

TEMMIT! FOR CHILDREN

Bible Lesson Quarterly Year 3 - 4th Quarter - "JESUS OUR SAVIOUR"

This week we start a new Quarter and we are going to study about the Life of Jesus our Savior! We are especially going to notice the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in His life and see how sure we can be that HE is 'The Seed of the Woman' who is able to save us from sin.

For our Bible lessons we are going to use the King James Version of the Bible, just like the boys and girls used to use to learn to read from in the pioneer days.

There will be some texts to look up for each day and you should practice your memory verse until you can say it without looking. Don't forget to learn the text too.

Weekly Bible Lesson #1: "PROPHETS FORETOLD"

MEMORY VERSE: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

Sunday

Text: Malachi 4:5, 6 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Luke 1:76 "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."

Zacharias was an old priest in the land of Judah close to the time of the birth of Jesus. He was one of the few who were faithful in obeying and serving the Lord, and so he seldom ever got a chance to minister in the Temple services.

The Priesthood was so corrupt by this time that only the special friends of the High Priest, a man that got his job through brib-

ery and even murder, would get to take part in the special feasts. But when God wants a man in a certain place, He has ways of getting him there.

So it was that godly Zacharias was in Jerusalem to do the job of burning the incense before the Lord on a certain day. As he was doing this, all at once he saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar. The right side meant it was a message of peace; the left would be a message of doom.

Still Zacharias was startled and afraid. But the angel spoke kindly to him. "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." Luke 1:13.

Now He and his wife had long wanted a child and had prayed for one for years, but none came. Now both of them were old and it seemed impossible for them to have a child now. Zacharias spoke out his doubts to the

angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

Now the Angel rebuked him for his unbelief saying, "I am Gabriel, who stands near to God in heaven. I have been sent to tell you this and because you don't believe me, you won't be able to talk until it happens."

The angel went away and Zacharias came out to the people, who wondered why he was taking so long in there. He could not tell them anything, but could only make hand signals. After his work was done he went home to his wife Elisabeth.

Thought - I imagine Zacharias was excited to tell his wife all about what the angel said, don't you? But he would have to write it all down.

Monday

Text: Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Luke 1:26-28 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

Six months later after Elisabeth was expecting her miracle baby, the same messenger, Gabriel showed up at the home of a young lady who was not married, but engaged to be married soon to a widower named Joseph. He was older than her, but a godly and kind man.

As Mary was working one day she heard a musical and kindly voice and looking up saw an angel of the Lord. He told her that the Lord had chosen her for a great honor. She was to be the mother of the Messiah.

How the thought must have struck her, Me? The mother of the Messiah? Why, that is what all Israelite mothers had longed to be all down the ages since Eve!

Mary was not like Zacharias, she did not disbelieve, but she wondered how such a thing could happen. Gabriel told her that through the Power of God this would happen. He then told her that her cousin Elisabeth was also expecting a baby in her old age and was six months along.

The angel left then and Mary hardly knew what to think for a while. She was excited about the news of her cousin and as soon as she could she hurried to go to the hill country to visit her cousin. Sure enough, what the angel said was true and she found Elisabeth rejoicing in the promise of her special son.

As soon as Mary entered the home of this dear lady, she was informed by the Holy Spirit that this, her young cousin Mary, was to be the mother of the promised Messiah. The Bible says that even the little unborn baby leaped inside for joy and the Holy Spirit filled him even then.

Thought - God tells us He often chooses people, even before they are born, to do a certain work for Him when they are older.

Tuesday

Text: Luke 1:46- 49 "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name."

There are people in the world today who claim that Mary was a special person born without any sinful nature like other people but notice the she herself says she rejoiced in her Savior. If she was some kind of magical, sinless woman, she would not need a Savior.

Mary stayed at her cousin's for three months and was likely there when the promised miracle baby was born. By then she also knew for sure that the message of the Angel to her was also true, she was going to have a baby.

After Elisabeth's baby boy was born, family and friends asked what his name was to be. Remember, Zacharias had not been able to speak a word since he had seen the angel. People thought the boy would be called after his father, but Elizabeth said that he was to be called John. (Which meant 'Jehovah Favored'.)

Zacharias asked by signals for a writing pad and wrote, "His name is John." Right away, he was able to speak again and gave a wonderful prophecy about the work his son would do as the forerunner of the Messiah. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." Luke 1:68, 69

Jacob, in a prophecy had said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10. Now King Herod, the man who was sitting on the throne of Judah was not even a Jew, the time had indeed come for the Messiah to be born of the line of King David.

Thought – All the prophecies about Jesus, even ones given thousands of years earlier, all came true. Over 300 different prophecies were fulfilled in the Life of our Savior!

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 1:20,21 "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy

Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Now when Mary returned from her visit to Elisabeth, one of the first things she had to do was to tell Joseph about the miracles. Sad to say, Joseph did not believe her and was planning to break off their engagement.

But God sent the angel to talk to him in a dream and explained the whole thing to him. Then Joseph believed the angel and did as the angel told him in the dream.

Now Joseph was a carpenter, and they lived in the town of Nazareth of Galilee. But the prophecies had foretold that the Messiah would be born in the town of Bethlehem. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. How was that going to happen?

God has a thousand ways to do what He says He will do. In fact prophecy had already foretold how it would be done. In Daniel 11:20 we see that there would arise "a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle."

This was Caesar Augustus, and he did just what Daniel foretold, he was a raiser of taxes and commanded that all the people should return to the cities of their ancestors and be registered and taxed. He had a fairly short reign after this main event of his life.

Now Joseph and Mary were of the family of David and from the town of Bethlehem. By now, when the order came from the Emperor, Mary was very close to the time when the wonderful baby was to be born. It was not easy for them to travel so far at such a time, but they had to obey the decree or be in trouble with the Romans.

Thought – The true people of God will always respect the laws of the earthly governments, as long as they do not go against the Law of God.

Thursday

Text: Luke 2:4,5 “And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.”

Taking their donkey for Mary to ride on, they went on their long journey to the town of Bethlehem. How tiring it must have been for Mary at such a time to have to go so far from her home. Angels were watching over this couple as they made their long journey.

As they got close to the town of Bethlehem, they began to know that they would not make it home again, before Jesus was born. They had been looking forward to getting a room and having a good rest, but now they had a more important reason to need a place of shelter, the special baby was soon going to be born.

Can't you just imagine how anxious Joseph was as they hurried from place to place trying to find a room? Because there were so many people coming there to be registered also, there just were no rooms to be had, not anywhere. At last they found a bit of shelter in a rude building where animals were kept.

In the stable, the wonderful baby all the earth had waited for so long to receive, was born. Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger for a cradle. Here was Jesus, the King of heaven, lying in a stable where beasts were kept. The richest palace on earth would have failed to properly honor the Lord of the Universe. But those who should have been looking for His coming, had twisted the scriptures to suit their own ideas all mixed up with Greek philosophy and did not know anything about His birth.

Thought – All too many people today, so busy with their own ideas and plans, also

fail to know the truth about the Savior, just like the rulers of old.

Friday

Text: Luke 2:10-12 “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

“Men know it not, but the tidings fill heaven with rejoicing. With a deeper and more tender interest the holy beings from the world of light are drawn to the earth. The whole world is brighter for His presence. Above the hills of Bethlehem are gathered an innumerable throng of angels. They wait the signal to declare the glad news to the world. Had the leaders in Israel been true to their trust, they might have shared the joy of heralding the birth of Jesus. But now they are passed by.” {DA 47.1}

The angel are anxious to bring the good news of the birth of the Messiah, but as they look in Jerusalem and also in Bethlehem, they find hardly anyone that is even thinking about the coming of the Promised One.

How strange it seemed to them, the greatest event in the history of the world, and no one seems to even care. No sense in telling such people anything. Then they find a group of simple shepherds watching their sheep on the hills of Bethlehem, just as David had done so long before. They are talking together about the prophecies of the Messiah.

Suddenly the bright angel appears to bring them the good news. He tells them not to be afraid for he brought good news. “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

He also told them where to look, ‘Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’

After giving them a moment to adjust to

the brightness, the whole host of heavenly angels appear and pour out their beautiful song. It was the brightest scene human eyes had ever looked at.

Earth was hushed, and heaven stooped to listen to the song,—

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Thought - If they had not been told where to look for the baby Savior, I am sure they would never dreamed of finding Him in a stable! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #2: “WHERE IS THE BABY KING?”

MEMORY VERSE: “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matthew 2:11

Sunday

Text: Matthew 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS**: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Luke 2:21 “And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called **JESUS**, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”

The name Jesus means ‘Savior’. It was the name given to Joseph for the wonderful baby that was to be born to Mary of no earthly father. Joseph and Mary had settled for the time in Bethlehem after the birth of Jesus.

Jesus; Our Savior, what a wonderful idea that the Great Creator loved His little created ones enough that when they had fallen hopelessly into the snare of the enemy and there was nothing ahead for them but eternal death, He stepped down from the throne of the universe- and became our Savior!

After a certain number of weeks, Joseph and Mary journeyed to Jerusalem to offer the special gift for a first-born son and have His name registered in the temple books. As they were poor, the only offering they could bring was a pair of turtle-doves.

The priest on duty took the child and held Him up, handed Him back to his mother,

wrote down the Name in the record books, and turned to accept the next child. Little did he know that when he wrote that Name, he was writing what all the temple and its services stood for and the One that would be the fulfillment and end of these same services.

But God was not going to let this amazing event pass without testifying about it. An old priest named Simeon had been told by God that he would live to see the actual promised One. Every day he eagerly watched the presentations of the firstborn and as the baby was handed back to Mary, the Holy Spirit impressed his heart that this was the One.

Hurrying forward he took the baby and holding Him up in his arms said: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Lu 2:29-32.

As he returned the babe to His Mother, he added that He would be a light to the Gentiles and that she would have grief also, like a sword that would pierce her heart.

Right then came another ancient figure, Anna, a prophetess of great age who stayed all the time in the temple, pressed forward and beheld with joy the Babe of Promise.

Then after praising God, she hurried out to carry the news to those who cared enough to listen in Jerusalem.

Thought - Today we have many people who are claiming if you don't call our Lord by just some certain Hebrew name, He will not hear you and you will be lost. This is such a wicked and false view of God! It was God Himself that gave men the languages at the tower of Babel. If it was so important that we call Him by only one name, He could have had that same name in all the languages of the world. God would never be so hard and cruel as to have people lost just because they say His name each in their own language!

Monday

Text: Matthew 2:1, 2 "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Numbers 24:17 "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

When Jesus was born the angels had come to bear the news, but how very few they found who were even interested! They told the glad tidings to the shepherds of Bethlehem, but they would have gladly told the priests and rulers at Jerusalem, but they had so long twisted the scriptures and mixed them with Greek and pagan ideas, that they were not ready to recognize the event.

Simeon and Anna told all that would listen of their seeing the Promised child, but most people ignored them as too old to know what they were talking about. But God was about to work in an amazing way to bring the fact of the birth of the Christ before the rulers again.

In the heathen lands of the east were wise

men, who studied the Hebrew Scriptures to learn prophecy, and so when one night they saw an amazing new star in the heavens in the direction of Judea, they were sure a great event had happened. Searching the prophecies they read that a 'star' was to rise out of Jacob.

God impressed them in dreams to go and seek the newborn Prince. Inspired to take certain rich gifts, they started out, traveling by night toward the bright spot in the heavens. Because of their joy in talking of the prophecies of scripture and the inspiration of God, the journey though long was pleasant to them.

Coming at last to Jerusalem, they expected to find everyone talking about the 'newborn king', but instead, nobody seemed to know what they were talking about. They even go to the temple but no one there was interested or knew anything either. However the caravan from the east arriving in Jerusalem stirred up a lot of attention.

Thought - People who teach the false science of astrology claim the story of the 'star' at the birth of Jesus proves their ideas true. But this 'star' was really the visible light of the large group of shining angels in the sky, so filled with joy over the wonderful birth of Jesus. These wise men were not astrologers at all, they were worshippers of the true God of heaven, even though they were not Jews.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 2:3,4 "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born."

Micah 5:2 "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in

Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

Soon word reached cruel old king Herod, about the strangers who were demanding to see some new king. He was not a Jew, and had his throne because the Romans had awarded it to him. The Jews hated him. Right away he got the idea that the priests of the temple were trying to pull some trick and put a child born of the proper line of David on the throne in place of himself.

He demanded all the temple priests and scribes appear before him and demanded to know where was the place that prophecy told that the promised king of Israel would be born.

The priests were angry at Herod’s demand but dared not disobey, so they were forced by the king’s orders to examine their own prophecies and report back about the Messiah’s birthplace. This was a real rebuke to them!

They returned and reported that the prophecy said the birthplace was to be at Bethlehem. Inside Herod was full of fear and anger as he sent away the priests and arranged a private interview with the strangers who had come in search of this ‘new king’.

Pretending to be interested in worshipping the wonderful baby King, he asked them to go and search for Him and when they found Him to come back and tell Herod, so he could worship Him too.

The wise men left Jerusalem alone, no one among the ‘chosen people’ were even interested enough to join in their search. They were a bit downhearted but as they left Jerusalem and turned towards Bethlehem, they again saw the ‘star’ and happily they followed it. Angels of God were leading these strangers to find what all Israel should have been eagerly seeking and were not.

Thought – Even the wicked king Herod had more belief in the prophecies than the religious leaders of Israel did.

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 2: 10-12 “When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

Even though we often see the pictures of the wise men coming to the stable along with the shepherds, it actually did not happen that way. By the time the wise men got there, Mary and Joseph were living in a house. I would imagine that the very next day after Jesus was born in the stable, Joseph would have been seeking for a better place for them to stay.

With great joy the wise men entered the simple home and kneeling, offered their rich gifts before the young child. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh were the gifts they gave. God had inspired them to bring these gifts, as they were full of meaning.

Gold meant the kingship of the Messiah, frankincense meant He was also God of heaven and the Myrrh, which was a spice used in burial, pointed to His death for mankind.

How long they stayed there visiting we do not know, but we are told that an angel warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod or to tell him anything. So they headed for home in a different route.

Herod waited impatiently for the wise men to come back, but they did not come. Finally he realized that they had somehow learned of his cruel plan to slay the young king. He was insane with rage. Sending for the captain of the guard, he gave the orders to go to Bethlehem and kill all the little baby boys two years old and under.

This latest tyrannical rage was to be his last, for he became deathly ill. Historians are not certain of its length, but agree that this sickness came on suddenly and ended rather quickly in Herod's death.

Thought – During this final illness, Herod suffered horribly. Only once did he rally briefly, and then quickly succumbed (Antiquities 17.183). Josephus provides us with the significant news that this fatal illness began with a vague condition causing “uncontrolled anger” (Antiquities 17.148). The description in history of Herod's illness was very much like the Herod that later died, ‘eaten of worms’.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 2:13-15 “And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

Jeremiah 31:15 “Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.”

Taking their donkey again for Mary and baby Jesus to ride on, they headed quickly into the darkness to escape to Egypt. Unseen angels were watching over them as they made their long journey to Egypt.

In the mean time, Herod's soldiers had ridden into Bethlehem, There they began to carry out his orders to kill all the baby boys from 2 years and younger. Imagine the ter-

rible scene of heartache and sorrow as these little ones were cruelly slain!

We are told that if the Jews had been following and obeying God, He would have protected them that Herod's plans would have failed, and God would have protected the people from his cruel plan. But when people turn from the Word of God and prefer to listen to the ideas of men all mixed in with philosophy, then God can no longer protect them from the evil happenings.

Here again we see the wonderful way that God works to care for the needs of those who trust in Him. When they reached Egypt, the rich gifts given them by the wise men were sold and provided enough money for them to live on until they could later return to their own country.

Thought – Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 481. (1905)

Friday

Text: Matthew 2:19-23 “But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Joseph, who was still in Egypt, was now bidden by an angel of God to return to the land of Israel. Because they thought Jesus was going to be the earthly king and sit on David's throne, Joseph desired to make his home in Bethlehem.

But when they learned that the son of Herod, who was just as cruel as his father had been, was ruling there, they were afraid. Again God sent an angel to guide them and in a dream Joseph saw that he would be safe to return to their home in Nazareth. There Jesus could grow up safely.

From the earliest times the faithful in Israel had given much care to the education of the youth. The Lord had directed that even from babyhood the children should be taught of His goodness and His greatness, especially as revealed in His law, and shown in the history of Israel.

"Song and prayer and lessons from the Scriptures were to be adapted to the opening mind. Fathers and mothers were to instruct their children that the law of God is an expression of His character, and that as they received the principles of the law into the heart, the image of God was traced on mind and soul. Much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings; and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study." {DA 69.2}

Mary was faithful in carefully teaching this child who could claim only God as His Father. He was not sent to the schools of the Rabbis because they had mostly replaced the study of God's Word with traditions and ideas of their own. Jesus was taught the scriptures first at His mother's knee and later He studied on His own, both the Scriptures and lessons from Nature. When He was older, angels were sent to teach Him things from the Scriptures and nature also, and so He was prepared for His work on earth. -

"Such was the Saviour's reception when He came to the earth. There seemed to be no place of rest or safety for the infant Redeemer. God could not trust His beloved Son with men, even while carrying forward His work for their salvation. He commissioned angels to attend Jesus and protect Him till He should accomplish His mission on earth, and die by the hands of those whom He came to save". DA 67.

Thought - Joseph was a carpenter and as Jesus grew up He was taught that useful trade and did His work faithfully and well. When we do our daily tasks faithfully and well, we are just as much serving God as the minister in the pulpit. Always seek to do whatever you can to help in your home carefully and cheerfully and Jesus will smile upon your efforts. = ^ .. ^ =



Weekly Bible Lesson #3: "GROWING UP"

MEMORY VERSE: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52.

Sunday

Text: Luke 2:40 "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

Jesus' mind was bright and active. He was of quick understanding, and showed a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years. Yet His ways were simple and child-like, and He grew in mind and body as other children grow.

But Jesus was not in all things like other children. He always showed a sweet, unselfish spirit. His willing hands were always ready to serve others. He was patient and truthful.

Firm as a rock in standing for the right, He never failed to be gentle and courteous toward all. In His home, and wherever He might be, He was like a cheerful sunbeam.

He was thoughtful and kind toward the aged and the poor, and He showed kindness even to the dumb animals. He would care tenderly for a little wounded bird, and every living thing was happier when He was near.

In the days of Christ the Jews gave much care to the education of their children. Their schools were connected with the synagogues, or places of worship, and the teachers were called rabbis, men who were supposed to be very learned.

Jesus did not go to these schools, for they taught many things that were not true. Instead of God's Word, the sayings of men were studied, and often these were contrary to that which God had taught through His prophets.

God Himself by His Holy Spirit instructed Mary how to bring up His Son. Mary taught Jesus from the Holy Scriptures, and He learned to read and study them for Himself. (SJ= From 'Story of Jesus' by Ellen White)

Thought - Read today's story carefully

and count how many sweet, kind ways Jesus had. Ask Jesus in your prayers to give you strength to be like that too.

Monday

Text: Job 12:7, 8 "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee."

Jesus also loved to study the wonderful things which God had made, in the earth and in the sky. In this book of nature He saw the trees and plants and animals, and the sun and the stars.

Day by day He watched them, and tried to learn lessons from them, and to understand the reason of things.

Holy angels were with Him, and helped Him to learn from these things about God. Thus, as He grew in height and strength, He grew also in knowledge and wisdom.

Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did. We should spend our time in learning only that which is true. Falsehood and fables will do us no good.

Only the truth is of any value, and this we may learn from God's Word and from His works. As we study these things the angels will help us to understand.

We shall see the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father. Our minds will be strengthened, our hearts will be made pure, and we shall be more like Christ. SJ

Thought - If you thoughtfully study and watch closely the things of nature and ask the Lord to teach you, then you too will learn many wonderful lessons. Remember that only real and true things have real and true lessons to teach us. Fiction and fantasy

makes us easy for Satan to trick and snare.

Tuesday

Text: Luke 2:41-43 “Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.”

Every year Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem, to the feast of the Passover. When Jesus was twelve years old, they took Him with them. The people traveled on foot, or rode on oxen or donkeys, and it took several days to go.

The feast was held near the close of March or the beginning of April. This was spring-time in Palestine, and the whole land was bright with flowers, and glad with the song of birds.

As they traveled, parents told their children of the wonderful things that God had done for Israel in ages past. And often they sang together some of the beautiful psalms of David.

In the days of Christ the people had grown cold and formal in their service to God. They thought more of their own pleasure than of His goodness to them.

But it was not so with Jesus. He loved to think about God. As He came to the temple, He watched the priests in their work. He bowed with the worshipers as they knelt to pray, and His voice joined in the songs of praise.

Every morning and evening a lamb was offered upon the altar. This was to represent the death of the Saviour. As the child Jesus looked upon the innocent victim, the Holy Spirit taught Him its meaning. He knew that He Himself, as the Lamb of God, must die for the sins of men.

With such thoughts in His mind, Jesus wanted to be alone. So He did not stay with

His parents in the temple, and when they started for home He was not with them.

Thought – Joseph and Mary loved Jesus, yet they had been careless in losing Him. They had forgotten the very work which God had given them to do. By one day’s neglect they lost Jesus.

In the same way today many lose the Saviour from their company. When we do not love to think about Him, or pray to Him; when we speak idle, unkind, or evil words, we separate ourselves from Christ. Without Him, we are lonely and sad.

But if we really want His company, He will always be with us. With all who seek His presence, the Saviour loves to stay. He will brighten the poorest home, and gladden the lowliest heart. SJ

Wednesday

Text: Luke 2:46, 47 “And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”

In a room connected with the temple there was a school taught by the rabbis, and to this place after a while the child Jesus came. He sat with the other youth at the feet of the great teachers, and listened to their words.

The Jews had many wrong ideas about the Messiah. Jesus knew this, but He did not contradict the learned men. As one who wished to be taught, He asked questions about what the prophets had written.

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah speaks of the Saviour’s death, and Jesus read this chapter, and asked its meaning.

The rabbis could give no answer. They began to question Jesus, and they were astonished at His knowledge of the Scriptures.

They saw that He understood the Bible far better than they did. They saw that their teaching was wrong, but they were not will-

ing to believe anything different.

Yet Jesus was so modest and gentle that they were not angry with Him. They wanted to keep Him as a student, and teach Him to explain the Bible as they did.

When Joseph and Mary left Jerusalem on their journey toward home, they did not notice that Jesus stayed behind. They thought that He was with some of their friends in the company.

But on stopping to camp for the night, they missed His helpful hand. They looked for Him throughout the company, but in vain.

Joseph and Mary were in great fear. They remembered how Herod had tried to kill Jesus in His infancy, and they were afraid that some evil had now befallen Him.

With sorrowful hearts they hastened back to Jerusalem; but it was not till the third day that they found Him.

Great was their joy at seeing Him again, yet Mary thought that He was to blame for leaving them. She said: "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

"How is it that ye sought Me?" Jesus answered. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:48, 49.

As He spoke these words, Jesus pointed upward. On His face was a light at which they wondered. Jesus knew that He was the Son of God, and He had been doing the work for which His Father had sent Him into the world.

Mary never forgot these words. In the years that followed, she better understood their wonderful meaning. SJ

Thought – It is easy to lose the presence of Jesus from our hearts and minds when we get all busy with the things of the world. Reading or watching fantasy right away takes away our love for God's Truth. When we find we don't enjoy reading the Bible or thinking about the things of God, we must get on our knees and seek Him again sorrowing, until we find His presence with us again.

Thursday

Text: Luke 2:51, 52 "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Though He knew that He was the Son of God, Jesus went home to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary. Until thirty years of age He was "subject unto them." Luke 2:51.

He who had been the Commander of Heaven was on earth a loving and obedient son. The great things brought to His mind by the service of the temple were hidden in His heart. He waited until God's time to begin His appointed work.

Jesus lived in the home of a peasant, a poor man. Faithfully and cheerfully He did His part in helping to support the family. As soon as He was old enough, He learned a trade, and worked in the carpenter's shop with Joseph.

In the coarse dress of a common laborer He passed through the streets of the little town, going to and from His work. He did not use His divine power to make His life easier for Himself.

As Jesus worked in childhood and youth, He grew strong in body and mind. He tried to use all His powers in such a way as to keep them in health, that He might do the best work in every line.

Whatever He did was done well. He wanted to be perfect, even in the handling of tools. By His example He taught that we ought to be industrious, that we should do our work carefully and well, and that such work is honorable.

All should find something to do that will be helpful to themselves and to others. God gave us work as a blessing, and He is pleased with children who cheerfully take their part in the duties of the household, sharing the burdens of father and mother. Such children will go out from the home to be a blessing to

others. SJ

Thought – If you, while you are young, try to please God in all that you do, if you do right because it is right, you will be useful in the world. By being faithful in little things you are getting ready to be faithful in big things. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Ecclesiastes 9:10

Friday

Text: John 7:5 “For neither did his brethren believe in him.”

John 1:46 “And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

The world has a very false idea about the life of Jesus when He was a child and youth. They tell stories about Him doing miracles in His play and show pictures of Him always standing staring up into the air and having no part in the work around Him. This is very untrue.

Jesus did not have an easy time growing up. Religious leaders tried to force Him to follow their traditions, and when He answered them from the Scriptures and proved them wrong, they were angry. They would go to Joseph and Mary and demand that Jesus be punished and made to follow their words, and even they often thought the Rabbis were right and could not understand why Jesus would not obey them.

Joseph had children from his first wife who had died, and they were older than Jesus. They often made His life very hard by making fun of Him and they took sides with the Rabbis against Jesus.

Nazareth was a wicked town and there were many young fellows who tried to get Jesus to join in with their wrong deeds. When He would not, they made fun and teased Him.

In all His life here on earth, there was never even one person who really understood

Jesus! Jesus had to meet many trials and temptations. Satan was always watching to overcome Him. If Jesus could have been led to do one wrong act, or to speak one impatient word, He could not have been our Saviour, and the whole world would have been lost. Satan knew this, and it was for this reason that he tried so hard to lead Jesus into sin.

The Saviour was always guarded by heavenly angels, yet His life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness. Not one of us will ever have to meet such fierce temptations as He did.

If you have a hard time in doing right because people don't understand you or make fun of you, don't be sad! Talk it all over with Jesus. He knows what it feels like and He will make you strong to bear it all and be patient about it.

Thought - His happiest hours were found when alone with nature and with God. When His work was done, He loved to go into the fields, to meditate in the green valleys, to pray to God on the mountainside, or amid the trees of the forest.

He listened to the lark caroling forth music to its Creator, and His voice joined the song of joyful praise and thanksgiving.

With the voice of singing He welcomed the morning light. The break of day often found Him in some quiet place, thinking about God, studying the Bible, or in prayer.

From these peaceful hours He would return to His home to take up His duties again, and to give an example of patient toil. Wherever He was, His presence seemed to bring the angels near. The influence of His pure, holy life was felt by all classes of people. SJ
= ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #4: "HIS MINISTRY BEGINS"

MEMORY VERSE: "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark 1:11.

Sunday

Text: Matthew 3:1-3 "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

When the time for Christ's public ministry had come, His first act was to go to the river Jordan, and be baptized by John the Baptist. John had been sent to prepare the way for the Saviour. He had preached in the wilderness, saying:

"The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15. Multitudes flocked to hear him. Many were convicted of their sins, and were baptized by him in the Jordan.

God had made known to John that someday the Messiah would come to him and ask to be baptized. He had also promised that a sign should be given him, so that he might know who it was.

When Jesus came, John saw in His face such signs of His holy life, that he forbade Him, saying: "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Matthew 3:14, 15.

And as He said this, there was seen upon His face the same heavenly light that Simeon had beheld. So John led the Saviour down into the waters of the beautiful Jordan, and there he baptized Him in the sight of all the people.

Jesus was not baptized to show repen-

tance for His own sins; for He had never sinned. He did it to set an example for us.

When He came up out of the water, He kneeled on the riverbank, and prayed. Then the heavens were opened, beams of glory streamed forth, "and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him." Matthew 3:16.

His face and form were all aglow with the light of the glory of God. And from Heaven the voice of God was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16, 17.

The glory that rested upon Christ was a pledge of the love of God for us. The Saviour came as our example; and just as surely as God heard His prayer, He will hear ours.

Thought - The most needy, the most sinful, the most despised, may find access to the Father. When we come to Him in Jesus' name, the voice which spoke to Jesus speaks to us, saying: "This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." (SJ= From 'Story of Jesus' by Ellen White)

Monday

Text: Mark 1:12,13 "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

After His baptism, Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.

In going into the wilderness, Christ was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He wanted to be alone, that he might contemplate His mission and work.

By prayer and fasting He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must

travel. But Satan knew where the Saviour had gone; so he went there to tempt Him.

As Christ left the Jordan, His face was lighted with the glory of God. But after He entered the wilderness, this glory disappeared. The sins of the world were upon Him, and His face showed such sorrow and anguish as man had never felt. He was suffering for sinners.

Adam and Eve in Eden had disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit. Their disobedience had brought sin and sorrow and death into the world. Christ came to give an example of obedience. In the wilderness, after fasting forty days, He would not, even to obtain food, depart from the will of His Father.

One of the temptations that overcame our first parents was the temptation to indulge appetite. By this long fast Christ was to show that appetite can be brought under control.

Satan tempts men to indulgence, because this weakens the body and beclouds the mind. Then he knows that he can the more easily deceive and destroy them. But Christ's example teaches that every wrong desire must be overcome. Our appetites are not to rule us; we must rule them.

When Satan first appeared to Christ, he looked like an angel of light. He claimed to be a messenger from Heaven. He told Jesus that it was not the will of His Father that He should endure this suffering; He was to show only a willingness to suffer.

When Jesus was struggling against the keenest pangs of hunger, Satan said to Him: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

But since the Saviour had come to live as our example, He must endure suffering as we have to endure it; He must not work a miracle for His own good. His miracles were all to be for the good of others. To the demand of Satan He answered: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Thought – Thus He showed that it is far

less important to provide ourselves with food than that we should obey the word of God. Those who obey God's word have the promise of all things needed for the present life, and they have also the promise of future life. SJ

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 4:8-10 "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Satan had failed to overcome Christ in the first great temptation; he next carried Him to a pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, and said: "If thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

Satan here followed Christ's example in quoting Scripture. But this promise is not for those who willfully venture into danger. God had not told Jesus to throw Himself down from the temple. Jesus would not do it to please Satan. He said: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

We should trust in the care of our heavenly Father; but we must not go where He does not send us. We must not do what He has forbidden.

Because God is merciful, and ready to forgive, there are those who say that it is safe to disobey Him. But this is presumption. God will forgive all who seek pardon and turn away from sin. But those who choose to disobey Him He cannot bless.

Satan now appeared what he really was—

the prince of the powers of darkness. He took Jesus to the top of a high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. The sunlight lay on splendid cities, marble palaces, fruitful fields, and vineyards. Satan said: "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."

For a moment Christ looked upon the scene. Then He turned away. Satan had presented the world to Him in the most attractive light; but the Saviour looked beneath the outward beauty. He saw the world in its wretchedness and sin, apart from God. All this misery was the result of man's turning away from God to worship Satan.

Christ was filled with longing to redeem that which was lost. He longed to restore the world to more than its Eden beauty. He wanted to place men on vantage ground with God.

For sinful man He was withstanding temptation. He was to be an overcomer, that they might overcome, that they might be equal with the angels, and be worthy to be acknowledged as sons of God.

To Satan's demand for worship, Christ answered: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:3-10.

The love of the world, the lust for power, and the pride of life—everything that draws man away from the worship of God—was embraced in this great temptation of Christ. Satan offered Christ the world and its riches if He would pay homage to the principles of evil. So Satan presents to us the advantages to be gained by wrongdoing.

He whispers to us, "In order to succeed in this world, you must serve me. Do not be too particular about truth and honesty. Obey my counsel, and I will give you riches, honor, and happiness."

In obeying this counsel we are worshipping Satan instead of God. It will bring us only misery and ruin.

Thought – Christ has shown us what we should do when tempted. When He said to

Satan, "Get thee hence," the tempter could not resist the command. He was compelled to go. Writhing with baffled hate and rage, the rebel chief left the presence of the world's Redeemer.

The contest was ended for the time. Christ's victory was as complete as had been the failure of Adam. So we may resist temptation, and overcome Satan. The Lord says to us, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." James 4:7, 8.SJ

Wednesday

Text: John 1:32-34 "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

From the wilderness, Christ returned to the Jordan, where John the Baptist was preaching. At that time men sent by the rulers at Jerusalem were questioning John as to his authority for teaching and baptizing the people.

They asked if he was the Messiah, or Elijah, or "that prophet," meaning Moses. To all this he answered, "I am not." Then they asked: "Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us.

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." John 1:22, 23.

In old times when a king had to travel from one part of his country to another, men were sent ahead of his chariot to prepare the roads. They had to cut down trees, gather out the stones, and fill up the hollows, so that the way would be clear for the king.

So when Jesus, the heavenly King, was

coming, John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way by telling the people, and calling on them to repent of their sins.

As John answered the messengers from Jerusalem, he saw Jesus standing on the riverbank. His face lighted up, and stretching out his hands, he said: "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." John 1:26, 27.

The people were greatly moved. The Messiah was among them! They looked about eagerly to find the One of whom John had spoken. But Jesus had mingled with the multitude, and was lost to sight.

The next day John again saw Jesus, and, pointing to Him, cried: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Then John told of the sign that had been seen at Christ's baptism. "I saw, and bare record," he added, "that this is the Son of God." John 1:29, 34.

With awe and wonder the hearers looked upon Jesus. They questioned with themselves, Is this the Christ? SJ

Thought – The messengers from Jerusalem were not drawn to the Saviour. They saw that Jesus was not rich. His clothing was plain and simple, such as poor people wore. But in His pale, worn face was something that moved their hearts. In that face they read dignity and power; and every glance of the eye, spoke of divine compassion and unutterable love. But John had not said what they wanted to hear. They expected the Messiah to come as a great conqueror, in disappointment they turned from Him.

Thursday

Text: John 2:2-5 "And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His

mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

The next day John again saw Jesus, and again he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God!" John 1:36. Two of John's disciples were standing near, and they followed Jesus. They listened to His teaching, and became His disciples. One of the two was Andrew, the other John.

Andrew soon brought to Jesus his own brother, Simon, whom Christ named Peter. The next day, on the way to Galilee, Christ called another disciple, Philip. As soon as Philip found the Saviour, he brought his friend Nathaniel. In this way Christ's great work on earth was begun. One by one He called His disciples, and one brought his brother, another his friend. This is what every follower of Christ is to do. As soon as he himself knows Jesus, he is to tell others what a precious Friend he has found. This is a work that all can do, whether they are young or old.

At Cana in Galilee, Christ, with his disciples, attended a marriage feast. For the happiness of this household gathering, His wonderful power was put forth.

It was the custom in that country to use wine on such occasions. Before the feast was ended, the supply of wine had failed. The lack of wine at a feast would be thought to show a want of hospitality, and this was regarded as a great disgrace.

Christ was told of what had happened, and He bade the servants fill six large stone jars with water. Then He said, "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast." John 2:8.

Instead of water, there came forth wine. This wine was much better than that which had been served before, and there was enough for all. After working the miracle, Jesus quietly went away. Not till He had gone, did the guests know of the work He had done.

Christ's gift to the marriage feast was a symbol. The water represented baptism, and the wine His blood, that was to be shed for

the world. The wine which Jesus made was not fermented liquor. Such wine is a cause of drunkenness and many great evils, and God had forbidden its use. He says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." "It biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Proverbs 20:1; 23:32.

The wine used at the feast was the pure, sweet juice of the grape. It was like that which the prophet Isaiah calls "the new wine ... in the cluster;" and he says, "A blessing is in it." Isaiah 65:8. SJ.

Thought – By going to the marriage feast, Christ showed that it is right to meet together in this pleasant way. He liked to see people happy. Often He visited them in their homes, and tried to have them forget their cares and their troubles, and think of God's goodness and His love. Wherever He might be, Christ was always trying to do this. Wherever people would listen, He told about the way of salvation.

Friday

Text: John 4:9,10 "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

One day, as He was passing through the country of Samaria, He sat down by a well to rest. When a woman came to draw water, He asked her for a drink. The woman wondered at this, for she knew how the Jews hated the Samaritans. But Christ told her that if she would ask of Him, He would give her living water. At this she wondered the more. Then Jesus said to her:

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:13, 14. By the living water is meant the Holy Spirit. As a thirsty traveler needs water to drink, so do we need God's Spirit in our hearts. He who drinks of this water shall never thirst.

The Holy Spirit brings God's love into our hearts. It satisfies our longings, so that the riches and honors and pleasures of this world do not attract us. And it fills us with such joy that we want others to have it too. It will be in us like a spring of water, that flows out in blessing to all around.

And every one in whom God's Spirit dwells, will live forever with Christ in His kingdom. Received into the heart by faith, it is the beginning of the life eternal. This precious blessing Christ told the woman He would give her if she asked for it. So He will give it to us.

This woman had broken God's commandments, and Christ showed her that He knew the sins of her life. But He showed, too, that He was her friend, that He loved and pitied her, and that if she was willing to forsake her sins, God would receive her as His child.

How glad she was to know this! In her joy she hurried away to the town near by, and called the people to come and see Jesus. So they came to the well, and asked Him to stay with them. He remained two days, and taught them, and many listened to His words. They repented of their sins, and believed on Him as their Saviour. SJ

Thought - In John 3 and 4 we have two of the greatest sermons of Jesus and each time it was only one person He was speaking to! What we say to even one person, is just as important as if we were talking to a crowd! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #5: "WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE!"

MEMORY VERSE: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matthew 5:44.

Sunday

Text: Luke 4:16 "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

Jesus had grown up in Nazareth. Quietly he had grown into manhood, working day by day at the occupation of a carpenter, he had not seemed much different from anybody else in the town, except for an amazing purity that most ignored.

Now after His ministry had begun, he came back to His hometown and, when Sabbath came, he went to the synagogue and was asked to read the scriptures.

He took the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and turning to Isaiah 61:1 He read from it. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Lu 4:18,19.

Then he sat down. The people were thrilled as the power of the Holy Spirit impressed these words about the work of the Messiah home to their hearts. Then Jesus stood and said plainly that the words were fulfilled that very day in their ears.

At this the people began to doubt and grumble and very quickly the impressions of the Holy Spirit were driven out of their minds. They did not like Jesus saying that they were in need of being set free, or any such thing and the certainly did not want Him as their Messiah!

Then Jesus spoke bluntly to them, tell-

ing them how in the days of ancient Israel, the heathen people often received blessings from God that the people of Israel did not receive because they refused to believe the prophets!

At this they flew into a rage and grabbed Jesus and dragged him out to where there was a high cliff. They would have thrown Him off and killed Him had not angels of God protected him and taken Him safely away from them.

Thought - Jesus said that a prophet is usually not believed in his own town. The people wanted to believe that He was no different from any one of them. Down inside they knew that was not true. It is like all the stories that are told today to try and make out that Ellen White was just an ordinary woman with a talent for writing, which is not at all true. Her whole life shows the special power of God in a most amazing way. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jeremiah 1:5

Monday

Text: Matthew 4:23 "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." 5:1, 2 "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them."

In chapters 5-7 of Matthew we have the greatest sermon ever preached. It was given by Jesus as the people came out to be healed

of their diseases and to see the wonderful new prophet of Galilee.

Jesus was careful to make his lessons so simple that all could understand who heard them. He liked best of all to teach in the open air, rather than in buildings. In the fields, groves, and the lakesides, were his favorite spots for teaching and also for meditation and prayer.

He had special reasons for choosing these natural places to teach and preach in. Everywhere could be seen things that all were familiar with and He could use these things to teach His lessons in a way they would remember.

The birds singing in the leafy branches, the pretty flowers of the valley, the spotless lilies, the lofty trees, the fruitful lands, the waving grain, the barren soil, the tree that bore no fruit, the mighty hills, the bubbling brooks, the setting sun that tinted and gilded the heavens, all were used as lessons of divine truth.

Now leading the crowd to a grassy place on the mountainside, He began to teach them. The disciples were close around Him and all listened as Jesus words rang out over the beautiful scene.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”

The poor in spirit are those who know how weak and sinful they are and trust only in Jesus, who is all-righteous and kind, to save them.

“Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.”

In blessing those who mourn, Jesus did not say that we are to be sad and gloomy all the time. The mourning spoken of by Christ is a godly sorrow for sin, which works repentance unto eternal life. Many grieve when their guilt is discovered, because the result of their evil course has brought trouble. But this is not true sorrow for sin.

Thought – When we are truly convicted of sin, we feel our whole life to have been selfish and unthankful. We feel we have robbed our Best Friend of the time and

strength that He bought for us at an infinite price. Our whole soul is filled with great sorrow that we have grieved the dear Saviour. Such mourning is precious, for it will open the heart to the powers of heaven that Jesus uses to change us and make us like Him.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 4: 5:5-7 “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.”

What does it mean to be ‘meek’? Well, it is just the opposite of being proud and boastful, bossy and showing off. It means being gentle, mild, modest and humble. If you have a friend that is bossy and a friend that is meek, you will see they are so different that it is like night and day.

The meek friend will listen to your ideas, he will share with you. But the bossy friend will boast and push and snatch, always trying to be best and first. Which would you rather play with?

But we forget which kind of friend we like, and often WE are the bossy, pushy person! Always remember, Jesus, and even God the Father Himself, are meek and gentle! Satan is boastful, bossy and pushy!

“Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.”

Have you ever been hungry? I mean really hungry? Soon nothing else matters to you but trying to find something to eat. To be hungry and thirsty for righteousness, really means that we will want to be like Jesus so much, that it will be the most important thing in our lives. When it is as important to us as that, then we can be sure that Jesus will guide and help us to find what we need to become like Him.

As the weary traveler eagerly seeks the spring in the desert, and, finding it, quenches his burning thirst with its cool and sparkling water, so should the Christian thirst for and seek the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain. We can find this in the inspired writings!

“Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.”

Harshness and cruelty is naturally found in the hearts of all of us. Unless these hearts are changed and kept under the control of the kind and gentle Saviour, we will show a hard, unkindness to others.

Jesus wanted to teach his followers a lesson of mercy that they should have that tender compassion which pities and aids the suffering and erring, and avoids magnifying the faults of others.

When we remember how patient Jesus has been to us and how often we have disappointed Him, we will show mercy and patience to others.

Thought – To be merciful is to treat others better than they deserve. So God has treated us. He delights to show mercy. He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. So He teaches us to treat one another. He says, “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32. SJ 61

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 5:8-12 “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.”

God cares more for what we really are, than for what we say we are. He does not care how beautiful we may look, but He wants our hearts pure. Then all our words and actions will be right.

We can fool people. We can pretend to be someone’s friend and then later turn around and say bad things about them to others. But we can never fool God! We may make everybody think we are a wonderful Christian, and go to church and do all kinds of good deeds, but if down in our hearts we are still living for self, God knows the difference!

King David prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.” Psalm 51:10; 19:14. This should be our prayer.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”

He who has the meek and lowly spirit of Christ will be a peacemaker. Such a spirit doesn’t quarrel, gives back no angry answers. It makes the home happy, and brings a sweet peace that blesses all around.

Jesus promised to give us peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27. The more we are like Jesus, the more peace we will have in our lives. The more we try to be like the world and want the things of the world, the less peace we will have.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

Jesus knew that for His sake many of His disciples would be put in prison, and many would be killed. But He told them not to mourn because of this. Nothing can harm those who love and follow Christ. He will be with them in every place. They may be put to death, but He will give them a life that will never end, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The things that seem so hard for us to bear will often turn out to be the greatest blessing to us. We are told that when we belong to Jesus, nothing can come to our lives except what Jesus allows to come. These trials and tests are what He uses to help us see how bad sin is and to help make us more like Him.

Do not let it bother you if when you stand for right and refuse to do wrong things, even those you thought were your friends, call you names and are mean to you. Remember Jesus had that happen more than anyone of us ever will. The wicked church leaders even made up false stories and then paid people to travel around and tell these stories against Jesus. He will always hear your prayer and help you if you ask Him to.

Just because someone says a bad thing about you, does not make it true. God knows all about it and He will take care of it for us, we do not have to try and defend ourselves. We do not see Jesus spending His time running around trying to prove the false stories wrong, do we? No, He just kept right on with His work for God and ignored the lies.

What are we to do? "Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad;" "for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Thought – It is better to be blamed for a bad thing you did NOT do, than to be punished for a bad thing you DID do!

Thursday

Text: Matthew 5:14-16 "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Jesus went on to use more object lessons for the people. He told them they were to be the light of the world. Nobody would light a

candle or a lamp and then hide it under a basket so it could not be seen. That would be silly!

If we truly have given our whole hearts and lives to Jesus, it will show to others in everything we do and every word we say. Just like a candle drives away the darkness, our lives will bring light to many people around us.

In the olden days, traveling in ships on the great oceans was very dangerous. If the ships traveling in storms or at night came too close to dangerous cliffs or rocks, they could be all broken to pieces!

In order to try and make ocean travel a bit safer, certain lighthouses were built on dangerous places and people lived there in them and every night they would light the huge lamps and care for them so the light would stream out over the water to warn passing ships of the dangerous rocks and to help them know where they were in their journey.

Now sometimes there were cruel robbers who wanted to cause the ships to crash so they could rob them. These pirates would sometimes attack a lighthouse, tie up the keeper and put out the light. Or sometimes they would light false lights in wrong places to confuse the ships and cause them to take a wrong turn and be smashed on the rocks.

What could the ship captains do to avoid these tricks? They had to use their charts and check them carefully.

This is just like Satan does. He wants people to all be lost. He wants to rob us of the truth God has given to us and get us all confused. He tries to put out the good lights by getting God's people into sin. He tries to make false lights by telling us ideas that the Bible says is wrong. If we stay with the Bible truth and check it carefully, we will not be fooled.

Thought – Remember the sweet, old song, "This little light of mine; I'm going to let it shine!"

Friday

Text: Matthew 5:17,18 “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Because Jesus did not teach all the many ceremonies and regulations that the Pharisees and priests had made up for the people to try to follow, some got the idea that he was saying the law was done away with.

Jesus was very careful to tell them how important the Law of God was and that all should obey it. He told them that not even the crossing of a ‘T’ or the dot of an ‘I’ would ever pass from the law.

And yet in spite of this, there are millions of so called ‘Christians’ today who are saying the law of God was all ‘nailed to the

cross’. They do not seem to realized that is it were possible that the Law could be changed or done away with, then Jesus would not have to have paid that terrible price on Calvary!

God’s 10 Commandment Law is the very foundation of the heavenly government and it is also what His own character is like. Never can it be changed or done away with.

Thought - Why did ministers start teaching that the Law was nailed to the cross? It was because of the teaching of the Seventh-day Sabbath. They could not answer why they were keeping Sunday when the Bible says the Seventh day is the Sabbath, so they decided to teach that the law was ‘nailed to the cross’. It is certainly a most foolish and dangerous idea indeed! = ^ .. ^ =

If you do not already know the Lord’s Prayer, try saying it every day until you do know it and always think about what the words mean!

Weekly Bible Lesson #6: “THE LORD’S PRAYER”

MEMORY VERSE: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Matthew 6:6

Sunday

Text: Matthew 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

Jesus first gave the ‘Lord’s Prayer’ in His sermon on the mount. Later He gave it again to His disciples. By that time they had come to realize that there was a connection between the wonderful power and endurance of Jesus and the long hours He spent in talking with His Heavenly Father.

Over and over they would see Him so utterly worn out from His ministry work that it seemed He would die, but when He would return from His hours of prayer, His face would shine with peace and refreshment.

One day they came back from an errand

to find Jesus talking to God. His face was radiant and he seemed to be in the very presence of the Unseen. They listened and their hearts were touched.

When He finished, they asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” At that time Jesus gave again the prayer He had taught on the mount. He was telling them that there was a great depth of meaning in that simple prayer that they had not yet learned to understand.

“When ye pray, say Our Father.” Luke 11:2. What a wonderful thing is this! Jesus teaches us to call His Father, the Great God of the Universe, OUR Father! He is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters. He is so eager to have us become part of the Family of God that we are told the very first words to say when we come to God: ‘Our Father’!

“Hallowed be Thy name.” Matthew 6:9. This means we are to reverence and show great respect to God, both in our prayers, our worship and in our lives. We need to think carefully about the greatness of God, and be always reverent.

The angels, who have never sinned and actually stand close to God in heaven cover their faces and bow humbly before God. How much more should we, who are fallen sinners, be humble and respectful when we pray?

Thought - Would we be silly and rude if we were talking to a human king or president? No, we would be most respectful. Yet many are careless and foolish in prayer and worship when they are talking to the Ruler of the whole Universe! Have you ever thought about being polite to God?

Monday

Text: Matthew 6:10 “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

When God is ‘our Father’, we are His little children. No matter how grown up and big you may think you are on this earth, you are still God’s little child, and only if you know and believe that, can God really re-create you as a member of the Family of God.

The truth is that we are helpless as a little child, and those who decide they do not want to be God’s little children, end up as their own little child, with no Father to help them. They may think they are smart and ‘free’ but really are lost and hopeless except as they return to the Father!

Because we are members of God’s Family, we are interested in His kingdom and eager to see it come. Here too, Jesus was showing them that His kingdom was not going to be set up then on the earth as the Jews were expecting.

But this was also a hope and a promise for them, because they were told to pray for it, it will surely come and all God’s ‘little children’ will have a part in it. It is at the

second coming of Jesus that He will reign and the ‘meek’ will inherit the kingdom. Interesting though, that it will be after Jesus 3rd coming that the meek will actually live on this earth.

‘Thy will be done.’ Think carefully about these words. DO you really want God’s will to be done? His will is His holy Law of the Ten Commandments, His wonderful character. When we truly pray that His will be done in us and not our own will, then we are truly born again. Our selfish and wayward will is given over to Him to be under control of His will.

This is how sin is gotten rid of in our lives. We choose to do His will and we allow Him to make this possible in us.

Let’s use an example: I feel like eating or drinking something that I know is not good for me. I really want to have this, I like it very much, but I know it is not good for me. I know that God’s wants me to have a healthy body and a clear mind.

So what do I do? If I truly pray ‘THY will be done in me as it is in heaven’, then I will, in the strength given me from the Father in the name of Jesus, turn away from that thing that my selfish heart wants and do God’s will instead. This is the secret of overcoming sin and developing a character that can be taken to heaven.

God’s will is done in heaven, and if we ever want to go there, His will must be done in us on earth first. He never forces His will on us, we have to choose and really want it and ask for it: then we will truly have it, for this is God’s promise!

Thought – This world even now would be a wonderful place, if God’s will were done here as it is in heaven! Your life can be a wonderful life if His will is done in you!

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 6:11 “Give us this day our daily bread.” Psalm 145:16 “Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”

When you sit down to eat your food, do you remember that it is only because of God's love in giving Jesus to die for you that you have that food? Day after day, year in and year out, it is the power of God that keeps this old earth growing food to feed the people and animals that live on it.

He is so patient and kind that He sends His blessings to all, whether they are good or bad. Most people that enjoy the blessings of God never even think about Him as they are eating them up. Many even curse God's name and despise Him and yet if He did not keep their hearts beating and provide their food, they would fall down and die right away and be as nothing.

Why does God put up with the rude and ignorant, boastful and wicked people and provide for them day after day? Why does He let them go on living? Well even writers in the Bible asked those kinds of questions.

It is because He is so loving and He hopes that if He gives them life, that they will one day wake up to all His loving kindness and decide to give their hearts to Him and love Him back of their own free will. Then He will welcome the repentant sinners into His royal family.

You see, if God were to start and kill all the wicked people right away, then soon those who served God would only do it out of fear, true love cannot live where that kind of fear rules.

I hope you never forget to bow your head and thank God in the name of Jesus for each meal and also to ask His blessing on it. We need His blessings today more than ever before in the history of the world. Even when we do the best we can to have clean, healthy food on our plates, there are so many dangers we know nothing about. When we ask Him to bless our food, we can eat it with confidence and joy.

Thought – Remember, God cannot bless food that we know is not what He wants us to be eating! We must do the best we can to

choose healthy, pure food, and then He can and will bless it.

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us.” Luke 11:4.

We all need to have our sins forgiven by God! We all need God to be merciful to us. None of us deserves even the teensiest of the many blessings that God every day gives us because of Jesus' great sacrifice for us. We must never, never forget how very much we owe to our loving Heavenly Father!

But what about the people around us, our friends, our family, our neighbors? Have you ever felt that you could never forgive some mean thing that someone did to you? Have you ever felt you would just go on hating them forever? What if God were to say that about us? We would be in a terrible spot then wouldn't we?

There are many things about this that people get confused about. Some feel that if you forgive someone who has done you wrong, that you are saying that what they did was just fine and didn't matter. That is not what forgiveness is. When God forgives us, He does not say that the wrong we did was OK and didn't matter. Indeed it DID matter so much that Jesus paid for that sin which broke the Law of God with His own blood!

We are to forgive others, not because the wrong they did does not matter, but because we ourselves are sinners and have needed to be forgiven, both by other people and above all, by God.

There are two kinds of forgiving. One is when the person actually comes to us and says they are sorry. Then we should forgive freely as God has forgiven us.

But what about those who refuse to ever say they are sorry? Maybe they are not even a bit sorry and would do the mean thing again if they get the chance. What can we

do?

We should refuse to keep any angry, hateful feelings in our hearts to these people. We should ask Jesus to take away these feelings from us and let us have the patience and kindness that Jesus had. We should ask God to take charge of the whole thing and then just leave it with Him. Let Him deal with it and then these unforgiving attitudes will not take you away from Jesus.

Should you just go on being friends with such a person? No, that is not a good idea, it would be silly to go on being friends with someone who only wants to harm you and then laugh at it. God does not expect you to do this. However, we should never speak harsh words or do mean things back to them. But our friends should be those who are loving and serving Jesus as we are.

But someday if that same person is in trouble and you have a chance to help them, you certainly can do that. Maybe this will help him to understand the real goodness of the God you serve.

Thought – Jesus died for us when we were His enemies and prayed ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!’ We can and should pray for our enemies too.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 6:13 “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Is it God who tempts us? No, the Bible says, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” James 1:13

So what does Jesus mean here? Where do temptations come from? They come from Satan and the evil that is in our own hearts. Jesus once said that Satan ‘had nothing in Him’. This meant that in Jesus’ heart there was no evil desires that Satan could take advantage of. But in our hearts Satan has better success in finding things to tempt us

about.

God in His great love allows us to be tempted and tried. This is not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every time we resist temptation, every trial we bravely bear, helps us to develop a character more like Jesus.

We are not to be dismayed by trial, bitter though it be, but we should pray that God will not permit us to be brought where we shall be drawn away by the desires of our own evil hearts.

When we pray this prayer, we are saying that we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot truly offer this prayer and still decide to walk in our own selfish ways. We shall wait for His hand to lead us; we shall listen to His voice, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Isaiah 30:21.

We must be very careful to stay away from places and things that could be a temptation to us. We must never be so bold as to say, “I can go to see this or do that and I won’t fall into temptation.” Never, never be boastful! That is when we will certainly be carried away by Satan’s snares.

“Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Matthew 6:13. This last part, like the first sentence of the Lord’s Prayer, points to our Father as above all power and authority and every name that is named.

Jesus knew His children would have to face hardship and persecution, but they were never to forget that even though things seem hard and confusing at times, God is ruling still and He will do all things good for those who trust and obey Him.

Thought – God has promised that He will not allow us to be tempted so badly that we cannot stand it. He has promised to send all the help we need to resist evil and overcome it. Never forget that God is the Ruler of the Universe, Satan cannot overcome Him nor those who trust in Him.

Friday

Text: Matthew 6:5-8 “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Jesus gave us much instruction about how to pray and how not to pray. Here are some things He said we were not to do.

We were not to pray in ways that are meant to draw attention to ourselves. The Pharisees liked to stand on the corners of the streets and pray loudly before all the people so that everyone would look at them and say, “My, just look at that Holy Man!” Jesus said that was the only reward they would get; only the admiration of people, God did not hear such prayers.

Our most important prayers should be in secret with only God to listen to us. We are to tell Him all about our needs and talk over with Him whatever concerns us. There is nothing so small, if it concerns us, that He will not listen to and help us with. There is nothing so big that He does not have the answer and power to deal with it!

Then Jesus said that when we pray we should not use ‘vain repetitions’. There are many religions among us that tell us we are to say certain prayers over and over again. Some even have beads to use, and as you say the prayer once you hold a bead, then you hold the next bead and say the same prayer again, then later on you come to a

bead of a different shape so you say a different prayer.

No, No! Jesus said this was heathen. It is not Christian. God wants us to come to Him and talk to Him honestly and openly. Suppose you lived near me and I was your friend. What would you think if every time I saw you I said exactly the same memorized words to you? That would be silly wouldn't it? We could not be friends very well if we were doing that.

And, do you know, that is just why Satan gets people doing these strange things. Satan knows if people really get to know that they can go to their Heavenly Father freely and openly in the Name of Jesus and talk with Him and get all the help and answers they need- well he would be in BIG trouble, wouldn't he?

So he tells people they have to do strange things and say only certain words, or go to certain special people and have them talk to God for us, and on and on. But none of that is true. We even have people among Advent believers, who are trying to tell others that they have to only call Jesus and God by some special name. Jesus told us what to call God, He said ‘When ye pray, say ‘Our Father’.

Thought - When we have a Mommy or Daddy, whom we know really loves us, we are happy to go to them and tell them all our cares and joys. As we grow to know our Heavenly Father more we will learn that He is always there for us. He never gets tired of us and He will welcome us when we come to talk with Him. All too often people like you and me tend to want to talk to other people when we have problems. But those other people have their own problems too! They really can't help you with the deeper things of life. Start today to learn to ask God in the name of Jesus for all the guidance and help you need and you will find a FRIEND and a FATHER who will never fail you! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #7: "HE CAME BY NIGHT"

MEMORY VERSE: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

Sunday

Text: John 3:1,2 "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Most of the Pharisees were so blind and interested in their own importance that they wanted only to get rid of Jesus, but not all. One man named Nicodemus was doing some deep thinking and felt he needed to know more about this new 'prophet' from Galilee. But what could he do about it. It would not do at all for someone as important as he was to just go openly to talk to this teacher. He could even lose his position.

Now Nicodemus was a very learned man and the way of the Jews who were educated was to get together and discuss and argue about points in the Law and the sayings of other important Rabbis. Nicodemus wanted to have such a discussion with this Jesus, and he felt sure that the new teacher would be very impressed with how learned Nicodemus was.

But there was something deeper in his heart. Since he had first heard Jesus speak, he had started to search the scriptures carefully in regards to the promised Messiah and he was beginning to believe that just maybe, Jesus was Who He was claiming to be. He felt he had to talk with Him.

How he going to be able to do this though, was a problem. He decided to try to get a secret interview. He told himself that if he were to go openly, others might follow his example. He made special inquiry to learn where Jesus went at night. He was told it was certain place in the Mount of Olives.

The chosen night came and he waited until the city was hushed in slumber, and then quietly and unnoticed made his way through the deserted streets to the place where he hoped to meet Jesus.

He had planned to boldly confront this new teacher, but now as he approached the spot where Jesus was in the stillness of the night, he suddenly felt strangely shy and timid.

Trying to shake this off, he gathered his dignity and approached with boldness. "Rabbi," he said, "we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."

He was hoping that Jesus would be flattered receiving such compliments from such an important person and so he would pave the way for his interview. But his words really showed unbelief. He did not acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, but only a teacher sent from God.

Thought - Do you ever feel that you don't want your friends to know that you belong to Jesus? We must never be ashamed of our Savior!

Monday

Text: John 3:3,4 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

What a surprise Nicodemus got. Here he was thinking himself very wise and honorable and ready to pass judgment on this young teacher, when he is bluntly told he

hasn't even been born yet! He can't even see or understand the kingdom of God!

'It is not man-made knowledge you need. You don't need to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will do no good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.'

The words of Jesus struck home to his heart. He was startled. He was a strict Pharisee, and proud of his good works. He was admired and looked up to. He felt sure he had the favor of God. The thought of a kingdom too pure for him to see in his present state was a shock.

He decided to pretend not to understand Jesus and to answer mockingly, almost rudely. "How can a grown man be born another time?" Now the idea of a 'new birth' was not something Nicodemus had never heard of. The Jewish leaders often spoke of new converts from heathenism as being 're-born'.

But his answer revealed the fact that there was in him nothing that responds to spiritual things, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Unless God changes the heart of a man, he can't know the things of God.

Did Jesus hurry to explain more clearly to Nicodemus what He meant? No, He repeated the same thing again only even more solemnly. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus knew that Jesus was talking about water baptism and the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of God. He was convinced that he was in the presence of the Promised One whom John the Baptist had foretold.

Thought – People who make fun or tell jokes about the Bible or holy things have not been 'born again' and cannot appreciate spiritual truth.

Tuesday

Text: John 3:6-8 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Instead of having his scholarly discussion with Jesus, Nicodemus found himself struggling to try to understand what he was being told.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By nature the human heart is evil, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. No human invention can find a cure for the sinning soul.

Our natural human hearts are in rebellion against God's law. We can do certain acts and religious deeds and may look good to others, but we cannot change our heart. Only God, by the power of the Holy Spirit can create a new heart in us.

The 'new heart' created by the Holy Spirit is not just a change of mind or a little improvement on our natural hearts. The 'Born Again' person is totally changed. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. We cannot do this for our self.

Nicodemus was still puzzled, so Jesus told a story about the wind to show His meaning: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

We can hear the wind in the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet we can't see it. An old verse says, "Who has seen the wind? Neither you or I-but when the trees bow down their heads-the wind is passing by."

So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind.

While the wind is itself invisible, it does things we can see and feel. So the work of the Spirit in our heart will show in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it changes the life. Truly, when we bow down our heads humbly, and fully give our hearts to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is passing by! We can't see Him or understand how He works, but we can experience the 'Born Again' life.

When we are 'born again' we are changed. No one can see the Power that changes us, but all can see the results. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are stopped; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the face reflects the light of heaven.

Thought – No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173}

Wednesday

Text: John 3:9, 10 "Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

It is impossible for our human minds to really understand the work of the Holy Spirit or how God's wonderful plan of salvation really works. But everyone who experiences being born again knows it is true and real.

As Jesus was speaking, some gleams of truth began to get through to this proud ruler. The softening, subduing influence of the Holy Spirit impressed his heart. Yet he did not fully understand the Savior's words. Now he asked "How can these things be?"

Jesus now plainly asked Nicodemus, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not

these things?" Here was this man who was supposed to be a teacher of religion to the people and yet he did not even understand even the most basic truth about salvation.

Jesus' words gave the lesson that instead of feeling irritated over the plain words of truth, Nicodemus should have had a very humble opinion of himself, because of his spiritual ignorance. Yet Jesus spoke with such solemn dignity, and both look and tone expressed such earnest love, that Nicodemus was not offended as he realized his humiliating condition.

There are few religious teachers and leaders today who understand these basic facts. Did you know that often it is easier for a young person like you to understand the most important truths about salvation? Yes, this is true

Why? Well it is because the people who are the leaders are not usually people who are there because they love Bible truth. Often they are there because they, like the Pharisees of old enjoy having the people think they are such 'godly men'. Some are even there only to get a paycheck and God has nothing to do with it.

But often even the honest-hearted ones have spent so much time in school studying the works and words of other men, that they are like Nicodemus, with a head full of 'facts and so-called knowledge' and a heart totally empty of the Holy Spirit.

Boys and girls, if you pray to the Lord in the name of Jesus and ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to help you understand heavenly things and you read your Bible and the books by Ellen White every day, you can know heavenly things. You can give your heart over to Jesus and be 'born again'.

Thought – Have you ever heard someone say, "I am a third or fourth generation Christian?" Well, I know what they really mean, they mean their mommy and their granny and so on were Christians. But God does not have any grandchildren. That is right! If we belong to Him, we have to be 'Born Again' ourselves as a child of God.

Doggies have little dogs and Kitties have little kitties, but Christian Mommies and Daddies never have little Christians! They have little people and these little people have to be 'Born Again' before they are truly children of God. Even very little tots can 'choose' to give their little hearts to Jesus, so don't wait to be 'big enough'; choose His way today.

Thursday

Text: John 3:11,12 "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

Nicodemus, and most of the Jewish leaders were all expecting a Messiah to come and make a wonderful earthly kingdom where the Jews would rule the whole world. Now as he began to understand a little bit about what Jesus was telling him and the Holy Spirit was bringing back to his mind certain Bible texts he had read and didn't understand, he was troubled. He could see that Jesus was not going to have that kind of kingdom at all.

Now Jesus was asking him, "If you can't understand even these very basic earthly truths, how do you think you can understand heavenly things?" If he could not understand Jesus' work on earth then he certainly could not understand His work in heaven.

The great need of Nicodemus and the Jewish leaders, was that very change which Christ had been explaining to Nicodemus, —a new moral birth, cleansing from sin, and the Holy Spirit to teach them real knowledge and holiness.

There was no excuse for Israel not to know these very truths Jesus was taking about. It was all written plainly in the Scriptures for them to see. But they had let their own self-ish ideas and pride come in so much that when they read the scriptures, they only saw

what they wanted to see and not the real truth.

David had prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." And through Ezekiel the promise had been given, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes." Ps. 51:10; Ezek. 36:26, 27.

Nicodemus had read these scriptures with a clouded mind; but he now began to see their meaning. He saw that no matter how rigidly a man kept the law outwardly, that would not make him able to enter the kingdom of heaven. He knew that in the eyes of men, his life had been just and honorable; but in the presence of Christ he felt that his heart was unclean, and his life unholy.

The Bible has a word for 'Born Again, the word is 'converted'. There are people who try and tell us that 'converted' means to turn around. This is not really true. A man can decide to 'turn around' and join a church. He can decide to do many 'religious' things, and he may end up like Nicodemus with people really thinking he is a good and godly man.

But real conversion, being 'Born Again', is something no person can do for himself. Another Power must do it for him. It is only as we come to Jesus and know in ourselves that unless He saves us and changes us, we have no hope at all, then, as we choose to give all over to Him, He creates the miracle of a new heart in us. It is just as much a miracle as if we died and were resurrected as a new person.

Many, sadly, all too many, pass through most of their life and may think they are Christians, but they have never surrendered all, they have never died to self and they have never been born again. Jesus wants very much to make us all 'born again' and give us new hearts and write His laws in our

○ hearts and minds, but He will not do it for us unless we agree and choose and ask to have this done.

We have to come to where we see that nothing we can do has any standing with God. Nothing we can do will change our hearts or save us from eternal death. When we really see this and cry out for God to save us and make us what He wants us to be, when we feel like Peter did when he was sinking in the water and cried, "Lord, save me!" then the miracle can take place.

Thought – People don't like to think they are helpless and cannot do anything to save themselves. They like to think if they only do lots of good deeds and try very hard to 'be good', then they are OK with God. But there is only one way- Ye Must be Born Again! Only God can make it happen- and only YOU can make the choice to have it happen.

Friday

○ **Text: John 3:14-16 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."**

Now Nicodemus knew about this symbol of the uplifted serpent and it made plain to him the Savior's mission. When the people of Israel were dying from the bites of the fiery serpents, God told Moses to make a serpent of brass, and place it on high in the midst of the congregation.

○ Then the people were told that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people knew that in itself the brass serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ.

What? A serpent lifted up on a cross the symbol of Christ? Isn't a serpent the symbol of Satan and sin? Yes indeed, and when Jesus died on the cross, He was made to be sin for us. All the sins of the world were put on Him and it was just like Satan and sin was all nailed there on that cross.

Satan was happy when Jesus died on the cross, but really, it was Satan's death sentence. Truly Satan had bruised Jesus' heel, but it was bruised as it was actually crushing the serpent's head. (See Gen. 3:15)

For all who will truly look by faith to Jesus as their only Savior from the guilt and power of sin, as their only hope for salvation, will find life and the door to being Born Again.

Those who had been bitten by the serpents might have refused to look. They might have asked how this could possible help them. They might have demanded a scientific explanation. But no explanation was given. They must accept the word of God to them through Moses. To refuse to look was to perish.

Nicodemus received the lesson, and carried it with him. He searched the Scriptures in a new way, not for the discussion of a theory, but in order to receive life for the soul. He began to see the kingdom of heaven as he submitted himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Nicodemus never forgot that one-man sermon. Although time passed before he openly took his stand for Jesus, he did. We see him coming out openly as a follower of Jesus at the very time that the rest of the disciples were wanting to run away and hide! Why? Because when he saw Jesus die on the cross, he saw clearly what he was told about Moses lifting up the serpent so all who were bitten could look and live. Nicodemus told John the story of that interview, and John wrote it down for the instruction of millions. The truths there taught are as important today as they were on that solemn night in the shadowy mountain, when the Jewish ruler came to learn the way of life from the lowly Teacher of Galilee. See DA 177.

Thought -

A ruler once came to Jesus by night,
To ask Him the way of salvation and light;
The Master made answer in words true
and plain,

“Ye must be born again.”

I verily, verily, say unto thee,

“Ye must be born again.”

Ye children of men, attend to the word
So solemnly uttered by Jesus the Lord,
And let not this message to you be in vain
“Ye must be born again.”

I verily, verily, say unto thee,

“Ye must be born again.” = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #8: “LOVE’S POWER”

MEMORY VERSE: “His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” John 2:5

Sunday

Text: John 2:2-4 “And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.”

When Jesus began His ministry many miracles were done. It is interesting that in all the years before His ministry, he did not miracles, and even in His ministry, His miracles were not to exalt Himself or to help Himself, but always to show the love of the Heavenly Father to the people.

It was at the wedding at Cana that His first miracle was done. It was there that Mary spoke the words I like to call the ‘Gospel according to Mary’, ‘His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.’ Good advice, isn’t it?

Running out of grape juice at the wedding feast was a real problem for the wedding party. It would have seemed like an insult to the guests. But what could be done? There was a need and no one knew what to do.

But Mary did what we should all learn to do when we have problems, she took it to Jesus. He showed her that He must follow the will of His heavenly Father and that she was not to try to direct His mission. But she had faith and turning to the servants told them that they should do whatever Jesus

would tell them to do.

But though Mary had not a right understanding of Christ’s mission, she trusted Him implicitly. To this faith Jesus responded. It was to honor Mary’s trust, and to strengthen the faith of His disciples, that the first miracle was performed.

Nearby were six large water pots. Jesus told them to take these and fill them with water. When they did this, He told them to draw some out and carry it to the governor of the feast.

When they poured out some of the ‘water’ they found it was very fine grape juice. The governor commented to the Bridegroom, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

There are many lessons in this first miracle for us. It is the way of this world, that many things seem good at first, and later not so good; but with the things of God, blessings just get better and better.

Thought - People try to tell us that this was alcoholic wine, but it was not. We know that Jesus would not have given to the people something His own word says is ‘a mocker’. Proverbs 20:1.

Monday

Text: John 4:49,50 “The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child

die. Jesus saith unto him, **Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.**"

Later when Jesus returned to the area of Cana again, a certain nobleman met him, and asked Him to please come and heal his son, who was sick.

We are told that this man had made up his mind that unless Jesus healed his son, he would not believe He was the Messiah, even though the scriptures said so. While the nobleman waited anxiously, Jesus showed that He knew the inner thoughts of this man. Jesus said to him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. He saw his own unbelieving heart. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible.

Earnestly he cried, "Sir, come down ere my child die." His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." Gen. 32:26.

Then Jesus said to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

He was no longer anxious and worried, no longer hurried or fearful. How do we know this? Because he didn't even get back to his home until the next day.

Servants had been sent to meet him to tell him the good news that the boy was well. When they met the father, he asked them what time the boy began to get well. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

This was one o'clock, right at the hottest time of the day that the fever left the boy. The father knew it was the very time that

Jesus had said, "Thy son liveth:" and himself believed, and his whole house.

Thought – God does not want us to base our faith on seeing miracles happen, or on whether or not God answers a certain prayer for us, but on the Living Word of God.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 19:13, 14 "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

All too often it seems that important people are considered much too busy to bother with children. Sadly, even many parents seem to think that everything else is more important than spending time with their children.

The disciples sure thought this way, because one day when some mothers wanted to bring their little ones to Jesus for a blessing, the disciples were all set to drive them away. But how did Jesus relate to children? I found this from one of Ellen White's special talks:

"As the children gathered the wild flowers growing so abundantly around them, and crowded up to present to Him their little offerings, He received them gladly, smiled upon them, and expressed His joy at seeing so many varieties of flowers.

"These children were His heritage. He knew that He had come to ransom them from the enemy by dying on the cross of Calvary. He spoke words to them that ever after they carried in their hearts. They were delighted to think that He appreciated their gifts and spoke so lovingly to them.

"Christ watched children at their play, and often expressed His approval when they gained an innocent victory over something they were determined to do. He sang to children in sweet and blessed words. They knew

that He loved them. He never frowned on them. He shared their childish joys and sorrows. Often He would gather flowers, and after pointing out their beauties to the children, would leave them with them as a gift. He had made the flowers, and He delighted to point out their beauties.

“It has been said that Jesus never smiled. This is not correct. A child in its innocence and purity called forth from His lips a joyous song.” {2SAT 191}

Thought – Wouldn't you have loved to be there and hear Jesus sing to the children? I sure would! But if we are faithful, we shall hear Him one day, for the Bible says: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

Wednesday

Text: John 5:19, 20 “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.” **John 14:11** “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.”

Jesus declared that His miracles were given by the Heavenly Father to show His love to mankind. Everywhere that Jesus went, He healed the sick and cast out devils, which were tormenting people's minds. Indeed sometimes when he passed through a village, every sick person in the whole area was healed!

One day Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and the people were listening with great interest. He did not teach like the Pharisees and scribes, but it says, ‘for he taught

them as one that had authority’.

You see, the church leaders had gotten to the place where they no longer spoke the Word of God with power. Oh no, not at all. Instead they presented man's ideas. They would say something might be this way, or it might be that way, or they would talk about what some long dead Rabbi said about it. But because Jesus spoke from the Holy Word of God, the scriptures, His words had power and authority.

Now the devil wanted to stop this teaching, so he had one of his victims come to church that day. This was a man who had played around with sin until he was totally devil possessed.

As the people were listening, some with interest and others scowling with anger, suddenly this mad-man burst into the room shrieking out, “Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God.”

Everything was confusion and alarm. Satan has succeeded in distracting the people. But Jesus rebuked the demon, saying, “Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.”

The devil tried hard to hold onto this poor man, but Jesus' word of authority drove him away. Soon the man was in his right mind, praising God, and so happy to be free!

Thought – You will find today also that those who truly believe and speak from the inspired writings will speak with authority. And this authority makes the false leaders and people who want to follow their own ideas, angry, just like it did in Jesus' day.

Thursday

Text: Mark 1:40,41 “And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus,

moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean."

Leprosy was a terrible and dreaded disease in the land of Judah. It was considered the result of sin and was called 'the Stroke' or the 'Finger of God'. Anyone suspected of having it had to go to the priest and if he said it was leprosy, that person had to leave his home and family and live only with other lepers.

Away from his friends and his loved ones, the leper must bear the curse of his illness. Everywhere he went he had to cry out to warn others. The cry, "Unclean! unclean!" coming in mournful tones from the lonely exile, was a signal heard with fear and abhorrence.

Not since the days of Elisha had this disease ever been cured. But there was one leper, who when he heard about Jesus, felt in his heart that Jesus could heal even him. The problem was, how could he ever get close to Jesus when he was not allowed to come near the towns or villages? But maybe he could find Jesus when He was traveling in the desert areas.

One day he learned that Jesus was preaching by the lake and determined to go to him he headed to the spot. Standing far away from the crowd he hears a few words from the lips of Jesus. He sees people being healed. All at once he determines to go and cast himself on the mercy of this man of Galilee.

He is a loathsome spectacle. The disease has made frightful inroads, and his decaying body is horrible to look upon. At sight of him the people fall back in terror. They step on each other to get away from him. Some try to prevent him from approaching Jesus, but in vain. He neither sees nor hears them. Their expressions of loathing are lost upon him. He sees only the Son of God. He hears only the voice that speaks life to the dying. Pressing to Jesus, he casts himself at His feet with the cry, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

And Jesus put out his hand, and touched him, and said, "I will; be thou clean."

Immediately a change passed over the leper. His flesh became healthy, the nerves sensitive, the muscles firm. The rough, scaly surface peculiar to leprosy disappeared, and a soft glow, like that upon the skin of a healthy child, took its place. The people watched with wonder.

Then Jesus told him to hurry and go to the priests and take the offering for healing of leprosy. He could not be restored to his family unless the priest pronounced him clean. Jesus was afraid if the priests found out how he was healed they would refuse to pronounce him healed out of jealousy to Jesus.

He also told him not to talk about it to anyone. He did not obey this request but told everyone about it. This caused problems for Jesus as the crowds that pressed around Him became so great He could not go into the city but had to stay out in the wilderness and people came to Him from all around.

Thought – The offering for the cleansing of leprosy included two sparrows. One of them would be offered as an offering and the other sprinkled with the blood and water and set free. There had not been much sale for sparrows until Jesus started healing lepers. This was a parable about the Saviour; His blood allows us to be set free from sin.

Friday

Text: Luke 17:12-14 "And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

Later on in Jesus ministry we hear of ten men who were lepers. They too wanted to be

healed and they had heard about how Jesus had healed lepers. They went together to the place where Jesus was preaching to the people.

Standing far away from the crowd they shouted to Jesus, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

When Jesus saw them, he said unto them, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

Of course, they might have refused to go and show themselves to the priests. They might have said, "What good will that do? We know we are lepers!" But they obeyed the words of Jesus and went and as they were on their way, they found they were healed.

Now one man, when he found he was healed, turned around and ran back to Jesus. Throwing himself at His feet he thanked Him and praised God with a loud voice. This man was a Samaritan.

Jesus was happy that the man returned

to say 'Thank you'. But sadly he asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" The others thinking only of themselves had hurried on their way, not even thinking about being thankful to God for this great blessing.

How about you and I? Do we remember to thank the Lord for all the wonderful blessings He gives us every day? Especially do we remember to be thankful for the great sacrifice that Jesus and the Heavenly Father made so that we can be cleansed of the leprosy of sin?

Thought - When we have a thankful heart, remembering to show our gratitude for what others do for us, and especially for what God does for us, we will find it makes us joyful and helps our faith grow stronger. You can easily find out that when you grumble and complain, you make yourself miserable and all around you. But when you are grateful and show it, it lets the sunshine of heaven shine on your life. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #9: "FOOD FOR BODY AND SOUL"

MEMORY VERSE: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." John 6:35

Sunday

Text: Mark 6:31-33 "And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him."

Word had come to them that John the Baptist had been beheaded and sadness lay over the disciples. Jesus knew they needed some time to think things over and to be instructed so He said to them: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a

while". Mark 6:31

So they went into a wilderness area where they could see the things of nature and pray and meditate on scripture. They were not there very long however, then the people found out where they were and followed them out into the wilderness. There they came, by themselves, in couples or in small groups and gathered around where Jesus was, hoping to hear Him teach them.

Here was Jesus, tired, wanting rest and His disciples needing a break and needing instruction, when here comes all these people to intrude on their privacy. How would you have felt? What might you have said? But was Jesus cross or grumpy? Listen to what the Bible tells us:

"And Jesus, when he came out, saw much

people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.” Mark 6:34.

Ever unselfish, ever loving, Jesus’ heart went out to the people and forgetting His own needs, He spoke the Word of truth to them. Happily the people sat and listened to the words of the Master Teacher. The hours passed by unnoticed as they heard His words.

Thought - Do you tend to be grouchy when you are sick, sad, or tired? Here is a quote that I often think about: “The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger, —a faith that will not faint, though severely tried.”GC88-621. It is now we are to learn to hold on to the promises and strength of Jesus and learn to be kind, true and loving no matter how we feel!

Monday

Text: Luke 9:12, 13 “And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.”

It was getting late in the evening. All day the people had listened so intently that they did not even notice they had not had anything to eat all day. Now the disciples began to think it was about time to send them home. So they suggested to Jesus they should be sent away so they could get somewhere to buy food before night.

But Jesus turned to them and said that they did not need to go away, but the disciples were to give them something to eat. Then He turned to Philip and asked, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”

This He said to test the faith of the disciple. Philip looked over the sea of heads, and thought how impossible it would be to provide food to feed such a crowd. He answered that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be nearly enough to divide among them so that each might have a little.

But Jesus asked, “How much food do we have?”

Now in that crowd was a little lad who had dearly wanted to go and listen to the teaching of Jesus. After asking his father and mother he had set out that day to follow the crowd to hear the wonderful teacher and his thoughtful Mom had given him a small lunch to take with him.

He had been so interested in hearing Jesus that he had not bothered to eat his lunch and so still had it. “There is a lad here,” said Andrew, “which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?”

The young lad was brought to Jesus and gladly donated his meager lunch to Him. Then Jesus did a strange thing. He told the disciples to get the people ready for supper, He said divide them into groups of about 50 and have them sit down on the grassy hillside.

Then He took the 2 fishes and 5 little barley loaves and looking up to heaven, He blessed it, broke it and began to hand the pieces to His disciples who then passed it to the people.

One group was supplied then another and another- all in an orderly way and still the food kept multiplying while the disciples, the people and the little lad all looked on in wonder.

Thought – Jesus taught in such a simple way that even children loved to listen to Him and often understood His words better than some of the more prejudiced adults.

Tuesday

Text: Mark 6:42- 44 “And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve

baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men."

This was a huge crowd that Jesus fed that day from the little lad's lunch! And He gave us many lessons too. He sent the disciples to gather up in baskets the left-over pieces. Then the people were allowed to take some of this miracle food home with them to give to their families and friends, as they would tell the wonderful story. Nothing was wasted.

Jesus truly cares about people, He cares about their needs. It did not matter to Him that He was tired and hungry, but He wanted them to have food so they would not faint along their way home.

It is interesting that the meal Jesus gave to these people was not a fancy one. It was just the plain everyday food they were used to having. He could have fed them with cakes and dainties just as easily, but He showed that day that we can be truly happy with the plain and simple needs of life.

If people today were simple in their habits and lived according to the laws of nature, there would be plenty of food for all. People would not be suffering from starvation on one hand while other people are suffering from disease caused by eating too much and too richly. If all harmful habits were laid aside, so much pain and suffering would never happened in this old world!

Thought – It is God who every day is feeding millions from earth's harvest fields. Men are called upon to co-operate with God in the care of the grain and the preparation of the loaf, and because of this they lose sight of the divine agency. They do not give God the glory due unto His holy name. DA 368

Wednesday

Text: Mark 6:45, 46. "And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away

the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."

In the story in Mark we are not told just why Jesus all of a sudden sent the people home and even sent His disciples off to cross the sea back to Bethsaida, but in John we find the secret: "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." John 6:15

The people were so thrilled by this miracle of free food, that they got all excited and decided they would make Jesus their king! He could feed them with free food and heal the soldiers injured in battle and soon they would rule the world!

The disciples were happy indeed and encouraged this idea. Finally, they thought, our Master is getting the attention and honor that He deserves. Finally we will see Him placed on the throne of David as King of Israel!

But Jesus would not allow this to happen. He knew that such a thing was not at all what was needed to redeem the world but instead, was the trick of Satan to bring His ministry to a terrible end. He knew that such doings would have led to war and bloodshed and these people, so eager to have Him as an earthly king, would be slaughtered by Herod's armies.

It was not easy to get these people to give up their idea once they were all excited about it. Even for a while Jesus' disciples were not listening to His directions until finally He had to turn to them and order them to get into their boat and leave.

They headed down to the shore but for quite a while they lingered around the boat hoping He was going to come with them. Finally they decided they had better obey and struck out towards the other shore.

Jesus went up into a mountain to pray and continued a long time. He knew that this was a trying time for the disciples and He prayed for them. He knew that soon the

people would turn from praising Him and wanting to make Him king, to hating Him and wanting to kill Him. This was not going to be easy for His disciples because they really thought their Master was soon going to be on the throne as King of the nation.

Thought – Ever so many ‘Christians’ today make the same mistake and think that Jesus is going to establish an earthly kingdom and all His followers will rule this world. But Jesus told us plainly, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

Thursday

Text: Mark 6:47- 49 “And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:”

The disciples were very stormy inside when they finally left in their boat that night. They were angry at Jesus and angry at each other. They were saying they should not have listened to Jesus but should have made Him King anyway. Black were their thoughts as the rowed into the night.

All at once they found they had something real to be upset about- a wind and a storm came up suddenly and they had to work very hard to keep their boat from sinking. Soon they forgot their angry thoughts in the struggle to stay alive.

Suddenly one of them gasped and all were terrified as they looked out across the angry waters and saw a figure coming towards them WALKING on the water!! Now nobody can walk on water, unless it is frozen, right? It had to be a spirit! Sailors are always superstitious and they decided it was a sign they were about to die.

But Jesus had seen their trouble and was coming towards them. He calmed their fears saying, “Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid,” But He kept walking as if He would pass them by.

Peter was so happy to see Jesus that he called out, “Lord- If it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water.” Jesus simply answered “Come”.

Peter climbed out of the boat and headed towards Jesus and the water was holding him up! But all too quickly Peter’s heart filled with that show-off “watch me” spirit and he glance towards the boat to see if all were admiring him.

Just that quick, he began to sink and in terror he looks up from the angry waves to his only hope, Jesus. “Lord, save me!” he cries and instantly Jesus reaches out His hand and lifts Peter from certain death. Quietly Jesus says, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

Not boastful now, Peter walks, wet and humble, back to the ship, hand in hand with Jesus.

Thought – Dear readers, this episode of water walking is there to teach us many precious lessons. No one ever before or since, that we have heard of, ever walked on water! It is not possible for a human being to walk on water. It is also not possible for a human being to keep the Law of God fully in his natural state. But when we walk hand in hand with Jesus, we can do it; just as Peter walked on the water that stormy night.

Friday

Text: John 6:22, 24-25 “The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;...When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his

disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

The chapters of John 6-8 are very amazing. We see here the conversation of Jesus with those who were eager to follow Him if He would give them lots of miracles and free food.

Thinking to get some more excitement they come up to Him to ask how he got to the other side without a boat. They wanted Him to tell about the miracle. But Jesus did not gratify their curiosity. He just told them bluntly that the only reason they wanted to follow Him was to get free food.

He went on to tell them that they needed to be more concerned about the spiritual food for their souls He was teaching them about, than just the earthly food.

Now these questioners show their true spirit as they say, "What sign do you show us that we may believe you?" These people all knew Jesus had just fed over 5,000 people with a small lunch, they knew He had come across the water in a miraculous way, but they still asked for a sign to 'prove' to them He was the Messiah!

Now, half mockingly, a rabbi questioned, "What sign showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as

it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

Now the people thought they would get what they wanted. "Evermore give us this bread," they said. Again their thoughts were all on earthly things and the heavenly kingdom was of no interest to them.

Jesus knew that once they really knew that He wasn't going to shower them with free food and do miracles to entertain them, that they would turn away. But He did not try to make them happy by giving them what they wanted. Instead He kept telling them plainly about His spiritual kingdom until they actually got angry and went away.

Jesus felt sad to see them go. He was offering them what would lead to eternal life, but all they wanted was a free meal. As they left, Jesus turned to His disciples and asked, "Will you also go away?"

Peter replied by asking, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" "Thou hast the words of eternal life," he added. "And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Thought - To whom shall we go if we don't turn to Jesus? Nowhere else in this world is there any hope of being saved from Sin and Death. No one else can enable us to 'walk on the water' of life all the way to the Kingdom.
= ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #10: "RAISING THE DEAD"

MEMORY VERSE: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25

Sunday

Text: Luke 8:41,42 "And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him."

Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue in the area where Jesus was teaching the people. He was very anxious to come to Jesus because he had only one child, a daughter, and she was dying. Earnestly he asked Jesus to come to his house and heal his child, even falling down at Jesus' feet and pleading.

So Jesus started on his way towards the man's house, while the people crowded around all eager to see Him. The father tried to hurry, but the crowd made it impossible.

Now there was one person in that crowd that especially wanted to get close to Jesus. It was a poor sick lady that had suffered for many years. No doctors had been able to help her, in fact all they had done was take her money and make her worse.

She believed in her heart that if only she could just touch the hem of his clothes, she would be healed. Many times she had tried to get close enough but had failed. She knew if she did not soon succeed, she would die of her disease.

Now as the crowd around the Saviour turned towards her in heading to the ruler's home, she felt her chance had come. Pressing and sliding between people, she worked her way closer, until with a last effort she stretched out her hand and was just able to touch the edge of His coat.

Instantly she was healed and strength came into her poor, feeble body! She was about to slip away, her heart full of praise to

God. But Jesus knew all about her and He wanted her faith to be known by all. Suddenly He stopped and said, "Who touched me?"

Now what a funny question to ask in a crowd! Peter, always fast to speak, inquired of Him why He would ask such a thing! Jesus explained that He knew someone had been healed. Trembling with fear but glad in heart the woman came and fell down before Him and told the whole, wonderful story. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Thought - She only touched the hem of His garment

As to His side she stole,
Amid the crowd that gathered round Him,
And straightway she was whole.

Oh, touch the hem of His garment!
And thou, too, shalt be free!
His saving pow'r this very hour
Shall give new life to thee!

Monday

Text: Luke 8:49, 50 "While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole."

Right then it almost seemed as if a happy event was followed by a sad one. Pressing through the crowd came a messenger from the Ruler's home to tell him not to bother Jesus anymore because his daughter was already dead.

Jesus quickly encouraged the despairing father, "Fear not, only believe!"

When they reached the house, some of the neighbors and hired mourners were al-

ready making a lot of noise, weeping and wailing, as the custom was in those days. Jesus said to them, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."

Right away the people stopped their false weeping and started to laugh at Jesus. But Jesus asked them to leave the house and then taking only the parents and Peter, James and John, He went into the room where the little body lay. Taking up the cold hand, He said, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."

Immediately she sat up and looked around her and got up. Jesus told her parents to give her something to eat and not to tell anyone about this miracle. Jesus knew that these miracles would only make more furious the hatred of the Pharisees and rulers of the land, but even though He told them this, the word still got out and people were talking about it everywhere.

Thought – Only God can actually give life and raise the dead or heal cases regarding restoring of life to some part. However Satan works hard to counterfeit these things.

Tuesday

Text: Luke 7:11,12 "And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her."

Jesus took an extra trip and went to the village of Nain purposely to meet up with this sad procession that was right then coming out of the place. It was a funeral procession where the only son of a poor widow was being carried to the grave. She was beside the body on the stretcher, weeping in deep and hopeless sadness. That son was all she had in the world!

Jesus kindly said to her, "Weep not." Then

he touched the bier, and the people carrying it stood still. Then Jesus said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

Immediately, he that was dead and on his way to be buried, sat up and started talking. And Jesus delivered him back to his mother. What a change was this- from hopeless grief to the greatest joy. Jesus loves to change our hopeless situations into joy.

Now in these two cases, Jesus had clearly raised the dead and the people and religious rulers knew that only the power of God can truly raise the dead. But they were stubborn and refused to believe in Jesus. Therefore they made up false stories about it. They claimed that the whole scenes had been planned by the disciples to make it look like the dead had been raised.

They even said that Jesus Himself had said that Jairus' daughter was not really dead, but only asleep. But God had planned an extra special case where they would no longer be able to claim those lies.

Before this final case happened, Jesus actually told a parable in which the very man's name was used. It is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Now in this parable Jesus plainly told them that if they did not believe what Moses and the old prophets had written in the scriptures that clearly showed he was the Messiah, they would not believe- even if one came back from the grave!

Thought – I have had Christians tell me that they are sure that if they could work some amazing miracle, this would make the people believe the gospel. But Jesus worked miracle after miracle and even raised the dead, and still those who were proud and determined to have their own way, refused to believe.

Wednesday

Text: John 11:1-3 "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with

ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

Jesus had no home of his own. He was dependent on the hospitality of his friends and disciples. The home of the family at Bethany was one of the Saviour's borrowed homes. Here he could find rest and repose. Often when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, he had been glad to escape to this quiet home, away from the suspicion and jealousy of the angry Pharisees. Here he found a sincere welcome and pure, holy friendship. Here he could speak with simplicity and perfect freedom, knowing that his words would be understood and treasured.

One day Lazarus, who lived there with his two sisters, Mary and Martha, became ill. His sisters sent a message to Jesus where He was staying to tell Him of this sickness. They figured He would come right away to heal their brother.

But Jesus did not come right away; instead He sent back the message that this sickness was not unto death but that the Name of God was to be glorified by it.

As the sisters watched at the bedside of their suffering brother, they wondered what was keeping Jesus so long. They saw how violent this disease was but were sure that Jesus could heal him-if only He would hurry and come! The messenger came back with the words, “This sickness is not unto death,” but Jesus did not come with him.

They clung to the hope that these words brought, and tried to encourage their brother, until he lost consciousness and died. Then how their hearts were torn! They could not understand why Jesus had not come, and why He had promised the sickness was not unto death, and yet their brother was now dead.

Days passed. The rituals of a Jewish funeral were followed and the body was laid to rest in a tomb and a great stone rolled against the door. The mourners continued to weep

and lament during the time of mourning.

Thought – Mary and Martha still believed in Jesus, but they were bewildered that at this terrible time, He did not come to them.

Thursday

Text: John 11:11-14 “These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”

At first the disciples wondered why Jesus did not go to Bethany when He got word that Lazarus was sick. But they also knew that the Jews wanted to kill Him and figured He was just playing it safe.

Now they were even more confused when He announced He was going there. They reminded Him that the Jews wanted to stone Him. But He told them a little parable: “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”

He was telling them that He was in no danger as long as He was walking in the path His Father in Heaven had planned for Him. Then He also told them that Lazarus was dead- but notice that Jesus called death a sleep. For those that believe in Jesus, dying is just like falling asleep until Jesus calls them on Resurrection Morning.

The disciples felt that Jesus was risking His life to go to Bethany at this time, but they decided they would go with Him. Jesus was quite a ways from Bethany and it took a while for them to come from beyond Jordan to the home of Mary and Martha. By the time they got there, he had been dead for four days.

Thought – The disciples, as well as Mary

and Martha, were confused and could not understand the events as they were happening. Often we will come into places in our lives where we won't be able to understand why things are going the way they are going. At such times it is important to wait and keep trusting in God, clinging to His sure promises.

Friday

Text: John 11:39,40 "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

It is amazing to see how God had set up this whole happening that all excuse would be taken away from the rulers and unbelieving Pharisees not to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Bethany was quite close to Jerusalem, and many of the Jews came out to comfort the family over the loss of their brother.

Now after the funeral and burial, Jesus comes on the scene. And some of them said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" They were always ready to find fault with everything Jesus did.

First Martha went to Jesus and then she called her sister to come. The mourners saw Mary get up quickly and go out and so they followed her thinking she wanted to go to the tomb to weep there.

Now the crowd were gathered around the tomb, some wondering and others doubting and criticizing. Then Jesus said the most amazing thing- "Take away the stone."

Now Martha was the practical one and quickly she spoke up to remind Jesus that Lazarus had been dead four days already

and there would be a very bad smell. Jesus said to her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

So the order was given and the stone rolled away. Now everyone in the crowd that day KNEW that Lazarus was dead. Their noses told the tale all too well. But now a hush had come on the crowd and all eyes were on Jesus.

Jesus prays to His Father, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

Then in a loud voice He cried, "Lazarus, Come Forth!" He didn't whisper it quietly just in case nothing happened; no; He said it in a LOUD voice. Then he that was dead came out, all tied up with grave clothes. I sort of think the angels must have helped him out of that cave as he was all wound up.

"Loose him and let him go", Jesus told them and soon all could see Lazarus, strong, well and whole returned to his family. How quickly that sad funeral party became a scene of rejoicing.

Thought - It wasn't long before this wonderful miracle was the talk of the nation. It reached the high priest and the chief Pharisees and they had a council. What did they decide to do? There could be no doubt now as to Who Jesus really was! Were they going to admit they were wrong and follow Him? No way! Jesus parable was fulfilled to the letter. They did not believe though one rose from the dead! In fact they made plans to kill Jesus and Lazarus also because the people were so excited at this wonderful miracle. How hard is the heart that Satan has full control over! = ^.. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #11: "SABBATH CONFLICTS"

MEMORY VERSE: "For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

Matthew 12:8

Sunday

Text: Luke 13:10-13 "And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

When we read the story of Jesus in the Bible, we find that there were many times that He healed people on the Sabbath. We also see that each time this happened, the church leaders were quick to claim that He was breaking the Sabbath. But was He breaking the Sabbath?

There are people today who try and tell us that indeed, Jesus was doing away with the Sabbath, but this is certainly not true. Jesus, as our Creator, was the very One who made the Sabbath in the beginning. He had blessed it and so why would it ever need to be changed?

There is also another fact to look at: it is true that the leaders had often called Jesus a Sabbath-breaker, but when the time came that they were trying to find a reason to put Him to death, they did not try and charge Him with that, because they knew it was not true.

So what was the problem with these leaders anyway? It was that the Rabbis and Pharisees had added their own 'rules' to the Sabbath until it had become a terrible burden to the people. It was these 'rules' that Jesus freely ignored and that made the rulers angry with Him.

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue one

Sabbath when in came a poor woman who had not been able to stand up straight for 18 years. Jesus healed her on the spot and she started praising God. But the ruler was angry and tried to make trouble.

Jesus looked at him and said, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?"

Sure they would care for their animals on the Sabbath because the animal was worth money to them, but they did not care about helping this sick woman. Then they felt ashamed.

Thought - The Sabbath is to be carefully kept. We are not to do our ordinary work or play on that day. However if we have an animal, we are to give it necessary care on the Sabbath; if someone is sick or gets hurt or an accident happens where someone needs our help, then we should take care of this quickly. God is merciful and kind and He does not want people or animals to be left to suffer if this can be prevented.

Monday

Text: Luke 6:1,2 "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?"

Now in Israel it was a law that if you were walking in someone's field, and you were hungry, it was OK to take some of the grain,

or fruit or pick an apple, just for you to eat at the time. Of course it was not right for you to bring a basket and start gathering up what was not yours. Oh No! But to take something just to eat was OK.

This day Jesus and His disciples were walking in a grain field and some of them who were hungry began to pick some grain and rub it to take off the husks and eat it. Jesus did not have a home, and depended on what the people gave freely to Him and his followers for food. Sometimes nobody bothered to give them anything. Maybe this was one of those days.

Anyway the Jewish leaders were right on the job and came to Jesus to complain that his disciples were 'harvesting and threshing grain' on the Sabbath. Notice they liked to accuse the disciples to Jesus and Jesus to the disciples; they were sneaky.

But Jesus told them that the priests in the temple had more work to do on the Sabbath than any other day. If this had been ordinary work, it would be wrong, but it was in the service of God. Jesus and the disciples were also in the service of God in teaching the people. Jesus also said to them, "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." Mt 12:7,8.

If these rulers had the true Spirit of God in their hearts, they would have been kind and offered a meal to the hungry men, rather than try to condemn them for eating a few heads of grain on the Sabbath.

Thought – Satan is tricky, if he can't get people to ignore God's holy Sabbath, he tries to get them to add so many rules to it that it becomes a heavy burden. The interesting thing is that for most of these rules that they put on the people, the rulers claimed they did not have to keep them themselves because they were so educated. Jesus told them, "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with

one of your fingers."

Tuesday

Text: Mark 3:1-5 "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

Again Jesus was in one of the synagogues and there was a man there who's hand was all withered up and useless, just like an old stick. Now the rulers were watching Jesus to see if He would heal this poor man.

Were they hoping that the man would be healed and well again? Were they excited because here was someone who could help the sick in such wonderful ways? Oh, No—they wanted to be able to blame Him for something so they could get rid of Him.

Jesus felt very bad because of their cruel, hard hearts. So he asked the man to stand up and then he asked these rulers if they thought it was better on the Sabbath day to do good and heal or to kill. You see He knew they were planning how they could kill Him. Then Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand and right away it was well and strong like the other hand.

After this the Pharisees stormed out and went and had a council with some of their own enemies as to how they could work together to kill Jesus. But of course that was OK for them to do on the Sabbath, but for Jesus to heal the poor man was not. How

blind people get when they think they know more than God Himself. Jesus had to take His disciples and leave the area so they could not kill Him.

Thought – Now there is another trick that Satan is doing these days, even among people who know about God’s true Sabbath. Some false teachers are saying because Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath, it is OK to go out and do all kinds of work if you are doing it to help people. This is just as wrong in one way as those rulers were in the other. Any work that can be done on another day, without leaving some person or animal suffering, should NOT be done on the Sabbath.

Wednesday

Text: John 5:6-9 “When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.”

It was another Sabbath morning and Jesus was walking near the place called the Pool of Bethesda. At certain times of the year the water in this pool would be agitated. A superstition had grown up that there was supernatural power in this and if a sick person was the first to get into the pool when those waters were moved, then he would be healed.

This caused a lot of people to collect around this pool at those times of the year, hoping to get healed. Porches had been built so they had a bit of shelter there while they were waiting. If the waters did get agitated they would all rush and push and shove to try to get in first. Stronger people would

trample over smaller and weaker people in their selfish wish to get in first.

Jesus looked sadly at the suffering ones all gathered around this pool and He felt sorry for them. He would have liked to heal them all, but He knew that if He did, the hard-hearted leaders would certainly kill Him.

He saw one man who had been sick and suffering for 38 long years. He was lying on the mat lifting his head every so often to look at the pool. Jesus bends over him and says to him kindly, “Wilt thou be made whole?”

The man tells Jesus, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” But Jesus says a strange thing, He tells the man to rise, take up his bed and walk.

Now the man could have said, “If you make me well, then I will”. But he didn’t. His faith took hold of Jesus’ words and he jumped up and found himself well. He picked up his bed and started to walk.

It wasn’t long before the Jewish leaders spotted him carrying his mat and asked him why he was breaking the Sabbath. He told them that the one who had healed him told him to. Now they were determined to find some way to slay Jesus for this.

Jesus warned the man when He found him in the temple later bringing a thank offering to God, that he must not return to his former sinful life, or something worse would happen to him.

Thought – Many people today are looking for ‘some man’ to help them. They look for answers to their problems from weak humans, as sinful as themselves. But all the time the kindly face of Jesus is bending over them saying, “Wilt thou be made whole?”

Thursday

Text: John 9:1,2, 6,7. “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or

his parents, that he was born blind? When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

Did Jesus stop healing people on the Sabbath so He would appear to go along with the false rules of the Pharisees? No, He healed another person; this time it was a man who had been born blind and never able to see.

Notice the strange question that the disciples asked Jesus about the blind man. You see, the Pharisees taught that anybody who was sick or handicapped had to be a worse sinner than those who were not. So the disciples were trying to figure out whose sin caused this poor man to be born blind. Now how could it be because of his own sin- if he was born that way? How could he sin before he was even born? But that was the confused way the Jews thought about these things.

Then Jesus spat on the ground and made some clay and put it on the blind man's eyes. Then he told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. So the man obeyed. He went groping along to the pool, but when he came back he was walking freely and praising God. He could see for the first time in his life!

Soon everyone was talking about the wonderful event. They took him to the Pharisees who asked him how it was that he could now see.

“A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and I washed and do see,” the man said happily.

At this the Pharisees began to argue with one another; some said, “This man is not of God because he doesn't keep the Sabbath!” But others said, “How could a man that is a sinner do such miracles?”

Then they decided that the man was not

the same one who was born blind, so they sent for his parents. The parents said that he was their son, and he had been born blind, but they didn't know how he could now see. The parents were afraid that if they said too much, they would be thrown out of the synagogue. They didn't even dare show how glad they were that their son could now see.

Thought – Over and over again God was showing these proud and stubborn leaders the truth about Jesus being the Messiah, but they tried always to find some excuse not to believe in Him.

Friday

Text: John 9:24, 25 “Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”

After they had talked to the man's parents, they sent for the man again and spoke harshly to him, “Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner!”

But the blind man wasn't going to be put down that easily and he answered, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.”

They started to question him again asking him how the miracle happened. He replied that he had already told them the whole story and why would they hear it again, did they want to be one of Jesus' disciples?

Well that really made them mad and they told him off saying that they were Moses' disciples but “as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.”

The blind man then went on earnestly to reason with them, finishing by saying, “Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.”

In their rage at these words they snarled at him, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" How dare he try to tell them anything? And they threw him out of the synagogue.

Jesus heard about this and went and looked for him. When he found the man He asked him, "Do you believe on the Son of God?"

"Who is He Lord, that I might believe on Him?" the man asked.

Jesus answered, "You have seen Him and it is He that is talking to you." Then the man worshipped Him.

Thought - How sad it was that these proud rulers did not feel glad for the wonderful healing of the blind man. How hard are the hearts that are full of jealousy and pride! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #12: "THE PARTING GIFT"

MEMORY VERSE: "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25

Sunday

Text: Luke 22:2-6 "And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude."

If Judas had died before that last trip to Jerusalem with Jesus, he would have been remembered as a true disciple. But deep in his heart lurked the very sin that caused the fall of Lucifer in the beginning, Pride, Greed and Jealousy.

Because he was well educated and the son of a Pharisee, the disciples looked up to Judas, and he was highly thought of by them.

Judas saw the miracles of Jesus and heard His teachings just like the other disciples, but he never fully gave his heart to Jesus. He cherished attitudes of selfishness and

dishonesty. He thought he was superior and he formed the habit of criticizing and accusing.

When Jesus had rebuked him for complaining about the cost of the perfume that Mary poured on Jesus' feet, he was bitter and angry inside, and went to the rulers and agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. He did it at first for revenge, but he really thought that Jesus would escape from the rulers anyway and maybe after that Jesus would show Judas more respect.

He also thought that this attack might force Jesus to declare himself King and set up an earthly kingdom in which Judas would have a high position. By cherishing selfishness and pride, Judas placed himself where even the best lessons of Jesus finally hardened him to the point that Satan had full control over him.

Thought - Ask Jesus in your prayers to show you what wrong attitudes, pride of selfishness you may have in your heart. Ask Him to forgive you and take away these wrong attitudes and then every time Satan tempts you to be proud or selfish, cry to Jesus to drive away these thoughts.

Monday

Text: Luke 22:13-16 “And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus told Peter and John to go into the street and they would find a man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him and go to the house where he went in and ask “The Master says, Where is the guest chamber that I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”

This man would show them a large upper room and there they were to get ready. Now why do you suppose Jesus gave such strange directions to find the room? Well He knew that Judas was looking for a chance to betray Him when he was not with the crowds and if he knew where the place was, Jesus may have been betrayed right there and never have a chance to teach the lessons of the Last Supper.

When the time came and the disciples all went to the upper room to eat the Passover meal, they were arguing along the way who was to be the greatest in the kingdom that they all thought was going to be soon set up. It was only a few days ago when Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on a young donkey and this was the way the Kings of Israel rode to their coronations.

When they were all settled around the table there was a problem. There were basins and water so that the feet of the guests could be washed, but there was no servant available. The disciples all pretended not to notice and each was saying in his own heart, “Well I sure am not going to be the one to do this slave’s work!”

Jesus felt sad to see them all so selfish,

especially as He was soon to leave them to go to His cruel death. Quietly Jesus got up and tied a towel around His waist and began to wash the disciples feet. The first one he washed was Judas and we are told that the tenderness and love of Jesus nearly won back the heart of this disciple.

But then the thought came to Judas that Jesus would never be king of Israel and there would be no high position for him in the kingdom of one who would do such a lowly task as this! He hardened his heart and Satan took over completely.

Thought – There were several times that Jesus made it clear to Judas that He knew all about what he was planning to do. But Judas just kept on anyway. Afterwards the disciples recalled that Judas had never fooled Jesus as he had fooled them.

Tuesday

Text: Luke 22:17-20 “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

Although Passover celebrations are still held to this day by the Jewish people, that ‘Last Supper’ that Jesus had with His disciples was the last Passover that would have any meaning before God. Jesus was about to be sacrificed as the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world, and when He died on the cross, it marked the ending of the feasts God had used to try to teach the people about the work of the Messiah.

Jesus here gave His people a new service

to remember His death and His promise to come again. As the Passover had looked towards the Great sacrifice, so this 'Lord's Supper' was to look back to it.

Jesus used the plain bread with no yeast in it, which represented the sinless life of our Savior and how his body was to be broken for our sins. The pure grape juice was never fermented either, as it was against the law for a Jew to have anything fermented in his house at the Passover time. Jesus would never give His people something harmful to use to remember Him by.

This grape juice wine was often made by soaking raisins, if the fresh juice was not available. Never was fermented wine used at such a time. This was to represent the blood that was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. The blood of lambs, used down through the ages, could not in itself forgive any sins. It pointed to the real Lamb of God, Jesus, whose life and death opened the way back to the Father's throne for all who are willing to believe and allow Jesus to take away their sins.

Thought – There are those that are saying we should go back to keeping those old feast days again, but if we do that, we are back to saying that the sacrifice has not yet been made and are looking for a future Messiah and denying Jesus.

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 26:21-24 “And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Jesus here plainly told the disciples that

it was one of them that would betray Him to His enemies. They were startled and each one began to ask Him, “Lord, is it I?” Only Judas said nothing, the eyes of the disciples turned to him wondering why he was silent. Then he quickly asked like the rest, “Lord, is it I?”

John asked Jesus, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus said, “He it is who I will give this piece of bread to when I have dipped it.” Then he handed it to Judas just as he asked, “Lord, is it I?”

Solemnly Jesus answered, “Thou has said.”

The Bible tells us that at this point Satan fully entered into Judas and as he got up to leave, Jesus sad sadly, “What thou doest, do quickly.” Judas hurried out into the night, “And it was night!” Yes the darkness of sin had swallowed up Judas and now he hurried off to the Pharisees planning to lead them to where Jesus would spend the night.

So highly did the disciples think of Judas that even with the plain words of Jesus, they still thought Judas was going to do some errand for Jesus when he left.

Jesus then began to give special lessons to them. He had so much He wanted to tell them, but because of their wrong attitudes and false ideas, they could not understand them. He began to tell them that they were to love one another. He told them He was going away and that they could not follow Him.

Quickly Peter spoke up, “Lord, why can't I follow You? I would even die for You!” Then all the disciples said the same.

Jesus told them that they all would run away from Him that very night. But Peter said, “Though all should run away and leave you, yet I will not!”

Jesus answered, “Truly I will tell you Peter, that before the rooster crows tonight, you will deny me 3 times!”

Thought – Jesus was trying to warn them not to trust in their own selves because their hearts were weak and they would surely fall

if they did not pray for help. But they were so sure they would never desert their Master.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 26:30 “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”

There was a special group of psalms that were sung at the Passover and these are likely what Jesus sang with His disciples that night. Then they got up and left to spend the night on the Mount of Olives where there was a peaceful Garden where Jesus often prayed and meditated.

The terrible night of agony for the Saviour began as they neared the garden. It seemed that the presence of God, which had been His support, was no longer with Him. He was beginning to feel what it was to be shut out from His Father.

Christ must bear the sins of the world. As they were now laid upon Him, they seemed more than He could endure. The guilt of sin was so terrible that He was tempted to fear that God could no longer love Him.

As He felt the awful displeasure of the Father against evil, the words were forced from Him, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

He left most of the disciples to rest near the gate of the garden and took with Him Peter, James and John. These three He asked to watch and pray with Him and warned them to pray that they enter not into temptation. Then He went a bit further and fell to the ground in agony.

If ever there was a time when they needed to stay awake and pray- it was now! But Satan was on the job and he made them sleepy. They could have resisted him if they would have prayed earnestly for help from God, but they didn't. Instead they gave in to the temptation and soon dozed off to sleep.

Thought – Have you ever found that when you go to read the Bible or sometimes pray at night that you become very sleepy? I have

seen people, who I was trying to give a Bible study to, suddenly start to yawn and say they were just too tired to listen, and yet they could sit and watch TV all night and that was just fine. Yes Satan has his tricks and we have to be wise to them. If this happens to you, just pray and ask Jesus to stop these devil tricks. If you refuse to give in, after a short while it will pass and you can read and pray easily.

Friday

Text: Matthew 26:40-43 “And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.”

Satan was really on the job that night, it was his last chance, and he was determined to overcome Jesus. The weight of all the sins of the world was pressing on Jesus and He fell on His face there in the garden crying out to His Heavenly Father. “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me!”

Satan tried to tell Him that it was no use to go through all this for sinful man, as they didn't even care enough to pray with Him. Jesus staggered to His feet and went back to where he left the three to pray and sure enough, they were sound asleep.

Sadly He asked Peter, “Could you not even watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation!” Then He staggered back to fall again to the ground. The terrible weight of the sins of the world caused Him to sweat great drops of bloody sweat as He cried in prayer to His Father.

Jesus was strongly tempted by Satan to just forget about sinful man and go back to

heaven where he belonged. But Jesus saw that unless He paid the price to redeem man, there was no other way any could be saved from this sinful world. The perfect Law demanded the death of the sinner and that Law was what held up the whole universe, it could not be changed or done away with!

Jesus in His agony thought of those who would be saved because of His sacrifice, He thought of you and me, and He decided that even if it meant he could never be one with His Father again, He would carry out the plan.

Three times He went to where his disciples were supposed to be praying and found them asleep. He had no human help at all that night. But in love He said to His Father, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." So the decision was made, He would save

man no matter what it cost Him.

Then an angel came to strengthen Him as He lay dying on the ground. As this angel came, even Satan had to flee. Then Jesus went the third time to His disciples and found them asleep. "Sleep on and take your rest", He said kindly, but then He heard the sound of the mob coming to get Him. "Arise, behold he is at hand who doth betray me!"

How the disciples ever afterwards regretted having slept that night!

Thought - Have you ever felt really bad because of some wrong thing you have done? We can't imagine how Jesus must have felt as the sins of all the people that ever lived pressed upon Him, just as if it was He who had done it all. The sins of cruel men and murderers, the sins of tyrants and torturers all lay on Him! And your sins and mine were there too! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #13: "WERE YOU THERE?"

MEMORY VERSE: "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matthew 26:64

Sunday

Text: John 18:4-6 "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

We can only tell the wonderful story of the cross very briefly here. Please read it for yourself in all four gospels. Every one of them has something special to tell us. Right after the angel had strengthened Jesus, the sound of the mob was heard coming with sticks and weapons to arrest Jesus.

Judas was with them and came up and kissed Him, as if he was not part of the cruel mob, but he did not fool Jesus. He asked sadly, "Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?"

John tells us of a wonderful thing that happened right then, the mighty angel that had come to strengthen Jesus, right then stepped between Him and the mob and let his glory flash out for a brief moment. Instantly all these wicked men, including Judas, staggered backward and fell to the ground.

This was a warning to them, but they quickly got back up and kept on with their plans. Jesus had just stood there quiet and calm, like the mighty King He really was and now as they got up they tied His hands to lead Him away.

Right at that moment, Peter decided he had better fight for his Master and pulled out a sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus told him not to do this, and easily freeing His hands, He touched the man's ear and instantly healed it. Did the crowd pay attention to these warning signs that Jesus was truly the Son of God? No, they just tied Him up again and started to take him to the courtroom of the High Priest.

Thought - Jesus asked the mob, "Whom seek ye?" When they said Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus said, "I am He" and then asked them to allow His disciples to go their way. Even though He knew what He was facing, He thoughts were on others, not Himself. At this point the disciples ran away and left Him just as He told them they would.

Monday

Text: John 18:15,16 "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter."

The 'other disciple' was John. When John went into the palace of the High Priest, he did not hide the fact of who he was, but Peter, tried to pretend he was part of the crowd and went over to where a fire had been built to warm up those who had brought in Jesus. Now if Peter had been honest and stayed with John, he would not have been put in a tight spot. By being dishonest, he could not have the keeping power of God.

Soon people noticed Peter and began to question him, 'aren't you one of that man's followers?' Peter said he wasn't and moved away to another area, again it happened and again he denied. Finally He got so upset that when asked for the third time, he actually

swore and denied Jesus again. Right then the rooster crowed and Peter remembered what Jesus had said. Yes, it had all come true, and as Peter looked towards Jesus, Jesus looked over at him with pity and sadness.

Peter was heart-broken; yes, he had done just what Jesus warned him of and he had been so sure of himself, so full of self-esteem and pride. Now he saw things as they really were. That night, weeping in sorrow for his terrible sin in the garden where Jesus had prayed a short time before and he had foolishly slept, he surrendered all and was born again.

Back at the judgment hall, things were not going good for the rulers. They were breaking many of their own laws, trying to convict Jesus. They brought out false witnesses they had paid to lie about Jesus, but these did not help at all. One said one thing and another said something else and so they cancelled each other out. Those watching, began to see the dishonesty of the priests.

To make matters worse, suddenly a frantic voice was heard, shouting out, "I have sinned in that I betrayed the innocent blood!" It was Judas, who hurried forward with the money the priests had given him, begging them to let Jesus go free. The priests were embarrassed as the people saw they had actually bribed someone to betray Jesus. "What is that to us? That's your problem!" they snarled. And Judas threw down the money and fled out to hang himself.

Why did Peter repent, but Judas hang himself? Peter was truly sorry for his denial. Judas wasn't truly sorry for what he had done, he was sorry that his plans had failed and his selfishness had come back on his own head.

Now the High Priest, getting desperate for fear they would lose this chance to get rid of Jesus, turned and asked Jesus point blank, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus had to answer or deny the truth of Who He was. He answered in the

words of our memory verse.

At this the high priest, pretending to be horrified, tore his robe. Now there was a law given of God that the Priest, because he represented God, was NEVER to tear his special priestly clothes. In fact if he did, he himself was to die for it! The rulers had made up a different rule of their own saying that it was OK if he did it for blasphemy. But God did not accept their rules. The High Priest himself was worthy to be executed but Jesus was condemned and led away.

Thought – We all need to learn Peter’s sad lesson, in our own selves we do NOT have the ability to be true to God. We MUST have the power of the Holy Spirit in us at all times or when things get tough, we will fall and be lost. That is why Jesus had warned them they needed to pray!

Tuesday

Text: John 18:28 “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.”

Here again we see more of the priest’s silly made up rules. They were busy murdering an innocent person and yet they were worried that if they went into a gentile’s house, they would be made unclean and not able to eat the Passover. How blind are people who turn away from the truth!!

Pilate came out on the porch to see what they wanted. They told him that they wanted to have this man put to death because He had said He was a king. Pilate looked at Jesus and saw that He was not a criminal. His heart was touched and he wanted to release Jesus.

He thought he could get out of the spot he was in by sending Jesus to Herod, and so Jesus was taken to Herod’s judgment hall. Herod asked questions and tried to get Jesus to work a miracle so he could see it. But

Jesus would not even speak to Herod. God had spoken to Herod many times through John the Baptist, and now there was no more to be said. Herod put an old kingly robe on Jesus and had the soldiers make fun of Him and then sent Him back to Pilate.

When Pilate saw Jesus brought back he was really upset. He did not want to condemn an innocent man. Right then also his wife sent him a warning message not to condemn Jesus because he was from God. But the mob shouted ‘Crucify Him, Crucify Him! We have no king but Caesar!’

Then Pilate had Jesus beaten and intended to let Him go. He even brought out Barabas, the worst criminal in the prison and asked the people to choose between him and Jesus. But the people chose Barabas and yelled for Jesus to be crucified.

Pilate asked for a basin of water and washed his hands to show he was not guilty of the blood of Jesus. The people all yelled, “His blood be on us and on our children!” Every word is recorded in the Bible but also in the books of heaven. What a terrible guilt then rested both on Pilate and the people and rulers!

During these false trials Jesus patiently bore all the shame and cruelty that Satan could get his slaves to pour out on Jesus. They mocked Him and spat on Him. Our messenger, Ellen White, actually was shown this and she saw Him quietly put up His hand and wipe the spit from His face and yet show no anger.

Finally Pilate gave them the paper they needed and ordered Jesus to be crucified, as they demanded.

Thought – Pilate was a coward. He allowed these demon possessed men to ‘force’ him into doing what he knew was wrong. His washing his hands did not take his guilt away. And the very thing he feared happened to him any way, he lost his position. Miserable to its close was the life of Pilate. Despair and anguish crushed every hopeful, joyful feeling. He refused to be comforted and died a most miserable death.

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 27:29-31 “And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.”

Jesus had been through the terrible struggle in the garden; there if the Angel had not strengthened Him, He would have died. Now He had been all night being mocked and shoved around by the mob. Twice he had been beaten and now a thorny crown was jammed onto His head. And yet through it all He remained calm and quiet: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Isa 53:7

Then as He was led out now, the heavy cross placed on His back to carry to the place of execution. But now humanity gives way and He falls to the ground fainting. Twice He struggles to carry the cross, but falls fainting. Then the soldiers grabbed a man named Simon and forced him to carry the cross, as none of the Jews would do it for fear they would become ‘unclean’.

Now God could have given Jesus power to carry that cross all Himself, but He did not. Why? There is a lesson here. While it is true that Jesus paid the price to open up the way of salvation to sinful mankind, yet there is a work that we must do if we would be saved by what Jesus did for us. WE must be willing to bear the cross and follow Jesus. We must accept the shame and reproach and be willing to follow the humble road of obedience all the way, no matter what it costs.

When they came to Calvary, the two thieves

struggled and cursed as they were bound to their crosses and nailed, but Jesus meekly allowed His hands to be spread out and the cruel nails driven through them. The only words He spoke were, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!” This prayer included all of us. Did you know that every time we choose to go our own way and disobey God, it is like we crucify Jesus over again? And Jesus stands before the Throne of God and pleads His blood saying, “Father forgive them.”

During the hours that Jesus hung dying on the cross, Satan worked through the minds of wicked men and they made fun of Him and laughed and jeered at Him. We are told that Satan and some of his wicked angels even appeared as men in that crowd and joined in the mockery.

They said that if Jesus came down from the cross, then they would believe Him. Another thing they said is very true: “He saved others, Himself He cannot save.” Yes, to save us, Jesus had to give all Himself, and bear all Himself. “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me.” Isa 63:3. He could not save Himself and us too.

Thought – Never once did Jesus complain or murmur through all this time of suffering. As the old song says, “They crucified my Lord, and He never said a mumbling word!” Remember that when you are tempted to complain.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 27:50-53 “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

At exactly the time when the Priest in the temple was about to slay the special Pass-over Lamb, Jesus cried loudly, "It is finished", and bowed His head and died. This was three o'clock in the afternoon, (called the fifteenth hour in the Bible). The huge, heavy curtain in the Temple that hung between the Holy and Most Holy place and could be seen through the Holy Place from outside, was suddenly torn from top to bottom with a loud sound and the earth shook. The lamb escaped in the confusion and ran away.

Never again would the feast days or animal sacrifices have any meaning before God, because Jesus, the Lamb of God was sacrificed for mankind. Now we can study those old ceremonies as they were given to Israel by God and we can learn things about the Plan of Salvation as we do, but if we actually try to celebrate those old feasts, it is the same as if we say, "I am still looking for a Messiah, Jesus is not my Messiah."

A little later in the evening, the priests and rulers decided they wanted those bodies taken down off the crosses so they wouldn't be hanging there on the Sabbath as the Passover sabbath and the weekly Sabbath that year were on the same day and that made it doubly holy. It was called 'an High Day'. So they asked Pilate that the three men on the cross might have their deaths hastened.

He agreed and sent a soldier to break the legs of the two thieves. Because they had to use their legs when on the cross to lift up enough to breath, this caused them to quickly die. But when they came to Jesus, they found He was already dead. This was amazing as death on the cross usually took many days.

The soldier did not break His legs, but instead pierced His side with a spear and two separate streams flowed out, dark blood and clear water. This showed that Jesus did not die of crucifixion, but of a broken heart.

Now the disciples were in a bad spot. They wanted their beloved Master to be placed in an honorable tomb, but there was

no way they could arrange for this to happen. Now it was that two secret friends of Jesus among the Rulers came to the rescue. Joseph of Arimathea went and begged Pilate for the body of Jesus and after sending a soldier to make sure Jesus was indeed dead, he let the body go to this man.

Nicodemus, another rich man, who had come to see Jesus secretly at night, also came forward to help. Soon Jesus was lovingly taken down from the cross and placed in Joseph's new tomb.

All this was done hurriedly for the Sabbath began at sundown. After laying Jesus to rest, all returned home to rest over the Sabbath hours.

Thought – He could have called ten thousand angels, to destroy the world, and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels-but He died alone for you and me!

Friday

Text: Matthew 27:62, 63 "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again."

It is the Sabbath, the special 'High-day' Sabbath and yet the chief priests are thinking about something besides worshipping. Indeed they are so worried about it that they go on the Sabbath right over to the palace of Pilate and go in to ask him a favor. So much for their silly man-made rules of holiness!

They remember that Jesus said He would rise the third day and they were afraid the disciples would steal the body and claim Jesus had risen. Actually Satan was very much involved with this whole business as He was hoping to keep Jesus in that tomb forever! He had legions of his evil angels around that tomb already.

Pilate gave the order and told them to seal the tomb and station Roman soldiers

around it. Like Satan, they all hoped Jesus would remain forever dead.

Strange the disciples did not remember these words of Jesus until much later. Instead they were huddled in the upper room where just hours before they had eaten the Last Supper with their Master. Shocked and sorrowful, they didn't know what to think, and were afraid the Jewish leaders would kill them next.

The third day began at Sabbath sunset. The night settled down and the hours of darkness passed away. The Roman soldiers faithfully stood their watch guarding the tomb. Satan and his nasty bunch also crowded around, invisible to human eyes.

Suddenly before the dawn, a mighty angel was sent from the heavenly courts. Like a flash of lightning he comes in visible form to the tomb. At the sight of him the guards fall to the earth like dead men and yet they can see what is happening! Even Satan and his angels scatter in terror from the presence of that heavenly messenger.

Seizing the huge stone, he rolls it away like a pebble and then sits on it. His voice rings through the darkness, "Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee." They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, "I am the resurrection, and the life." As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host

bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.

After this bright scene has passed, the trembling soldiers stagger to their feet and hurry off to carry the story to Pilate. Before they can get to Pilate however, the chief Priests get the news and call them in to tell them about it first.

After the soldiers tell the story they are about to go to Pilate and tell him too, but the priests urge them to lie instead and say that the disciples stole the body. The soldiers did not want to do this, but the priests offered them a lot of money until they agreed. Pilate was too smart to be fooled by this, and soon got the real story.

From that day until the ends of their lives, both those chief priests and Pilate lived in terror lest the risen Christ appear before them and accuse His murderers. They never knew another happy day or peaceful night.

But we can have happy days and peaceful nights if we accept Jesus as our Saviour because He is not still in Joseph's new tomb, He Is Risen! He is a Living Saviour!

Thought - He is risen from the dead, and we have a living Saviour today who is making intercession for us. Then talk of His love, talk of His power, praise Him. If you have a voice to say anything, talk of God, talk of heaven, talk of eternal life. = ^ .. ^ =

