

# The Dawn

*A Herald of Christ's Presence*

OCTOBER 2012



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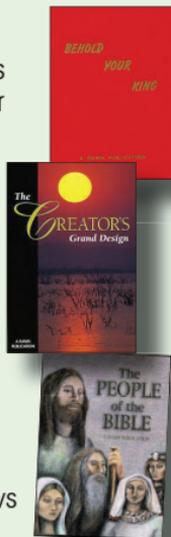
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# The DAWN

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# The Day of the Lord

***“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”***

***—II Peter 3:10,13***

*the prophecies being unerringly fulfilled. We rejoice in this as we realize the truth of God’s Word and see our race moving ever closer to the blessings of*

*[PREFACE: Fifty years ago, in the October 1962 issue of The Dawn, this “Highlights of Dawn” article appeared. When first published, it could hardly be imagined that the trouble foretold would yet be unfolding fifty years later. For most theories of man, this would have necessitated a revision of thought. However, the years that have intervened, rather than making this message irrelevant, have enhanced the strength of the prophecies cited. The events since those specified in this article have only underscored the progress of God’s divine plan, as we see the*

*Christ's kingdom and the restitution of all things promised in the Scriptures. We are assured concerning this vision, "It shall speak, and not lie: though it [seem to] tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (Hab. 2:3) Thus, with the desire that our mutual faith be strengthened and reassured from the words which appeared on these pages half a century ago, we republish this article.]*

**THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO**, when man first transgressed the divine law, God withdrew himself from human affairs and, except on certain occasions, has permitted the reign of sin and death to continue without interference. One of these exceptions was the sending of the flood to destroy the race in the days of Noah. On other occasions, he has inflicted special punishments upon nations because of gross sins, especially when the conduct of these nations had a bearing on the lives of his own people.

However, by and large we could say that God's policy toward his sinful human creatures throughout the centuries has been one of "hands off," allowing people and nations to work out their own destinies as best they could. It has been a downhill road for humanity—the "broad road" that leads to destruction. (Matt. 7:13, *Weymouth*) This attitude of the Creator does not imply lack of interest in his human creatures, for the Bible assures us that despite the sinful course of humanity, God still loves the people, and has made provision through the redemptive work of Christ to deliver all the willing and obedient from sin, sickness, and death.

God has a "due time" for the accomplishment of

all his purposes, and the work of deliverance is scheduled to be accomplished during the time of Christ's Second Presence. It is this general period that is referred to in the Scriptures as "the day of the Lord," for it is during this time that God, through the agencies of Christ's kingdom, will deal with the people to give them an opportunity for reformation and restoration.

### **DARK IN THE BEGINNING**

We are not to think of this "day of the Lord" as being one that, in its early stages, is all bright, and without trouble of any kind. We read, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." (Zech. 14:6,7) The prophet Joel also wrote concerning this time, that it would be "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."—Joel 2:2

The early portion of "the day of the Lord" is also referred to in the prophecies as the day of God's "wrath." (Ps. 110:5; Ezek. 7:19; Rev. 6:17) During this time, and in contrast to the past, there occurs a divine overruling in the affairs of men to bring about the destruction of all humanly constituted authority based upon selfishness and sin. The Scriptures reveal that the accomplishment of this will entail much trouble throughout the earth. The prophecies depicting this period are graphic in

their descriptions of the distress which comes upon mankind in this “day.” Here are some of them:

“Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.”—Isa. 34:1-3

“The LORD is the true God [God of truth, *Marginal Translation*], he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.”—Jer. 10:10

“A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.”—Jer. 25:31-33

“Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace

and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”—I Thess. 5:1-3

“There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”—Luke 21:25,26

“At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.”—Dan. 12:1

“Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”—Matt. 24:21,22

“The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.”—Isa. 42:13,14

“Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will

I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”—Zeph. 3:8,9

“Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”—Ps. 46:8-10

### **A LOVING PURPOSE**

While the foregoing prophecies depict a period of universal upheaval and trouble such as never before was experienced on the earth, the last two remind us that the divine object in this “wrath” against sin and selfishness is the establishment of the divine will throughout the earth, and that this will mean the end of war, and the filling of the earth with a true knowledge of the living God. He will turn to the people a “pure language,” with the result that all will call upon him to serve him with one consent. He will make wars to cease, and his name will be exalted in the earth. For this we give thanks!

It is never possible to arrive at a proper understanding of any prophecy of the Bible except as we compare it with the entire prophetic testimony. Some, failing to do this, have used the prophecies which speak of fire in connection with the day of God’s vengeance, and thus have reached the erroneous conclusion that literal fire will be rained down from the sky and destroy the earth. We know from many prophecies that this is not true. For example, after mentioning the “desolations” which

the Lord will bring upon the earth, we find the Psalmist David explaining that after this Jehovah's name will be exalted in the earth. This indicates that the earth remains.—Ps. 46:10

We know that this is true, for there are many assurances in the Bible that the literal earth will not be destroyed—that it was created, not in vain, but formed to be inhabited. (Eccles. 1:4; Isa. 45:18) It is a symbolic earth, or a social order, that is destroyed in the dark beginning period of “the day of the Lord.” This symbolic earth is said to be “removed,” to be “melted,” and to be “devoured” by the “fire” of God's jealousy, or “zeal,” as the Hebrew translation reads.—Ps. 46:2,6; Zeph. 3:8

Jesus described the trouble to come upon the people as distress of nations with perplexity, and then likened this to the roaring of the sea and the waves. In his description, Jesus may have had in mind the prophecy of Isaiah 17:12,13, which reads, “Woe to the multitude [noise, *Marginal Translation*] of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty [many, *MT*] waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing [thistledown, *MT*] before the whirlwind.”

From this, we see that when the prophecies speak of the roaring of the sea and the waves, the symbolic reference is to the clamoring of the people. Instead of literal waters roaring, it actually is the nations which “rage.” (Ps. 2:1-5; 46:6) The

Psalmist David spoke of the mountains being carried into the midst of the sea, but in the same prophecy he interprets this as the removal of kingdoms—symbolized by the reference to mountains.—Ps. 46:2,6

In examining the above prophecies, and many others in the Bible which refer to the same general period, it will be noted that various symbols are used to illustrate the distress which was to come upon the people of earth during the day of God's wrath. There are many aspects to the prophetic "time of trouble," or "tribulation," which comes upon the earth in the early days of the Lord's Second Presence, and it would be illogical to single out any one of these and say it would be literal, such as fire, or a whirlwind, or the tumbling of literal mountains into the ocean. This is all pictorial language, and the use of fire in the prophecies is no exception.

### **THE DAYS OF NOAH**

One aspect of the prophetic time of trouble, as shown in our theme text, is that it comes upon the world "as a thief in the night." Jesus illustrated this by referring to the "days of Noah," the time when the ark was being prepared as a means of saving Noah and his family. He said that the people then went on with their ordinary and regular pursuits of life and knew not of the coming flood until it was upon them. It would be the same, he said, in "the days of the Son of man."—Luke 17:26,27

The Apostle Peter likewise speaks of the days of Noah and of the flood as an illustration of the trouble that brings the present social order to an end. He wrote, "The heavens were of old, and the earth

standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world [Greek, *kosmos*, meaning order] that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." (II Pet. 3:5,6) Then Peter explains that the "heavens and the earth, which are now" are "reserved unto fire," and that the earth "and the works that are therein shall be burned up."—vss. 7,10

Some have erroneously taken this to mean that since the world before the flood perished in literal water, so the present world, or earth, will be destroyed by literal fire. However, we should remember that Peter is merely using the circumstances in connection with the destruction of the pre-flood world as an illustration of the ending of the present evil world. An illustration is never precisely the same as the thing illustrated. In the tabernacle services, a bullock was used to illustrate Jesus in the flesh, but Jesus was not like a bullock.

We are not implying that there will not be a great deal of "fire" during this time, as the nations rage against one another and bring about the destruction of their world. However, the point of Peter's prophecy is that a "world"—an order of things—is destroyed in this raging of the nations, and fire is merely one of the symbols used to illustrate the various aspects of the great "time of trouble" involved.

## **PATTERN OF EVENTS**

Our interest in these prophecies is based on the fact that we now see them in process of fulfillment. This becomes evident when we examine the general pattern of events which they forecast. One of the things foretold is that there would be a general

gathering of the nations of the earth in cooperative efforts for war and peace. We have seen this in process of fulfillment over many decades, and it continues. The first major gathering of the nations was in connection with World War I, which began in 1914. In that struggle, the vast majority of all the nations of earth were assembled on one side or the other in what was then claimed to be a war to end wars.

Following the armistice of 1918 came the League of Nations, which, it was hoped, would safeguard the peace of the world. It failed, however, and there came another alignment of the nations in the second global war in a generation—World War II. With the close of that war came the setting up of the United Nations. While in the past small groups of nations formed treaties of mutual security, there have never been such worldwide gatherings of the nations as have taken place in our time.

The Lord said that HE would gather the nations. (Zeph. 3:8) One of the means used to accomplish this has been the increase of knowledge in this “time of the end.” (Dan. 12:4) Rapid means of travel and communication have made it impossible for single nations to exist in absolute isolation from others. Additionally, selfishness prevents them from coexisting in peace. All of this results in chaos of one kind or another almost everywhere. Heads of state and other government officials travel back and forth from nation to nation, and from one council table to another, but no lasting solutions are found to their problems.

## **IN SPASMS**

The prophecies also point out that the great time

of trouble would come upon the world in spasms, like travail upon a woman with child. (I Thess. 5:1-3) This also we have seen, particularly in the two world wars, and other world conflicts since. The first spasm of destruction resulted in the overthrow of the powerful church-state monarchies of Europe. There is a handful of minor kings left, but they are weak and have very little, if any, influence in the molding of world affairs.

Meanwhile, other forms of government have risen—some of them dictatorships, some, so-called democracies, and some of other forms. Some of the dictatorships were destroyed in World War II—those also being replaced by other forms of government. However, all efforts to re-establish and govern the present social order upon the basis of selfishness will ultimately fail. In reality, what we see taking place is the chaotic disintegration of Satan's world, with each spasm of destruction leaving its foundations weaker and its superstructure more vulnerable to the next attack.

The prophecies also point out that the “time of trouble” would be as an evil which would spread from nation to nation. (Jer. 25:31-33) This was true with respect to both world wars. They did not engulf the whole world at once, but began as struggles between individual nations. They then spread until all the major nations became involved. Thus the fulfillment of the prophecy relating to the “slain of the LORD” in these spasms of trouble has been worldwide.

The fact that those who lose their lives in these spasms of destructive trouble are referred to as the “slain of the LORD” does not mean that God is

directly responsible for their death. However, this is the day of God's wrath upon the nations, and he takes the responsibility, both for the gathering of the nations and the casualties resulting from their struggles. It is by this means that they are destroyed as nations, and the way prepared for the kingdom of Christ.

As we have seen, Jesus foretold that this time of trouble would eventually become so destructive that unless it was brought to a close all human life would be destroyed. (Matt. 24:21,22) This possibility has also now become a reality. We are thankful, however, for Jesus' assurance that this total destruction of the human race will not be permitted, that there will be divine intervention in time to prevent this otherwise inevitable and ultimate result of human selfishness.

## **FAITH STRENGTHENED**

When we note the wonderful manner in which the prophetic pattern of events is being woven in the fast-moving events of our time, it should give us a strong faith that we are indeed already living in the days of the presence of the Son of Man, and that his kingdom will soon be established for the blessing of all the families of the earth. It is a time of fearful foreboding for the world, but for us it is a time of rejoicing.

It is not that we are unmindful of the sufferings of the world around us, but we know that Satan's world must be destroyed before the people can receive the blessings of Messiah's kingdom. Our rejoicing is not in what is happening throughout the earth today, but in the promises of God to

establish a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness—that is, a righteous social order under the jurisdiction of Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Thus, we continue to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) The complete answer to this prayer will not come suddenly. Not until the close of the coming thousand-year reign of Christ will it be fully answered. Not until then will all insubordination to the divine will be put down, and all the enemies of God and righteousness destroyed. By then even man’s great enemy Death will have been destroyed.

The expression, “Thy kingdom come,” and “Thy will be done,” are not synonymous in meaning. The kingdom is the means by which God’s will is to be re-established throughout the earth. To begin with, the authority and power of God’s kingdom will be in the hands of Christ, but ultimately all authority and power contrary to the will of the Creator will be put down, and death itself destroyed. Paul explained, “When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”—I Cor. 15:28

We know that there will be no failure of this work, no holding back of the divine purpose. In our impatience, we may think that the time is long delayed for the restitution project to be put into operation. However, from God’s standpoint this is not so. Let us, then, learn patiently to wait on the Lord, meanwhile zealously laying down our lives bearing witness to the “gospel of the kingdom” in any and every way which may be open to us. What a privilege it is to be

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# Stephen's Arrest and Speech

**Key Verse:** **AS THE EARLY CHRISTIAN**  
*“Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.”*  
—Acts 6:8

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Acts 6:8-7:50**

church grew, the Apostles found it needful to select certain ones to serve as deacons. These were given the responsibility of overseeing the pastoral portion of the work. Seven were chosen as deacons, including Stephen. (Acts 6:5) Although the primary role of the deacons was the pastoral work, they also took advantage of opportunities which came to spread the message of truth. In fact, the Apostles had laid their hands on them (vs. 6), conferring on them the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In our Key Verse, we are told that Stephen had great faith, and was using the power of the Holy Spirit to do “wonders and miracles among the people.” One of the special abilities Stephen evidently had, through the Holy Spirit, was that of speaking to the people in such a way that was very convincing. Some in the synagogue, who began to dispute his message, found that they were unable to “resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.” (vs. 10) They found men who agreed to purposely stir up the people, and also act as false witnesses against Stephen, accusing him of blasphemy. They took him into custody and brought him before the Jewish

council.—vss. 11-14

The high priest demanded that Stephen defend what he had been preaching. Acts 7:2-50 gives the account of his defense to the council, and what a defense it was! Stephen, beginning with Abraham, spoke of God's dealings with their forefathers. He spoke of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and how God gave them the promise of an inheritance through a future seed. He spoke of how Joseph's brethren sold him into Egyptian slavery, but that this entire experience was overruled by God for Israel's benefit. Stephen continued by recalling how, while in Egypt, the Israelites multiplied, and when the proper time came, he raised up Moses as their deliverer from bondage and the Pharaoh "which knew not Joseph."—vs. 18

One of the important lessons Stephen recalled was how the Israelites refused on many occasions to follow the instructions given to them by God through their leader Moses. He reminded them that Moses spoke of another prophet who God would "raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." (vs. 37) This statement was particularly troubling to the council, because they knew Stephen and others had been preaching that Jesus was that "prophet . . . like unto me" foretold by Moses. Stephen continued speaking, however, recounting the many ways in which the Israelites had been disobedient to God, even though he had provided them with a Tabernacle, and later a Temple, in which to worship and offer sacrifice.

As Stephen closed his discourse, he reminded the council that, in reality, God is not to be found in literal temples or buildings. Quoting from the prophet Isaiah, Stephen said, "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; . . . Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?"—vss. 48,49 ■

# Stephen's Martyrdom

**Key Verse:** *"They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*

—Acts 7:59

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Acts 7:51-8:2*

it: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."—Acts 7:51-53

The reaction of the council to Stephen's words was that of extreme anger. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." (vs. 54) The phrase "cut to the heart" has the meaning of being "sawn asunder," or "rent with vexation" in their heart, the seat of their motivations and character. This "cutting" effect of the word of truth reminds us of Paul's words in Hebrews 4:12, "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." How true it was that the evil intents of their hearts

**WHEN STEPHEN FINISHED** his discourse to the Jewish council, he boldly questioned them as to why they resisted the arrangements of God as their forefathers had resisted Moses and the prophets. He said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit:

were now fully displayed against Stephen, even though he had only spoken to them truth from the Word of God.

As the anger of the Jewish leaders reached a climax, Stephen was reassured. The account says that he looked up to heaven and saw, in a vision, “the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” He then stated to those gathered, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55,56) This vision gave reassurance and comfort to Stephen that God was pleased with the witness he had given. Such reassurance was provided at just the right time, because immediately the Jews “cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him.”—vss. 57,58

The thought of our Key Verse, as translated and punctuated in the King James version, is not that those stoning Stephen were calling upon God, as a cursory reading might indicate. It is clear, rather, from the entire verse, that it was Stephen who called upon God, and asked him to receive his spirit—breath of life. Finally, we have Stephen’s last words—epitomizing a fully developed character of Christlike love and forgiveness—spoken in a loud voice, for all to hear, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”—vs. 60

Of all those who witnessed this entire experience, none were ultimately impacted as much as Saul, who at the time “was consenting unto his death.” (chap. 8:1) His consent was shown by the fact that witnesses had laid their clothes down at his feet. (chap. 7:58) The forgiving attitude manifested by Stephen in his final words as he was being stoned were possibly overruled by God specifically to be heard in the ears of this young man, Saul, who soon after would be converted and become the “Apostle to the Gentiles.” ■

# Simon Wants to Buy Power

**Key Verse:** “*When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money.*”  
—Acts 8:18

**Selected Scripture:**  
Acts 8:9-24

lesson of October 7), began preaching to the people in this area.

Philip’s preaching was so effective that “when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (vs. 12) Even Simon professed belief, and was baptized. He “continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” (vs. 13) Given Simon’s background, however, as well as the events that followed, the motivation of Simon’s “wonder” at the miracles and signs he witnessed is highly questionable.

Nevertheless, the gospel message continued to be well-received, so much so that word got back to the

## **TODAY’S LESSON IS THE**

interesting account of a man named Simon, who was a sorcerer in the region of Samaria. He had evidently achieved some success in this practice, since the account reads that many people in the area gave heed to him, even saying that he had power from God. (Acts 8:9-11) However, this all changed when Philip, one of the seven deacons chosen (see

apostles at Jerusalem, so they sent Peter and John to assist with the work. As apostles, they had the ability of the laying on of hands, and of giving the Holy Spirit. The account explains that although those, including Simon, had been baptized “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. (vs. 16) This points out to us an important truth that mere outward baptism in water does not necessarily signify that God has accepted one into covenant relationship with him. Such acceptance is only shown by the begetting of the Holy Spirit.

Peter and John proceeded to confer the begetting of the Holy Spirit to those whose baptism and consecration had given evidence of being accepted by God. It is clear from the account that Simon, although one of those baptized, did not receive this begetting. Rather than inquiring of Peter and John as to why he had not received the Holy Spirit, he wrongly focused on the power they had to give it. Our Key Verse says that Simon offered the apostles money to have the power they had in this regard. He said, “Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.”—vs. 19

Peter’s response to Simon was quick and to the point. The ability to give the Holy Spirit, or any of the other apostolic powers, could not be purchased with money. Furthermore, anyone who had such a desire was not in a proper condition of heart. He told Simon, “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” (vss. 21,22) Not only could Simon not be given the power of conferring the Holy Spirit to others, which is what he desired, he was not even in a condition of heart to receive the begetting himself—he had no part in this matter, Peter said. Thus, how vital it is to heed the words: “Keep thy heart with all diligence;

# Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

**Key Verse:** *“As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”*  
—Acts 8:36

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Acts 8:26-39**  
charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.”—Acts 8:27

## **IN OUR FINAL LESSON**

this month, we once again see Philip being used in the ministry of the Gospel. The angel of the Lord directed Philip to go to Gaza, a region in the southwest portion of Israel, about fifty miles from Jerusalem. As he traveled, he met up with “a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship.”—Acts 8:27

Upon encountering this Ethiopian eunuch, Philip noticed that he was reading aloud from Isaiah the prophet, so he asked him, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” (vs. 30) He answered, saying, “How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” (vs. 31) The fact that the eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship, perhaps on more than one occasion, and also had obtained a copy of the book of Isaiah, indicates that he was a Jewish proselyte. Having embraced their faith, and sincerely desiring to learn more, he was drawn to the promises to Israel contained in the Scriptures. He also perhaps knew of Jesus, his teachings and the great works he had

performed, and wondered if there was some connection between his ministry and the words of Israel's prophets.

The eunuch showed Philip the place in the book of Isaiah which he was reading. It said this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth." (vss. 32,33) The eunuch asked Philip who the prophet was speaking of. The account continues by saying, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." (vs. 35) We can imagine the excitement of Philip, knowing that here was an individual with no Israelite heritage, but who had come into the Jewish faith, and was now starting to see connections between Jesus' ministry and God's promises to Israel.

Although the account does not provide the details, it is evident that Philip's words to the eunuch were more than sufficient to convince him that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and the one through whom the promises of the Old Testament would be fulfilled. As they continued to talk, they approached water and, as stated in our Key Verse, the eunuch asked to be baptized. Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (vs. 37) Based on this response of faith in Jesus, Philip gladly baptized him. The account ends by saying that Philip was then parted from the eunuch, who "went on his way rejoicing."—vs. 39

From this account, we see examples in the actions of both Philip and the eunuch. In the eunuch, we see a sincere hunger to know the truth of God's Word. It is that hunger which all who desire to know more of God's plans and purposes must have in order to expect his truth to be revealed to them. In Philip, we see an example of readiness to explain the truth, and respond to the questions of one who was searching for answers. ■

# God's Word versus Men's Traditions

*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*  
—*Colossians 2:8*

**JESUS WAS VERY OUT-**spoken in condemning the “tradition of the elders” as set forth by the scribes and the Pharisees of his day. He was asked by them why his disciples transgressed these traditions, and his reply was, in part, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (Matt. 15:2,3) Thus Jesus indicates that the traditions of men are often contrary to the commandment, or Word of God.

*Webster's Dictionary* gives as one definition of tradition: “The delivery of opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs from ancestors to posterity; the transmission of any opinions or practice from forefathers to descendants by oral communication.” This thought is in sharp contrast to the Scriptures,

in which it is made clear that religious doctrines, practices, and rites come only by the direct instruction of God, or through his specially chosen instruments. In the New Testament, the word translated “tradition”—the practice Jesus condemned—is the Greek word *paradosis*. According to Prof. Strong, this word specifically has reference to “the Jewish traditionary law.”

The “Jewish traditionary law” was that mass of interpretations and adjustments which began to be formulated by the elders of Israel at an early date, and which was transmitted orally and added to from generation to generation. So far as we know there were no written versions of these traditions in Jesus’ day. It was in the second century that these oral traditions began to be put into written form. Out of these written versions of tradition there finally developed the Jewish Talmud. However, not all Israelites shared the views of the scribes and Pharisees with respect to tradition. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote:

“What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers.”

## **CONTROVERSY CONTINUES**

The controversy as to the relative value of the written Word of God and the tradition of men,

which began in ancient times and was highlighted by Jesus' firm stand against tradition, has continued to our day. One of the crucial issues today confronting many of the large denominations of Christendom is whether or not their traditions should be given equal authority with the written Word of God in their teachings. As church leaders deal with this, the necessity arises of perhaps even setting aside the Word of God in some cases, where it conflicts with their long-held traditions.

As shown by our theme scripture, the Apostle Paul, in the days of the Early Church, found it necessary to counsel the brethren to resist the influence of tradition. The traditions Paul spoke of that were "not after Christ" and which wrought the greatest harm during that time were likely those related to false notions concerning the place the Jewish Law should occupy in the beliefs and practices of Christians.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." (I Pet. 1:18) Here, Peter emphasizes that neither the world's wealth nor the foolish conduct enjoined upon them by the traditions received from their fathers had purchased their redemption, but they were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ."—vs. 19

In Galatians 1:14, Paul speaks of his former zeal for the traditions of his fathers. We quote: "[I] profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Now, however, Paul was zealous only for the Gospel of

Christ, and this zeal was even greater than it had previously been for tradition.

As we have noted, the word “tradition” simply implies the passing along of ideas to others by word of mouth. Thus, the word itself does not suggest anything necessarily evil. Paul, in fact, uses it in reference to his own teachings of the Gospel. He says, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” (II Thess. 2:15) Here Paul uses the Greek word translated “traditions” as applying to his own inspired teachings which he had passed on to the brethren by word of mouth and by letter. However, since Paul spoke and wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, his teachings were a part of God’s message to his people, and not the opinions of men.

Paul also used the word “tradition” in a good sense in II Thessalonians 3:6, which reads, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” Here again the “tradition” Paul refers to is his own teachings, and therefore inspired by God’s Holy Spirit.

## **HUMAN TRADITIONS**

The traditions condemned by Jesus and the apostles are those of purely human origin. The specific traditions with which they dealt at that time pertained to the Law. Today there are many philosophies pertaining to the Gospel of Christ which have developed throughout the centuries,

and which eventually have become accepted by many as of equal importance to the Word of God. As the definition of the word implies, these traditions started as opinions which were passed along to others orally, sometimes over many generations. Finally they achieved dignity and a semblance of authority by being published in written form.

However, human tradition, unsupported by the teachings of the Bible, no matter how old, how venerable, or how seemingly reasonable, should be given no authority by the dedicated child of God and sincere student of the Bible. The Lord's true people will only give heed to the instructions of his Word, which states, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa. 8:20

### **THOROUGHLY FURNISHED**

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, saying, "All Scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for Teaching, for Conviction, for Correction, for that Discipline which is in Righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for Every good Work." (II Tim. 3:16,17, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) Here the Apostle Paul clearly emphasizes that the Lord's people need not look outside the Word of God for authoritative instructions in order to be acceptable servants to the Lord.

Paul again wrote to Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) To be workmen pleasing to God, it is essential only that we rightly

divide the Word of truth and apply its precepts in our lives as we daily walk in the narrow way of sacrifice. It is not necessary to harmonize the Word of God with traditions. Some traditions may be quite in harmony with the Word of God, but most traditions are not, and these should give us no concern in our “rightly dividing the word of truth.”

### **SMALL BEGINNINGS**

Traditions usually have small beginnings. The doctrine of the trinity is a humanly conceived tradition. There is no authority for this teaching in the Word of God. To the one who first gave thought to this erroneous doctrine it probably seemed to be a reasonable conclusion. Certainly the Bible speaks of God the Father, and it also speaks of Jesus, his beloved Son. The Bible also speaks much about the Holy Spirit of God.

Could it be, someone may have inquired, that these three are in some way the same? This seed of philosophy was possibly passed on to others, and then to still others. Finally, it was debated in church councils and accepted by the majority as fact. Many of those who fought against it, insisting that the Bible taught that there is but one God, were pacified by the suggestion that “these three are one.” This tradition has become so deeply rooted in the minds of millions that to question it makes one disobedient, in their minds, to the Word of God. Yet, it is not taught in the Bible at all. Rather, this tradition makes void the teaching of the Word of God that “there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.” (I Cor. 8:6) It also makes the Holy Spirit

a “ghost” instead of the holy power or influence of God, as the Bible teaches.—Acts 1:8, *Rotherham Translation*

Many other traditions developed during the Dark Ages. Among them is the teaching that the end of the world means the destruction of the earth by literal fire. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that the end of the world is the end of an age—the end of Satan’s kingdom, the present evil social order—and is brought about to prepare the way for the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom. Recognizing this enables us to have a much clearer understanding of the end-of-the-world prophecies than otherwise would be possible. God assures us in his Word, “Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” “The earth abideth for ever.”—Isa. 45:18; Eccles. 1:4

Then there is the “immortal soul” tradition. This false idea began very early in man’s experience, when Satan said to mother Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) As this tradition developed it took the form that “there is no death.” Then the “reasonable conclusion” was reached that since actual death is not the punishment for sin, some form of conscious punishment must await those who only “seem” to die. This idea, thought by many to be so reasonable, soon developed into the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torture in a fiery hell. How this tradition has indeed made void the Word of God with respect to its simple statements that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die,” that “the wages of sin is death,” but that God has a loving

provision for everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord!—Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; John 3:16

## **INFALLIBILITY**

As the great falling away from the faith foretold by the Apostle Paul developed, the tendency grew to impart authority to certain outstanding leaders in the church. The bishop of Rome received the largest share of this authority. In due course, it seemed reasonable to his supporters to confer infallibility upon him and to regard him as the vicerent of Christ, that is, in place of Christ. This tradition soon became a church-approved doctrine, but it has no support whatever in the Word of God.

The only truly infallible teachings, so far as the humble Christian is concerned, are those contained in the written Word of God. God has so overruled the matter that, as Paul declared, the Scriptures given by inspiration are sufficient to make one wise unto salvation. We know that it is in the providence of God that he has seen to it that his Word of truth has come down to us in written form. It does not depend upon oral transmission, as is true with the beginning of all traditions. Oral testimony can be forgotten, distorted, or wrested, but not the written Word of God.

True, we do not have the original manuscripts of the Bible, as written by those who were inspired by God. We have to depend upon translations, which at times are less than perfect. Today, however, in the Lord's providence, we have Greek and Hebrew concordances and lexicons which enable us to check the accuracy of translations. These helps are available in printed form as well as in computer

software versions. This has proved to be a great blessing to the Lord's people, and has resulted in a clearer and more blessed understanding of God's great plan of salvation.

Revelation 22:18,19 contains a warning against adding to or taking away from the Word of God. While this warning applies particularly to the Book of Revelation, without doubt God is equally concerned with respect to his entire written Word. He wants his people to be meek and humble in their approach to his Word. When he speaks, he rejoices to have his people take heed to what he says and to order their lives accordingly. This is one of the vital tests the Lord imposes upon all his consecrated people. They have dedicated themselves to do his will, and his will is expressed through his written Word. Are we truly following that Word, or are we in part giving heed to the precepts and traditions of men?

### **THE NOBLE BEREANS**

The Apostle Paul was one of the inspired servants of God who was used greatly in helping to provide his written Word to those in the Early Church. Paul rejoiced when he met those who insisted that even his teachings be tested as to their harmony with the inspired Scriptures already written. He indicates this in telling of his experiences with a group in a synagogue in Berea to whom he presented the Gospel. He said of these that they "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."—Acts 17:11

In addition to searching the Scriptures for proof of what Paul preached to them, these Bereans were

noble also in the fact that they received the Word of God “with all readiness of mind.” This is an important quality for all those who would be pleasing to the Heavenly Father. The disposition to turn a deaf ear to clear statements of the Word of God, and to be guided instead by human philosophy and tradition, cannot be pleasing to the Lord. Let us endeavor to be among those who “tremble” reverently at his Word.—Isa. 66:5

## **HELPERS**

The Lord, in his providence, has provided that his people should assist each other in the understanding of the sacred and infallible Word of truth. We all have opportunities and responsibilities along this line. The Apostle Paul speaks that some of the brethren may serve as teachers, some as evangelists, and some as pastors. (Eph. 4:11) In this regard, the Lord in his love provided a special servant for his people in this Harvest period of the Gospel Age, for which we are duly grateful.

Throughout the Gospel Age, the oral and written assistance to the church provided by these helpers occupies a different position than do the writings contained directly in the inspired Word of God. These helpers are not, nor have they ever claimed to be, the sources of truth with respect to the divine plan. Rather, they have served to call attention to the glorious doctrines of present truth as they are set forth in the inspired Word. If Paul, although an inspired apostle, considered the Bereans to be noble because they made sure that what he taught them was supported by the infallible Scriptures, how much more important it is for us to make sure that

what we are taught by those not inspired, as was Paul, is indeed supported by a “thus saith the Lord.”

### **SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATIONS**

Speaking of the experiences of natural Israel, the Apostle Paul wrote, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages, *WED*] are come.” (I Cor. 10:11) Some have taken this statement by Paul to mean that everything which happened to Israel is supposed to have a very deep significance which does not appear on the surface. Then they proceed to interpret these supposedly deep types according to whatever their opinions may indicate to be the meaning.

This is an unwarranted use of the Word of God. Paul clearly indicated what he meant by saying that the things which happened to Israel were examples. He explains that God dealt with all his ancient people in the same manner. Some responded to his providences in terms of faithful obedience, but others did not. They were “ensamples,” either good or bad, by how they responded. He wrote, “With many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as

some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”—vss. 5-10

Then follows the explanation already quoted that “all these things happened unto them for ensamples.” God permitted those things to happen to natural Israel in order to provide “ensamples,” or lessons, to his people of later times not to be disobedient as some of his people of old were disobedient. These lessons apply to the Lord’s people of today, those living at the “end of the age,” just as Paul expresses in this verse.

Many numbers and figures are mentioned in various parts of the Bible. Some have assumed that these are all intended in some way to be prophecies or to have special, deep, significance. As a result, many have disappointed themselves and others by their interpretations of these so-called prophetic “deep things,” which have not come to pass as they were once supposed. Although most often rightly intended, this is an unwise use of the Word of God. There are indeed wonderful and beautiful prophecies in the Bible, but the Bible itself identifies these as such, and gives us the proper keys for unlocking them. We must also remember that no prophecy can be fully understood in every detail until it is fulfilled. Paul wisely and humbly said, “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”—I Cor. 13:12

## **THE FUNDAMENTALS**

All the great fundamentals of the divine plan are clearly established in the Word of God by direct statements of Scripture. If we rightly divide the Word of

truth we will discover the firm foundation upon which present truth is established. If, however, we try to harmonize these truths with opinions and traditions which are based merely on human philosophy, we will sooner or later experience disappointment, no matter how appealing the philosophy may be.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)" (Heb. 10:23) God is always faithful to his promises, but he takes no responsibility for the theories we may attach to his promises. We will never be disappointed when putting our faith in the promises of God, but could well be disappointed if we fail to see the difference between the promises of God and those theories and traditions which we may unwittingly associate with his promises. May the Word of God, and all the blessed features of the divine plan which are clearly revealed therein, become more and more precious to us as the days and years go by! ■

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**OCTOBER 4**—"Jesus saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."—Matthew 4:19 (Z. '04-26,27 Hymn 275)

**OCTOBER 11**—"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD."—Isaiah 52:11 (Z. '04-28 Hymn 130)

**OCTOBER 18**—"He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster."—Proverbs 18:9 (Z. '04-77 Hymn 116)

**OCTOBER 25**—"Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good."—II Chronicles 19:11 (Z. '04-207,205 Hymn 12)

# Patience

—Part 1—

## Forbearance and Longsuffering

*“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to temperance; and to temperance patience.”*  
—II Peter 1:5,6

**IN THE LISTING OF CHRISTIAN** graces by the Apostle Peter in II Peter 1:5-7, patience is the fourth of seven graces he says must be added to our foundation of faith—following virtue, knowledge, and temperance, but preceding godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, or love.

It is appropriate, as shown by our theme text, that patience is listed immediately following temperance, or self-control. Patience, in its fullest development, requires that we have already made significant progress in controlling self—temperance. We cannot hope to “add” patience in its complete sense to our foundation of faith if self is not, to a measurable extent, under the control of the New Creature.

### **DEFINING PATIENCE**

Defining patience might at first seem relatively easy, because it is likely that we know quite a bit

about it. Mankind in general understands certain things about patience, and most feel that it is a trait to be admired and emulated. The patience of the Scriptures, however, goes much deeper than what most among mankind would include in its definition.

Patience is a progressively learned grace, and has various levels, all of which must be developed within the Christian's character. The Scriptures, and life's experiences themselves, suggest four progressive aspects to this grace of patience: 1) Forbearance; 2) Longsuffering; 3) Endurance; and 4) Constancy. All four of these aspects of patience are necessary to its complete development. We know this because God, his son Jesus, and many other examples of faithful individuals found in the Bible, had all of these. In this article, we will examine the first two of these—Forbearance and Longsuffering.

## **FORBEARANCE**

Forbearance is the most basic form of patience, and it is most likely the aspect that the world understands something about—whether they actually practice it or not. As used in the Scriptures, the meaning of forbearance is similar to how most people would define patience. *Strong's Concordance* and *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* give these synonyms for forbearance: self-restraint, to tolerate, to put up with.

Forbearance is usually thought of as an action—a relatively short-term restraint or act of tolerance. By definition, it is directed toward another person, group of people, or set of immediate circumstances,

resulting from some wrong (or perceived wrong) having been committed against us. Forbearance may be shown with a truly loving heart. It can also be shown with much grumbling and little in the way of a loving motivation.

The Scriptures state that God exercises forbearance. The Apostle Paul, after speaking about the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, says further concerning him, “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. (Rom. 3:25) Earlier, in verse 23, Paul said, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” In other words, all in Adam have fallen into sin, and hence, are partakers of the just penalty of death.

From these verses, the first thing we notice about God’s forbearance is that it does not in any way remove the just penalty of death upon mankind. However, we notice something else in Paul’s words. He indicates that God’s forbearance is directly associated with a plan for the recovery of man from sin through the redemptive work of Jesus. His forbearance is shown in that once our first parents fell, and as all their progeny were born into sin, and as mankind continued to fall further away from perfection, God, to a large extent, tolerated man’s downward course. He restrained himself from interfering with the course of man’s affairs. He “put up with” much of fallen man’s sinful and ungodly deeds—moment by moment, day by day, year by year—in a seemingly unending exercise of forbearance.

The key to understanding God’s great exercise of forbearance is his knowledge that only by doing

so will mankind eventually learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and also that he has a plan in place that will eventually bring about man's release from sin's stranglehold. Only thus can we harmonize the penalty for sin—death—with God's forbearance of man's downward course since the fall of Adam. This goes far beyond a mere surface appreciation of the forbearance aspect of patience.

## **CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE**

As followers of Christ, we must also exercise forbearance—not just in the mundane experiences of life, but also in the course of our development as New Creatures. Our forbearance must be tailored after God's high standard. Like God, our exercise of forbearance toward others does not mean we condone their sin. We realize, however, as God does, that all of man's current experiences with sin will one day yield the positive results God intends. So we properly forbear much in the way of wrong deeds, unkind words spoken, ridicule, and criticism directed toward us.

However, our forbearance is to have an even deeper effect upon us. Paul talked about his life as a Christian and the many trials he endured. "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it."—I Cor. 4:11,12

The word translated "suffer" at the end of verse 12 is the Greek word for "forbear." Paul is saying, "being persecuted, we forbear"—we tolerate, we restrain ourselves from retaliating, we put up with

persecution. Paul could do this because he knew that persecution, as well as hunger, thirst, being buffeted, being reviled, as well as the other kinds of trials and besetments mentioned in these verses, were all necessary experiences for him in order to be fully developed as a member of the sympathetic “royal priesthood” which will teach mankind in Christ’s coming kingdom.

Paul, here speaking of the various experiences that came to him, and which will come to us, in which forbearance is needful, hearkens back to the opening words of this chapter. In I Corinthians 4:1,2, he says, “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” We, as Paul, are stewards of the mysteries of God. As stewards, it is required that we be found faithful. The exercise of Godly forbearance toward others, as Paul demonstrated and testified of in verse 12, is part of our stewardship responsibility.

## **WARNINGS**

We might be inclined to think that forbearance, because it is the most basic form of patience, is relatively easy to master. A close look at our fallen flesh, however, reveals that even simple forbearance is not easy. Because forbearance is most often the immediate, or short-term, response to an action or words spoken against us, the fallen flesh is likewise notorious for its momentary and immediate responses, usually in direct opposition to forbearance.

Think of this relatively common experience which could happen to any of us. We are sitting at a traffic

light in the left turn lane, behind several cars, waiting for the green left turn arrow. After waiting through an entire light cycle, the green arrow comes on, and the cars in our lane begin to move—except the car directly in front of us. For some reason, the driver is not paying attention, and even after the cars in front of him have gone, he continues to sit there, and we are behind him, still waiting. After what probably seems like eternity, we honk the horn, say a few grumbling words to ourself, and the person finally starts to move. By this time, however, the left turn light has turned red, and we find ourself stuck there for another seemingly endless light cycle, perhaps uttering a few more grumbling words. Finally, when the green arrow comes on again, the car in front of us makes its turn, and we do too. This entire experience likely took all of about 3 minutes out of our day from start to finish, yet we allowed it to irritate us.

For the child of God, such an experience, or one similar to it, demonstrates a failure to exercise forbearance, the most basic form of patience. In this example, the fallen fleshly mind was quicker in responding the wrong way than the new mind was in responding with forbearance. Worse than this, however, is the fact that the quicker wrong reaction meant that the New Creature was not in sufficient control of the flesh in the first place. If it had been in control, the new mind would have responded first and the flesh would not have gained the victory. This should serve as a warning to us that the fallen flesh, when not properly controlled by the New Creature, will get victories along the lines of even the most basic of the Christian graces.

Another warning concerning forbearance lies in the fact that even when we have successfully and faithfully exercised it in many experiences, over a long span of time, and are perhaps toward the latter years of our Christian walk, it is still possible that, under certain circumstances, we could fail in its application. We recall Moses, who meekly and faithfully showed forbearance to his fellow Israelites for nearly forty years. He tolerated their complaining, he restrained himself when they lacked faith, and he put up with their murmuring. Yet, near the end of his life, when instructed by God to speak to the rock to obtain water for the “still complaining” Israelites, it was more than Moses could take. His flesh got the better of him. In disobedience he angrily struck the rock, doing it not once, but twice, rather than speaking to it as God had instructed him. In addition he angrily spoke to the people, saying, “Must we [Aaron and I] fetch you water out of this rock?” Moses failed this test of forbearance late in his life, even after nearly forty years of patiently exercising it. As a result, he was not allowed by God to cross over the Jordan and enter the land of promise.—Num. 20:7-12

We understand, of course, that God still considered Moses a faithful servant of his, taking his whole life into account. (Heb. 11:23-29) However, this experience late in life, which cost him so dearly, is a lesson and warning to us, not only along the lines of forbearance, but with regard to any of the Christian graces. We must be on our guard to the very end of our walk, that the old flesh does not, even for a moment, gain the upper hand and cause us to lose control and fail to exercise these graces when

it would be the proper course to do so. On the contrary, when put into practice time after time, in experience after experience, forbearance will lead us to the development of the second aspect of patience—longsuffering.

## **LONGSUFFERING**

Longsuffering is similar to forbearance in its meaning and application. The chief difference is that longsuffering, as suggested by the word itself, is a type of forbearance which is not just exercised in the immediate moment of an experience. Rather, it is a character quality developed and exercised over the long-term course of many similar experiences.

Turning again to *Strong's* and *Thayer's* definitions, the Greek word for longsuffering means: bear long, slow to anger, slow to punish, slow in avenging, slow to wrath. In the Greek language, it is the compound word "*macrothumeo*." "*Macro*" means "long in relation to time and place." "*Thumeo*" simply means "wrath." Putting the two words together—*macrothumeo*—means literally to go for a long period of time before exercising wrath. We see from this definition that the longsuffering aspect of patience represents progress beyond forbearance.

There is a connection, however, between forbearance and longsuffering. In Romans 2:4, Paul speaks these words about God, "Despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Here God is described in the same verse as both forbearing and longsuffering, and that these are the products of "the riches of his goodness." In the case of God, this does not mean

that he must “progress” from forbearance to longsuffering. In him, both qualities dwell fully and are exercised in total perfection and harmony. His perfect forbearance in all the individual instances of disobedience on the part of his human creation brings with it the natural result that God is also longsuffering—slow to anger, slow to wrath, slow to avenge.

Note also in this verse that the same goodness of God, which results in his being both forbearing and longsuffering, is designed to have an effect upon those who recognize that they are the beneficiaries of these. Paul says that the recognition of these qualities in God should have the effect of leading us to repentance. All mankind will eventually learn this and benefit from God’s exercise of forbearance and longsuffering, but for now the chief lesson is for the church. When we approached God in consecration, there was a fundamental realization on our part that he had shown much forbearance and longsuffering on our behalf. As a result, we had a sincere desire to repent, and to make a change in our walk of life. We covenanted to do his will, and follow in the example of his son Jesus, and to develop these same qualities which we saw that they possessed in such perfection and harmony.

### **GOD’S LEGACY OF LONGSUFFERING**

The Scriptures show God’s legacy of longsuffering with mankind. We read this concerning the period leading up to the flood: “The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (I Pet. 3:20) Although in the final

analysis only eight persons were saved from the flood, God was longsuffering to give mankind every opportunity to repent and join faithful Noah and his family. The account in Genesis, chapter 6, indicates that there was a period of time which passed after God's initial declaration that he would destroy all flesh, until the flood actually took place. During this period, and as the ark was being prepared, God was longsuffering, to the intent that possibly some might have a repentant heart and turn toward him. Once again, he was slow to wrath, slow to avenge, slow to punish—longsuffering.

Another example of God's longsuffering is given to us with respect to his chosen people—Israel. We read of this as follows: "God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." (Rom. 9:22) From the context, we know that Paul is speaking here of the nation of Israel as "vessels of wrath." The word translated "willing" at the beginning of this verse has the proper thought of making a choice, or having the option. In other words, God could have chosen, and had the option on many occasions, to exercise his wrath toward Israel by carrying out their destruction, for which Paul says they were "fitted" by their demonstrated lack of faith and obedience. Yet God endured "with much longsuffering," Paul says. God did so, as in the case of the flood, for the purpose and with the hope that some might repent and turn to serve him.

The longsuffering of God with Israel lasted many centuries, even up to the time that he sent his only begotten Son to be their long-sought Messiah.

A few, a remnant, did indeed repent, accepted Jesus, and received the resulting blessings of coming out from under the Law and into Christ. To these individual Jews, the longsuffering of God was much appreciated and highly valued. The nation as a whole, however, failed to benefit from God's longsuffering, even crucifying the one who was their Messiah. As a result, their house was finally left desolate and all vestiges of their nationhood destroyed. This shows another important feature about God's longsuffering. God's longsuffering with Israel, and with mankind in general, does not mean that there will never be punishment, never be wrath, or that longsuffering will be indefinitely manifest toward a continued lack of obedience and faithfulness.

Even here, however, God is merciful. Recalling the entire context of Romans, chapters 9, 10, and 11, God's message is not just about the failure of the nation of Israel to maintain their covenant with God, his longsuffering with them, and their ultimate casting off by him as a nation. If this was the end of the story, then God's longsuffering would never serve any real purpose, nor have any true benefit. We are thankful that such is not the case. These same chapters in Romans also promise the recovery of Israel—that they will eventually learn the lessons needed and be reestablished, not just as a nation, but as a covenant-keeping people of God. Additionally, the New Covenant, which God will establish with Israel, will flow out to the entire world of mankind. Then, truly, the longsuffering of God will have achieved its full fruition and purpose in them and well as in all men.

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The Scriptures show that the prospective members of the church must develop and exercise longsuffering, just as they enjoin forbearance. Paul said, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12,13) In these verses, we are admonished to be both forbearing and longsuffering. Who especially does Paul say we are to exercise these aspects of patience toward? In both scriptures he says we are to exercise these toward "one another," the fellow body members of Christ—our brethren.

In James 5:7,8,10, the Greek word for longsuffering, *macrothumeo*, is used four times. In the *King James Bible* it is translated "patience," but as we quote it we will substitute the word "longsuffering," putting it in brackets: "Be [longsuffering] therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath [longsuffering] for it . . . Be ye also [longsuffering]; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of [longsuffering]."

These verses speak of the longsuffering of three groups or individuals. First, verses 7 and 8 admonish the church to be longsuffering in our experiences as we wait for all the events relating to the coming [Greek, presence] of the Lord to unfold. Second,

verse 7 says that the husbandman—God—has long-suffering for the fruit of the earth. This fruitage is the church, developed on earth, and to whom God continues to exercise longsuffering. Third, in verse 10 James counsels us, as we endeavor to develop this character trait, to look at the example of the prophets, not just in their suffering of affliction, but especially in their longsuffering attitude while going through those afflictions.

The Apostles Paul and Peter both expressed their humble appreciation of the longsuffering of God and Jesus toward themselves personally, as well as toward all the Lord's consecrated. Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." (I Tim. 1:15,16) Similarly, Peter says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. . . . And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." (II Pet. 3:9,15) Truly, without the longsuffering of the Lord, we could not obtain salvation.

In I Corinthians, chapter 13, the famous love chapter, Paul simply, but powerfully, states in verse 4, "Charity [Greek, '*agape*' love] suffereth long," showing that one of the demonstrations of *agape* love is longsuffering. Additionally, although Peter in our theme text mentions the grace of patience,

Paul, in his listing of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23, specifically mentions longsuffering, showing that it is indeed part of the fruitage required in our character.

### **CONNECTION TO FAITH**

Paul also connects longsuffering and faith. Once again, the *King James* translators used the word patience, although it is the Greek word for longsuffering. Rendered accordingly, Paul says, “Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and [longsuffering] inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after [longsuffering], he obtained the promise.”—Heb. 6:12-15

Here Paul mentions an important truth. The promises made to those such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other men of old, are to be fulfilled toward them because they not only had great faith, but they were also longsuffering. What was this connection in their case? We answer that their faith in God’s promises of a better day, a day of blessing to all the families of the earth, gave them the confidence and assurance needed to “suffer long” in their experiences of trial, testing, ridicule, and even persecution. They counted this longsuffering as, in a sense, a “light affliction” to them, because of their faith in these promises and their desire to obtain them.—II Cor. 4:17

So it should be with us. As Peter says in the context of our theme text, faith is the foundation principle upon which we build all the Christian graces,

including the longsuffering aspect of patience. In reality, faith is vitally connected to every aspect of this grace—forbearance, endurance, and constancy. So important is the connection between faith and all the Christian graces, that the Apostle John says, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—I John 5:4

In next month’s issue of *The Dawn*, we will consider the final two aspects of the grace of patience—Endurance and Constancy. ■

## 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 Claudine White, Sun City West, AZ—August 14. Age, 88

Brother Ted Trzeciak, Phoenix, AZ—August 16. Age, 96

Sister Ann Truth Post, New York, NY—August 27. Age, 89

Sister Florence Niemyski, Highland, IN—September 1. Age, 84

Sister Birdes Gardener, Ypsilanti, MI—September 4. Age, 75

Sister Agnes Thomassen Spraytz, Kingsburg, CA—September 7. Age, 96

Sister Josie Franco, Groton, CT—September 11. Age, 86

# The Sheep and the Goats

*“Then shall the  
King say unto them  
on his right hand,  
Come, ye blessed of  
my Father, inherit  
the kingdom  
prepared for you  
from the  
foundation of the  
world.”*  
—*Matthew 25:34*

**THE PARABLE OF THE** sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46) is the conclusion of Jesus' reply to his disciples' question pertaining to the signs of his return and Second Presence. (chap. 24:3) “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory,” are the opening words of the parable, and they clearly estab-

lish it to be one of the signs of his presence, or *parousia*, as it is in the Greek text.

The coming of the Son of Man in “glory” is in contrast with his First Advent, which was in humiliation and suffering. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he announced that “all power” had been given to him “in heaven and in earth.” (chap. 28:18) He was then exalted to the right hand of “the throne of God.” (Heb. 1:3; 12:2) It is this divine, glorified Jesus who returns for the ultimate purpose of establishing his kingdom for the blessing of all people.

The signs of the Master's Second Presence do not all appear at once, just as the signs of his First Presence did not all occur at the same time. First, upon his return, Jesus reckons with and rewards his servants, his disciples. These enter into his joy, and are made joint-heirs with him. (Rom. 8:16-18) Thus, in presenting the final sign of his presence—The parable of the sheep and the goats—Jesus specified that his angels—his servants, or messengers—would be with him. This is in fulfillment of Jesus' promise that his faithful followers would sit with him in his throne.—Rev. 3:21

### **ALL NATIONS**

With the faithful overcomers of the Gospel Age exalted to glory, and with Jesus on his throne, the divine plan of redemption and restoration moves into its final phase, which is the offering of restitution to "all the families of the earth." The parable states that the people of all nations are gathered before him.

It is well to guard against endeavoring to understand this parable too literally. The people of all nations will not be gathered before the throne of Christ's glory in the sense of all being assembled in one vast field, or area, with the goats herded to the left of the field and the sheep to the right. The thought is, rather, that the people of the whole world will be taken into active consideration by the Great Judge of all, and that, through the agencies of his kingdom, he will deal with them for their development with the intent of determining their worthiness or unworthiness of everlasting life.

We are informed that this judgment day will be a time when the people will learn righteousness. (Isa. 26:9) However, those who are evil at heart, and willfully persist in continuing in the way of disobedience, will not learn righteousness in that “land of uprightness,” nor will they “behold [recognize] the majesty of the LORD.” (vs. 10) These are the ones in the parable who are represented by the goats.

### **DOMINION RESTORED**

The “kingdom” mentioned in our theme text, which the sheep class are informed that they are to inherit, is the same as stated in Genesis 1:26-28. It is man’s dominion over the earth which is the kingdom that was lost because of sin. The ultimate purpose of Christ’s Return and Second Presence is the restoration of man to life and to his lost dominion. Peter stressed this point when he said that “the heaven” received Jesus until “the times of restitution of all things, which,” he added, “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:19-21

The “all things” to be restored to those of the human race who prove worthy, include life as well as the lost dominion. The parable states that the sheep class enters into life eternal. Jesus made provision for this at his First Presence by dying on Calvary’s cross, “the just for the unjust.”—I Pet. 3:18

### **SINNERS DESTROYED**

God is unchangeable, and the “wages,” or punishment, for sin will always be death. (Rom. 6:23) The “goats” of the parable represent the

incorrigibly wicked during the world's coming judgment day. These hear the sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—Matt. 25:41

Fire is used in the Bible as a symbol of destruction. Everlasting fire would be everlasting destruction. In verse 46, it is described as "everlasting punishment." Peter speaks of this punishment as being "destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:23

To the sheep class of the parable, the King said, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Matt. 25:35,36) The "sheep" are surprised at this, and inquire when they had rendered all these good services.

The King's reply to their inquiry states, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (vs. 40) The expression, "these my brethren," denotes that the King is speaking of those there on the scene. These will be the people of the restored world of mankind at the close of the thousand-year judgment day.

While Jesus will be instrumental in awakening the dead world of mankind from the sleep of death, and in restoring the willing and obedient to human perfection, the Heavenly Father will become the Father of the restored world of mankind when the kingdom is turned over to him at the close of the Millennium. He is also Jesus' Father. From this standpoint the "sheep" will be the least of Jesus'

brethren, while his followers of the present age, exalted to divine glory with him, will be the greatest.

The “sheep” of the parable demonstrate their worthiness of everlasting life by their loving interest in, and solicitude for, those about them. Hunger, thirst, loneliness, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment, symbolize a fairly complete cross section of human needs. The “sheep” sense these needs of their fellows, and do what they can about them. It becomes part of their character to do this, and they do not realize that they are performing deeds so pleasing to the King. They learn and practice the way of love, and at the end discover that they are worthy of inheriting the dominion of earth which our first parents forfeited through their disobedience to divine law.

The “goats,” on the other hand, do not display the qualities of divine love. Their outlook is entirely selfish, so they do not enter into the spirit of the kingdom, and do not cooperate with the kingdom agencies for the general welfare and blessing of the people. They do not learn righteousness, and continue in the evil ways of the selfish world in which they had formerly lived. Consequently, they are cut off from life.

Jesus is the great King referred to in the parable. He is the one who, together with his joint-heirs—the church class of the present age—will administer the just and righteous laws of the kingdom period, man’s judgment day. We know that there will be no misjudging of the people. No mistakes will be made. Concerning the King who will sit upon “the throne of his glory,” the prophet Isaiah wrote, “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest

upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; . . . and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth [the Truth], and with the breath of his lips [a decree of condemnation] shall he slay the wicked [the goat class of the parable]. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”—Isa. 11:2-5

With the work of the judgment day complete, the purpose of Christ’s Return and Second Presence will have been fully accomplished. This work will be the final sign of his *parousia*. Many of the earlier signs of the Master’s presence are already visible, but this final sign is still future. It will not appear until all the true followers of Jesus have proved their worthiness to live and reign with him, and are exalted in the first resurrection to sit with him on the throne of his glory.—Rev. 20:6

With joy, the sheep of the parable will join in the proclamation, “Say among the heathen [the Gentiles] that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”—Ps. 96:10-13 ■

# ENCOURAGING LETTERS

## INSPIRING AND JOYFUL

DawnBible: These are such warm, solid truths of everything God teaches us through his Son, Jesus. I enjoy reading all of the articles and booklets. How inspiring and joyful they are. Thank you for making my life better!—VA

## USING DROID PHONE

DawnBible: Am able to read the Manna [*Daily Heavenly Manna*] and articles in *The Dawn* online using a droid phone. Wonderful blessing! Christian love—WY

## TREASURES OF THE WORD

DawnBible: Thank God our Heavenly Father. Its nothing except your grace and mercy to get treasures of your Word.

Thank God for the spiritual food we receive through *The Dawn*. Please strengthen us with food of your beloved Son and our Redeemer, Christ Jesus.—India

## THE COMING KINGDOM

Dear Dawn: Thank the Lord for his plan, for today a big work is taking place. God's choosing a spiritual church that will do away with all evil, sin, and all wickedness in the coming kingdom that we are praying for.

Keep up the good work. God bless you.—Sweden

## PUBLIC LIBRARY

DawnBible: I've read *The Dawn* magazine in our public library from time to time.—MN

## WHAT A BOOK!

DawnBible: I have been reading Dawn publications ever since I was a child. Jehovah God has led my life in a wonderful way.

The *Divine Plan of the Ages* is the best I have ever read, and preached! The plan of God, restitution of all things, what a book!

I wish God's hand help you to publish more books and spread to the whole world. Greetings in the name of the Lord.—India

## **GOOD EFFORT**

DawnBible: I would like to thank you for your good effort to let us know and study the Bible and also to learn more about Christ.—Kenya

## **NEW HARDBOUND BOOKS**

DawnBible: Thank you for the new hardbound edition of *Studies in the Scriptures*. The books are fantastic, and much easier to read and study.

I also love *The Dawn* magazine, it always is filled with gems you can't get anywhere else.

The Jehovah's Witnesses put out two versions of the *Watchtower* every month, but both combined do not give you the powerful truths this magazine gives. Keep up the good work.—VA

## **INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES**

DawnBible: I really enjoy the Bible lessons each week [*The Dawn* magazine]. They help me in my studies and help prepare me for our Sunday School.—TX

## **YOUR GIFT**

DawnBible: Thank you for your gift. I am disabled and have difficulty filling these out. Thank you and God bless you for your gift and the great work you do.—NY

## **COMFORT AND PLEASURE**

Dear Dawn: I get much comfort and pleasure from all the knowledge you give the world so freely.

God bless you always. I have been reading your material for years. Love.—NJ

## **INFORMATIVE SITE**

DawnBible: I was pleased to find your informative site and booklets. God bless you!—AR

## **BIBLE LEARNING TOOLS**

Dear Dawn: Could you please send my son the booklet, *When a Man Dies*?

I've learned more from that booklet than I did going to church for the past thirty years.

Thank you so much for these Bible learning tools.—MD

## **BIBLE STUDY HELPS**

DawnBible: Thank you for your very informative helpful messages for Bible study. I conduct Bible study every evening and lead the groups. Your messages are very useful to learn more about the depth of the true Word of God. May God bless your ministry.—India

## **RADIO AFRICA**

DawnBible: I really like your website. Please can you put me on your mailing list. I wish to be receiving your magazine as frequent as possible.

I will continue to listen to *Frank & Ernest* program on Radio Africa.—Nigeria

## **BIBLE DOCTRINES**

Dear Dawn: I do appreciate so much your graciousness in continually and consistently sending to me monthly publications of *The Dawn*.

I have learned quite a lot of great Bible doctrines inspiringly and reasonably interpreted in true relevance to historical world events. In the grace of Christ our Lord.—Malawi

## **LISTENER EVERY SUNDAY**

Dear Dawn: Hello, I am writing to request some booklets—*The Atonement*, *Hope Beyond the Grave*, *Israel*, and *Your Adversary the Devil*.

I listen to your broadcast [*Frank & Ernest*] on WCHB 1200 radio [Detroit, MI] at 10:30-11:00 a.m. every Sunday. Thank you.—MI

## **AN ANSWER TO PRAYER**

DawnBible: I moved to FL from NYC 25 years ago. I met a very wise older woman that worked with me. She had been the answer to my prayers. I had asked God to help me find the right religion or understanding to know him better and raise my children knowing the message.

God put her in my path and she introduced me to *The Dawn* magazine and the six volumes of *The Keys to the Bible* [*Studies in the Scriptures*], written by Russell. I was able to understand everything so clearly as I started reading,

asking, researching and accepting how wonderful it is to know the truth and our Heavenly Creator.

I continue to look for all the promises and all the signs when I watch the news. We are very close to the new system. How great it is to know that. Praise the Lord Jesus and Jehovah his Father.—FL

### **BIBLE COMES ALIVE!**

DawnBible: What a blessing your site is! I supplement my Bible study with your commentary, and it just makes it come alive!

Thanks, and God bless your work until the glorious reign of Christ is manifest to the world.—NY

### **SPEED YOUR PLAN**

DawnBible: I pray very humbly that Jehovah will speed his plan. I pray for the day that his son Jesus will be our ruler. For many, many reasons I'm so ready for this. However, the one reason I want this most for all the sweet, beautiful children that have to suffer so much.

Thank you for making sense.—MO

### **BIBLE-BASED**

DawnBible: I have actually read, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, as I had a host family who let me read this book while I visited with them for a few days on a walk through Oklahoma last year.

I found the book fascinating, interesting and Bible-based. I understand that it is book one of six. Could someone send me book two and/or three? Thanks, in advance.—MT

### **NEW MEANING**

DawnBible: I thoroughly enjoyed the booklets you have on your website. I have read most of the scriptures you mentioned from my Bible and they have a new meaning.

I agree with you based upon the Word of God, in whom we are to test everything we read. God bless you!—CA

### **PURGATORY**

DawnBible: The piece on purgatory [*The Dawn*, Jan. 1997] answered my questions concerning its validity and how it fits in overall biblical scripture. Thank you so much.—AR



## 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.*

**LAGOS, NIGERIA CONVENTION, October 6**—Ejigbo, Lagos State, Nigeria. Contact C. M. Oledibe, #29 Morning Star Church Street, Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: oledibe@yahoo.com

**PITTSBURGH CONVENTION, October 6,7**—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139 Or contact L. Mlinek. Phone: (724) 689-8733

**GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 13,14**—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259 or E-mail: ljhoulmont@gmail.com

**SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 20,21**—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2963

**ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 27,28**—South Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or E-mail: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

**NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 4**—Westwoods Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. M. Suraci. Phone: (203) 430-5770

**SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 9-11**—Alliant University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego, CA 92131. For accommodations at Alliant University, contact B. Bach, PO Box 323, Alpine, CA 91903. Phone: (619) 445-4879 or E-mail: bbach1@cox.net. Other information, contact R. Rice, 13084 Treecrest Street, Poway, CA 92064. Phone: (858) 486-0381 or E-mail: robin.rice@gmx.com

**JERSEY CITY CONVENTION, November 18**—Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ 07083. Phone: (908) 688-9842. Contact S. Koterba. Phone: (718) 961-4437, (917) 554-2348 or E-mail: sandykoterba@gmail.com

**CHICAGO NEW YEAR CONVENTION, December 29,30**—Location to be announced. Contact L. Manzuk. Phone: (630) 660-1874

**AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, January 25-28**—Wilkin Baptist Camp, 57 Noble Street, Anglesea, Vic. 3230, Australia. Contact G. Smith. E-mail: graemedawn@gmail.com

*Christian Fellowship*

*Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.*

*Blest are the sons of peace,  
Whose hearts and hopes are one,  
Whose kind designs to serve and please  
Through all their actions run.*

*We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear;  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.*

*Our glorious hope revives  
Our courage every day,  
While each in expectation strives  
To run the heavenly way.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

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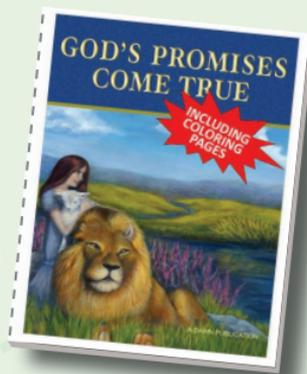
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## *To us the Scriptures clearly teach:*

**THAT THE CHURCH IS "THE TEMPLE" OF THE LIVING GOD**—peculiarly "his workmanship;" that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief "corner stone" of this temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come "to all people", and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

**THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING AND POLISHING** of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these "living stones," "elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

**THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD** lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, "a ransom for all," and will be "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "in due time."—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

**THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH** is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be a "partaker of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

**THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH** is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace, to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

**THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD** lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35

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