

Sunday School Lesson

FEBRUARY 16, 1947

By Dr. Paul Caudill

Topic: Jesus At The Feast Of Tabernacles

Scripture: John 8:12-30, 33-36. The coming of Jesus to the Feast of Tabernacles created intense excitement on the part of the people concerning the Messiahship.

The rulers would have arrested him, doubtless, had it not been for the division of sentiment in the Galilean multitude at the Feast. The impressions of the Jerusalem populace and the Ro-

man officers varied greatly, and besides there was the work of Nicodemus: "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" (John 7:51).

Following the Feast Jesus greatly angered the Pharisees by claiming to be the light of the world (John 8:12-20), and later on, the Pharisees attempted to stone Jesus when he exposed their sinfulness (John 8:21-59).
Sin and Suffering

Upon leaving the temple (John 8:59) Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, came upon a man "blind from his birth." Blindness was common in the Orient and Mark tells us of two cases (8:23; 10:46) which were healed by Jesus. In view of the prevailing Jewish notion that sickness was invariably a penalty for sin, the disciples questioned Jesus as to who committed the sin the man or his parents "that he should be born blind."

If the man were guilty of sin it had to be pre-natal sin for the simple reason that he was born blind. This would have been, as Dr. A. T. Robertson puts it, "a curious notion surely." The other alternative would lay the sin at the door of the parents. After all, did not the scriptures teach (Exodus 20:5) that Jehovah God is a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate him?

No one would dispute the fact that there is much in heredity but Jesus makes it clear that heredity is not everything. "Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3).

There is much comfort for sufferers to be found here in the words of Jesus. Denying both alternatives Jesus plainly declares that the man's suffering is to be thought of as an avenue whereby the mercies of the living God might be more fully demonstrated.

Of course disease may be the result of personal sin as in the man in John 5:14, and it is possible for parents so to live that the scars of their sins will be borne by the children of the third and fourth generations.

On the other hand there are cases free from blame like the one of this lesson. Herein lies great comfort for sufferers.

The Light of The World
"Whosoever I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (v. 5). When Jesus had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle and annointed the eyes of the man born blind with clay, and said unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The man did as he was instructed and came seeing.

The neighbors who had been acquainted with his past, knowing that he had been a beggar, were surprised when they saw him in his new state: "Is not this he who sat and begged?" others said, "It is he: others said, No, but he is like him." But the man said, "I am he."

Upon being asked how his eyes were opened the man told the story of how Jesus had made clay, annointed his eyes and instructed him to go to Siloam and wash, and how, following the experience, his sight was restored.

So far as we know there is no record of healing of the blind in the Old Testament, nor by the apostles in the New Testament.

In recounting the signs that were to accompany the disciples as they should go out in the name of Christ, Mark does not mention the healing of the blind (Mark 16:18). The experience of the Apostle Paul in Acts 9:17 f. is of course an exception from whatever angle it may be considered.

The restoration of sight to the blind was to be a sign of the Messianic times: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" (Isa. 35:5). See also Isaiah 29:18.

The Believer's Responsibility
In verse 4 Jesus associates us with him in the task that was committed to him by the Father: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: there cometh night when no man can work" (v. 4).

In the discussion of the character of the office of the Christian Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

While Jesus is the light of the world we also are associated with him in his world task. He is able to work only through us who know him and who have already come to experience the glory of his indwelling presence. Repeatedly following the resurrection and before the ascension he emphasized the duty and responsibility of believers to go with the message of salvation to all mankind throughout the world. "The field is the world," he said, and we are to be witnesses even unto death for the sake of the message. Jesus did not say, "I must work the works of him that sent me," but rather "we must work the works of him that sent me." Jesus calls attention to the urgency of the task. "Night is coming on," he said. Night was coming for Jesus. (7:33), and it is coming for each of us.

Proof of His Deity
The ejection of the blind man who had been healed from the council of the Pharisees marked the dawn of a new era in the life of man. "For the first time the Lord offered Himself as the object of faith and that in His universal character in relation to humanity as 'the Son of man'." He had before caused men to follow Him: He had revealed Himself, and accepted spontaneous homage of believers; but now He proposes a test of fellowship. . . . the blind who acknowledge their blindness are enlightened: the seeing who are satisfied with their sight are proved to be blind." (Westcott).

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and having found them, said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of man?" He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he that talketh with thee is he. And he said, I believe, Lord. And he worshiped him.

One cannot help but wonder what must have been the thoughts of the Pharisees in the light of the words of Jesus and his ministry to the man born blind. He had not only kneaded clay on the Sabbath and applied it to the eyes of the blind—thereby violating a Jewish tradition that had been held sacred for centuries—but had also demonstrated his power over disease, and had declared himself to be a worthy object of faith. He had manifested living proof of his deity!

WAC's NEEDED BY U. S. ARMY

It was announced today by Sergeant Francis M. Darcy, Commander of the U. S. Army Recruiting Station in Lenoir, N. C., that a special effort is to be made to obtain twenty former members of the Women's Army Corps with a Military Occupational Specialty 213, Stenographer, for assignment to the U. S. Forces in the European Theater.

Applications for reenlistment can be made at the Lenoir Recruiting Station, which is located in the Post Office Building. All applications must be made before 1 March 1947.

Smoker Pays \$25 Fine For Cigarette In Bed

Indianapolis. — John Mason, 25, of Indianapolis, first person charged with violating a new city ordinance against smoking in bed in a hotel, pleaded guilty yesterday and was fined \$25 and costs.

Mason said he would pay the hotel \$45 for the damage done to the bed on which he dropped a cigarette while asleep early Sunday.

The ordinance bans smoking in hotel and hospital beds and in department stores.

February 2-3 has been designated as National Garden Planning Week by Secretary of Agriculture, Clinton P. Anderson.

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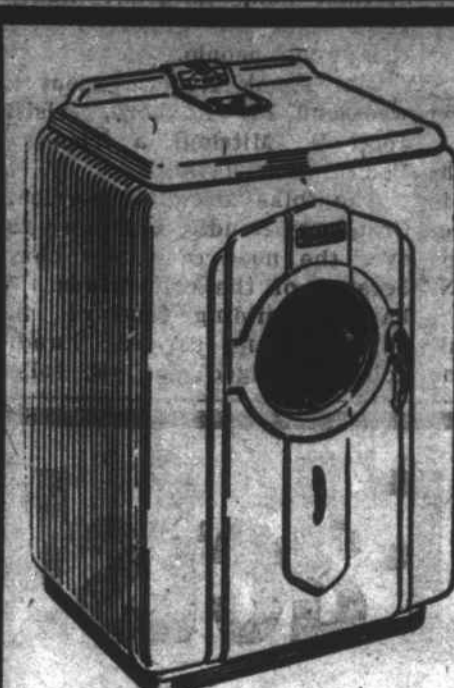
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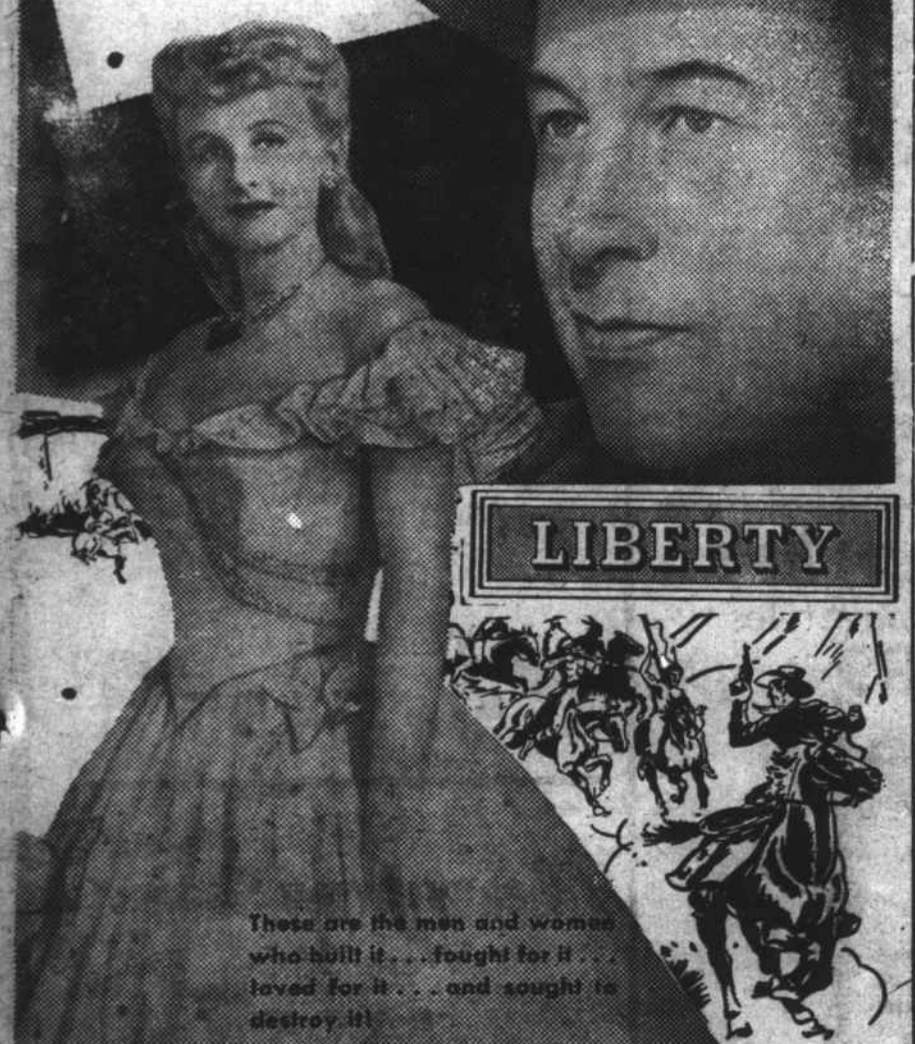
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