

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JAMES, LEADER IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

International Sunday School Lesson for September 17, 1950

Memory Selection: "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."—James 1: 22.

Lesson Text: Acts 15: 13-20; Galatians 2: 9-12.

The New Testament does not give us much light about the home life of Jesus, other than the fact that he was an apprentice carpenter in the workshop of Joseph and that he had four brothers, James, Joseph, Juda and Simon and several sisters. It seems that the brothers of Jesus were not greatly impressed with him or his ministry while he was alive. As a matter of fact, Mark tells us that Jesus himself was conscious of their apparent lack of sympathy, when he declared, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

One brother, however—James—did finally catch the vision and became, after Christ's death, the bishop in charge of the church at Jerusalem. It was he who sat as the presiding officer at the great Church Council which had been called together to decide whether they would accept into their membership both converted Jews and converted Gentiles; and whether the Gentiles would be forced to first go through the ancient rite of Jewish circumcision, becoming good Jews before they could become good Christians, or whether a declaration of faith in Christ was enough.

The necessity for the Church Council was brought about by the fact that Paul and Barnabas had been preaching in Antioch and numbers of Gentiles were accepting the gospel. Titus, a Gentile convert, was a member of the Antioch Church—an uncircumcised member. The strict legalists and Judaizers, however, didn't like that. They agreed, as Paul had said, that God had opened "a door of faith to the Gentiles," but when it came to Jew and Gentile sitting down together at supper, in the Church, that was opening the door "a little too wide!"

After a long argument over the matter at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Church to Jerusalem for a conference with the church leaders there. Titus, Paul and Barnabas sat down in a pre-conference meeting with the three pillars of the Jerusalem church—James, Peter and John—to talk the matter over. They agreed to divide the mission task, giving Paul and Barnabas supreme authority in the Gentile areas, and making Peter and the other apostles leaders in the Jewish areas. The Council, meeting later, ratified that arrangement.

When the whole Council of Jerusalem met, Peter, Paul and Barnabas explained the situation to them, with such tremendous effect that the Council sat in utter silence, pondering the words and ideas of these three men on the question of circumcision and the Gentiles. Then, James, the leader of the assembly and identified as the "brother of the Lord," summed the whole matter up, speaking for all of them. After a brief outline of the matter, a reference to the Scriptures, in the words of Amos, the prophet (Amos 9: 11-12), James gives the verdict, in the following words:

"Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood." The decision of James sets him squarely on the side of piety, as against legalism and bigotry. He gave voice to one of the most vital decisions in the formation of the church: quietly, almost piously, in a spirit of Christian understanding and tolerance, he insisted that the doors of the Church be left wide open to both Jews and Gentiles. Like Paul, he felt that only one thing was necessary: conversion to Christ, and a will to follow him. Race didn't matter; blood didn't matter; rites and ceremonies didn't matter. If James had not done this, the Church would have started right then, to die of the dry rot of racial and religious prejudice.

Another contribution that James made was that he advocated church unity. While allowing for diversity of thought and ritual in one great Church, he still saw it as a Church uniting all mankind on the basis of the grace and love of Jesus his Saviour and on that alone. It was One Church in One World, serving all humanity.

Charles Tudor Leber, in *Is God in There?* says: "The doors of the church must be closer to the sidewalks. The preaching of the church must go deeper. The sacrifice of the church must be more Christlike. The worship of the church must mean more." (Continued on Page Two)

THE ROAD THAT LEADS NOWHERE

The road pictured below bears the time-worn marks of many travellers. Apparently it leads to some distant village or serves perhaps as a link between more vital thoroughfares.

But in reality this road does neither. Once, no doubt, it had a destination, but today it fades away into the woods a few miles beyond—a "dead end."

How many lives are like this road? They have promising beginnings, but instead of continuing to worthwhile goals, they wander aimlessly to final dead ends.

The Church teaches us to build useful lives and guides us toward noble achievements and ambitions. Regular attendance at church services gives greater assurance that our pathway of life will not lead us astray. On the contrary, it leads straight to the house of the peaceful mind and the contented heart.

THE CHURCH FOR ALL . . . ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake, (2) For his children's sake, (3) For the sake of his community and nation, (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Book	Chapter	Verses
Sunday . . . Mark	1	1-8
Monday . . . Isaiah	40	1-8
Tuesday . . . Matthew	7	13-23
Wednesday Psalms	5	7-13
Thursday Hebrews	12	1-8
Friday . . . Acts	9	10-19
Saturday Psalms	46	1-11

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Duling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
Church services at 3:00 P. M.
Christian Union, 7:30 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. R. Byerly, Pastor
Church services first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
E. B. Edwards, Pastor

First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:30 P. M.

Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:30 P. M.

Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:30 P. M.

Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:30 P. M.

Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church at 7:30 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
E. R. Meekins, Pastor
Church School, 11:00 O. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WHITEVILLE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Carl Bjork, Pastor
Sunday School, 11 A. M. every Sunday except third Sunday.
Church services every third Sunday at 8 P. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. E. G. Willis, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
Carl J. Yow, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Morning worship—11.00 A. M.
Youth Fellowship, 6:30 P. M.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
G. M. Singletary, Pastor
Sunday Schoc., 10:30 A. M. on first and third Sundays and 2:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.
Church services, 3:00 P. M. on second and fourth Sundays.

HERTFORD METHODIST CHURCH
Ben O. Merritt, Pastor
Church School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Youth Fellowship, 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 P. M.
Mid-week Fellowship, Wednesday at 7:30 P. M.

BAGLEY SWAMP PILGRIM
Coy S. Saunders, Pastor
Sunday School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Young People's Meeting, 6:30 P. M.
Evening Worship, 7:30 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Thursday at 7:30 P. M.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
Holy Communion, 9:00 A. M.
Every Sunday except first Sunday at 9:00 A. M.
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Prayer and Sermon, 11:00 o'clock.
Holy Communion first Sunday at 11 A. M.

BEREA CHURCH OF CHRIST
Walker Perry, Pastor
Bible School 10:00 A. M., except second Sunday, at 10:30 A. M.
Morning worship on first Sunday at 11 A. M.
Evening worship first Sunday at 8 P. M.

CHAPPELL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
A. H. Outlaw, Pastor
Sunday School, 2 P. M. every first Sunday.
Church Service 3 P. M. every first Sunday.
Sunday School at 11 A. M. every second, third and fourth Sunday.

Go To Church Your Church Any Church But Go