

The Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION:

Imagine yourself a citizen of the most evil kingdom conceivable. All who dwell there are murderers liars, cheats, adulterers, brawlers, and the like. Encouraged by the wicked ruler, everyone mistreats the other in this kingdom, and you have been thrown into the darkest dungeon. You are there rightfully, because you are guilty of the vilest crimes. You spend your time just waiting for the executioner.

The tiny window of the door of your cell opens. An ambassador from a far country tells you that his king has taken pity on the wretched citizens of your land. The King has made a successful invasion and has overthrown the wicked ruler. You are free to leave the prison and migrate to the new kingdom if you will forsake your evil ways and loyally serve the good king. Though you can hardly believe it possible, you pledge to obey, and the door is thrown open. You are led out of the prison and transported to the new kingdom. Now, as a citizen, you must learn a whole new way of life. You must learn the laws of your new king. You must begin doing the work that he commands.

This is what happens to Christians in a spiritual sense. We are citizens of this world condemned by our sins. But God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for us thus breaking Satan's hold on us. We are invited to come into Christ's Kingdom if we will repent of our sins and follow Him as Lord. When we enter Christ's Kingdom, we must then learn how to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

In today's Scripture, Paul told the Colossians that they were citizens of a new kingdom. They must reject the teachings and practices of the world, and devote their full energies to becoming mature and productive citizens of the Kingdom of Gods' Son.

THE LESSON:

"From Paul, who by Gods' will is an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy - To God's people in Colosse, who are our faithful brothers in union with Christ: May God our Father give you grace and peace. We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all God's people. When the Good News, first came to you, you heard about the hope it offers. So your faith and love are based on what you hope for, which is kept safe for you in heaven. The gospel keeps bringing blessings and is spreading throughout the world, just as it has among you ever since the day you first heard about the grace of God and came to know it as it really is. You learned of God's grace from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is Christ's faithful worker on our behalf. He has told us of the love that the Spirit has given you. For this reason we have always prayed for you, ever since we heard about you. We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, with all the wisdom and understanding that His Spirit gives. Then you will be able to live as the Lord wants and will always do what pleases Him. Your lives will produce all kinds of good deeds, and you will grow in your knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength which comes from his glorious power, so that you may be able to endure everything with patience. And with joy give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for his people in the kingdom of light. He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the Kingdom of his dear Son, by whom we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven." (Colossians 1: 1-14)

The power of God enables ordinary men and women to do extraordinary things. Paul himself planted churches throughout the Roman world. Martin Luther opposed all the powers of the church of Rome and prevailed through Gods' power. Missionaries face impossible situations, yet succeed in communicating the gospel. But a Christian doesn't have to be famous to call upon God's power. God will help every Christian to do much more than he can do by himself.

We should not be afraid to undertake some work for the Lord because we think it is beyond our capability. If the Lord presents us with a challenge, He will also give us the help we need to meet that challenge. Note, however, that the Lord does not give us talents we do not have. He helps us to use the maximum the talents we do have. Again, the Lord does not do all the work; He requires toil, dedication, and sacrifice on our part, and He then multiplies and rewards our efforts. Average Christians are able to accomplish great and important things everyday when they trust God to help, and then they press on to the work.

No one is a Christian against his will. God has provided the means of breaking Satan's hold on us; we can escape the power of darkness if we choose. God invites us to enter His Kingdom, but He does not force us to do so. However, once we are in His Kingdom, the Lord does expect us to be faithful citizens in serving Him.

Let us work tirelessly for our King. Let us call on His power to enable us to do more. Let us sacrifice for Him as He sacrificed for us.

Father, forgive us when our stubborn hearts and minds lead us to rebel against You. In the name of Your Son we pray. Amen.

POST OBITUARIES

BEASLEY'S FUNERAL HOME

Mr. Earnest Stewart, 71, of 5312 Elderbank Dr. died in University Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held at East Stone Wall A.M.E. Zion Church. Burial was in York Memorial Garden. Rev. Derrick Anderson officiated.

Survivors are his children, Ms. Laura Kennedy of Charlotte, Mr. Ernest Pitts of Fayetteville, NC, Mr. Leroy Pitts of Tocomo, Washington, Mr. Willie James Pitts of Tillet, Ill, and Ms. rose Lee Jefferson.

Mr. George (Buzzy) Fair, 63, of 200 Pennsylvania died Feb. 20, 1989, at his place of residence. Funeral service was held Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Oaklawn Cemetery.

Survivors are his daughter, Ms. Minnie L. Williams; 1st cousin, Mr. R.C. Patterson; cousin, Mr. Willie Patterson.

Mr. Mack McArthur Caldwell, 70, of 3212 Boyd St. died Feb. 20, 1989. Funeral service was held at Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden. Rev. Drake Barber officiated.

Survivors are his niece Mrs. Shirley Ann Hart.

Mrs. Brenda Gillispe, 40, of 2121 Rozzells Ferry Rd. died Feb. 13, 1989 in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was

held in Beasley's Memorial Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivors are her husband, Mr. Nathaniel Gillespie; brothers, Mr. Fred Anderson, Mr. Michael Black, and Mr. Richard Black.

Mr. John Willeham, 68, of 609 Cordia Ave. died Feb. 15, 1989 in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held at Beasley Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

LONG & SON MORTUARY

Mrs. Annie Ruth Thomas, of 1908 Union Street died Feb. 18, 1989, at her place of residence. Funeral service was held Feb. 26 at Glorious House of Prayer For All People. Burial was in York Memorial Cemetery.

Survivors are her sons, Mr. Timothy Thomas of Monroe, NC, Mr. Joseph Thomas, Mr. Julius Thomas, and Mr. Isiah Thomas all of Charlotte; daughters, Mrs. Fannie Ruth Coleman of Belton, S.C. and Mrs. Jeanette Martin of Charlotte; father, Mr. Frank Hill of Abbeville, S.C.; sisters, Mrs. Eva Mae Willis of Abbeville, S.C.; 11 grandchildren; and 5 great grandchildren.

Mrs. Ruth Hudson Jackson, of 1919 Cliffwood Pl. died Feb. 24, 1989, at her place of residence. Graveside service was held at York Memorial Cemetery. See Obituaries On Page.

God: The Only Way To Salvation

By J. M. Little

In the ninth chapter of Acts, we have the story of the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul. Let me say in the beginning that every soul who ever gets saved is saved just like Saul was saved, or just like I was saved. God has only one Way of Salvation, and only one Salvation, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord Jesus Christ alone is my salvation. And He is your Salvation if you are saved. The greatest thing in all this universe is just to know Christ as your Lord and your Saviour. So the eternal question I ask each of you is, "Do you know Christ?" Has He been revealed to your heart? We are going to see just how the Lord saves every sinner who ever gets saved in this story of the salvation of the villain, Saul of Tarsus.

What does the name "Saul" mean? It means "Destroyer." Saul of Tarsus was a great religious man, a lawyer, trained under Gamaliel, a Pharisee and President of the Sanhedrin Court. "And SAUL, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the LORD, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round him a light from heaven" And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, SAUL, SAUL, why persecutest thou me? And he said, WHO art thou, LORD? And the LORD said, I am Jesus whom you persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, LORD, what wilt thou have me to do? And the LORD said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:1-6).

Here we see a great religious man who was persecuting the Christians, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against them. And we are told in the seventh and eighth chapters of Acts that Saul was there when Stephen was killed and gave consent to his death. We see this same man going to the high

priest for permission to bind every man or woman who knew the Lord. Every unsaved heart has a high priest to report to. Here is a man with a heart of hatred for Christians. Why did he hate Christians? Because every man in his natural state hates God.

Since 1972 when God saved me, I have been setting forth the truth that every man out of Christ hates God. Few know that truth in reality. At this time a great persecution broke out against the Christians who were known as the children of "this way," or "that way." Meaning those who knew Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Here we see a man riding down the Damascus Road with all the hatred and vengeance in his heart to persecute all the Christians he could lay hands on. He set out that morning to continue what he had been doing for years. Now, how can that man be changed, or stopped? Modern-day theology would have taken this approach: "just get him to ACCEPT JESUS" as his Saviour and then lead him away from his sins later on." That's what you hear all across the religious world. The Devil has made popular that saying over the last 23 years. Here is a man hating God and all Christians, and modern-day theology says just "ACCEPT JESUS." What a tragedy!

You can accept Jesus as your Saviour just as easily as you can make a new heaven and a new earth. I would not want a Jesus I could accept any time I wanted to. But I hear that everywhere I go. If you could accept the Lord Jesus anytime you wanted to, then you would be sovereign instead of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ does not stand before any sinner for that sinner to accept Him. On the contrary, you stand before Christ for Him to accept you or damn you in Hell. I wish that our preachers across AMERICA and the world knew that great truth, but they don't. All they know is a little "EASY BELIEVINGISM" that's damning multitudes to Hell. I lived there and taught easy believingism for years. I don't think anyone supported that damnable doctrine any more than I did. But here is a man with his party riding in the direction of Damascus to lay hold of every Christian and bring them bound to Jerusalem.

As he came close to Jerusalem, there shined "round about him a light from heaven." This is the same light Paul spoke of in II Cor. 4:6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of Jesus Christ." On the Damascus Road, the Sovereign God of the Universe shined the light in this lost man's darkened heart. It is this same light that the blessed Holy Spirit shines in the darkened heart of every sinner whom He deals with for salvation in Christ. No individual

can shine this light into his own heart. No soul is saved apart from this light being shined into his heart to reveal to him his lost condition.

That is what happened to Saul on the Damascus Road. "And he trembling and astonished..." The word "astonished" there means "awakened." When the Lord shined the Light into that darkened heart, He showed Saul he was lost. The Light was from Heaven and was so powerful Saul was knocked to the ground.

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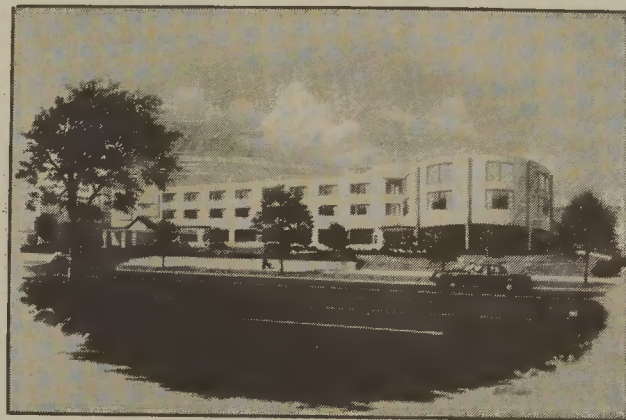
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