

Sunday School Lesson

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The Ethiopian eunuch began with a study of the Scripture and reached, not belief, but confusion. (Acts 8:30-31) When Philip preached to him "the good news of Jesus," his confusion disappeared, and he believed.

5. Thus the Bible takes its place at many different points in the experience of different people. It may enter at the beginning to raise a question in the pursuit of which the questioner

comes to a new grasp of the truth. This is what happened to the Ethiopian eunuch. It may enter at the end to confirm or ungird a commitment already more than half made. This is what happened in Berea.

James shows us still another way in which the Bible may be used. It holds a mirror before us in which we may see what we are really like. This self-knowledge confronts us with a decision. We may be moved by the self-revelation to decision and action, or we may walk away and forget the self-portrait.

The passages agree that the Bible aims at producing obedience to the will of God. This is not forced obedience but the obedience of a free man, voluntarily deciding and freely accepting the responsibilities arising from his decision. The New Testament understands that this obedience is reached not by an effort of will but by a faith-commitment to Jesus Christ. The Christ embodies and exemplifies in his person and teaching the whole intention of God. Therefore, faith is obedience,

and obedience faith.

What the Scripture Says to Us

From our study of the biblical passages we may isolate five keys to understanding the Scripture.

1. A History of Salvation. The entire Scripture is history — not world history but the history of God's saving acts. In the Old Testament this salvation is directed to a particular nation. Salvation is thought of fundamentally in political terms — deliverance from the domination of foreign rulers and new life in a restored land.

However, in laying bare Israel's sin and describing her coming salvation the Old Testament writers frequently broke out of their nationalism. This is particularly true in their analysis of the nature and need of man and in the hope of a new life that they held out to him. The New Testament accepts this description of human nature and proclaims a hope, not put off to the future or expressed in national terms, but breaking into the present of every man in Jesus Christ.

2. Promise and Fulfillment.

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