

The DAWN

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Overcoming the World

*“In the world
ye shall have
tribulation: but be
of good cheer;
I have overcome
the world.”
—John 16:33*

AS JESUS DREW NEAR TO the close of his ministry in the flesh, he was more than ever concerned for the welfare of his disciples. He knew that without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit they would

not be able to understand fully the meaning of the seemingly tragic events which were fast closing in around him. Yet he endeavored to prepare their minds and hearts as fully as possible, lest they be completely stumbled and thus not be ready to enter into the privileges of the Gospel Age which were to open beginning at Pentecost. Thus he ministered to them directly and prayed for them to this end.

The disciples had already learned that being a follower of the lowly Nazarene did not bring them the goodwill and approval of the world, particularly the religious world of that day. While there were times when the multitudes flocked around their beloved Master, too often the motive turned out to be the material benefit which they hoped to receive

from the miracles he performed, to “eat of the loaves” and to be “filled.” (John 6:26) Few were interested to the point of being willing to make sacrifices in order to be disciples of Jesus, and often there was outright opposition manifested toward him.

Before Jesus was crucified his disciples probably thought that in some way he would overcome this opposition and become the accepted leader and King of Israel, and ultimately of the whole world. Had not the prophet written concerning him, “Of the increase of his government and peace,” there would be no end? (Isa. 9:7) As yet they did not know that first it was necessary that he suffer and die for the world before the prophecies concerning his kingdom glory would be fulfilled. (Luke 24:26) It was their hope to share in the Master’s glory, which they believed was near.

Jesus did not withhold from his disciples the fact of his imminent death, but somehow they felt that what he had said in this regard must have another meaning. “My flesh ... I will give for the life of the world,” he had said. (John 6:51) He told them also that he must go to Jerusalem where he would suffer many things, and finally be killed. When hearing this, Peter said, “Be it far from thee, Lord,” indicating that he thought Jesus was wrong in estimating the strength of his enemies, or that he could be dissuaded from recklessly exposing himself to danger.—Matt. 16:21,22

Jesus, however, meant exactly what he said concerning his rapidly approaching death, even though the disciples could not bring themselves to believe that it would actually occur. Jesus knew that they were still viewing their privileges of discipleship

too largely from the standpoint of the material advantages of glory they hoped to attain from being associated with him. Indeed, they loved him, and they loved the Messianic cause of which they were convinced he was the divinely appointed leader, but they did not yet understand, as clearly as they would know later, that there was to be suffering and death associated with that cause, as well as glory and honor. The prophets had foretold the “sufferings of Christ” as well as the “glory that should follow,” but thus far they knew only of the promised glory, and in that glory they hoped to share.—I Pet. 1:10,11; Isa. 53:1-12

Jesus knew this, so in the closing days of his ministry he endeavored to prepare them for what he foresaw would yet be their experience. “If the world hate you,” he said, “ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: ... but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” “These things have I spoken unto you,” the Master continued, “that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”—John 15:18-20; 16:1,2

There would seem to be no way of misunderstanding the meaning of statements such as these, for they speak of impending calamity. In addition to telling his disciples that death might be their reward for following him, he also forewarned, “The hour ... is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every

man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” (John 16:32) Such statements as these, coming from a reliable source, would certainly be liable to engender fear and a fretful foreboding of future disaster. However, Jesus further explained, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”—vs. 33

Such words as the foregoing seem a strange way of cheering people and of quieting their hearts. It is well to note, though, that it was not so much the warning of coming trouble that was calculated to give the disciples peace and good cheer, but rather the fact that when it came, they would understand its meaning and realize that they were having the privilege of suffering with him. Jesus wanted them to know also that he overcame the world, and that they too would be given strength to overcome the world if they continued to be his disciples. With this assurance of victory, they could have “good cheer” despite the opposition of the world. Knowledge that they were suffering with their Master, while not lessening the pain, would give them courage to continue on.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

In the example set by Jesus’ own life and ministry, and through his teachings as well as the teachings of his apostles, it is clear that the Christian life is one of struggle against opposition. It is a warfare in which we are engaged in combat against formidable enemies, which most certainly would overpower us unless we were given divine strength to overcome

them. Satan, the devil, is the chief of our enemies, and his allies are the world and our own fallen flesh. (I Pet. 5:8) As New Creatures in Christ Jesus we find ourselves at enmity with all three of these, and this struggle will continue as long as we are in the flesh.

Descriptive of our efforts to subdue the flesh are such scriptural terms as “mortify” and “crucify.” (Col. 3:5; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14) Speaking of himself, the Apostle Paul wrote, “I discipline my body and keep it under control.” (I Cor. 9:27, *English Standard Version*) On the other hand, the term “overcome” is used in the New Testament to describe the Christian’s victory over Satan, and over the evil which is the foundation of the world of which he is the prince. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,” writes Paul. (Rom. 12:21) John speaks of overcoming “the wicked one.” (I John 2:13,14) He also writes that he who “is born [begotten] of God overcometh the world.”—I John 5:4

The Apostle John was greatly impressed with what the Master said about overcoming the world, for not only did he make a record of it in his Gospel, which Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not, but he enlarges upon this theme in his epistles. John also seemed to appreciate greatly the thought of divine love as it was manifested in the sending of Jesus to be man’s Redeemer. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” he records. (John 3:16) With reference to our privilege of joint-heirship with Jesus he writes, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”—I John 3:1-3

It will be helpful in considering the matter of overcoming the world, to remember that there have been two great principles operating in the earth since man's original sin. These are love and selfishness—or good and evil. It was probably the Apostle John's clear vision of divine love, and what it means to God's creatures, that helped him to discern the importance of the Master's statement concerning the matter of overcoming the world. To John, it meant that Jesus had been victorious over the evil, selfish spirit of the world.

The Creator, our Heavenly Father, is the author of love, and throughout the ages has been its sponsor. Satan is the sponsor of selfishness. These two principles have been at war with each other since the fall of man. True Christians, those whom God has called to serve him and who have been faithful to the terms of their calling, have been motivated solely by love. They have been "begotten of God,"—that is, by his Spirit. (I Pet. 1:3; I John 5:18) The remainder of mankind has, to a greater or lesser extent, gone through life with the principle of selfishness largely controlling them. Most assuredly, not all have been willfully wicked, unjust or unkind. Man was created in the image of God, and traces of this image still remain and manifest themselves in deeds of kindness on the part of many.

However much these are to be commended, it is not just kind deeds, nor acts of charity, which constitute overcoming the world and its spirit, as Jesus set us the example. Rather, it is a matter of a changed viewpoint on the objective of life, from the principle of living for self to the principle of living for God by devoting our lives to his service. Self-preservation,

it has been said, is nature's great law. This is undoubtedly true with respect to all the lower orders of God's creatures here on the earth, and properly so. It is only because of sin and the misrule of Satan, however, that it has been adopted by human beings as the dominating motive of life.

Self-interest has become so much a way of life in the world that it is considered normal and commendable. It is a principle which, to a large extent, rules the "present evil world," over which Satan is the "prince." (Gal. 1:4; John 12:31) This was also true during past ages, throughout the many centuries since man's fall from perfection. Some, instead of drifting with the waves of selfishness which have swept the majority of mankind along, have gone against the tide. They have devoted their lives unselfishly to causes which they hope might somehow better man's current state, or at least alleviate the sufferings of those who are unable to help themselves. These will have their reward in God's due time.

The only "cause" which actually will do away with selfishness and establish love throughout the whole earth as the motive of life is God's plan of redemption through Christ. The only ones, therefore, who can truly overcome the world at the present time, in the scriptural sense, are those who follow faithfully in his footsteps of sacrifice. Before Jesus' First Advent there were some who caught the spirit of the Messianic cause and gladly devoted their lives to it. Paul lists a number of these in Hebrews chapter 11. Moses was one of them. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer

affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”—Heb. 11:24-26

John wrote that the victory which overcomes the world is faith. (I John 5:4) On this basis, Moses was an overcomer. As the world views matters, it would have been much to Moses’ advantage to remain in Egypt and accept legal membership in Pharaoh’s family. From the standpoint of self-interest, he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by leaving and espousing the cause of his people. However, as the apostle explains, “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” (Heb. 11:27) Moses had faith in the promises of God and was confident that a course of life consistent with those promises would be to his best eternal interests, even though it meant the loss of nearly all earthly advantage.

JESUS, THE GREAT EXAMPLE

In Jesus we have our greatest and most comprehensive pattern of love as a way of life. He not only gave us an example, but enjoined love upon his followers, saying, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you.” (John 13:34) However, this viewpoint was neither understood nor appreciated by the people of Jesus’ day, and not until Pentecost did his own disciples grasp its real import. When the rich young ruler was told to sell all he had and give to the poor, he went away sorrowful. In following the law of

self-preservation he had accumulated those goods as a protection against the future, and he was not prepared to abandon the idea that someday he would need his wealth.—Matt. 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-23

Even the disciples were perplexed at this advice to the rich young man, which seemed to reflect so reckless an abandoning of all self-interest. Commenting on the incident, Jesus explained to his disciples that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Then they asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus did not answer this question directly, observing merely, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Peter, wishing to understand a philosophy so different from anything to which they were accustomed, asked, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”—Matt. 19:23-27

The import of Peter’s question is obvious. “We have forsaken all,” he said. In other words, he was reminding the Master that as his disciples they had complied with the conditions of discipleship he sought to impose upon the rich young ruler. Indeed, their “all” was probably not as much as the young man’s “all,” but the principle was the same. Having made this sacrifice, they naturally wanted to know what they could expect to get in return. This was the point of Peter’s question. It reveals that as yet he had not caught the true spirit of discipleship. To him it was still more or less of a business proposition, one which he hoped would net him greater returns, at least in honor and prestige, than his fishing business. Instead of being a humble fisherman, he had hopes of a prominent position in

Messiah's kingdom to be a ruler, prince, and great among men.

When Jesus announced to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem and that he expected to be arrested there and put to death, Peter admonished, "Be it far from thee, Lord," or, as *Young's Literal Translation* reads, "Be kind to thyself." (Matt. 16:22) Jesus' reply to this well-meant advice was to the point: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (vs. 23) Peter was attempting to persuade the Master that he should permit self-interest to influence him and not go to Jerusalem, where he knew his enemies had set a trap for his arrest. In doing this, Peter was unwittingly espousing the cause of Satan, who always encourages men to consider self first.

People of the world, over which Satan is the prince, naturally think of self first most of the time. It has become man's way of life since the days of Eden, but it is not God's way. Jesus was introducing a new pathway—that of self-less love. In God's world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," it is the only way which will be permitted to continue. (II Pet. 3:13) However, now it is the path merely of Jesus' disciples, introduced by him during his earthly ministry.

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16:24,25) Peter had advised Jesus to save his life, but Jesus here explained to Peter that those who endeavor to save their lives will lose them, whereas those who lose their lives in sacrifice will

save them. It is doubtful if the disciples understood the depth of this statement at that time, but it was simply one method by which Jesus explained the difference between the way of self-interest and the way of love—love that is manifested by a self-sacrificing interest on behalf of others.

Jesus was even then “losing his life” sacrificially for others—indeed, for the whole world of mankind. Later, to the women at his empty tomb, the instruction was given to go and tell the disciples that he had been raised from the dead, and in that commission special mention was made of Peter: “Go ... tell his disciples and Peter.” (Mark 16:7) Peter had probably comprehended but little when Jesus explained to him that those who lose their lives in the divinely-directed service of God would save them. However, now it would seem that Jesus, by calling special attention to the fact of his resurrection, was driving the lesson home to Peter’s mind and heart. No doubt, Jesus’ thought was, “Tell Peter that my life has been saved. He wanted me to save it by selfishly avoiding the privilege of sacrifice. Like men of the world, he considered it foolish that in an emergency I should think of anyone but myself. He thought I should protect myself, but when you tell him that I have been raised from the dead, he will realize that my life has been saved in God’s way, not by following the worldly principle of self first.”

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

Overcoming the world means that in living up to the terms of our consecration we stand against the principle of selfishness with which we are surrounded on every hand, and continue to lay down

our lives unselfishly in the service of God, the Truth and the brethren. As Christians, we have been called out of the world, and we are to remain separate from it, not permitting ourselves to be influenced by its self-interested viewpoint. It is not yet the due time for reforming the world nor for changing its general viewpoint of self first to that of self-sacrifice. Thus, the test upon us is to continue to be separate from the world while, by abandoning the self first viewpoint, we endeavor to lose our lives in the cause of divine love and service.

Overcoming the world has far more serious implications than merely to refrain from participating in some of its pleasures. Indeed, many of the world's pleasures are selfishly inspired, and hence should be shunned by those endeavoring to overcome the world. Let us not think, however, that we are faithful overcomers simply because we stay away from these things.

As followers of the Master we are being prepared to share with him in the rulership of God's new world, hence we are being trained in the principles of love. Under the influence of love we are losing our lives in sacrifice. This does not mean that we have no joy in life. In fact, if we are living up to our privileges, the joy of the Lord will be ours. If, on the other hand, we have not learned to appreciate the way of love and sacrifice sufficiently to find in it, and in the promises of God associated with it, a fully satisfying portion which more than compensates for all the trifling joys of this world, we should examine our hearts to find out what is wrong. If we have to go to the world to find pleasurable diversions while we lay down our lives

for God, we might seriously question whether or not we are as victorious as we should be along these lines.

The tribulation we have in the world which Jesus spoke of in our opening text, will be in proportion to the degree that our course in life runs counter to the spirit of the world. The world loves its own, Jesus explained. (John 15:19) If the world does not find anything in us, or in our way of life, that is contrary to its own, then we may well question the course we have been taking or the degree of our overcoming.

However, if we are overcoming the world, we are bound, at some point, and in some way, to feel its opposition because, “in the world ye shall have tribulation.” (John 16:33) Nevertheless, we can “be of good cheer,” not because we rejoice in trouble, but because of this evidence of divine approval. We can have joy because of our faith in God’s promises that although we are now losing our earthly lives, giving up everything which the world considers valuable, we are sure to attain life “more abundantly,” for by “patient continuance in well doing” we are seeking for “glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—John 10:10; Rom. 2:7

“FOLLOW ME”

The world of Jesus’ day turned against him, and finally put him to death. We should expect no better treatment today. As Jesus explained, the servant cannot expect to be above his Master. (John 15:20) The reason the world hated Jesus was that his way of life was contrary to theirs. By his example of sacrifice he condemned their way of selfishness, and

by his teachings he exposed their widely-held errors, while teaching unpopular truths himself.

Like his disciples, we hear the Master's call, "Follow me." (Matt. 4:19) To follow Jesus means far more than merely to admire him. To walk faithfully in his footsteps means that our experiences in the world will be similar to his. He has "overcome the world," however, and we likewise can do the same if, like him, we keep before us the great objective of the divine will and confidently rely on the Heavenly Father's promised grace to help in time of need.—Heb. 4:16

As we soon partake of the Memorial emblems this year, let us rejoice more than ever in what they mean as symbols of Jesus' death as man's Redeemer. Let us also remember that because of this great redemptive work we now have the privilege of dying with Jesus by laying down our lives in doing God's will. If we are faithful in this we will be true overcomers, and have fulfilled in ourselves the promise of the Master, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3:21 ■

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

Sister Martha Shahan, Fairmont, WV—January 23.

Age, 88

Brother Eugene Kalinski, Chicago, IL—February 3.

Age, 95

Brother Boone Mora, Skamokawa, WA—February 9.

Age, 87

Serve With Humility

Key Verse:
“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”
—*Luke 14:11, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Luke 14:7-14

JESUS SUPPLIES US, IN our Key Verse, with an overarching theme of Christian life. That essential theme is personal humility. If we pursue self-exaltation, we will assuredly be humbled at some point in time. If, on the other hand, we voluntarily humble ourselves, we will be exalted by our Heavenly Father. This is in harmony with the Divine principle, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” (Gal. 6:7-8, *NKJV*) Either we will savor the fruit of humility or despair the fruit of our pride.

Jesus’ primary audience for this lesson was a gathering of religious leaders at the home of a prominent Pharisee. These men loved “the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts.” (Mark 12:38-40) Our Lord framed the lesson on humility with a parable, based on a text from the Book of Proverbs. Surely these religious men were familiar with the words of the Old Testament, for they considered themselves stewards of God’s Word. The admonition was, “Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of the great; For it is better that he say to you, Come up here, Than that

you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.”—Prov. 25:6,7, *NKJV*

Would it not be very embarrassing to assume a seat of honor and then, in front of all, be sent down to a lowly seat? Let us be forewarned and avoid such presumptuous thinking. As the psalmist pleaded, “Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me.”—Ps. 19:12,13, *NKJV*

By virtue of our fallen natures, it is easy to presume honor is due us because of spiritual maturity or years of service in God’s cause. No! Humility must continually reign in our hearts. In the eternal scheme of things, those who are self-seeking, prideful, or boastful will find themselves humbled by God. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me.” (Matt. 7:21-23, *NKJV*) Let us always remember, “Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.”—Prov. 18:12, *NKJV*

Jesus’ lessons regarding the necessity of humility left a lasting impression on Apostle Peter’s heart. He passed this vital principle on to us in the closing lines of his first epistle. “All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (I Pet. 5:5-7, *NKJV*) Our humbling, under God’s supervision, is never to belittle us. It is always for our blessing and Christian growth, and shows God’s care for us. Thus may we cherish the privilege, benefit, and blessing of serving God with humility. ■

The Cost of Discipleship

Key Verse:
“Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

—Luke 14:27, New King James Version

Selected Scripture:
Luke 14:25-33

OUR KEY VERSE TELLS US

what the cost of discipleship is. In brief, it costs everything that we have. This thought may initially overwhelm the natural mind. However, the spiritually minded will understand. (I Cor. 2:12-16) In order to successfully follow Jesus requires taking up our own cross, and bearing it “daily.”—Luke 9:23

In the setting of our Selected Scripture, Jesus’ ministry was achieving evident success, and great multitudes followed him. It would appeal to naturally minded people that the Master preach a smooth and flattering message. Why offend any of the multitude and risk losing potential disciples? Jesus words must have been shocking: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26, *NKJV*) Here he was telling them about the cost of discipleship.

How is it possible that Jesus would preach hatred for parents, siblings, or children? The hatred that Jesus spoke of is not one of malice, avarice, or anger. Rather, it is a realization of the relative worth of the things most precious to us. In comparison to the gift of becoming God’s children, begotten of his Holy Spirit, all else pales in significance.

We acknowledge the precious value of earthly family, but death will eventually separate earthly ties. However, our adoption into God's family through Christ is eternal, and therefore priceless. All that we have in this world is nothing by comparison—all of its affections, friendships, honors, and wealth. "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."—Mark 8:36,35, *NKJV*

The Apostle Paul comprehended this principle. After rehearsing his impressive resume of achievements he concluded, "What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."—Phil. 3:7-11, *NKJV*

The "fellowship" of Christ's sufferings is attained through cross bearing. Such cross bearing, as stated in our Key Verse, does not mean that we should literally carry a large cross with us in the course of daily life. Cross bearing is the pain, fatigue, reproach, and humiliation associated with letting our light shine daily. Our Lord Jesus experienced these things acutely as he walked through Jerusalem's streets on his way to Golgotha. We must each bear the cross that our Heavenly Father has given us. This will cost us greatly of our time, energy, and earthly reputation. Jesus stated, "Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:33, *NKJV*) Hence, giving our little all to God for the sake of Christ is a very modest cost indeed for the inestimable worth of discipleship. ■

The Prodigal Son

Key Verses: *“The father said to his servants, Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”*
—*Luke 15:22-24,*
New King James Version

Selected Scripture:
Luke 15:11-24

no other parable so helpful in illuminating the love of God and his desire to accept them. They are encouraged by its representation of the Father as one who is not only willing to receive them, but watching and waiting for any sign of return, and then running out to meet the repentant one. Jesus said earlier, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than

OUR LESSON IS COMMONLY referred to as the parable of the prodigal son, because of the son’s reckless appetite for earthly pleasures and wasteful spending. With greater validity, however, it could be titled the parable of the merciful and loving father. Clearly the father in this story is meant to represent God, as the nature and depth of our Heavenly Father’s love and mercy are powerfully emphasized in the words Jesus spoke. Like a father, God both yearns and watches for repentant sinners to return to him. He is not a destroyer, but a savior.

Those desiring to repent of sinful ways and be received back into the family of God will find

over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”
—Luke 15:7, *NKJV*

This portrait of God contradicts the general perception of him. His character has been misrepresented by erroneous creeds, causing most people to fear him. Thus they expect no warm or loving reception from him. The fact that the father in this parable was watching and waiting for his wayward son, and even ran out to meet him, is a powerful testimony to the caring and loving nature of God. As the proper thought of God’s character reaches those who are spiritually poor and debased, they receive renewed hope of a full return to God and acceptance by him.

The prodigal son came to his senses. He awakened to a realization of his dire need and the fact that his father had abundant wealth. His father would likely be willing to let him have a share in the blessings which he no longer deserved, even if it was to live as a servant. His expression, “I will arise and go to my father,” represents what should be the attitude of all who repent. (vs. 18) Indeed, we all are to perceive our own neediness, and the abundant provision which God has made in Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. Being thus forgiven we are welcomed again to his love and care, and back into harmony with the one from whom all blessings flow.

The joy of sweet reconciliation with God is made clear in today’s lesson. We, as Christians, have been reconciled to God through Jesus, and now a ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to us. (II Cor. 5:18) “We are ambassadors, as God is exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.” (vs. 20, *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*) As God’s ambassadors, we are charged with preaching the word of reconciliation. “On behalf of Christ,” we beseech the sin-afflicted human family, the prodigals of the parable, to be reconciled to God. ■

The Son of Man Saves

Key Verse: “*The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*”
—*Luke 19:10, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Luke 19:1-10

OUR KEY VERSE SUMMA-
rizes why Jesus came to earth. His self-described mission statement is “to seek and to save that which was lost.” That remains his mission today, and we are vitally interested in its accomplishment.

The occasion in our Selected Scripture was that of Jesus visiting Jericho. Zacchaeus, a tax collector for the Romans, struggled to see the Master. His short stature frustrated his efforts, so he quickly climbed up a sycamore tree to get a better view, and there he waited. His efforts were greatly rewarded. “When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house. So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully.” (Luke 19:5,6, NKJV) The fellowship in the home of Zacchaeus that evening must have been marvelous! He became a follower of Jesus, and the memories of their evening together undoubtedly glowed in his heart for the remainder of his life.

In sharp contrast to Jesus’ welcoming attitude toward Zacchaeus, the religious leaders of the Jews scorned him. In their estimation he was a lost sinner, worthy of contempt, because he served as a tax collector for the Roman occupiers. Their negative reaction to Jesus going to Zacchaeus’ home may have been due to the subtle rebuke

implied in his choice. He preferred to lodge with an earnest-hearted sinner than a stony-hearted self-righteous host. We learn a valuable lesson from our Lord's example. It is a flaw, endemic to our fallen race, to look down on others not esteemed to be as sanctified as we think we are. Jesus, however, was following his Father's example, "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." —I Sam. 16:7, *NKJV*

Let us remember that we have nothing of which to boast. All that we have we have received from God, and we are wholly reliant on his grace toward us in Christ Jesus. (I Cor. 4:7; II Tim. 2:1) Thus we should never show disdain toward our fellow man. Rather, we are to manifest the same love, mercy and sympathy that Jesus exemplified in his treatment of Zacchaeus.

An impressive lesson of harsh judgment, in contrast with Jesus' love, is found in Luke's Gospel. As Jesus journeyed toward Jerusalem, he sent messengers ahead of him. "As they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." (Luke 9:51-56, *NKJV*) Let us likewise be ever mindful of our "manner of spirit"—that we are not here to "destroy men's lives," but to work with Jesus in saving them.

As Christ's representatives in the world today, we do well to refresh our minds with his mission statement daily upon awakening. We are to save men's lives, not destroy them, for the Son of Man came to "seek and to save that which was lost." ■

Follow Me

Key Verse: “*Then He said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*”
—*Matthew 4:19,*
New King James
Version

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 4:12-22

THE CALL TO GOD’S SERVICE in the preaching of the Gospel is timelessly grasped in our Key Verse, and all who recall the setting of our lesson admire the unhesitating response from the invitees. “They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” (Matt. 4:20, *NKJV*) Doubtless the words of Jesus were very persuasive to them, even as they

still persuade us two thousand years from the time they were spoken. The voice of Jesus has an unmistakable tone of authority and spirituality. We want to follow him, as sheep follow their shepherd. Jesus noted that when he calls to his own sheep, “the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”—John 10:4, *NKJV*

The disciples mentioned in our Selected Scripture had other cause to follow Jesus with such suddenness. Luke’s Gospel reveals that a miracle occurred at the time of the Master’s invitation. As he stood by the Sea of Galilee, called by Luke the “Lake of Gennesaret,” Jesus got into one of the empty boats along the shore, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to go out a short distance from land, and he taught the multitudes from the boat. When he finished speaking, Jesus said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. But Simon answered and said to Him, Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing;

nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.”—Luke 5:1-7, *NKJV*

When Simon Peter saw what had happened, the account continues, “he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord! For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men. So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”—vss. 8-11, *NKJV*

We, as followers of Jesus, take an important lesson from this event. The disciples were professional fishermen, and knew their trade well. They had fished all night, catching nothing, and now a stranger tells them to drop their nets. With perhaps a sigh and some reluctance, Peter obeyed. The resulting massive catch of fish led Peter to be overcome with emotion, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” However, the voice of the Master was reassuring, “Do not be afraid,” and Simon immediately followed him. We also may encounter circumstances in our lives that seem either overwhelming or futile. Nevertheless, we must obey the words of Jesus despite our thoughts to the contrary. He will see to it that the blessing is given as long as we follow him.

John the revelator provides an apt description of those who closely follow Jesus, “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” (Rev. 14:4) They do not seek an easier path or a shortcut in life. Wherever the Lamb goes, they closely follow. Let us listen daily to the Master as he says, “Follow Me.” ■

Death the Penalty—Not Torment

*“The Lord said,
Forasmuch as this
people draw near
me with their
mouth, and with
their lips do
honour me, but
have removed their
heart far from me,
and their fear
toward me is
taught by the
precept of men.”
—Isaiah 29:13*

ONE OF THE WIDESPREAD blights upon the religious thinking of the world is fear. Fear darkens the mind and hinders one from attaining a knowledge of the true God of love revealed to us in the Bible. Almost universally fear is employed by the proponents of religion as a means of making converts and as a motive for belief and righteous living. Our opening text emphasizes that this is wrong, that fear

toward God is induced by the precepts of men, and by those who, in their hearts, come far short of knowing the true God of the Bible, and of worshiping him in spirit and in truth.

One of the traditions of men which has contributed greatly to this unholy fear in the professed

Christian world is the false teaching that the divine penalty for sin is eternal torment. This tradition teaches that those who die without accepting Christ are doomed to this fate, where they will have to suffer throughout the endless ages of eternity. Thinking minds revolt at the very thought of this teaching, yet it is still believed by millions, and they insist that it is taught in the Bible. People who themselves are kind, sympathetic and forgiving, and who would give their lives to prevent their own children from being tortured, regardless of how wayward they might be, do not hesitate to teach that the God of all mercy and love will consign to torment billions of his creatures forever in the most excruciating fashion.

Most supporters of the eternal torment “precept” are sincere in their belief that it is taught in the Bible. Therefore, let us examine the Word of God in order to ascertain what its testimony really is concerning the divine penalty for sin. The proper place to begin this examination is in the Book of Genesis, with its record of the creation and fall of man. We can be assured that whatever God there stated to be the penalty for transgressing his law has never been changed, for he is the same yesterday, today and forever.—Num. 23:19; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17

The first mention we have in the Bible of punishment for sin is in Genesis 2:16,17. This passage reads, “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” *Young’s Literal Translation* reads, “dying thou dost die,” meaning

that if Adam disobeyed, the dying process would immediately begin, and he would finally succumb and return to the dust from which he was taken.

God explained very clearly what the penalty for sin would be, and there seems no good reason for misunderstanding his words. However, this is exactly what has happened, and various false teachings have resulted. Death, it is claimed, does not mean death as we know it, but eternal separation from God in a state of constant torment, often including the thought of literal fire and brimstone. By attaching these false meanings to the word death, the entire testimony of the Bible on this subject becomes confused and distorted.

For example, when a person is convinced that death means torment, Paul's statement in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death," means that "the wages of sin is torment." When the apostle added that "the gift of God is eternal life," it means that the gift of God is escape from eternal torment. According to this distorted viewpoint there is no actual death. All must live eternally regardless of belief or unbelief, the difference being that the believer lives in heaven and the unbeliever in a hell of torment.

ORIGIN OF ERROR

The question naturally arises as to how such a misconception of plain words came about. The origin of this false tradition was in the Garden of Eden. While God said plainly to father Adam, "Thou shalt surely die," the serpent, "which is the Devil, and Satan," later said to mother Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." (Rev. 20:2; Gen. 3:4) Here

was a denial of God's truth, a lie that has been responsible for many of the false teachings in the world from that day until now.

We are not told what Satan may have had in mind when he thus charged God with a falsehood. He may have imagined that he could thwart the divine purpose of inflicting the death penalty. If so, when he discovered that the human race was actually dying, he began his campaign of deception. This has seduced practically the whole world into believing that death is not what it really is, that actually there is no real cessation of life—"Ye shall not surely die."

Just as in ordinary human relations one lie leads to another, so it is in the realm of religion. Since it was claimed that death was not death, but merely the entrance into another state of eternal consciousness, a place of torment had to be conceived for the wicked. Thus the creed-makers allowed their imaginations to work very freely, deciding that God would surely want to eternally punish unbelievers.

We thank God, however, that this is not the teaching of the Bible. It is a "precept of men" by which those possessing zeal without knowledge have endeavored to frighten unbelievers into repentance. Indeed, the Scriptures do teach that there is a hell, but the hell of the Bible is not eternal torment, but the state of death. Hence, the united testimony of God's Word is that "the wages of sin is death."—Rom. 6:23

HELL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The original manuscripts of the Old Testament were written in the Hebrew language, and in them there is only one word which is translated "hell." It

is the Hebrew word *sheol*, which appears sixty-five times in the Old Testament, but it is not always translated “hell.” In the *King James Version*, it is rendered “grave” thirty-one times, and “pit” three times. In *Young’s Literal Translation*, *sheol* is left untranslated, always appearing in its Hebrew form.

How does the Bible define the Hebrew word *sheol*? Ecclesiastes 9:10 reads, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*], whither thou goest.” Here are the words of the wise man, Solomon, one who wrote under the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit, and he informs us that there is no work, knowledge nor wisdom in *sheol*. If language has any significance at all, this explanation means that *sheol*, the only “hell” of the Old Testament, is a state of complete unconsciousness.

The man Job evidently understood the matter in the same way. When he was suffering physical pain from head to foot, and being mentally tormented by his supposed comforters, who instead were accusing him falsely of gross sin, Job asked God to let him die and go to *sheol* where he could be at rest. Job said to God, “O that thou wouldest hide me in *sheol*, that thou wouldest keep me in secret, until thy wrath be past.”—Job 14:13

According to tradition, hell is a place where God visits his wrath upon sinners by means of cruel torment. Here in the Bible, however, we find a righteous servant of God asking that he be allowed to die and go to the Bible hell—*sheol*—in order to escape God’s wrath. How terribly the traditions

of men have distorted the truth of the Word of God.

The “wrath” of God mentioned here by Job is the penalty of death which rests upon the whole world of mankind. Incident to the carrying out of this penalty there is much suffering, and Job wanted to fall asleep in death until the time came in the plan of God when the penalty would be removed. He knew that in *sheol*, the Bible hell, there would be no pain.

The Hebrew word *sheol* is again used in Psalm 16:10. This is a prophecy of the death and resurrection of Jesus, in which we are assured that Jesus’ soul would not be left “in hell,”—*sheol*. On the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter quoted this prophecy, and in his quotation used the Greek word *hades* to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*. (Acts 2:25-28) From this we know that these two words have the same meaning.

Hades is the Greek word most frequently translated hell in the New Testament. It is used in Revelation 1:18, where Jesus informs us that he has “the keys of hell”—*hades*. It is also the Greek word used by Jesus when he spoke of “the gates of hell” which would not prevail against the church. (Matt. 16:18) *Hades* is used in Revelation 20:13, where we are informed that “hell” will give up its dead. In verse 14 of this same chapter we are assured that hell—*hades*—is to be destroyed, that it will be “cast into the lake of fire, ... the second death.” Tradition would have us believe that the lake of fire is hell, but according to this text, hell is destroyed in the “lake of fire,” fire being used here to symbolize destruction.

(Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) **THE RICH MAN IN HELL**

In Luke 16:19-31, we have Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which the Greek word *hades* is again used. We are told in the parable that the rich man died, and that in *hades* he lifted "up his eyes, being in torments." The advocates of the torment tradition have seized upon this to prove their point. They insist that this is not a parable, but a literal statement of facts. However, the only thing in the parable they actually believe literally is the word "torments."

The torment tradition is associated with the belief that the righteous go to heaven when they die and the wicked go to hell. However, upon examining the parable, it does not say that the rich man was wicked. No advocate of the torment belief concludes that a person will be tormented forever simply because he was rich when he died, yet the parable says nothing more about this rich man than that he "fared sumptuously every day" and allowed beggars to eat the crumbs which fell from his table.

Similarly, the parable does not teach that the righteous go to heaven when they die. The beggar is not said to be righteous. No advocate of the eternal torment tradition believes that being a beggar automatically qualifies one for an eternity of bliss in heaven.

The parable, in fact, does not say that the beggar went to heaven. Instead, it declares that he was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." We doubt if there has ever been an advocate of the torment theory who believed that at death a person is transported by angels into Abraham's bosom. Indeed, it could not be true, for Abraham's bosom decayed and returned to the dust thousands of years ago.

Additionally, no one has ever suggested that throughout the centuries there have been rich men in torment asking beggars in Abraham's bosom to send them a drop of water to cool their tongues. These details are not interpreted in a literal way by even the most ardent teachers of the torment theory. This parable is seized upon to teach this God-dishonoring tradition for the sole reason that it contains the word "torment." In order to make use of it in this way, it is taken completely out of its setting and given a meaning which Jesus never intended, nor taught.

We will not here discuss the meaning of all the details of this wonderful parable, referring the reader instead to our booklet, *The Truth About Hell*, a free copy of which will be sent to anyone who requests it. In brief, however, we understand that the rich man of this parable is symbolic of the Jewish nation, the riches of which consisted of the favors and blessings of God. The beggar, on the other hand, symbolized the Gentiles, who up until the time of Jesus did not enjoy the favor of God, although many were glad to partake of some of the "crumbs" of favor that fell from the rich man's "table."—Matt. 15:22-28

Shortly after Jesus uttered this parable, both of these symbolic men "died" to the position which they then occupied. Calamity came upon the Jewish polity, and the nation, as such, was destroyed. The position of the Gentiles also changed. No longer were the riches of God's favor withheld from them. Dying to this unfavorable situation, they were carried to Abraham's bosom. That is, they had the privilege by faith of becoming the children of Abraham, and of inheriting the promises which God made to him.—Acts 26:17,18; Gal. 3:13,14,28,29

With the change of Israel's status, these natural descendants of Abraham, formerly "rich," became a persecuted people. Throughout the centuries since, the fires of hatred and persecution have raged unrelentingly around them. While in *hades*, and therefore dead as a nation, as individuals they have suffered much, and time and again have appealed to the favored Gentiles for help, but mostly with little or no result.

This fire of persecution was foretold by God, through Moses, who said concerning the Israelites, "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy ... and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell [*sheol, hades*], and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischief upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction."—Deut. 32:20-24

It is clear that the "fire" referred to in this prophecy is symbolic, not literal, for the Lord said, "They shall be burnt with hunger." When Jesus spoke in the parable of the rich man in *hades*, it is quite possible that he had this very prophecy in mind—that the troubles coming upon Israel would burn unto the "lowest hell," completely destroying them as a nation. Within a few years after Jesus uttered this prophetic parable, destructive trouble did come upon the nation. Their city and Temple were destroyed, and the people scattered to the far

corners of the earth. While, as a nation, Israel was in the oblivion of *hades* for more than nineteen hundred years, as a people they have suffered many torments of oppression and persecution.

It is also interesting to note in this connection that Jesus said nothing in the parable about the *hades* condition continuing for eternity. The prophecies foretold, and we are now witnesses, to the fact that Israel has been reborn as a nation in her own land, in preparation for the forthcoming kingdom of Christ, through which they will be blessed.—Rom. 11:25-28

GEHENNA FIRE

In some instances the word hell in the New Testament is a translation of the Greek word *Gehenna*. *Gehenna* was a deep ravine outside the walls of ancient Jerusalem. In the Old Testament it is referred to as the “valley of Hinnom.” (Josh. 15:8; 18:16) The Jews used it as the location for the detestable practice of human sacrifice. (Jer. 32:35) When God put an end to these abominations during the reign of righteous King Josiah, it became an area where the refuse of the city and carcasses of dead animals were destroyed in a continuously burning fire.—II Kings 23:10,28

Jesus used *Gehenna* as a symbol of the utter and lasting destruction of the willfully wicked. It is this Greek word that is translated hell in Matthew 10:28, which reads, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*Gehenna*].” It is clear from this statement by Jesus that *Gehenna* symbolizes destruction, not torment. All agree to the reality of bodily death, and Jesus

speaks of the soul being killed, or destroyed, in the same manner.

The possibility of the soul, or being, living again after the body is destroyed is because there is to be a resurrection of the dead. Those who are to be awakened from death are spoken of in the Bible as merely being asleep. (John 11:11-14; Acts 7:59,60) In the coming kingdom, however, those who willfully oppose God and righteousness will be destroyed in the “second death,” represented by Jesus as the destruction of *Gehenna*—not only of the body, but of the very being, or soul.—Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8

The Greek word *Gehenna* is also used in Mark 9:47,48. This passage reads, “If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell [*Gehenna*] ... Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” In searching the Scriptures for some proof of the torment precept, this statement has been seized upon, even though no mention of torment is made in these verses.

Here the proof given is Jesus’ reference to worms which do not die, and to unquenchable fire. The “worms,” it is claimed, are in reality the souls of the wicked, forgetting that in Matthew 10:28, as previously noted, Jesus states specifically that souls which are cast into *Gehenna* are killed, or destroyed. They do not remain alive.

If it were not for the torment dogma, which darkens the mind and distorts reason, no one would for a moment think that Jesus is teaching here that the wicked will physically suffer in *Gehenna* forever. As elsewhere, he is using *Gehenna* as a symbol of destruction, the worms being a reference to the

natural process by which dead carcasses are consumed. Worms, maggots, and similar creatures are ever present when decaying flesh is exposed to the elements.

Any fire that completely destroys that which it consumes is unquenchable. For example, when a building is burning and the fire cannot be extinguished, we could properly speak of it as an unquenchable fire. However, this “unquenchable fire” dies out and ceases to be when there is nothing more to consume. Thus we should not misuse expressions of this sort to prove that God will mercilessly torment sinners forever.

“THE GIFT OF GOD”

As we have seen, Paul wrote that “the wages of sin is death,” not torment. To this he added, “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) Life and death are the two alternatives presented to us in the Word of God, not bliss in heaven or torment in hell. God warned Adam that death would be the penalty for disobedience, so when he disobeyed, he was sentenced to die. This plunged the whole race into death, because all have been born in a dying condition. “By man came death, ... in Adam all die,” wrote Paul.—I Cor. 15:21,22

The receiving of life through Christ will be by means of a “resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:15) Consecrated believers in this age are reckoned “just” by faith, and it is in the “first resurrection” that they will be rewarded with actual life—immortality for those who prove to be faithful followers of the Master. These will live and reign with Christ and, during the thousand years of his kingdom, will be associated with him in dispensing

the blessings of life to “all families of the earth.”—Rev. 20:6; Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:29

The general resurrection of all the dead—“unjust” in Adam—is described in Revelation 20:13 as a deliverance from hell, or *hades*. When Jesus died as the world’s Redeemer he purchased, as it were, the “keys of hell,” and he will use these keys to set death’s captives free. After his resurrection Jesus said, “I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”—Rev. 1:18; Isa. 61:1

Presently, all of earth’s billions, under Adamic condemnation, are either dead or dying. These can be blessed with life only by being raised from the dead. Jesus assured us that this would be accomplished, that the “gates of hell” would not forever hold death’s prisoners, that he, who has the “keys,” together with his true followers, will throw open the “gates.” It will be then that hell will give up its dead.

This does not mean that all mankind is assured of enjoying everlasting life. It means only that all will be released from the sentence of death that was entered against Adam and his children. Released from this, they will be given an opportunity as individuals, under favorable and righteous conditions, to obey God’s law and live forever. Those, few in number we believe, who willfully choose not to obey will be destroyed from among the people. (Acts 3:23) The vast majority, however, will gladly obey, and thus hear the words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34) Then all the “precepts” and traditions of men which have engendered fear will be forever overthrown. ■

Character Lessons from the Book of Ruth

*“All scripture
is given by
inspiration of God,
and is profitable
for doctrine, for
reproof, for
correction, for
instruction in
righteousness:
That the man of
God may be perfect,
thoroughly
furnished unto all
good works.”
—II Timothy
3:16,17*

THE OLD TESTAMENT

narrative in the Book of Ruth provides historical insights into the habits of the Israelites, who generally had an agricultural economy and whose experiences were especially supervised by the Heavenly Father. These included special blessings to the nation for faithfulness to God, but also chastisements for disobedience. “Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of

Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”—Amos 3:1,2

Ruth is one of only two books in the Bible named after women, the other one being Esther. In Hebrews chapter 11 are recorded the names of many individuals who lived before Christ's earthly ministry, whose fidelity to God was noteworthy. However, only two women, Sarah and Rahab, are specifically cited in this listing. Nevertheless, there were additional heroines whose actions demonstrated faith in God, such as Jochebed, who along with her husband hid Moses after his birth. (Exod. 2:1-3; 6:20; Heb. 11:23) There also were many other faithful unnamed women of whom it is written, "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."—Heb. 11:35

JOURNEYING TO MOAB

The Book of Ruth begins, "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband."—Ruth 1:1-5

One suggested lesson for us based upon the foregoing narrative is that Elimelech's departure from Bethlehem demonstrated his lack of faith in God to provide for his needs during the famine, even though other Israelites remained in the land during this difficult time. We are reminded that for ourselves, faith will manifest itself in the demonstration of love and obedience towards God. This thought is confirmed elsewhere in the Bible, where we read the following about true faith: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born [begotten] of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:3,4) Presently, many of the Lord's people in various parts of the world live under difficult economic circumstances. While Christians need to provide for their families, they should be very wary of moving away into a godless environment, such as Elimelech did by moving to Moab. We need to have faith that our bread and water are sure even if circumstances may seem to impact our temporal well-being, and we should remain close to other believers for needed fellowship.—Isa. 33:16; Heb. 10:24,25

A TIME FOR DECISION MAKING

After the death of her sons as well as her husband, Naomi learned that the famine in Bethlehem had ended, and she made plans to return to Judah. She also advised her daughters-in-law that the wisest course for them would be to remain in Moab and remarry. This surely must have been an emotional occasion as the three of them wept together. They

had developed a close relationship, and both Ruth and Orpah had a deep bond with their mother-in-law. Nevertheless, Naomi, who had determined she would return to Bethlehem, pleaded with them to follow her advice and stay in Moab, because she was very concerned for their welfare.—Ruth 1:6-15

In our own lives, there are many situations where our virtue or courage may be tested. For example, in our personal associations, are we able to separate ourselves from others when we believe it is God's will for us to move in a different direction? It should be our desire to fulfill in our hearts the spirit of love and righteousness and to consider what actions would be most pleasing to God. We have liberty in Christ, but that does not mean we are free to do as we please without possible repercussions. It is essential that we seek scriptural guidelines to determine if what we wish to do is merely gratifying our flesh or not. The Apostle Paul wrote: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (I Cor. 10:31) It takes courage to apply a passage such as this to our life's activities, especially when our flesh might desire to take a different course. Orpah, although she was attached to Naomi and loved her greatly, desired to have security in her life. She felt the cost of journeying with her mother-in-law to a new land would not be in her best interest. Accordingly, she kissed Naomi and remained in Moab.

Ruth's expressed desire after Orpah's departure reflects her devotion to the Heavenly Father. "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be

my people, and thy God, my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.” (Ruth 1:16,17) During the years they knew each other in Moab, Ruth undoubtedly observed Naomi’s faith in Jehovah and his promises to Israel, probably both by word and example. Ruth was a Moabite, but when she said that Naomi’s God would be her God and that she was willing to die where Naomi would die, she must have had some knowledge of the divine purposes concerning Israel. As a result, she was willing to commit herself to being associated with God’s specially chosen people for the rest of her life.

As consecrated Christians today, do we have a deep understanding of and appreciation for God’s plan and his kingdom that will bless all the families of the earth? Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, are we committed to the doing of his will at any cost? If that is true of us, then we should have no hesitation in pressing down upon “the mark for the prize of the high calling.” (Phil. 3:13,14) Let us realize, however, that such a commitment on our part requires constant diligence in studying God’s Word, and seeking the edification which comes from fellowship with others who likewise have assurance of God’s character and his eternal purpose for the church and the world.

ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM

“Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and

glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.”
—Ruth 2:1,2

Here we note the introduction of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi’s husband who remained in Bethlehem while Elimelech took his family into Moab. The Mosaic Law indicated that farmers should not fully harvest their fields, but they were to leave some grain behind so the poor and needy could glean in order to obtain food. (Lev. 19:9,10) Ruth took advantage of this provision and entered a portion of the field owned by Boaz in order to gather barley for Naomi and herself. When Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he inquired who Ruth was, and was told she was Naomi’s daughter-in-law.—Ruth 2:3-6

Boaz introduced himself to Ruth, and spoke these words to her: “Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.” (vss. 8,9) Ruth thanked Boaz for his kindness. He was so impressed with her devotion to Naomi that he invited Ruth to eat with his workers and also directed them to leave some extra grain in the fields for her to glean.—vss. 10-16

A LESSON IN DILIGENCE

Ruth demonstrated patience and diligence, in that being young and energetic, she was content to engage in gleaning in the harvest fields to secure handfuls of grain that were left by those who were

reaping. Daily she cheerfully labored, providing food for herself and her mother-in-law, Naomi, with no obvious indication that her future prospects were going to change into something more favorable.

For the consecrated, especially those who are young, employed in terms of day to day activities and the need to make a living, often under stressful and difficult circumstances, Ruth's example suggests some practical advice. Do not be overly concerned that you do not have an abundance. The Heavenly Father has promised to supply all our needs, although we are expected to be diligent in securing them to the best of our ability, and also to distinguish needs from wants. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-withal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matt.6:31,32, *Revised Version*) Let us focus instead upon the eternal riches of God, as opposed to the temporal good things of this world, considering the example of those, such as Moses and others, who have so walked. (Heb. 11:24-27) We are stewards of all that the Lord has provided for us. Let us be content, although not idle, concerning the business of this world, not becoming filled with anxiety. Most importantly, let us be especially diligent in doing the Heavenly Father's business, remembering that he who called us will never forsake us if we do not forsake his ways.—Heb. 13:5

RENDERING PRAISE FOR GOD'S GOODNESS

As the narrative records, Ruth had gathered a large amount of barley. She brought it home to

Naomi, who thankfully gave praise to God for his goodness. "Her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead."—Ruth 2:19,20

Christian believers also should reflect upon divine goodness. One aspect of this trait is that which evokes praise and gratitude for God's blessings. "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed." (Ps. 65:1) This verse should be filled with meaning for us, as it refers to the praise rendered now by those having made a vow of consecration to the Lord, and to the future prospect, if faithful, of praising God as divine beings, "in Sion." Many such promises are set forth in the Scriptures for the body of Christ who prove faithful unto death in following our Master's example. (Rom. 2:7; II Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:21) What a glorious hope is ours, for if faithful in obtaining the high reward of immortality, we shall have the capacity for rendering perpetual adoration to the Creator of the universe in a manner far beyond our present abilities.

THOUGHTFUL COUNSEL

Naomi was ever mindful of Ruth's personal, loving commitment to her. She also desired that her daughter-in-law should enjoy security and companionship. Thus, Naomi began to counsel Ruth as to

how she might develop a relationship with Boaz towards such a goal. “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.”—Ruth 3:1-4, *English Standard Version*

Lest it be concluded that Naomi was proposing something immoral to her daughter-in-law, nothing in the narrative implies such a suggestion. It should be remembered that it was a result of Naomi’s being a living witness to godly principles that inspired Ruth to forsake Moab’s idolatrous environment and devote her life to following the God of Israel. Through her consistent example, as well as her knowledge of Boaz’ noble character, Naomi’s advice to Ruth reminds us of the following Scripture: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”—Eph. 4:29

As a consideration for believers today, we may at times need to rely upon the counsel of others who have demonstrated spiritual maturity as to the proper course to take in dealing with issues that impact our lives. Elders in the church can provide guidance as to how we can make sound decisions that would prove pleasing to God. This is an important reason that brethren are admonished to

follow closely Scriptural guidelines when electing such servants.—I Tim. 3:1-7

BASIS FOR MAKING JUDGMENTS

Ruth followed Naomi's counsel and went to the threshing floor in the evening. "When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. Who are you? he asked. I am your servant Ruth, she said. Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer. The Lord bless you, my daughter, he replied. This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."—Ruth 3:7-13, *New International Version*

In the foregoing interaction, Ruth identified herself and made a simple request. In humility she presented herself as Boaz' servant and desired that he take her as his wife. Boaz' response seems to reflect the terminology used by the Heavenly Father concerning his relationship to Israel. "I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your

nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.” (Ezek. 16:8, *NIV*) As the deceased father-in-law of Ruth, Elimelech had the right to have his family name carried on, and according to the Law, Boaz had a responsibility to marry Ruth and provide children to continue the family line. Boaz apparently was much older than Ruth and perhaps at first did not envision the possibility of marriage with her. Additionally, another positive aspect of Ruth’s character was emphasized in that she based her attraction to Boaz more on respect than on physical appearance, as is often the case.

Here again we may take lessons for application in our Christian walk. Ruth’s attitude toward Boaz calls to mind events a few generations later, when God’s choice of David to be the successor to King Saul was not made based upon outward appearances. (I Sam.16:7) Thus, we also should expect that the selection of the members of the body of Christ would be based upon inner heart qualities.—I Cor. 1:26-28

A wise and faithful servant of God made the following observation in this connection. “Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of his brethren, and when the suggestion was made that he should be the Lord’s anointed, his people hid, as it were, their faces from him—disdained him, despised him, and considered him hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious,—‘as a root out of dry ground.’ The same has been true respecting the members of his body, the true elect church; they also have been despised and rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we are counted fools all the day long

for Christ's sake. (I Cor. 4:13) Again he declares that 'not many great, not many wise, not many learned, hath God chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom.' And this principle of the divine selection of things that are not [esteemed amongst men], to bring to naught the things that are [esteemed by men], is noticeable all throughout this Gospel age."—Reprints, page 3226

THE NEARER KINSMAN

On the morning following Boaz' conversation with Ruth, he began to fulfill his promise to her. "Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it."—Ruth 4:1-4

Although the nearer kinsman was willing to purchase Naomi's land, Boaz added the stipulation that he also would be required to marry Ruth. (Deut. 25:5) However, the nearer kinsman was unwilling to do this. He may have had sons entitled to receive their inheritance of his present property, and should

he and Ruth have children in the future, it might cause complications regarding who should receive various portions of his estate. (Ruth 4:5,6) Thus, in view of this kinsman's relinquishing any claim to redeem the land as well as marry Ruth, Boaz was now able to take Ruth to be his wife.—vss. 7-14

As a final admonition for us as believers we might consider the element of patience which was required by Boaz to have Ruth become his wife. At no stage of our Christian career do we want to spend too much time thinking or imagining things that could make us weary in well doing or impatient with our present state. The Bible is a textbook, and in it is godly counsel that we need to continually apply in our lives. In addition to prayers, meditation, study and fellowshiping with our brethren, we should wait upon the Lord for direction in our lives so that we can take appropriate action towards realizing our heart's desire relative to God's kingdom which will bless the human family.—Ps. 27:14; 130:5

If we continue to feed upon the precious promises of Scripture, it will help to negate feelings of weariness, impatience or even doubts concerning our continued earthly sojourn. The Apostle Paul knew the brethren would experience these things and recorded the following admonition. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—Heb. 10:35,36

May the character lessons found in this Old Testament narrative involving Naomi, Ruth and Boaz help to inspire us to greater faithfulness in our walk towards becoming a part of the bride of Christ. ■

Hidden in the Day of the Lord

*“Seek ye the LORD,
all ye meek of the
earth, which have
wrought his
judgment; seek
righteousness, seek
meekness: it may
be ye shall be hid
in the day of the
LORD’s anger.”*
—Zephaniah 2:3

THE SCRIPTURES INDICATE that the present “time of trouble” and “great tribulation,” affecting all aspects of the world in which we live, are accomplishing a great cleansing work in the earth. (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21) Jesus prophesied concerning the destruction of this present order: “Except those days [of trouble] should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved,” but then assures, “those days shall be shortened.” (Matt. 24:22) The words of our opening text further indicate that some will be “hid” during the time of this severe trouble.

The foregoing testimony of the Scriptures intimates that all flesh will not die in the destruction associated with this great time of trouble. Some will be permitted to pass over into the new dispensation of Messiah’s kingdom. This will be the glad day when the curse of death is to be lifted, and the

blessings of everlasting life offered to all the willing and obedient of mankind.

The question may arise with some as to whether it is necessary that every member of the human family physically die before experiencing the power and blessings of Christ's kingdom. We answer that, as concerns the world of mankind, it is not necessary that they should all go first into the tomb before participating in the "resurrection" work of the next age.

From God's standpoint, mankind has been reckoned as dead ever since the condemnation came upon Adam because of disobedience. The Bible speaks of all people as "prisoners," shackled, in a sense, with mental, physical and moral weakness. There are different wards in this prison condition, but those whom men call alive, God says are "appointed to death," being dead in trespasses and sins, and under divine sentence. (Ps. 102:20; Eph. 2:1) These are, so to speak, still walking in the prison yard and have not yet been shut up in their cells—the tomb. Yet they are in prison, and none of them can escape.

If the order for release of all inmates were sent to a prison-keeper, we would understand it to apply not only to those who were locked up in their cells, but to all who were in any sense of the word incarcerated within the prison walls. Thus it is with death, the great jailer. It has committed billions of the race to the tomb, and other billions are still at partial liberty in the prison yard, but firmly and securely kept and doing service with groaning and travailing, waiting for their deliverance.—Isa. 42:7; 49:9

In order for the opening of this prison to occur, Jesus, the great restorer and life giver, is represented

as having two keys to unlock “Death and *Hades*.” (Rev. 1:18, *English Standard Version*) It would seem that the key of Death will be used first—divine power being exercised upon those who will survive the great tribulation, though still under the sentence of death. Second, the key of “*Hades*” [“Grave:” *Thayer’s Greek Definitions*] will come into operation—a symbol of Messiah’s power and authority to unlock the prison house of the tomb, and set at liberty all of its captives.—Isa. 61:1

The Scriptures assure us that some will be carried through the symbolic “fire” of trouble, and to these God will turn a “pure language,” the pure message of the Gospel—“good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” (Zeph. 3:8,9; Luke 2:10) However, this blessing of being among those “hid in the day of the LORD’s anger” is conditional. Our text refers to those who are looking to the Lord—who “seek righteousness” and “seek meekness.” The word “seek” in this verse has the meaning both “to search out” as well as “to strive after.”

There have been many among mankind throughout the ages who have made some progress toward God and righteousness, even as there are today. All of these will be better off when the Messianic kingdom is established. They will be glad to give their hearts to the Lord and make rapid progress over the “highway” that leads to holiness, to God, and to perfect life.—Isa. 35:8-10 ■

We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”
Hebrews 3:14

General Convention Bulletin

July 20-25, 2019—Moscow, Idaho

NOTE NEW LOCATION

THE 2019 GENERAL CONVENTION is only a few months away. Now is the time to make your plans to attend this annual gathering of the Lord's people. This year's convention will be held at a new venue, on the campus of the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho.

Adjoining rooms with a bathroom in between are available in the Wallace Residence Center, which also houses The HUB, where all meals will be served. Rooms in Wallace can be reserved by singles, couples or families. Apartment-style housing is available in the Living-Learning Community, located a short walking distance from Wallace and The HUB meal facility. Each apartment contains multiple bedrooms, a single bathroom, and a small living and kitchen area.

All room and meal costs for children 12 or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the room and meal cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid at the door.

Shuttle arrangements to and from the Spokane, WA and local Pullman-Moscow airports are currently being worked out. Details, including costs, will be made available once these arrangements are finalized.

There will be special programs at the convention for young people of all ages. Six different groups,

beginning at age 3 up to age 25, will have daily studies, fellowship, recreation and other activities designed especially for them.

A pricing table and registration form, including contact information for questions you may have, is provided following this announcement. For more information about this year's facilities, please visit the convention website at: **biblestudentsgeneralconv.org**. We encourage you to register early, and make plans now to attend this year's General Convention. ■

	Ages	18 & up	**13-17
Breakfast		\$7.00	\$6.00
Lunch		8.00	7.00
Dinner		11.00	10.00
Total, three meals		\$26.00	\$23.00
Lodging (per night)			
single occ (Wallace or Apts)		\$44.00	\$39.00
dbl occ - bunk style (Wallace)		\$40.00	\$35.00
dbl occ - bunk style (Apts)		\$41.00	\$36.00
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
single occ (Wallace or Apts)		\$372*	\$337*
dbl occ - bunk style (Wallace)		\$352*	\$317*
dbl occ - bunk style (Apts)		\$357*	\$322*

*If no breakfasts, deduct—\$35.

**100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group.

NOTES: For adults, a charge of \$15 per person, regardless of length of stay will be added to your invoice if you are staying on campus, to cover charges from the university for linens. A Convention Fee of \$10 per person, regardless of age, length of stay, lodging or meal arrangements replaces the \$5 Facilities Charge from previous conventions, and will be added to your invoice to help offset convention expenses unrelated to lodging and meals.

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 19, 2019				
Saturday, 20th				
Sunday, 21st				
Monday, 22nd				
Tuesday, 23rd				
Wednesday, 24th				
Thursday, 25th				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals <input type="checkbox"/> or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) <input type="checkbox"/>				
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath <input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy or <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> *Wallace or <input type="checkbox"/> Apartments				
<small>*Wallace Residence Hall also includes The HUB-dining center on the first floor.</small>				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

M. Colletti		B. Keith	
New Orleans, LA	March 9,10	Orlando, FL	March 2-4
M. Davis		B. Montague	
Orlando, FL	March 2-4	Orlando, FL	March 2-4
W. Dutka		P. Mora	
New Orleans, LA	March 9,10	Orlando, FL	March 2-4
K. Humphreys		J. Parkinson	
New Orleans, LA	March 9,10	Orlando, FL	March 2-4
S. Jeuck		D. Rice	
Atlanta, GA	March 17	Orlando, FL	March 2-4

*In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body,
whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free;
and were all made to drink of one Spirit.”
—I Corinthians 12:13*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 7—“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”—I John 4:12 (Z. '03-56,57 Hymn 312A)

MARCH 14—“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”—Proverbs 16:32 (Z. '96-279 Hymn 95)

MARCH 21—“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”—Matthew 5:44 (Z. '91-141 Hymn 145)

MARCH 28—“Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”—II Timothy 2:3 (Z. '03-84 Hymn 13)

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 2-4—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822. Contact hotel for room reservations. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify “Orlando Bible Students” to receive special rate of \$131.00. Online booking code: SBO. For other information, contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

SYDNEY AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, March 8-10—Contact R. Tazzyman. Email: rtazzyman@dodo.com

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 9,10—Holiday Inn Gulfport/Airport, 9515 Highway 49, Gulfport, MS 39503. Room price, \$99.00/night, available until February 9. Hotel Phone: (228) 679-1700. Other information, contact M. Costelli. Phone: (228)861-2822 or Email: michael@simpkins-costelli.com

HIGHLAND PARK CONVENTION, April 6—Double Tree by Hilton, 789 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. Contact S. Koterba. Email: sandykoterba@gmail.com

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 13,14—Quality Inn Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 19-21—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

AGWA, NIGERIA CONVENTION, April 20—Agwa Ecclesia place of fellowship. Contact V. Ekeh. Phone: +2348080205812 or Email: abiblestudecc@yahoo.com

HARTFORD CONVENTION, May 5—**New Location**—Mandell Jewish Community Center, 335 Bloomfield

Avenue, West Hartford, CT. Contact J. Slivinsky. Phone: (860) 289-0116 or Email: djslivinsky@sbcglobal.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 5—Sewickley Grange Hall, West Newton, PA. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 25,26—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Accommodations and information, contact N. Nekora at npnokora@aol.com or T. Parkinson at ti77park@gmail.com. Cutoff date for securing rooms at the subsidized rate is April 15.

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 2—Falls Township Senior Center, 282 Trenton Road, Fairless Hills, PA. Contact R. Griehs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriehs@gmail.com

VANCOUVER CONVENTION, June 8,9—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Centre, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC, Canada. Contact B. Smith. Phone: (604) 576-6070 or Email: bas@telus.net

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 20-25—**New Location**—University of Idaho, 709 Deakin Avenue, Moscow, ID 83843. For information, go to the General Convention website: BibleStudentsGeneralConv.org. For registration, see pp. 59-61 this issue.

2019 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Thursday, April 18, 2019.

A complete Memorial Service is available for any who wish to have it. CD or DVD versions can be purchased for \$6.00. Please send your request to:

Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Please place your order by April 3, if possible.