

temperance FOR CHILDREN

Bible Lesson Quarterly

Year 1 - 4th Quarter - "BIBLE PICTURE STORIES"

We are now going to learn some Bible Stories that use object lessons and find out what these Picture Stories teach us.

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: "BIBLE LADDERS"

MEMORY VERSE: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

2 Peter 1:5-7

Sunday

Text: Genesis 26:10,11 "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep."

We have heard the story of how Jacob, led on by his mother, cheated his older brother out of his birthright. When Esau his brother found out, he was angry and swore to kill Jacob. His mother fearing for her son had Jacob ask Isaac his father for permission to go to Haran, where his mother's family lived, to seek for a wife.

Now Jacob knew he had done wrong, and now his own brother wanted to kill him. He felt very bad as he set out on foot, with his staff in his hand to walk the many miles into another country. What was going to happen

to him? Would he be killed by robbers or fierce beasts? Would he ever see his family again?

He was sorry for what he had done also as he knew that God can never bless a lie. As he traveled he had to avoid places where people lived, for he feared they would report to his brother, and he would catch him and kill him.

Finally, tired out, he lay down on the ground to sleep, wrapping his coat around him and having nothing but a stone for a pillow. Have you ever tried a stone for a pillow? Not very cozy! He looked up at the starry heaven. If only he could know that God had not forsaken him, but how could God bless a cheat?

Thought - Even though lying and cheating may seem to help at the moment, they always bring sorrow and regret.

Monday

Text: Genesis 28:12 “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

With these thoughts in his mind he had dropped off to sleep. All at once he saw a bright and amazing sight! A shining ladder with its base near him and its top going up and up— all the way to God in heaven. Lovely angels were travelling up and down on that ladder.

At the top he could see a glorious being surrounded by light. He spoke to Jacob and said “I am the LORD God of your father Abraham and Isaac.” God told the lonely young man that the land he was lying on would belong someday to his children and he told him, “and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

This was the covenant promise that had come to Abraham! The promise that the Messiah, the promised seed of the woman, would come through his descendants. Jacob was amazed. How could God be willing to bless him after the wicked things he had done?

God also promised (see verse 15), “And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

Hope and courage sprang up in Jacob’s heart as he heard this promise—and also a deep love for God.

Thought - Jesus is always near to His children at the very times they feel the most lonely and sad. The important thing was that Jacob was truly sorry for his sin.

Tuesday

Text: Genesis 28:16, 17 “And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

You will notice that when Jacob woke up, he felt afraid and humbled. We do not see him jump up and start shouting and clapping and jumping around. When people really see an angel of God, or are shown something by God, they feel great awe. They want to bow down and worship in humble silence. People that are proud and boastful—do not know God.

Jacob was greatly encouraged by the dream, and his heart was given hope. He could see that there was a way of salvation for sinners like himself. In his heart he realized that the shining ladder represented the promised Saviour of the world, providing a link joining earth to the very throne of God.

“That night Jacob, the petted son of his mother, experienced the new birth and became a child of God. In his discouraged state the light that came to him was regarded as most precious, and the hard stone on which his head rested, the most desirable on which his head had ever rested.” 10MR PG- 263

Thought - Only through Jesus becoming our Saviour could there be any hope that sinful man could return to the presence of God. Jesus is that wonderful ladder that reaches from the lowest place that man can fall into— to the very throne of God.

Wednesday

Text: Genesis 28:18-22 “And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel (that is, The house of God) And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the LORD be my

God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

When morning came, Jacob still thrilled with the wonderful message from God; set up the stone he had slept on as a monument to the goodness of God. He made a vow to serve God always and to honour Him in all things and return a tithe to God. Jacob was not trying to bargain with God, No! God had already promised to bless him; his heart was filled with love for the God of heaven who would care about a lonely, castaway like him. He made the promise to serve this wonderful God always and in all ways.

If Jacob had not repented of his sin, God could not have blessed him. But as soon as Jacob had seen the wrong of what he had done and was humble and sorry; God showed him the wonderful ladder, meaning that God had agreed to have Jesus make a bridge for the sinner.

"We might have looked and said, I long for heaven but how can I reach it? I see no way. That is what Jacob thought, and so God shows him the vision of the ladder, and that ladder connects earth with heaven, with Jesus Christ. A man can climb it, for the base rests upon the earth and the top-most round reaches into heaven. . Ye inhabitants of the earth, praise Him! And why? Because through Jesus Christ—whose long human arm encircles the race, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite—the gulf is bridged with His own body, and this atom of a world which was separated from the continent of heaven by sin and became an island is again reinstated, because Christ bridged the gulf" (MS 5,1891).

All this was revealed to Jacob in his dream. And all of his life, by thinking on what God had showed him, he learned more and more about salvation.

Thought - At the very time when Jacob was most discouraged, God sent him the wonderful message of salvation.

Thursday

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7 "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

This is called 'Peter's Ladder'; but Jesus is the ladder. Jesus lived a perfect life while on this earth, in Him was found all these wonderful traits and He makes them available to us!

"Christ . . . is the ladder. The base is planted firmly on the earth in His humanity; the topmost round reaches to the throne of God in His divinity. The humanity of Christ embraces fallen humanity, while His divinity lays hold upon the throne of God. We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder. All these graces are to be manifested in the Christian character; and "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Maranatha 84

The ladder is the way God can communicate to man. Jacob saw the gospel when he saw that ladder. As the ladder stretched from earth, reaching to the highest heavens, and the glory of God was seen above the ladder, so Jesus in His divine nature reached to heaven and was one with the Father. As the ladder, though its top reached heaven, had its base upon the earth, so Jesus, though He was God, clothed His divinity with humanity and was in the world "found in fashion as a man." The ladder would be useless

if it did not come all the way down to earth or if it did not reach all the way to heaven.

Thought - Some people try to tell us that Jesus did not have the same kind of human flesh that we have- He was special and could not sin. Well, then He could not be our ladder! If the ladder did not reach all the way down to us, we could not be saved.

Friday

Text: 2 Peter 1:10,11 “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Sometimes when we read texts like these, we say to ourselves, “Well I must try hard and do all these things”. But we can’t do them! There is no real good in man’s heart at all—without the Saviour. He is the ONLY ladder to heaven. The ONLY way anyone can have these good things in his heart is by turning his life over to Jesus and saying, “There is no good thing in me, Lord, but You lived a perfect life here on earth. I want You to live that perfect life in me. I choose to be like You, and I need You to take away my bad heart and put Your good heart in me. Write your laws in my heart and send Your Holy Spirit to teach me and give me power to live like You.”

You see, when we try to live a good life without choosing to have Jesus live in our hearts, it is like we try to go to heaven—without the Ladder!

I live in a 3-story building; suppose I said to you, “Go up on the roof because I put something nice for you up there. Go get it.”

You would have no way to get to that roof; you could not climb the sides of the building; you could not jump that high; you would be helpless to get the treat on the roof.

But if I come to you with a nice high ladder, reaching all the way to the roof, and I

put it in place, good and solid, then you can climb up on that ladder all the way to the top and get the good things.

You would be silly if you said to me, “Oh, I don’t need your ladder; I’ll just keep jumping, and if I try hard enough for long enough, I will be able to jump all the way to the top! You watch, each day I will be able to jump just a bit higher, and by and by, I will get to that roof in my own strength. Away with your old ladder!”

Now that is just what people do when they think they can live a good life without surrendering first to Jesus, they can jump a little bit, maybe with practice they can jump a little bit higher; but without the Ladder, they just fall back again.

Thought - Jesus does not only forgive our sins; He can ‘take away’ our sins but we have to choose to let Him do it. The Ladder is there— it goes all the way down to you and reaches all the way up to God. That Ladder is solid and that Ladder is your Saviour!
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Weekly Bible Lesson #2: "BIRDS"

MEMORY VERSE: "But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Luke 12:7

Sunday

Text: Matthew 10:29-31 "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Think of it, not one of these little brown sparrows that are singing their praises to God will fall to the ground without the notice of the heavenly Father. Not one of these little brown sparrows that the boys so ruthlessly kill, drops to the ground but His eye marks its fall.

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Satan's hatred against God leads him to hate every object of the Saviour's care. He seeks to mar the handiwork of God, and he delights in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God's protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

When people hurt and kill God's little creatures, it makes Jesus very sad. Cruelty is the Devil's trademark. When people enjoy torturing and killing living things, they are showing they are the children of Satan, who was a murderer and tormenter from the beginning of the world.

Never take part in any kind of cruelty, and if you see it, do your best to stop it. Remember that God sees it all, and the Holy Watchers keep a record. If you know someone who is cruel, it might be a good idea to tell them that the angels are watching. Those who are cruel will reap cruelty in their own lives.

Thought - If you have a pet, always make

sure that you are kind to it and care for it faithfully. God watches these things.

Monday

Text: Leviticus 14:7 "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."

It is very interesting that Jesus talked about the price of sparrows when He was here. There had not been much interest in buying sparrows before Jesus began His ministry. But in Leviticus 14 we find that an offering of two sparrows was to be brought to the Priest for anyone who had been cleansed of leprosy. Before Jesus began cleansing the lepers, it had been thousands of years since someone had been cured of leprosy.

What was done with the two sparrows is most interesting. One bird was killed and its blood mixed with some running water: notice—blood and water! Then the live bird was dipped in the blood and water and set free.

Leprosy was a symbol of the horribleness of sin. Unless it was cured by a miracle, it would gradually eat away at the person, making him more and more ugly, until he died. The two birds represent the plan of salvation. Jesus died for us, and His blood is the sinner's only hope.

By dipping the live bird in the blood and water, it was shown that our sins can only be removed by Jesus' death on the cross. After that, the little bird went free! Can't you just see his joyful flight up into the sky and away?

Thought - It was because Jesus was curing lepers; an unheard of thing not considered possible; that sparrows were once again

being bought as offerings!

Tuesday

Text: Psalm 124:7 “Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.”
Proverbs 1:17 “Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.”

There are several places in the Bible where it talks about catching birds in nets or snares. People, who caught birds to sell for food, were called fowlers. Satan is like a cruel fowler, seeking to catch us in his nets and snares.

Notice this verse: “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler...” Psalms 91:3 Jesus wants to set us all free from the traps of Satan. But He can't do it unless we are willing to stop going after Satan's bait! He gives us the power of free choice, and if we choose to have that bait no matter what, we will be caught.

Jesus died to break the snare, as it says in the verse; He made a way of escape for us poor trapped birds.

But God has done even more, he has given us much counsel in the Bible and now in these last days, when we need so much more help, he has given us the Spirit of Prophecy writings. We have thousands of pages of information telling us all about the 'snares of the fowler'!

Notice it says that if the bird sees the man set the trap for him, he will not be caught in it. So we, by reading the inspired information, will be able to see those traps and, in Jesus' strength, stay away from them.

Thought - All the wonderful counsel in the world will not help us, if we do not read it, believe it, and obey it! We need to be wise birds!

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,

how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

What bird did Jesus call His people? Tiny chicks! The weakest and most helpless of all. And a mother hen, so faithful and loving to her babies that some people use her as a symbol of the best mother, stands for Jesus' care for us.

Gathering us all safe and warm under His wings, is what He wants to do for all of us. How kindly and full of goodness and mercy is our God, to use such an illustration! Tiny chicks are extremely alert to stay near their mother and run to her in time of danger.

In late afternoon as the sky is darkening somewhat, the mother hen calls to her little ones,—and they hurry to her! Then, leading them to a safe place, she crouches down somewhat, leaving just enough space beneath her for the chicks to hide securely. One by one, they press beneath her soft feathers.

This is what God wants to do for you and me. He wants us very close to Himself, where we will be safe. What a powerful truth this is! Psalms 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust:

Thought - The Jews of Jesus day had refused to come to Him and it was breaking His heart. We must learn to stay close to our dear Lord.

Thursday

Text: Deuteronomy 32:11 “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.”

Eagles build their nests way up in the high rocks and places where no danger can come to the babies. Like the hen, the mother eagle takes very good care of her babies.

Now when the time comes that the little ones need to learn to fly for themselves, she begins to encourage them in several ways.

When the nest is built, it is made of prickly branches, but it is all lined with soft grasses and fluff. Then when it is time for those babies to get flying, she 'stirs up her nest'. In other words she takes out the soft stuff and leaves the prickles.

She encourages the young to try to fly, by fluttering over the nest and calling to them; but it is scary for them. Then she will take the young bird on her back and sore up into the air. Then she will drop away from under it so it has to fly. If it has trouble she again will swoop under it and support it.

So God patiently teaches and protects His children. Sometimes also He has to 'stir up our nest' because we get settled into habits or situations that are not good for our spiritual growth. Then He will allow trials and difficulties to come to make us want to climb out of the prickles and onto His powerful back.

In Revelation 12:14 we see the persecuted church helped to fly as an eagle to a rugged and safe place. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

Thought - We all must individually be in the school of Jesus where He teaches us, each one, helping and guiding us as a mother eagle.

Friday

Text: Revelation 18:2 "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Here we see a very interesting, yet sad, word picture. Jesus is saying that 'Babylon', the churches that obey their leaders instead

of obeying God, has changed into a cage of nasty birds. 'Unclean and hateful birds' are things like vultures, and crows and sea gulls. They are noisy, smelly, and are always picking at each other and trying to bully each other.

Now wild birds that are this way can't help it, as that's the way they are made. But people do not have to act like them. We have a choice!

You see, what has happened is that people have chosen to follow the rules made up by church leaders, and to obey church leaders instead of God's inspired words. Mark 7:7 "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." When they do this, they begin to fight among themselves, each trying to be the boss, or more important than the other. Those who will not surrender and obey God, become slaves to each other and everything else!

Like carrion and killer birds, they make their living by picking and tearing at their fellow birds. Religious leaders do this by trying to force all the people in the church to obey them, and they take the money from the people and use it for their own purposes. Instead of being humble servants, like Jesus was, to the people, they become vultures, getting fat off their fellow birds.

God's true children are a very different kind of bird. God says: Jeremiah 12:9 "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her;"

When the unclean and hateful birds see the different and peculiar people that Jesus wants His children to be— faithful and obeying Him, they persecute them.

Thought - Remember that although we can learn from and with each other, no person can tell you how to serve the Lord; each one of us must learn from God for ourselves, and obey Him. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #3: "SHEEP AND GOATS"

MEMORY VERSE: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10:11

Sunday

Text: Psalm 78:52 "But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock."

When Jesus gave us a symbol to represent His people, He did not select a powerful beast like a tiger or elephant, nor even one that is cunning and resourceful, like the fox. Of all the animals to represent His people, God chose the sheep. It is quite well known that the sheep is one of the most defenceless of all creatures. Indeed, it should long ago have been slain by its enemies. However, God gave the sheep the warmest and sturdiest of all fur— wool. And He placed it in massive amounts on the sheep. That wool is highly valued.

The Lord did this; so shepherds would from the most ancient times, care for the sheep. Without such tender care, the flock would die. The sheep senses its utter dependence on the shepherd, and meekly lets him lead it from place to place.

To make things worse, the sheep does not know how to protect the grass it eats. Unlike other grass eaters, sheep will quickly overgraze and ruin a pasture. You cannot just put a flock in a pen near your house, as you could with other farm animals. Sheep require too much space. So the shepherd must constantly go before them, leading them to new sources of food. This means that new streams and water holes have to be found. The shepherd must spend his full time providing for all their needs.

"As the shepherd leads his flock over the rocky hills, through forest and wild ravines, to grassy nooks by the riverside; as he watches them on the mountains through the lonely night, shielding from robbers, caring tenderly for the sickly and feeble, his life comes to be one with theirs. A strong and

tender attachment unites him to the objects of his care. However large the flock, the shepherd knows every sheep. Every one has its name, and responds to the name at the shepherd's call."—Desire of Ages, 479.

Thought - We are like sheep. We cannot make it alone. We need God's help —every moment of every day.

Monday

Text: Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

However, sheep can be very stubborn and can stray away from the Shepherd, and there is nothing more helpless than a sheep out in the world alone.

Years ago, when a friend of mine, and his family lived in southern Illinois, they made the acquaintance of a nearby family that had sheep. We were amazed to learn that an adult sheep is so defenseless that, if a passing coyote jumps up on its side, the sheep will fall over sideways—and cannot thereafter get back on its feet! Its heavy coat of wool makes its sides so rounded, it will lay there with its feet off the ground until it dies.

As our text says, Jesus had to pay the price of all our foolishness, sinful and stubborn ways. He is our Good Shepherd and He did give His life for His sheep!

Is there ever a time when you know in your heart what is the right thing to do and you just won't do it? Are there ever times when Mommy or Daddy asks you to do something, and even explains to you how important that it is, and yet you still won't obey? Well, that is the stubborn spirit of Satan, that has been in people ever since Adam and Eve obeyed the serpent instead of God. As soon as Eve knew God forbade one tree—

that was the tree she was interested in.

But when we remember that our parents love us and we love them, we will gladly obey. Just so Jesus showed His great Love by suffering and dying for us and when we remember how much He loves us, we will want to do right, just because it is right.

Thought - We must all choose to ask Jesus to remove our stubborn and selfish ways, so the Good Shepherd can lead us.

Tuesday

Text: Ezekiel 34:12 “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.”

Sheep can become lost; and, when a predator comes, they may scatter in fear. Unless they are found by the Shepherd and brought back to the safety of His care, they will perish when the predators come out at night.

There is a song that says: “My soul is lost; so lonely and so cold; just like a lamb, that has strayed from the fold; across the barren waste of sin I roam; Oh Tender Shepherd, hear my cry, and lead me home!

And He will lead us home! The Holy Spirit seeks tirelessly to guide all people to follow the Good Shepherd.

“In the parable, the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep —the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one. “Christ’s Object Lessons, 187.

Thought -There is one thing different about us than a sheep; we have free choice and that’s why there will be people lost. The Shepherd does his part, but they refuse to do theirs.

Wednesday

Text: Exodus 3:1 “Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the

priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.”

Remember the story of Moses? He was sure he knew how to deliver the Hebrews from Egypt. He had been trained as a general of armies; no doubt he knew martial arts. He went out one day and saw an Egyptian being horribly cruel to a Hebrew slave and he thought he’d better get started ‘doing God’s work’—he killed the cruel man.

But everything backfired on him, and soon he found himself way out in the wilderness caring for a flock of sheep— of all things! God saw that Moses had a lot to learn about doing God’s work, and the sheep were the ones to teach it to him. Gradually, during 40 years, his attitudes began to change.

The very helplessness and defenselessness of sheep appeal to the heart of a born shepherd. The goats; they want none of him. But the sheep repay affection. The exiled shepherd recognized humanlike traits in sheep personalities, and he found himself understanding God better.

When Moses finally was called by God to go and ‘do His work’; rescue the Hebrews from Egypt; he was not at all like he was before! Now he was meek and quiet, humble and teachable. The interesting thing is now, when God was calling him, he told God he could not do the job!

This is something to remember; people who are all excited and bold, boasting their plans for ‘doing God’s work’, cannot be used of God! You will always find God’s true workers are meek and know they can do nothing themselves, so they lean on God. Then He can use them.

Thought - It is when a person is sure that he can do nothing for God, that God begins to use them.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 25:31-33 “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels With Him, then shall He sit

upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.”

In the final judgment, Jesus, Himself — the great Master Shepherd,—will separate the sheep from the goats. Why does He prefer the sheep over the goats? Surely, the goats are more capable!

Goats are the most independent of all grass eating livestock. They are so independent, that it is hard to keep them in enclosures. While goats can take care of themselves, the sheep cannot. They look to their shepherd to care for them.

Goats go through a lifetime managing their own lives. They break out of fences, and do whatever they are inclined to do. Much of the time it seems to be the wrong thing. But the sheep, ever on the brink of disaster from predators, spend a lifetime of conscious dependence on the shepherd.

Although it can and does get lost, the sheep knows enough not to run away from the shepherd tending it (unless the arrival of the wolf suddenly frightens it).

Goats are stubborn delinquents; sheep are submissive children, ever ready to be guided by their master. Of all the animals in the world, they alone have a special child-parent relationship with the person caring for them.

Thought - Love begins with the shepherd; the sheep isn't worth loving; it only needs loving. Goats are a lot more attractive than sheep. But the sheep learn to love the shepherd, while the goats love themselves.

Friday

Text: Revelation 5: 5,6 “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold,

the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

Some of us may say, “Now, Here’s an animal that I want to be like! A Lion! Fierce, powerful, nobody needs to take care of him!” Our Saviour is also called the Lion of Judah, but when John turned quickly to see that fierce Lion— what did he see? A lamb! And what is more helpless then a lamb? And yet it was even worse—this lamb was wounded and dying. It’s head hung down and blood flowed from its wounds. What could a wounded lamb do to help anyone?

Yet it was by becoming one of us, one of His sheep— that the Shepherd paid for our salvation. It was the path to the mountain of Calvary that the Shepherd took to find that lost sheep. The Lion could only be powerful to save us, by becoming a slain lamb.

But what a wonderful lamb this is! It has seven eyes and seven horns. This means it has all knowledge and all power. And yet it is meek and lowly, humbly obedient to God.

In this we see Jesus who was 100% God, becoming 100% man and as a man dependent upon the power of His Father, to live a sinless life. And He did it! The Lion/Lamb defeated Satan, and lived a perfect life. And the good news is— He wants you to have that life for your own.

Thought - Just tell Jesus, “Yes, I want to be your little lamb. Teach me Your ways, and write Your laws in my heart, so I can be like You. Let me always follow my Good Shepherd!” = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #4: "TREES"

MEMORY VERSE: "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalm 1:3

Sunday

Text: Jeremiah 17:7,8 "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

You can find this picture-story in our memory verse, Psalms 1:3, and it is showing us what the life of a true Christian, who has given their whole heart to Jesus will be like.

In good times or in hard times, he will keep trusting in Jesus and as he does, Jesus will give him strength for each day and what ever problems he has to face.

A true Christian does not fall to pieces when things don't seem to go right for him. He remembers the promise in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God..." and he just hangs on to Jesus knowing that our Lord will not lead us in anyway that is not best for us.

He keeps 'yielding fruit' – that is he stays sweet and kind, patient and courteous even when having a hard time. One who truly belongs to Jesus will not be grouchy and mean just because he doesn't feel well.

Thought - There is never an excuse for us to be mean or grouchy; think about all Jesus suffered, and never lost His temper! He will give us power to be like Him.

Monday

Text: Luke 13:6 "He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted

in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none."

The fig tree was one of the symbols Jesus used to show what his people were to be like. This kind of tree is interesting because, each year, it makes its fruit before it makes its leaves. This shows we are to be obedient and doing good deeds in our life and not just showing off.

In Jesus' ministry, He told a story about a man who had a fig tree and it didn't grow any figs. He was going to cut it down, but his servant said, lets give it special care and see if it gives figs next year—and if not—we will cut it down.

At the very end of Jesus' ministry, the disciples and he were walking and he saw a fig tree covered with leaves— now there should be figs on it because the figs come first. But when Jesus looked— there was none!

Then He did a strange thing, He told the tree that never would it have figs again. And the very next day the disciples saw the tree all dried up and dead!

Jesus was showing them the end of the fig tree story—even with the extra care; the tree still had no fruit, only show-off leaves. So it was cursed, and withered away.

Thought - Many people seem to be good Christians when you hear them talk; but when you look at their lives, you see no good fruit.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 24:32 "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh."

In this lesson, Jesus was telling the

people that they needed to pay attention to the things that were happening and see what they meant according to what the Bible had said would happen.

The scriptures had many prophecies telling what was to happen when the Messiah came to earth. Isaiah in Chapter 53, told how He would be rejected; other verses in Psalms and prophets told what He would do and how the leaders would reject Him.

If the people and leaders had been studying their Bibles, as they should, they would have recognized their Messiah. The few people who did study for themselves, did see in Jesus the long looked-for Redeemer.

In our day there are also many signs that show that it is soon time for Jesus second coming. Sin is increasing, wars and trouble are everywhere, most people don't care about what God says and live selfish lives; the churches are all trying to force people to obey the church leaders instead of the Bible; all these things show that we are near the end of time. People who read the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy for themselves, see and know what is coming. But those who just listen to what other people and preachers tell them, don't see it.

Thought - For thousands of years, Israel waited for the Messiah; and when He came, they didn't know Him: We must know our Bibles so we won't be fooled like they were.

Wednesday

Text: Genesis 3:7 "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

The first time we see fig leaves mentioned in the Bible, Adam and Eve after they had sinned, were trying to use leaves to cover themselves up with. You see, they had a lovely robe of light God gave them to wear; but when they disobeyed God, the light went away. They tried to make something to take its place.

Fig leaves, in the aprons they made, and

later on the fruitless tree, meant man trying to save himself without God; something that was no-good and could not work. Just imagine wearing a bunch of leaves to school; before the day was over they'd just shrivel up and leave you bare.

That is just the way it is when people try to follow religions of their own, instead of learning what the Bible says— sooner or later it all shrivels up and leaves you bare!

It is interesting how much the fig tree is mentioned in the Bible. It was a very important source of food for the people. In fact we are told in heaven we will each have our own fig tree. (Zechariah 3:10.)

According to the rabbis the first choice for altar fuel was fig-wood, although fir, walnut and other trees might be used when necessary. The fig log fire burning the lamb on the altar showed the sins of God's people, which "burned" the Lamb of God.

Thought - If we want to be saved, we must do it God's way, our own ideas won't work.

Thursday

Text: Luke 13:19 "It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."

Jesus told this picture story when the disciples asked him to give them more faith. He explained that God gives each person some faith. This faith is a living thing like a little mustard seed; which is a small round seed. When the mustard seed is placed in the ground where it has water and earth and sunshine, it starts to grow! Up and up it grows until the mustard plant is like a small tree and the birds can perch on it.

So with the faith that God gives each one of us; it is small but it has life in it when it is based on God's Word, the Bible, and when we take hold of the things God has given us to help us grow; the Bible; Prayer; believing

in Him; claiming His promises for us; choosing His ways, then our faith will grow until it can be like a tree.

This also shows that when we first meet Jesus, He may not be a very important part of our life, but as we learn more about Him and come closer to Him, soon He will be the most important thing in our whole lives!

Thought - Faith grows as we exercise it. We exercise it by choosing to believe God's word is true and acting on it!

Friday

Text: 1 Kings 19:4 "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

Elijah was discouraged, so he sat under a juniper tree. Have you ever seen a juniper tree? They are scratchy and prickly and low to the ground. Here poor Elijah was crawled under the juniper, so discouraged he wanted to die! And this was on the same day he had prayed and God had answered his prayers in an amazing way on Mount Carmel.

But God did not get angry with Elijah, He actually sent an angel who spoke kindly and made dinner for him, then Elijah had a sleep, and the angel made some more dinner for him. Then Elijah felt stronger and traveled to the Mountain Horeb, and hid in a cave.

God then gave him a very important lesson. He asked Elijah why he was there hiding in the cave. God had not told him to do that. And Elijah told God that all the true worshippers of God were gone and there was only Elijah left.

God then told him, I have 7,000 people who have not worshipped Baal, the idol.

Elijah did not know this, and he was encouraged.

Sometimes when we are discouraged because when we choose to do right and follow Jesus all the way, our friends make fun of us, and leave us, and we feel all alone. But when you are under your 'juniper tree', remember that there are many others who also love and obey Jesus, and also there are all the good angels, and millions of people on other worlds who obey God and love Jesus. They are all on your side. And God is on your side— if God is on your side, that's all that matters!

When you have to stand alone for the right— remember God would send all the angels out of heaven to come and help you rather than have you captured by old Satan!

And remember that Jesus is patient with us, like He was with Elijah under the juniper tree. He knows when it is hard for us, tell your troubles to Him and He will always help you!

Thought - We are never alone if we give our hearts to Jesus. One person with God is a majority! = ^ .. ^ =



Weekly Bible Lesson #5: "WATER"

MEMORY VERSE: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17

Sunday

Text: John 4:14 "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."

Jesus compares Himself and His truth with Water—the water of life!

John 6:35 "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."

Water is the second most important thing for our life. Air is the most important; we die in minutes if we can't breathe. But we die in only a couple days if we have nothing to drink.

Think about what it is like to be really thirsty. Most of us have been thirsty at times, but few really desperately so. There is an old song I used to like when I was little, about a man lost in the desert and searching for water to keep himself and his donkey alive. It tells about how he had thought he saw water and it was only a mirage; it wasn't really there.

If you look at hot pavement on a hot summer day at just a certain angle; you will sometimes see what looks like a pool of water there, but when you go closer it goes on ahead. That is a mirage.

The man in the song said it was the devil that put the mirage there to fool a poor lost man. And you know, he is right! The devil puts many mirages in our world today, and poor lost people longing for the real water of life to save their poor lost souls, wander from one idea to another.

They think they have found the real thing, but it leaves them more lost and thirsty than

ever before, and they go to something else. What they need, what we all need is Jesus! Once we really find Him and drink deep of His salvation, we don't chase mirages anymore!

Thought - We must find Jesus for ourselves and then when we really know Him we must show others what He is like, in both our word and our deeds, then some thirsty ones will see the real water and come to it!

Monday

Text: Exodus 19:10 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes."

The saying, 'Cleanliness is next to godliness' is not in the Bible, but if you read the careful instruction given to the children of Israel by the Lord in regard to keeping their body, clothing, and surroundings clean and neat, you will clearly see that anyone who is obedient to God, will have habits of cleanliness and order. To come before God in dirty clothes or with dirty bodies is an offence to Him.

Also when we realize that we have holy angels with us, when we belong to Jesus, and they come from heaven where all is clean and orderly, we will want to do our best to have this in our homes as well.

In our text the children of Israel were getting ready for the Lord to come and speak to them. They were told to make everything bright and clean. They prepared like they would if a great King were coming to visit.

You know, we are to be children of the Heavenly King; He wants to visit with us every day, and the Holy Spirit and the Holy angels want to be with us all the time. And

we need them all the time! It is only by the power of heaven that we can be changed and made ready for a place in heaven.

So we will want our homes, our rooms and our bodies to be as fresh and clean and tidy as possible so the heavenly family will enjoy being with us.

There is an extra special time when Heaven is close to us; do you know when that is? Yes, it is the Sabbath Day! So especially for that day, we should have everything very nice, like you would if you got a call from Jesus saying He was coming to spend the day with you; you would make everything neat and nice wouldn't you?

Thought - Remember that Jesus and the angels are with you always and especially on Sabbath He comes close to bless us.

Tuesday

Text: Revelation 22:1 "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Can you even imagine what that water is going to be like? None of us have any idea how wonderful it will be. I once read about when the first white explorers found the Great Lakes (Canada) that the water was crystal clear and you could see down to great depths in it, we can't even imagine it. We have no idea how lovely the water in heaven and the New Earth will be!

It is pure water that Jesus says is like Him and His truth. Pure water is hard to find in our dirty old earth, so people who want to be healthy, drink distilled water because it has all the bad things taken out. You can get real sick if you drink bad water.

If you wash your clothes in muddy water, they will be worse won't they? So the false religious ideas of churches and religions often leave a sinner worse than he was before!

So where do we find that pure water to wash away all our badness and sins? It says right in the text; it comes from the throne of

God and the Lamb! We find it in the inspired writings of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. All other worldly things have impurities mixed in, and they can make us spiritually sick. We need that pure water of life from Jesus.

Thought - In Jesus' time on earth, He taught from the pure Bible truths, but people back then were so used to hearing from the false teachers, they thought His words were strange and new.

Wednesday

Text: Philippians 2:8 "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Jesus likens Himself to the 'Water of Life'. There are many things we can learn from this idea. Water is cleansing; Jesus cleanses us from sin. Water is essential to life; Jesus is essential for eternal life.

Now what does this text have to do with water, you ask? Well there is something very special about water. If you pour a glass of water on your table, what will it do? It will run off the edges, right?

Water always seeks the lowest place; it cheerfully and without complaint, quickly goes to the 'lowest room'. Jesus is the meek and lowly One; He is the humble God, who came down to the very depths to reach His fallen children.

When we are imbued with His spirit, we will never be found seeking the highest place, but like the water, singing with joy we will seek the way of lowly service.

If you have ever sat beside a sparkling, splashing stream, you have seen another spiritual lesson from water. When flowing over rocks and rough places, water sings joyously. So may we rejoice in troubles and hard times as well as when skies are bright.

When you are near flowing water in a falls or fountain, this singing, joyous water seeking the lowest place, gives a healthy, fresh

feeling to all around it. So the life of Jesus, and his true children filled with His Spirit, has a heavenly and refreshing effect on all around, if they do not harden their hearts to this blessing.

Thought - When Jesus lives in our hearts we will be humble and helpful, cheery and a blessing to those around us.

Thursday

Text: Genesis 2:10 "And a river went out of Eden and watered the garden."

James 5:7 "Behold, the husbandman (gardener) waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

If you have a garden, you know that it needs to be watered by rain or in some way or it will dry up and die, won't it? Well The Bible promises us a special kind of rain. God calls the Holy Spirit the 'Early and Latter RAIN'

We are God's garden and He sends the Holy Spirit, like rain to give us life and make us grow. Last week we learned about a tree that was always green and kept giving fruit. Why? Because it was planted by living waters and never dried out.

After Jesus went back to heaven, He sent a special gift of the Holy Spirit to be with all His true followers. It was called the 'Early Rain'. He never took it away again, but it is to come to everybody who truly repents and is born again, giving their whole hearts to Jesus. This 'Rain' comes into our hearts, and works to cause us to grow and bear good fruit.

If we don't have the 'Early Rain' in our lives, we are like old dried up sticks. Many people that think they are Christians, are just dried up sticks in the Garden of God. Why? Because they have never, ever given ALL their lives and hearts to Him; they are just fooling themselves.

If you don't know for sure that you have the Holy Spirit inside your heart, helping you to get rid of sin, and teaching you to be more

and more like Jesus, then you need to pray and ask Jesus for it. Jesus wants to give us all blessings, but we must want them, and ask for them. Ask Him to show you if there is anything in your life that would stop the Holy Spirit from coming into your heart. If there is, ask Him to help you get it out of your life.

Thought - It is through the Holy Spirit "Rain" that Jesus lives in our hearts and makes us ready for Heaven.

Friday

Text: Zechariah 10:1 "Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."

Soon there is going to come a very special time in this old world's history. Soon there is going to be a group of people who really, truly love Jesus and have given all their hearts to Him. They will not want the things of this earth, that would stop them from belonging completely to Jesus.

They will not want entertainment and sports; they will not want parties and silly stories; they will not want fiction and cartoons. Why? Because they will be really getting to know Jesus and His truth, and it will mean so much to them that they will just want more and more of Him. All these devil-delights will not interest them anymore.

Even though these people will have much trouble and persecution from those who do not really love Jesus with all their hearts, they will still be the happiest and most joyful people in the entire world. They won't want worldly things because they know it is just junk, that is soon going to be gone.

God is going to do something special for these people. He is going to send what is called the 'Latter RAIN' of the Holy Spirit. So they already have the Early Rain and this is what has helped them to become like Jesus, loving the heavenly things and hating

the worldly things; and now a special extra rain is sent to do two things: 1- get them ready to go to heaven; and 2- give them power to tell all the world about Jesus and His Law, one final time.

They will go everywhere telling all that they must surrender to Jesus and let Him make them into obedient children of God.

We need to be ready in our hearts for this special 'Rain'. And we need to ask 2 things: 1- Jesus make me ready and 2- Jesus send that special Rain because we really need it down here in this dark old world!

Thought - I choose to have those rains, both the Early Rain now and the Latter Rain when God decides it is time to send it— don't you? = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #6: "BREAD"

MEMORY VERSE: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51

Sunday

Text: John 6:33 "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

Just like we said last week about water, so it is about our bread or food; Few of us have ever been starving, but still we know when we are very hungry, food is very important to us. And the more hungry we get the more important it seems until it becomes the most important thing on our mind; I must have some food!

Jesus told the Jews some very interesting things about Bread. You find the story in John 6. He told them that He was the Living Bread and that if they wanted to live, they had to eat his Flesh and drink His blood.

They pretended not to understand what He meant, and got very angry with Him. But in their hearts, they did know what He meant; they knew His words had a spiritual meaning. They knew He was not telling them to be cannibals, He was telling them to take His Words into their hearts and let their lives be changed by His truth; but they did not want to listen to what He was telling them.

You see, the Jews for hundreds of years, had been teaching that when the Messiah would come, He would be a mighty King and Warrior, and He would set up His kingdom and rule the world, and they, the Jewish lead-

ers would be the most important people in all the world. They would be rich and powerful; and that is what they really wanted.

Now here was this poor, plain, gentle man telling them that all this idea of greatness was wrong, and that if they wanted to be in God's kingdom, they had to stop wanting to boss and rule others and stop wanting to be rich. OH! That made them so angry!! Because down in their hearts they knew He was right and they just would not accept it!

Did you know that when people get real angry when someone tells them something, it is a sure sign that down inside, they know it is true and they are wrong? Yes, anyone who gets raging angry, when people try to show them a wrong in their beliefs or lives, shows that Satan controls them. Remember this if you ever see it happen.

Thought - There are many Christians today who are looking for a great kingdom to be set up here on earth, with them as rulers in it: they are not happy when you show them the Bible says it will not happen.

Monday

Text: John 6:5 "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

We are going to see what lead to Jesus

telling the Jews that He was their Bread. You have heard the story; there was Jesus, teaching the people out in the hills. They were so interested in what Jesus was saying, that they stayed there for a long time listening and hardly noticed.

Many had come from a long distance, and there were also women and children there. Jesus knew if they had to go all the way back home with nothing to eat, they might faint. In our verse we see Jesus ask a disciple how he would get bread for the people. He was testing Philip's faith and Philip failed that test. He said that they didn't have enough money to buy that much bread, even if there was a bakery near-by.

The disciples still did not fully realize Who Jesus really was. He is the Creator, as God says in the Bible, "Is anything too hard for Me?" "How much food do we have?" Jesus asked them. "Only five little loaves and 2 baked fish", they said. Then Jesus asked the disciples to get the people sat down in an orderly way.

I'm sure the disciples looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders at that, but they had enough trust in their Master to obey. It is important that we have enough trust in Jesus to obey Him, even when we have no idea what to do or how to do it. It is nice to understand why, but we must obey even when we don't.

Thought - These people were so hungry for the Living bread, God's Truth from the lips of Jesus, that even their physical hunger was forgotten.

Tuesday

Text: John 6:11 "And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would."

First Jesus gave thanks for the food and blessed it; then he started handing it to the disciples, and they started passing it out to the people. It wasn't fancy, just plain nour-

ishing food. This was like Jesus' words to them; there was nothing fancy or new; just plain solid Truth from God's Holy Word.

When you are hungry, plain food tastes delicious! So when we really desire to know God's Truth with all our hearts, when we realize how important it is, and we really are hungry for it, Jesus words will be delicious to our hearts.

Notice Jesus gave thanks and asked blessings on what He had. When we remember to always ask God's blessing on whatever we have or do, it will make a big difference. As much difference as a small lunch compared to enough to feed a multitude!

As we study and learn from God's Word, we are given precious, living truths; 'Bread of Life' is ours and when we have it we are to pass it to others, so that all may be blessed. Not one of the disciples grabbed a loaf and went and sat by himself and ate it, no, they all did what Jesus said, and shared it, and then reached out their hands to Jesus for more. There was plenty for all.

Thought - The more we obey the truths of Jesus' Word and the more we seek to share these precious truths with others, the more we will receive from His hand.

Wednesday

Text: John 6:15 "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."

Now something interesting happened, and it helps us to see why working miracles is not the main way God uses to spread truth. These people who had just heard Jesus tell them that His kingdom was not to be set up in this world, forgot all that, and went back in their minds to the idea of a great earthly-king Messiah, and they decided to take Jesus and crown Him king, whether He liked it or not!

The disciples were thrilled! Here at last

their Master was getting recognized and because they too looked for an earthly kingdom, they were going right along with the idea. Jesus put a quick stop to all their plans, He told the people to go home, and He told His disciples to get in their boat and go to the other side of the lake. When Jesus commands, all obey; the shouts and excitement died away, and the people began to drift towards their distant homes.

Jesus went away by Himself to pray. The disciples waited at the boat and finally realized He wasn't coming, and they had better do what they were told and cross the lake. You all know the story about how they were grumbly and complaining that Jesus should have let Himself be made king. All at once a storm came up that took their minds off their complaints.

Later, when Jesus came walking on the water, they were afraid, but when they saw Him calm the sea, they realized He was the Son of God and they better not be telling Him how to do His work on earth.

Thought - In our world and churches today, there are many people who are trying to do 'God's work', but they don't want to do it in God's way. They end up working for Satan and not for God at all.

Thursday

Text: John 6:27 "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

The next day the people find Jesus on the other side of the sea and begin thinking about the miracles again. "Show us how to do these things", they ask. In other words, now they think He knows some magic tricks, and if He would just tell them the secret, they all could multiply food and never have to work anymore.

Jesus again tried to point them to the spiritual kingdom, he starts to explain that He is the 'Bread of Life' that the Father in

heaven has sent down to them. He is explaining that they need to take these truths into their lives and let their selfish hearts be changed.

Then they start saying, 'well, if you're so big, prove it to us by showing us a miracle.' They had just seen Him feed thousands of people from a little boy's lunch, and they knew that in some amazing way He had come across the lake without a boat; but here they were asking Him to prove something to them.

'Our Fathers had manna for 40 years', they continue. In other words they are asking why don't you feed us all the time. Then Jesus told them that the manna, like the loaves, was only good for their temporary life. He told them that all the ones who ate that manna, had still died. He wanted them to accept Him as their Saviour, so they could have Eternal Life.

When He finally told them that unless they 'Ate His flesh and Drank His blood' they would not be saved. Then they saw that He was not going to give them the earthly power and riches they wanted, they were angry at His words. Most of them went away and didn't follow Jesus any more.

Thought - Still today, often when people learn that following Jesus is not the way to become rich and powerful, but instead He wants us to have His character, they turn away and walk with Him no more.

Friday

Text: John 6:68 "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

As the people walked away from Jesus muttering among themselves and rejecting Him, Jesus felt very sad. He wanted to save these people, He loved them, but He did not give them what they wanted, earthly power. The things of this earth will never be able to really save anyone.

Sometimes we think, "Oh, if I only had lots of money, I would be happy." Go and

ask the world's richest people, are they happy? No, they have more problems and worry than the poor.

We think, "Oh, if I could just make people do what I want them to, I would be happy." Satan has been doing this for thousands of years now, trying to control and force everybody to obey him, and he is sure not happy; he is miserable and wants to make everybody else miserable also.

If you look around you, it is easy to see that only those who really accept Jesus, those who 'eat up His holy Word', those who trust in Him; they are the happy ones. They find peace and joy in this life that nothing can take away from them. And they will also have Eternal Life with Jesus, where no evil

shall ever trouble them again.

Should we go seek the things of this world? Like Peter, we can all say, "Lord, where would we go? You have the Words of Life. You are that Bread that came down to give us life. We won't find it anywhere else."

Thought - Everything in this world fades, rusts, changes, dies and so on. Rich people lose their money; today's fancy car is tomorrow's junk; heroes of today are forgotten tomorrow; today's 'star' is unknown tomorrow; athletes quickly become old and younger ones push them aside; but Jesus is the same yesterday, today and always. If we choose His ways and 'eat' His truth, we will have something precious forever! = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #7: "MORE BREAD LESSONS"

MEMORY VERSE: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4

Sunday

Text: Matthew 16:11,12 "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Jesus had just told the disciples to beware, or watch out, for the 'leaven' of the Pharisees. They didn't catch what He was trying to tell them and thought He meant not to buy bread from a Pharisee.

Luke 12:1 says "...he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Leaven is what we call yeast and in the Bible it was used to represent sin. Why? Because sin is sneaky, like leaven. A little bit can be hidden and you not know it is there, but it will just grow and spread until one's whole life is full of it.

What is 'hypocrisy'? It means claiming to believe and be something, when inside you really aren't and don't. Hypocrisy is a dangerous thing, because those who have it, often fool even themselves.

People thought the church leaders were good, holy men, because they did things like praying loud prayers in public; putting on a big show so everyone would see when they gave any money to the church or did anything 'good'. They even wore special clothes with bits of scripture tied to their wrists and foreheads, so people could see them and say, "Oh, look at that holy man!"

When we claim to be a true Christian and we have not given our whole self to Jesus so He can live in our hearts, and are not choosing to obey Him, then we are a hypocrite.

Thought - We may fool others and even fool ourselves sometimes, but we must remember that Jesus looks in our hearts and we can never fool Him! We need to ask Him to show us the truth about our own hearts, so we won't fool ourselves.

Monday

Text: Exodus 13:7 “Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.”

In the Passover service, the children of Israel were to remove all leaven from the house and for 7 days eat only unleavened bread. And they would not have any fermented drink either.

Even today the Jews do this. In fact they make sort of a game for the children of searching the house for all yeast or leaven and taking it out of the house before the special week. Then they eat special crackers called Matzos all week. And they have specially prepared grape juice that they use also.

What Jesus was trying to show the people by this service that He gave Moses for the people, was how we need to search our hearts and homes carefully, and remove all sin and sinful things from our homes, and by the power of Jesus, from our hearts. See what Paul says:

1 Corinthians 5:8 “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Sincerity means that we are honest; we really mean what we are saying. It is only sincerity and truth that can mean anything to God! Down through the ages, men have been eager to do all kinds of deeds, and put on big fancy ceremonies, and do long travels and painful penance to please God. But none of this is any good.

All God wants is for us to honestly choose to give our lives over to Him, and let Him be in charge. He will put His laws in our hearts and change us and teach us and live His life in us, until we are ready for heaven. But He only does it as we choose to have Him do it.

When we search for the leaven of sin in our hearts, we ask Him to take away what

we find that is not like Jesus in us. He will provide the power to change us as we make the choice to be changed.

Thought - Start right away to ask Jesus to take all the leaven of sin out of your life.

Tuesday

Text: Luke 13:20, 21 “And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

Here is one place where Jesus used leaven to represent something good. He was showing how His kingdom, though it seemed such a small thing, would grow and spread throughout the earth.

He was also showing how the truth when it is taken into our hearts, at first may seem like nothing very important. But as we learn more and more about Jesus and His kingdom, and choose to follow Him, soon it becomes more important than anything else in our whole lives!

Unleavened bread is hard and we usually eat it like crackers, but yeast in the bread makes it very different. Just so, if we have Jesus and His truth all through our lives, we become very different indeed.

Thought - Going to church is not what makes us a Christian: we are only a Christian when Jesus is living His life in us.

Wednesday

Text: Isaiah 55:2 “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”

‘Bread’ is used here to mean something that is good, and worthwhile and needful for our lives. In this text God is pleading with His people to learn to enjoy the good things that He wants them to have in their lives. He

tells them not to waste their time and money on the foolish and hurtful things of the world.

“Fatness” here does not mean fat, but rather, that which is good; that which is the best. As we learn to love the things God wants us to have, we will have much more peace and joy in our lives.

As we listen to the council of God in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, we learn the difference between what is good and worthwhile and what is just plain worthless. People waste so much time and money and effort on things that will only hurt them.

Have you ever gone into a store and just thought about how much of the things in that store are really good things? Sometimes it is not very many! I have thought that if stores sold only what a good Christian would want to buy, they would be much smaller, wouldn't they?

Think of what a real Christian does not need to worry about: makeup and cosmetics; alcohol and tobacco; tea and coffee; sugar and junk food; meat and candy; most videos and games; oh, we could just go on and on.

Thought - When we only 'buy what is 'bread', we are much happier and have less worries.

Thursday

Text: 1 Corinthians 11:26 “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”

On that last evening before Jesus went to His trial and death, He gave the disciples a simple act to do when they came together, to remember Him and show their faith in His death for them and His promise to return.

He gave them some bread, and we know it was unleavened bread, which represented His body without any sin in His life, and He gave them a cup of pure, unfermented grape juice, and said it was to represent His blood, shed for them.

We know it was unfermented wine and unleavened bread because it was Passover

time, and no Jew would have any fermented or leavened thing in his house!

It wasn't a big, fancy ceremony that He gave them that only special priests of the church could perform: Oh, no! It was to be a simple, humble sharing of bread and grape-juice and thinking about Jesus great sacrifice for them.

It is not just at communion time that we are to remember His great sacrifice and love for us and show we believe in Him; every day when we eat our food, we are to remember, that if not for the cross of Jesus, there would be no life for us at all, not in this world or in heaven! Try thinking about Jesus' love each time you eat, and when you 'say grace' or thank God for your food, really mean what you say.

Thought - It is because of the grace that Jesus' great sacrifice bought for us, that life continues and food grows in this world.

Friday

Text: Exodus 16:15 “And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.”

Exodus 16:31 “And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”

Here was a huge nation of people out in the desert where nothing could grow to feed them. How were they going to eat? God said, just watch Me— and when they got up—here was all this grain-like stuff all over the ground like snow.

The people said 'manna, manna?' which means “what is it?” And God explained to them that it was their special food and He would give it to them each day except on Sabbath. On Friday, He would give them double and they would use that for Sabbath.

Any other day if they tried to keep it to the next day, it would spoil. So for 40 years God taught them by a double miracle what day was Sabbath!

If someone had been silly enough to think that it didn't matter what day of the week he kept for Sabbath, he would have had problems, wouldn't he?

There was a pot of the precious angel-food placed in the ark, near the law of God,

to show that if we obey God, He will certainly provide what we need to live. Like a little child trusts his loving parents to feed and care for him, so we can trust our Heavenly Father and not worry. In the trouble of the last days, God may even send manna to His people again, we do not know.

Thought - In heaven, manna is one of the things we will get to eat. I sure am looking forward to tasting angel-food, aren't you?
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Weekly Bible Lesson #8: "BUILDING"

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:" Matthew 7:24

Sunday

Text: Matthew 7:26 "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand."

This is a very important story that Jesus told to us. I'm sure most of you know it quite well because of the little song boys and girls love to sing, about the wise and foolish men and their houses. They especially like the 'fall down' part.

But I want you to think today about the meaning. By "houses", Jesus meant our lives. And He told us that we must build our lives on a solid rock. The "solid rock" is Jesus and His Words of Truth found in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy writings.

You know, before the storm hit, both of those houses probably looked the same. They both looked safe. The people in the house on the sand thought they were safe.

Most of the people in the Christian world today have their houses built on the shifting sand of men's ideas. They go to church and they hear what the ministers say, and they love the ministers who tell them that they

don't have to worry—all they have to do is just 'accept' Jesus, believe in Him and join the church, and they will be sure to go to heaven.

This is shifty sand indeed! Then there are some that say, as long as you read your Bible each day and pray and go to church, you are OK— it doesn't matter if you keep sins in your life, Jesus will take them all away when He returns! This is a terrible lie!

When Jesus comes, only those who have allowed Him to remove ALL sins from their lives and give them power to live a life like Jesus; only they will be able to live in His presence.

When the priest in old Israel had to go into the Most Holy Place where Jesus' presence was; if he had sin in his life he would die! That's why they tied a long rope to one of his ankles so he could be pulled out of there if he died before the Lord.

Jesus accepts sinners who choose to give up their sins, but we can't hang on to them and think it's OK, and we will be saved. This is the worst kind of sinking sand.

Thought - There is a 'storm' coming that is going to hit all our 'houses'; we MUST be sure we are on the Rock!

Monday

Text: Luke 6:48 “He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.”

We saw some of the sand, people have their life ‘houses’ built on; now let’s see the Rock. The ROCK is Jesus, our Saviour, all our hopes to be saved and enter heaven at last, center around Him.

To understand how Jesus saves us, first look at how man got lost to start with—Adam and Eve chose to believe a lie and not believe God, and then they chose to disobey the command of God and do what they felt like doing.

Nobody will be lost because they were fooled and believed a lie. They WILL be lost because they chose to believe the lie—instead of God’s truth. When people are fooled, God sends truth to them in some way, and then it is up to them to accept it and obey it. But all too many say, “I like to believe this better [the lie], I won’t believe the Word of God, after all, all the people in my church believe what I do, and most of the other churches believe it also. All those people and ministers can’t be wrong.”

So they reject truth and keep on with the lie; the house is on the sand—and the storm is on its way!

Thought - Notice the man in the story had to ‘dig deep’ to put his house on the Rock. If we are not willing to study for ourselves from inspired writings and learn and obey truth, we won’t even find the Rock! So after we find the Rock, we fall on Jesus.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 21:42, 44 “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the

corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? ...And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

Here Jesus is talking to the church leaders and what He said made them so mad, they wanted to kill Him! Some people like to tell you that Jesus always said nice, sweet things and Jesus never criticized anybody—this is just not true at all. Jesus put forth the TRUTH and the TRUTH always upsets people who want to believe lies and not obey God.

He was telling them here about a ROCK, and they knew that ROCK meant Jesus Himself. He was telling them if they did not humble themselves and come and accept Him, that one-day He would have to destroy them.

Falling on the Rock and being ‘broken’ means that we come to Jesus and admit that we are lost sinners, we cannot save ourselves, there is NO GOOD in us at all. If you fall hard on a big Rock, you are going to have broken bones! You will need someone to pick you up and put you back together.

This is just what Jesus does when we ask Him to, not only forgive our sins, but to take them away, out of our lives. We ask Him to come and live His life in us.

He does this by the Holy Spirit and then when temptation comes and we choose to resist it, the Power of God in the Holy Spirit gives us victory over sin. This is how we ‘build on the Rock’—day by day we keep ‘falling’ on Him and depending on Him, and trusting in Him, and choosing to obey Him—and so our ‘houses’ get built onto that solid Rock.

Thought - Building on the Rock seems hard sometimes, and building on the sand seems easier, but when the storm comes, the houses on the Rock will have it easier, and the sand houses will have a terrible, horrible shock!

Wednesday

Text: Psalm 118:22 “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”

When the wonderful temple of Solomon was being built, all the stones for it were prepared far away from where it would be built. Every stone had its place and when all was ready the temple was to be built without the sound of hammers and chisels. Sort of like a giant Lego-set. It was the most wonderful building ever built on this earth.

The story goes, that as the builders were putting the building together, they came upon a stone that was very large and strangely shaped. It just did not seem to fit in with the plans anywhere! So they moved it to one side and went on building.

When they got to the place where they had to have a very special and strong stone to use as the main stone to hold the building together, the ‘capstone’, they could not find one strong enough. Then someone remembered the strange stone that they had set aside. They looked at it and tested it. Sure enough it was the right one and placed into the building it kept it all together.

Jesus is not only the Rock foundation for our house, He is also the One who keeps it all together and gives strength to keep it from falling down. He is the ‘First and the Last’, we come to Him when we are poor lost sinners and He saves us and we keep coming to Him and He builds us and finally, when the storm hits, we can depend on Him to keep us safe and strong in Him.

Thought - Never be discouraged when you see sins in your life, take hold of Jesus’ Power and you can be free of every one of them! If anyone tells you that you have no choice, but must go on sinning until Jesus comes; they are telling you Satan’s lies—no matter who they are, they are wrong!

Thursday

Text: Luke 14:28-30 “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not

down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”

Jesus was here telling a very important lesson to the Pharisees and to us all. In the sacrifices and ceremonies that pointed to Jesus, the Jewish nation had been laying the foundation of their religious faith, and they had come to the place where they could advance no farther. They had to have that ‘chief cornerstone’ to finish their tower.

But the Stone, Jesus, was a ‘Rock of Offence’ to them. They would not accept Him even though He clearly was the only one Who could ‘fit’ and had stood every test.

Jesus was the one predicted in all their sacrificial services, He alone could make atonement for their sins, and He was among them and they would not believe Him. He who alone could give power and meaning to their faith was refused. And their refusal to receive the world’s Redeemer left them with their salvation incomplete; without Christ they were a ruin.

In order to accept Jesus, they would have had to obey Him, to come down from the throne and let Him rule. They would not fall on the Rock!

Thought - We too, have to turn the ‘throne of our lives’ over to Jesus. If we don’t make Him ‘King of All’ in our life, our lives will be only a ruin at last.

Friday

Text: 1 Peter 2:4-8 “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained

in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

Peter listened very closely to Jesus' lessons about building and the important foundation and cornerstone, and he talks about them here.

He is also pointing out that each one of us is also like a stone that Jesus uses to build up His 'Temple' on earth. Now when a stone, even a jewel, is first dug out of the ground, it is dirty and rough. In order to be a useful and worthwhile stone, it has to be

cut and polished. It has to be shaped so it will fit into God's plans. (Remember the 'place' in heaven that Jesus is preparing?)

If a stone had feelings, it might not like to be cut and polished and shaped, just so, sometimes when things are hard and not the way we like them to be, we might be tempted to grumble.

But Jesus knows what He is doing and if we choose to obey Him and be faithful, no matter what— in eternity we will be pleased with all God has done for us. No one in heaven will say to God; "I wish You had done things different for me!" All will declare that His ways are right and perfect.

Thought - "Those who believe in Christ must be willing, if necessary, to forsake father and mother, sisters and brothers, and, if need be, sacrifice their own lives, in order to be doers of the Word, Those who refuse to do this, who refuse to lift the cross, can not be Christ's disciples." The Signs of the Times 07-21-98 -7 = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #9: "SEED"

MEMORY VERSE: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Luke 8:15

Sunday

Text: Luke 8:5-8 "A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

In this story, Jesus was telling of His work. He was the Sower of the seed. He went forth, a suffering, tempted man; went forth alone,

to sow in tears, to water with His blood, the seed of life for a lost world. The seed is the precious Heavenly Truth to bring us back to loyalty to God. The people did not understand Jesus' mission. Their leaders had taught them so many false ideas that they could not see the lessons God had placed right in the temple services.

They were looking for some mighty act of power to prove He was the Messiah. They wanted to see Him gather vast armies and march out to conquer the world; but instead they heard Him tell stories about tiny seeds on the mountainside.

He wanted them to see that His kingdom had the same principles as the seeds planted in the ground; if His truth was taken into the heart, it would grow by the power of God

and bring changes in their entire lives.

Jesus had come, not as a king, but as a sower; not to overthrow kingdoms, but for the scattering of seed; not to point His followers to earthly greatness, but to a harvest to be gathered after patient toil in the midst of losses and disappointments.

Thought - They looked for glory and a King, to break the scepter of their foes;

They found a Man in love with Truth, Who wept for other people's woes.

They hoped for victory and a throne, the clash of swords to set them free;

They saw a Man who healed the poor, and talked of lilies by the sea.

They longed for empire and power, to cure the wound of earthly loss,

They watched a Carpenter walk by, Who died alone, upon a cross.

Monday

Text: Luke 8:9,10 "And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

Why did Jesus not just come right out and tell the people plainly the truth about the false leaders and tell them all about His kingdom?

There were several reasons. First off, I want you to understand that whatever God does is always the very best that can be done in any situation. It is important to know this in your heart, especially when things happen to you that may not seem to make any sense at the time.

If Jesus had spoken right out against the wicked church leaders, His mission would have been cut short. Think about the many times He would say to people, "My time is not yet come." At the end of His ministry, He did tell them right to their faces how wicked they were and He knew that they would not

rest then, until they had killed Him.

But Jesus knew that the simple stories would stay in the minds of the common people, and later as they thought about them, the Holy Spirit would cause them to understand the deep meanings hidden in the stories and they would learn, just as we are, the precious lessons in the story-pictures.

Sometimes when people read the Bible, and don't know Jesus very well, they think He did not want the people to know the truths, so he hid them. But it was so they would understand the truth later, that He did this.

The disciples did what we can all do; they came and asked Jesus to know the meaning.

Thought - Every one of Jesus' picture-stories is full of wonderful things to learn and if we ask for the Great Teacher, the Holy Spirit, to come and teach us, we will learn amazing secrets.

Tuesday

Text: Luke 8:11,12 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

Now Jesus goes on to tell them that different things happen when the seed of truth goes to different people. Some of the seed falls on the hard-beaten, wayside path and birds swoop down and eat it.

The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of a careless hearer. Like the hard-beaten path, trodden down by the feet of men and beasts, is the heart that becomes a highway for the world's traffic, its entertainment and sins. Caught up in selfish aims and sinful pleasure, their heart is hard. They don't see spiritual things at all. They hear the word, but don't understand that it applies to them. They don't realize their need or their danger. They do not notice the love of Christ, and

they pass by the message of His grace as something that does not concern them.

Satan is ready to catch away the seeds of divine truth from the mind just like the birds are ready to catch up the seed from the way-side. He fears that the word of God may awaken the careless, and take effect upon the hard hearts. Satan and his angels are there when the gospel is preached. While God's angels try to impress hearts with truth, the enemy is on the alert to snatch the words away from the minds.

Often Satan will bring some thing to distract minds that have been impressed with some word of truth. This happened plainly one time at a youth meeting. The speaker had told the young people about the need to give their hearts to Jesus and they were deeply impressed. He wanted to urge them to come forward and pray with him; but instead, a 'special' music was announced, that was a lively, silly ditty and the youth were then told of a pizza party to be held later. All thoughts of dedicating their lives to God were gone. The Birds had struck—the seeds were taken away.

Thought - Watch out for the 'birds'! They don't only go to church meetings; they will try to snatch away truth from you as you read Bible, or even your TEMKIT lessons. They strike by bringing along some exciting thing that catches your attention and makes you forget Jesus. Don't let them do it!

Wednesday

Text: Luke 8:13,14 "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

Have you ever seen someone who gets so excited about everything that comes along,

but then if you see them a couple days later, they have forgotten all about it? Well this is what the stony ground hearers do.

Some of these people seem to be good Christians; the seed grows up fast, but underneath is a hard, selfish heart, and so the good seeds wither and die. It isn't receiving the truth quickly that is their problem; the trouble is their selfish, worldly hearts underneath that they don't want to give up. They don't want to have Jesus come in and break up the stony hearts and take their selfishness away.

They think they are 'good enough' themselves and don't see the need to be connected deeply with Jesus.

The Thorny Ground people are similar; they have big weeds in their hearts and don't want to have Jesus remove them. These weeds can be love of entertainment, fantasy movies or books, video games, sports, appetite, or worldly friends. They can also be worrying about business, school, and troubles in our lives instead of turning these things over to Jesus and trusting Him to take care of them.

Often these people are the 'busy' ones. Busy with work, studying worldly things, learning sports and watching them, parties, music, and even church activities. All the problems and stuff of the worldly life are big and getting bigger in their hearts every day.

There's no time to study and talk to Jesus, no time to search their hearts and plead for Jesus to pull out those weeds and move in. The plants of heavenly truth struggle down under all the prickly weeds and after a while, although the person may still come to church, there is no Christian fruit in their lives. The heart is just a thorn patch of worldly ideas.

Thought - It takes time to be a real Christian, time to think deeply, time to talk to Jesus deeply, time to read and study deeply. If you have a heart with 'busy worldly weeds' in it, turn right around now and have Jesus help you tear them out of there! This worldly stuff is all going to end soon and you don't

want to meet Jesus with a weed garden for a heart!

Thursday

Text: Luke 8:15,18 “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. ..Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

Did you know that everyone of those other kinds of hearers could become good ground if they chose to? Yes, Jesus will come in and dig up the hard ground, break up the stony ground and remove the rocks, and pull up the prickly weeds— He’ll be glad to work with us to do it, if we want Him to, and ask that it be done.

I have never yet seen a garden where you could justly go there and plant your seeds, without someone putting in some real work ahead of time, digging, raking, taking out rocks, tearing out weeds. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit and the Heavenly Angels to help with this work if we choose to plead that it be done for us.

Jesus went on to warn them, to be careful how they treated the seeds of truth He was giving them. He was bringing them the Words of Life, and if they rejected them, or were careless about trying to learn the lessons they needed to know, they would lose the seeds. The devil would snatch them away or choke them somehow and they would be lost!

He was telling His disciples to pay attention! God’s truths are not something unimportant that it might be interesting to know, but don’t really matter. No! No! It is a matter of life and death for each one of us, how we decide to treat the Word of Truth that comes to us.

Jesus told them that if they rejected these truths, they would lose even what they

seemed to have already.

This is true—sometimes a person leads a fairly good life, but then they come face to face with the truths of God’s Word, maybe at a meeting or in a book somewhere. They decide they will not accept the new truth. After all, they have a pretty good life, why should they change what they have been doing? They will just stay the same.

But they never do! Strangely, after they refuse the new truth, they start to lose hold on all their Christian beliefs. They become changed to be more like the devil than Jesus and the terrible thing is— they don’t see it themselves!! This is very serious indeed.

Thought - We must, each one of us, young or old, make learning in Jesus’ school of truth the number 1 job in our lives! What good would it be to have worldly honor, fun and fame and be forever lost?

Friday

Text: Mark 4:26-29. “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

The seed is a living thing that has God’s power in it; this is true of the Bible Truth also. If it comes to a heart that chooses to receive it, it will grow. We can’t explain how a seed grows to a plant.

The seed does not have power to make itself grow; it is God’s Power that makes seeds sprout and grow. But the seed has something to do in order to grow; it must receive what God has made available to it so it can live and grow. It must take in water, send down roots for food, and start growing up towards the sunlight.

A sinner cannot change himself into a child of God either, but the Power of God will do just that, if that person chooses and cooperates with the Heavenly Powers. The Word of God has power like the life in a living seed. As we receive it into the heart, it starts to grow. Then if we take hold of what God has given to us to help us grow, the food of His Word, the water of the Holy Spirit, the breath of prayer and reach up towards Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, changes will happen.

As we continue each day to co-operate with God, we will learn and grow and develop more and more like Jesus, until we 'grow up into Him'. The same mighty power that makes a giant tree out of a tiny seed is what will work for us.

Thought - Man cannot make a living seed; just so man's words and ideas do not have the Living Power that God's Words in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy have. As you learn and draw closer to Jesus, you will learn to know the difference. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #10: "TREASURE"

MEMORY VERSE: "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

Matthew 12:35

Sunday

Text: Luke 6:45 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

We all like that word 'Treasure'. We like stories about treasure and the people in Jesus day did too. I used to live in a place where Pirates used to have a town, and there was a story that there was a treasure hidden near where we lived. We used to think how great it would be if we could find it. But with no map or clues, it would be impossible.

Our Bibles are like a map for us and they also contain the Treasure. As we study and memorize from the Bible, we store up good treasure in our hearts. When we give our hearts to Jesus, and He lives in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, then He is a treasure to us also.

When Jesus is our treasure, we will love to talk about Him and think about Him. Pure words and kindly deeds will come from a heart full of heavenly treasure. Heavenly treasure brings happiness and peace to the heart

and it shows on the face.

When you listen to anyone talk, you soon learn what his 'treasure' is. With some, all you hear from them is TV and Movies; others hockey and soccer; for some it is the fashions and how others dress. Some are always planning what to eat or how to have a party. Some have evil treasure indeed because they like to talk about horrible things and cruel deeds. This kind of treasure shows on the face too, in dark looks and frowns.

Thought - Let us all seek to fill our hearts and lives with the Heavenly Treasure; we will never be sorry if we do.

Monday

Text: Matthew 13:52 "Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

A 'scribe' in this verse means a teacher. Teaching the people was one of the duties of a scribe. When someone is in Jesus' School and being taught by the Holy Spirit, they will

always have treasures to share with others.

They will have 'Old' treasures; things about prophecies and lessons from the Old Testament. And they will have 'New' treasures, things about Jesus in the New Testament; but they also will have new things to tell of how Jesus is helping them day by day and how He is teaching them new truths from His Word.

When we really belong to Jesus and He is the Treasure of our lives, we will always have something precious that we can think about or talk about to others. The Truth is like a fountain springing up inside us and we are bubbling over with Heavenly things. It will show in the joy and peace of our lives, and in the sweet smile on our faces.

Thought - 'Old' treasure is just as precious as 'New' treasure. In our day there are people who say, we don't need the 'old' ideas, we need to change everything and make it 'new'. But the 'Old' is our foundation; a house with no foundation soon falls down!

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 13:44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

This is an exciting story and I am sure the people listened closely as Jesus told it. Here is a man who is renting a field. He takes his ox one day and ploughs the field to get it ready to plant. He is taking out the rocks as he finds them. It is hard work.

All of a sudden the plough hits something hard—Clunk! He stops the ox and goes to dig out another rock so he can get his field ready. He is not thinking about treasure or anything; but when he starts to dig out that 'rock' he finds it is a box of buried treasure!

Now he forgets about ploughing his field and starts planning what to do. He covers it up again and goes home to gather up every-

thing he has that he can sell. He goes to the market and there sells everything he has.

Then he takes the money to those who own the field and pays for the field. The papers are signed and he is full of joy, as he realizes that the treasure is now his. Back to the field he goes with his shovel and digs up the treasure chest. He is now rich for the rest of his life.

We can be going along in our lives from day to day, and sometime we learn about the wonderful heavenly treasure. We want that for our own! There is nothing more important to us than having that treasure. If we feel like that, it is easy for us to part with all our old earthly habits and pleasures. And when we have that treasure for our own — we are happy for the rest of our lives. The heavenly treasure never runs out and there is always more to enjoy—forever!

Thought - Nothing on earth can compare with the Heavenly Treasure! If we have all the worldly treasure it will soon pass away and we will die. But the Heavenly Treasure is forever!

Wednesday

Text: Isaiah 39:4 "Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them."

There is an interesting story in this chapter about King Hezekiah. He was healed, you remember, of a deadly disease and to give him a sign, God made the sundial go BACKWARDS! Now the heathen rulers in Babylon sent messengers wanting to find out about a God that could have so much power as that!

When they came to Jerusalem, Hezekiah made a big mistake. He decided to show off and he gave these messengers a tour of his treasure houses. He showed them all his riches and boasted about them.

The messengers had come on their long journey hoping to find Heavenly Treasure, but Hezekiah only showed them earthly trea-

sure, he did not tell them about the great God of Heaven, Who had made the sundial go back. Sadly they went home to tell their masters that there was nothing unusual in Jerusalem; Hezekiah was no different than any other king.

God sent the prophet to talk to Hezekiah and asked him "What have they seen in thine house?" You can see what the king said. Then God told him that all that treasure would be taken away to Babylon. What a difference it might have been if Hezekiah had given them the heavenly treasure!

Thought - Sometimes when people come to us, wanting to learn about Heavenly things, we show them all the big buildings the church has, and tell them about all the wonderful things the church is doing, and they end up thinking we really don't have any more heavenly treasure than they do.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 13:45, 46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Pearls are considered very precious, and in the days before people had diving equipment, it was a hard and dangerous task to hunt for pearls in the sea, so they were even more valuable.

Jesus here is telling about someone who looks for a very special pearl. He travels from one pearl collector to another looking for the very best pearl. Finally he finds one that is so perfect, and so large and lovely, that he feels he must own it.

Like the man who found the treasure chest, this man goes and sells everything he has, just so he can own the 'Pearl of Great Price'.

What does this story tell us? The merchant is like a person who is searching for real truth in this world. He goes to different churches, reads different books and it all seems the same, good, but not the precious

truth he wants.

Then one day he finds the truth of God's Word and he finds what he is looking for. But he realizes to have this precious truth for his own, he must leave behind all his former life and give up all his worldly treasure to own the Heavenly Treasure. He gladly does this, as that precious Pearl is his heart's desire.

Thought - Jesus Himself is the pearl of great price. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. The glory of God is seen in His character. Every page of the Holy Bible shines with His light. The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain.

Friday

Text: Matthew 19:21, 22 "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

This was not a story, but something that happened when Jesus was here:

There was a man who was young and rich; we call him the rich young ruler. He had lots of earthly treasure and he thought he had heavenly treasure too. After all he went to church every Sabbath, and he paid tithe, and everybody said he was a good person.

He went one day to listen to Jesus and as the lessons that Jesus was telling the people began to sink into his thoughts, he was not so sure that he really did have the heavenly treasure. He decided to ask Jesus, if there was something special he could do, so he'd be sure to go to heaven.

Jesus told him to keep the Commandments. He said he did keep them. Then Jesus said a strange thing, he told the ruler to sell his property and give to the poor, and come and follow Him.

What a wonderful chance this man had! He could have been among the disciples. But when he thought about giving up his money and worldly honour to follow the humble Jesus, he just did not want to do it.

The Bible says that he went away sorrowful. There is an important lesson in this for us all. Those who decide to hang onto the world with its pleasures and riches, enter-

tainment and pride, will end up sorrowful.

While those who leave all for Jesus' sake, and make Him their Treasure will be forever joyful.

Thought – The true Christian may have hard times, temptations and trials in this life, but he knows it is worth it all. Even a dungeon is a wonderful place if Jesus is with you. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #11: "THE HARVEST"

MEMORY VERSE: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7

Sunday

Text: Matthew 13:24, 25 "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

Jesus is the Sower of the good seed. Satan is the enemy who sowed the weed seeds. When Jesus made this world, it was all good; there were no bad, hurtful things at all. But when Adam and Eve listened to Satan's lies and chose to follow him, it brought evil into this world.

When we look around us and see sad, bad things; pain, fear, sickness, death, and unhappiness; we can know that Jesus did not put them here. An enemy has done it. Satan is the enemy that now sows his weed seeds along side of God's good seeds. Everywhere we look in this old world we see the weeds of sin.

But Jesus has given us a wonderful gift; it is the power to CHOOSE. There are good seeds in the world and there are evil seeds; we must learn to choose the good and throw out the evil in our lives.

Because we live at the very end of this world's history, there are more evil seeds around us than ever before. But the good seeds are still there. In our lives we must choose to stay away from Satan's bad seeds.

What are some bad seeds? Fiction books, TV stories and movies that are not true or show foolish or ugly, cruel things; these all put bad seeds in our hearts. There are many games and things on computer that are packages of Satan's bad seeds, if it is not something that Jesus would read, or watch or do; then choose to stay away from it!

Thought - We do the choosing and Jesus gives us the power to carry out our right choices.

Monday

Text: Galatians 6:7,8 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

We will talk about the 'end of the world' harvest of the good and the wicked in a minute, but did you know that everything you do in life is like a seed that you sow in your heart? And just like a seed, it will grow up into a plant.

This memory verse is a very important one. It shows that what we do really matters. Sowing 'to the flesh' means giving in to your self. It can be things like eating food that is not good for your body. It can be reading or watching wrong stories. It can be act-

ing mean and selfish to others, or angry words. It is all bad seeds that will grow up to terrible weeds. People, who let them grow in their hearts, will one day be destroyed by them.

Good seeds are things like reading and learning your Bible; Praying and staying close to Jesus; Doing kind, unselfish things and speaking kindly; Taking care of your body and not putting junk food into it; throwing away bad or silly books or videos. All these good seeds will grow up to make us strong and joyful Christians, who will be ready to go home with Jesus when He comes.

Thought - Remember, we are the ones who choose what seeds we will put into our lives; and they will always grow up!

Tuesday

Text: Mark 4:29 “But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

Revelation 14:14 “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”

There is a very interesting story in the second half of Revelation 14. It is telling us about two kinds of harvests, and they both happen when Jesus comes. Did you know that when He comes, He will have in His one hand a sickle? A sickle is a tool people used to use to harvest the grain. So it means He is coming back to get the results of all the good seeds He has sown in this world.

In our day, the harvest is growing up fast. But there are two harvests; there are the good people who have allowed Jesus to put the good seed in their hearts and have not chosen the bad seeds and there are the wicked who have kept the bad seeds in their hearts and have not let Jesus put good seeds in there.

The Good Seed people have developed to be just like Jesus' sweet and lovely charac-

ter; but the Bad Seed people, have let Satan put bad seeds in their hearts and have become wicked and cruel, just like Satan. Just before Jesus comes, everyone living on this earth will be either just like Jesus, or just like the devil!

Thought - Now is the time to decide and ask Jesus to guide you to always make the right choices, so only good seeds will be in your heart.

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 13:28, 29 “He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.”

‘Tare’ in the Bible is what we call a weed. It is an interesting thing about plants that when they are very small, you often cannot tell what kind of plant they are. Even when they are bigger, often you can be fooled. But when their flowers and fruit appear, then you will know for sure what they are.

One year I had a flower garden, and some plants came up in it. They looked just like a kind of flower and I was so sure they were, that I let them grow. Even when they were very big, I was still sure they were flowers. They got buds on them that looked like flower buds but when the flowers came out—they were a kind of burs. I was so disappointed.

That same year I had another plant grow until it was large and I thought it was a weed, so I cut it down. I found out later it was a nice flower.

Jesus told this story to us to show that we really can't tell with people, who are the good seed and who are the bad, until the fruit comes. Now some people say this means that no matter how a person lives, we should not tell them about their sins or take their names away from the church books. If someone is openly breaking God's law and we know for sure they are, then they

should be warned and if they do not repent, then they should not remain members of the church.

But there are many who we do not know for sure about, and these may fool us. Some may seem nice and good, but later they show the bad fruit, and others may seem rough and not very likable, but after God works on their hearts, they will show lovely Christian fruit.

Thought - The Jewish church in Jesus' day seemed very religious, but when it ripened up, it rejected and killed their Lord.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 13:30 "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Matthew 13:39 "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

As we read this story Jesus told about the harvest and the weeds, we can learn many things. If you want a real treat, get the book, "Christ's Object Lessons", by Ellen White and read all about this parable. It is full of wonderful information.

You will notice here that the weeds get tied up in bundles first, but the wheat is just gathered into the barn. We are told that, as the end of the world comes on, the wicked will form many groups. They tie themselves up together in clubs, in societies, in unions, in gangs and associations, and, yes, in denominations. They will often do things in a group or when influenced by their friends, which they would never do if they were alone and thought it over themselves.

Most people who start to drink or smoke, or take drugs, do it because their 'friends' were doing it or dared them to do it by mak-

ing fun of them. Did you know that Jesus, as he was growing up as a child, had to put up with other children laughing at Him and making nasty jokes, because He would not do the bad things they were doing? It is true, and even His family often did not understand Him, and called Him names.

If you have to stand alone because you love Jesus, and want to be ready to go home with Him when He comes, always remember that He will give you strength. He knows just how hard it is, and just how you feel. He went through it all Himself and He gives His victory to you, if you choose to have it.

Thought - Be careful whom you choose as your friends. If there are ones you know that do wrong things and say bad words, or who make fun of religion or the Bible, then you do not want to be with them, because when that kind of people get tied up to be burned, you don't want to be tied up with them!

Friday

Text: Matthew 13:38, 40 "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;...As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."

There is another verse that says; "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed" (margin) Proverbs 22:8

So many people in the world today, and yes, in the church also, think that because they seem to get away with doing things that they know God does not want them to do, that it is OK and nothing bad will come from it. This is not so. God does let us make our choices. He does not look down and zap us with a lightning bolt every time we do a wrong thing.

He gives us His Word and He teaches us in many ways, but if we choose to do what we know is wrong, there will come a time

when what we thought we got away with, is going to come back on our heads.

There was a boy who was told to plant seeds in a field. He was shown to plant them one by one with space between for the plants to grow. It was a hot day and he wanted to go swimming, but he was told to plant all the seeds in the field, one by one.

He got tired and after a while he began to put in several at a time and finally a handful at a time. At the last he dumped the bag of

seeds that were left into one big hole, covered it up and went off to swim.

Now he thought no one would ever know; but the seeds came up, and everyone could see his disobedience.

Thought - Wrong deeds and wrong choices always bring sad results. God tells us that the seeds will always come up. Ask Jesus to guide you to be careful to only plant the good seeds in your life. = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #12: "SUPPERS AND WEDDINGS"

MEMORY VERSE: "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." Matthew 22:12

Sunday

Text: Luke 14:16,17 "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready."

The church leaders and Pharisees in Jesus day were sure they were all going to go to heaven, and they had a saying, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of Heaven." When they said this it was obvious that they felt there was no doubt that certainly they would be there.

Jesus had an important lesson to teach them, and so He began to tell this story about a man, who had invited the people of His land to the great supper. When the supper was all prepared, the message went out for everyone to come to the supper. But when the servants told the invitation to the people, they all made excuses.

One said he had bought land and had to go see it. Another said he had bought oxen and had to go and see how well they plowed. These asked to be excused. The other person said he had married a wife and so couldn't come. He didn't even ask to be excused.

When the servants came and told what

had happened, the rich man said, "The supper is ready, and those who I asked to come, don't deserve it. Go to the poor and the crippled and blind and tell them to come."

The servants did this and told him there was still room, so he told them to go look everywhere and bring in all who would come so his table would be filled with guests for none of those other people shall even taste the supper.

Thought - When Jesus came to earth and was teaching the people, His words were like a great supper of God's truth spread out for the people.

Monday

Text: Luke 14:21 "So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."

In this story, the first guests invited to the supper were the Jewish leaders and Pharisees, but they were not interested in it. Other things were more important. Houses, lands, honour, oxen, money and marriages meant more than the heavenly feast.

The poor and lame and blind, were the harlots and tax collectors and common people who did listen to Jesus, and many of them followed Him. These were people that the Leaders would not even talk to, because they thought they were unclean and worthless.

When the servants were told to go into the highways and byways and urge the people to come to the supper; this meant the taking of the gospel message to the whole world.

“For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper,” these words of the great man in the story were a warning to those Jewish Leaders. And they are a warning to us also. If we think that earthly things are so important that we have no time to answer the Lord’s invitation, no time to bother with God’s Truths, we too will never taste of God’s wonderful supper.

Thought - Jesus was telling the leaders that they would miss out on that heavenly supper, not because God didn’t want them, but because they themselves refused to come to God in the way He asked them to.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 22:4-6 “Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

Now near the end of Jesus’ ministry, He tells a similar story, but this time it is even more of a warning. It is a King that is inviting the people in His country to the wedding feast for His Son. And the people invited, do even worse than in the first story; here they even kill the King’s servants!

Verse 7 tells us what the King did; “But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” Jesus was again warning the Jews what would happen if they rejected what Heaven had sent to them to save them. His words were fulfilled in A.D. 70, when the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem.

Then as in the first story, the servants were sent out to call all, both ‘bad and good’ to come to the marriage supper. They came and the banquet hall was filled with happy guests. This meant the gospel invitation going to the entire world.

Thought - Each one of us can be a guest at that wonderful marriage supper; the King invites all to come!

Wednesday

Text: Matthew 22:11 “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.”

Now here is the secret of this story; you remember that the King allowed all, both ‘bad and good’ to come? Well, when they came, something very special was given to them absolutely free. It was a beautiful, expensive Wedding Garment!

This Wedding Garment is the same as the ‘White Raiment’ that Revelation 3:18 tells us about. It represents Jesus’ perfect life and character, which He gives to us, instead of our sinful life and character. Jesus was the richest Gift that Heaven could give for us. To put on this Wedding Garment, we have to repent of our sins and choose to have Jesus live His life in us.

Although everybody was invited, and all who wanted to, could come, there came the time when the King came in to see the guests. After all, this was His Son’s wedding feast, and the King wanted everything just right. As His eyes went over the guests sitting happily at the table, he saw a man that did not have on the lovely wedding garment that he had been given!

This man had figured his ordinary clothes were good enough, and he wasn't going to let the King tell him what to wear. But when the King asked him why he did not wear the costly garment given to him, he wasn't so bold then. We are told he had nothing to say. So he was thrown out of the wedding.

Thought - There was no excuse for that man not to wear the lovely robe given him by the King; and there's no excuse for us either, if we don't let Jesus remove our sinful characters and give us His White Robe of character so we can go to the Wedding Supper.

Thursday

Text: Matthew 25:1, 2 "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

These 10 virgins were what we would call Bridesmaids. They each had a lamp, and their job was to meet the bridegroom when he came, and to have all their lamps burning brightly.

We are told that half of these girls were wise and half were foolish. What made the difference? Well the wise ones took extra oil with them, and the foolish ones didn't. Maybe they thought they would not have to wait very long, and wouldn't need extra oil.

It took much longer for the bridegroom to come than they had planned on, and after a while all those girls began to slumber and sleep. At midnight they were waked up by a lot of noise and bustle—the Bridegroom had come and it was time to meet him with their lamps all bright and shiny.

Now the wise ones put in their oil, and were ready to go, but the foolish ones found their lamps were empty and going out. They asked the wise girls to give them oil but they could not.

While the foolish girls went off to buy some oil, the wise ones went into the wed-

ding supper with the Bridegroom. When the other girls came later, they were locked out.

Thought - Jesus was teaching many things in this story. What lessons can you see there?

Friday

Text: Matthew 25:11-13 "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

In this story, the girls are the ones who have heard the invitation to the marriage supper and have chosen to accept. They are 'church members'; they all have Bible truth, the lamps; and they all want to meet the Bridegroom and go in with Him.

As the time grows long, they all slumber and sleep, but when the Midnight Cry awakens them they all wake up. But here is where there is a difference, five of them are in trouble, they are out of oil.

What is that 'oil' that is so important? — It is the Holy Spirit in the heart and more than that; it is a personal experience in knowing and trusting God. That is why we can't give it to anyone else; each must get it for themselves. And we have to get it and have it with us ahead of time, when things start happening and the hard times come, it is too late to start looking for it then.

Did you know that you can think you have the Holy Spirit in your heart and really be a Christian, because you feel so happy thinking about heaven, going to church or singing hymns, but the Holy Spirit is still on the outside, trying to get you to let Him in?

Every so often He will impress you that there are things you are doing or not doing that need to be given over to Jesus, so He can come in and dwell inside your heart, to change your character to be like Jesus. But if we think to ourselves; "No, I don't want to stop doing that, I enjoy it too much." Or "No,

I don't want to give all my life to Jesus, I have other plans, and He might want me to do things I don't feel like doing." Then the Holy Spirit is kept out and we are still like the foolish girls.

Thought – Let us all be very serious about

getting ready to meet our Bridegroom! Jesus is coming soon, and only those who have really chosen to get ready, and stay ready by Jesus' power, will look up and say, "Lo! This is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us!" = ^ .. ^ =

Weekly Bible Lesson #13: "DOORS AND PATHS"

MEMORY VERSE: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6

Sunday

Text: Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Here we have a door and a supper in one verse! It shows how Jesus wants to be very close to us. He wants to come to supper with us, and He wants us to come to supper with Him.

He wants to be a part of everything we do, but he does not push His way in! Jesus has showed us a picture of Himself as knocking at the door. He does not open it; you do. If you do not choose to open up the doors of your heart, you will never know what it is to have the Heavenly Guest with you.

Many people today are telling us that we can have a friendship with Jesus, that as long as we pray and read a bit about Him each day, we can just live our lives the rest of the time however we feel like, and we are still friends with Jesus. But Jesus will not share our hearts with our worldly pleasures and idols. He wants all our heart and will not come in and abide with us, until we are willing to give Him ALL our heart.

Some people have so much junk piled up at the doors of their hearts they can't get the door open. They feel that their families, their jobs, their entertainment and sports, their worldly friends; are all more important than giving their whole self to Jesus.

Yet these people like to fool themselves that they can still be ready for heaven be-

cause they pray now and then and maybe even go to church.

Jesus will only come in when you invite Him in and give all your self to Him. You have to really want Him more than anything else.

Thought - When you do that, you will soon find that having Jesus in your heart is more wonderful than anything in the whole world!

Monday

Text: John 10:7 "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."

In this story, Jesus was telling the people that it was only through Him that anyone could be saved and come into the safe fold, under the care of the heavenly Shepherd.

He warned them that there would be people who would make up other ways to be saved by their own good deeds or holiness, or tell others that some other person or made up god could save them. He told us not to listen to them because they were thieves and robbers. They only want to hurt and destroy the sheep.

There are many people in the world that get others to follow them by promising them salvation if they do what they tell them. But they really only want to have the people's money and keep the people as slaves to serve them.

One of the ways we know these enemies is, they don't tell us to come in by the only

door, which is Jesus. Another sign that things are not right, is that these people tend to be proud and boastful. They get angry when you insist on following only what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy tell you.

When you find someone who does these things— get away from them as fast as you can, even if you find them in a church! Remember what Jesus said, only thieves and robbers that want to steal and kill, tell you that there is another door other than Jesus.

Thought - Even the pope, who calls himself Christian, now tells people that it is not necessary to believe in Jesus or the Bible to be saved. This is a terrible lie! But Jesus' true sheep know the true Shepherd's voice.

Tuesday

Text: Matthew 7:13 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

Here Jesus told the people about two roads in life. The one road is wide and seems smooth at first, and the other road is narrow and strait. (This word means tight)

These roads are different, separate, in opposite directions. One leads to eternal life; the other to eternal death. The roads are different, and also the people on the roads are different. The roads are opposite; one is broad and smooth, the other is narrow and rugged. So the people that travel these roads are opposite in character, in life, in dress, and talk.

The popular way seems easy, because most people go that way. You can do whatever you want; you just live whatever way you feel like. You ignore God's laws and just have as much fun as you can find.

In the broad road all are thinking about their selves, their dress, what they want to eat, and the pleasures in the way. Silliness

and glee they freely indulge in, and often laugh loudly. They don't think about their journey's end, of the destruction at the end of the path. Every day they approach nearer their destruction, yet they madly rush on faster and faster.

When you are all caught up in walking the broad road and the so-called pleasures of sin, you think you are happy, but down inside you really are empty. Why do people drink alcohol, and take drugs? Why do they smoke? Why do they rush from one entertainment to another, even though they may be tired and need to rest?

It is because they are trying to cover up the fear and loneliness down in the bottom of their hearts.

Thought - If you want to see just how 'happy' the people in the broad way really are—see them when they run out of alcohol, or smokes: see them when they have no entertainment and can't get any; then you will see them really miserable!

Wednesday

Text: Luke 13:24 "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Matthew 7:14 "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

We can go in the broad way with no real effort; we can take all our pride and sins, our bad habits, silliness and selfishness. But notice we need to 'strive' to enter the narrow way. (Strive means to try hard.) It's just like the opening the door thing, we have to respond to Jesus and seek to come to Him. Even though He is calling, He is knocking; nothing happens if we don't answer and reach out to have Him in our lives.

Jesus once said that for a rich man to enter into the way of life, it was like a camel

going through the eye of a needle. Now they say there was in Jerusalem a very small gate called the 'eye of the needle'; and if a camel was to be led through that gate, it had to get down on its knees and have all its load taken off first, and then it could manage to get through.

This is the same with all of us; we can't get through the gate into the way of life with all our worldly idols and stuff; all our own selfish pleasures, pride and plans. We have to get down on our knees and ask Jesus to take all those off of us, so we can be totally His children; then we can slip through that gate. But remember the worldly stuff is left behind, if we take it back, we will find ourselves back out on the broad way again.

Thought - Something as precious as eternal life, and the presence of our dear Saviour with us all the time, and a wonderful future in heaven, is worth 'striving' for!

Thursday

Text: Proverbs 13:15 "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."

These two paths are different than what they seem. The broad way that seems so easy— turns out to be the hardest way of all. People, who choose to walk in the broad road, think they are being free, and yet they end up as miserable slaves to everything and are afraid of everything.

People think it is being grown-up and big and tough to smoke and toke and drink alcohol. But later, they don't look so smart, when they have to be desperately searching for more stuff to satisfy their habits. They look downright pitiful! Even when they work hard, all their money goes to just keep a paper tube of weed burning in their mouth, or a glass of mind-killing poison in their hands.

People in the broad road will say that

being a Christian is being a slave. They think that you, all the time, are wishing to do the same things that they want, but you have to force yourself not to, and so you are not free.

This is not so at all. Once a person has really given his heart to Jesus and got rid of the worldly baggage in the power of Jesus, and Jesus really lives inside; he finds himself so free and peaceful and full of holy joy, that he wishes he had not waited so long to come to the Lord.

The worldly person can never know how wonderful and free is the true Christian's life; unless he too, gets down on his knees, gets the 'stuff' taken off, and comes through that door into the strait and narrow path. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." Proverbs 28:1

Thought - If you don't yet know for yourself how truly free and wonderful it is to be really born again as a child of the Heavenly King; then find out today!

Friday

Text: Proverbs 4:18 "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

One of the most common things you will hear from people who are travelling in the broad road to destruction, is that they are 'bored'. Did you ever hear people say that? Why do they feel bored?

It is because they have become slaves to another habit that is just as addicting as nicotine or drugs. It is the entertainment habit, and it is very sad that even little children are being taught to get into this habit.

They get so used to watching or doing exciting things, and when they are finished, they feel sad and let down. Then they have to run and find some more excitement or pleasure to make them happy again — until it also runs out and they are all sad and

down again.

What a rotten way to live! Thank our Lord that we do not have to live like that! When we belong to Jesus, there are so many good, pure things to enjoy, and they are not depending on outside entertainment. Yes, and the wonderful thing about the Christian life is, that we can know that the peace and joy we have today, will be even better tomorrow.

Jesus teaches us new lessons all the time,

and as we learn from Him we find greater peace and happiness. Even in hard times, just having Jesus close to us brings wonderful joy. So you see, the 'easy' road is really the hardest; and the 'hard' road is really the easiest!

Thought - A true Christian, locked up in a dungeon, is happier than a wicked man in a palace! = ^ .. ^ =

