride destroys the vineyard in so many ways:
 1. Pride wrecked the nation of Edom. Obadiah 1,2,3.
 2. The proud man gets his feelings hurt so easy while the humble man is able to forgive.
 3. Pride keeps Christians from confessing their sins.
 - a. David was king of Israel but he said "I have sinned." 2 Sam. 12:13.
 - b. The Pharisee was so proud that he confessed faults of others, but not his own. Lk. 18:10-14.

^{2:5} The Christian must humble himself and confess his sins. 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Pet. 5:6.

III. THE LITTLE FOXES THAT ARE TWINS ---ENVY AND JEALOUSLY.

- A. Envy is the inordinate desire toward that which belongs to another. One is jealous of his own.
- B. Joseph's brothers, "moved with envy", sold him into slavery. Acts 7:9.
- C. Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered the Christ. Mt. 27:18.
- D. The little foxes of envy and jealousy have ruined many marriages, disturbed many congregations, etc.

IV. THE LITTLE FOXES THAT ARE TRIPLETS---SELFISHNESS, MALICE, UNFORGIVENESS.

- A. Selfishness is "a concern for one's own welfare or advantage at the expense of or in disregard of others." (Webster)
1. This little fox is far too prevalent in the life of too many Christians.
 2. Jesus Christ was the very opposite. Phil. 2:5-9.
 3. We must help bear one another's burdens. Rom. 15:1-3.
- B. Malice is evil intention to do harm through unlawful or unjustified means.
1. In malice we are to be children. 1 Cor. 14:20.
 2. Malice is to be put off. Eph. 4:31; 1 Pet. 2:1.
- C. Unforgiveness cannot be a part of the life of a Christian. Mt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35.

Conclusion.

1. The little sins are the ones that are the most dangerous. "They spoil the vineyard. "It is only man's littleness which discovers no importance in trifles. Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."
2. "Take us the foxes" means that all our war* must be waged against them lest they truly spoil the vineyard.

Gal. 6:1,2.

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INTRODUCTION:

1. "One of the major problems confronting the average congregation is that of inactive church members. It matters not where one may go, he is almost certain to find people who claim membership in the church, but who take little or no part in the work which the Lord has ordained for his people. Not only is this kind of a situation unpleasant, pitiable, and tragic; it also invariably keeps the congregation below its potential strength."
2. Someone has compiled the following statistics regarding the average denominational church. Some of the items may be a little high for the average church of Christ; but it will have to be admitted that in many of the instances the figures are substantially correct. It will help us to compare ourselves with this information.
 - 5% of reported members do not exist.
 - 10% cannot be found.
 - 20% never pray.
 - 25% never read the Bible.
 - 30% never attend church services.
 - 40% never give to any cause.
 - 50% never go to Sunday school.
 - 60% never go to church on Sunday night.
 - 70% never give to missions.
 - 75% never engage in church activity.
 - 80% never attend prayer meeting.
 - 90% never have family worship in the home.
 - 95% never win a soul to Jesus Christ.
3. Certainly those statistics present a problem which is both difficult and important. Certainly there is nothing more important than the saving of souls. Certainly it becomes a major concern to every elder, deacon, preacher, member of the Lord's church to know what to do to cause the careless, indifferent, inactive church member to assume his God-given responsibility.
4. In studying this lesson let us consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH HAVE GOD-GIVEN OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. Anyone who has been saved from his sins and added to the Lord's church has certain definite obligations.
 1. To provoke one another to love and good works. **Heb. 10:24.**
 2. To assemble with God's people and exhort one another. **Heb. 10:25.**
 3. To preach the gospel to the world. **Mt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16.**
 4. To do good unto all men as we have opportunity. **Gal. 6:10.**
 5. To minister to one another as good stewards of God's grace. **1 Pet. 4:10.**
- B. To fail willingly in the performance of these obligations is sin.
 1. One shall not escape that "neglects so great salvation." **Heb. 2:3.**
 2. To keep the whole law and fail in one point is to be guilty of all. **James 2:10.**
 3. To know to do good and not do it is sin. **James 4:17.**
- C. Inactivity is one of the worst things that can happen to a child of God because it invariably leads him from the Lord. **2 Pet. 2:20-22.**

II. WHAT CAUSES INACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERS?

- A. Before one begins to correct some fault or defect it is always wise to try to discover that which caused it.
- B. The American Cancer Society has long urged the public to watch for the "Seven Danger Signals," or signs that may lead to cancer.
- C. In like manner, there are danger signals or basic reasons why one becomes inactive or leaves the Lord.
 1. Discouragement. **Gal. 6:9.**
 2. Carelessness. **Matt. 25:1-13.**
 3. Lack of knowledge. **2 Tim. 2:25.**
 4. Indifference. **Rev. 2:4,5.**
 5. Unbelief. **Jude 5.**
 6. Lack of growth. **2 Pet. 1:9**
 7. Harboring ill will toward others. **Col. 3:12,13.**

III. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERS?

- A. It's easy for members of the church to say:
 - 1. "You might as well forget them; for they are not going to do any better."
 - 2. "Let them alone and try to convert others."
 - 3. But anyone familiar with God's will knows this not the answer to the problem.
 - a. It's God's will that he should "lose nothing." **John 6:39.**
 - b. He's not willing that any should perish. **2 Pet. 3:9.**
 - c. He will have "all men to be saved". **1 Tim. 2:3,4.**
- B. Inactive church members are, of course, responsible for their own lives.
 - 1. Every man shall bear his own burden. **Gal. 6:5.**
 - 2. Each will receive according to that which he has done. **2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:6-11**
- C. The faithful are also responsible for their inactive brethren.
 - 1. Faithful are to try to restore one overtaken in a fault. **Gal. 6:1,2.**
 - 2. We are to provoke one another to love and good works. **Heb. 10:24,25.**
 - 3. To try to convert one that has erred from the truth. **James 5:19,20.**

IV. HOW SHOULD THE INACTIVE BE APPROACHED?

- A. In a spirit of meekness and gentleness. **Gal. 6:1.**
 - 1. One must not approach an inactive church member with a "better than thou" attitude.
 - 2. One must approach an "inactive church member with a realization that he is subject to the same weakness. **Gal. 6:1.**
 - 3. One that endeavors to revitalize and restore a careless and inactive church member should by his actions and words show that he is genuinely interested in his soul. **2 Tim. 2:24-26.**
- B. In a spirit of promptness. **Eph. 5:15,16**
 - 1. Cancer, as any other disease, is more easily treated and cured when it first begins.
 - 2. Inactivity is a disease and if treated in time, it can generally be corrected, but if allowed to run its course it may reach the point of no return. **Heb. 6:1-6.**
- C. In the spirit of prayer. **James 5:16.**
 - 1. The Lord prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail. **Lk. 22:31,32.**
 - 2. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Brethren, inactive, careless, indifferent church members are going to be lost if they continue in their present condition.
- 2. God has placed upon you and me the responsibility of trying to restore them.
- 3. They'll face us in the judgment if we put forth no effort to restore them. Let's be busy.

(Some of the points of this lesson were taken from a lesson by Bro. Leslie G. Thomas that appeared in the Minister's Monthly, April, 1958).

INTRODUCTION:

1. The book of Job has been recognized as one of the greatest poetic productions of all times.
 - a. Thomas Carlyle used three words to describe the book of Job - "Sincerity," "simplicity," and "melody," - adding that "nothing in the Bible or out of it is of equal merit."
 - b. The poet Tennyson also paid high tribute to the literary grandeur of the book.
 - c. The writer has been called "the Shakespeare of Old Testament times." (The Old Testament Speaks, p. 280).
2. The book of Job is accounted a work that contains "the purest morality, the sublimest philosophy, the simplest ritual, and the most majestic creed." (Clarke).
3. The key text of the book is **Job 13:15**: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."
4. As a whole, the book discusses the problems:
 - a. "Can Goodness exist irrespective of reward?"
 - b. "Is suffering a result of sin?"
5. But let's consider:

DISCUSSION:I. SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT JOB AND ITS CONTENTS.

- A. The characters in the book of Job are God (**Job 1:1**), Satan (**1:6**), Job (**1:1**), three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zaphar (**Job 2:11**), and a young man named Elihu (**Job 32:6**).
- B. The contents of the book of Job are:
 1. The misfortunes of Job form the setting for the dialogue that makes up the major part of this book.
 - a. Job is presented in times of unprecedented prosperity. **Job. 1:1-3.**
 - b. Job is presented in extreme poverty. **1:13-19.**
 - c. Job is presented in immeasurable personal suffering. **1:20 - 2:10.**
 2. Job's friends came to comfort him and the discussion between Job and his friends occupy chapters **3 - 31.**
 - a. Job curses the day of his birth and complains of life. **Ch. 3.**
 - b. Eliphaz rebukes Job. **Ch. 4, 5.**
 - c. Job answers Eliphaz. **Ch. 6, 7, 8.**
 - d. Bildad enters the picture. **Ch. 8.**
 - e. Job acknowledges God's justice, but still can't understand. **ch. 9, 10.**
 - f. Zophar reproves Job. **Ch. 11.**
 - g. Job answers his friends. **Ch. 12, 13, 14.**
 - h. Job and his friends talk back and forth. **Ch. 15-31.**
 3. Elihu, "the young man with all the answers" enters the picture. **Ch. 32-37.**
 4. God challenges Job out of whirlwind and shows him he is not qualified to question what God does. **Ch. 38-41.**
 5. Job acknowledges his ignorance; God restores his wealth, friends, family, and position in life. **Ch. 42.**
- C. The book of Job is a book of mistakes.
 1. Satan made the mistake of thinking that Job served God for what he could get.
 2. Job's wife made the mistake of thinking that when visible, material things were lost all was lost.
 3. Job's friends made the mistake of thinking Job's sufferings were the outcome of his sins.
 4. Elihu made the mistake of thinking he knew all the answers.

II. FIVE GREAT QUESTIONS OR PURPOSES ARE CONSIDERED IN THE BOOK OF JOB.

- A. Is there such a thing as disinterested goodness?
 1. Satan's question "Doth Job fear God for nought?" implied that Job and all men serve God simply for what they get out of it. **1:9, 10.**
 2. The entire narrative answers the question.
 - a. Job is tried and tested by:
 - (1) Unexampled misfortunes. **1:13-19.**
 - (2) A painful and loathsome disease. **2:7.**
 - (3) Defection of his wife. **2:9.**
 - (4) Cruel charges of his friends. **4:1-8.**
 - (5) Desertion of his relatives. **19:14.**

(6) Insulting language and actions of the rabble. 30:1-10.

b. Yet, in all this, Job:

(1) retains his integrity. 1:21,22; 2:10.

(2) Remains faithful to God. 13:15.

(3) Continues to place all his hope and trust in the Almighty.

3. "A crucial experiment has been made, and Job stands the test- there is no reason to believe that with any other good and righteous man the result would be different." (Introduction To Book Of Job, Pul. Com. Vol. 7, p. XVII).

B. The second question is an inquiry regarding the grounds upon which God distributed prosperity and adversity, happiness and unhappiness, etc.

1. Job's friends answer that they are distributed according to a man's deserts- Job you are suffering because you are such a sinner.

2. Job denies this and immediately raises other questions.

a. But if suffering does not come as a result of one's sins, how does one account for it?

b. Why does the ungodly so often prosper? (12:6; 21:7-33).

c. Why is the just, upright man so often oppressed? (12:4).

3. God sends calamities on good men by way of chastisement, not of punishment; in love, not in anger, to purify and strengthen. Ch. 33.

C. Another question or purpose which the writer must have had in mind was concerning man's future destiny.

1. Was death the end of all things?

2. "If a man die, shall he live again?" 14:14.

3. There seems to be an effort then to cheer man by (1) the glorious hope of future life and (2) to point to a time when the "unequalities of the existing condition of things redressed by the permanent establishment of conditions entirely new."

4. Jesus Christ has forever answered the question that we shall live again. Jn. 11:25.

D. A fourth question raised is, Can man be just before God?

1. Absolutely perfect man cannot be because the sins of youth (13:26) sins of temper, speech, etc., (6:3, 26; 33:8-10).

2. But man can be in the sense of being sincere, honest and determined to serve God as Job was "perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil." (Job. 1:3).

3. This book shows that man can do right if he tries, that he can purify himself and live a just and noble life.

E. The last question is the question of man's power to know God.

1. That man has a knowledge of God in that he knows him to be wise, just, good, eternal, almighty, etc., cannot be denied and is proved throughout the book.

2. But that man can fully comprehend God is denied and disproved throughout the book. Job. 28:12-28; 38:4-41.

3. Therefore man must not presume to sit in judgment upon God who "doeth great things, which man cannot comprehend." (37:5).

a. "His attitude must be one of submission, reserve, and reverence. He must continually bear in mind that he has no faculties to grasp the whole range of actual facts and consider their relation one to another, no power to comprehend the scheme of the universe, much less to sound the depths of the being of him who made it." (Intro. To Job, Pul. Com. Vol. 7, p. XVIII.)

4. "...the ignorance ~~is~~ ^{of man} a sufficient answer to most of the objections which men are in the habit of urging against the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the Divine government, whether as made known to us by reason or by revelation, so the author of 'Job' is evidently bent on impressing upon us, as one of the main lessons to be learnt from reflection and experience, and one of the main teachings which he would enforce upon us by his treatise, that we are quite incompetent to understand the general scheme of things and therefore quite unfit to criticize and judge God's doings." (Ibid, pp. XVIII-XIX).

CONCLUSION:

1. Job came to realize, as all must, that God never forsakes his own - he is there all the time - even amidst suffering, but is working out His plans for all humanity, and one individual is only a small part of the total program.

2. When we come to realize that God has a plan and purpose that is being worked out in the world and that God is conscious of us in His plan and that it has definite meaning for us, then nothing else matters.
3. "So the whole problem of suffering dissolves, in a faith that God is and that he cares, and that He has a plan which includes me. The final gain for Job after his trial was a spiritual enrichment; and this can be true for us today. For any man to have an inner certainty of God and of a proper relationship with Jehovah is the finest asset that we can have in all of life; and true religion is to trust God implicitly in the face of every trial and every pain and even in the face of despair." (J. D. Thomas, "The Old Testament Books and Their Message," p. 237).

INTRODUCTION:

1. All of us are familiar with great days.
 - a. The history of our country is replete with great days.
 - b. The day the Declaration of Independence was signed; the day World War II ended, etc.
2. The Bible likewise mentions great days.
 - a. The day man was created.
 - b. The day Christ died.
 - c. The day the church was established.
3. Our text mentions another great day, in fact, our text suggests several things:
 - a. There is a great day coming.
 - b. It is the day of God's wrath.
 - c. Things will occur on that day and,
 - d. the question, Who shall be able to stand?

DISCUSSION:

- I. THERE IS A GREAT DAY COMING. Rev. 6:17.
 - A. Christ referred to it as the day of judgment (Mt. 11:21,22); that day (Mt. 24:36); the last day (Jn. 12:48).
 - B. Paul spoke of it as a day (Acts 17:31); the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30); the day of Christ. (Phil. 1:10; 2:16).
 - C. Peter called it the day of judgment (2 Pet. 2:9); day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:10); the day of God. (2 Pet. 3:12).
 - D. John named it the day of judgment (1 Jn. 4:17).
 - E. Jude simply said the great day (Jude 6).
 - F. The Bible clearly establishes the fact that there is a great day coming.
- II. THE GREAT DAY COMING IS THE DAY OF GOD'S WRATH.
 - A. Divine wrath means "divine indignation or the punishment that will come on the guilty."
 - B. God's wrath came on Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen. 18-19.
 - C. God's wrath came on Jerusalem. Matt. 24:1,2.
 - D. God's wrath will be felt by all that do evil.
 1. Rom. 2:8,9 - "wrath upon every soul that doeth evil."
 2. Rom. 1:18 - "wrath of God revealed against all evil."
 3. 1 Thess. 2:16 - God's wrath abode on the Jews to the uttermost that hindered the preaching the truth.
 4. Rev. 11:18 - Time of His wrath is come.
 - E. God's wrath is a terrible, fierce, and great thing.
 1. 2 Chron. 28:11; 2 Kings 22:13.
 2. Jesus described it as a furnace of fire (Mt. 13:40-42); where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched (Mk. 9:43,44).
 3. Paul said its a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Heb. 10:31
 4. John said men would cry out to be saved from it (Rev. 6:16); describes it as torment (Rev. 14:11); lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10, 15; 21:8).
- III. MANY THINGS WILL OCCUR ON THAT DAY.
 - A. The trumpet will sound. 1 Cor. 15:51,52.
 - B. Christ shall descend in the clouds. Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7.
 - C. The dead shall be raised. Jn. 5:28, 29.
 - D. The living shall be changed. 1 Cor. 15:51-55. (Christians).
 - E. All nations shall be assembled before the great white throne. Mt. 25:31; Rev. 20:11-15.
 - F. Every secret thing revealed. Eccle. 12:13,14; Rom. 2:16; 1 Tim. 5:24,25.
 - G. Man judged according to his works. 2 Cor. 5:10.
 - H. Man give account of every idle word. Mt. 12:36.
 - I. A great separation will take place. Mt. 25:32,41,34.
 - J. The heavens shall pass away and the earth be dissolved. 2 Pet. 3:10ff.
- IV. "WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?"
 - A. "Who will not be able to stand?"
 1. Those that have trusted in their wealth. Prov. 11:4; Zeph. 1:18.
 2. Those that have sincerely done good, but not according to God's will. Mt. 7:22, 23.
 3. Those that believe not on Jesus Christ. Jn. 3:36.
 4. Those that do evil and come not to repentance. Rom. 2:1-9.
 5. Those that engage in sinful practices. Eph. 5:3-6; Col. 3:1-6.

6. Those that obey not the gospel. **2 Thess. 1:7-9.**
- B. Who shall be able to stand?
 1. God has not appointed us to wrath. **1 Thess. 5:9.**
 2. God has provided a way for us to escape the wrath to come. **Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10.** (Thus some can and will stand in that day.).
 3. Those that do His sayings. **Mt. 7:21,24-27; Heb. 5:8,9; Rev. 22:14.**
 4. Those that put on the whole armor of God. **Eph. 6:10-13.**
 5. Those whose love abound in knowledge and judgment. **Phil. 1:9-11.**
 6. Those who continue stedfastly to the end. **Col. 1:21-23; 1 Cor. 15:58.**
 7. Those that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **Rev. 7:9-17.**

CONCLUSION:

Friends, how is it with you? If the great day of God's wrath occurred this moment would you be able to stand? What do you lack? Do it now.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Of all the books of the Old Testament books, no book has meant more to Christian people than the Psalms. "The popularity of the Psalms rests in the fact that they reflect the common experiences of the human race." (The Old Testament Speaks).
2. a. In the early church, some writers say, morning and evening worship commenced with a Psalm.
- b. "Tertullian, in the second century, tells us that the Christians of his day were wont to sing many Psalms in their agapae."
- c. Jerome says that "the Psalms were continually to be heard in the fields and vineyards of Palestine."
- d. The Psalms are printed in many editions of the New Testament because love for them has been so great.
- e. Adam Clarke wrote: "I know nothing like the book of Psalms: it contains all the lengths, breadths, depths, and heights of the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations. It is the most useful book in the Bible, and is every way worthy of the wisdom of God." (Vol. 3, p. 218).
- f. John Calvin wrote: "I may truly call this book an anatomy of all parts of the soul, for no one can feel a movement of the Spirit which is not reflected in this mirror. All the sorrows, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, pains, perplexities, stormy outbreaks by which the hearts of men are tossed, have been depicted here to the very life."
2. The key word of the Psalms is "worship" and the key text might well be **Psa. 29:2**.
3. The underlying theme is "The Attitude Of Man In The Presence Of God."
 - a. God is here seen supreme and man in submission to Him.
 - b. An examination of the Psalms will "reveal a certain conception of God, and an attitude of the soul in worship resulting from such conception."
4. We can think of the Psalms as a collection of 150 religious songs and hymns written by several authors, over a period of several centuries.
 - a. 73 Psalms are attributed to David specifically.
 - b. Psalms 90 was written by Moses.
 - c. Several other authors in the Psalms.
5. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. SOME GENERAL DETAILS AND CONTENTS OF THE PSALMS.

- A. Leading ideas in the Psalms.
 1. The names or references to God.
 - a. Jehovah (translated Lord in KJV) appears 464 times.
 - b. God appears 250 times.
 - c. Lord appears 62 times.
 - d. Jah appears 42 times.
 2. "Trust" in the Lord. **4:5; 27:3; 84:12; 143:8.**
 3. "Praise" the Lord. **22:23; 69:30; 104:35; 117:1; 150.**
 4. "Rejoice" in the Lord. **2:11; 31:7; 89:16; 118:24.**
 5. "Lovingkindness" (Mercy, KJV) appears hundreds of times.
- B. Five-fold division of Psalms.
 1. Book I - **Psalms 1 - 41:13**. Worship of Jehovah as the becoming one who is helper
 2. Book II - **Psalms 42:1-72:19**. Worship of Jehovah as the wonder-working God.
 3. Book III - **Psalms 73:1 - 89:52**. Worship of Jehovah ceaseless.
 4. Book IV - **Psalms 90:1 - 106:48** - Worship of Jehovah rendered.
 5. Book V - **Psalms 107:1 - 150:6**. Worship of Jehovah consummated.
- C. According to subjects the Psalms might be divided into:
 1. Poetry. "The poetry of any nation is an unmistakable index to the character of that nation." (Lightfoot) **Psa. 19:1,2,7,8; 1:6.**
 2. History. "Beyond doubt the contribution of the Psalms to history is one of its most significant contributions, for the Psalms cast more than ordinary light on the historical sections of the Old Testament. Not only do the Psalms add to the substance of historical fact, but the historical fact

are made richer by their embodiment in the psalms. The cold and lifeless facts of a distant age when put into psalms are revived with feelings of religious fervor and serve to remind all who repeat them the unmistakable lessons of history. And what a varied history Israel does have! Many events of this history are portrayed in these Psalms: the creation of man (8:5); the covenant established with Abraham and his descendants (105:9-11); the priesthood of Melchizedek (110:4); Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Aaron (105:9ff); the deliverance from Egypt and the Canaanite inheritance (78:13; 105:44) - and scores of others that could be cited, providing an independent witness to the key points of early Hebrew history. In the Psalms literature joins with history and shares with us their composite treasures." (The Old Testament Books...)

3. Psalms as religious expression and devotion.

- a. The abiding value of the Psalms lies in its religious conceptions.
- b. The first chamber we enter is the "Room of Righteousness." 51:17; 133:1; 41:1; 15:1-3,5.
- c. The second room is the "Room of Revelation" 110:1-4.
- d. The Third room is the "Room of Reverence." 65:11-13; 27:10; 37:25; 100:1-4.

D. Interesting facts:

1. Psalms 119 is the longest, also longest chapter in the Bible.
2. Psalms 117 is the shortest - also shortest chapter in the Bible and the middle chapter.
3. Psalms 118:8 is the middle verse of the Bible.

II. PASSAGES IN THE PSALMS SPECIFICALLY DECLARED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT TO REFER TO CHRIST.

- A. Jesus declared that all that was written in the Psalms about him must be fulfilled. Luke 24:44.
- B. "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." 2:7; Acts 13:33; HEB. 5:5.
- C. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (16:10) Acts 2:27; 13:35
- D. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring." (22:1) Mt. 27:43.
- E. "For Dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet." (22:16) Mt. 20:23.
- F. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (22:18) Jn. 19:24.
- G. "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (40:7,8) Heb. 10:7.
- H. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (41:9); Jn. 13:18.
- I. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." (45:6); Heb. 1:8.
- J. "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." (69:9); Jn. 2:17.
- K. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (69:21); Mt. 27:34,38.
- L. "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." (109:8); Acts 1:20.
- M. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (110:1); Mt. 22:44.
- N. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (110:4); Heb. 7:17.
- O. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." (118:22); Mt. 21:42.
- P. "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." (118:26); Mt. 21:9.

III. SOME OF THE PSALMS THAT ARE A PART OF OUR SONG BOOKS. (Plan of presentation is to have some of the Psalms quoted or read and then sing the song.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Psalms 1 - Song 14 | G. Psalms 133 - Song 400 |
| B. Psalms 23 - Song 510 | H. Psalms 148 - Song 53 |
| C. Psalms 51 - Song 189 | I. Psalms 150 - Song 191. |
| D. Psalms 84 - Song 500 | |
| E. Psalms 100 - Song 332 | |
| F. Psalms 119:97-104 - Song. 399 | |

CONCLUSION:

1. "Memorize the psalms and their thoughts will cheer you in the morning, will give you strength through the day, and will give you rest at night." (Lightfoot).
2. Here are the Psalms! "Taste and see that the Lord is good." **Psa. 34:8.**

2. 10. 1942

CONCLUSION:

1. "Remember the past and their thoughts will cheer you in the morning, will give you strength through the day, and will give you rest at night." (Psalm 111:10)
2. Here are the final "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Ps. 34:8.

"JUDGE NOT"**Mt. 7:1-5****INTRODUCTION:**

1. Every thoughtful observer can testify to the fact that this precept of Jesus is more often disregarded than observed.
2. This admonition has always been needed, for we are all too prone to judge others, and to justify ourselves.
3. Our text today is one of the least understood passages in the Bible and most people would probably do less judging if they understood the meaning of the words "judge not."
4. In this section of the sermon on the mount, Jesus seems to be enforcing again the all importance of remembering that we are walking under the Father's watchful eye.
 - a. It concerns our relation with other people.
 - b. "We cannot read the Bible without coming to the conclusion that the thing that really differentiates God's people from all others is that they have always been people who walk in the consciousness of their eternal destiny." (Jones, Vol. 2, p. 159).
5. In this study then let us observe:

DISCUSSION:**I. JUDGING - WHAT IT IS NOT?**

- A. It is not forbidding our judges to hand down decisions in our civil courts.
 1. Civil authority exists for the purpose of making judgments. **Rom. 13:4.**
 2. Man were being tried in the courts when Jesus spoke this so he was not forbidding such.
- B. It does not forbid the disciplinary action of a congregation.
 1. The Bible plainly teaches withdrawal of fellowship. **2 Thess. 3:6.**
 2. The church at Corinth was to put away an immoral member. **1 Cor. 5:1-5.**
- C. It does not mean that we must refrain from condemning and preaching against sin.
 1. Jesus denounced the sins of the Pharisees. **Mt. 23.**
 2. Paul said "them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." **1 Tim. 5:20.**
 3. Sometimes when a minister of Christ proclaims the Lord said against a particular sin, someone will say to him, "You preached that sermon just for me." "He feels that way about it because he is guilty of sin, but it is not often that a minister preaches a sermon for just one person. It betrays considerable egotism in a man when he thinks he is important enough for a minister to spend a couple of weeks preparing a sermon just for him. Even if I thought the preacher had me thus in mind, I would not betray my egotism by saying as much." (Willeford).
- D. It does not forbid our pointing out religious error.
 1. Ofttimes when religious error is pointed out someone says, "But we are not to judge."
 2. Jesus condemned the doctrine of the Pharisees. **Mt. 15:9, 13.**
 3. Paul condemned false teachers. **2 Tim. 2:16-18.**
 4. Peter said there were false prophets. **2 Pet. 2:1.**

II. JUDGING - WHAT THE LORD WAS FORBIDDING?

- A. We are not to have a critical and condemning attitude toward others.
 1. True criticism is an excellent thing.
 2. But one may be hypercritical. Such an individual approaches a thing expecting to find faults, in fact he hopes to find them.
- B. "It is against the practice of ill-natured criticism, hasty and half-formed opinions, the open or unconscious assertion of our own superiority, the malicious whispers, and the cruel sneers, who do so much harm in everyday relationships of human life that Jesus so sternly warns against in the passage now before us." (Thomas).
- C. We are not to sit as judges, and determine within ourselves the guilt of others.
 1. We are not to condemn others, but we are not judging when one's own deeds judge him and we call them to his attention. We can be fruit inspectors. **Mt. 7:16, 20; cf. 7:6.**
 2. We are not to judge according to appearance, but that which is based on fact.

1 Sam. 16:7; Jn. 7:24 -

- a. If you were to hear me curse you then you could say I took God's name in vain and that would be righteous judgment. But if you heard a rumor that I cursed and judged me guilty on the basis of the rumor, you would be judging me.
- b. A man is brought before a judge and the judge looks at the fellow when he first walks in and says in his heart, "I don't like the way that fellow walks, nor the manner of his speech. He appears guilty to me, so I am going to give him 30 days in jail." The judge has judged according to appearance and not the facts in the case.
- c. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." Lk. 6:37. The judging forbidden is that wherein we sit as judge and jury instead of letting the man's deeds decide the case.

III. JUDGING - SOME REASONS FOR NOT JUDGING OR WHY THE LORD WON'T LET US DO IT.

- A. "That ye be not judged." Mt. 7:1b.
 1. When one judges another in a harsh, critical spirit, then one need not be surprised if the same standard is used against him. Mt. 7:2; Gal. 6:7; Jas. 2:13.
 2. When one finds that others are very critical of his actions and ways it may be because he uses the same standard on others.
- B. Our inability to form a correct judgment. This is true for four reasons:
 1. We are too often blinded by the beam that is in our own eye. Mt. 7:3-5.
 - 2 a. The Lord points out that we, too often, are not concerned about righteousness and true judgment at all, because if we were, we should deal with it in ourselves.
 - b. Our real desire is to condemn the person, not to get rid of the evil in the person.
 2. We are controlled too much by custom, tradition, personal feelings, and prejudices.
 3. We cannot always know the motive behind a deed. 1 Cor. 2:11.
 - a. Human conduct cannot be properly evaluated until one knows the motive behind a deed. No court can assess a proper penalty until it knows the motive.
 - b. A person buys an automobile that we think is really beyond his means and we say: "He is trying to keep up with the Joneses." But such may be the farthest thought from his mind as his doctor may have advised a larger car.
 - c. We sometimes charge our religious neighbors with being insincere in their belief. Let us be careful because they may be sincere but mistaken. cf. Acts 26:9.
 - d. Young people sometimes say of another "She thinks she is better than anyone else." It's possible she feels this way but it may also not be true.
 - e. Sometimes men charge congregations of trying to make a name for itself and to be the most influential congregation. Have the elders told you this is why they do things, if not, you are judging.
 4. We can't always know all the facts in the case.
 - a. We sometimes fail to see the need for all the facts.
 - b. We also allow our likes or dislikes to determine what facts we accept.
- C. Not everything we condemn in others is in reality a sin.
 1. Jesus and Paul were frequently condemned by their critics, but they were not sinners.
 2. Eli thought Hannah was drunk. 1 Sam. 1:12ff.
 3. Job's three friends thought he was a great sinner. They did not understand the circumstances of the trials and temptations that led to this. "If we knew the cares and trials, Knew the efforts all in vain, And the bitter disappointments, Understood the loss and gain - Would the grim eternal roughness Seem - I wonder * just the same? Should we help where now we hinder? Should we pity where we blame?"

Ah, we judge each other harshly,
Knowing not life's hidden force;

knowing not the fount of action
Is less turbid at its source;
Seeing not amid the evil
All the golden grains of good;
And we'd love each other better
If we only understood

Could we judge all deeds by motives
That surround each other's lives,
See the naked heart and spirit,
Know what spur the action gives;
Often we should find it better,
Purer than we judge we should;
We would love each other better
If we only understood.

Could we judge all deeds by motives,
See the good and bad within,
Often we would love the sinner
All the while we loathe the sin.
Could we know the powers working
To overthrow integrity,
We would judge each other's errors
With much patient charity.

....Selected...

- 7 D. The prerogative of such judgment belongs only to God. 1 Cor. 4:3-5; Rom. 14:4a, 10-13.

IV. JUDGING - THE CURE FOR IT.

- A. Spend more time thinking only and looking for things to praise. Phil. 4:8.
B. Remember that we must all stand in the judgment of God one day. Mt. 7:2;
2 Cor. 5:10.

CONCLUSION:

1. Man must be careful about setting himself up as having final authority to pass sentence on others.
2. We must be "fruit inspectors, " yes - and thus judge our own actions and that of others in the light of God's word," with care not to impugn others' motives or impute our own motives to them. Then we have the proper basis for withdrawing fellowship, admonishing the weak, restoring those overtaken in faults, and preaching the gospel to the whole world." ("Forethoughts," Bob Gilliam, p. 6).

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Int.

1. The question that serves as our lesson is one that has been asked over and over again during the past few days.
 - a. "It is sick" answers one.
 - b. "It is filled with violence and we are mad" answer others.
2. Perhaps now, more than ever before in the history of this country, people have awakened to the fact that something is wrong and there is a need.
 - a. At the Annual Baptist Convention in Houston, Texas, this past week the annual convention sermon urged a return to "new Testament Christianity."
 - b. In most of the religious bodies there is tremendous unrest and seeking for something they do not have.
3. Possible there has not been a time since the first century when the church of our Lord had a greater opportunity and responsibility to go forward than now.
 - a. We have been pleading for a return to "New Testament Christianity" for years.
 - b. We have been pleading that Christ is the solution to problems, but now we must demonstrate it.
4. In this study let's consider:

Dis.I. ISRAEL UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE DAYS OF AMOS.

- A. Israel had been brought out of Egypt to become a prosperous nation just as America. **Amos 2:10.**
- B. Israel had begun to abuse and take for granted God's blessings just as have we:
 1. They gave the Nazarites wine to drink. **2:12a.**
 2. They said to the prophets "Prophecy not." **2:12b.**
 3. They stored up violence and robbery in their palaces. **3:10.**
 4. They oppressed the poor. **4:1; 5:12.**
 5. They turned judgment to wormwood and left off righteousness. **5:7.**
 6. They reveled in their luxury. **6:1-6.**
- C. God's solution to Israel's condition was:
 1. He called upon them to prepare to meet their God. **Amos 4:12.**
 2. He urged them to seek the Lord. **5:4,6,8,14,15.**

II. THE CHURCH UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN AMERICA.

- A. The church is made up of people that God has saved from sin. **1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Thess. 2:14.**
- B. The church is in the world, but is not to be of the world. **Jn. 17:14-16; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.**
- C. The church, in too many cases, has imbibed the same spirit as the nation.
 1. Like the nation we have become tolerant toward anything and everything in the church.
 - a. America was built on tolerance toward others, but now we have become tolerant toward criminals, communists, etc.
 - b. In the church discipline is almost a thing of the past. One chief complaint wherever I go is "It seems that we never get around to correcting sins in our midst." **2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:1-5.**
 2. Like the nation the church has begun to take for granted the blessings that she enjoys from God's providential hand.
 - a. America was built on sacrifice, honesty, gratitude and dependence on God, but she now takes all for granted.
 - b. The church has likewise begun to take for granted the privilege of worship, Bible Study, freedom, God's love, etc.
 3. Like too many Americans we criticize and complain about the status quo, but refuse to take an active part in making it better.
 - a. How many Americans fail to exercise the right to vote, to write letters, to make their wishes known.
 - b. How many members of the church refuse to become a real active part of the Lord's kingdom?
 4. Like the nation there is too much bitterness and hatred among members of the church.

a. In our nation there is too much "every man for himself."

b. In the church there must be a real concern for each other. Mt. 7:12; Rom. 15:1-3; Eph. 4:31,32; Phil. 4:1-4.

5. There is too much unconcern and unwillingness on the part of too many Americans to become informed regarding the real problems and needs of our society. Likewise members of the church fail to take advantage of study regarding some of the basic demands of our day. During this week a once in a lifetime advantage and opportunity will be yours:

a. "Communism vs. Christianity" on Monday and Tuesday evenings.

b. "Atheism, Evolution, and Evil" on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings.

Conclusion.

1. "What's wrong with our society?" Sin is the main thing that is wrong.

2. But there is not anything wrong with it but what Jesus Christ is the cure. Jn. 14:6.

Introduction.

1. "If the book of Psalms was the believer's manual of devotion then the book of Proverbs may be said to be our handbook of ethics or behavior." (Preaching Through The Bible," Hayden, p. 93)
2. In this age of the transistor, someone has said that Proverbs might be called God's "Transistorized wisdom." It is a book that presents "truth in the smallest possible package."
3. It is generally accepted that Solomon wrote the Proverbs and that they were intended for universal use.
 - a. There is little distinctive Judaism in the book
 - b. "At the same time the law is often mentioned" bearing out the fact that law has always been essential to successful dealing between God and man, man and God.
 - c. Of the 3,000 proverbs which Solomon spoke, we have only those in this book and Ecclesiastes.
 - d. Of the 1,005 songs we have only those of the Song of Solomon.
4. Proverbs have always been a favorite way of teaching.
 - a. They are quoted or alluded to some 32 times in the N.T.
 - b. Henry Halley said, "The Oriental method of teaching was constant repetition of wise and practical thoughts in a form that would stick in the mind."
 - c. "They are handles on truth to make it profitable."
 - d. Jesus was the master of a form of proverbs, called parables. Mt. 13:3.
5. The key word of Proverbs would be "conduct" and the key text would be Proverbs 9:10.
6. In this study let's consider:

Discussion.

I. THE KEY PURPOSE AND MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

- A. "The key subject of the Proverbs are the affairs of the common life of man." (Frank Seay)
- B. "The principle object he (Solomon) has in view is, to inspire a deep reverence for God, fear of his judgments and an ardent love for wisdom and virtue." (Adam Clarke) Prov. 1:7.
- C. The doing of religion is stressed in Proverbs.
 1. It teaches "Practical Christianity."
 2. It shows that salvation depends upon a working faith. Jas. 2:14-26.
 3. Davidson said "For the writers of Proverbs religion means good sense, religion means mastery of affairs, religion means strength and manliness and success, religion means a well-furnished intellect employing the best means to accomplish the highest ends."
- D. Some of the divisions in the book are these headings:
 1. "The proverbs of Solomon . . ." 1:1.
 2. "The proverbs of Solomon . . ." 10:1.
 3. " . . . hear the words of the wise." 22:17.
 4. "There are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah copied out." 25:1.
 5. "The words of Agur . . ." 30:1
 6. "The words of King Lemuel . . ." 31:1.

III. PROVERBS TEACHES PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

- A. Duty to God. Prov. 1:7.
 1. It teaches that fear, reverence, and respect for God is man's first duty.
 2. "Fear of the Lord" makes for confidence and trust. Heb. 11:6; Prov. 3:5,6.
 3. "Duty to God" involves "externals of religious worship that must not be neglected. Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7;
 4. "Duty to God" calls upon us to confess our sins and shortcomings. Acts 8:22; Prov. 28:13.
 5. "duty to God" calls upon us to submit to his chastisement. 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 12:5,6; Prov. 3:11,12.

B. Duty to Self. It becomes a duty to self to avoid those things that would deprave us of salvation.

1. We are admonished. Rom. 6:16; 1 Thess. 5:22; Prov. 1:10.

2. "Duty to self" means we must watch for pride. Mt. 18:4; 23:12; Prov. 16:5; 16:18; 27:1,2.

3. "Duty to self" means being on guard against envy, luxury, short temper, nervous disorders, idleness.

4. "Duty to self" means being on guard against money. 1 Tim. 6:10,17; Mt. 6:19; Prov. 11:4,28; 28:20.

5. Watch out for the good name

C. Duty to our neighbors.

1. Duty to neighbors was expressed by Jesus to be the second great commandment. Mt. 22:37-39.

2. The Proverbs emphasizes the importance of words and deeds toward others. Prov. 12:25; 16:24; 14:21,31; 3:27-29; Jas. 1:27.

3. "Duty to Neighbors" involves honesty. Rom. 12:17; 13:13; Prov. 17:13; 24:23; 3:29.

D. Domestic duties. A child's first impression comes from parents.

1. Paul gave instructions to parents. Eph. 6:4.

2. Prov. 4:1; 20:7; 22:6; 23:13,14.

E. Duties to civil and political life.

1. A Christian has duties to civil rulers. Rom. 13:1.

2. Prov. 16:12; 20:28; 20:26.

Conclusion.

1. The book of Proverbs is, in a special sense, dedicated and directed to youth. Prov. 1:4.

2. There are none of us but what needs the contents of this book. "In the barracks, in town, in school and home, the Book of Proverbs speaks to plain, everyday situations."

3. All can turn to the most practical portion of the word of God.

Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Explain the situation under which our Lord was speaking.
 - a. He was in the house of a chief Pharisee on the Sabbath. vv. 1-6
 - b. (1) They watched him drop a drop of oil.
 - (2) There was a man with dropsy before him.
 - (3) Jesus asked "If it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day?"
 - (a) He healed the lame man.
 - (b) He told them they would get an ass or an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath.
 - b. It was a planned situation to trap the Lord.
3. Jesus then spoke three parables:
 - a. He spoke the first one to criticize the guests for their bad manners. Lk. 14:7-11
 - b. He spoke the second to rebuke the host for the false principle upon which he had invited people. 14:12-14.
 - c. He spoke the third to correct false views with respects to the blessings of the Messianic kingdom. 14:15-24.
 - (1) the Jews thought it would be ushered in by a great supper.
 - (2) The Jews thought they would enter it by natural birth.
4. In this study we purpose to notice:

Discussion.I. THE GREAT SUPPER AND THE EXCUSES OFFERED.

- A. It was a custom to invite people to a supper and later to send notice when it was ready.
- B. When the supper was ready and the servant went to tell the invited guests "They all with one consent began to make excuse."
 1. "I have bought a piece of ground and I must needs go and see it." v. 18.
 - a. This is the man who loves his possessions and pleads the necessity of looking after them.
 - b. This man had no bona fide excuse.
 - (1) The field was his and he could see it at another time.
 - (2) Furthermore it is usually unwise to buy a field sight unseen.
 - c. It is truly bad when one allows his possessions to keep him out of the kingdom.
 2. "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them."
 - a. This is the man who is so involved in the affairs of business that he doesn't have time for religion.
 - b. He has too much to do. "His business is his Bible and 'making a living' is his creed."
 3. "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."
 - a. This one has allowed domestic affairs, social ties to stand in his way.
 - b. He placed the obligations of his family and of his home first and he expected that everybody would understand.
 - c. It is a paradox that one would allow something as lovely and sweet as home to stand between a man and his God. There are at least two ways in which we can use our homes wrongfully:
 - (1) First, our home and family ties can occupy the chief spot in our hearts Cf. Lk. 14:26.
 - (2) Second, our homes can be used selfishly by wrapping ourselves in their luxury. "However, our homes are built the windows should always look out on the needs of others." (Lightfoot)
- C. Some things revealed by the excuses.
 1. One thing is common to them all---men often esteem a present good above the heavenly offer.
 2. Men make engagements for business and pleasure without the least regard to the hour of the banquet or the hour of worship.

3. Excuses show that c invited.
- a. We do not regard **11:28-30.**
- b. We do not regard
- c. We do not regard
4. Those who make exc supper. **vv. 21-24**

II. SOME MODERN EXCUSES THAT

A. Some offered by the s

1. "I'm not good enough."
- a. Jesus said "I a **Mt. 9:13.**

- b. Paul said he wa
2. "I can't come by n

- a. The Lord's invi
- b. The Spirit and

3. "Some Christians a
- True, but:

- a. You don't refu
- b. You don't refu

- c. You don't refu
- d. So why should

4. "There are some t
- a. All difficulti

- b. Eleven years a
- one or two thi

5. "It's just not co
- a. Felix was wait

- b. Beloved, don
- be.

B. Some offered by Chr

1. "I couldn't help
- a. Adam blamed h

- b. Eve blamed th
- c. Saul blamed t

- d. Man is respon
2. "It just happen

- a. Aaron told M
- just happene

- b. Men still ex
- kind of expl

3. "Oftime one' exc
- was done."

- a. Saul knew he had not done God's will but he explained that they intended to
- sacrifice. **1 Sam. 15:20-22.**

- b. Christians state other good deeds or good intentions.

4. Christians often excuse themselves from not attending the services by:
- a. "I don't think every service is necessary." Which one is not?

- b. "I don't intend for anyone to tell me what to do." Attitude from army.

5. Christians often excuse themselves from doing what they are asked to do by:
- a. "I'm not fit or capable of doing it." **Cf. Moses Ex. 3:11; 4:10.**

- b. "Someone else can do it better."

Conclusion.

1. At the conclusion of Luke 14 Jesus shows that it is not excuses that count but cross bearing. **Lk. 14:25ff.**

2. All those in the parable sent excuses, as many do today, but there was only one reason why they did not come-----they loved other things too much.

3. Those today who make excuses instead of obeying will not enter heaven. **2 Thess. 1:7-9;**

Rom. 6:17,18; Heb. 5:8,9

- disciples suffer (27).
1. He demanded that all His
- Concerning Living (27-35).
- B. Jesus Accepted No Excuses
- (26).
2. He accepted no excuses
- concerning loving Him
- (25).
1. He allowed no exceptions
- concerning loving Him
- Concerning Love (25, 26).
- A. Jesus Accepted No Excuses

ENDING OF EXCUSES.

III. JESUS DEMANDED THE

- (24).
2. They caused the master to
- condemn his insulters
- (21b-23).

1. They caused the master to
- change his invitation
- Dreadful Rejection (21b-24).

- B. The Excuses Brought a
- about the excuses (21a-2).

2. The master was indignant
- about the excuses (21a-1).

1. The master was informed
- served Reaction (21a).

- A. The Excuses Brought a De-
- Evil of Excuses.

II. JESUS DENOUNCED THE

- (20).
- b. The excuses included
- family relationships
- (18b, 19).

- a. The excuses included fi-
- nanial responsibility
- (18b-20).

2. The invitation was met
- with ungrateful insults

- with ungrateful insults

2. The invitation was met

2. The invitation was met

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2. The invitation was met

laid up in heaven. to be ready for him
was not well off if he had no treasure
was thinking, that after all, perhaps he
gave a good while, but all the time he
Uncle George went out, and was
now, for I am going out."
run away and play with your hoop
said Uncle George, thoughtfully. "But
"Well, I don't believe I have,"
too?" asked Mary.
"But haven't you any in heaven,
George."
other places," answered Uncle
on earth--some in banks and some in
"Oh, no Mary, my treasures are all
heaven."
ing read about laying up treasures in
who had heard her father that morn-
"Up in heaven?" asked Mary,
that I have laid up."
"About my treasure, little girl,
Uncle George?"
"What are you talking about,
laid up against a time of need."
"There, I have quite a nice sum
then Mary heard her uncle say:
book. For an hour all was still, and
Mary busied herself with a picture
he had some accounts to look over, so
George had told her to keep quiet, as
Uncle George one afternoon. Uncle
Little Mary was sitting with her

His Treasures

Introduction.

1. "The book of Ecclesiastes, though deeply inbedded in Old Testament scriptures, and an exceedingly ancient and curious document is, in many important and striking respects, fresher and more up-to-date than tomorrow's newspaper. Because its themes are age-lasting, its principles unchanging and unchangeable, and its message to men as applicable and as true as when originally penned, it speaks to our day with an urgency and directness entitling it the most serious consideration." (Old Testament Books, Woods, p. 265-66)
2. The author of the book is Solomon, son of David.
 - a. "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem." 1:1.
 - b. "I the Preacher was kind over Israel in Jerusalem." 1:12.
3. The Hebrew title of Ecclesiastes is Kohleleth, and it signifies one who assembles or gathers people together to address them and give them instruction.
4. "The design of the book was to show the utter emptiness of all matters worldly; and that this life, with all of its labors, is without value, if there is no future. It is the moving chronicle of a man who deliberately tasted every worldly delight, only to discover the bitter disappointment of each on realization." (Woods)
5. The word "vanity" is the key word of the book as well as the expression "under the sun."
 - a. It denotes that which passes quickly and completely and leaves no adequate result behind---emptiness, transitory, unsatisfactory.
 - b. It occurs no less than 37 times in the book.
6. The theme of Ecclesiastes is stated in Ecclesiastes 2:3.
 - a. His was, therefore, the age-long quest for the summum bonum--- the Supreme Good.
 - b. Few have been able to pursue it like this ancient king of Israel. "He revelled in madness and mirth; he plunged wildly into industry and business; he yielded to every fleshly and sensual impulse; and if happiness may be found in unrestrained desire, complete abandon in lust and unlimited indulgence in sin, it could not possibly have eluded him."
7. The book of Ecclesiastes is presented like a play with actor and parts on the stage. Let's consider:

Discussion.

- I. PART ONE---THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS ON EARTH IN GREAT WISDOM. 1:13,16,17a.
 - A. The Bible does not give details about the nature of his wisdom, but we may assume that it embraced all of those facts and details about mankind of that day. 1 Kgs. 4:29-31a.
 - B. Solomon expected to find happiness in knowledge itself "apart from its uses as a means to conduct one to the source of all knowledge and wisdom."
 1. He knew a great amount about the works of God, but he forgot God.
 2. Knowledge is valuable to the soul only as it is used as a means to an end.
 - C. He discovered by actual experience that knowledge is not the cause of happiness but "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." 2:18.
- II. PART TWO---THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS IN PLEASURE. 2:1-3.
 - A. Solomon's experiment shows that real happiness does not come from pleasure.
 1. He tried it and concluded "it is vanity." He does not mean that all enjoyment is unworthy and vain, but only that it is unable to supply the soul's deep need.
 2. He later advised youth "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth . . . but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." 11:9.
 - B. Moses recognized that the pleasures of this life are only brief. Heb. 11:24-26
 - C. Despite Solomon's warning and conclusion millions are today seeking happiness in an ever increasing demand for more pleasures.

III. PART THREE---THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS IN WEALTH, RICHES AND REGAL LIVING.

A. Solomon said, "Whatsoever mine eyes desired," said he "I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy." 2:10.

1. He built houses, vineyards, had great possessions of cattle, gathered silver and gold, and got all sorts of musical instruments. 2:4-8.

2. What was his conclusion: "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought . . . all was vanity and vexation of spirit. . . ." 2:11.

B. Jay Gould, the American millionaire said, when dying, "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

C. "How very many of us today are expending our energies and dissipating our powers in the quest for happiness through earthly gain when it has been demonstrated over and over again, that the effort is futile and foolish." (Woods, Old Testament Books, Woods, p. 270)

1. Our Lord taught "Take heed and keep yourself from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Lk. 12:15.

2. Some of the happiest people on earth hardly know where the next meal is coming from and some of the most miserable live in luxury.

D. 3. Paul said "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." Phil. 4:11.

IV. PART FOUR---THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS IN POWER AND EXALTATION.

A. The view is widely held that fame, power and popularity can bring contentment of heart.

1. There is a high percentage of suicides among beauty queens, movie stars, etc

2. Solomon said "So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem." 2:9.

3. He concluded that such failed and said:

a. Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king, who knoweth not how to receive admonition any more." 4:13.

b. Eccle. 6:8; 5:15,16.

B. Our Lord taught the true standard of greatness and contentment---the way up is down---humility leads to greatness. Mt. 20:25,26; Lk. 14:11.

Conclusion

1. The experiment is over and the veteran actor moves to the front of the stage.

a. "Earthly wisdom, pleasure, wealth, and power are powerless to produce abiding happiness in the human heart announces one who had tried them all.

b. Here is my conclusion as to where the only real, genuine happiness can be found: "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Eccle. 12:13

(1) "Duty" is not in Hebrew text, thus "to fear God" and "keep his commandments" is "the whole of man"---not merely his duty but his life.

(2) "True religion---a holy and reverent fear of God, and humble unquestioning obedience to his will---affords the only genuine happiness here, and salvation hereafter."

2. The book of Ecclesiastes truly reveals how empty life is away from God in order that we might learn how rich and full life is with Him. Campbell Morgan wrote "It is only as a man takes account of that which is over the sun as well as that which is under the sun that things under the sun are seen in their true light." (The Unfolding Message of the Bible, p. 229)

THE BIBLE--SONG OF SOLOMON

Int.

1. "There is no book of Scripture on which more commentaries have been written and more diversities of opinion expressed than this short poem of eight chapters." (Pulpit Com, Vol. 9, Int. P.1)
 - a. This is probably the most difficult in the O.T. to understand.
 - b. Commentators of all ages have disagreed.
 - c. "...and perhaps the book has had more treatments since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation than any other single book." (The O.T. Books, p.278)
2. The Jews had an opinion about this book which was read or sung at the Passover Feast: "They liken Proverbs to the outer Court of the Temple, Ecclesiastes to the Holy Place, and the Song of Solomon to the Holiest of all." ("Preaching through the Bible," Haydew, p. 101)
3. As in the book of Ester, the name of God is not mentioned in the Song of Solomon. It is not quoted or alluded to in the New Testament.
4. The title of this little book of eight chapters is "the Song of Songs" or as we would say "the best of Songs." Some call it Canticles.
5. Regardless of how one may finally interpret the book the key word would be "love."
6. Someone has said that Chapter 8:6 is the key verse.
7. In this study let's consider:

Dis.

I. The Contents of the Book.

- A. "The song is a poetic representation of the sentiment of lovers, some of it quite frank in terms of intimate and erotic admiration for each other." (The O.T., Book, p.276)
 1. "Some have seen the poem as a mere love poem to commemorate Solomon's own marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, or as setting forth the love of any devoted human couple. If that is so then it is valuable, for the kind of love described here is not the false Hollywood variety, superficial, sensual, frivolous, fanciful, lustful. Here is true love in all its height and depth and beauty. Here is true human love in all its glory, not to be trifled with or trampled under foot for it is the most sacred thing next to human life." (Preaching Throng The Bible." Hayden, p.101-2)
 2. "On the face, the poem is a eulogy of the joys of wedded life; and its essence is to be found in its tender and devoted expressions of the intimacies and delights of wedded love." (Halley, p. 248)
- B. In noting the contents we shall accept the traditional view that there are two lovers--Solomon and the Shulamite woman--and "a chorus of women from Jerusalem." J.W. Roberst, "In the Old Testament Books & Their Messages In The Christian Age," divides it into these five scenes:
 1. Scene I. 1:2--2:7
 - a. The Country Seat of the King near the home of the Shulamite--The woman has been brought into the chambers (1:4) of the Kings banqueting House (2:4)
 - b. The Chorus of damsels of Jerusalem celebrate the praises of the maidens. 1:2-4.
 - c. The Shulamite excuses herself. She is rustic, dark, due to working in the vineyards, but does not blush to admit longing for her lover. 1:5-8.
 - d. Solomon now enters the scene and the two lovers ^{VIE} ~~pine~~ with each other in describing the loveliness of each other. 1:9-2:7.
 - e. The scene ends with a refrain that occurs two other times. 2:7
 2. Scene II. 2:8-3:5

- a. A scene in the bedroom of the house of Shulamite's mother (3:4) and in the street of the city. Since the language of (3:1) describes this action in the words "at night on my bed" these scenes are usually interpreted as a dream of the maiden in which she expresses her longing and searching for her lover.
- b. The lover comes to the home of the maiden. 2:8-17
 - (1) The man says she is as inaccessible as a dove in the cliffs. (2:14)
 - (2) She replies in the famous figures of the foxes (2:15) that she has been detained from him by her duties.
 - (3) She then relates another scene where she left her bed and sought him.
 - (4) It ends with a plea to not waken the lover. 3:5
3. Scene III. 3:6-5:1
 - a. The city of Jerusalem--The Wedding Procession of King Solomon and his beloved borne on a litter.
 - b. The people of Jerusalem sing of the approach of the King and his bride. 3:6-11.
 - c. Songs of Mutual endearment. 4:1-5:1
 - (1) The husband of the bride. (sec. reference to veil, 4:3 and to the breasts. 4:5)
 - (2) The bride interrupts the praise of her charm to long for the solitude until the cool of the evening. 4:6
 - (3) The husband tells of the beauty of his spouse in tender and beautiful metaphors.
 - (4) She closes the scene by the wish that this garden may prosper and that he may gather the fruits of it.
4. Scene IV. 5:2-8:4
 - a. The palace--Incidents of the wedding festival, New searchings and findings of the lovers.
 - b. The Shulamite lets one chorus of a dream in which her lover again visited her room at night but disappeared when she arose to open for him. She sought him in the street and was wounded by the keepers of the wall. 5:2-8.
 - c. The chorus interrupts to ask why her lover is more desirable than any other lover. 5:9.
 - d. The bride answers, extolling his husband. 5:10-16.
 - e. The chorus interrupts to ask where her lover is gone. 6:1
 - f. The bride replies that he has gone to the garden to gather lillies. 6:2,3.
 - g. Solomon enters to sing her charms. 6:4-9.
 - h. Dialogue between the chorus and bride. 6:10.
 - i. The chorus continues, singing the bride's charms which have captivated the king. 7:1-5.
 - j. Solomon again enters and sings the praises of his beloved in very intimate terms. 7:6-9.
 - k. The bride in turn invites the lover to revisit the scene of her childhood home and the scene of their first love. 7:10-8:4
5. Scene V. 8:5-14.
 - a. The Shulamite Home.
 - b. The inhabitants ask "who comes?"
 - c. The bridegroom recalls the first moments of mutual love under a tree, near which the girl had been born. 8:5
 - d. The bride responds with what is regarded as the theme of the whole book. 8:6,7
 - e. The bride's brothers are pictured as originally objecting to her marriage implying she was immature. 8:8

- f. She replied that she was (had been) a wall (kept to herself) and that this had won for her the peace of her lover. 8:10-12
- 9 g. Solomon asks her to sing. 8:13
- h. She repeats the song of 2:15-17 and invitation to love's fulfillment. 8:14

II. Some of the prominent inter-pretations of the book.

- A. The Allegorical interpretation holds that the lovers are Jehovah & Israel.
- B. The dramatic view holds that "originally the poem was a dream in which the setting and action were supplied by pantomime or stage curtains."
- C. The collection view thinks the book is just a collection of wedding songs.
- D. The modernist view holds that the song was borrowed from pagan religious surrounding.

Conclusion

- 1. Truly the Song of Solomon reemphasizes the Bible view of love in marriage.
- 2. Love is the great factor in all human relationships. It likewise must be in the spiritual relationship.