

IN THE NAME OF JESUS

LESSON 1: THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS — COLORS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Teacher's Notes

Levels III and IV

Text: Mark 15:6-20

Theme: PURPLE, THE COLOR FOR SUFFERING AND SORROW

NOTES ON TEXT:

Background Setting: It is Good Friday. Mark gives a brief account of the events which occurred on this day. He omits many events which have no direct bearing on the Passion story. The night before, Jesus had been arrested while in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples. He was led to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. There, He was falsely condemned to death by the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Early on Good Friday the Sanhedrin held another meeting to ratify the original death penalty imposed the night before. They decided also to bind Jesus and bring Him in front of the Roman procurator (governor), Pontius Pilate. Only the Roman government had the right to impose the death penalty.

Verses 6-15: Pilate recognized Jesus' innocence and tried to release Him. The Jews would have nothing of this! They cried, "Crucify Him."

Verse 15: At this time of year it had become the custom for the governor to release a prisoner. Pilate had hoped to be able to release Jesus. Instead, the crowd insisted on another man, a hardened criminal named Barabbas. Pilate listened to the threats and intimidations of the crowd and gave in. He listened to the mob instead of his conscience. Pilate stopped functioning as he should have in his office as Roman governor. He was supposed to dispense justice but now he was helping to establish anarchy.

Before Jesus was crucified Pilate had Him flogged. The Roman floggings were particularly brutal and bloody. They used short handled whips. These whips had several strips of leather attached. At the ends of the leather strips were acorn-shaped pieces of lead or pieces of bone. Two whips were used on the victims. The effect was ghastly and disfiguring (Ruprecht p.389). Pilate had this done in a desperate attempt to save Jesus from the death penalty. He wanted to arouse the pity of the Jews. This attempt was futile. When Pilate saw all his maneuverings were in vain he finally released Jesus to be crucified.

Verse 16: The soldiers led Jesus to the Praetorium, which was the court of the palace, and served as a barracks. The whole company of soldiers was called together here. The company

was 1/10 of a legion, about 600 men. These "brave" soldiers were now going to make Jesus the object of their sport.

Verse 17: Jesus was dressed by His captors in a purple robe. Purple is a color which denotes royalty. Kings wore purple on state occasions. We may assume that the robe wasn't in the best of shape.

The soldiers also placed a crown of thorns on Jesus' head. We don't know about the type of plant this crown was made from. Most likely the twigs which comprised the crown came from a nearby bush. After the crown was thrust upon Jesus' head we can well assume it caused Him much pain. From the other Gospel accounts we learn that Jesus was also given a scepter of sorts.

The robe, crown of thorns and scepter were all intended to make Jesus appear as a king; a mock king though, a king upon whom the soldiers may heap their insults and abuse. Also, the intent was to intensify Jesus' physical and emotional suffering. Another reason for the mockery was to debase the Jews. They portrayed the king of the Jews as a charlatan (fake). That's the best they could do for a king?

Verse 18: The soldiers greeted Jesus in the same manner in which earthly kings were saluted in those days. The only difference was the sarcasm that accompanied their words. The Greek indicates that the mockery went on for some time.

Verse 19: Jesus is hit with a staff (a rod), possibly the scepter which was placed into His hand to give Him the appearance of a king. The beating on the head drove the thorns deeper into His brow. The agony must have been beyond comprehension.

They spit into Jesus' face. This was a most disgusting insult. Jesus prophesied about this (Mark 10:34). The spitting showed the complete lack of respect which the Roman soldiers had for the Jews and for Jesus. It showed they felt He had no majesty, dignity, honor.

The worshipping here was not true worship. Rather, blasphemy of the worst sort. The worshipping was just the heaping of another insult on top of all the others. It was

intended to break Jesus' spirit and send His soul into the depths of despair.

Verse 20: The mockery and abuse haven't ended, they just begin to take a different, uglier form now. Jesus' clothes are put back on Him and He is led to Golgotha. On Golgotha, or the place of the skull, Jesus was crucified between two criminals for crimes He never committed and words He never spoke. The crucifixion process was painful and gruesome.

APPLICATIONS:

1. Jesus endured tremendous suffering. He didn't deserve this suffering. He was the Son of God who was pure and holy. Jesus suffered voluntarily. He suffered not for His own sins but in our place. He suffered the punishment of Hell for us on the cross. Because of Christ's suffering and death on the Cross, we have been redeemed (bought back from our bondage to sin).
2. The purple robe Jesus wore was an unwitting admission by His captors of His kingship. Jesus wasn't an earthly king but the Prince of Peace who reigns over His Church. Only those who have faith in Jesus can see this.
3. The color purple also represents penitence (godly sorrow over sins). During Advent and Lent worshippers penitently prepare their hearts and minds for the high festivals of Christmas and Easter. With hearts and minds truly prepared through penitence, the special holidays of the church take on even more blessed meaning.
4. During Advent and Lent we use purple in our churches (altar hangings, pulpit and lectern scarves). This is fitting because we are focusing our eyes at this time directly at our king, Jesus.

- a) During Advent we prepare for our coming King. 1) We prepare for His coming in the flesh as the babe from Bethlehem. 2) We prepare for His coming into our hearts the rest of the year in Word and Spirit. 3) We also prepare for Jesus second coming.
 - b) During Lent we focus our eyes on Christ our King who humbled Himself in order that we might be redeemed.
5. There is great significance to the church calendar which we follow, the colors we use during the different seasons of the year, and the special emphasis of each season. Each year we are reminded of the high points of Jesus' ministry. By following the church calendar we avoid the temptation to dwell only on certain aspects of Christ's ministry and certain Bible teachings to the exclusion of everything else.
 6. The different seasons and colors throughout the year show us that we have a splendid God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who has done much to reconcile sinful mankind to Himself. As we enter our church throughout the year we are reminded that there is much to pray, praise and give thanks about.

Introduce the children to the Church Year and the colors that are used. Since this lesson is short you can spend some time in telling how the church year and its colors relates to Christ's life and the stories we will be discussing. At this time you might want to speak of the lengths of the seasons, the order of the seasons and the meaning of the particular seasons and holidays.

PASSAGES: Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:2-8; Mark 10:32-34

HYMNS: 140; 144; 150; 151, 2-5; 69; 65; 73

LESSON 2: JESUS' CRUCIFIXION — COLORS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Teacher's Notes
Levels III and IV

Text: Gospel Harmony (Matthew 27:45-47; John 19:28-30a; Luke 23:46; Matthew 27:51-54; Luke 23:48)
Theme: BLACK, THE COLOR FOR SIN & ITS CURSE

NOTES ON TEXT:

Background Setting: Good Friday on Mt. Calvary (also called Golgotha) outside the walls of Jerusalem.

The sixth hour — 12:00 noon. Jesus hung on the cross from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

The darkness from the sixth to ninth hour (12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.)

Extent of darkness — Not partial as if covering only that particular sight outside Jerusalem, nor only Jerusalem; but over all the earth. The Greek word GE, may mean either earth as a whole, or a particular region of the earth. But Matthew writes "ALL the earth" and Mark and Luke write "the WHOLE earth." None of the evangelists use a word that would limit the darkness to a specific area of the earth.

Cause of darkness — Luke also states that "the sun stopped shining" which would certainly have brought darkness to the entire earth. In addition, when one considers that the darkness symbolized God's judgment upon the sins of the whole world, it would seem only fitting that the darkness covered the entire world. NOTE: the earliest Greek manuscript copies have the verb entirely left out or failed. It could not have been an eclipse, as some have suggested, for the Passover was always celebrated with a full moon overhead. It was probably not a dust storm, as others have suggested, for the text says nothing in support of that. The best explanation for the children, no doubt, is simply to say that God caused the darkness supernaturally through a miracle. The sun itself was darkened because it entirely left off the giving of its light. We will want to stress the miraculous nature of the Father's act in our teaching at this point.

The Lord's crying out from the midst of the darkness — Jesus spoke in the Aramaic of the people, "ELOI, ELOI ..." as Mark has recorded it. Matthew has "ELI, ELI ..." in the Hebrew, as it is found in Psalm 22:1. David speaks in this Psalm not only of personal experience (his own relative "God-forsakenness" during his period of great suffering), but also prophetically and by inspiration of the Spirit of the utter forsakenness of his Descendant, Jesus, the Christ.

What does it mean to be forsaken by God? Here lies the importance of the visible sign God has given us by means of the darkness that covered the earth. The sun "leaving off

entirely" or failing to give its light was a most spectacular visual aid demonstrating that God the Father entirely left His Son in the darkness of hell during this period.

As the light of the sun was suddenly no longer shining upon the earth, leaving it in darkness, so also the light and the face of God the Father-His sustaining presence and fellowship-was no longer with the Son! Christ was entirely left alone by God!

The force of the Greek verb shows that this state of God-forsakenness Christ HAS EXPERIENCED even as He cries out at the height of His suffering. Thus He clearly refers to the God-forsakenness which He experiences during the hours of darkness ONLY.

"God is Light ... in Him is no darkness at all." (I John 1:5) Satan, on the other hand is the "Prince of Darkness", "Ruler of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 2:2), who was "cast into hell and delivered into chains of darkness" (2 Peter 2:4). To be completely abandoned by God is nothing less than to be eternally condemned to the same darkness to which Satan and his evil angels were condemned - the terrors and punishments of hell.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus' SOUL "was sorrowful even unto death" (Mark 14:33), yet the Father was still with Him, and Jesus was able to address Him, "O my Father. . ." (Matthew 26:39). Even in His first saying from the cross Jesus is able to address God as Father ("Father forgive them. . ."). Also in His last word from the cross, Jesus is again able to say, "Father into Your hands. . ." But during the hours of suffering the punishment of hell, the hours of darkness, Jesus experiences only the eternal wrath of the righteous God upon His body and soul - for us!

That Jesus still refers to God as "MY God" during this period, does not signify any comforting thought on His part at all! Being abandoned in hell, Jesus utters the truth which cannot be escaped even by the inhabitants of hell - there is only one God, and He alone has condemned me. Jesus suffered ALL the terrors of hell, even as all the condemned. Yet there IS this difference: whereas all other inhabitants of Satan's domain only curse and blaspheme "their" God forever, the Holy Jesus remains without sin and continues in His love for God even now as He suffers the eternal wrath of God! Surely these are the most heart-broken words ever spoken by one forsaken, for

no one has ever been closer to another than the eternal Son was to the eternal Father, yet cast further away through no fault of His own whatever! Who can begin to imagine the agony of our Lord Jesus which brought forth the words, "MY God, why ...?" "WHY?" indeed!

Isaiah 53 . . . "He was wounded for our transgressions . . . The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all . . . for the transgression of My people He was stricken . . ." "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when You shall make HIS SOUL an offering for sin . . . He shall see the travail of HIS SOUL and shall be satisfied . . ."

Christ endured the curse of the law in our place (Galatians 3:13) by being made a curse for us!

He bore our sins in "His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Jesus was under the judgment of God for the sins of Israel and the sins of the world! In fact the very hour in which the darkness over the whole earth ended was the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), and this was the very hour in which the lamb for the evening sacrifice was offered by the priest in the Holy Place of the Temple. (Edersheim, THE TEMPLE - ITS MINISTRY AND SERVICE, p. 256)

The reactions and the consequences of the event

1. "Those standing near" . . . The Jews were acquainted with the prophecy of Malachi (4:5ff) that Elijah would come. They did not know, however, that John the Baptizer was that Elijah (Matthew 11:14). Whether they were now mocking Jesus, or whether in view of the complete darkness they had witnessed their superstitious fears moved them to think that Jesus was really calling out to Elijah is not clear from the Scripture. One thing is clear; the people did not make the proper connection, the connection between Jesus and the Father.
2. "After this (i.e., the period of His God-forsakenness), Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished" (i.e., all He had come to do as the "suffering Servant" - Isaiah 53- all that the Old Testament Scriptures had spoken of His redeeming work for sinners, especially the most recent agony of hell - all was DONE to perfect COMPLETION (Greek verb), yes only now that He has finished all that was required for our salvation from sin, death, and hell, does our Savior give expression to His own tremendous physical need, saying: "I AM THIRSTY." (Psalm 22:14-15)

Thirst was one of the worst agonies suffered by the crucified. We can surmise that Jesus had already gone for many hours without a drink (probably since Maundy Thursday evening). Earlier He had refused the vinegar mixed with gall or myrrh, a bitter tasting sedative, which the Roman soldiers had given

Him upon the arrival at Golgotha (Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23; Psalm 69:21) It seems to be the case that Jesus refused such a drink because it would have dulled the pains of His suffering before He had accomplished all suffering in our place. It gives evidence of the depths of Christ's suffering, demonstrating that His was a real human body.

"A jar of wine vinegar . . ." this sour wine was the cheap, yet refreshing wine issued to the Roman soldiers as part of their rations.

"A stalk of the hyssop plant" The stem of the hyssop was about 18 in. long - long enough to reach the lips of Jesus, who was NOT as high off the ground as many artists have pictured Him on the cross. (From all accounts of those who have made it a point to determine the height of the cross above the ground, it is clear that Jesus, feet were no more than 2-3 feet above the ground.)

"It is finished" (Tetelestai-in the Greek) the most important single word ever spoken by Man. By this our Lord announced no the end of His life, but His victory, absolute victory over Satan, death, and hell. "The Savior turned His gaze from the first sinner to the last, and behold, He saw no one for whose guilt He had not atoned, no one for whom He had not won forgiveness and peace." "For by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:14; Genesis 3:15)

"Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' with that, He bowed His head and gave up His life." His cry with a LOUD VOICE was a triumphant testimony to all men that:

- 1) Having already defeated Satan's worst during the hours of darkness on our behalf, His spirit and life did not belong to the great accuser, but to His heavenly Father;
- 2) that He is ready to fall asleep in peace and safety, confident of His resurrection from the dead.

That Jesus "bowed His head and GAVE UP His life" is evidence that death does not summon Him, but that He calls upon death to serve Him. He is the Conqueror, not the conquered. His life was not taken from Him, but rather He willingly and consciously gave up His life. As one poet puts it, "Death did not come to Jesus, but Jesus came to Death!" Jesus Himself states this in John 10:18, "No one takes it (My life) from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Even now He might have escaped death. But the Scriptures and He Himself had consistently spoken of His death and burial. From the foundation of the world it had been determined that the Lamb of God would be slain (Revelation 13:80).

Now follows the physical consequences of Jesus' victory in the darkness. All these signs occurred at precisely the moment of Christ's death.

"The veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom." The tearing of the curtain in the temple was a very significant sign and it had visible results. In Acts 6:7 we are told that "a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." This, no doubt, came about in part because of this marvelous sign. The temple curtain itself was an immense thing: 60 ft. tall, 30 ft. wide, and fully 4 in. thick. The Jewish historian Josephus described it as a "Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple." It is said that it took 300 priests simply to lift it when it was first hung. The curtain served to separate the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies within the temple. Priests would enter the Holy Place each morning and each evening, but only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and this only once a year on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat to make atonement for the sins of the people. (Leviticus 16:2ff; Exodus 30:10) The Holy of Holies symbolized the presence of the living God, while the curtain served to symbolize the barrier between God and man because of man's sin. The significance of this sign is revealed in the book of Hebrews (9:7-8; 10:19-22). Before Jesus' atoning death man could approach the presence of God only through His appointed priests, but after Jesus' atoning death sin was removed. Now man can approach the very presence of God with boldness for his sins have been removed by Jesus Christ. The curtain, which symbolized the barrier caused by sin, was severed in order to symbolize that man could now approach God.

"The earth shook and the rocks split." No coincidence! But calling attention in a most dramatic way to the relationship between the dead Christ and the living and powerful God.

"The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life." It was not the earthquake that brought forth the dead from their tombs ALIVE. Only the "saints", those who had died in the faith of Christ, arose. These resurrected saints are the forerunners of all those who will be raised up to life eternal on the last day!

"And after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city, and appeared to many people." We are not told what happened to the "holy people" who were raised from the dead. We may safely presume, however, that they are presently with their Lord and Savior, having performed their appointed task of demonstrating that Satan's power over death had been broken by the work of Jesus.

In consequence a Centurion's Christian Confession! (Matthew 27:54-56; Mark 15:39-42; Luke 23:47-49) A Centurion was the captain of a hundred soldiers. Perhaps there were many of his detachment of Roman soldiers at the scene

for security reasons. He "STOOD OVER-AGAINST HIM." The centurion had missed nothing during the hours of Jesus' crucifixion. He must have been deeply impressed with the manner in which Jesus died. His confession was wonderful: "TRULY, THIS WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN." (Luke 23) "TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD." (Matthew 27) The first to confess his faith in Jesus upon His death. His statement was both a condemnation of the unbelief of the Jews who denied Jesus' divinity, and a condemnation of the unjust sentence imposed upon the Righteous One by the Romans.

Others, probably also Roman soldiers "WITH HIM" agreed with the conclusion of their leader. When the Jews, Christ's own people, failed to recognize and honor Him, God sent the heathen to pay Him honor. The same thing happened at the birth of Jesus with the coming of the wise men from the East to the shame of Herod and other Jewish leaders.

Those "who had gathered to witness this sight" saw a "spectacle" for sure! It was not at all what they had anticipated. The combination of the miraculous, the utterances of Jesus, and the earthshaking, was enough and more than enough to shake them terribly within and trouble their own fearful consciences. They mocked no longer, they were shocked beyond expression! The beating of the breast was no sign of conversion, but of fear and frustration, for the visible signs which they witnessed might have come from God! And if so, WHAT HAD THEY DONE!

Concerning crucifixion: it was invented by the Phoenicians, but adopted and developed by the Romans. There were several types of crosses, and we cannot be certain of the type used for our Savior's crucifixion. The nails, used to fasten the hands to the cross, were driven through the wrist rather than through the palm of the hand as depicted frequently in pictures of the crucifixion. Either one or two nails were used routinely to secure the feet to the cross. Death by crucifixion came due to asphyxiation, when the muscles of the chest would cramp due to the strain and breathing would become impossible. This would occur either when the person being crucified was too weak to push up with his legs and relieve the cramped chest muscles, or, as in the case of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, the legs of the person being crucified were broken. It was and remains one of the most cruel ways of inflicting death known to man.

APPLICATIONS:

BLACK, THE COLOR FOR GOOD FRIDAY

1. The color black was chosen for Good Friday because of the darkness that covered the earth. That darkness symbolized God's judgment upon sin. A judgment that was borne by our Savior upon the cross. He became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). He became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He became the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for the sins of the whole world

(1 John 2:2). By dying upon the cross Jesus endured God's wrath over sin and removed the judgment we deserved because of our sin.

2. BLACK, or darkness, is frequently used in Scripture in connection with God's judgment upon sinful and unbelieving mankind (see Joel 2:31; 3:14-15; Isaiah 5:30; 13:9). The Bible also warns us that if we reject God's gift of salvation we will be thrown into everlasting darkness (see Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).
3. BLACK is the color of mourning. On Good Friday we review with sadness and mourning the reasons for our Savior's death which is our many sins (see Isaiah 53). At the same time we focus upon the results of Jesus' death, which can only properly be seen in the light of Easter's empty tomb, for "Jesus was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:25)
4. God blankets the earth with physical darkness as Christ suffers upon the cross. How could the people help but think that a sentence, a judgment was being pronounced and carried out by God? Even a judgment upon THEM! For would you not think that God was judging the world and YOU because of sin, if when the sun was at its highest point in the sky, it suddenly stopped shining and the whole earth was plunged into darkness for 2-3 hours? What fear, even terror would have gripped also our own poor sinful hearts on that first BLACK FRIDAY!
5. It was Martin Luther's meditation upon Psalm 22:1, which led to the light of the Gospel restored by the Lutheran Reformation. Why, Luther asked himself, was the soul and body of Christ so far from God as He hung upon the cross. Why, if He was the Beloved Son of His Father, did He experience such a painful separation from the Father? Luther concluded that it must have been the wrath and

punishment of our sins which Christ took upon Himself that caused His God-forsakenness. Whereas before Christ was pictured to Luther's mind as an angry Judge of sinners, now he realized that Christ was the loving and self-sacrificing fellow Suffering Substitute for sinners. (Spend some time with the children on the WHY of the crucifixion.)

6. Our debt has been paid in FULL by the suffering of hell which Jesus endured for our sins. That which has been paid in full, that work which had been done to perfection, cannot be added to. Examples may be given that the children at all levels will understand. "AFTER THAT, JESUS KNOWING THAT ALL THINGS WERE NOW COMPLETED . . . JESUS SAID, 'IT IS FINISHED'." The children should understand that it was not Christ's life which was finished, but His WORK on our behalf. An artist will tell you that there is a point in painting a scene where to add more color, more detail, is to ruin the picture. Those who feel they must add their works, their prayers, their worship, or anything of their own doing to what Christ has done perfectly for them upon the cross, also ruin the salvation their Savior has earned for them. This is to return to the darkness from which Christ redeemed us, a return to the law which cursed us for our sins! But let us say and believe rather that he who "believes and is baptized shall be saved" and let us look to the resurrection of Christ from the dead for the proof-positive that God the Father has accepted the completeness of His Son's work on our behalf.

BIBLE PASSAGES: Psalm 22; Hebrews 9:11-28;
1 John 3:8; Galatians 4:4-5

CATECHISM: 2nd Article

HYMNS: 153; 154; 159; 3; 166-168; 171; 174;
176; 177 (5-10); 103-106

LESSON 3: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS — COLORS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Teacher's Notes
Levels III and IV

Text: Matthew 28:1-10 Additional Text: Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-8
Theme: WHITE, THE COLOR FOR PURITY & LIFE

NOTES ON THE TEXT:

Background Setting: The sorrowful and mournful hymns of Lent and Good Friday, such as, "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted", "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed", and "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" have died away and the joyous and exultant strains of "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" resound in our ears. The Violet (Lent) and Black (Good Friday) altar paraments denoting sorrow, death, and mourning have now been replaced by WHITE, the color of greatest joy in the church year. Our whole spirit has been elevated, our hearts filled with joy, and our lips burst forth with songs of praise as we celebrate the Easter miracle, the resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

Verse 1—"As it began to dawn" The Sabbath is passed. It would have been unlawful for them to have gone on that errand on the Sabbath. So we see them "very early in the morning" (Luke), "when it was yet dark" (John), "at the rising of the sun" (Mark), coming to the Savior's tomb. Matthew mentions only two women.

"Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" The former is from the town of Magdala in Galilee from whom Jesus had cast out seven devils and who with deep love and affection for the Lord from that time faithfully served Him. (Luke 8:2-3) The other Mary mentioned was the mother of James the Less (not the brother of John). She also had witnessed the crucifixion. But there were others, either with them or close behind: Salome and Joanna.

"To see the sepulchre" They came to complete the embalming of Friday evening. We see the wonderful love and devotion of these women; all their faith and hope had been buried in Joseph's tomb and now their love rises above faith and hope to honor Him whom their nation had dishonored with the cross.

Verse 2—"And behold" - As the women are hurrying to the tomb, an unexpected and remarkable thing happens.

"there was a great earthquake" - "The earthquake, as Luther says, tolled the bell for Christ to pass to His grave and the Lord God rang the peal again for His resurrection". There is the connection between the earthquake and the angel's coming down from heaven as he rolled back the stone.

"rolled back the stone from the door" - The angel opens the

tomb to show that it is empty, to announce the glorious fact of the resurrection. The angel did not come to open the tomb to let Jesus out, for silently, invisibly, wondrously, gloriously the living Christ came forth out of the tomb. "The stone is best conceived as a great upright circular slab, set in a groove, to be rolled to one side and thus to expose the opening into the rock behind it. The angel by touching it (we must remember that it took strenuous effort on the part of two or three men to put it into place) hurled it away from the rock wall, making it fall flat upon the ground, and then he sat on it--the tomb open to all eyes. The women felt the shock, and then, drawing nearer, saw the angel sitting on the stone." (Lenski) The grave was empty while the soldiers were still guarding it.

Verse 3 & 4—"His countenance was like lightning" - The angel is like Christ at His transfiguration, only the glory is that of a created being, while Christ's is the manifestation of His deity. The glistening whiteness and radiance, as blinding as lightning indicated purity and holiness.

The guards at the tomb were terrified at the appearance of the angel. He did nothing to relieve their fear and spoke no words to comfort them. They were heathen men, without love for Christ or faith in Him.

It was different with the women who set out early on Easter morning to go to Joseph's garden. They were hurrying there in love to attend to the Savior's body. It did not occur to them that He would keep His promise to rise from the dead on the third day. Their faith was waning. The challenge of the cross had been too much for them. Some of them had seen Him die. They had seen the gaping wound made by the Roman spear. Their reason and common sense told them that it was not possible for that lacerated, disjointed (Psalm 22:14), pierced body to be restored to life once more. Temporarily their reason overshadowed their faith. However, their faith was still alive.

Verse 5 & 6—"Fear not" The angel speaks these words to the women, as if to say: The guards have reason to be afraid but not you. They have a guilty conscience. In their present condition they have no hope of forgiveness. But don't YOU be afraid. For you and all believers in Christ, past, present, and future, this is the most glorious day in history. "Christ was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:25)

He lives to silence all my fears,
He lives to wipe away my tears,
He lives to calm my troubled heart,
He lives all blessings to impart.

With death all around us, we do not need to fear it. (Give current examples of world conditions, news reports) As children of the heavenly Father, redeemed by the blood of His Son, death has become the very door to heaven. "Because I live, you shall live also!" (John 14:19)

"for He is risen," The resurrection is described as the act of God; "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." (Romans 6:4) Both terms are true: the Father raised Christ from the dead, and He himself arose from the dead, for He himself is true God. Jesus has power to lay His life down, and He has power to take it again. (John 10:18)

"as He said" The angel emphasizes this not only to call to remembrance Christ's promise to rise, but also giving proof. The Word of Jesus cannot fail. The message of the Gospel of Christ is that which takes away the fear of sin and death from the heart, and fills it with holy joy in the Lord. Christ is risen as He had told them time and time again.

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay" Once again the angel points to the empty tomb as evidence of the Lord's resurrection and rightfully so, for we remember all of the security measures that were taken to secure the tomb, none of which worked. The Roman soldiers were brave men, but they had not been trained to cope with the supernatural. We remember too, the professional nature of the Roman army and the discipline which they were under. If they had fallen asleep while on duty this was punishable by death, for we read in Acts 12, that when an angel delivered Peter from prison, Herod commanded that the ("keepers") guards should be put to death, even though they were not to blame for this escape.

It is our eyes of faith that "Come & See". . . and believe this miracle of the resurrection which assures us also of our resurrection and eternal life.

Verse 7 & 8—"go quickly, and tell. . ." True faith is lively and active. It shows itself in deeds of kindness and love. Its supreme joy is to share the assurance of eternal life with others. After the women had seen the place where the Lord lay, in order to convince themselves that He was no longer dead, they literally obeyed the command of the angel to "go quickly" and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead." Fear was in their hearts, but joy was upon their lips.

Verse 9 & 10—They had hardly started out on this errand, when they met the risen Savior in person. Words cannot adequately describe their feelings. Filled with such deep emotion, they didn't say a word but instead dropped to their knees and worshipped Him.

"into Galilee" There is a connection here between this verse and verse 16, when the disciples all gather in Galilee to be commissioned by the Lord to go out into all the world and preach the Gospel to everyone.

APPLICATION:

1. The faithful women came early to the tomb. Love for the Lord motivated them. If we have love for the Word of God and the Savior we will be eager and glad to come and worship Him.
2. The women knew that there was a great stone in front of the door of the grave, but they continued on. The fact that difficulties threaten us in life should not keep us from continuing on in serving the Savior, for He knows how to roll away the obstacles that confront us.
3. a. Jesus' resurrection shows that He is really the Son of God.
b. Jesus' resurrection shows that all His promises will be kept.
c. Jesus' resurrection shows us that He really saved us from our sins.
d. Jesus' resurrection shows us that He has conquered death both for Himself and for us.
4. If we want to rise and live with Jesus in the world to come, we must live with Him and for Him in this world.

THE COLOR WHITE: This is the color for perfection, holiness, light and joy and is used during the major festivals of the Church Year CHRISTMAS, EPIPHANY, EASTER, ASCENSION (Used: Christmas Eve to last Sunday after Epiphany; Easter Sunday to the Sunday after Ascension)

What does WHITE remind us of when we are in church?

IT REMINDS US OF GOD. . . At Christmas, we see white to remind us that it was God the Father who gave as His gift to us the son of GOD that came as the baby Jesus. At Epiphany, the white reminds us that GOD, in Christ, was not a well-kept secret, but that He was shown to the whole world - all nations - as the Light of the World. At Easter, we remember Jesus' joyous victory over death and sin. We remember that He rose with a glorified body. He rose by the power of GOD. At Ascension, white reminds us that Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of GOD (meaning that He rules over the earth with all authority, and power, for the good of His Church)

IT REMINDS US OF ANGELS. . . Who serve God constantly as messengers and 'ministers', for the good of believers in Him. Being pure spirits, they reflect that shining white glory of God, hence the frequent description of 'white robes', 'shining white', etc. On these high festivals, white reminds us that

angels were frequently called on to serve in some way or another: At Christmas, the heavens were filled with God's angels, joining in magnificent song and praise, proclaiming the birth of our Savior. At Easter, it was angels whom God sent to meet would-be mourners at Jesus' tomb, announcing the resurrection. At Ascension, angels appeared to the witnessing disciples, assuring them that He would return 'in like manner as they saw Him go into heaven.'

IT REMINDS US OF THE BELIEVERS AS SAINTS. . . Our sins make us appear 'dirty' to God. Even our attempts at good fail: 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags'. Unlike God, who is perfection, among men, 'there is none who does good, no, not one'. But Christ, in dying for our sins, washes us clean of them: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world'. Now we are pure before God, by faith in Jesus Christ: 'These are the ones who. . . washed their robes and made them WHITE in the blood of the Lamb'. This is the message of the Gospel, which we bring to the whole world: 'come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, 'though

your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as WHITE as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'" Even today, though we daily struggle against sin, often fall and have to come before God, seeking forgiveness for the sake of Jesus, we appear pure and WHITE before our heavenly Father, thanks to Jesus Christ: "wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." Consider bringing in the account of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:3), where Jesus shone in glory, and His robe appeared whiter than any Tide, Clorox, or Biz commercial could hope to get them.

PASSAGES: John 14:19; John 11:25-26; Romans 4:25; Acts 1:3; Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 3:18-19; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:12-23; 50-58; Isaiah 1:18; Revelation 4:7

CATECHISM: 2nd Article

HYMNS: 192; 193; 198; 200; 205; 656

LESSON 4: PENTECOST — COLORS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Teacher's Notes

Levels III and IV

Text: Acts 2:1-13

Theme: RED, THE COLOR FOR FIRE AND ZEAL

NOTES ON TEXT:

Background Setting: People often have the mistaken notion that the Festival of Pentecost was first celebrated, or originated, with the event which we now commonly associate with the term - namely the tongues of fire, etc. Pentecost was named for the Greek word for fifty--because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the presentation of the first harvested sheaf of the barley harvest; i.e., the fiftieth day from the first Sunday after Passover (Leviticus 23:15ff). It is known also as "The Feast of the Weeks" (Exodus 34:22 and Deuteronomy 16:10), and as "The Day of the First Fruits" or "Feast of Harvest" (Numbers 28:26 and Exodus 23:16). It was one of the three great Old Testament Jewish festival days, the others being the Passover and the Festival of Tabernacles. Because it was one of the important festival days the Jews tried to make it to Jerusalem for the feast. Thus we find the wide variety of languages being spoken of in verses 9-11. A study of the miracles which took place on Pentecost should be taken together with a brief survey of the events connected with the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-8. God confused the language of mankind at Babel to fulfill His desire that they "multiply and fill the earth", and then miraculously made provision for this "confusion of languages" at Pentecost so that the saving message of Christ could be preached "easily" to all the nations of the earth.

Verse 1: On the day of Pentecost specified in our text we are told "they" were all together in one place. In Acts 1:15 we are told that the disciples of our Lord Jesus in Jerusalem at that time numbered about one hundred and twenty. It is likely "they" refers to the Apostles and some of these other disciples.

Verse 2: "A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" Note that this is a comparison of what that "sound from heaven" was like. This was no mere spring breeze, but as the Greek indicates it was a "violent, forcible" wind. How strong a wind it was we cannot say, but we might liken it to a gale wind or the winds that often blow in with a summer storm, or maybe the winds of March that often blow. Note also that the text does not say that a "wind blew into the house", but rather that there was a "sound" that filled the air and the house where the people were sitting. It was an audible sound that was loud enough to attract attention to this house so that the many people mentioned in verses 9-11 came to the place also to see what was going on. The sound came "suddenly" out of

nowhere perhaps like a sudden unexpected clap of thunder that shakes the house and rumbles on for some time.

Verse 3: We find the Spirit of God appearing to them in tongues, or what we would call flames which looked like the flames of a fire. It might well have appeared to them in one large flame at first and then as they watched, it divided itself, into single flames and sat one flame upon each of the disciples who were there. I would take this to mean again that these flames were seen on the heads of ALL those who had gathered themselves together in that house. Both men and women, because of verse one and also because of what Peter goes on to say in verses 16-18 the quote being from Joel 2:28-32 which specifically mentions "sons and daughters" and "menservants and maidservants".

Verse 4: The sitting on each of them in verse 3 is explained further here in verse 4. It indicated that the Spirit was in them, fully filling them up with His power. So filled, these men and women began to speak not of every day things, but of Jesus Christ, and what He came to do, and what He accomplished through His death. That He had been raised on the third day and had just 10 days ago been taken up into heaven someday to come back again. It should be no surprise to us then to read in verse 13 that there were some who heard these things and laughed at them for what they said. The fact that a man would die for the sins of the world was unusual, but even more absurd to them would be the fact that this Jesus had risen from the grave and ascended into heaven! How unbelievable this was to their reason. The "tongues" in this verse are the different languages of the people who came to find out what the noise meant. It is important that we make this point clear that when the disciples "spoke in tongues" they were known languages of the day and that there were individuals there who could UNDERSTAND what was being said. This was not some gibberish or unknown language. The purpose of this day was so that the many individuals would hear of "the wonderful works of God" (verse 11). It was to get the message of Christ crucified and resurrected out in their own language to others.

Verse 5: Dwelling in Jerusalem were Jewish people who had been scattered about to "every nation under heaven". Verses 9-11 list some of the places from which they came. These Jewish people who had settled in these distant lands were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate this special Jewish festival. Some believe that many were Jews who had formerly lived in these

distant countries but now had settled down in the city to live out the remaining days of their lives. Whatever the case these were "God-fearing Jews".

Verse 6: "Confused" These people when they came to this house at the sound of the wind, and saw and heard what was going on became utterly confused. They were at a total loss as to what to say, or think or even do. This state of confusion was a result of the disciples (Galileans) speaking in tongues. They were speaking in the languages that these people from all different lands could understand.

Verse 7-8: "Amazed and marvelled" These words add further description to the statement in verse 6. They were thrown off guard, totally astonished at what they were hearing and seeing. They marvelled at these simple folk before them and wondered how this could be possible.

Verse 9-11: These verses simply tell us where these people came from. The fulfillment of Jesus' command to preach the gospel to every nation began here in this house at Pentecost. No doubt the happenings of this day were long remembered and spoken of by these people. We can well imagine that when they got home to their lands they told their neighbors and friends the events that transpired this day and of that message which they heard. That message of the "wonderful works of God" of Jesus Christ and what He had accomplished. In the early days of the Christian church the Jews found it very difficult to accept the fact that the Gospel was intended for "all nations." The events of Pentecost should have been a powerful testimony to them that the Christian faith was not restricted to any one nation, but the Lord through Paul still had to bring Peter and the rest around to a full realization of this truth. The Jews were convinced that the gift of tongues was given simply to accommodate the Jews around the world. (Cf. Acts 2:5 and Acts 15)

Verse 12-13: Verse 12 picks up again the thoughts of verse 7 and shows us that these people were debating among themselves as to what all this meant. They were in doubt. They were entirely at a loss as to the meaning of these Galileans speaking in their native languages. There were however in the crowd of people, as always, those who made fun of what was going on. They derided and scoffed at all this and concluded that these people had dipped into new wine and were drunk. What people's reason cannot comprehend they put down and laugh at.

SUMMARY:

Acts 2:40-41, 46-47 relates for us a most remarkable account of this Pentecost day's outcome, and what happens during the time immediately following. The group of disciples in Jerusalem numbers about one hundred twenty as recorded in Acts 1:15. As the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

and Peter's preaching on Pentecost, 3,000 additional souls are added to their number, as well as others being added in the days that followed. So it has continued to this very day - the Holy Spirit continues to be poured out through the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, turning the hearts of people to the Lord, sealing unto them the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

APPLICATION:

THE COLOR RED: RED is the color of fire, of great fervor and zeal, of victory and triumph. The color RED is used in connection with Pentecost, Reformation, church dedications, anniversaries, harvest festivals, and national holidays.

If you had to pick a color for the event known as Pentecost what would you pick? RED seems the logical choice not only because it signifies purification, but because it reminds us of the unique flame-like tongues which God used to transmit His special gift of the Holy Spirit. When we are really excited about something in our lives, we say we are "fired up about it". When two people are very much in love they often appear to be almost glowing - radiant. This is how we see the pioneers of the early Church after Pentecost. Suddenly, like intensively trained combat troops, these Christians found themselves instantly trained for their "mission" and they were indeed "fired up", eager to do battle with the forces of Satan. And yet, unlike the stereo-typical soldier, these "warriors" had been tempered in the flame of Pentecost with the love of Christ Jesus - a love which burned in their hearts and left them basking in its glow.

Before Pentecost the disciples of the Lord Jesus were still looking forward to the "Spirit" as a future gift. They were servants waiting for their calls; clay which still had to be molded to fit into God's master plan. They did not know what to say nor to whom they should speak. To be ambassadors of the Most High God they had to be purified, as Isaiah said, "I am a man of unclean lips." (Isaiah 6:4-8) This is part of the significance before the discovery of antiseptics, surgeons would heat their instruments with fire, often until they were glowing red-hot, to purify them. The surgeon could not take the chance that his tools would be infected and end up doing more harm than good. The disciples were God's tools, tools purified on Pentecost to prevent the infection of false doctrine. In a way very similar to Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-8) the Lord touched their unclean mouths with a glowing coal, in this case the flame-like tongues of fire which came to rest on their heads, signifying, first of all, purification by fire.

You might want to look through verses 15-39 of chapter 2. This is the contents of Peter's sermon. Read to the children or have them read pertinent verses that show how Peter preached the Law and Gospel to the people. Law - verses 23, 36. Gospel - verses 24, 31-33, 38-39. What effect did the Law have?

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, ...”
verse 37. What effect did the Gospel have? Then those who
gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about
three thousand souls were added to them. verse 41.

It is a victory and triumph of the greatest measure each time a
soul is saved through a person being converted to faith in the
Lord Jesus Christ and thereby rescued from sin, death, and the
power of the devil. When the Holy Spirit works this saving
faith in our hearts what fervor and zeal are awakened in
response to the miraculous nature of the grace of God which
brings about our salvation.

Because of what happened on the great day of Pentecost, fire
has been used to symbolize the Holy Spirit and His work. The
victory and triumph assured by this work is incomparable.
Attempts to undermine this work have been made not only
outside the church, but inside as well. The outside attempts
have not succeeded. Nor will the Lord permit the work to be

halted from within. The Reformation is a good example of the
Lord raising up servants to staunchly confess the Truth even
in the face of grave dangers.

Church dedications, anniversaries, harvest festivals, national
holidays - Thanksgiving - are all times when the zeal of faith
is in evidence manifested through thanksgiving for the bounty
God has supplied. At these times as always the grace of God
through which Jesus has been sent to be our Savior from sin is
the primary reason for thanksgiving. It is through this greatest
victory and triumph that all other blessings are made possible.

PASSAGES:

Joel 2:28-32; John 14:16-17; Luke 24:13-35 (esp. 32); 1
Corinthians 12:3-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

CATECHISM: 3rd Article

HYMNS: 224-227; 229; 232; 234

LESSON 5: THE THRONE IN HEAVEN — COLORS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Teacher's Notes

Levels III and IV

Text: Rev. 4:1-11; 5:11-14

Theme: GREEN, THE COLOR FOR GROWTH IN GOD'S GRACE

NOTES ON THE TEXT:

Background Setting: The Revelation of John is really the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John (1:1). This revelation, which came to John in a series of visions, was given to the Apostle during the last decade of the First Century (95 a.d.), while he was living in exile on the island of Patmos. The purpose of the book is to comfort and strengthen Christians under trials in this world by assuring them that victory over Satan and the forces of evil has been secured by our Savior, the Lamb Triumphant, and shall be brought to its final glorious conclusion at the final coming of Christ. Here is both encouragement and warning for times of trial and affliction.

Chapters four and five of Revelation record 2 visions granted to John the Apostle. In both the Vision of the Throne (4) and the Vision of the Lamb (5) we see God's rule of the world depicted. And what each pictures is true, of course, not just for a certain time frame or for some period in the future, but rather it is the reality behind all history from Jesus' Ascension to His Return. God the Creator and Christ the Redeemer are in control of the whole creation--ruling all for the sake of the children of God. (Romans 8:28)

Revelation 4:1-11 The second part of Revelation begins here as the scene shifts from earth to heaven.

Verse 1: What John saw was part of an introductory to the vision he was about to be granted. "The voice" - This was Jesus speaking (1:10).

Verse 2: "in the spirit" - probably best with a small "s" - John's spirit. Whether John's body was involved at all we cannot say (c.p. 2 Corinthians 12:2) but the Apostles participation in and observation of the visions was primarily spiritual.

Verse 2: "throne" - In the vision earthly terms and visual presentations are used by Christ to depict realities about God and His Rule. For example, the Throne of God is not a wooden chair on a cloud, but God's power and authority.

Verse 3: "The One Who sat there" - God the Father (c.p. 4:5 & 5:5-7). "jasper" - a diamond-like stone (21:11) picturing majesty. "carnelian" - a sard, a deep colored stone used in jewelry-symbolizing judgment. Here is the brilliance of divine majesty and judgment.

"rainbow" - in shape, but green in color. The rainbow shape reminds us of God's gracious promises (as to Noah), which He always keeps. It is a sign of peace between God and man -- peace secured by God's grace. Green is the color of grace. Perhaps because we are to grow in grace. More to the point, as Christians it is only by God's grace that we grow and thrive (Psalm 1). It is also true that the sun and rain which give life to greenery are examples of God's open-handed grace. (Matthew 5:45)

Verse 4: "24 elders" - symbolizing the Church of all ages. Believers of both Old (12 tribes) and New (12 Apostles) Testaments. God's people share in His rule, even as we share in His purity (white robes) and His victory (gold crowns).

Verse 5: "lightnings, rumblings, Thunder" - God's power and authority depicted. "seven lamps. . . seven spirits" - The Holy Spirit. This is the same symbolic seven found in the 7 churches (chapter 2-3) 'and' - indicates the union of God through the Spirit with the Church, which is filled with the Spirit. There are symbols of the Spirit which includes 7 lamps.

Verse 6-8: "sea of glass" - from God's throne the future which to us is as dark and mysterious as the depths of the sea is crystal clear.

"Living creatures" - literally: living ones or living beings -- (Not "beasts"-KJV). Not explained in Revelation, by their activity and by the symbols they appear with (they aren't angels or the Church). They don't represent the four evangelists as traditional church art has it. Some say "they are living earthly instruments of God's providence, searching out (eyes) and speedily (wings) doing His will." God rules in all parts of the earth (4 is the number for the earth): lion=wild places, ox=cultivated places, human figure=cities and towns, eagle=air and sky.

"Day and night" - God's rule and will are ever being carried out.

"Holy, holy, holy" - A 3-part hymn of glory to the one true God, the Triune God. Note the 3-fold holy and three phrases which are each 3-fold in content. The Bible truth that the true God is Triune is one we do well to emphasize with its own Sunday - and by designating that portion of the church year in

which we especially consider the kingdom or rule of the true God as "Trinity". This is especially true today when anti-trinitarians cults (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc.) and non-Christian religions (Moslem, Judaism, Hinduism, etc.) are more active than ever.

Verse 9-10: Those who are agents of God's Word (elders) and those who are instruments of His providence (living ones) join together in giving glory, honor and thanks to the Lord, even as God's Word and God's providence themselves show forth God's glory.

"crowns before the throne" - illustrating the hymn they sing: All glory be to God alone.

Verse 11: "to receive" - here and in 5:12 is another way of saying, "You have these things (honor, glory, power, etc.) and that is as it should be, that is good and right."

"you created all things" - takes us back to Genesis 1:1 where the Lord our God revealed that all power, glory and honor is truly His.

Revelation 5:11-14 — In the vision of Revelation 5 Christ is presented as the Lamb slain and risen - and therefore the One having all power and authority (Matthew 28:18). He carried out the Father's great plan of redemption as our Substitute and Sacrifice. Now He lives and reigns to carry out God's plans for us in His exaltation. (c.p. Philippians 2:6-11; Ephesians 1:20-23)

Verse 11: "many angels" - The piling up (multiplying actually) of terms shows that angels in the vision were really beyond numbering.

Verse 12: "who was slain" - risen now, alive forevermore, but always the One who laid down His life and shed His blood for us.

"Power and wealth and wisdom and strength" - All belong to the Lamb triumphant. Think how He used each in His redeeming work - and continues to use them in bringing Christians to full possession of the results of His work of Redemption.

"honor and glory and praise" - These are rightfully due to the Lamb for ALL, whether beneficiaries - verse 13 - or bystanders - like the angels.

Verse 13: "every Creature" - The 4 areas indicated are not meant to serve as categories for a list of all creatures, but rather demonstrate that all of creation takes part in this doxology. All creation should praise the Lamb our Redeemer,

because of the future of this sin-blasted creation is tied to the final redemption of God's people. (c.p. Romans 8:19-21) Remember also the personifications of the Psalms 96:11-12; 98:7-8

"to the Lamb" - Jesus Christ. Equal praise is due to both (Father & Son, c.f. John 5:23).

"be praise" - This was the last word of the song of the angels (verse 12) and it now becomes the first word of adoration in the song of creation.

Verse 14: "Amen" Handel used the three doxologies of Revelation 5 to bring his oratorio "The Messiah" to its majestic climax, with the final "Amen" echoing and re-echoing the "Amen". John heard the conclusion of the hymn sung by all creation in the vision of Revelation 5.

MAIN POINTS:

- ✦ The true God rules over all of His creation.
-He is Triune: Creator—Redeemer—Sanctifier
- ✦ Praise belongs to God from all He has made and from all whom He has redeemed.
-ALL the glory belongs to the Lord our God.
-Equal praise belongs to the Father and the Son (Lamb).
- ✦ Grace and peace (the green rainbow) are ours as Christians because our Savior-God rules and reigns.

APPLICATION:

- ➔ What do you think of when you hear: "God is King of all."?
- ➔ How does it help us to think about God's rule when we are worried or afraid?
- ➔ How does this truth affect our attitudes toward the future, a nuclear holocaust, our own personal responsibilities (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 6:6-7)?
- ➔ How can we answer people who say: "If God is ruling how can this or that (evil) be allowed to happen?"
- ➔ How important is singing to worship?
- ➔ Why is it important to praise and worship God?
- ➔ How can we praise God? (start with singing and then help the children to discuss how all of life can be lived in thankful response to God's grace)

PASSAGES:

John 5:23; Romans 8:19-21; Philippians 2:6-11

HYMNS:

123 (verse 1-2); 238; 239; 242; 244; 246; 339; 341; 344; 367

THE COLOR GREEN:

Green for Pentecost Sundays/Trinity Sundays

The color green signifies growth and therefore also grace (see 4:3), since there is no Christian life apart from God's grace--and where there is grace there is growth.

During the Pentecost\Trinity Season we consider the Kingdom of God--that is, the rule of Christ our Lord, especially His rule in the hearts and lives of His people. This would include taking up what the Bible says about: How we become Christians, Christian living, the Christian Church, the Christian congregation, the Christian home and family; and, finally, how God brings us into His heavenly home (kingdom).