

# Third Quarter 2008

## Adult Sabbath School Lessons

Special Insights No. 1

(Produced by the Editorial Board of the 1888 Message Study Committee)

### For Such a Time as This: The Apostle Paul

Our Lesson Book (Sabbath School Quarterly) for the third quarter is entitled "God's Great Missionaries." It's a study of the lives of people like John the Baptist, the Apostle John, the Apostle Peter, the prophet Daniel, and others.

Truly these men (and women, just as deserving) were indeed "faithful" to the Lord. Their life stories are a great encouragement to us today.

However, the Lord Himself never called any of them "great."

In fact, take Moses for example, the "servant of the Lord": the Lord never called him "great." The Lord honored him highly for his fidelity; but the Lord never said a word that would encourage Moses to become proud of himself.

In fact, in all these stories of so-called "Great Missionaries," the Lord seems to take their fidelity for granted; for them to be "faithful" is just duty.

Jesus explains this principle in Luke 17: "When you have carried out all you have been ordered to do, you should say, 'We are servants and deserve no credit; we have only done our duty'" (vss. 9, 10, NEB). In other words, we should say, "We do not deserve to be called 'great.'"

Does this sound like the Lord does not appreciate our faithful service? No! When at last He says to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant: ... Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21), you will feel that He is praising you to the skies! (And that is true!).

But the Lord considers that all your faithfulness, all your hard work and self-sacrifice, is just the proper response of any honest heart to the "much more abounding grace" of the Lord Jesus; no big deal. ...

The Lord went to hell to save your soul; for you to respond by giving Him your heart, your life, your all, is no big deal to get proud over; it's just the proper response of any believing heart to the cross of Christ!

This is explained clearly in 2 Corinthians 5: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (vs. 14). Paul says he knows some people will think he is crazy; here he is pouring his very life out in unselfish service for Christ, and still doing so long after "retirement age."

Why doesn't he get himself a nice little villa near the Mediterranean Sea, and rest from his long life of grueling service? We have lots of retired pastors and teachers, today; but Paul could not "retire" because that love (*agape*) of Christ kept tugging at his heart; was he a better man than we are?

No; he had simply seen something that day when he was on his way to Damascus to try to destroy the church of Christ—he saw Jesus, and Jesus spoke to him and said "it is hard for thee to kick against the goads."

Paul never forgot that!

We can still let self be crucified when we "retire," and although we may grow some roses, etc., we can keep ourselves dedicated to the Lord.

The Holy Spirit is giving you and me individually, personally, our own little "vision" of that love [*agape*] of Christ. The final movement is coming suddenly; let us be ready

to welcome the Lord's leading.

—Robert J. Wieland

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[Return to Insights Index](#)

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