

# Worship At Some Church On Sunday . . .

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## Sunday School Lesson

For the first six months of 1949, we shall have for our consideration a chronological study of the life of Jesus Christ, drawn from the Gospels, largely from Mark and Luke, but also taking account of the narratives of Matthew and John. This study is a continuation of the historical study of the Bible where the Spring quarter of 1948, the Captivity and Return of the Jews, Spring quarter of 1948, the Captivity and Return of the Jews, left it.

Our lesson for this week is a study of the background, geographical, political and religious, of that particular portion of the world into which Jesus was born.

Geographically, the world into which Jesus came was a very small world. He was born in what we know of as Palestine, less than 11,000 square miles in total area. Its length west of the Jordan from Dan in the extreme north to Beersheba at the south was one hundred and forty-four miles. Its width at Beersheba was ninety miles; at the sea of Galilee forty miles; and at the part farthest north twenty-five miles. The section east of the Jordan had about the same length and varied in width eighty miles in the north to thirty miles in the south. When we speak of Palestine, we usually mean the section west of the Jordan, where Jesus spent most of his life.

Politically, all the nations of the then known world were under the dominion of the great Roman Empire. The armies of Rome held sway everywhere and a peace prevailed such as the world had not enjoyed for centuries. While the Jews were restive under the yoke of Rome, great things were being accomplished by that government. Military roads were built leading out from Rome in every direction, portions of which remain to this day and travel was relatively safe and easy. As someone has said, had those ancient roadbuilders been endowed with prophetic vision, they might truthfully have said: "The Christ is coming by a road by, and we are helping to pre-

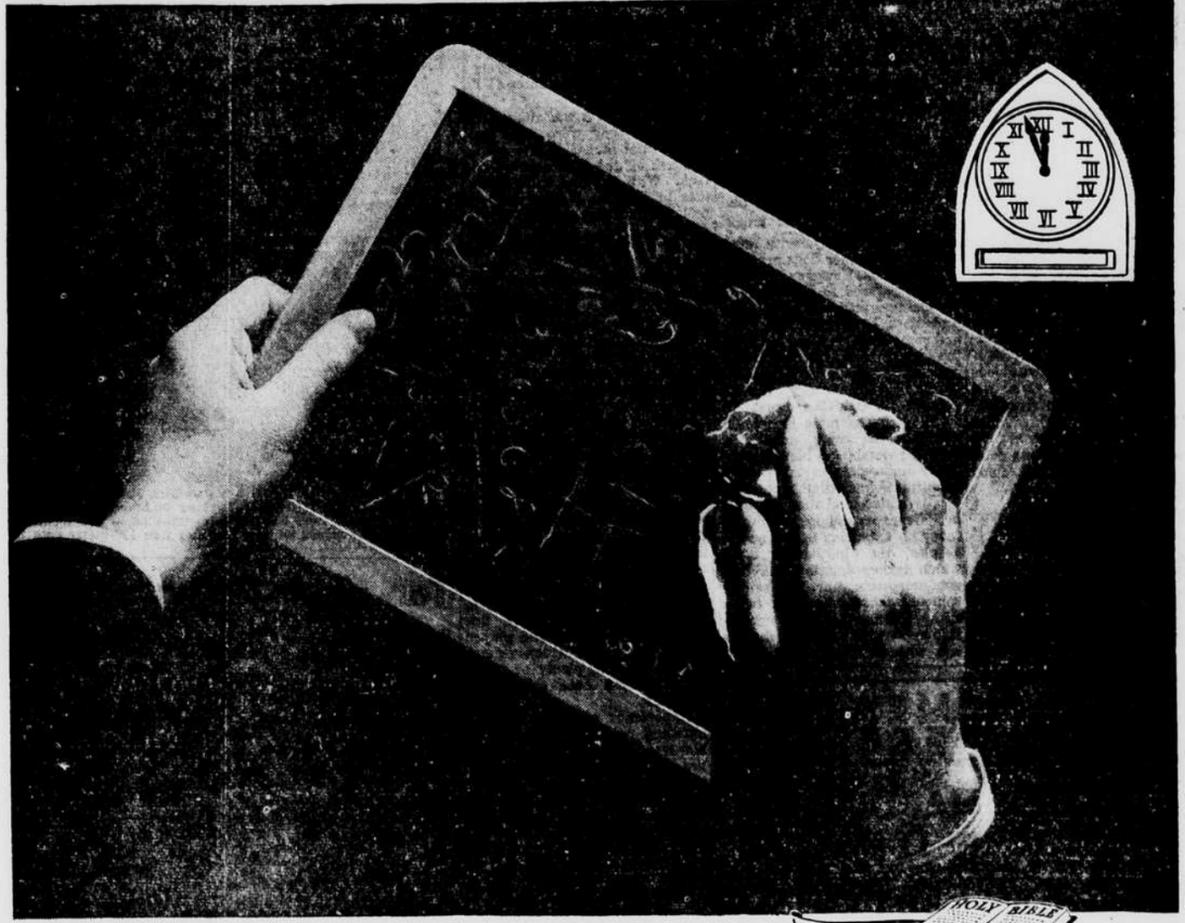
pare a pathway by which his ambassadors may journey through all lands with the message of mercy for the sons of men."

In Jesus' time, there were three centers of religious interest: 1. The Law; 2. The Temple; and, 3. The Messianic hope. Since the time of Ezra, the written law of the Old Testament had been the guiding rule by which the Jewish life was regulated. On the basis of this law and its interpretation, every aspect of life was ruled. Since the obligation to observe the law, as interpreted by the 'tradition of the elders' was accepted by all Jews as an essential part of their religion, the Pharisees, who devoted themselves to the study and teaching and interpretation of the law, held in Judaism a place of the greatest importance.

The Temple held first place in the hearts of all Jews. As the crowning act of worship for the first century Jew was the offering of sacrifice to Jehovah and the only place in all the world where this could be done was the temple at Jerusalem, therefore Jews from all over the world came on pilgrimages to this holiest of places in all the universe. Since these visits could be made but infrequently except by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the synagogue became the center of religious life in the villages. The chief priests who controlled the temple were, by virtue of their position, in name the heads of the nation, and it was to them that the Romans looked when they sought to deal with the Jews as a people. The High Priest was the head of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council to which the Romans entrusted whatever powers of local self-government they left to the Jews of Judea. The great priestly families were the center of the party of the Sadducees.

The Jews, a proud and nationalistic people, irked under the Roman yoke and devout Israelites found comfort and peace in the faith that God would in his own good time fulfill the covenant promise made to the fathers of his chosen race. This fathered the hope of a coming new age, when Jehovah himself would sweep away the existing world system, and replace it by his own perfect Kingdom in which all the wrongs of his chosen people would be redressed, and Israel would be exalted to its proper place in the world. They had pictured the Messiah as a political savior rather than a spiritual savior.

Looking at the situation in Palestine in which Jesus found himself, we can agree with Paul,



Every year we do it! We watch the clock tick away the seconds until midnight . . . believing that the stroke of a chime can wipe the slate clean. All of yesterday's mistakes can be forgotten . . . tomorrow is another year.

But it isn't so! At midnight, December 31, only a second separates the years. And a second cannot change what hours and days and months have failed to change.

The resolutions of a moment rarely make us different men and women. It is our spiritual seeking over the years that lifts our lives to higher summits.

And the clean slate we long for . . . it comes only with faith in a God who forgives . . . and who strengthens us in our daily pursuit of the better life.

How much did you let the Church help you in '48? How much more it can help you in '49 if you really want this New Year to be happier!

### THE CHURCH FOR ALL . . . ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

- Sunday . . . . . Matthew 19:16-23
- Monday . . . . . Luke 14:25-35
- Tuesday . . . . . Luke 15:1-10
- Wednesday . . . . . I Corinthians 13:1-13
- Thursday . . . . . Isaiah 55:6-13
- Friday . . . . . Romans 8:12-17
- Saturday . . . . . Luke 14:15-24

If you desire a schedule of readings for the year write to American Bible Society, Dept. U, 450 Park Ave., N. Y. 22, N. Y.

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"How Can I Mean More to My Church This Year?" will be the subject of the sermon at the morning worship and Lord's Supper service Sunday morning at eleven o'clock at the First Christian Church, with the pastor, the Rev. Lewis Styons, in charge. Special music for this service will also be provided by the church choir.

At the Sunday School hour at 9:45 the lesson for the day will be "The Word in which Jesus lived."

Evening services include a meeting of the Christian Endeavor to discuss the lesson, "Problems Young People Face Today", and a meeting of the adult men of the church to study the Book of Acts, both these meetings at 6:30.

The evening evangelistic service will be conducted at 7:30 with the message "My Greatest Question in 1949" to be brought by the pastor.

**Rosemary Baptist Watch Party Is At 11:30 Tonight**

At 11:30 tonight the Rosemary Baptist Church will hold its annual New Year's Eve Watch Night services.

During the service there will be brief messages and special music, and promptly at midnight the light's will go off and a picture of Salliman's "Head of Christ" will be projected on the screen, and there will be a period of prayer and meditation followed by a benediction by the pastor, the Rev. B. Marshall White-Hurst.

Following the service, light refreshments will be served to all worshippers in the basement of the church.

The public is invited to worship with the First Christian Church, particularly those who have no other church home.

Herald Want Ads solve worrisome hiring, renting, and selling problems. R-326.

**LOW CUT**—Edena Romney, British actress, wears a low cut evening gown with a wide lace collar at a reception in London for film folk who took part in a command performance.

FROM GERMANY comes a wristwatch camera, equipped with F-2.5 lens and weighing only 1.6 ounces. An ordinary roll of Leica film will give 480 photographs when used in this camera. Film case is at the left, ordinary size pocket watch at right.

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