



**Sermons on
Saints and
Sinners**

JOHN WADDEY

BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINES OF BIBLE CHARACTERS

SERMONS
on
SAINTS and SINNERS

(Biographical Studies of Bible Characters)

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INTRODUCTION

John Waddey's books are becoming more popular all the time, which leads us to believe that brethren find them to be useful and helpful, and for that we are very thankful.

SERMONS ON SAINTS AND SINNERS is only one of several of John Waddey's books that we have printed here in Asia.

In this book, SERMONS ON SAINTS AND SINNERS, the author makes outline studies of various Bible characters and draws some beneficial and inspiring lessons from them. I would say that anyone who would take this book and really put forth a definite effort to study it would be greatly blessed.

We hope to print many other such volumes as we continue our literature work here in the U.S.A. and around the world.

J.C. Choate
Winona, Miss.
Sept. 1, 1980

DEDICATION

To Orin E. Purdom, my maternal grandfather, who led his family in the path of righteousness and served the Lord's church as an elder. I shall ever be grateful for his interest in my spiritual welfare when I was not. A great host will follow him into heaven.

PREFACE

The lives of notable people of the past are exciting and challenging to every generation. Christians have the richest heritage of great biographies to study. The Bible overflows with life stories of both good and bad people. From both of these types we can benefit.

Goethe wrote, "Man alone is interesting to man." People never grow tired of biographical lessons from the Scriptures. A wise teacher will make use of this interest in his teaching.

"Gallant men have faced dangerous and hazardous journeys to widen the borders of man's freedom. Each in his time contributed to our tradition something which has inspired not only his own generation but the generations that follow." Everett Dirksen. Any person will be influenced to greater things by a study of Gideon, Barnabas or Elijah. All will be warned by a study of Judas, Bathsheba or Herod.

The following outlines were prepared and preached at the Karns congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee during 1973. They were well received and helpful to the saints. Their preparation and delivery was a pleasant and rewarding experience. The author is constantly looking for fresh ways to present the old principles of the gospel lest his lessons become stale and repetitive to his hearers. Biographical preaching is a marvellous way to meet this need. Even youngsters are interested in character studies.

It is hoped that other preachers will find these lessons useful. If this little volume is well received, others will follow with yet more life studies.

Appreciation is expressed to the publisher, brother J. C. Choate, for making these volumes available to the public. Also the author's thanks are extended to Judy Whitson, Molly Kirkland, Becky Allen and Reba Waddey for typing the manuscript.

May God be glorified in this production and may it assist in the furtherance of the gospel.

John Waddey
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ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD

Jas. 2:21-23

INTRO: Of all the earthlings ever to live, surely Abraham ranks among the top five. No man's knowledge of the Bible is complete without a thorough knowledge of his eventful life. His name is woven into the warp and woof of Christianity.

I. His Times:

A. He was born in Ur of the Chaldees about 2,000 B.C.

B. Chaldea was highly developed and civilized.

1. Archeologists have unearthed a great temple to moon god, Sin.

2. Large spacious houses, 13 rooms, two floors.

3. Large quantities of written material, legal documents.

4. A farming and manufacturing center.

5. A land of idolatry, Jos. 24:2.

6. A land of learning.

C. Canaan:

1. It was sparsely populated.

2. Divided into city states and tribal shiekdoms.

3. Each city was a fortress.

4. Constantly at war with each other and wandering bedouins of the desert.

5. Given over to a base kind of idolatry.
6. Morally degenerate, generally speaking.

II. The man:

- A. His father was Terah, his brothers, Nahor and Haran, Gen. 11:27.
- B. His name:
 1. Abram, exalted father.
 2. Abraham, the father of many nations.
- C. His position in life:
 1. His background in Ur, would likely indicate a good education and training for his life's work.
 2. He was the head of the family clan, patriarch, after the death of Terah.
 3. He was a wealthy man with a large retinue of servants.
 - a. Gen. 24:35.

III. His Life Before God:

- A. His call, Gen. 12:1. He was 75 yrs. old.
- B. The fourfold promise, Gen. 12:2-3.
 1. A great nation, the Hebrew Nation.
 2. A great name, father of the Hebrews and Arabs.
 3. A land, Canaan.
 4. A blessing to all nations, Christ.
- C. His faith, Heb. 11:8; Rom. 4:17-22.
- D. His obedience, Jas. 2:21-24.
- E. His values and goals in life, Heb. 11:9-10, 13-16.
- F. His religion:

1. Where ever he wandered, there he built an altar, Gen. 12: 7.
 2. Total self surrender to God, Heb. 11:17-19.
 3. His generosity towards the priest of God, Gen. 14: 18-20.
- G. His character:
1. As the head of his family, Gen. 18: 19.
 2. His hospitality, Gen. 18: 2-8.
 3. His dealing with Lot:
 - a. He took his brother's son as a charge to raise.
 - b. His unselfish generosity when a conflict arose, Gen. 13: 7-9.
 - c. His concern for Lot and the righteous in Sodom, Gen. 18: 22-33.
 - d. His courage and selflessness in the battle with Chedorlaomer, Gen. 14: 14-24.
- H. His sin. He was still a man like us, Gen. 12: 10.
- I. His inheritance and reward, Died at 175 yrs.
1. In his life he had no settled home, Acts 7: 4-5.
 2. But all the promises were fulfilled in his descendants.
 3. He looked for a city whose builder and maker was God and he found it, Heb. 11: 9-10.
 - a. Lk. 16: 22.
 - b. Matt. 8: 11.
- J. Living monuments to Abraham: Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, over half the world's population honor him.

IV. LESSONS TO LEARN FROM ABRAHAM:

- A. When God calls, we too must be ready to go.**
- B. Like Abraham, we must believe and walk in the steps of his faith, Rom. 4: 12.**
- C. The importance of waiting on God, we cannot rush Him.**
- D. We must not try to improve on God's promises and plans.**
- E. That faith means implicit obedience.**
- F. We need the peaceful and generous attitude of Abraham.**
- G. As parents we need to instruct our families as he did.**
- H. Our homes should be centres of hospitality.**
- I. Nothing of ours can be withheld from God.**
- J. We must give generously to God as Abraham did.**
- K. Like him, we should take our altar wherever we go.**
- L. We should have a concern for those in danger and intercede for them as he did Lot.**
- M. We are only pilgrims here.**
- N. Our goal and destiny is the city whose builder is God.**
- O. We who are God's people look forward to resting in Abraham's bosom.**
- P. We must become Abraham's seed if we want to inherit with him, Gal. 3: 26-29.**

ADONI-BEZEK, A KING WHO REAPED WHAT HE SOWED*

Jud. 1:4-8

INTRO: A bizarre picture is printed in our text. A powerful Canaanite monarch is dining at his table. All his family and courtesans are with him. Servants bring sumptuous dishes. The king is Adoni-bezek, lord of Bezek, a cruel heathen tyrant.

We witness a weird sight, they toss scraps of food on the floor. See them scramble and clamor. Strange men, like dogs claw and fight for bits of meat. Looking more closely, we see they all have their thumbs and toes cut off. There are 70 of them, all kings.

They were mutilated to cripple them and make them unfit for military service. To this was added the humiliation of grovelling for scraps of food.

When Judah and Simeon invaded his land, in the battle, Adoni-bezek lost 10,000 men. He tried to escape, but was captured. They cut off his thumbs and toes.

His thought was, "as I have done, so God hath requited me." Judges 1:8.

LESSONS FROM ADONI-BEZEK

- I. Be Certain You Will Reap What You Sow.**
 - A. Gal. 6:7-8.**
 - B. If a man sows evil, he will reap evil.**
 - 1. Sow neglect and reap heartaches.**

From *Kings on Parade*, adapted.

2. Sow an evil example and reap it in your children.
 3. Sow profanity and see it in your offspring.
 4. Sow dishonesty, have it imposed on you.
 5. Sow gambling, see the ruin it will bring.
 6. Sow immorality, reap the ugly fruit.
- C. Sow to the Spirit and reap everlasting life.
1. Joseph sowed to the Spirit.
 2. Daniel sowed to the Spirit.
 3. Do that which is right and you will have nothing to fear.
 4. This is true in every way.
 - a. Kindness.
 - b. Helpfulness.
 - c. Generosity.
 - d. Forgiveness.
 - e. Faithfulness.
- II. Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out.
- A. Num. 32: 23.
- B. Where does sin find people out?
1. Here in this life.
 - a. Is. 28: 20.
 - b. David.
 2. In the hereafter.
 - a. II Cor. 5: 10.
 - b. Heb. 4: 12-13.
 3. All unconfessed sin will face us in judgment.
1 John 1: 9-10.
- III. Be Sure That There Is A Way Out For Sinners and Only One Way.

- A. You must deal with your sins according to God's word or face eternal consequences.
- B. For the Child of God there is but one way.
 - 1. Repent and confess, Acts 8:22.
 - 2. Forsake sin, Jas. 4:8.
- C. For the alien, salvation is only by way of the cross.
 - 1. Acts 4:11-12.
 - 2. Matt. 11:28.
 - 3. Trust and obey.
 - 4. Mk. 16:16.

You also will reap what you have sown, Gal. 6:7.
Will you not sow to the spirit that you might reap eternal life?

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

John 8:1-11

INTRO: His enemies accused Jesus of being the friend of publicans and sinners, Matt. 11:19. Many of the stories of his life that God chose to record for us involve these very people. Our study today is one of the best known events of Jesus' ministry.

- I. The Setting:
 - A. In the temple court.
 - B. Early in the morning.
 - C. A great crowd gathered.
 - D. Jesus teaching.

E. The noisy disturbance.

1. Jewish religious leaders dragging a women into Jesus's presence demanding a judgment.

II. The Characters:

A. The Prosecutors:

1. Religious men, holding high office.
2. Legalists.
 - a. No pity, mercy or compassion. Not one word said about saving the woman.
 - b. Zealous to bind the law on others and inflict its judgments, while excusing themselves.
 - c. Willing to sacrifice a person to win their theological point.
3. Though acting as judges, they were the real enemies.

B. Christ:

1. The friend of publicans and harlots.
2. The minister of grace, mercy and forgiveness.
3. The sinless Son of Man.
4. The teacher of true religion and morality.
5. The fairest judge of all.
6. The exposor of hypocrisy.

C. The Woman:

1. A sinner.
2. Likely a young, engaged woman.
 - a. Deut. 22: 22-24, This was the only case that specified stoning as the manner of death.

3. Likely, the victim of a devious plot.
 - a. It was unlikely that they would have caught her “in the act” unless, it had been a “set up.”
4. A tool for wicked men to use against Christ.
5. A precious soul, made in the image of God.
6. Though tarnished, she was a prospect for salvation.

III. The Plot:

- A. Find grounds for condemning Jesus.
- B. Get him to take a position contrary to either Jewish or Roman law.
- C. The dilemma:
 1. If he said condemn her, charge him before the Romans who reserved the right of death to themselves. John 18:31.
 2. If he said do not condemn her, they would have accused and charged him with setting aside Moses Law.
 3. Either way, they would attempt to poison the public mind against him as either for or against sinners.
 4. They kept on asking him, so the Greek reads.

IV. The Master Defuses the Time-bomb.

- A. He stoops and writes on the ground, apparently ignoring them.
 1. Perhaps they thought he was unable to respond.
 2. He may have written their sins.
 - a. Katagraphen, “to write down” is used

when speaking of writing accusations or charges.

3. He may have written the words of Lev. 20: 10 which said stone both parties of adultery.

B. The moral challenge, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

1. Deut. 17: 6-7.

2. They had violated Moses' Law by not bringing the man.

3. Perhaps they themselves were guilty of adultery, and Jesus could look into their hearts and know it.

4. The silent response as they hastily retreated.

V. Jesus' Conversation with the Woman.

A. His question, "Where are your accusers?"

1. "Woman" is the term he used for his own mother, John 2: 4.

B. His tender mercy and forgiveness.

1. The Jews desired to condemn her but were not qualified to do so. Jesus was qualified, but had no desire to condemn.

C. His charge and challenge, "Go and sin no more."

D. The contrast between Jesus and the Jews.

1. They brought her as a captive. He treated her as a free woman.

2. To them, she was a tool for them to use; Jesus respected her as a human being.

3. They considered only her sin; Jesus had confidence in her future.

4. They wanted to stone her; Jesus was ready to save her.
- E. We see his delicacy, modesty and obvious compassion. This separated him from the accusers and her former partners in sin. She had in Jesus a friend she could talk to.
- F. The case was dismissed for lack of executioners.
- VI. Lessons to Remember:
- A. We are all like that woman in that all are guilty of sin. Rom. 3:23.
1. Satan, the accuser, is pressing God for our death. Rev. 12:10; Job. 2:2-5.
- B. The Lord in mercy will forgive us as He did her.
- C. We must “sin no more” if we would be pardoned.
- D. We see the heartlessness of legalistic religion.
- E. We see the cruelty of man towards his fellow man.
- F. We learn how to deal with those who fall into sin. They are to be saved, not destroyed. John 12:47.
- G. Only he that is without sin should cast the stone of condemnation.
- H. Like David we can say, “Let us fall now into the hand of Jehovah; for his mercies are great and let me not fall into the hand of men.” 11 Sam. 24:14.

ANDREW, THE SOUL-WINNER

John 1:35-42

INTRO: Not everybody can be great in life. Most of us are just ordinary people. We need not be discouraged about being ordinary for Christ chose many ordinary people to be his closest disciples. The ordinary man is the backbone of society, business and the church. He carries the big load. Andrew was an ordinary disciple and a great example to us.

I. Getting Acquainted with Andrew:

A. His family:

- 1. The son of Jonas or John.**
- 2. The brother of Peter, John 1:40.**

B. His home town was Bethsaida, John 1:44.

C. His occupation was fisherman, Matt. 4:18.

D. His name means “manly”.

E. His spiritual life:

- 1. He was a disciple of John the Baptist, John 1:35.**
- 2. He was pointed to Jesus by John, John 1:35-36.**
- 3. He was the first disciple called by Jesus, John 1:40.**
- 4. He brought Peter to Christ, John 1:41-42.**
- 5. He was chosen to be an apostle of Christ.**

F. Of his work as an apostle we have no record.

- 1. Tradition says he carried the gospel into Russia, Greece, Asia Minor and Turkey.**

G. His death: Tradition says he died a martyr's death in the year 69 at Patras, Achaia, Greece.

1. That he was crucified after being beaten.
 - H. It is to John, the friend of Andrew, that we are indebted for what we know of him.
- II. He brought Peter to Christ, John 1:40-42.
- A. He never preached any great sermons that we know of.
 1. Andrew left no epistles.
 2. He did not have 3,000 responses after a sermon.
 3. He did not walk on the water or cut off an enemy's ear. Peter, his brother, did all that.
 - B. He was the quiet, low-key man in the background who won the man who shook the world.
 - C. Any Christian can bring "his brother" to Christ.
 1. You can do what Andrew did.
- III. He was Interested in Youth, John 6:8-9.
- A. The Crisis: 5,000 hungry pilgrims.
 1. A deserted place, no food available.
 2. Not enough funds to buy bread; 200 shillings worth.
 - B. Andrew brought forth a boy with "a sack lunch".
 - C. "Andrew discovered the hidden resources of a boy."
 1. The boy held the key to the problem.
 - D. There is something wrong with a man who is not interested in young people.
 1. They are the leadership of tomorrow's world.

2. Christ took the boy's resources and performed a great miracle.
- IV. He Introduced a Group of Foreign Strangers to Christ, John 12: 20-23.
- A. Certain "Greeks" sought to see Jesus.
 - B. Philip was not sure just what to do.
 1. Perhaps he questioned if they would be welcome.
 - C. Andrew took them to Jesus.
 1. He understood, perhaps quicker than others that the gospel was for *all* men of all races.
 2. Acts 10: 34-35.
 - D. We need every Christian to be a good will ambassador to usher strangers to Christ.
- V. Qualities that Made Andrew Great, Even Though He Was Ordinary.
- A. He was "a man of his word." Peter trusted his report about Messiah.
 1. Our usefulness to Christ is limited to our good name.
 2. Prov. 22: 1.
 - B. He was enthusiastic about sharing his religion. "A religion not worth sharing is not worth keeping."
 - C. He was willing to live in the shadow of a great man without resentment or bitterness.
 - D. He was willing to accept his "ordinary role" in the kingdom and fulfill it.
 - E. He did not try to "ride in on Peter's coat-tails."

- F. He was able to make decisions.
 - G. He was able to find something to do “where he was”.
 - 1. Prov. 17:24, If a man won’t work at home neither will he work abroad.
 - H. He was interested in people, a true friend. His friendship was a road to bring men to Christ.
 - I. He did much with the little he had.
- Anyone can do what Andrew did. Will you?

APOLLOS, THE ELOQUENT PREACHER*

Acts 18:24-28

INTRO: Real genius does not fall upon many men. Our subject seems to be one of those few. “A man who could divide honors with Paul is worthy of study,” Robertson. It is as a preacher that Apollos’ name has passed down to us. Not only can we learn much from the man, but much about preachers.

- I. His Place of Origin.
 - A. Alexandria in Egypt, 18:24.
 - B. Cultural Center of N. Africa and the Near East.
 - C. Founded by and named after Alexander the Great, 332 B.C.
 - D. Greatest library of the day-900,000 volumes a great university.

* From *Types of Preachers, in the New Testament* by A.T. Robertson.

- E. Home of 100,000 Jews.
- F. Distribution point for Hellenism.
- G. Home of Philo the Jew, the *Septuagint*.
- H. Later home of Clement and Origen and stronghold of Christianity.
 1. Fountain head of doctrinal corruption.
 2. Allegorical method of interpreting Scripture.

II. The man as a Preacher.

- A. An *eloquent* man, 18:24.
 1. Gifted in speaking powers.
 2. Learned.
- B. *Mighty* in the Scriptures, 18:24.
 1. An *able* interpreter.
 2. "A man may have a considerable knowledge of the Bible and yet not be able to use his knowledge effectively", Robertson.
 3. One cannot be mighty in using the Scriptures without a good knowledge of them.
- C. Fervent in Spirit, 18:25.
 1. "Boiling over" in zeal.
 2. Rom. 12:11, all should be fervent.
- D. Had been instructed in the way of the Lord Jesus, 18:25.
- E. Spoke and *taught accurately* concerning Jesus.
 1. There is always the need for accuracy in our teaching.
 2. "We must handle aright the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15.
- F. He spoke boldly.
 1. Like the apostles, Acts 4:13.

2. Timid fearful souls should not presume to teach.
 3. Boldness is not brashness, crudeness, not ignorant ranting; rather courageous preaching of truth!
- G. He taught this new message in the *synagogue*.
1. So must we go to those willing to hear us, in their homes or “synagogues”.

III. As A Person.

- A. He was limited in his knowledge, 18:25. Knew only the baptism of John.
- B. He was willing to be taught:
1. By a “non-professional.”
 2. By a woman.
 3. By a family he had not previously known.
 4. So should we.
- C. It is a weakness of many preachers that cannot receive correction by one of less stature than they.
1. From those listed above; also those younger.
 2. One is never too old to learn.
 3. A preacher who is always learning will always have a hearing.
 4. Like Apollos we should gladly sit at the feet of Priscilla and Aquila.
 5. Thank God for the finesse and skill of this couple that salvaged a great man of God.

IV. Apollos and the Corinthian Church.

- A. He helped them much.
1. He was a church builder, not a wrecker, 1 Cor. 3:6-10.

B. He refused to be a party to the factious spirit at Corinth, 1 Cor. 16:12.

1. Notice he is in no way blamed for the problems.

V. Apollos the Apologist and Defender of the Cause.

A. Acts 18:28.

1. He powerfully refuted the Jews, publicly “argued them down”.

B. He showed by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

May the Lord give us 10,000 Apollos’ to help in the work today.

BARABBAS, THE NOTABLE SINNER

Matt. 27:16

INTRO: Christ died for sinners. Perhaps the most notable was Barabbas.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor was faced with a difficult choice. He knew Christ was innocent and wanted to free him. He wanted to pacify the mob and avoid a riot. Pilate thought he had discovered an escape route—“Make them choose between Jesus and Barabbas. Surely no one would want Barabbas.” You know the story, Barabbas was freed, Christ died.

1. Christ died in the place of Barabbas.

2. He died in the stead of all sinners, Rom. 5:6.

a. Rom. 5:8.

I. Barabbas Was Distinguished by Sin.

A. Matt. 27:16, “a notable prisoner.”

- B. Mk. 15:7, “had made insurrection . . .” “who had committed murder . . .”
- C. John 18:40, “Now Barabbas was a robber.”
- D. Nothing good has been recorded about Barabbas.
- E. He was distinguished by sin.
 - 1. He was not the last . . . so have others.
 - 2. What about your life?

II. Barabbas Was **Lost**:

- A. He was a “notable sinner,” imprisoned, committed to die.
- B. He was eternally lost because of sin! Rom. 6:23.
- C. He was lost because he did not believe.
 - 1. John 3:18, “he that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that *believeth* not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”
 - 2. Barabbas stood only a few feet from Christ, yet he was lost.
 - 3. You may be inches or seconds or thoughts away and yet be as lost as he was!
 - a. Illustration of Greek soldier who helped pillage Persopolis. He found a leather bag of jewels; threw away the jewels and kept the bag for a bread sack.

III. Barabbas Was Unloved By Mankind.

- A. He was a violent criminal,
 he was an outcast,
 he was a rebel and a trouble maker,
 he was sentenced to die.

- B. The world has little affection for its own.
The world is selfish.
The world drops a man when his value to them is gone.
- C. Though unloved by man, Barabbas was loved by God.
 1. Rom. 5: 8, "God commended his love to us".
 2. John 3: 16.
 3. 1 John 4: 10.

- IV. Barabbas had heard the chief philosophers of men.
 - A. "Live right", "be sincere", "do the best you can".
 - B. He had not lived up to it nor have you.
 - C. He could not live up to even man's standard, much less God's.
 1. Nor can we, Is. 64: 25, Eph. 2: 8-9.
 - D. For Barabbas lived his life for the flesh. He wasted a lifetime on the unimportant. What are you majoring on in life?

- V. Barabbas Might Have Been Saved.
 - A. Of all the people in Jerusalem, Barabbas had the best opportunity to understand the atonement.
 - B. He could have accompanied John and the women to the cross.
 - C. The door of history slams shut, without further mention of the poor wretch's name.

The governor nods, the guards unlock the chains, they clang to the pavement, cowering he dashes into the milling crowd—the condemned criminal free. Christ is beaten, the rough cross thrust upon him.

You are in Barabbas' shoes, what will you do? Flee and hide with your guilt and sin? Or fall down and worship him as your Lord? You must decide!

BARNABAS, THE GOOD MAN

Acts 11:22-24

INTRO: The book of Acts is a history of the young church in action. History is the biographies of the lives and works of great men and women. Barnabas was one of the great spirits of the early church.

The following verses present a portrait of our subject.

- A. Acts 4: 36-37.
- B. Acts 9: 26-30.
- C. Acts 11: 19-30.
- D. Acts 13: 1-3.
- E. Acts 15: 1-5; 22-26.
- F. 1 Cor. 9: 1-6.

I. The Difficulty We Face.

- A. The problem of being good.
 - 1. Rom. 3: 9-12, Natural man is seldom good.
 - 2. Gal. 5: 22, The fruit of the spirit is goodness.
 - 3. *Only Christ can make us good.*
- B. The problem of making goodness attractive is great.
 - 1. Not being a “do gooder”.
 - 2. A goodness that is genuine under all circumstances—Not to benefit self but others. Phil. 2: 3-4.
 - 3. Love for God and love for fellowman is the basis.
 - a. Matt. 22: 36-39.
 - b. Rom. 5: 5.

II. The Description of Barnabas’ Goodness.

- A. He had a *generous* spirit.

1. Acts 4: 36-37.
 2. It is harder to give all when we have much, than when we have a little.
 3. He had a stewardship rather than an ownership of property.
 - a. 1 Pet. 4: 10.
 4. Generosity is not determined by how much or little one has, but his attitude towards it.
- B. He had a *magnanimous* spirit towards *others*.
1. He befriended *Saul* and brought him into the church in *Jerusalem*. Acts 9: 26-27.
 2. He *brought Saul into* the work at Antioch although it was a successful work.
 3. He was one of the first preachers to work with an integrated congregation.
 4. He *stood up* for John Mark. Acts 15:36-39.
- C. He had an *Infectious Spirit*.
1. Son of exhortation.
 - a. WHAT WOULD YOU BE NAMED?
 2. He did good enthusiastically and encouraged others and made them want to do the same.
- D. He had a *helpful* spirit.
1. Helping Saul, Acts 9: 26.
 2. Helping the Antioch Church, Acts 11.
 3. The missionary journey.
 4. Delivering the gift to Jerusalem, Acts 11: 30.
 5. Delivering the Jerusalem decree, Acts 15.
- E. He had a *Solicitous Spirit*, winning others to Christ.
1. Acts 11: 24.
 2. A soul winner.

III. The Explanation of His Attitude and Life.

A. Acts 11:24, "full of the Holy Spirit."

1. Utterly surrendered to and cleansed by the Spirit's indwelling and influence.
2. The spirit is referred to 300 times in the New Testament . . . His power is mentioned often.

B. We must let the word of the spirit dwell in us richly. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19.

C. We must be willing to follow its guidance through the Scripture.

May the attributes that made Barnabas good dwell in our lives that we may be *good* Christians.

BATHSHEBA, THE SALVAGED SINNER

II Sam. 11:2-5

INTRO: We remember David as a man after God's own heart. We think of Bathsheba as the woman who committed adultery. This reflects man's tendency to lay a heavier blame on women than men in moral sins. However, Bathsheba was not all bad, nor was her life a total failure. Perhaps we can learn from her mistakes and avoid them.

I. Her Sin.

A. The event, II Sam. 11:2-5.

B. Her negligence in exposing herself to lustful eyes.

1. The importance of careful modesty in dress and conduct, 1 Tim. 2:9.

C. Her guilt.

1. No greater than David's.
2. Even less than the king's since Oriental monarchs simply took what they wanted without request.
 - a. We would not excuse her, but understand her.
 - b. God seems to have laid the heavier responsibility upon David, 11 Sam. 12:7.

D. The awful avalanche of death and destruction that followed in the wake of their sin.

1. Her husband murdered.
2. Her baby was smitten and died.
3. Death plagued David's house till the day he died.

II. Her Forgiveness.

A. Her's is not detailed, but David's is.

1. II Sam. 12:13.
2. Ps. 51:1-4, 10-12.

B. Her close association with Nathan the prophet indicates her reformed life, 1 Kings 1:11.

C. A girl's life is not totally destroyed because of an unwed pregnancy. Like Bathsheba, God will forgive and help her salvage her life.

III. Her Illustrious Son, Solomon.

A. She was legally married to David.

1. Solomon, a legitimate son.

B. How fortunate and proud she must have been to have such a son.

- C. Other sons were born. 1 Chron. 3: 5.
 - 1. Shimea, Shobab, and Nathan.
- D. She helped him secure the throne.
 - 1. 1 Kings 1:15-16.

IV. Lessons to Remember.

- A. The danger of indiscretion.
 - 1. Tit. 2: 5.
- B. The awful power of lust.
 - 1. Matt. 5:28.
 - 2. Prov. 4:23.
- C. No man, however good, is exempt from sin.
 - 1. 1 Cor. 10:13.
 - 2. Matt. 26:41.
- D. Never make even one improper move toward another's mate.
 - 1. Deut. 5:21.
- E. The volatile nature of immorality.
 - 1. Prov. 5:3-5.
- F. The cancerous growth of sin as it multiplies.
 - 1. James 1:15.
- G. The evil of ingratitude that David showed toward Uriah.
 - 1. Lk. 17:17-18.
- H. The abuse of authority, such as David exhibited.
 - 1. "power corrupts".
- I. God's displeasure at sin.
- J. The destructive power of sin.
- K. Sin cannot be buried or hidden.
 - 1. Num. 32:23.
- L. We need Nathans to rebuke and reprove sin.
 - 1. 11 Tim. 4:2.

M. God can over-rule our foolishness and make something worthwhile of us. He gave Bathsheba a Solomon.

N. The possibility of recovering from a terrible mistake, even as Bathsheba did.

1. 1 Tim. 1:15.

Bathsheba is a great example of a sinner reclaimed for God. Will you let him reclaim your life?

CAIN, THE WAGES OF SIN

Jude 11

INTRO: Rom. 15:4—The lives of O.T. characters provide us with many useful lessons both as to the commendable life and the wrong life. Cain is a lesson in negatives.

I. The Birth, Gen. 4:1-2.

A. Cain, the first of many children, Gen. 5:4.

B. His name meant “to get” or “possession”.

1. “I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah”.

II. The Occupation, 4:2-6.

A. Cain, a tiller of the ground.

B. Abel, a keeper of sheep.

III. The Worship, 4:3-7.

A. Prescribed by God.

1. By faith, Heb. 11:4.

2. Will-worship condemned, Col. 2:23.

- B. *Abel's* a *blood* sacrifice, a recognition of sin and need of forgiveness, Heb. 9:22. *Cain's*, a *vegetable* offering, a thank offering.
- C. Abel's was an offering of faith, God accepted him and it. Cain's was not of faith.

IV. The Sins of Cain, Gen. 4: 4-9.

- A. Lack of faith, Heb. 11:6.
- B. Wrong sacrifice, will-worship, Col. 2:23.
- C. No sense of need for forgiveness of sin.
- D. No sorrow or repentance.
- E. Resentment toward God and Abel.
- F. Envy and hate towards Abel, striving.
- G. Murder. 1 John 3: 11-12, 15.
- H. Lying.
- I. Arrogance—"Am I my brother's keeper?"

V. The Punishment, Gen. 4: 9-14.

- A. Cursed art thou.
- B. The ground shall not yield its strength.
- C. Driven from society and home to be a wanderer.
 - 1. Sin always separates friend from friend; and families.
 - 2. Man from God, Is. 59: 1-2, Eph. 2: 11-13.

VI. The Mercy, Gen. 4: 15.

- A. Allowing Cain to live.
- B. No man to punish Cain. Punishment was God's to give.
- C. The mark.
- D. 11 Pet. 3: 9.

LESSONS TO REMEMBER:

- 1. The necessity of a heart of faith towards God.

2. The importance of faithful obedience in worship to God.
 3. The importance of attitude—his jealousy led to resentful anger and that to murder and condemnation.
 4. The awful wages of sin.
 5. The wicked have always hated and persecuted the righteous.
 6. Before we can be saved there must be a realization of sin and a penitent heart.
 7. We need atoning blood to take away our sins.
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CALEB, THE MOUNTAIN CLAIMER

Josh. 14:6-14

INTRO: The history of man's progress is the stories of courageous men who were willing to stand alone in the hour of trial and testing. Such a man was Caleb.

- I. The Man, His name meant "Dog".
 - A. He was of the tribe of Judah, Jos. 14: 6.
 1. His father was Je-phun'nek the Ken'iz-zite.
 2. A *prince* of his tribe.
 3. Was chosen as one of 12 spies to spy out the land, Num. 13: 1-2, 6.
 4. Only he and Joshua brought back a faithful report.
 - B. He survived the 40 years in the wilderness.
 1. Only he and Joshua of the adult generation that came out of Egypt survived.

2. This was his reward for his faithfulness, Num. 14: 28-30.
 3. He never forgot what he had seen in the promised land.
- C. He led in the conquest of the land of Canaan.
1. He was then 85 yrs. old.
 2. Yet strong and capable, faithful and fearless.
 3. He challenged the stronghold of the enemy and took it for his own.

II. The Character of Caleb.

- A. "He had *another* (different) Spirit" than the majority of his peers, Num. 14:23.
1. Caleb had great *Faith* that God would grant them victory. Others had fear and unbelief in God. "It was not the giants that kept them out, it was lack of faith."
 2. Caleb was courageous and anxious to fight to gain the victory. The others did not want to run the risk. They wanted victory, without the battle.
 3. Caleb was faithful unto death, always dependable. The others were vacillating in their loyalty.
- B. "Caleb wholly followed the Lord", Jos. 14:9.
1. He did not run with the majority.
 2. He took a stand for what he believed even though it was intensely unpopular.
 - a. Public opinion is sometimes "public enemy No. 1".
 3. He remembered what God had previously done and staked the future on it.

4. The crowd threatened to stone him, he refused to compromise, Num. 14: 10.
 5. He followed God fully with all his heart, soul, and mind.
 6. His *godliness made for manliness*, a good example for young men today.
 7. He followed God fully, all his days. He spent and was spent for Jehovah's Cause.
- C. Caleb dared to try the difficult.
1. He could have reasoned that "he was too old" or "he had already done his share of fighting."
 2. He could have demanded an easier inheritance, one already secured.
 3. He chose the very place and enemies that had frightened the spies 40 years before.
 - a. Num. 13: 21-22.
 - b. Josh. 14: 12-14.
 4. It is a mark of greatness to attempt the difficult. People cheat themselves by choosing the easy roads.
 - a. Students want easy teachers.
 - b. Men want easy jobs.
 5. Like Caleb we must dream the impossible dream.
 6. It is the **STRAITENED** and **NARROW WAY** that leads to life, Matt. 7: 13-14.

III. Caleb Received A Rich Reward.

- A. His contemporaries wanted to stone him, they died in the wilderness. He survived to enter Canaan land.

- B. The children of his enemies honored him as a great and good hero of the Nation.
- C. He had the blessing of a good conscience. He knew he had done the right thing. He was true to himself.
- D. God honored him “My servant Caleb”, Num. 14:24. His name was engraved in God’s Hall of Fame.
- E. For 40 years in the wilderness, he was waiting to receive the promised land, the others were waiting for a grave in a strange land.
- F. The joy of helping “possess the good land”.
- G. “Give me this mountain”.
 - 1. He drove out the sons of Anak.
 - 2. He took Hebron, the royal city.
 - 3. He lived the rest of his days in REST and PEACE.
 - a. “The land had rest from war”, Jos. 14:15.
 - b. The impossible dream.

“Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you will wonder at yourself, at the richness of life that has come to you by the grace of God.” P. Brooks.

THE CASE OF CORNELIUS

INTRO: Of great importance to us is the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile Christian. It is a landmark in the history of Christianity. It shows God's great love for us.

Eph. 2: 1-5; 2: 11-13.

- I. Relate the Story of Acts 10.
- II. Cornelius Puts Many Modern Day Christians to Shame. 10: 1-2.
 - A. His *morality*.
 - B. His *generous benevolence*.
 - C. His *spiritual life*.
 1. He was devout.
 2. Prayed always.
 3. Feared God with all his house (family).
 - D. His faith when God sent a message.
 1. Rom. 10: 17.
 - E. His willingness and readiness to *obey* in standing for Peter. 10: 7.
 - F. His *concern* for the *welfare* of his *friends* and *family*—he gathered a large group together. 10: 24-27.
 - G. His willingness to *hear, accept instruction* and *learn*. 10: 33.
 - H. On becoming a Christian he begged Peter to stay to instruct them more. 10: 48.
- III. Some Lessons:
 - A. In spite of his moral goodness he had to hear words whereby he could be saved! 11: 14.

- B. Peter would not accept his worship but corrected him. 10: 25-26.
- C. Holy Spirit Baptism was not sufficient. They were commanded to be baptized. 10: 44-48.
- D. Baptism is a command of God that must be obeyed. 10: 48.
- E. *God cares not for a person's race or background but his heart.* 10: 34-35. We must "call no man common or unclean". 10: 28.
- F. What church did Cornelius join?
Acts 2: 47.

Why not follow the godly example of Cornelius in obeying the Lord?

DANIEL, THE PROPHET OF WORLD HISTORY

INTRO: One of the most notable men of O. T. history is Daniel, the prophet of the Babylonian Empire.

I. The Man.

- A. Born about 620 B.C.
 1. Taken to Babylon as a prisoner of war in 605 B.C. when about 15 yrs. old.
 2. Spent the rest of his life in Babylon, dying at 85-90 years.
 3. Nobility of the tribe of Judah, possibly royalty.
- B. His name means "God is my judge".
 1. The Babylonians named him Balteshazzar.

- C. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and likely other promising youths were placed in three years preparatory training that they might become royal ministers.
- D. He was “well-favoured with no blemish, skilled in wisdom, endued with knowledge and understood science”, 1: 3-6.
 - 1. He was educated in the learning and language of the Chaldeans, 1: 4.
- E. God gave him knowledge and skill in *all* learning and wisdom and the understanding of all dreams and visions.
- F. He was raised to the highest civil posts in three governments:
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar made him ruler over the province of Babylon and chief governor over all wise men, 2: 48.
 - 2. Balshazzar appointed him third ruler of the kingdom, 5: 29.
 - 3. Darius made him one of the three ruling presidents, 6: 2.

II. Babylon-the City of Daniel’s Ministry.

- A. The wonder city of the ancient world.
- B. Dimensions 15 miles square.
- C. Walls-300 ft. high, 80 ft. thick, set 35 ft. in the ground.
- D. 250 towers guarded the walls, 100 brass gates made it accessible.
- E. The Euphrates river flowed under its walls through the midst of the city.

- F. A drawbridge and tunnel joined the two parts of the city.
- G. The temple of Marduk (Bel) was the greatest temple in that part of the world.
 - 1. The golden image of Bel and its altar weighed 50,000 lbs.
 - 2. There were 53 temples and 180 altars to Ishtar.
- H. Nebuchadnezzar's building projects beautified it above all other cities.
 - 1. The hanging gardens.

III. The Character of Daniel.

- A. From *his teens* he was an example of faithfulness and consistency and firmness.
 - 1. Lam. 3:27.
 - 2. Eccle. 12:1.
- B. Though always willing to serve his royal masters yet he was careful to preserve his conscience void of offence.
 - 1. Dan. 1:8-16.
- C. His great wisdom in the things of God and the world.
 - 1. Dan. 1:4.
 - 2. Dan. 1:20.
 - 3. There should be no divorce in worldly knowledge, scholarship and faith in God and the Bible.
 - 4. God needs servants with intelligence and humility, 2:25-30.
- D. His faithfulness under trial is a beautiful example.

1. His enemies could find no occasion of fault against him but his faithfulness to God, Dan. 6: 4-5.
 2. He was a man of prayer, Dan. 6: 10.
 3. He would rather die than betray his faith, Dan. 6: 7.
 4. His great confidence in God.
- E. He enjoyed the highest respect of kings and his countrymen.
1. Dan. 2: 48-Nebuchadnezzar.
 2. Dan. 5: 29-Belshazzar.
 3. Dan. 6: 28-Darius.
 4. Ezek. 14: 14-he was a legend in his own day.

May God raise up a generation of Daniels to lead his church. Young and old with such faith and courage to face the meanest enemies with total faith and conviction in their cause.

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Acts 13:22

INTRO: David received one of the greatest commendations any man has ever received from God. Acts 13: 22, "And when he had removed (Saul), he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall do all my will."

David was the hero of all his people ... **WHAT MADE DAVID GREAT?**

- I. Reared Under the Influence of a Good Home.
 - A. His father taught him about Jehovah.
 - B. He was taught the honor of work at an early age.
 - C. Eph. 6: 4.

- II. He Remembered God In His Youth.
 - A. Anointed in his early twenties,
1 Sam. 16: 7, “for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”
 - B. Eccle. 12: 1-2, Solomon, David’s son said this.
 - C. It is a false ideal that says that a man must sow “wild oats” before he can settle down to a useful life.

- III. David Had Great Trust and Faith in Jehovah.
 - A. Against Goliath.
1 Sam. 17: 37, “Jehovah that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.”
 - B. Ps. 23: 1, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want . . .”
 - C. Ps. 27: 1, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”
 - D. Ps. 37: 25, “I have been young, and now am old . . .”

- IV. He Had Respect for Holy Things.
 - A. 1 Sam. 24: 10, “Behold, this day thine eyes have

seen how that the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave; and some beg me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my Lord; for his is the Lord's anointed."

- B. We should have respect for the church, the Bible, the brethren!

- V. He was a Spiritual Man.
 - A. He prayed often.
 - B. He praised God often.
 - C. He willingly sacrificed unto the Lord.

- VI. David was a Lover of Good Men.
 - A. 1 Sam. 18: 1-20, David and Jonathan.
 - B. 11 Sam. 9: 11, Mephibosheth.

- VII. 1 Sam. 18: 14, "And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him."
 - A. Eph. 5: 15, "Look therefore carefully how ye walk . . . as wise, redeeming."

- VIII. He was of a Penitent Heart.
 - A. 11 Sam. 11, Bathsheba . . .
 - B. 11 Sam. 12, "Thou art the man."

- IX. He Was Obedient, 1 Kings 14: 8, "my servant David who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes."

- X. He Desired To Build a House For The Lord.
 - A. David envisioned great things for the Lord's cause.

- B. 11 Sam. 7:2, “the king said unto Nathan the prophet, see now I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.”

David was a man after God’s own heart. These qualities made him one of the great men of all ages... These qualities in you could make you a child of God.

DEBORAH, THE PROPHETESS

Judges 4 and 5

INTRO: Of the many great and notable women who have lived, Deborah was the first to be thrust into a role of national leadership and one of the foremost women of all time.

I. The Times:

- A. About 1285 B.C.
- B. The Dark Ages of the Hebrew Nation.
- C. The Hebrews had no strong central government, nor much national cohesiveness.
- D. Large pockets of Canaanite heathens had been allowed to remain in the land.
- E. Canaanite social and religious customs had permeated the Israelites and corrupted them.
- F. The nation had only weak local government. Judges were raised up locally to meet military crises.
 - 1. Judges were usually military leaders rather than civil, political or religious leaders.

2. They were not generally given much political authority.
 3. Their work was local and temporary.
 4. Judges were not appointed consecutively, but on emergency basis.
- G. The oppressor in Deborah's day was a Canaanite Kingdom located at the city of Hazor in the northern district of Naphtali.
1. Their king was Jabin.
 2. His military chief was Sisera.
 3. His military advantage was in:
 - a. 900 iron chariots.
 - b. Large armies (Josephus says 310,000, p. 157.)
- H. This operation had stretched on for 20 years.
1. The rulers in Israel ceased, 5:7.
 2. Caravans ceased.
 3. Travelers kept to the byways, 5:6 off the main roads.

II. Deborah, The Woman:

- A. Name means "the *bee*".
- B. The wife of an unknown man named Lappidoth.
- C. Home: she lived between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, just north of Jerusalem.
- D. Deborah filled many roles, all of them well:
 1. Wife.
 2. Mother.
 3. Prophetess.
 4. Judge.
 5. Poetess.

6. Singer.
 7. Leader in war.
- E. Her character:
1. Sympathetic to her people, willing to listen.
 2. A wise counsellor.
 3. A righteous judge of their disputes.
 4. She was insistent on obeying God's will.
 5. She was willing to "be involved", a courageous leader in time of war.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Israel's Problem:
 - A. Sin within, Jud. 4: 1.
 - B. Oppression from without, 4: 2-3.
- II. Deborah's Challenge To Barak, 4: 4-9.
 - A. She chides Barak, 4: 6—"Hath not Jehovah . . . command thee?"
 - B. The draft notice, 4: 6—"go and draw unto Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Nephtali and—Zebulon.
 - C. The battle plan, 4: 7—"I will draw unto thee Sisera—and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hands."
 - D. Barak's condition of acceptance, 4: 8—"If thou wilt go with me, then I will go."
 - E. Prophecy of Sisera's death by a woman. 4: 9.
- III. The Mustering For War, 4: 10.
- IV. The Battle, 4: 12-16.
 - A. The odds.

1. Sisera-900 iron chariots, huge army (perhaps 310,000).
2. Barak and Deborah-10,000, ill-clad, irregulars and God.
 - a. 5: 8.

B. Providence.

1. The storm.
 - a. 5: 4-5.
 - b. 5: 20, hail.
2. The flood, 5: 21-22.
3. The horses and chariots were immobilized.
4. Josephus adds an interesting note, saying that blinding rain and sleet blew into the face of Sisera's men, handicapping them.

C. Victory, 4: 15-16; 23.

V. Sisera's Fate, 4: 17-22.

- A. Jael's deadly strategy.
- B. His death.

VI. Deborah's Song of Victory, 5: 1-31.

A. The introduction, 5: 1-11.

1. Exhortation to bless Jehovah for His deliverance, vs. 1-5.
2. The nature of their recent oppression, vs. 6-8.
3. Celebration of Jehovah's deeds, vs. 9-11.

B. Poetic description of the Battle, vs. 12-22.

1. Prelude, vs. 12.
2. The muster, vs. 3-15a.
3. The reluctant and the ready, 15b-18.
4. The battle, vs. 19-22.

C. The sequel, vs. 23-31:

1. The cursing of Meroz, vs. 23.
2. The courageous deed of Jael, vs. 24-27.
3. The mother of Sisera, vs. 28-30.
4. Conclusion, 31.

LESSONS TO REMEMBER

1. Though Deborah was a public woman, she was no private failure. She was a “mother in Israel”, 5:7.
2. No public office justifies a woman to forsake her private duties.
3. She loved her people and her God and felt a sacred responsibility to them as well.
4. Her public role did not lessen her faith in God, rather it increased it.
5. Her public role did not place her in antagonism to men.
6. God can and does use women to do great things.
7. We see the great influence of one godly woman who was conversant with God, yet humble and feminine.
8. Many times a woman is the courage behind the man.
9. God directs, intervenes and overrules in the affairs of men, in war and peace. He drew Sisera into defeat.
10. The elements of nature are used by God to accomplish his will.
11. When God intervenes battles are not won by military armaments or might.

12. In Deborah and Barak, we see the noble example of self-sacrifice.
 13. In Reuben, Dan and Asher we see the danger of letting worldly involvements keep us from duty.
 14. Meroz teaches the sin of neutrality in moral conflicts.
 15. God has revealed himself, his ways and his message through poets as well as prophets.
 16. The sure judgment of the ungodly.
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ELIJAH, THE PROPHET OF FIRE

Heb. 11:30-40

INTRO: Breaking forth like a whirlwind in the history of the northern kingdom of Israel was Elijah the prophet.

I. The Times.

- A. The reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah.
- B. 910-896 B.C.

II. Conditions.

- A. Religiously, a time of crisis.
 1. Jehovah worship persecuted; prophets were killed.
 2. Jezebel had introduced Baal worship and was seeking to make it a compulsory state religion.

3. The double threat of their idolatry was the tendency to mix it with Jehovah worship, making it respectable.
- B. Politically Ahab's rule was prosperous and strong until Jehovah sent "natural" disasters upon the nation.
- III. The prophet Elijah.
- A. Nothing is known about him save about what is recorded in the books of Kings.
 - B. He was of Gilead, east of Jordan from the village of Tishbe.
 - C. He was an ascetic type, living alone in the deserts and mountains, away from the cities.
 1. He was identifiable by his unique appearance.
 - a. Hairy-bearded, shaggy hair.
 - b. Hairy cloak and leather girdle, II Kings 1: 8.
 - D. He was a bold warrior of God.
 1. He was uncompromising.
 2. He was totally selfless.
 3. He was jealous for the true God and his religion, 1 Kings 19: 10.
 - E. He brought no new revelation, his task was to maintain and defend the "old faith" of the nation.
 1. He did little preaching, much warring.
 2. He wrote nothing, but stood in the gap to prevent the total apostasy of the nation.
 - F. His career is punctuated by crises.

- I. The drought.
 - A. His flight and refuge at “Cherith”.
 - 1. Fed by ravens, 1 Kings 17:27.
 - B. His sojourn with the widow of Zerephath, 1 Kings 17:8-16.
 - 1. The miracle of “replenishing meal and oil”.
 - 2. The widow’s son raised from death.
- II. The “Showdown” on Mt. Carmel, 1 Kings 18.
 - A. Jezebel’s persecution of Jehovah-prophets.
 - B. Elijah confronts Ahab.
 - 1. Ahab accuses Elijah of being a “national enemy”.
 - 2. Elijah “reverses the charges”.
 - C. The Carmel Convention.
 - 1. 450 prophets of Baal.
400 prophets of Asherah.
 - 2. Elijah the only prophet of Jehovah.
 - 3. The multitudes of Israel, fickle fence straddlers.
 - 4. The challenge: “How long go ye limping between the two sides?”, 1 Kings 18:21.
 - 5. The trial by fire.
 - a. Baal’s men fail.
 - b. Elijah’s water soaked altar.
 - c. God answers Elijah by fire.
 - 6. The prayer for rain answered.
- III. Elijah’s Retreat and Rearmament, 1 Kings 19.
 - A. Jezebel’s vengence.
 - B. Elijah’s flight to Beersheba.
 - 1. He desires to die.
 - 2. Continues to Horeb.

- C. The Lord's message, 1 Kings 19:10-14.
 - 1. The prophet's lament.
 - 2. The power of God demonstrated.
 - D. A job given.
 - 1. Anoint Hazael, King of Syria.
 - 2. Anoint Jehu, King of Israel.
 - 3. Elisha, prophet, heir apparent.
 - E. Reassurance, 7,000 faithful men left. 1 Kings 21.
- IV. At Naboth's Vineyard, 1 Kings 21.
- A. Jezebel's dastardly crime.
 - B. Elijah pronounces the death sentence.
- V. Ahaziah's Death Predicated, II Kings 1.
- A. The messages to Ahaziah.
 - B. 102 soldiers destroyed by fire.
 - C. The King dies.
- VI. The glorious Ascension, II Kings 2.
- A. The school of the prophets.
 - B. Elijah and Elisha make their final journey.
 - C. Jordan parts for them to cross over.
 - D. Elisha's request for "a first born" portion from his master.
 - E. The chariots of glory.

LESSON TO REMEMBER:

1. God's people are often accused of being trouble makers by the real trouble makers.
2. God never has tolerated "limping between two opinions".
3. In Elijah we see the great power of fervent prayer.

4. It is a vital part of a man of God's work to train younger men.
5. One man, consecrated to God can change a nation.
6. No man ever stands alone, who stands for God's truth and righteousness.
7. We are fitted for life's work by seasons of quiet meditation and waiting on God.
8. God is gentle and tender in dealing with one who is discouraged and despondent.
9. National righteousness is far more important than national power and success.
10. The highest form of obedience is to continue at our post of duty even when we cannot understand why we are kept there.
11. One man with God has the balance of power in the conflict of good and evil.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE—ESTHER*

Esther 4:13-16

I. Introduction.

- A. Place—Shushan the Palace in Elam the capital of Persia.
- B. Year—483 B.C.
- C. Characters.

* The author is indebted to J.W. McGarvey and his book of *Sermons* for much of this lesson.

1. Ahasuerus, Xerxes, King of the Medes and Persians.
2. Vashti, the Queen.
3. Esther, the young Jewish Queen.
4. Mordecai, Esther's elder cousin, an attendant at the king's court.
5. Haman, prime-minister, proud arrogant self-vaunting.

II. Esther, the chosen Queen.

- A. The king's feast, 147 days, ch. 1.
- B. Vashti's modesty—King's wrath.
- C. Esther presented and chosen, ch. 2.
- D. Mordecai exposes Bigthan and Teresh in assassination plot.

III. Haman's Decree, ch. 3.

- A. Haman made prime-minister.
- B. King's command for reverence to Haman.
- C. Mordecai's refusal to bow.
- D. Haman's wrath and master plan of mass extermination of Jews, 3: 8-11.
 1. Lies concerning Jews.
 2. Ahasuerus' approval.
 3. 11 months till doom.

IV. Esther saves Her people, ch. 4-5.

- A. Mordecai appeals to Esther, her answer.
- B. Mordecai's second plea, 4: 13-17.
- C. Esther approaches king, requests a feast, king and Haman.
- D. A second feast requested.

- V. Haman builds a gallows for Mordecai, ch. 5.
- A. Zeresh, his wife recommended this.
 - B. Gallows, 75 ft. high.
 - C. The king's sleepless night, ch. 6.
 - 1. The chronicles read.
 - 2. Mordecai remembered.
 - D. How shall the King honor the man?
 - 1. Royal robes.
 - 2. King's horse.
 - 3. Crown royal.
 - 4. Led about by most noble prince.
 - E. Haman led Mordecai, proclaiming his honor.
 - F. The Second Banquet, ch. 7.
 - 1. Esther tells the king her plight.
 - 2. Haman ordered to be hung from his own gallows.
- VI. Jews Rescued, ch. 8-10.
- A. Mordecai given Haman's post.
 - B. New decree—Jews should destroy all who attacked them, 75,000 Persians died.
 - C. Feast of Purim—March.
- VII. The Providence of God . . . traced.
- A. God not once mentioned, yet evident.
 - B. Mordecai's decree averted disaster.
 - C. Decree resulted from King extending the scepter the second time.
 - D. How did Mordecai occupy such a position?
 - E. How did Mordecai avert death to win position?
 - F. Because Haman arrived at court just after the clerk read from the chronicle about Mordecai.

- G. Had he arrived before Mordecai, would have been hung ... (Why was he late?)
- H. How come the king to remember Mordecai? ... the chronicles read ...
- I. Why reading so early? ...
- J. Why could he not sleep that night? ...
- K. Why had he failed to honor Mordecai before? ...
- L. How did the young Jewess happen to be Queen? Who exposed Haman?
- M. The former Queen had been deposed.
- N. Because she refused to show off.
- O. Why this heathen Queen so modest?

DID GOD OVER-RULE ALL OF THIS? Gen. 45:8.

Think how God has ordered the events of your life so that today you could obey Jesus?



THE MAN FROM ETHIOPIA

Acts 8:26

The Preacher-Philip.

The Place—The Gaza Road, deserted.

The Subject.

1. From Ethiopia.
 - a. An African nation.
 - b. At least 600 miles south of Jerusalem.
2. Treasurer.
 - a. High public officer of government.
 - b. Not too high or too busy to be concerned for his soul.

3. Under the Queen Candace.
 - a. Not a personal name, but name of office like Pharaoh.
 - b. The queen mothers administered Ethiopian governmental affairs—the king was declared divine and above such menial tasks.
4. Had been to Jerusalem to worship.
 - a. Consider the length of his pilgrimage.
 - b. This tells some clue as to his race and religious practice.
 1. He was either a Jew.
 2. Or a proselyte, a Gentile who had formally joined the Jewish Religion.
 3. Or God-fearer—not likely this for it was sometime later that Peter admitted Cornelius into the fellowship.
5. He was a eunuch.
 - a. A man who had been emasculated or castrated.
 - b. A common practice in eastern courts in ancient times when rulers imposed this surgery on those who worked within the palace to protect their harem.
 - c. Could not enter the temple sanctuary in Jerusalem, Dt. 23: 1, originally could only observe from the outer courts.
 - d. Isaiah had prophesied that this ban would be removed when Messiah came, Is. 56: 3.
6. He was reading aloud—the common mode of reading in ancient times.
7. He was reading.
 - a. Isaiah the Prophet, chapter 53.

- b. From the Septuagint.
 - 8. His humility.
 - a. He accepted the instruction of Philip.
 - b. He admitted he did not know the meaning of the passage.
 - 9. The sermon synopsis—he preached unto him Jesus.
 - 10. The response—“he requested baptism.”
 - 11. The kind of baptism “they went down into the water.”
 - 12. He went on his way rejoicing.
-

EVE, THE MOTHER OF ALL MANKIND

Gen. 3:20

INTRO: In Genesis 1-5, Moses recorded for us the beginning of the human race, the beginning of sin and the beginning of redemption. Let us consider the story as relating to Eve.

- I. Her Birth Day, Gen. 2: 18-25.
 - A. A helper suitable to Man.
 - B. Bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.
 - C. A great miracle, the first surgery.
 - D. The weaker vessel, 1 Pet. 3:7, not mentally, socially or religiously, but physically.
 - E. Made in God’s image like her husband, Gen. 1:26-27.
 - F. Made to have dominion with her husband over all creation.
- II. Her Wedding, Gen. 2:22-24.
 - A. Performed by God.

- B. Two sinless innocent sweethearts.
 - C. A prospective guideline “leave father and mother”
 - D. A divine example of monogamy.
 - E. Her home, Eden, Gen. 2: 8-10.
- III. Her Temptation and Fall, Gen. 3: 1-7.
- A. The Law of God, ye shall not eat, Gen. 2: 16-17.
 - B. The temptation.
 - 1. The question and the lie.
 - 2. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, the pride of life.
 - C. She sinned being beguiled, II Cor. 11: 2-3.
 - D. She gave to her husband, he sinned in full knowledge, Rom. 5: 12.
 - E. The shame of guilt, Gen. 3: 7.
- IV. Her punishment, Gen. 3: 8-24.
- A. The question of God.
 - B. The guilty conscience.
 - C. Her husband shall rule over her, I Tim. 2: 12-14.
 - D. Pain increased in childbearing.
 - E. Driven from the Garden, separated from God and her home.
 - F. Death with all its disease, pain and sorrow.
- V. Her children: Gen. 3: 20, “The mother of all the living”.
- A. Cain, Gen. 4: 1.
 - B. Abel, Gen. 4: 2.
 - C. Tragic fruit of sin, Gen. 4: 3, 8.
 - 1. The awful loss.
 - 2. The remorse that came from realization that it was her sin that had made this possible.

VI. Her Heritage.

- A. All the sin, sorrow, destruction, wreck, death and ruin that has plagued 30,000 generations.
 - 1. Think how it must have broken her heart.
- B. The SEED, Gen. 3:15.
 - 1. Matt. 1:21-23, Christ.

The first woman, the first wife, the first sinner, the heir of the Redeemer. Note her influence on her husband and humanity for good and bad.

GIDEON, GOD'S GREAT WARRIOR

Is. 55:8-9

INTRO: Many times we just can't understand why Jehovah does as He does . . . Isaiah explains that for us.

- I. Consider Gideon and the way the Lord used Him in delivering Israel. Judges chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the story.

Rehearse this briefly.

- A. Midian, had oppressed Israel for seven years.
- B. Gideon, the son of Joash of Ophrah. He was called from the poorest family of Manasseh.
- C. His father worshipped Baal.
- D. Gideon's first task was to break down idols. The home folk wished to kill him.
- E. God tells him to recruit an army.
 - 1. Gideon asks for proof . . . the wet fleece given.

2. Gideon asks for more proof — the dry fleece given.
- F. There were 32,000 soldiers recruited.
 1. The Lord sent 22,000 fearful soldiers back.
 2. The water test sent 9,700 back.
 3. Only 300 soldiers left.
 - G. The dream of the barley loaf.
 - H. Three groups of 100 men: the odd's were 400 to 1.
 1. Each man had:
 - a. A trumpet.
 - b. An empty pitcher containing a torch.
 - I. The signal was given, all 300 sounded their trumpets and held high their lamps.
 - J. In the confusion, 120,000 Midianites were destroyed.
 - K. Succoth and Penuel refused to help: they received severe punishment.
 - L. The people sought to make Gideon their ruler; he refuses and points them to Jehovah.
- II. Practical Lessons for us:
- A. With God's help, the weak become mighty, 1 Cor. 1: 27.
 - B. Family background is not a hindrance, Ezek. 18: 20.
 - C. The fearful have no place in Christ's army, Rev. 21: 8.
 - D. Only the alert are good soldiers, Mk. 14: 38.
 - E. The number is not significant, II Cor. 10: 12.

- F. The victory is Christ's and ours, not with weapons but by words of light, II Cor. 10: 4-6.
- G. The light was contained in earthen vessels... when broken they shone brightly. Paul said... II Cor. 4: 7, we have this treasure in earthen vessels. When afflicted, the truth showed brightly.
- H. The enemies will fight against themselves and destroy one another.
- I. Many today are like Ephraim ... unhappy. A soft answer turns away wrath, Prov. 15: 1.
- J. Succoth and Penuel were afraid. They had a "hands off policy" in rough times, just like many congregations. Matt. 12: 30.
- K. Like Gideon, no Christian will take to himself undue power, Lk. 22: 25-26.
- L. Gideon was great but made mistakes. We should never forget this weakness. So did Peter. I Cor. 11: 1, we follow men only as they follow Christ.

The Lord can and will use us. We must trust in Him and obey. The victory is His. Rom. 8: 37.

HANNAH A PRAYING MOTHER

1 Sam. 1:9-11

INTRO: Hannah, the mother of Samuel, is the personification of ideal motherhood in the Old Testament. From her life and experience we can gain many great and wonderful lessons.

I. She Desired To Be A Mother.

A. 1 Sam. 1:26.

B. 1 Sam. 1:9-11.

C. Many wives do not want to be mothers.

D. Marriage where no children are wanted have a poor survival rate.

1. Ten years ago 80% of them failed.

E. One of the purposes and responsibilities of marriage is procreation, Gen. 1:28.

II. Hannah Was A Religious Woman.

A. She *annually* went to Shiloh.

B. Women were not required to go up, only men, Ex. 34:23.

C. She was a praying woman.

1. Would that every child could regularly see his mother pray.

2. Lk. 18:1, "They ought always to pray, and not to faint."

3. Jas. 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man".

D. She prayed silently.

1. 1 Thess. 5:17, If we truly pray without ceasing we will sometimes pray silently.

2. "When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words be without heart", J. Bunyan.

3. "Doubt not that God who sits on high, thy secret prayer can hear."

4. Silent prayer eliminates any possibility of being seen or heard by them.

III. She Dedicated Her Son To God.

A. She realized her son was a gift from God.

1. Ps. 127: 3-5.

B. We see the great power of a mother's influence on her children.

1. Prov. 31: 28, "Her children rise up, and call her blessed".

2. "The mother in her office holds the key of the soul."

3. "The child without godly parents is underprivileged."

4. "No man is poor who has had a godly mother." Lincoln.

C. She trained her son to do what she could not do herself.

D. We desperately need Christian mothers to dedicate their sons and daughters to the service of God.

1. Preachers.

2. Teachers, workers.

3. Missionaries.

IV. She was Happy In Her Religion.

A. 1 Sam. 2: 1.

B. Her despair brought her closer to God and happiness.

1. True religion makes a soul happy in his relationship to God, Is. 12: 3.

2. Blessed are they ... Matt. 5: 1 ... Happy.

3. Phil. 4: 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always ..."

V. Beautiful Lessons From Hannah.

- A. Her despair brought her a blessing.
 - 1. "Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."
- B. Long years of meekly endured trial may be the divine training for higher spiritual ends.
- C. The power of fervent prayer.
- D. God does hear and answer his children.
- E. Great things can come out of a "not so ideal" home situation.
- F. Her example of keeping her vow unto God, Eccle. 5: 4.
- G. The example of a mother's consecration of her child to God.
- H. The joy of true religion.
- I. The joy of seeing your child grow up to be one of God's great leaders.
- J. She gave God her most precious possession.

Is your relationship to God like Hannah's? Do you pour out your needs to God with the faith and urgency that she did? Do you have the same attitude about your children and God as she did? If not, what is missing?

Can we help you adjust your life to be like God wants it to be?

GOOD KING HEZEKIAH*

Is. 38:5

INTRO: Most will recall Hezekiah as the king of Judah whose life God spared for 15 years and confirmed it by a tremendous miracle. Hezekiah's career was marked by four great crises:

1. The first was one of choice. When he began to reign at 25, he had to decide whether to OBEY the will of God or to follow the sinful trends of his day. II Kings 18: 1-7.
2. His second was a crisis of invasion. II Chron. 32 records Sennacherib's invasion 185,000 men. Hezekiah prayed and God gave the victory. Is. 36: 1ff.
3. The third was a mortal illness. Isaiah advised him that he would surely die. Hezekiah prayed fervently to God. His prayer was heard and his life spared. Is. 38: 1-8. A great sign was given him by God when the shadow on the sun dial regressed 10 steps.
4. His fourth crisis was one of prosperity. When messengers came from Babylon, Hezekiah showed them all his treasures. This displeased God and brought a rebuke to Hezekiah. Is. 39: 1-7.

SOME LESSONS FROM HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY

- I. We Do Not Know How Long We Have To Live.
 - A. Hezekiah was told just how long he had.

* From *Kings on Parade*, adapted.

B. Jas. 4:13-15.

1. Death is only one breath away.
2. In view of the uncertainty of life, there are certain things we must do.

C. We should set our houses in order. Is. 38:1.

1. Set them in order today.
2. Keep them in order always.
3. Leave no unfinished business of the moral and spiritual kind for uncertain tomorrows.
4. Live every day as if it were your last.

D. Do not count on tomorrow!

1. Today is the day of salvation. II Cor. 6:2.
2. Take care of all sins today. They are due today.
3. Take care of all personal and spiritual obligations today.

E. Today is the day to act for the souls of others as well as our own, they may not have tomorrow.

1. 1 Cor. 9:22.

II. All of Our Days Are a Gift From God.

A. In answer to his prayer, Hezekiah received 15 extra years from God as a special gift.

1. Acts 17:25, "he himself giveth to all life."

B. Since every day is a special gift from God, we dare not waste them nor misuse them in sin.

1. Under Hezekiah's direction, work was done on the Sacred Scriptures, Prov. 25:1.
2. Israel reached a high spiritual level under Hezekiah.

C. We must ever be about our Father's business.
Lk. 2: 49.

1. There are so many acts of kindness to be done.
2. Notes of appreciation to be written.
3. Lessons to be taught.
4. Gifts to be given.
5. Col. 4: 5, We must redeem the time.

D. We have not one day to waste.

1. In low living: drinking, carousing, dissipation.
2. In low thinking: lusting, grudging, quarreling, grumbling.
3. In low activities: Every endeavour of life should be worthy of the effort spent to accomplish it.

E. We must let our idols go from our hearts.

1. Ezek. 14: 3.
2. Use illustration of African idolator who came to hear the gospel with his idol clutched in his hand. But as he intently listened it slipped to the ground.

F. Some are living on borrowed time.

1. How many have been critically ill, yet, God spared you?
2. How many had near fatal accidents but God spared you?
3. What are you doing with your life?

III. God Has A Purpose for Each life.

A. He spared Hezekiah for a purpose.

- B. God is able to preserve our lives until his will is accomplished for us. Paul did not die before his time was due. He had finished his course. 2 Tim. 4: 6.
- C. If we live in His will, God will preserve us until our mission is accomplished.
- D. When we live our lives wholly for God a number of things will happen:
 - 1. We will find the solution to our problems.
 - a. When a man's life is a mass of confusion stress and unrest, he is not in harmony with God.
 - 2. There will be safety and security. Heb. 13: 15.
 - 3. There will be satisfaction.
 - a. Phil. 4: 11-13.
 - b. Satisfaction does not depend upon external circumstances, but on a right relation to God.

CONCLUSION:

- A. So many make the fatal mistake of thinking, "after today I am going to quit sin and become a Christian."
- B. A story is told of a foolish young man who bet his friends he could stop a freight train. Just as the train rounded the bend, he would leap on the tracks waving his handkerchief and shouting. The engineer managed to stop the train . . . and the boy dashed into the woods. He did this twice with success. He was challenged to a third attempt which he accepted.

An adult warned him of his danger and folly. He replied, "*I am going to stop after this.*" The engineer was tired of being tricked. He did not apply the brakes. The boy thought it would work again—it did not. His last words to his friends as they hovered over his mangled body were, "I'm going to quit after this."

Is this the game you are playing with your soul . . . today?

JOASH, A MAN WHO STOPPED TOO SOON*

II Kings 13:14-19

INTRO:

- A. The scene is the sickroom of Elisha, the prophet, Elisha, is some ninety years of age. His had been a rich, full ministry. He had worked numerous miracles. Now he is dying, II Kings 13:14-19. Even in these last painful days he is concerned about his people, his nations, his rulers.
- B. Joash, king of the northern kingdom of Israel pays the mighty prophet a bedside call.
 - 1. II Kings 13:14.
 - 2. He was not a godly king, yet he had respect and admiration for this patriot-prophet.
 - 3. He wept at the thought of losing Elisha and sought one last word of advice.

* From *Kings on Parade*, adapted.

C. Three words describe this meeting.

1. *Visitation:*

- a. It will do us all good to visit the aged, the sick, the dying; saved or unsaved.
- b. From the examples of the godly we can learn how to face these *tests of life*.
- c. From the lost, we are reminded of the need to make preparation, and our responsibilities to them.

2. Second, we learn *Instruction:*

- a. Joash was concerned about his nation's future.
- b. Elisha's two acted out parables.
 - (1) The arrow shot to the east indicated Israel's victory and deliverance from Syria in a forthcoming battle at Aphek.
 - (2) Elisha told Joash to take his arrows in hand and smite the earth. Which he did three times and stopped.

3. *Rebuke:* The aged prophet rebuked him for smiting only three times. For in this act God had indicated how extensive Joash's victory over Syria would be. Rather than total victory, he had limited himself to three victories. *He had stopped too soon!*—As with Joash so with many today. They stop soon, short of the full blessings God would have given them.

I. We Suffer By Stopping Too Soon.

The call of God is to move on and on, higher and

higher; But we strike feeble, half-hearted blows and strokes.

- A. Too many are content with a “little faith”; they could move on to greater faith.
 - 1. Rom. 14: 1, “weak faith”.
 - 2. Matt. 6: 30, “little faith”.
 - 3. Lk. 17: 5, “Lord increase our faith.”
 - 4. Stephen was full of faith, Acts 6: 5.
 - 5. Heb. 10: 39, “faith into the saving of the soul.”
- B. Others are content with “little knowledge.”
 - 1. II Pet. 3: 18.
 - 2. Heb. 5: 12-4.
 - 3. Hosea 4: 6.
- C. Others are satisfied with a crippled, shallow daily life for God. They stop too soon.
 - 1. Not guilty of gross crimes and sins.
 - 2. Not living victoriously.
 - 3. Not living separate from the world.
- D. Some settle for low achievements for Christ and self.
 - 1. Satisfied to be spiritual dwarfs when they could be giants; such as elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, missionaries.
 - 2. Churches have such low goals, they never grow.
 - 3. When challengers arise we surrender rather than battle and win.
- E. Is God grieved because *you* have stopped too soon?

II. Others Suffer When We Stop Too soon.

A. Joash stopped too soon, the nation suffered.

B. Others watch our example, follow our steps.

1. Children follow parent's examples into *in-difference* and *apostasy*.

2. Mates are not won when the believer stops short.

3. Friends we have approached might have been won, but we stopped short.

4. Henry Ward Beecher, outstanding preacher of a past century, attributed his life's work to the example of an old Negro servant who helped to raise him after his mother's death. "And I bear record that his praying made a profound impression upon my mind. I thought to myself, 'How he does enjoy his religion.' I gained more from that man of the desirableness of prayer than I ever did from my father or mother."

III. God's Cause Is Dishonored When We Stop Short.

A. Because Joash stopped short, Israel was unable to win the victory and the heathen could laugh at her and Jehovah.

B. When we begin a work for God and allow it to fall through, the world scorns God's cause.

C. When we save a soul and do not follow up and he falls back into sin—.

D. When we preach strong sermons but fail to take a strong stand—.

E. When preachers, elders, deacons, teachers get discouraged and quit—.

CONCLUSION:

- A. In this sickroom were two important men.
 - 1. A dying man, Elisha.
 - 2. A sinful man, Joash.
- B. Elisha was faithful to the end and victorious.
 - 1. His influence did not die with him.
 - 2. His name and example was a previous treasure of his nation.
 - 3. Elisha honored God.
- C. Joash died in dishonor and shame. Few people recognize his name today.
- D. Do you honor God, or dishonor Him by stopping too soon?
 - 1. In prayer be constant.
 - 2. In Bible study be diligent.
 - 3. In soul-winning be persistent.
 - 4. In worship be loyal.
 - 5. In Godly living be committed.
 - 6. In training your children be responsible.
 - 7. Rev. 2:10 a crown of life awaits those who do not stop short of the goal.

JONAH, THE MAN WHO RAN FROM GOD!

INTRO: Give the brief historical introduction: Date, 750-790 B.C. Jereboam II was king of Israel. Israel was at her height. Assyria loomed on the horizon as a national threat. JONAH, the son of Amittai, from Gath-hephor, Galilee, II King 14:25. There are 4 natural divisions of the book.

I. Running Away From God, chpt. 1.

- A. The command to go to Nineveh, dreaded enemies of Israel, 500 miles east.
- B. Jonah flees to Tarshish, Spain, 2,000 miles west.
- C. Tempest sent by Jehovah.
- D. Conversion of the seamen, 1:14-16.
- E. Jonah was cast over and swallowed by fish.
 - 1. God prepared a Fish, dag-Hebrew, ketos-Greek, (a monster of undefined fish species).
 - 2. Sceptics attack this as a "fish story".
- F. White Shark of the Mediterranean grows to 70 ft. long, up to 50,000 lbs.
 - 1. Have been found with men, horses, sea-calf, reindeer in the stomach, whole!
 - 2. Specific Case: The Rhinodon Typicus swallowed man in the English Channel. 48 hours later the shark was killed. The man was found unconscious but alive. Harry Rimmer saw him. James Bartley, 1927.
 - 3. White Shark off Knight's Key, Fla, 1912, a 45 ft. 30,000 lb. had a 1,500 lb. blackfish in its stomach. (Smithsonian Institute).
 - 4. Why should man doubt God's ability to prepare a fish to accommodate a man 3 days? Man has prepared a sea monster to accommodate 120 men for 30 days, 3 months. The Submarine . . . then spew them out on dry land safe and sound.

II. Jonah Running To God, chpt. 2.

- A. Jonah's prayer and vow.

- B. Jonah cast out on dry land.
- III. Jonah Running With God, chpt. 3.
- A. Nineveh, 650,000 population. Capital of Assyria, chief enemy of Israel.
 - 1. 60 miles in circumference.
 - 2. Walls 100 ft. high—wide enough for three chariots to race abreast.
 - 3. A library of 10,000 plates in 860 B.C.
 - 4. A people of cruelty and violence.
 - 5. King *Ana. Bax. a. rus* rules Assyria.
 - B. Jonah's Sermon, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."
 - C. The Tremendous Response.
 - D. God's Mercy . . . "and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not."
 - 1. Jer. 7:25, Israel had 900 years.
 - 2. Jer. 18:7, God's promise.
- IV. Jonah Running Ahead of God, chpt. 4.
- A. Jonah was displeased exceedingly, and angry.
 - 1. He prayed, was not this my saying . . . for I know that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness" . . . 4:2.
 - B. Jonah made a booth and waited to see.
 - C. Jehovah prepared a gourd, 4:6.
 - D. God prepared a worm . . . and it smote the gourd.
 - E. God prepared a sultry east wind.
 - F. 4:10-11, "Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored . . . should I not

have regard for Nineveh ... wherein are more than six score thousand persons (120,000) that cannot discern between their right and their left hand?"

V. Practical Lessons For Us.

1. It is utterly impossible to escape from God's presence, Ps. 139: 7-12.
2. The path of self-will always leads to disaster.
3. It is futile to resist the will of God.
4. One usually runs into a storm when he runs contrary to God.
5. It is tragic to face the storms of life without God.
6. In the hour of distress we call on God.
7. God has always loved all the race and provided their salvation.
8. Genuine repentance averts catastrophe.
9. God's threats are conditional.
10. Being narrow and bigoted towards other nations is contrary to God's will.
11. No Divine task may be lightly regarded.
12. The necessity of obedience.
13. God would have us love all men and give ourself to winning them.
14. We see the power of preaching God's Message, I Cor. 1: 21.
15. The penitent wicked shall condemn the nominal professor, Matt. 12: 41. "The men of Nineveh shall stand up on the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold a greater than Jonah is here."

JONATHAN, A FRIEND IN DEED

Prov. 18:24

“There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

David was a young man in trouble with the king, Saul. He was a pursued fugitive. David sorely needed a friend. Jonathan was such a one.

1. Jonathan was a son of Saul.
2. A prince in Israel.
3. A courageous warrior, I Sam. 14: 6-15.
4. He interceded for his friend. I Sam. 19: 1-7.
5. He risked his position for his friend.
6. He risked his life for his friend.
7. I Sam. 20: 4, “Then said Jonathan, whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.”
8. I Sam. 20: 17, “For he loved him as he loved his own soul.”
9. II Sam. 1: 25-26.
10. He was killed in the battle of Mt. Gilboa against the Philistines.

I. Jonathan Was a *Real Friend*.

- A. Prov. 17: 17, “A friend *loveth at all times*, and a brother is born for adversity.”
- B. Real friendship cannot be purchased. Real friendship begets real friendship.
- C. Prov. 18: 24, “A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.” KJV.

- D. He was David's friend in good and bad times.
 - 1. I Sam. 18: 1-4.
 - 2. I Sam. 23: 15-18.

- II. Jonathan's Friendship *Strengthened David's Hand* in God.
 - A. I Sam. 23: 16.
 - B. This is the only kind of friendship worth having.
 - 1. I Cor. 15: 33, Friends can corrupt us.
 - 2. Friends can lead us to purer thoughts, nobler speech, higher deeds.
 - 3. Friends can help us be better Christians or they can lead us away from God.
 - C. Prov. 27: 6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are profuse."
 - D. Prov. 27: 9, "Oil and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend that cometh of hearty counsel."
 - E. Real friends will not condone our wrong but will seek to lead us away from the wrong into the right.

- III. Do Our Friends Weaken Our Hand In God?
 - A. Jas. 4: 4, "the friendship of the world is enmity with God."
 - B. Friends who weaken our relation to Christ are worse than worthless.
 - 1. Remember the friends of the prodigal son. Lk. 15: 13.
 - 2. Anyone who entices you to sin is not a friend.
 - a. To drink.

- b. To try drugs.
- c. Read and view pornography.
- d. Meanness.

IV. We Must Take Care of Our Friends.

- A. Prov. 27: 10, "Thine own friend, and thy father's friends *forsake not.*"
- B. Thank God for him.
- C. Never abuse him; don't use or take advantage.
- D. Don't let a whisperer separate you and your chief friends, Prov. 16: 28.
- E. Prov. 17: 9, "he that harpeth on a matter separateth chief friends."
- F. Matt. 7: 12.
- G. Matt. 22: 39.

Could your friends describe you as a Jonathan? If not, why? As we close, think of another friend, Jesus. John 15: 13-15. Is he your friend?

JUDAS, THE MAN WHO SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BORN

Matt. 26:24

INTRO: The story of Judas Iscariot is the most tragic of all biographies. Judas, the betrayer, soiled forever the name he bore. He wrecked it and made it unfit for further use. He is the supreme enigma of the N.T. It is hard for us to see how anyone so close to Jesus could ever come to betray him to his enemies. We can learn many valuable lessons even from the life of one wicked.

I. About The Man.

- A. His name, a Grecianized form of Judah which meant “celebrated”.**
- B. His father—Simon Iscariot.**
- C. His home—Kerioth, of Judea.**
- D. His ministry,**
 - 1. A disciple of Christ.**
 - 2. One of the twelve apostles-leaders of the movement, Matt. 10: 1-4.**
 - 3. A preacher of Christ and Kingdom, Matt. 10: 5-10.**
 - 4. Treasurer for the group.**
 - a. John 12: 4-6.**
 - b. John 13: 29.**

II. His Awful Fall.

- A. The facts.**
 - 1. John 6: 70, Jesus predicted one of them would betray him, a year in advance.**
 - 2. John 12: 4-6, Judas became a thief before he became a betrayer.**
 - 3. Following the mild rebuke at Simon’s house he approached the Jewish authorities, Mk. 14: 3-11.**
 - 4. Matt. 26: 16, “From that time he sought opportunity to deliver him unto them.”**
 - 5. The Passover Meal, John 13: 1-3.**
 - a. John 13: 21-30.**
 - b. Seated on cushions on floor, resting on left elbow:**
 - John, the disciple Jesus loved, on the**

right in Jesus bosom, 13:23.

—Judas likely on the left, the place of honor.

—the sop always given to the guest of honor first.

c. The starting announcement, “One of you shall betray me.” 13:21.

1. All asked, “Is it I?” Mark 14:17-21, Matt. 26:25.

d. The sop given—the command to leave, John 13:26-27.

6. The arrest, Matt. 26:47-50.

a. Matthew used *kataphilein* “to kiss fondly and repeatedly”.

b. It seems Judas took great delight in his deed.

B. His remorse and death.

1. Matt. 27:3-10.

2. Acts 1:15-20.

III. Possible Reasons for Judas’ Betrayal.

A. Greed and covetousness.

1. 1 Tim. 6:10.

2. John 12:6.

B. Ambition.

1. Mk. 14:10, “the *one* of the twelve” (compare the marginal reading).

2. All apostles thought Jesus was setting up a worldly kingdom, Matt. 20:24, Acts 1:6.

3. The triumphal entry on Sunday.

The conflict with the moneychangers on Tuesday.

The public rebuke of Jewish leaders.

The plain prediction of the fall of the Jewish State.

Political ambition was totally disallusioned.

4. Compare John 6: 15, 6: 70-71.
- C. Misguided attempt to prod a slow moving reluctant Christ into a decisive action to set up his earthly kingdom and drive out the Romans. We reject this.
1. The writers all call him an evil sinner and Satan inspired betrayer; not a hero.
- D. Alienation.
1. Judas was only apostle from outside Galilee.
 2. Perhaps he felt he was not receiving fair treatment.
 3. Sullen resentment and ever deepening alienation turned love into hatred.
- E. Some think Jesus' rebuke at Simon's house triggered his actions, John 12: 4-8.
1. Lk. 22: 3-4.
 2. However, all 12 were rebuked, Mk. 14: 3-11.
- F. Jesus saw through Judas's pretense and kept prodding him to force his hand, Judas grew tired and fearful of exposure and moved to destroy the source of his discomfort.
- G. Perhaps it was self-preservation that drove him to it.
- H. There seems to be an indication of vengeance in the way he led the mob and personally marked Christ for the guards.

- I. Perhaps he loved himself too much. One who loves self above all others or all causes is always capable of bad faith. He is a traitor at heart and needs only the right set of circumstances to bring it out.
- J. The enormity of his sin consisted in its being against all bonds of discipleship and friendship, against light, mercy, affection, trust and warning; against his own promise and preaching.
- K. Judas did not have to join the disciples of Christ or the apostolic group. He did not have to do his evil deed. Jesus did not choose him for that purpose. His evil deed came from his wrong choices.

LESSONS TO REMEMBER:

- 1. Nothing is more deadly than love turned to hate.
- 2. We, like Judas, can fall.
- 3. The wages of sin is death.
- 4. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.
- 5. The heinous crime of betrayal of love and friendship.
- 6. The evil of betraying innocent blood.
- 7. The sin of suicide.
- 8. High privilege does not guard a man against spiritual ruin.
- 9. Do not give place to the Devil, Eph. 4: 27.
- 10. Take heed lest ye fall, 1 Cor. 9: 26-27.
- 11. Remorse and sorrow are not enough.
- 12. Judas' failure was that he refused to accept Jesus as he was and sought to make him into what he wanted him to be.

LUKE, THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN

Col. 4:14

INTRO: For two of our New Testament books we are indebted to our subject. Few men have made the lasting contribution to the progress of Christianity that Luke did.

I. The Man.

A. His name is a shortened form of Lucanus.

B. He is Grecian.

1. His name is Grecian.

2. He seems to have first joined Paul in Troas, Acts 16: 10-18.

3. In Col. 4: 10-14 Jewish workers are first listed, then Greeks, including Luke.

4. His use of the Greek language is highly polished.

5. He addresses his book to Theophilus, a Greek.

6. He presented Jesus to the Grecian point of view.

7. He quotes the Septuagint.

C. He is the only Gentile writer of the New Testament.

D. We know nothing of his conversion, but he enters the historical record of The Acts in 16: 8-10 where he uses the first person plural pronoun "we".

E. His place of birth, we know nothing definite. Jerome, in the 4th century wrote that he was from Antioch.

- F. He was a man of refinement and culture.
 - 1. A rich vocabulary.
 - 2. A good education, being a physician.
 - 3. He exhibits a special interest in the songs of God's people.
- G. Tradition says he died in Greece in his 84th year.

II. Luke, the physician, Col. 4.14.

- A. His profession was highly advanced, comparable to the medical profession of the 1800's.
- B. Greek physicians practiced in the tradition of the noble Hippocrates. (460-377 B.C.).
 - 1. Galen of Pergammon (130-200 A.D.) wrote an outstanding medical treatise.
 - 2. Herophilus of Chalcedon was the father of anatomy.
 - 3. Erasistratus of Chios was the father of physiology.
 - 4. Many physicians were slaves.
- C. No doubt he ministered to the needs of Paul and the missionary company.
- D. In this record he pays particular attention to the miracles of healing, giving details as to nature of the affliction and using medical terminology to describe them.
- E. Being a missionary and a doctor, he may well be termed the first "medical missionary".
- F. The field of medicine is a great field for the young Christian who wishes to serve both God and man.

III. Luke, the evangelist.

- A. All that we know about Luke relates to his involvement in spreading the gospel.
- B. His books were written to convince and convert sinners.
- C. He was a co-worker with Paul, Philemon 24.
 - 1. We can infer that he worked with the church at Philippi.
 - 2. He went to Jerusalem with him and on to Rome, Acts 21: 17-18; 27: 1ff.
 - 3. He was a missionary worker.
- D. His book of Acts has had a role in millions of conversions.
 - 1. What a man writes lives on and does good long after he is gone.

IV. Luke, the historian.

- A. In Luke's writing we catch a glimpse of how an inspired writer went about his work.
 - 1. Lk. 1: 1-3, He was not eyewitness of Christ.
 - 2. Acts 1: 1-3, Some of the events in Acts he witnessed.
- B. He was an accomplished historian and researcher.
 - 1. 110 persons named in Acts.
 - 2. Wm. Ramsey wrote: "Every person is found just where he ought to be." Ramsey spent 34 years proving the historical trustworthiness of Luke.

- V. Luke, the humanitarian. From his writing we learn something of Luke's nature and character.

- A. His concern for women is unique. The Virgin Mary; Anna, 2: 36; Mary and Martha, 10: 38-42; the ministering women, 8: 1-3.
- B. He was interested in the outcasts of society; the poor, the humble, the despised; harlots, publicans and sinners.
- C. His interest in Gentiles and Samaritans.
 - 1. Lk. 10: 25-27.
- D. He reflects a beautiful Christ-like tolerance:
 - 1. Towards Samaritans.
 - 2. The other teacher, whom the disciples forbade, Lk. 9: 49-56.
 - 3. His lesson sorely needed today.

From Luke we learn two great lessons. The necessity of being a Christian and how to become one. The importance of being a worker for Christ: 1. Minister to our fellowman, 2. Taking the gospel to the lost.

MARY OF BETHANY A BEAUTIFUL GIFT

Matt. 26:6-13

INTRO: Mary of Bethany loved Christ dearly. She openly showed her love and devotion at every opportunity.

The precious ointment was worth 300 shillings, nearly a year's wages.

HER GIFT WAS MOST BEAUTIFUL

- I. It was beautiful in *motive*.
 - A. No self seeking, no display only devotion.

- B. Her tho't was how can I show my love? What is the best gift I can give my Lord? Surely this is the least I can do.
- II. It was beautiful in its *Recklessness*. True love acts with a spontaneity that does not sort and count all the pennies nor worry about doing too much.
- III. Her gift was beautiful in its *Uniqueness*.
- A. She brought what she only could give. Not many could have offered such a gift.
- B. What have you to give to Jesus, that only you can give?
- IV. It was beautiful in its *Timeliness*.
- A. She had a once in a life time opportunity. She grasped it. It was the last opportunity before his death.
- B. Today may be your last opportunity to show your love to Christ.
- V. It was beautiful because of *What it did for Jesus*.
- A. It warmed his heart.
- B. It strengthened him for the ordeal ahead.

God broke the alabaster box for you and me when he gave heaven's best. What can he expect of you in the year ahead?

NAAMAN, A TYPE OF UNIVERSAL MAN*

II Kings 5:1-15

INTRO: Rom. 15:4 tells us the Old Testament has a message for us of the Christian age. In the oft-told story of Naaman the leper we find an analogy that has significant meaning for our generation.

- I. II Kings 5:8, Naaman had everything a man in his day could want—except for one thing—leprosy and it meant inevitable death.
 - A. Universal man has everything today ... except for one thing: Sin and it means inevitable death. Rom. 6:23.
- II. II Kings 5:2-4, There was a *place* where Naaman could be cleansed: in God's kingdom.
 - A. There is an appointed place where universal man can be saved from sin—in God's kingdom, the church, Acts 2:47.
- III. There was one man of God who could heal Naaman: Elisha.
 - A. There is one who can heal us, Jesus, Matt. 1:21.
- IV. II Kings 5:5-7, He went to the king of the state for healing, but the king could not heal him.
 - A. Many today think that governments can solve man's dilemma—Never! John 6:68.
- V. He brought *great treasures to buy* his cleansing.
 - A. So many people think they can buy salvation by

* From a lesson delivered by Marvin F. Bryant.

generosity, good works, etc., Eph. 2: 8-9; Is. 64: 6.

VI. Only God's Man Could Heal Naaman.

A. Only God's Son can save man from sin.

VII. God's Man Called Naaman to him for cleansing, II Kings 5: 8.

A. So Jesus calls us to him for cleaning.

1. Matt. 11:28.

VIII. Naaman Sought Out God's man, II Kings 5:9.

A. So we must seek out the Christ.

1. Matt. 7:7-8.

2. John 12:21, "we would see Jesus!"

IX. Elisha did not speak to Naaman personally, but sent him a message of instruction, 5: 10.

A. So Christ does not speak to us personally but has sent us a message by his servant.

1. II Cor. 5:20.

X. II Kings 5: 10, Naaman was told to wash in Jordon, which command bore no reasonable relation to curing leprosy.

A. We are commanded to be baptized in water which bears no reasonable relation to forgiveness of sins, Acts 10: 48; Mk. 16: 15-16.

XI. II Kings 5: 11-12, Naaman came with pre-conceived ideas about what God's man should have told him to do and say in healing him. He was angry when it did not turn out according to his notions.

A. So do many today who come to Christ for salvation, Lk. 8: 15, "a good and honest heart".

XII. Naaman rejected the message and retained his leprosy.

A. Many reject Christ's plan and retain their sin.

XIII. Naaman would have substituted other rivers than that God specified.

A. So, many substitute their preferences for the gospel commands.

1. Sprinkling, pouring, other churches, other names.

XIV. Naaman finally complied and was healed, II Kings 5: 13-14.

A. So only when we comply with God's will/we be saved.

XV. He was not half healed when he had half complied, but was fully healed when he had fully complied.

A. So we must complete our obedience.

XVI. He brought gifts to the house of the man of God to show his appreciation, II Kings 5: 15.

A. So will we bring our gifts to his Son, in his church.

Learn the lessons from Naaman's experience. Obey the Lord, let Him cleanse the leprosy of your sin.

NOAH, THE HEIR OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Heb. 11:7

INTRO: No study of Bible personalities would be complete without a consideration of Noah, a great man of faith, the first shipbuilder of the Scriptures.

I. His Times.

- A. The tenth generation from Adam.**
- B. Probably an immense population of millions, maybe billions.**
 - 1. If each couple bore only ten children, it could easily be 2,000,000 in ten generations.**
 - 2. If each couple bore 20, it could have numbered 2,000,000,000.**
 - 3. Remember their long lives and greater strength and health.**
- C. A corrupt age.**
 - 1. "The earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence", Gen. 6: 11.**
 - 2. "Every imagination of the thoughts of (man's) heart was only evil continually," Gen. 6: 5.**
 - 3. The children of God had intermarried with the sinners of the world and lost their identity, being swallowed up, Gen. 6: 2.**
- D. Only Noah and his family maintained the faith of Jehovah, Gen. 7: 1.**

II. God's Decree.

- A. "I will destroy them with the earth", Gen. 6: 13.**
"I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh", Gen. 6: 17.

- B. “Make thee an ark of gopherwood”, Gen. 6: 14.
 - 1. It was for the safety and salvation of God’s righteous remnant.
 - 2. It was divinely given.
 - 3. It was minutely detailed.
 - 4. Plainly stated.

III. The Man.

A. His faith, Heb. 11: 7.

B. His life, Gen. 6: 9.

- 1. “Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generation.”
- 2. “Noah walked with God.”

C. His Obedience.

- 1. “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him”, Gen. 6: 21.
- 2. His toil—to build such a huge ship.
- 3. His trial.
 - a. To *believe* that which seemed unbelievable.
 - b. To *endure* the *reproaches* of the unbelieving.
- 4. His *perseverance*, Gen. 6: 3, “yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.”

D. His preaching.

- 1. II Pet. 2: 5, God “preserved Noah . . . a preacher of righteousness . . .”
- 2. His apparent failure. From *Matt. 24:39* it seems that his generation totally ignored him, “They knew not until the flood came and took them all away.”
- 3. He saved his family, Gen. 7: 6.

a. He did not fail. No man is a failure who can save all of his family!

E. His worship.

1. Gen. 8: 20, "and Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah . . . and offered burnt-offerings . . ."

2. Not just after the flood-before he walked with God, Gen. 6: 9.

F. His sin, the awful consequence.

1. Gen. 9: 20, "he drank wine and was drunken."

2. Gen. 9: 25, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be . . ."

3. Part of that which he had saved through the flood, he lost because of his sin.

IV. The Judgment of the Great Deluge, II Pet. 2: 5.

A. It was *appalling* in form.

B. It was *universal* in scope.

C. It was *supernatural* in origin.

D. It was both *punitive* and *purifying* in purpose.

E. It was *woefully sad* in its occasion.

F. It was *inevitable* in its coming.

G. It was *unescapable* in its nature.

V. Lessons to Remember.

A. God is grieved at man's self destroying sin.

B. The tireless diligence of God to save men.

C. The personal nature of God's dealings with men.

D. The care with which he cares for his own.

E. The indispensable necessity of obedience to salvation.

- F. With God's help the most monumental tasks can be accomplished.
- G. The wrath of Jehovah.
- H. The surety of Judgment upon sinners.
- I. The vulnerability of the material creation before his wrath.
- J. The last great day of destruction and judgment. "The stench inside the ark would have been unbearable except for the situation outside."

PORTRAITS OF PERSONAL WORKERS

Matt. 4:19

INTRO: Jesus promised the disciples who had been fisherman, that he would make them fishers of men. Let us consider the work of some of them as they pursued their new occupation.

- I. Jesus The Great Example.
 - A. The woman of Samaria, John 4: 1-42 (relate the story).
 - B. Jesus overcame barriers.
 - 1. Racial—Samaritan.
 - 2. Social—a woman.
 - 3. Religious—error.
 - 4. Moral—oft married.
 - 5. Attitude—worldly, indifferent.
 - C. The woman immediately began to share her faith with others. 4: 28-30; 39-41.
 - 1. So can you.

- II. Andrew, who won Peter, John 1:40-42.
 - A. Not a great preacher or writer.
 - B. Just an ordinary disciple.
 - C. He won the man, who became one of the world's greatest preachers.
 - D. Any body can do what Andrew did.

- III. Philip and the Eunuch. Acts 8:26-38.
 - A. Soul-winning while travelling away from home.
 - B. We see divine providence in leading the soul-winner to the seeker for salvation. John 7:17.
 - C. The importance of grasping the one-time opportunity.
 - D. The convert was baptized immediately, not in a church building or service.

- IV. Priscilla and Aquila, Acts 18:24-28.
 - A. Personal work with a preacher.
 - B. "Taking him aside".
 - C. Teaching him privately.
 - D. Showing him the way more perfectly.
 - E. After winning him, putting him to work.
 - F. Hundreds of denominational leaders could be won today if we had more like Priscilla and Aquila.

Every Christian should be a fisher of men. Are you?
Would you try? Would you be willing to train yourself?

PHILEMON, A PERSONAL NOTE FROM PAUL

Key vs. 10.

INTRO:

1. Written by Paul in 60-62 A.D.
2. It was written from Rome where he was imprisoned, vs. 1.
3. It was written to Philemon, a wealthy member of the church in Colossae, Col. 4: 9, also Col. 4: 17, compared with Phil. 2 (Archippus).
4. The purpose is to reconcile Philemon and his run-away slave, Onesimus, whom Paul had converted.
5. The classic dealing with slavery:
 - a. The New Testament does not specifically advocate abolition of slavery. Rather the Christian love and respect for others, Matt. 7:12, did destroy it.
 - b. All forms of work were considered improper for Roman citizens, proper only for slaves.
 - c. Some think there were 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire, 600,000 in the city of Rome alone.
 - d. The economy of the Empire was sustained on slavery.
 - e. Slaves had no rights, personal, civil or legal.
 - f. They could be beaten, mutilated, crucified or fed to wild beasts at the whim of their owner.
 - g. They were referred to as "bodies" not regarded as having souls.
 - h. Compare also Col. 3: 32-4: 1, I Cor. 7: 20-24.
6. Background and Occasion for writing:

- a. Philemon was converted by Paul, vs. 19.
 - b. The Church met in his home, vs. 2.
 - c. Onesimus, his slave, ran away taking money or other things of value, vs. 18.
 - d. He travelled several hundred miles to Rome.
 - e. There he came in contact with Paul the prisoner.
 - f. He became a Christian, vs. 10.
 - g. He became Paul's personal helper, vs. 13.
 - h. He must return and make things right with his master.
 - i. Paul writes to intercede for him.
Onesimus means "useful". Notice Paul's pun on this meaning in vs. 11.
7. Archippus is probably minister for the church in Philemon's house, Phil. 2, Col. 4:17.
8. This epistle is beautifully rendered by J.B. Philips in his paraphrase. It will be most helpful to read it.

OUTLINE

Introduction and Greeting, vs. 1-3.

- I. Thanksgiving for Philemon, vs. 4-7.
 - A. For his love and faith.
 - 1. Toward the Lord.
 - 2. Toward the saints in hospitality.
- II. The appeal for Onesimus, vs. 8-21.
 - A. He suggests to Philemon he could command it, but will trust his friend's sense of love, vs. 8-9a.
 - B. Philemon should receive Onesimus without harshness because of Paul's:

1. Great age, vs. 9.
2. His imprisonment, vs. 9.
3. His spiritual relationship to Onesimus, vs. 10.
4. His spiritual relationship to Philemon, vs. 11-14.
5. Because of Philemon's new spiritual relationship to Onesimus, vs. 15-16.
6. Because Paul offers to repay personally whatever Onesimus may owe him, vs. 17-19a.
7. Because Philemon owes a debt to Paul, his salvation, vs. 19.
8. Because Paul, his brother asks for Onesimus' release, vs. 20.
9. Paul expresses his confidence in Philemon's goodness, vs. 21.

III. Conclusion, vs. 22-25.

- A. Paul's hope to visit Philemon, vs. 22.
- B. Greetings from Paul's co-workers, vs. 23-24.
- C. Benediction, vs. 25.

LESSONS TO REMEMBER:

1. Early Christians often assembled for worship in their homes. We can have Christianity without modern church buildings.
2. As Philemon practiced Christian hospitality, so should we.
3. Our converts are as dear to us as our children.
4. The confines of house arrest did not keep Paul from winning souls.
5. The importance of restitution.

6. We should be willing to be involved . . . to intercede for fellow Christians with problems.
 7. The need for proper tact and psychology when dealing with knotty problems.
 8. The importance of forgiveness.
 9. The power of a personal letter.
 10. We see the incompatibility of slavery with Christian love.
-

THE RICH YOUNG RULER A YOUNG MAN CAME TO CHRIST*

Matt. 19:16-22

INTRO: Great lessons can be learned from the lives of others. This young man presents lessons both commendable and uncommendable to us today. His lesson is especially useful to youth.

- I. He Came at the Right Time of Life—Youth.
 - A. Eccle. 11:9-10; 12:1.
 - B. II Tim. 3:15, "From a babe thou hast known."
 - C. Lam. 3:27, "bear the yoke in his youth."
 - D. 1 Tim. 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth but be thou an example . . ."
- II. He Came to the Right Person . . . Jesus.
 - A. Our hero to worship.
 - B. Jno. 6:66-68.
 - C. Jno. 14:6, "I am the way . . ."

* The author first heard this lesson from Joe Malone.

- D. Jno. 10:7, "I am the door."
 - E. 1 Tim. 6:14-16, "Who only hath immortality . . ."
 - F. Acts 4:11-12.
- III. He Came With the Right Attitude—Bowling, Reverent and Worshipping, Mark 10:18.
- A. Heb. 12:28, "with reverence and awe."
 - B. Is. 6:1-9.
 - C. Mal. 1:6-14.
 - D. Jno. 4:24.
- IV. He Came With the Right Question: "What Must I Do To Inherit Eternal Life?"
- A. The only question of value!
 - B. *Jno. 2:17*, "the world passeth away".
 - C. *Mk. 8:36-37*, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life . . .".
- V. He Received the Right Answer: "Keep the Commandments."
- A. Eccle. 12:13.
 - B. Acts 10:35.
 - C. Heb. 5:8-9.
 - D. Gal. 5:6.
 - E. Christ is the only Savior—without him all these works would be worthless.
Because he died for us—we love him and gladly obey him that He may save us.
- VI. There is But One Discordant Note in This Story. He Responded Wrongfully. He Went Away Sorrowfully.

- A. Acts 13:46, “It was necessary that the word of God should be first spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life . . .”
- B. Lk. 7:30, “. . . rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him.”

Are you willing to follow the good example of this young man? Do not, like him, go away sorrowful.

**BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL
“THE GOOD SAMARITAN”**

Matt. 5:7

INTRO: There is a great power in a well-told story. Jesus was the master “story-teller”. This story of the Samaritan is a house-hold word on the lips of one half the world’s population.

Read the narratives—Lk. 10:25-37.

Note the original question, Lk. 10:25, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

I. The Place.

- A. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho, 17 miles.
 - 1. The terrain: mountainous-rugged.
- B. The descent, 3,600 ft.
- C. “The Bloody Way”, Josephus.

II. The Victim.

- A. “A certain man”.

- B. Travelling alone.
 - C. Fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him and left him half dead.
- III. These Thieves Lived by the Iron Rule.
- A. “Might makes right”.
 - B. What is thine is mine and I will take it.
- IV. The Priest and Levite, Lk. 10: 31-32.
- A. It was their job to be benefactors of their fellow-men.
 - B. They were professional religious leaders.
 1. The victim could *expect* them to help.
 - C. Some possible reasons for not helping.
 1. Perhaps too tired from religious functions.
 2. We might be defiled, Num. 19: 11.
 3. Too busy to help—did not have time.
 4. Some one else could do this better than me.
 5. It’s not my business.
 6. Someone else will see to it.
 7. It’s not my fault.
 8. It’s no use, he will die anyway, or he is not hurt too bad.
 9. Safety first—I might get killed.
 10. “You can’t help everyone”.
 11. He might just be drunk and passed out.
 12. I can’t afford to get mixed up in this . . . legal proceedings, etc.
 - D. They lived by the “Silver Rule”.
 1. “Do not do anything to another, that you would not want done to you”.

2. Or do unto those who can do unto you.

E. 1 Cor. 13:2-3.

F. They were theologically sound, but lacked human kindness.

V. The Samaritan.

A. The victim would not expect his help.

B. The victim would not have likely helped him.

C. He had no racial, family, religious or national obligation . . . just human kindness.

D. He relieved.

1. Bodily suffering.

2. Emotional distress.

3. Financial embarrassment.

4. Provided food and shelter.

5. Thus we see.

a. Sympathy.

b. Contact.

c. Ministry.

d. Provision.

VI. Lessons to Remember.

A. We must be ready to help a man of any nation, race or religion.

B. We must think of the needs of others before we selfishly think of self.

C. Our help must be practical, not just sentimental sympathy.

D. 1 John 3:17-18.

Jas. 2:14-18, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

Who is my neighbor? What is neighborliness? Matt. 25:31-46.

GOD'S DELINQUENT, SAMSON*

Heb. 11:32-34

INTRO: In Judges 13-16 we have the exciting story of one of God's great men, Samson. The story is not all pleasant because this young man made some tragic mistakes that mar the record. Samson was God's delinquent. He offers a number of lessons for young men and women today.

- A. Your adolescent period is a tremendous period in your life. You are undergoing tremendous changes—psychological and physiological changes. You are leaving childhood and moving into adulthood. While these great changes are taking place you are called upon to make some of life's most important decisions—What will you make of your life? What will your vocation be? Who will you marry? Your philosophy of life? Your attitude toward religion?
 - B. What are you doing with your life? What are your commitments? I do not tell you Christ's Cross is easy. You must deny yourself—that is not always easy. Satan tries us ... the world may hate us, but through Christ we can have the victory.
- I. Samson—A young Man With Everything Going For Him.
- A. He was born at a crisis period of history, Judges 13:1.

* This is adapted from a sermon by Billy Graham.

- B. God had a great plan for his life.
 - 1. There is great security in following God, Judges 13: 5.
- C. He was handsome—the girls were attracted to him.
- D. He was endowed with miraculous strength, Judges 14: 5-6.
- E. He had youth.
- F. He had godly parents, a religious home.
 - 1. He grew up in the ways of God, Judges 13: 8-20.
- G. He had courage beyond most men—he feared no man, Judges 15: 9-20.
- H. He was a happy young man, full of jokes and fun, Judges 14: 10-18.
- I. He was a leader and a hero—what else could a young man want?

II. Samson Made a Mess of His Life.

- A. He threw his life away.
- B. He made a serious mistake in marriage.
 - 1. Different race.
 - 2. Different religion, Judges 14: 1-4; II Cor. 6: 14-16.
 - 3. Different ideals.
 - 4. It failed—left him bitter.
- C. He fell into the snare of lust, Judges 16: 1-22.
 - 1. His immorality in illicit sex ruined his life and career.
 - 2. The passions of love are not evil when channelled into a holy marriage, Heb. 13: 4; 2 Tim. 2: 22; 1 Cor. 6: 18-20.

D. Why Did He Fall?

1. He had simply grown tired of being good. Most young people have times of boredom and sense a desire to rebel, Eccle. 12: 13.
2. He had an ego problem—He was so sure of himself.
 - a. He deliberately took his holiday among his enemies, Judges 16: 1-9.
 - b. Jesus taught, “Lead us not into temptation”, Matt. 6: 13; Samson hunted temptation. It captured him!
3. He had a “parent” problem.
 - a. They tried to advise him to avoid sin and do the right thing, Judges 14: 3.
 - b. He did not listen to them.
4. He had a problem with himself—his biggest problem.
 - a. He had become a slave of sin, John 8: 34.
 - b. He broke the first commandment, he did not put God first in his life.
 - c. He broke the fourth command because he did not honor his parents.
 - d. He broke the sixth command because he killed.
 - e. He broke the seventh command, he committed fornication.
 - f. He broke the ninth because he lied. He was having a good time—but there was a reckoning.

5. The wages of sin—Rom. 6:23.

a. Gal. 6:7.

b. Jas. 1:14-15.

III. What Samson's Sin Cost Him.

A. It cost him his strength.

1. God cannot give us His blessings and strength when we refuse to use them to his honor.

B. It cost him his sight.

1. Sin always blinds.

C. It cost him his freedom.

1. He became a slave.
2. Sin always enslaves.
3. There is no freedom of liberty except in conformity to law.
4. Every sin is a thread in the cord that binds.
5. His fatal mistake was believing consecration to God was too hard and restricting—he thought rebellion and license would bring freedom and happiness.
6. See him in the mill, bound to the great mill stone . . . that could be you.

He was freed from his slavery only by his death—
So you must die—

Be crucified with Christ.

Die to sin and your old life of rebellion and disobedience.

Be buried with Christ in baptism.

Be cleansed from sin's stains.

Be raised a new creature.

SAUL, THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL

1 Sam. 26:21

INTRO: The above words are the confession of Saul regarding his vengeful conduct toward David, his trusted citizen, subject and military servant. No one made Saul a fool, he had chosen the role. He is not the type of fool we laugh at, rather one for whom we are sad.

I. Saul, The Man. God Was Good To Him.

A. He had a splendid physique.

1. 1 Sam. 9:2.
2. A sound body is a great asset in winning life's battles.

B. He was a modest man.

1. 1 Sam. 9:21.
2. He was not too good for manual work.
 - a. He was caring for his father's animals.
1 Sam. 9:3.

C. He had *youth*, "a. young man."

1. His life lay before him.
2. He had youth with health and energy.

D. He had a great friend in Samuel.

1. No man is a pauper who has a friend.
2. Samuel was a spiritual counsellor and advisor.
3. Samuel always tried to correct Saul when he went wrong.

E. He was chosen for a great task.

1. He was God's man of the hour. 1 Sam. 10: 24.
2. He was chosen to unite the tribes.
3. He drove out the enemies and liberated his people.
4. The spirit of God came upon him. 1 Sam. 10: 9-10.

II. How Saul Used His Opportunities.

A. "He played the fool."

B. He rebelled against God.

1. He was warned. 1 Sam. 12: 13-15.
2. He dared to offer sacrifices at Gilgal. 1 Sam. 13: 8-14.

C. He only partially obeyed God.

1. 1 Sam. 15: 3, 9.
2. Some people do not know what obedience means.

D. He claimed he had obeyed God, when he knew better. 1 Sam. 15: 13.

E. He blamed others for the wrong. 1 Sam. 15: 14-15.

F. He tried to hide disobedience under the guise of religion. 1 Sam. 15: 20-21.

G. He refused to repent and acknowledge his sin of rebellion, except when cornered. 1 Sam. 15: 22-23.

H. Note.

1. Partial obedience will not do.
2. We can't blame others for our sins.
3. Excuses for sin are not acceptable.
4. Disobedience in the name of religion is still disobedience.
5. Confessions forced by difficulty are of no avail. God looks at the heart.
6. Calling on God only when you are in a bind is seldom of any permanent quality.

III. The Harvest Saul Reaped.

- A. He became a Godless man. 1 Sam. 28: 15.
1. The most tragic man is the man with no God.
- B. He became wretched. 1 Sam. 16: 14-15.
1. His life became miserable.
 2. All joy faded; everything began to fall apart.
- C. He became fretful, feverish, and suspicious.
1. Envy turned him into a violent, vengeful man.
 2. 1 Sam. 18: 6-13.
- D. His courage and ability left him.
1. He became fearful, like a hunted beast.
 2. He turned to superstition.
 - a. 1 Sam. 28: 4-11.
 3. Man is incurably religious. Every man who turns from God turns to something.
- E. He lost his life. 1 Sam. 31: 1-6.
1. His sons died. (No man falls alone).

2. His nation lost the battle.
3. He committed suicide.
4. He was humiliated in this death.

Think how differently the story might have ended if Saul had been willing to *obey God with all his heart* and *repent* when he had done wrong. Without these two qualities his life was a total failure.

SHAMMAH, A MAN WHO WOULD NOT FLEE

11 Sam. 23:11-12

INTRO: David's great success as a warrior and king was to a great degree due to "the mighty men" he wisely chose and gathered around him as co-workers and leaders of his people. There were 30 of these "mighty men". One of them, *Shammah*, is the subject of our study.

I. The Setting.

- A. It was a time of war with the Philistines.
- B. Outside an Israelite village, peasants were harvesting a crop of lentils (beans).
- C. Suddenly a marauding band of the enemy appeared, likely to either destroy or confiscate the crop.
- D. The shout went up, "The Philistines are coming".
- E. All the people fled to the city, leaving the crop.
- F. All but *Shammah*. He stood his ground.
 1. What do we know of him?

- a. Only what is here stated.
- b. Son of Agee.
- c. From Harar, a Hararite.
- d. A courageous man.

II. Shammah *Stood*, “But He Stood in the Midst of the Ground.”

A. The first mark of a man is that he stands.

- 1. Snakes creep.
- 2. Beasts go on all fours.
- 3. Birds fly.
- 4. *But man stands.*

B. The godly man stands and fights for the right.

- 1. Eph. 6: 14, “Stand therefore...”
- 2. Others ran, Shammah stood.
- 3. Likely his own family fled, he still stood.
- 4. He was outnumbered, he faced fighting men, still he stood.
- 5. He was right. It was his possession. He was undaunted. The crowd did not scare him.
- 6. One with God is a majority. Jos. 23: 10, “One man of you shall chase a thousand; for Jehovah your God, he it is that fighteth for you...”
- 7. We need fearless Christians to fight the battle today.

C. To stand we must have faith, courage and conviction.

- 1. Faith in God, Heb. 11: 33-38.

2. Conviction toward our cause, Prov. 28: 1.
3. Courage to hazard our life in battle for the cause we believe in.
4. Shammah's *conviction* would not allow him to turn away from his ground and give it to the Philistines.
 - a. He had that conviction because:
 - (1) He knew he was *right*.
 - (2) He had faith that God was with him.
5. Always be sure you are right.
Have courage to stand by your convictions.
Be sure God will be with you.

III. Shammah *Fought*, "And Defended It."

- A. There must be more than standing; there must be some fighting.
- B. 1 Tim. 6: 12, "Fight the good fight of faith."
 1. Eph. 6: 11, "Put on the whole armor".
 2. 2 Tim. 2: 3, "Endure hardness as a good soldier."
- C. Our battle is real, our foe is powerful.
 1. 1 Pet. 5: 8.
 2. 2 Cor. 10: 3-5.
- D We need the correct armor, Eph. 6: 13-17a.
We need the right weapon, Eph. 6: 1-16.
- E. We need prayer, Eph. 6: 18.
- F. We need a pure life, 2 Tim. 2: 19-22.

IV. Shammah *Won*, "The Lord Wrought a Great Victory."

- A. So can you:
 1. On the Lord's side, Rom. 8: 31.

- a. The Lord has all power, Mt. 28:18.
 - b. Satan hasn't a chance.
2. Give all the glory to God, Phil. 4:13.
 3. Expect victory, 1 John 5:4, "Faith is the victory."

We need ten thousand Shammah's. John Knox was like him, the great Scotch reformer. It was said of Knox at his death, "There lies a man who never feared the face of any man."

When the crowds ran, Shammah had the conviction to stand. While others fled for safety, he stood and fought. Others would have abandoned and forfeited their possessions. He fought and won.

THE SICK MAN AT BETHESDA*

John 5:1-9

INTRO: With the curse of death came the plague of disease and infirmity. Much of mankind's energy, time and money has been spent in seeking cures from sickness. In desperation man will try anything for relief. Jesus' pity and compassion is seen in this story.

I. The Hospital, 5:2-3.

- A. It's *site*: In Jerusalem, near the sheep gate, close to the temple.
- B. It's *form*: A pool of water with five stone porches.

* From Whitelaw's Commentary on John.

- C. It's *name*: Bethesda, a house of grace.
- D. It's inmates: a multitude of sick, blind, halt, withered.

II. The Patient, 5: 5.

- A. A great sufferer for 38 years, half a life time.
- B. A friendless outcast, "he had no one to put him in the water."
- C. A disappointed seeker.
 - 1. Prov. 13: 12.
 - 2. Prov. 18: 14.
- D. He still clung to his hope.

III. The Physician, 5: 6.

- A. His quick observation.
 - 1. Lk. 5: 31-32.
 - 2. So we must be ready unto every good work.
- B. His perfect diagnosis.
 - 1. Christ knows all there is to know about man.
 - 2. He knows our spiritual needs.
- C. His tender compassion.
 - 1. Matt. 20: 34.
 - 2. The man with no compassion in his heart for suffering humanity cannot truly be a Christian.
- D. His hope-giving question: "Wilt thou be made whole?"
- E. His amazing prescription: "Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

1. Only one conscious of possessing the power of God would say such.
2. So Christ says to the one dead in sin. Eph. 5: 14.

IV. The Cure, 5:9.

- A. It was *instantaneous*. "Straightway the man was made whole."
- B. It was *complete*. "He took up his bed and walked."
- C. How unlike modern faith healers this is.

V. The Inhumanity of the Jews, 5: 10, 16-18.

- A. Rather see the patient untouched than violate the Sabbath tradition.
- B. Legalism. Do no good works lest we might offend the law.
 1. Matt. 25: 24-28.
- C. They persecuted Jesus.
 1. So do the "Antis".
 - a. Gal. 6: 10. The church should help all needy men.

VI. The Post Operative Advice, 5: 14.

- A. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee."
- B. A universal prescription for all saved men.
 1. 2 Pet. 2: 20-22.

Will you be made whole? Are you ready to obey the physician?

WHAT THOMAS MISSED

John 20:19-29

INTRO: Read the passage with emphasis. Luke 24: 36-49 reveals a parallel to this. Here we find the faithful apostles gathered together on the evening of the first day, and as he had promised, Jesus was there in their midst. Also we see someone who should have been there missing. **WHERE WAS THOMAS?**

I. THOMAS Did-y-mus, the twin.

A. His Character: only a fragmentary record of him is given.

1. John 14: 4-5, “and whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” (It is not the expression of a desire for knowledge, but an excuse for ignorance).
2. John 11: 16, “Thomas, therefore who is called Did-y-mus said unto fellow disciples, let us also go that we may die with him.”
3. John 21: 2ff, Thomas with Peter and five other of the apostles returned to their fishing business on Galilee, “lovest thou me more than these?”
4. John 20: 25, “he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails; and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

B. Why Thomas was not present, we are not told. Perhaps it was because of his defeatism and un-

belief. He probably was despondent and thought it was useless. It is evident that he did not expect Jesus to be there!

II. WHAT THOMAS MISSED that Sunday night.

- A. Fellowship with his brethren, who could have encouraged him.
- B. He missed seeing with his own eyes the risen Lord.
- C. He missed hearing wonderful words, “peace be unto you”.
- D. He missed having his “mind opened that he might understand the scripture”, “the law, psalms and the prophets”, Luke 24: 44-45.
- E. He missed the experience, “He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit”. John 20: 22.
- F. He missed the Commission, Lk. 24: 47, “Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them whose soever in ye retain, they are retained.”
- G. Thomas lived in unbelief and possible jeopardy for a whole week because he was not present Sunday evening.

III. Reasons Why One Should Attend Every Service of the Congregation.

- A. Jesus is there, Matt. 18: 20.
- B. The Christian hungers and thirsts after righteousness, Matt. 5: 6.
- C. God commands that we study, II Tim. 2: 15. Search the Scriptures, John 5: 39.

- D. That I may grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, II Pet. 3: 18.
- E. Your children/grandchildren are watching you and will follow your example. Also you have the duty to nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6:4.
- F. That your influence may count for Christ, and not for sin and Satan. Matt. 5: 13-16 positively.
- G. That you may not cause a brother to stumble, "and thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ." I Cor. 8: 12.
- H. That you may find and associate with the finest of friends, Christians, your spiritual brothers with whom you hope to spend eternity.
- I. That you may impart to your fellow-worshippers and students, the great lessons that you have learned from life and God's Word. These lessons are not yours to keep or hoard, but to share.
- J. That you may be better prepared to teach those who do not know the truth.
- K. That your soul may find new strength in the teaching . . . to endure temptation.
- L. Your heart may be warmed by the spiritual songs of worship.
- M. That you may find peace of mind, communion with God through prayers.
- N. That your family may be drawn closer through the influence of Christ in your lives.

- O. That you may become better acquainted with the world's most beautiful character, Jesus, your Savior.
- P. That the world may know that **YOU HAVE BEEN WITH JESUS**, Acts 4:13.
- Q. "To know to do good and to do it not is sin", Jas. 4:17.
- R. Lest I profess to know God, but my works deny him, being reprobate unto good works, Tit. 1:16.
- S. That I may be a person of God's own possession, **ZEALOUS** of good works, Tit. 2:14.
- T. Because we are to follow the example of Christ walking in his steps, I Pet. 2:21.
- U. Because we are to imitate Paul, I Cor. 11:1.
- V. Because we expect it of our preacher.
- W. We are to seek **FIRST** his Kingdom, Matt. 6:33.
- X. Because non-Christians attend with zeal similar services and Jesus said, "What do ye **MORE** than others?" Mt. 5:47.
- Y. I am to consider my brethren and provoke them unto love and good works, and not to forsake the assembling together as some do. Heb. 10:25.
- Z. Jesus said, "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:44.

Don't let Satan hinder you. If you have been neglectful of the services of Christ's church, repent of that and confess it, resolve to be faithful unto death that you may receive a crown of life.

ZEDEKIAH, LAST KING OF JUDAH

II Kings 25:7

Introduction:

1. Zedekiah took the throne at age 21.
2. He ruled 11 years.
3. His reign was one of turmoil and strife.
4. In his ninth year, Nebuchadnezzar and the army of Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem.
5. The siege lasted two years.
6. Famine stalked the city.
7. Jeremiah urged the king to surrender.
8. When the walls were breached, Zedekiah tried to escape, but was captured near Jericho.
9. He was brought to Riblah to stand trial before Nebuchadnezzar.
10. His sons were slain before his eyes.
11. He was blinded.
12. He was bound in chains and led to Babylon.

I. Mistakes of King Zedekiah.

A. It was a mistake to do evil.

1. II Kings 25:19, "he did evil in the sight of Jehovah."
2. The three kings before him had been wicked and all paid a bitter price; Jehoahaz, Jehoakim, Jehoachin.
3. He should have profitted by the mistakes of others, but he did not.

4. In this we see the great power of sin and the foolishness and blindness of sinners.
5. Children should profit by the mistakes of their parents, not copy them. Deut. 32:7; Lev. 18:30.

B. Second, he left God out of his life.

1. The anger of the Lord was kindled against him. Therefore the Lord cast him out.
2. Jer. 37:2, “But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land did harken unto the words of Jehovah which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah.”
3. When God is left out of a life, there is no friend in the hour of need.
 - a. Zedekiah had no God to help him in his hour of crisis.
 - b. Abraham had God for a friend to whom he could go in his hour of need. To whom would you go if crisis struck now?

C. His third mistake was to endanger his family by his sin.

1. He should have thought what his conduct would mean to his sons.
2. He did not, they suffered.

II. Zedekiah's misery.

There is no bright spot in his life.

He ruled a defeated nation.

He was invaded in his ninth year.

Famine struck.

Defeat overwhelmed him.

Prov. 13: 15, "The way of a transgressor is hard".

A. He lost his sons, he saw them destroyed before his eyes.

1. Many parents have seen their children destroyed by drugs, immorality, rebellion, lawlessness.

B. He lost his sight.

1. He was already blind, spiritually.

2. Now he is physically blinded.

3. His last vision is that of his sons slaughtered.

4. He carried that to his grave.

5. Sad to be blind, but far worse to be spiritually blind, II Cor. 4: 4.

6. Blind Fanny Crosby wrote 6,000 gospel hymns. *Blessed Assurance*.

C. He lost his soul.

1. We read of no repentance; no faith; no calling on God in prayer; no tears; no sorrow.

2. He was not like Hezekiah who in his day of trouble called on God.

3. A man may lose fortune, prestige, friends and health; if he has God, he can survive. If he loses his soul, he has lost everything, it is an eternal loss.

III. Moral of Zedekiah' story.

A. Be sure your sins will find you out, Num. 32: 23.

1. Those who play in sin must pay the price of sin.

2. Those who sow sin must reap the bitter harvest.
 3. The wages of sin is death. Sin always insists on paying off in full. Interest is always added. Rom. 6: 23.
- B. Our sins affect others.
1. No one lives to himself, no one dies to himself, Rom. 14: 7.
 2. You cannot sin alone.
 3. Your sin hurts many.
- C. The story teaches us to hate sin, Heb. 1: 9.
1. Sin is against God.
 2. Sin enslaves man.
 3. Sin destroys now.
 4. Sin damns eternally.
- D. You cannot hide nor flee from God, Amos 9: 1-4.
1. Zedekiah tried to escape his fate, but could not.
 2. Heb. 9: 27, 4: 12-14.
 3. Jonah, also tried but failed.
 4. One cannot run from or hide from God, we can only prepare to meet him, Amos 4: 12.

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