

# The DAWN

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# Will “New” Socialism Work?

*“He shall judge thy  
people with  
righteousness, and  
thy poor with  
judgment. He shall  
judge the poor of  
the people, he shall  
save the children of  
the needy, and shall  
break in pieces the  
oppressor.”  
—Psalm 72:2,4*

**ONE OF THE WAVES OF** political thinking gaining more traction in the United States is that which is described as “democratic socialism.” Briefly, democratic socialism is a philosophy that advocates democracy alongside some form of planned socialist economy. It further claims that capitalism alone

is inherently incompatible with democratic values of liberty and equality. Adherents of democratic socialism support reformist politics as well as the use of the many news and social media outlets available as methods of promoting their ideas to the general public. While it is true that many social programs exist in this country today which were formed decades ago, the push by numerous political voices toward a much greater socialistic agenda is quite recent.

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is the largest socialist organization in the United States

today. Although it has been around since 1982, it has been mostly on the fringes of the political spectrum until recently. Since the end of 2017, however, its membership has nearly doubled, and its number of local chapters has more than quadrupled. The DSA has also become much younger. In December 2017 the median age of its members was 33, compared to 68 in 2013, just four years earlier.

In 2017, fifteen candidates in thirteen states were elected to office who were members of the DSA. In the November 2018 mid-term elections, two DSA members, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. In February of this year, Representative Ocasio-Cortez co-sponsored a congressional resolution promoting what is called the “Green New Deal,” a series of far-reaching government programs being proposed which aim to address economic inequality and climate change.

## **MAN’S LONG PURSUIT**

The chronicle of civilization is the story of man’s perennial struggle for life, freedom, plenty, and happiness, and the myriad ways in which he has sought to gain this elusive end. From the time of his fall from God’s favor in Eden, he has tried one arrangement after another in his attempt to find the one that would truly and completely satisfy his soul’s desires and rid the world of the bane of war, hunger and want, sickness and disease, envy and injustice.

Though socialism as generally known today has a relatively brief history, efforts at mutual assistance among individuals for the purpose of gaining security

and the necessities of life has been around for thousands of years, identified primarily through the family arrangement. In addition to the fact that this was ordained by God, it would seem to be a normal development. Surely, it would be thought, the natural love and ties between the various members of a family could be counted on to insure fair dealing and the promotion of their joint interests. Sadly, however, this arrangement often fell short of its intended purpose.

We recall, for example, that Jacob agreed to work for Laban, his uncle and prospective father-in-law, for seven years to gain the lovely Rachel for his wife. However, at the end of that time Laban tricked Jacob into accepting Leah, the elder sister, as his wife. Jacob was then required to labor another seven years to pay for his beloved Rachel. He also complained that Laban had changed his wages ten times during the twenty years he had worked for him.—Gen. 29:16-28; 31:4-7

Beginning with the sad account of the slaying of Abel by his own brother Cain, we find history replete with accounts of jealousies, struggles, rivalries, and even murders within families, in the pursuit of life's necessities, power, position, or, paradoxically, peace. In the ages-long struggle for land, life, or liberty, blood ties have often proved to be very frail. Indeed, we are daily reminded that one of the bitterest and most hate-filled struggles between peoples the world has ever witnessed is presently going on between the nation of Israel and her Arab neighbors. Yet, all of them are descendants of a common and highly revered ancestor, Abraham.

As time moved on and world population increased, families grew into tribes, and tribes into nations. The strongest, most ruthless, or most intelligent among them became the rulers, whether of tiny feudal states or of mighty kingdoms. Throughout the centuries, regardless of whatever arrangement or form of rule was accepted by, or imposed upon, the people, there was always that unfortunate and troublesome gap between the position of the affluent and powerful few on the one hand and the poorer and mostly defenseless masses on the other. For the latter, in varying degrees, there was always more or less of hunger, misery, disease, and suffering. To these, security, health, and prosperity never came to pass, and was merely a distant dream.

Thus, for century after long century things have gone along ever since man was placed on planet Earth. Sometimes conditions were better, sometimes worse, but for most of mankind there was little hope or expectation of material improvement.

## **THE “TIME OF THE END”**

With the approach of the biblical “time of the end,” two new factors appeared on the world scene. (Dan. 12:4,9) One was the industrial revolution, which began to steer the population away from rural areas into the urban centers, under the lure of better wages and steadier employment. However, too often the reality did not match, or even approach, the promise. Having given up the relative security of the agrarian way of life, many found themselves working long hours in hard labor for low wages, endeavoring to keep their families alive while often subsisting in poverty.

The other factor that arrived along with the movement toward an industrial society was the general increase of knowledge, which simultaneously brought to the masses an awareness of their lowly condition along with a hope of escape, thereby stirring them to action. Thus, the stage was set for the introduction of the labor union, which was an effort to improve the condition of the workers and to gain for them a more equitable share of the fruits of their labors.

During the nineteenth century, perhaps the foremost advocate of social change was Karl Marx, the German philosopher and expositor of the concept of socialism. He argued that property and wealth gradually come into the hands of the privileged few at the expense of the workers. In collaboration with Friedrich Engels, Marx produced a powerful pamphlet entitled *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. It urged upon the working masses a permanent struggle to bring about by peaceful means the abolition of property distinctions and the common ownership of all products and the instruments of production. Marx's announced goal was the achieving of a classless society in which all would share equally in the world's goods. The well-known closing words of this ringing battle cry were, "The proletarians [workers] have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"

This would appear to have been a fair and reasonable objective. However, for some the proposed program was not sufficiently dynamic. The desired goal and the attainment of its benefits seemed too far removed in time. In the early twentieth century

Vladimir Lenin and his associates began to advocate physical seizure of power, with stern suppression of all opposition. The eventual goal was to create a worldwide communist state based on the socialist principles of public ownership of property, with universal sharing of the products of labor by a classless society.

In the course of time the implementation of this doctrine led to one of the cruelest bloodbaths in history, when the czarist regime of Russia was overthrown by the Communist Revolution of 1917, which rallied the people with the promise of justice, plenty, and equality for all. Thus, Russia under Communist rule came into being. This regime lasted for more than seventy years, until 1991, when Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev instituted reforms and began moving the country toward a social democracy. The influence of Communist Russia, however, provided the pattern of government for other impoverished nations, some of which even today are governed under various forms of socialist/communist ideology.

## **HAS SOCIALISM WORKED?**

No one would presume to argue that the world prior to the introduction of socialism and communism was ideal. Wars, poverty, injustice, hunger, disease and suffering were all common, and in many cases, rampant. Even in our own nation these conditions still meet the eye and assault the consciousness all too often. We ask, however, what conditions do we find in the past and present-day socialist states? How well have they fulfilled the promises made to the expectant millions who

so eagerly and hopefully hailed their rise to authority?

In the matters of health care and education, socialist countries have sometimes performed well. In some nations, medical services have been good, certain diseases well contained, and education at no or little cost has been available. In a few cases, people get generous handouts from the cradle to the grave, and pensions for retired workers are provided.

However, in many socialist countries of the past and present, consumer goods have generally been of low quality, and often chronically scarce. Housing shortages have been common, and agricultural production has been deficient, as the collectivized farmer has lost much of his incentive to produce. In some cases, production has been low because farm prices are kept down by the authorities, thus further depriving the farmer of a reason to work harder. In the factories the work ethic has been eroded by the absence of rewards for outstanding production. In other countries which have implemented socialist policies, income tax rates are so steep as to discourage incentive. Ownership of property or business thus becomes less desirable, and again production declines.

It is in the area of human rights and freedom that the disparity between a majority of socialist states and the other governmental forms has been most evident. This becomes particularly apparent when it is remembered that equality for all people in a classless society was one of the chief inducements held out to the people to adopt socialism. Yet, in most socialist and communist countries of today, there are still the masters and the underlings, the privi-

leged few and the struggling hordes, the wealthy and the poor, the persecutors and the persecuted.

In these cases, while the average person may often struggle to get low quality goods at high prices, those in authority may procure high quality luxuries at relatively low cost. Additionally, the privileged few have access to the highest quality medical care, while the general public most often must accept inferior service. In some socialist countries the higher officials have second homes for vacations, and many send their children to special schools, which are neither available nor affordable to the general population.

In the matter of freedom of speech, a right so dearly cherished in many countries, the socialist and communist regimes have been particularly lacking. In some cases, although freedom of speech is guaranteed to the people in their nation's constitution, it has been extremely unwise for one to exercise this right. Critics of the government have often faced loss of jobs, eviction from their homes, ostracism, deportation, imprisonment, and in some cases, death. In such environments, the media are also under the control of the state, and all information is shaded accordingly.

In the more extreme socialist and communist countries the rule has been authoritarian. Prisons have held thousands of dissidents. Democracy has been nonexistent, equality a myth, and freedom a vanished hope. The late Oxford University senior research fellow, Leszek Kolakowski, was an outspoken critic of socialism, and was effectively exiled from his native Poland in 1968. He is quoted as saying, "In Eastern Europe we expropriated the owners,

and we created one of the most monstrous and oppressive social systems in world history.” If Karl Marx could see the results of man’s attempts in the area of socialism, we wonder what thoughts would pass through his mind today.

## **ALL PRESENT SYSTEMS WILL FAIL**

We believe that the experiments of socialism and communism, however well-intentioned, will fail, and indeed, many have already failed. The present ideas now gaining popularity in this country of a move toward a more socialistic form of democracy will also fail, we believe, to fulfill man’s innermost longings for peace, plenty, justice, and happiness, even as previously tried systems have failed.

Why is this? It is because man, in his present fallen and sinful condition, is imperfect and selfish. Selfish man tends to think and work based primarily on self-interest. If he is deprived of the reward of his own efforts, he will not extend himself. Further, if one can get something without working for it, or by working very little, he is not likely to exert himself greatly in the general interest of his fellow-man. In short, no system that could ever be devised by sinful men for other sinful men could ever bring peace, plenty, and happiness to the inhabitants of this earth.

## **BIBLE PROVIDES HOPE**

Is this to say that the outlook for man is hopeless? Can he never look forward to a time when there will be no more starvation, sickness, wars, or injustice? By no means, we answer! The theme of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation proclaims God’s loving purpose to bring not only peace, justice, and

plenty to the whole world of mankind, but also the opportunity for all people, both the living and the dead, to gain everlasting life in a perfect paradise here on earth.

The almighty God of heaven has patiently permitted this world to pursue its many ideas and forms of government, all for a specific purpose and for a definite time. The purpose is to reveal to sinful man his inability to bring about a happy, peaceful world by his own imperfect ways, and to demonstrate for all time the sure but awful results of disobedience to God's righteous laws. Paul describes God's purpose, that "the unspeakable sinfulness of sin might be plainly shown."—Rom. 7:13, *Weymouth New Testament*

This time is drawing to a climax. "I have long time holden my peace," says God through the prophet. "I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once." (Isa. 42:14) The time during which God has permitted evil to reign and during which he has held his peace is called in the Scriptures "this present evil world," of which Satan is the ruler. (Gal. 1:4; II Cor. 4:4) It will end in a great Time of Trouble, in which the selfish, iniquitous institutions of this world will be destroyed.—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; Luke 21:25,26

This will open the way for the establishment of a "new earth," in which Christ's thousand-year kingdom of righteousness will bless "all the kindreds of the earth." (II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 20:4; Acts 3:25; Gen. 22:18) It is then that the world will receive the benefit of the perfect ransom price that was paid on their behalf by Christ Jesus almost two

thousand years ago.—Matt. 20:28; John 3:16; I Tim. 2:3-6; I John 2:2; 4:10

The period of Christ's kingdom reign is called the "times of restitution of all things" by the Apostle Peter. (Acts 3:20,21) During that time, God will write his perfect law in the hearts of the people. (Jer. 31:33,34) All who prove willing and obedient and who demonstrate love for the Lord and for their fellow-man will gain everlasting life.

In that glorious kingdom, Jesus will be the highly exalted "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Rev. 19:16; 17:14) The Apostle Paul wrote: "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ... And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."—Phil. 2:9-11

## **JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE**

It will be a just, righteous and peaceful kingdom, and it will be worldwide. We quote, in part, the psalmist David, speaking prophetically of Christ's kingdom rule: "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. ... He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. ... In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. ... Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him ... Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."—Ps. 72:2-17

Sin and selfishness of every kind will be abolished. Justice will be accorded every person. There will be

plenty for all. Every man will learn to love his neighbor. Even death will be destroyed, and God will dwell with men, and he will be their God. (Rev. 21:1-4) How the suffering inhabitants of the world will rejoice in their newfound happiness, peace, and plenty. They will bask in the sunshine of the Heavenly Father's smile and the overwhelming love of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Eagerly, with love-filled hearts, neighbor will reach out to neighbor. Joyfully, all will sing praises to the loving God of the universe and his glorious Son!

All that man has been vainly striving to recapture during more than six thousand years of human history had been freely given to Adam and the entire human race in the Garden of Eden. Through disobedience to the divine will, man lost it. However, by the matchless grace of our Heavenly Father, and through the redeeming blood of Jesus, it will once more be freely given to all who love their Lord and follow his ways with their whole heart. "The Spirit and bride," in Christ's kingdom, will say, "Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Rev. 22:17 ■

*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.*

*The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

*—Isaiah 9:6,7*

# Righteousness by Faith

**Key Verses:** *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”*  
—Romans 3:24,25

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Romans 3:21-31*

## **IN OUR CONSIDERATION**

of this lesson from Romans chapter 3, we first note verse 23, in which Paul states, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Thus, all are in need of a Redeemer. Summarizing our Key Verses, they declare that redemption has been provided by God’s grace through Christ Jesus. Those who have full faith in his blood are “justified,” or counted righteous in God’s sight, because Jesus was the “propitiation,” or satisfaction, for Adamic sin. God, the righteous judge, has declared that his Son was fully perfect, which has qualified him to accomplish the “remission of sins.”

The “forbearance of God,” also spoken of in our Key Verses, has been long and merciful toward the fallen human race. Yet, the exercise of his mercy and grace in providing a Redeemer has not been done in violation of his attribute of justice. Indeed, God cannot violate his own laws. In the following verse, Paul asserts that God

is not only “just,” but also the “justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”—Rom. 3:26

For those whom God has justified, the “enmity” which once existed has been removed by virtue of the blood of the cross of Christ. (Eph. 2:16) The Apostles Paul and Peter testify with regard to this work of Jesus, “In that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” “Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God.”—Rom. 6:10; I Pet. 3:18, *New American Standard Bible*

The word “propitiation” is a translation of the Greek word *hilasterion*, and signifies propitiatory, or place of satisfaction. The same Greek word is translated “mercy seat” in Hebrews 9:5. In Israel’s Tabernacle arrangement, the blood of their Atonement Day sacrifices was sprinkled on top of, and in front of, the mercy seat in the Most Holy. This was, in a literal sense, the place of satisfaction for Israel’s sins. The mercy seat was the solid gold cover of the ark of the covenant, where God’s symbolic presence was shown. Thus was indicated the fact that atonement, or satisfaction for sin, was properly made to God himself.—Exod. 37:1-9; Lev. 16:14

These arrangements were types and shadows. Only Jesus’ blood could truly be the basis for the forgiveness of sins. He served a “greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,” and “obtained eternal redemption.” He “offered himself without spot to God,” so that we could be cleansed from “dead works, to serve the living God.”—Heb. 9:11-14

Referring again to our Key Verses, the phrase, “through faith in his blood,” emphasizes the fact that redemption and the resulting propitiation of sins is based upon the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. He was sinless, and not worthy of death, yet he laid down his life voluntarily so that mankind might be made free from Adamic condemnation. Truly we can echo Paul’s words, “By grace are ye saved through faith; ... it is the gift of God.”—Eph. 2:8 ■

# Life in the Spirit

**Key Verse:** *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*  
—Romans 8:1

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Romans 8:1-14*

**WE READ IN ROMANS 3:20,** “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” The law given to Israel through Moses was perfect. However, no one from Adamic stock is perfect, neither Jew nor Gentile. “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me,” the psalmist declares. (Ps. 51:5) It

is by the ransom sacrifice of God’s only begotten son, Jesus, as the only one who was “separate from sinners,” that redemption of the world of mankind from sin and death has been made possible.—John 3:16; Heb. 7:26

Our Key Verse shows us that freedom from present condemnation is the result of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf, and our being “in Christ Jesus” by faith. Paul also uses the word “therefore.” This refers to his preceding words, in which he testified, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Rom. 7:25) God has graciously arranged that the merit of Christ’s sacrifice compensates for the unintentional weaknesses and blemishes of the followers of Jesus. There is then “no condemnation” so long as we abide in Christ, and under the merit of his shed blood.

All who have made a consecration and come into Christ during the present age are reckoned as dead to the law of sin, and alive by “the law of the Spirit of life” in Christ. (Rom. 8:2) This new life is spent in the development of a heart, mind, and character, which God will accept. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor. 5:17) This new mind, or new creature, is in reality, as Paul states, the “mind of Christ.” He further admonishes, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”—I Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5

In another place, the apostle instructs us: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you.” (II Cor. 13:5) To be “in the faith” implies more than belief, confidence, and trust, although these are of vital importance. It also involves more than mere acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf. Additionally, it means having Jesus’ humility, meekness, and self-sacrificing spirit. Self-examination along all these lines is a very important part of our life in the spirit.

Our growth in the new life we have in Christ also includes the work of transforming our character into his likeness. (Rom. 12:2) This is to be especially along the lines of service, sacrifice, and in the development of the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.—Gal. 5:22,23

Our efforts in these holy endeavors will give evidence that we have the spirit of God and are pleasing in his sight. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.—Rom. 8:16,17

# Grafted into the Olive Tree

**Key Verse:** “Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.”

—Romans 11:18

**Selected Scripture:**  
Romans 11:11-24

## THE PICTURE THAT GOD

gives us through the Apostle Paul in today’s lesson identifies the nation of Israel as representing the trunk and the branches of an olive tree. The root of the tree fittingly denotes the promise which God previously made to the fathers of the Jewish nation —Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

“In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”—Gen. 28:14

God did not explain the details of his plan to the Israelites, but he did invite them to enter into a covenant with him. If they would obey and keep his covenant, they would be a “peculiar treasure, ... a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Their response to this was, “All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.” (Exod. 19:5-8) Based on this positive response, the Jewish nation was joined in covenant relationship to God, which constituted them the figurative olive tree that grew out of the root of the Abrahamic promise, of which Paul speaks.

Although Israel was the natural seed of Abraham, God’s eternal purpose was to develop a spiritual seed, which Paul says was Christ. (Gal. 3:16) The Jewish nation did not recognize this, nor did they accept Jesus as their Messiah

when he came. Rather, they were still hoping that the promises made to Abraham would be fulfilled through the covenant given in Moses' day. Late in his ministry, Paul spoke of this, saying, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come."—Acts 26:7

When the nation of Israel rejected Jesus, God's special favor to them came to an end. The Lord said that, as a nation, they would become desolate. (Isa. 53:3; Matt. 23:38; Luke 23:20,21; Rom. 9:30-33) As branches in the symbolic olive tree, they had failed to bring forth proper fruitage, and thus were cut off from the root of promise. Thus Paul said, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for."—Rom. 11:7

God, however, had not made his promises in vain. He desired a spiritual seed to be developed from the root of the promises made to Abraham. These "Israelites indeed" would take the place of the broken-off branches of the fleshly house. When the Israelites as a people were proven unworthy of becoming heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant, they were broken off and Gentiles began to be grafted to the root. As Paul further testifies, the Gentiles would now have the privilege of partaking of the "root and fatness of the olive tree." (Rom. 11:17) Individual Jews, too, would still have the opportunity, "if they abide not still in unbelief," to be grafted back in to the olive tree root.—vs. 23

All those who, by faith, "have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." There is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile among those who have been grafted into the olive tree, and who are partaking of the richness of God's promises. (Gal. 3:26-28) These all must be humble, however, as our Key Verse states. Our standing before God is not in our own strength as branches, but in the root—God's promises as provided in his Word. If, based on this, we truly belong to Christ, then we are part of "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—vs. 29 ■

# A Living Sacrifice

**Key Verse:** “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*”  
—Romans 12:1

**Selected Scripture:**  
Romans 12:1-8

standing,” is ours only if we make a full consecration, laying down our lives in sacrifice and service in the divine cause. (Phil. 4:7) Nowhere does God command anyone to make a consecration. Rather, he has invited, or called, us with a “holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus.”—II Tim. 1:9

Similarly, sacrifice, self-denial and service in the Lord’s cause are not forced upon followers of the Master. Certainly, however, if our Heavenly Father has granted us the privilege of fellowship with his Son by invitation, we should rejoice at the opportunity to be used in some way to bring honor and glory to his name. By calling us, God has given assurance that he is desirous of working with

## **IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE**

that Paul addresses the words of our Key Verse to “brethren,” those who have faith in the blood of Christ as their means of redemption. The apostle urges such to take the further step of presenting themselves to God as a “living sacrifice,” which he says is our “reasonable service.” We have “peace with God” through our justification by faith in the ransom merit of Christ. (Rom. 5:1) However, the greater “peace of God, which passeth all under-

us, and in us, to develop a character which will be of use to him in his future plans and purposes for mankind. To this end, Paul admonished, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:2

This cooperative work with God is spoken of by Paul. He states, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12,13) These verses suggest a work that requires time, patience, diligence and great care. God’s work in us is through the power and influence of his Holy Spirit, and we are admonished to be “led by the Spirit of God.” (Rom. 8:14) We also must spend time in study and meditation on God’s Word, to show ourselves “approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Tim. 2:15

The fulfillment of our vow of consecration, and its related sacrifice and service, is a daily matter. Take up your cross “daily,” Jesus said. (Luke 9:23) It was thus with Jesus, and it must be also with us. The psalmist wrote, “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) Through Christ Jesus, we not only have a standing before God, but are also in covenant relationship with him. Our covenant is by sacrifice, as the psalmist indicates, but is also by God’s favor and grace. “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—Rom. 6:14

From this standpoint of God’s abounding grace, we note, if only in part, the grandeur of God’s wonderful plan of the ages, and our privilege of sharing in its ultimate accomplishment. Let us, then, “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph. 4:15) By so doing, faithfully even unto death, we will have a share in the outworking of God’s grand plan which will bless all of the willing and obedient of mankind forever.—Gen. 22:16-18■

# Judgment Day— Not to Be Feared

*“He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”*

—Acts 17:31

## **OUR OPENING TEXT**

clearly teaches that there is to be a future judgment day for the world of mankind, but tradition has attached many unreasonable and even repulsive ideas to the Bible’s teachings on this subject. In the minds of many it is thought to be a day of doom, when a majority of mankind will be consigned to an eternity of torment, while relatively few

will be taken away to heaven.

From the standpoint of tradition there is actually no good reason why there should be a future day of judgment, for supposedly the eternal destiny of every individual is fixed at death. Believers who are worthy, tradition says, go immediately to heaven when they die, while unbelievers are consigned to a hell of torment. However, since the Bible clearly reveals that there is to be a future judgment day, an effort had

to be made by the creed-makers to fit this into their theology.

Such efforts have made for confusion. The judgment day proposed by the creeds of men is visualized as being only twenty-four hours in length. In a symbolic judgment day scene presented in Revelation 20:12, the “dead, small and great,” are shown standing before God. This was given a literal interpretation—that all believers who, at death, were judged worthy of going to heaven, would be brought back from heaven, and all the sinners who had been condemned to hell-fire would be brought back from hell, all of whom would pass before the judgment seat of God in a twenty-four hour period.

Surely no good purpose could be served by this. We cannot imagine that any mistakes could have been made in the decisions which were reached at death, which, according to tradition, place the dead into one of two classes, consigning them either to heaven or to hell. There is, of course, the additional tradition concerning a third group which, following death, enter an intermediate state, called purgatory. As with most of the theories which have come down to us through the medium of tradition, this one also is unreasonable, and without support in the Bible.

### **MORE THAN A SENTENCE**

Tradition is erroneous in limiting the meaning of the word judgment to the passing of sentence. Just as a judge in court first hears the evidence for or against the one on trial before passing sentence, so those who are sentenced before the bar of divine justice are first given an opportunity to prove their worthiness or unworthiness of God’s favor.

Our first example of the operation of this principle is the case of Adam. In Romans 5:16 the Apostle Paul speaks of “judgment” coming upon all through Adam “to condemnation.” The sentence which came upon Adam, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” was the culmination of his judgment. Prior to this he had been given an opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to God’s law. Failing in this, he was sentenced to death.—Gen. 3:19

It is important to notice in connection with Adam’s judgment that he was given full information concerning the Lord’s requirements. He was not in ignorance of the issue involved. Here is another essential principle which operates in all of God’s dealings with his intelligent creatures. They are never on trial before him without knowing it, and without the necessary information concerning his will for them. No one will fail to receive the grace of God because of ignorance, and no one will attain salvation without the necessary knowledge concerning Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, and the will of God for those who accept this gift of his love.

### **ANCIENTS PROVED WORTHY**

When Adam sinned and began to die, it meant that all his progeny were imperfect, and therefore under condemnation to death. “In Adam all die,” the Apostle Paul says. (I Cor. 15:22) Nevertheless, from Adam’s day to the first advent of Jesus, there were individuals who demonstrated their faith in God and their loyalty to him and to his cause. The first of these was Abel. The last, of record, was John the Baptist.

In the chapter 11 of Hebrews many of these faithful ancients are noted, including the difficulties they

encountered in proving their devotion to God. Paul explains that they endured the trials which came upon them that they might “obtain a better resurrection.” He also speaks of their being “made perfect” in the resurrection. This means, we believe, that when these faithful ones are awakened from the sleep of death they will be perfect human beings, and be fully qualified to conduct the work of God which will then be assigned to them in connection with the Messianic kingdom.—Heb. 11:35,39,40

While these ancient ones of faith were not given a full understanding of the plans and purposes of God for the restoration of the human race to life through Jesus, God did favor them with sufficient knowledge upon which to decide whether or not they would devote themselves fully to him, regardless of the cost. Abel, one of Adam’s sons, surely knew of God’s prophetic statement that at some future time the “seed” of the woman, Eve, would “bruise” the serpent’s head. (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20) From this Abel would know that God had some plan for overcoming the havoc which had been wrought in Eden by the Devil, and he wanted to be on God’s side and share in that future triumph of righteousness.

The Scriptures inform us that “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,” prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord to execute judgment. (Jude 1:14) This indicates that Enoch was given enough understanding upon which to base his decision to take his stand on the Lord’s side. With the passage of time the plan of God unfolded more and more, as one after another of the holy prophets was caused to testify concerning it, giving the worthy ones of

old a definite basis for their faith and an inspiring loyalty to the divine cause.

### **JUDGMENT DAYS OF OLD**

We might say, therefore, that the entire period from the fall of man in Eden until the First Advent of Christ was a “judgment day,” during which faithful servants of old proved their worthiness of being made “princes in all the earth.” (Ps. 45:16) When they are awakened from the sleep of death and given perfect human bodies, as the Scriptures indicate will be the case, they will need to continue their faithfulness in order to maintain everlasting life. However, so far as their past is concerned, they received “a good report through faith.” They passed their trial successfully.—Heb. 11:39

Beginning with the giving of the Law by Moses, the nation of Israel entered upon a special day of judgment. Through the Law, as epitomized in the Ten Commandments, the will of God was expressed for the Israelites. Jesus said to the Jews in his day, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matt. 19:16,17) For Israel, faithfulness to the Law would have resulted in an honored position as a “kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”—Exod. 19:3-6

The Lord granted the people of Israel a long period of probation in which to prove their worthiness or unworthiness of the blessings promised under the Law, but they failed. Paul explains: “Death reigned from Adam to Moses [that is, to the giving of the Law to Israel], even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” (Rom. 5:14) Adam’s sin was individual and willful, and his

progeny shared in the condemnation regardless of their individual responsibility. However, as Paul indicates, so far as the Israelites were concerned this was changed by their agreeing to obey God's Law. This placed them in a special position of responsibility before God, in which they failed.

The promise that if obedient to the Law they would become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation was made to the Israelites. In this also they failed to qualify, and Jesus said to the representative leaders of the nation, that the kingdom would be taken from them and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits" which God expected. (Matt. 21:43) Later the Apostle Peter identified this new nation to which God's kingdom would be given. To footstep followers of Jesus, he wrote: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—I Pet. 2:9,10

## **THE PRESENT JUDGMENT DAY**

The Scriptures reveal that following the First Advent of Christ another judgment day began, Jesus himself being the first one involved. Jesus came into the world to accomplish the divine purpose of redeeming mankind from death and of restoring the willing and obedient to life. However, to serve the divine cause in this manner, Jesus had to be tested.

In the prophetic words of the psalmist, Jesus is quoted as saying, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my

God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:7,8) The thought here expressed is that when Jesus came at his First Advent, it was for the purpose of accomplishing all that had been previously written, or prophesied, concerning him. This, as Jesus said, he delighted to do, for God’s law was within his innermost heart.

As prophesied in the Old Testament, the divine will for Jesus was that he was to sacrifice his flesh, his humanity, in death for the sins of the world. (Isa. 53:5,6,10; Dan. 9:24,26) This he willingly and gladly did, and in doing it he proved his worthiness of the sacred responsibility his Heavenly Father had placed in him. Had he been unfaithful he would have lost all, even life itself.

That Jesus was severely tested is brought to our attention by the incident in which Peter urged him not to go to Jerusalem, where his enemies were waiting to arrest him and put him to death. To this Jesus replied, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” He then added the explanation that anyone who took up his cross to follow him, and then sought to save his life, would lose it. (Mark 8:31-35) Jesus knew that since he had covenanted to lay down his life for the sins of the world, any holding back to save his life, as Peter had suggested, would mean unfaithfulness, and would result in the loss of his own life, in the sense that he would not be raised from the dead.

Of Jesus it is written that he “learned obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. 5:8) Jesus had always been obedient to his Heavenly Father. In his prehuman existence he had served his Father faithfully, and God was delighted with him. However, not until he came to earth and encountered

the prejudice, jealousy, and the hatred of the fallen human race, did Jesus know, by experience, what it meant to be obedient in suffering. Faithfully he served God in the face of opposition engendered by these blighting manifestations of mankind's sinful nature. This was the great lesson which Jesus learned during the three and one-half years of his earthly ministry, and he proved faithful to this ultimate test.

### **JESUS' FOLLOWERS ALSO TESTED**

Beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the followers of Jesus have been on probation, the opportunity being theirs of proving worthy not only to live with Christ, but also to reign with him in his thousand-year kingdom. (II Tim. 2:11,12; Rev. 20:4,6) As with the people of God in previous ages, these also have been enlightened with respect to the divine will for them. Since they have been invited to prove their worthiness of reigning in the kingdom of Christ, Jesus said that it is their privilege to "know the mysteries of the kingdom." —Matt. 13:11

Through the acceptance of Jesus as their Redeemer, and upon the basis of faith in his shed blood, these surrender themselves to God and to the doing of his will. The merit, or value, of Christ's ransom sacrifice releases them from the original condemnation to death, and they now have the privilege of laying down their lives in service to the Heavenly Father and his divine cause. (Rom. 12:1) Paul speaks of their "patient continuance in well doing" by which they "seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7) It is during this entire lifetime

of dedication to the Lord that they are on trial to prove their worthiness of such a high reward.

As in the case of Jesus, the trial of his followers is a difficult, exacting one. The Apostle Peter wrote, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."—I Pet. 4:12,13

Peter understood that the "fiery trial" experiences of the followers of Jesus are in reality their "judgment" experiences. Thus, a few verses later in this chapter he writes, "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—vss. 17,18

The expression "if the righteous scarcely be saved" denotes the difficulties under which the followers of Jesus in this age, those who are laying down their lives sacrificially as Jesus did, prove their faithfulness. However, there is a compensating reward. To these Jesus said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "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. 2:10; 3:21

## **THE WORLD'S JUDGMENT DAY**

As we have seen, Peter explained that the judgment, or trial, of the Gospel Age "house of God" is a very exacting, difficult one, and he asks, "Where

shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Although the apostle does not answer this question in the verses immediately following, he explains the matter in his second epistle. The unenlightened, sin-cursed and dying race of mankind will appear in the world's future judgment, which is a "day," or period in God's plan, of a thousand years in length.—II Pet. 3:7,8

Peter describes that future day of judgment as one of perdition, or destruction, for ungodly men. This is in contrast with the present time, when all are dying, irrespective of whether they are righteously inclined or otherwise. However, Peter also explains that God is longsuffering, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (vs. 9) This is why a thousand years has been set aside in the divine plan for the enlightenment of the people, and for giving all a full opportunity to repent, obey, and live upon the basis of that enlightenment.

In Paul's sermon to the worldly-wise on Mars' hill in Athens, he spoke of the general ignorance of mankind, as represented in the many gods worshiped by the Athenians. He explained that God had "winked" at this ignorance, meaning did not hold responsible those who were unenlightened. "But now," Paul further stated, God "commandeth all men every where to repent," and quoting again our opening text, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—Acts 17:30,31

Paul's statement that now God "commandeth all men every where to repent" does not imply that this command has as yet *(Continued on page 36)*

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*(Continued from page 31)* actually reached all men. He is merely calling attention to the fact that beginning with the First Advent of Jesus, the plan of God moved forward, and that through the Gospel, God was now calling individuals to repent, take up their cross, and follow Jesus. (Matt. 16:24) This message is not limited to any one nation or race of people, but as Jesus commissioned his disciples, it has been taken by them to all nations.—Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:7,8

### **“GIVEN ASSURANCE”**

In our opening Scripture, Paul speaks of assurance in connection with the coming day of judgment. What assurance could possibly come from the tradition that the judgment day is in reality doomsday for the vast majority of the human race? The fact that “all men,” as they learn the truth about the coming judgment day, are “given assurance” by this knowledge, suggests that it will be a time of blessing. Indeed, it will be a time when they will have an opportunity to accept the provisions of life made for them through Christ, obey the laws of his kingdom, and live.

The work of that future judgment day will be based upon enlightenment. The psalmist prophesied that the Lord would come “to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.” (Ps. 96:13) The Prophet Isaiah wrote that when the Lord’s judgments are abroad in the earth, “the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—Isa. 26:9

Jesus explained the source of the information which will reach the world during the future day of judgment. He said, “If any man hear my words, and

believe not, I judge him not.” To this he added, “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” Jesus also explained that the words or commandments he had spoken were not his, but had been given to him by his Father. Then he said, “I know that his commandment is life everlasting.”  
—John 12:47-50

Tradition would have us believe that those who hear the teachings of Jesus in this life, and for one reason or another do not accept and obey them, are judged unworthy of heaven, and forthwith consigned to an eternity in the torments of hell. However, Jesus did not agree with this tradition. He said that he did not judge unbelievers, but that his “word” would judge them in the “last day.” This last day, which will be a thousand years in length, is the final age in God’s plan of salvation—the same “day” during which Paul said the world will be judged “in righteousness.”

The meaning of Jesus’ words is obvious. Those who do not now accept the Gospel are not presently on trial for life, and, hence, are not now being judged. However, in the “last day” the truth of God’s will shall be made known to all. All the hindrances to belief will be removed, and then the commandments of God, his “word,” will constitute the basis of judgment for all mankind. Those who then accept and obey will, as Jesus explained, receive “life everlasting,” not in heaven with Jesus, but on earth as perfect human beings.

## **OPENING OF THE BOOKS**

In Revelation 20:12 we are given a beautiful, symbolic lesson revealing God’s purpose to enlighten the

people with his truth during the future judgment day of the world. John wrote, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Tradition tells us that the "books" which are opened in this text contain the records of the past lives of all humanity. The belief is that these books will be opened to ascertain the worthiness of each individual to spend eternity in heaven, or if unworthy, to be sent to eternal torment.

This tradition is seen at once to be wrong, because the text mentions the "works" of those who are judged as separate from the things "written in the books." They are judged by the laws and principles written in the books, according to whether their works are in harmony with these. The opening of these books symbolizes the revealing of God's truth—his commandments—to the people, upon the basis of which they will be judged. This is in harmony with the words previously quoted from John 12:47-50, wherein Jesus stated that his "word," which he explained was the "commandment" given to him by God, would judge the people in the "last day," the judgment day.

This judgment "according to their works," does not refer to past works, for those who are awakened from death and come up in the world's judgment day period are already known by God not to have been worthy of everlasting life. Rather, judgment will be according to mankind's works during that future "day." As they learn and seek to apply the words

and laws of God “written in the books,” each individual’s worthiness to attain everlasting life on earth will then be determined.

### **BOOK OF LIFE**

Revelation 20:12 speaks of “another book” being opened, “the book of life.” The complete thought set forth in symbol in this text is that when the dead are awakened, they will, first of all, receive enlightenment, as symbolized by the opening of the “books.” As their works are gradually brought into conformity with the will of God, their names will be enrolled, symbolically speaking, in the “book of life.” They will no longer be subject to Adamic condemnation, but upon the basis of their individual acceptance of and obedience to the truth concerning Jesus as made known by the opened books, they will be traveling on the “way of holiness” toward eternal life.—Isa. 35:8

During that day of judgment those who do not take advantage of the gracious provisions of God, and who, according to their works at that time, fail to follow the “books” of his righteous laws, will not have their names enrolled in the “book of life.” These, which we believe will be few in number, will go again into death, the “second death,” symbolized by John’s words as the “lake of fire,” that is, complete and everlasting destruction. (Rev. 20:14,15) The Apostle Peter states the same truth concerning man’s future judgment day with these words: “It shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:23

Speaking of Israel, Paul said that God “hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have

mercy upon all.” (Rom. 11:32) This same principle applies to all mankind who, like Israel, have similarly not believed God’s Word in this life. Indeed, in God’s judgment day there will be mercy for the Israelites because they lacked full understanding and were blinded by their prejudices. Likewise, there will be mercy for all who have died without having had a full opportunity to know and serve God. Then, “from the least of them unto the greatest of them,” all will know the Lord, for the earth shall be “full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea,” and God will “judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”—Jer. 31:34; Isa. 11:9; Ps. 96:13 ■

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**MAY 2**—“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”—II Timothy 3:12 (Z. ’03-164,165 Hymn 183)

**MAY 9**—“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”—Colossians 2:6,7 (Z. ’03-199 Hymn 93)

**MAY 16**—“Thou shalt be called by a new name, . . . thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.”—Isaiah 62:2,3 (Z. ’03-164 Hymn 281)

**MAY 23**—“Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”—John 13:14 (Z. ’97-243 Hymn 23)

**MAY 30**—“Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.”—Romans 12:12 (Z. ’95-20 Hymn 203)

# The Vine and the Branches

*“I am the true vine,  
and my Father is  
the vinedresser.  
Every branch of  
mine that bears no  
fruit, he takes  
away, and every  
branch that does  
bear fruit he  
prunes, that it may  
bear more fruit.”*  
—John 15:1,2,  
*Revised Standard  
Version*

**ON THE NIGHT BEFORE** he died, Jesus gathered together in the upper room with his beloved disciples. John records: “Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13:1, *RSV*) One of the ways Jesus loved his disciples “to the end” was by giving

some final lessons. One lesson was a “new commandment,” to love one another as he had loved them. (vs. 34) He also encouraged his disciples, telling them that he was going to “prepare a place” for them, and that he would return and take them to be with him. (John 14:1-3) He promised to send a helper to his disciples, the “spirit of truth,” the Holy Spirit. (vss. 16-26) Jesus did not want his disciples to be discouraged after his departure,

especially when difficulties and trials would be permitted to come upon them.

In addition to these encouragements, Jesus gave the parable of the vine and the branches, recorded in John 15:1-8. Jesus began this lesson by stating that he was represented in the parable as the “true vine,” and his Father as the “vinedresser,” as seen in our opening text. Here is one example, among many others recorded in the Gospel accounts, in which Jesus honored and glorified his Heavenly Father, emphasizing the fact that God was greater than himself.

God, described as the vinedresser, is the one who, in the parable, owns the vineyard. The Apostle Paul emphasizes this important point of God’s preeminence, and also of the fact that the Father and the Son are separate beings. He says, “There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”—I Cor. 8:6, *RSV*

In the parable, Jesus states that he is the “true vine.” This language implies that there is also a false vine, a church system which the Heavenly Father has not planted. On an earlier occasion during his ministry, Jesus alluded to this when answering a question posed by his disciples. He said, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.” (Matt. 15:12,13, *RSV*) Similarly, we are told in the book of Revelation that the symbolic “vine of the earth” would be cut off with a sickle and destroyed in “the great winepress of the wrath of God.” (Rev. 14:19) The fruitage of the true vine is love and its associated character qualities. These

are precious to our Heavenly Father, whereas the fruitage of the false vine, selfishness and its sinful counterparts, are unacceptable in his sight.

### **FRUITAGE REQUIRED**

Jesus continues the parable by saying that every branch of the vine which bears no fruit is taken away by God, but every branch that bears fruit he prunes so that it will produce more. (John 15:2) The branch referred to in this verse is symbolic of each individual who is united to Christ Jesus. As part of the one true vine, each individual branch has a personal relationship with Jesus, and an individual responsibility to abide in him, and to bear fruitage in harmony with the example he set for us.

In the case of the branches that bear fruit and are pruned so that they will bring forth more fruit, the meaning of the original Greek text includes not only the thought of pruning, but also that of cleansing. This thought is similarly found in Paul's words when he says, speaking of Jesus, that he "gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds." (Tit. 2:14, *RSV*) In the parable, the explanation given as to why branches which are already bearing fruit are pruned is that they might bear more fruit. The Greek word translated "more" denotes not only more in quantity, but also higher in quality.

The fruitage produced by the branches are the Christ-like qualities of character which are manifested in our life by means of the influence and help of God's Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul explains that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”—Gal. 5:22,23, *RSV*

### **GOD’S METHOD OF PRUNING**

The thought of pruning may often be contrary to the inclinations of our fallen human nature. In the plant world, it is important to prune trees in order to have them produce a plenteous amount of good fruit. When this takes place, not only is the length of each branch trimmed, but also small shoots, called suckers, that may have sprouted on the sides of the branches are cut off. These produce no fruit, but consume valuable nutrients from the fruit-bearing part of the branch. When pruning, we may at times wonder if we have cut off too much, and possibly ruined the tree or vine. Indeed, it does not at first seem natural to trim branches which appear to be healthy. Yet, it is necessary in order for a branch to remain in good health. Even the best-looking branches on a tree need to be pruned in order to produce good fruit in abundance.

As followers of Christ and as branches in the symbolic vine, we too need to be pruned in order to be spiritually healthy. How comforting it is to know that our Heavenly Father does this work in each of our lives and that in all cases it is for our greatest spiritual benefit. Such pruning includes all the experiences and trials which God permits in our life. Citing in part the words of a “faithful and wise servant” of the Lord concerning this subject, we quote: “God’s methods of pruning should be understood, or else we might become discouraged. Sometimes, the pruning is by taking away earthly wealth or property, or cherished plans. God’s prunings may

also include persecutions, or loss of a good reputation or earthly friendships. God's prunings may also be the permission of experiencing illness."

Our pruning, permitted by God, instead of discouraging us should be an encouragement, because when we have such experiences, it shows the Heavenly Father's love for us, and that he is looking at our eternal interests. From a fleshly point of view, when we go through a difficult experience, we may not always consider it an encouragement. However, as New Creatures we must realize that such experiences are permitted and overruled by God. By taking this view of our experiences, we can avoid becoming discouraged.

Concerning his own experiences, Paul wrote: "To keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh ... to keep me from being too elated." (II Cor. 12:7 *RSV*) In his letter to the brethren at Philippi, Paul also spoke of his personal prunings: "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ... For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."—Phil. 3:7-9, *RSV*

## **IN THE UPPER ROOM**

While in the upper room on that most special evening, Jesus took a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciple's feet. (John 13:3-5) Peter's response when the Master came to him, was, "Lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered

him, what I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand. Peter said to him, You shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part in me. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head! Jesus said to him, He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not all of you. For he knew who was to betray him.”  
—John 13:6-11, *RSV*

A few moments later, Jesus said to his disciples, “One of you will betray me.” Upon hearing this, the disciples became greatly concerned, and the Apostle John asked Jesus, “Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, What you are going to do, do quickly.” “So, after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night.” (vss. 21,25-27,30, *RSV*) Based on the foregoing narrative, we believe it was sometime after Judas had left the group gathered in the upper room when the lesson of the vine and the branches was given. At the beginning of the parable Jesus said, “You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you.” (John 15:3, *RSV*) This is in corroboration of the statement previously made to Peter, “you are clean.”

### **ABIDE IN CHRIST IN ORDER TO BEAR FRUIT**

Jesus continued the parable, saying: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can

you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4,5, *RSV*) To abide in Christ, we must do more than just decide to consecrate our all to God. This decision is only a first step. We must also begin, and continue, the work of cultivating in our character the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit.

To abide in Christ means not only to recognize Jesus as our Redeemer from Adamic sin, but also to recognize him as our “head,” and to look to him as our “chief Shepherd.” We are to additionally recognize him as the “chief corner stone; ... In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”—Eph. 4:15; 5:23; I Pet. 5:4; Eph. 2:20-22

To abide in Christ entails submitting humbly and joyfully to all the pruning which God, in his wisdom, permits for our greatest spiritual good. In the Old Testament we are told: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (Prov. 3:5,6, *RSV*) One of the ways we can apply these words is in our daily prayers, since an important objective of prayer is to bring our hearts and minds into closer harmony with God.

How vitally important are Jesus’ words that whoever abides in him “bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” We may wonder if the fruit Jesus referred to included such things as the building of large, impressive churches, orphanages, or hospitals. As wonderful as these efforts might be, we do not believe these are the fruits Jesus was

speaking of, since neither he nor the apostles did this. We might also think that our activities in the service of the Truth, at the expense of our time, effort, and wealth, constitute fruitage, or that our study of the Lord's word equates to fruit-bearing. However, none of these things, by themselves, signify the production of "much fruit."

Our studying of the Lord's word and our activities in his service are accepted by God only to the extent that they are accompanied by the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our heart. Indeed, we must cultivate and develop the qualities, previously noted, of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, in order to be pleasing to God, irrespective of time and effort we may expend in the areas of study, activity or service.

Our demonstration of the fruits of the Holy Spirit may, to a limited degree, be noticed by some of those with whom we come into contact. However, we should not expect that it will often bring us their approval or admiration. Oftentimes the efforts made in displaying the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives might be interpreted by others as being weak, soft, or even foolish.

Jesus explained that the world in general would not approve or admire his followers. (John 15:18-21; 17:14-16) If our consecration is not wholehearted, we might miss the fellowship and admiration of the world and crave for even their slightest approval. Thus, the disapproval or misinterpretation of our efforts by others, as we strive to exercise the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit, is part of the testing of the "royal priesthood."

## PROMISES CONDITIONAL

The parable continues with Jesus' words, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you." (John 15:7, *RSV*) The word "if" indicates that there are conditions to this promise. We must abide in Christ and have his words abide in us. Having Jesus' words abide in us includes transforming our way of thinking, which formerly may have been primarily focused upon the earthly things of the present life and our own personal interests. To abide in Christ means to become more and more focused on spiritual things and on the interests of others, as he set forth by way of example.

As Jesus' words abide in us, they will help to guide us in our daily life. Therefore, we must not only seek God's grace by praying for a greater measure of his Spirit, but we must also spend much time and effort to know and apply the Scriptures. By doing this, we will be greatly helped so as to "not be conformed to the world," with its decaying standards, attitudes and methods. We will also be assisted in becoming "transformed by the renewal" of our mind, in order that we "may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."—Rom. 12:2, *RSV*

Jesus continued, saying, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples." (John 15:8, *RSV*) Bearing "much fruit" depends upon our continued diligence in the work of developing spiritual wisdom and of daily seeking to be pleasing to God. Along this line, Paul said to the brethren, "We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the

knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”—Col. 1:9,10, *RSV*

## **ABIDING IN LOVE**

After giving the parable, Jesus said to the disciples, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:10,12, *RSV*) This new commandment, that we love one another as Jesus loved us, speaks of a love which includes sacrifice, and which goes beyond what justice alone would require. Indeed, Christ-like love will be the characteristic of all who have the spirit of the Lord.

We will not produce the fruits of the Spirit, summed up in love, simply by reading about them or knowing what they are. Rather, possessing the same love which Jesus showed toward us includes having sympathy for and encouraging those who are going through difficulties or who are experiencing discouragement. It also means helping our brethren to grow in faith, and stirring up one another to love and good works, striving to do nothing which might stumble or discourage others walking in the narrow way of sacrifice. As we cultivate this spirit of love, it will dominate our actions, our words, and even our thoughts.—I Thess. 5:11-15; Heb. 10:24; Rom. 14:19,21

Expanding further on the lesson of having love for one another, Jesus said, “Greater love has no man

than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13, *RSV*) Jesus laid down his life continuously throughout his earthly ministry by his teachings, and by healing the sick, deaf, blind, lame, and those possessed by evil spirits.

We do not possess the special gift of healing as Jesus did, but we can serve one another in many other ways. Paul admonished, “Through love be servants of one another,” and “love your neighbor as yourself.” We can do this, and we will joyfully do so, if we “walk by the spirit,” letting the Holy Spirit of God be our motivation in all that we say and do. However, as the apostle also warns, we must not “bite and devour one another.”—Gal. 5:13-16, *RSV*

## **BOTH JOYS AND TRIALS EXPECTED**

Jesus explained to his disciples, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11, *RSV*) If our joy is dependent merely upon the circumstances of this life, we will be without joy much of the time, and perhaps, of all men, most miserable and discouraged. However, if our hope lays a firm hold upon the promises of God, and is nourished by our prayers and any opportunity we might may have in the Lord’s service, then our joy will spring up, like flowers in a desert, and be fully in bloom.

“You are my friends,” the Master continued, “if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” (vss. 14,15, *RSV*) As Jesus spoke further, he explained, “I have said all this to you to

keep you from falling away,” while also warning his disciples that they would face severe persecution after his departure. (John 16:1-4, *RSV*) After giving a few more lessons, Jesus then prayed to the Heavenly Father, asking that he preserve these specially chosen ones, and not only them, but all those who would believe in him through their words.—John 17:1,6-26

Surely there will be more or less pain in the prunings and testings of loyalty and obedience which God permits in our life. However, every manifestation of our obedience to him is part of our preparation for membership in the Bride class. Paul wrote, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Heb. 12:11, *RSV*) May our Heavenly Father help each of us to recognize his prunings in our lives, to accept them with joy and thankfulness, and to learn valuable lessons from them. Let us continue to trust the Lord and patiently accept whatever experiences may come to us, knowing that he can intervene and protect us if it is his will. Therefore, we can be assured that “all things” are working together for our good, “according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28 ■

*“How precious are your thoughts about me,  
O God. They cannot be numbered! I can’t even count  
them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when  
I wake up, you are still with me!  
Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me  
and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything  
in me that offends you, and lead me along the  
path of everlasting life.”*

—Psalm 139:17,18,23,24, *New Living Translation*

# General Convention Bulletin

July 20-25, 2019—Moscow, Idaho

## NOTE NEW LOCATION

**THE 2019 GENERAL CONVENTION** will begin in less than three months. If you have not yet made plans to attend, now is the time to do so. As announced previously, 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 shared bathroom 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 individuals, couples or families. Apartment-style housing is available in the Living-Learning Community, located about two blocks from Wallace and the HUB meal facility. Each apartment contains multiple bedrooms, a single bathroom, and a small living and kitchen area.

The convention program appears in this issue of *The Dawn* following the General Convention Registration page. Among several special program features will be discussions of our hope as “an anchor of the soul,” and Israel's three major feasts. In addition, an outside discourse and vesper service “on the lawn,” with chairs provided, is planned for Sunday evening.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention.

Shuttle service will be available to and from the Spokane, WA airport. Details will be made available once they are finalized.

A pricing table and registration form, including contact information, is provided following this announcement. We encourage you to register soon, and make plans now to attend this year's General Convention. For more information about this year's facilities, please check out the convention website at: **[BibleStudentsGeneralConv.org](http://BibleStudentsGeneralConv.org)** ■

	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)		\$372*	\$337*
single occ (Apts)		\$390*	\$355*
dbl occ - bunk style (Wallace)		\$352*	\$317*
dbl occ - bunk style (Apts)		\$375*	\$340*

\*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. This subsidy does not cover meals paid at the door.

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.

# General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: [ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com](mailto: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   
**or** 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts)

Check:  private bath **or**  shared bath  
 double occupancy **or**  single occupancy  
 \*Wallace **or**  Apartments

\*Wallace Residence Hall also includes The HUB-dining center on the first floor.

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)


Address:

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## Saturday, July 20

Chairman: Leonard Griehs, *Delaware Valley PA*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Orientation by College

10:00 **Welcome Address**

Byron Keith, *Seattle WA*

10:45 Intermission

11:15 Discourse

Timothy Krupa  
*Cannon Beach OR*

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse

Peter Mora  
*Los Angeles CA*

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse

Brian Montague  
*Highland Park NY*

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Rick Sconyers  
*Orlando FL*

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:15 **Symposium: “Now Abideth Faith,  
Hope, Love”—I Corinthians 13:13**

**Faith** Michael Colletti, *Portland OR*

**Hope** Nathan Austin, *Portland OR*

**Love** Timothy Malinowski, *Grand Rapids MI*

8:30 Songs in the Night

# Sunday, July 21

Chairman: Rick Suraci, *New Haven CT*

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Discourse                      Homer Montague  
*Highland Park NY*
- 10:30 Intermission
- 11:15 **Theme Discourse—Proverbs 3:1**  
**“My son, forget not my law...”**  
  
Arbur Fernets  
*Okanagan BC*
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Praise and Testimony        Robert Gorecki  
*New York NY*
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Discourse                      Thomas Gilbert  
*Southern WI*
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 **Dialogue: Hope—“An Anchor of the**  
**Soul”—Hebrews 6:19**  
  
Kent Humphreys, *Phoenix AZ*  
Benjamin Siwak, *Prince Albert SK*
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:15 **Discourse/Vesper:**  
**“How Great Thou Art”—Psalm 19**  
O. B. Elbert, *Delaware Valley PA*
- 8:30 Songs in the Night

# Monday, July 22

Chairman: Robert Brand, *San Diego CA*

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Discourse Russ Marten  
*Puget Sound WA*
- 10:30 Intermission
- 11:15 Discourse Daniel Szarkowicz  
*Vancouver BC*
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Discourse Todd Alexander  
*Columbus OH*
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Praise and Testimony George Balko  
*West Newton PA*
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse Austin Williams  
*Highland Park NY*
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:15 Discourse Tom Ruggirello  
*Chicago IL*
- 8:00 Songs in the Night
- 8:15 Elders' Meeting

## Tuesday, July 23

Chairman: Dan Wesol, *Albuquerque NM*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 **Baptismal Discourse**

Michael Balko  
*Orlando FL*

10:30 Intermission

11:00 **Immersion Service**

David Wittbrodt  
*Detroit MI*

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Praise and Testimony

Jonathon Freer  
*Sacramento CA*

2:45 Intermission

3:15 **Dialogue: Gog's Invasion—Climax  
of Gospel Age or Millennium?**

Richard Doctor  
*Chicago IL*  
William Dutka  
*Detroit MI*

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Mark Davis  
*Los Angeles CA*

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

## Wednesday, July 24

Chairman: Brad Sweeney, *East Saskatchewan*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Convention Business Meeting

11:00 Short Recess

11:15 Convention Business Continues

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse Mike Ensley  
*Colfax WA*

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony Robert Goodman  
*Orlando FL*

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse Aaron Kuehmicel  
*Chicago IL*

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:15 **Highlight Discourse: Revelation 2:10**  
**“Be Thou Faithful Unto Death”**  
Andy Oystryk  
*East Saskatchewan*

8:00 Vesper Service

8:45 Songs in the Night

## Thursday, July 25

Chairman: Stephen Jeuck, *Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Praise and Testimony                      Mark Allard  
*San Luis Obispo CA*

10:30 Intermission

11:00 **Panel: Israel's Three Major Feasts**

David Rice, Moderator, *San Diego CA*

Brian Jakubowski, *East Saskatchewan*

Douglas Rawson, *San Francisco Bay Area CA*

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse                                      Timothy Thomassen  
*Albuquerque NM*

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse                                      James Parkinson  
*Los Angeles CA*

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse                                      Randy Shahan  
*New York NY*

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:15 **Closing Discourse**                      John Trzeciak  
*Grand Rapids MI*

8:00 Melodies of Praise

8:45 Love Feast

# SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

<b>G. Balko</b>		<b>E. Kuenzli</b>	
West Newton, PA	May 5	Boaz, AL	May 17-19
<b>O. B. Elbert</b>		<b>H. Montague</b>	
Los Angeles, CA	May 25,26	Detroit, MI	May 4,5
<b>J. Freer</b>		Boaz, AL	17-19
Boaz, AL	May 17-19	Los Angeles, CA	25,26
<b>R. Goodman</b>		<b>T. Thomassen</b>	
Los Angeles, CA	May 25,26	Detroit, MI	May 4,5
<b>S. Jeuck</b>		<b>J. Trzeciak</b>	
Chicago, IL	May 25,26	Jacksonville, FL	May 5
<b>J. Krasonic, Jr.</b>			
West Newton, PA	May 5		

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## 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.*

**Brother Bruce Hanley, Toowoomba, QLD, Australia**  
—November 20, 2018. Age, 83

**Brother George Ibasfalean, Bradenton, FL—March**  
29. Age, 89

**Sister Lillian Boychuk, Wakaw, SK, Canada—April**  
6. Age, 76

**Sister Ruth Eldridge, Portland, OR—April 8. Age,**  
96

**Sister Helen Johnson, Connellsville, PA—April 9.**  
Age, 103

## 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.*

**METROPOLITAN DETROIT CONVENTION, May 4,5**—American Spirit Center, 10590 E Grand River, Brighton, MI 48116. Contact N. Hummel. Phone: (248) 486-6357 or Email: psa343nj@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

**JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 5**—Holiday Inn Hotel, 620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073. For room reservations, contact the hotel. Phone: (904) 562-7407. Other information, contact C. Hughes. Phone: (904) 781-0506 or Email: clanky3@att.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 npnekora@aol.com or T. Parkinson at ti77park@gmail.com.

**DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 2**—Falls Township Senior Center, 282 Trenton Road, Fairless Hills, PA. Contact O. Elbert. Phone: (732) 710-2423 or Email: obe3@comcast.net

**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

**PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 14-16**—Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220. For convention accommodations, contact

J. Wojcik. Phone: (503) 459-2720 or Email: janetlwojcik@gmail.com. Other information, contact M. Colletti. Phone: (503) 820-8899 or Email: colletti291@gmail.com

**PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, June 29-July 1**—Siwak Farm, RR 1, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8. Contact B. Siwak. Phone: (306) 960-5526 or Email: bswk77@gmail.com

**BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 20-25**—**New Location**—University of Idaho, 709 Deakin Avenue, Moscow, ID 83843. For reservations and program, see pp. 53-61 this issue. For information, go to the General Convention website: **[BibleStudentsGeneralConv.org](http://BibleStudentsGeneralConv.org)**

**BENIN REPUBLIC CONVENTION, July 26-28**—Semekpodji Porto Novo, route pk 16klm, Benin Republic. Contact E. Okorie. Phone: + 229 65505568, + 229 97059452 or Email: bbsecclesias@yahoo.com

**RED DEER CONVENTION, August 9-11**—Golden Circle Senior Centre, 4217 50 Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. Rooms available at Super 8 Hotel, 4217 50 Avenue. Phone: (403) 358-7722. Mention Alberta Bible Students when booking. Other information, contact J. Neumeier. Email: jbnemeier@live.com

**JACKSON CONVENTION, August 17,18**—**New Location**—Jackson College, Bert Walker Hall, 2111 Emmons Road, Jackson, MI 49201. Contact L. Davis. Phone: (517) 414-5544 or Email: lydadav@gmail.com

**NIGERIA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 23-25**—Central School Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

**SEATTLE CONVENTION, August 31-September 2**—Seattle Scottish Rite Center, 1207 N 152nd Street, Shoreline, WA 98133. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206)518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us