

# INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

Lesson Treatment Prepared by Rev. Titus Lehmann

Lesson 10

June 7, 1925

## PETER'S BROADENING VISION

Lesson Text: Acts 11: 5-18.

Reference Material: Acts 10: 1—11: 18; Isaiah 61: 1-9.

Golden Text: Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. Acts 10: 34.

### Teaching Hints

It is natural for a child to attempt to put good impulses into action. The teacher should encourage this natural tendency. Get this lesson for yourself out of the text for today. Peter's vision was followed by definite action.

I. THE VISION AT JAFFA (Joppa).  
Verses five to ten.

We find the story of Peter's vision and his visit to Cornelius two times in Acts. The part from which our lesson is taken is the second one. The apostles and the brethren at Jerusalem had heard that Peter had preached to Gentiles in Caesarea, and on his return to Jerusalem they rebuked him. They scolded him for eating with the Gentiles. Peter justifies his conduct and tells them how he came to act as he did.

In the quiet of prayer-time at the noon hour, just before meal-time, Peter had a vision. It is in silence that you get in touch with the great God, and with all-power. We need to be silent more often, so as to have greater visions and greater strength. He who desires wisdom, power or success will find it only within.

In this vision Peter saw what seemed to be an enormous sail being let down out of the sky by ropes at the four corners. In the receptacle Peter saw all manner of creeping things and birds, and he heard a voice bidding him rise, kill and eat.

Peter was still narrow in his conceptions, self-willed and vehement, and he cried out, "Not so, Lord, for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth." In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14: 4 ff. we note the list of things that were unclean in a ceremonial sense. Three times the vision and the words were repeated. The answer came, "What God has purified you must not regard as unholy."

### II. THE REALIZATION OF THE VISION AT THE HOME OF CORNELIUS.

Just at this juncture three men stood before the house and the Spirit bade Peter go with them. Peter took six Jewish believers with him and went to the house of Cornelius, an army officer and a Gentile. What a wonderful drama is unfolded in the story of Peter and Cornelius! Here are two men being secretly impelled towards each other, with the destinies of continents hanging on their meeting. The history of the world entered upon a fresh phase as they met. The two men were resistlessly thrown into each other's arms in fulfillment of a tryst of which neither was aware. When they clasped hands then, Jews and Gentiles were all one in Christ.

Peter spoke about Jesus Christ. The Spirit fell upon the entire assembly. Peter then justifies his action to the Council by saying, "Who was I to be able to thwart God?" The inevitable conclusion of it all was that God is no respecter of persons, there is now no distinction between Jew and Greek, salvation is meant for all. Peter's vision was indeed broadened from the narrow, provincial, racial viewpoint to the wide, world view. We need to overcome racial and national prejudices today. We still need the "broadening vision". Why condemn a man because of his race or color? That is one thing he cannot help. Why indulge in educational prejudices, thinking on the one hand because one is educated he is more than others, and on the other despising those who have gone through a college? Value a man for what he is and for what he can do, as well as for the disposition he shows in doing it. May the Holy Spirit teach all of us, as he did Peter, that "what God has cleansed we dare not make common."

# INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

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Lesson 5

May 3, 1925

## THE BENEFITS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

Lesson Text: Daniel 1: 8-17.

Reference Material: Daniel 1: 1-20; 1 Cor. 9: 24-27.

**Golden Text:** Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank. Daniel 1: 8.

This is a temperance lesson, but because of the text which is its basis, it should not be limited to "temperance" in the commonly accepted use of the term. It may be treated as a lesson upon the evils of alcoholic drinking, gluttony, and all that weakens mind or body. Let the teacher take advantage of this great lesson material to instill a higher regard for the human body. We need lessons of this type these days. Let it be a lesson on simple living and high thinking.

### I. A Life With a Purpose

Daniel was one of the royal tribe of Judah, and in the exile was chosen to be trained for service in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, along with three other friends. They were attending "The Princes College of Babylon." They were to be taught, nourished and prepared for civil service. The meat which was served and the wine which was offered to these young men at the College might have been dedicated to the idols. This meant that the young men, eating and drinking these things, would become ceremonially unclean, would sacrifice conviction and renounce God. So Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. This resolution involved quite a number of things. It meant to stand for a conviction, to persuade the steward, to test out the simpler methods of living. Here was a man who had a purpose in life. Purpose gives direction to life. Mankind may be divided into those who have a purpose in life and those who have none. Why should our life be aimless in the world! There is room for every voice, a path for every foot, and a work for every hand. The people who work by spells are the saddest of all men,

A great motive in life is the sense of obligation. Live a life with a purpose. know what you want and strive for that.

### II. Simple Living

Daniel's suggestion to the steward to try out the simpler way of living proved successful. Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things,—that thing is sin to you. The human body comes into consideration first of all. It is the dwelling place of the greatest, most capable and most valuable thing in the universe outside of heaven—*namely the immortal spirit of man*. It is the home of the temple of the Holy Spirit. The body is a perfect piece of machinery, almost perfect in form and mechanism. Its five senses give to life its highest pleasures. It has in it the brain, emotional, and will power. Truly the body must become more and more a suitable dwelling place for God's spirit. There are many enemies that fight against the body. Among these are drink, gluttony, dope etc., or in one word intemperance. We dig our graves with our teeth. Drinking strong drinks is wasteful, destructive of bodily tissues, releases the devil in man and is bad for man generally. We must cease to make fun of the prohibition law, quit carrying the hip flask, stop having private saloons. Our homes must become law-abiding. It is bad business trying to compel people to be good. Get the spirit of God into hearts and this will stop. Implant a high regard for man into hearts and a change will take place. A man owes it to himself and to others to keep himself physically fit, as well as mentally alert.

# INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

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Lesson 1

April 5, 1925

## BLESSINGS OF PENTECOST

Lesson Text: Acts 2: 36-47.

Reference Material: Acts 2; Joel 2: 28-32.

Golden Text: Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: 38.

We have been making a survey or outline of the Bible in our studies. We now come to the last portion in this survey. For the next nine months, the rest of this year, we will study the Acts and the Epistles. As teachers we will find this a very fascinating and gripping study. Enter into it wholeheartedly.

It might be well to read the book of Acts through at one sitting, so as to get its entire setting in one mould. The key-word of Acts is "witness". Its outline is given in Acts 1: 8. It was written by Luke to Theophilus. It tells the story of the spread of Christianity in the first century.

In the creed we confess that we believe in "one, holy, universal, Christian Church." Let's follow this outline today, but reverse and change about the order of these words.

### I. A CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter was the birthday of the Christian Church. The disciples were gathered in Jerusalem. They were together in prayer. On that day the Holy Spirit came upon them in a most startling manner. They received the "gifts of tongues." They were able to speak in a language that differed from their own. This is still experienced by missionaries today. God can give this power. Peter arose, refuted the taunts that the apostles had been drinking wine and then preached a sermon far-reaching in its effect. In our printed material we have only the last verse of his sermon. Hearts were pricked, were touched to the quick by the words of Peter. The question was put by the hearers, "Brethren, what shall we do?" A question that arises in hearts to this day. "Repent—be

baptized—receive the Holy Spirit." These are the steps unto salvation. *Repent*—change your mind, direct your mind toward God. *Be baptized*—confess openly that you belong to Christ. *Receive the Holy Spirit*—a new dynamic will enter into your heart. Thus the first Christian church was founded. It centered about Christ. That was the theme of Peter's sermon. That Christ was the one the believers submitted to and confessed. Note how the energies, powers of God broke through the life of Peter, as well as the other disciples. Link yourself up with Christ, and irresistible energies of a greater sort will break through. The real business of the Christian Church is to be a transmitter of real energy.

### II. A HOLY CHURCH

That Church which was founded through the blessings of Pentecost was a holy church. It was separate from the rest of the community. They went apart. They did indeed, "Save themselves from this crooked generation." It was not, however, a holiness of the supercilious kind, which thought itself above its fellowmen. Rather all ground is sacred ground, all life is holy and sacred. Thus the spirit and the principles of that Christian Church permeated all of life.

### III. IT WAS ONE CHURCH

The believers lived together, formed one community, had all things in common. They thus formed a sort of communistic society. They worshipped together day after day, they studied and followed the teachings of the apostles, they were together in prayer and in communion. It seemed an ideal way to live. The feeling of oneness, of stewardship is a striking

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Lesson 1

July 5, 1925

## THE BEGINNING OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Lesson Text: Acts 13: 1-12.

Reference Material: Acts 12: 25—13: 12.

Memory Verse: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

Mark 16: 15.

As we enter the studies of the third quarter we continue to think about the spread of Christianity as shown to us in the Acts and the Epistles. It is indeed a fascinating study. The teacher will keep in mind two general ideas; first that Christianity was meant to be a world religion, and secondly, that it was to be spread by personal evangelism.

### I. Sent Forth

Barnabas and Saul had been sent down to Jerusalem from Antioch with some gifts for the famine stricken. Upon Paul's mind his real task, that of preaching to the Gentiles, had been pressing for some time. In Jerusalem a special vision came to him in prayer and he was told, "Go your way for I will send you afar as my apostle to the Gentiles." His call determined Saul's entire future career. His path was clear, and he made no delay in entering upon it. Yet he did not embark on his mission from Jerusalem.

Antioch was the cradle of Gentile Christianity, the capital of Gentile Christendom and it was fitting that the Antiochene Church should consecrate and commission him. On reaching Antioch Barnabas and Paul conferred with the three prophets or other leaders and acquainted them with their purpose. The entire congregation was called together for a ritual service, a period of fasting, (everything was put aside that would have the effect of deadening their response to the Divine Voice) and prayer. The Church had a broad vision. The Holy Spirit illumined their minds, and they recognized the will of God. Two of the five leaders of the church were sent out in a very impressive commissioning service. The noblest and best were sent out, for the best is none too good for the wider service of the Lord. Note that this church con-

sidered itself a part in the larger enterprise. Note also that God always guides men if they will open their hearts to him.

### II. Opposition and Conquest

So Paul and Barnabas, with John Mark as attendant or helper, left for Cyprus for their first missionary journey and labor. Cyprus was a considerable island. It had a coast-line of three hundred and ninety miles. Its people were partly prepared for the gospel message by refugees. The missionaries traveled over the entire island. At length they reached Paphos and there achieved their first triumph. At this place, the capital, the seat of the Proconsul Sergius Paulus, they were invited to witness to their faith. It was the fashion of exalted personages to retain astrologers, (sorcerers, in our text) in their counsel. This one happened to be a Jew, by name Bar-Jesus.

It was a golden opportunity for the witnesses. They embraced it. Bar-Jesus listened and when he noticed how his master was impressed he took alarm. He felt sure that he would be ousted from his position. So he kept on interrupting the speakers, until Paul lost patience. Elymas Bar-Jesus was probably the first man of this type which they met. Paul came down upon him without mercy. Anger gives to his tongue fresh power, and highly expressive language is used. "You mass of trickery and rascality! You son of the Devil!" he cried, playing upon the name Bar-Jesus, "You enemy of all righteousness, will you not stop twisting the Lord's straight way!" Temporary blindness was brought upon the astrologer, for Paul felt that he might be led the same way as he had been led. We do not know whether the sorcerer was won or not, but we know that Sergius Paulus was gained for Christ.

# INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

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Lesson 10

September 6, 1925

## PAUL WRITES TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Lesson Text: Philippians 3: 7-16; 4: 8.

Reference Material: Entire Book of Philippians is to be read.

Golden Text: I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Phil. 4: 13.

### Philippians as a Whole

Paul wrote to the Philippians from his prison. There were various disappointments, anxiety about the future, being in prison; but none of these things kept him from writing a letter of joy. His letter is an out-pouring of his heart's gratitude and affection. It is the sweetest and tenderest of all his surviving letters. His spirit might well have been oppressed, yet it was light and glad. "Joy" is the letter's refrain occurring oftener than in any other epistle.

The apostle Paul in the specific passage (3: 7-16) brings before us a *life with a purpose*.

We note in that life which the apostle wishes to live first an—

*Ideal.* The apostle puts things on a scale. On one side of the scale is "Christ" and on the other "all things." He counts "all things" to be loss for Christ. From the Jewish viewpoint he has at least seven points of pride which he has given up. Circumcision the eighth day; Jewish blood; belonging to the tribe of Benjamin; being a Jewish leader; being a Pharisee; being a zealous persecutor of heretics; having observed the minutest details of the law; "all these" had no value to him as a Christian. They are thrown aside as of no importance. Paul means to tell us that everything is a positive loss if in any way it takes the place of that personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

Paul's ideal is rather to become like Christ. In seven strong striking sentences he expresses that ideal. To gain Christ, to be found in him, to have the righteousness from God, to know him and the power of his resurrection, to enter into the fellowship of his suffering, to be conformed to his death; these are the objects of his life. Paul has one passion

and that is Jesus Christ. What an ideal for every teacher and every scholar. Paul longs to imitate Christ and that imitation involves all that is true, beautiful and good. Think each one of these items, mentioned above, over again.

To attain that life with a purpose Paul had a *Vision*. Paul in spite of all his striving does not feel that he has already attained his ideal. He has a vision of that which he might be, the man God wants him to be. How many of us are satisfied with ourselves? Paul is always making progress. He forgets the past failures, the past successes, and ever pushes on. He never stops growing. New truths were always before him. This quality of "stretching forward to the things that are before" characterizes great men; they are always reaching out for all the new ideas possible. They are always making adjustments to the new conditions. Paul wants to lay hold on Christ as Christ has laid hold on him. He wants to press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

To that ideal and that vision which Paul had in mind, there must be added the *realization*. How did Paul strive to realize his aims in his purposeful life? It meant intense *work*. Paul lost himself in his task. He had but *one* thing to do, and that was to glorify and honor Christ. Of course it takes *will power* to attain. But the real secret of his attainments is to be found in that verse which is added from chapter 4: 8. "Whatsoever things are true etc." Keep your mind so full of Jesus, and all that he stood for, that you will have no time to think of anything else. Paul does not believe, that by finding fault and criticizing, one can better mankind, but by filling it with the spirit of the Master.