

The Dawn

A Herald of Christ's Presence



The DAWN

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The Stone Which Is Still Rejected

***“The stone which
the builders
rejected, the same
is become the head
of the corner.”
—Matthew 21:42***

We are approaching the time of the year when the Christian world will begin to draw its attention to those grave events which occurred in Judea nearly two thousand

years ago, culminating in the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God, who came into the world to be the Messiah and the King of promise.

Commentators tell us that there has never been a period in human history like the last several decades, when so many outstanding events have occurred to change the whole course of human history. Actually, however, this is not true when compared with the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. These events, although associated in the main with but one personality, have already been world-shaking, and are destined to change the course and outlook of the human race to a far greater extent in the future than they have in the past.

Jesus Rejected

It is written of Jesus that he “came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John 1:11) This was the immediate cause of the persecution which brought about his cruel and early death. “His own” was the nation of Israel. Many of the common people of the nation rejoiced in his message and a few days before his crucifixion enthusiastically acclaimed him King. (John 12:12-15) However, it was not so with the religious leaders. They enviously hated the Master and finally succeeded in bringing about his arrest and crucifixion.—John 15:25

Jesus was fully aware that the scribes and Pharisees hated him. On an occasion near the close of his ministry he related a parable to them which fitted the circumstances so accurately that even they sensed the meaning of it. Yet their anger was increased, and they became more determined than ever to kill him. The parable was of a householder who planted a vineyard, and then left it in care of husbandmen while he went into a far country. When the time came for the gathering of the fruit, the householder sent his servants to the vineyard, but the husbandmen whom he left in charge killed some of them and maltreated the others. Finally, the householder sent his own son, thinking that the husbandmen would respect him, but they did not. They killed him also.—Matt. 21:33-46

The householder in this parable was Jehovah, and the vineyard was the Jewish nation. The husbandmen were the religious rulers of the nation, and the servants who were first sent to represent the householder were the prophets. The record is that the religious rulers killed the prophets, and

stoned them that were sent by God. (Matt. 23:37) Now they planned to kill the Son whom the Heavenly Father had sent.

After relating this parable, the application of which was so obvious, Jesus quoted the prophecy concerning the stone which the builders rejected: "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."—Matt. 21:42-44; Ps. 118:22,23

Jesus himself was that stone whom the builders—the religious rulers of Israel—rejected. The Prophet Isaiah foretold one of the reasons, saying, "He had neither beauty nor majesty, when we beheld him, there was nothing to behold, that we should desire him." (Isa. 53:2, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) Actually, of course, Jesus was perfect, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26) He was kind and sympathetic and went about doing good. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He encouraged the faint-hearted and extended mercy to sinners. He condemned the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the publican and commended the publican because he recognized his own sin and humbly asked God for forgiveness.—Acts 10:38; Matt. 11:5; Luke 18:9-14

However, these were not the qualities the scribes and Pharisees were looking for in the one whom

they would accept as their Messiah and King. They wanted a Messiah who would not expose their evil practices as Jesus did. They desired one they could control as a sort of puppet king, well qualified as a general to raise and command a conquering army, but satisfied to let them rule and exploit the people as they chose. So, from their standpoint, Jesus had no beauty that they should desire him.

To the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus did not fit their desires as to the Messiah of promise. The illustration of the stone that became the head of the corner suggests the building of a structure. The cornerstone was the starting point of the foundation, and the rest of the foundation was aligned and squared to this stone. Jesus was not only the cornerstone of the spiritual temple, but he was the “head of the corner”—that is, he was the very top stone that tied the entire structure together. Thus the builders, not understanding the kind of building God was erecting, rejected Jesus. They could find no place for him in their own plans, and God’s plan they refused to hear.

Exalted by God

All the tragic experiences surrounding Jesus’ life were due to the fact that the builders rejected him. However, his exaltation to heavenly glory following his suffering and death was in fulfillment of the prophecy that the rejected stone would become the head of the corner. He would not be the head over the old Jewish house, which the scribes and the Pharisees had so miserably warped and twisted by their selfish construction methods, but a new house, a spiritual house. This being true, it was

both appropriate and essential that the head of the corner be provided first for the new house so that the entire structure could be conformed to God's plan and purpose.

Speaking of the faithful and resurrected Jesus, the Apostle Peter says this: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."—I Pet. 2:4-10

The New Nation

When Jesus let it be known to the scribes and Pharisees that the stone they were rejecting was to become the head of the corner, he added, "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing

forth the fruits thereof.” (Matt. 21:43) In the lesson we have quoted from Peter, in which he refers to the stone and the new building which began to be erected with Jesus as the head of the corner, he also tells us about the nation to which Jesus said the kingdom would be given. He said, “Ye [the church] are ... an holy nation.”—I Pet. 2:9

The nation of Israel could have been God’s royal or kingdom nation. In Exodus 19:5,6, we read of God’s promise to Israel if they would be obedient to his laws. “Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” The promises were originally made to this nation. However, because they rejected the prophets, and finally killed God’s Son, the kingdom was taken from them, and, starting with Jesus as the head of the corner, God began to bring a new nation into being. Many are the promises, particularly in the New Testament, which refer to those who become a part of this new spiritual nation. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him,” is one of them.—II Tim. 2:12

The work of God since Pentecost has been the calling and selecting of those who are to reign with Christ in that thousand-year kingdom. (Rev. 20:6) It is to be an actual kingdom, although this fact has long been lost sight of in much of the Christian world, but the apostles and the Early Church understood it. Indeed, they believed that this glorious kingdom of the Messiah was very near. They knew that Jesus would return to set up that kingdom in the earth, making an end of earth’s long

night of weeping and death. Paul wrote, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."—Rom. 13:11,12

This will be the day that will result from the reign of Christ, who has been exalted to the head of the corner in the Messianic kingdom structure. Indeed, this is the day which the Heavenly Father will bring about. It is his doing, and "it is marvelous in our eyes." (Matt. 21:42) The kingdom day of blessing will not be a humanly conceived Utopia, but a day of brightness and joy which will result from the rising of the "Sun of righteousness," who will arise "with healing in his wings."—Mal. 4:2

The Vision Lost

It was not long after the apostles fell asleep in death that the vision of the hope of the kingdom began to fade. Two erroneous viewpoints gradually developed to take its place in the hearts of Christians. The first was that the kingdom of God would be established by the church uniting with civil powers. The professed Christian world now knows how miserably that has failed. Later there developed the erroneous theory that the kingdom referred to in the Bible is merely a righteous influence exerted in the hearts and lives of believers. It is claimed that when the whole world is converted to righteous living, the kingdom shall have fully come.

Great and widespread missionary efforts to convert the world have been made, especially within the last century and a half, with the hope of realizing the fulfillment of the kingdom promise. Now it is slowly beginning to be recognized that this viewpoint is just as disappointing as was the church-state theory. Because of this, many are now admitting that

they do not really know the meaning of Christianity, or whether it has succeeded or failed. This is evident from the following, written several decades ago by the late Dr. Charles W. Ranson, General Secretary of the International Missionary Council, and published in the *Christian Century* magazine.

“It is increasingly recognized that we shall not find answers to some of the most perplexing questions of contemporary missionary practice until we achieve a new clarity as to the Christian meaning of history. What do we expect to happen as a result of the missionary preaching of the church? What is the meaning of Christian hope—within history and beyond history? And what is the relation of this hope to our missionary vocation? There is a sense in which the contemporary crisis of missions derives from a recognition that we do not really know the answers to these questions, or at least that the answers we conventionally offer are totally inadequate.”

“To interpret this revived interest in eschatology [the destiny of humanity] merely as a form of escape from practical problems that have grown too difficult for solution is totally to misinterpret it. These questions are, rather, the result of a new realism which recognizes the catastrophic nature of history and seeks an answer to it in the light of the fullness of the Christian revelation and the Christian hope. They are an attempt to submit the whole historic enterprise of Christian missions to the judgment of the Word of God.”

“It is here indeed that the present judgment of God is upon us. It may well be that what the Lord our God most requires of us at this time is a penitent reexamination of those things in which we have

failed in simple obedience—the insights we have ignored, the convictions we have not had the strength or the courage to apply. This will undoubtedly be a hard road. But it may well be the road that leads to resurrection and renewal, not only for the missionary movement but for the whole church.”

“It is thus my deepest conviction that what God requires of us is not some stupendous missionary strategy, not some pretentious piece of central planning, but a humble return to the Word of God wherein we meet once more our Judge and our Savior, and receive afresh our mandate and our marching orders.”

Here is a frank confession of frustration. It is a humble acknowledgment of the lack of knowledge of God’s purposes and of what work is to be done through the church. This did not come from some obscure layman, but from a Doctor of Divinity, graduate of Oxford University, the General Secretary of the International Missionary Council, and a widely read author of books and articles on the subject of Christian missionary work. Facing the stark fact that the missionary efforts of churchianity were failing, he earnestly recommended that all should return to the Word of God to find out what he really wants them to do. If Dr. Ranson’s observations were true several decades ago, how much more today do they describe the church’s need to return to the Word of God—the Bible.

Jesus told the Pharisees that they had made void the Word of God by their own traditions—the traditions of men. (Mark 7:6-9) Now history has repeated itself. Traditions and ideas of fallen humanity, rather than the Word of God, more and

more are guiding the church systems and their teachings.

Increasingly throughout the centuries, various traditions of men have attempted to make void the Word of God. The church-state tradition certainly did this, and while that idea is now generally frowned upon, it has left its mark upon religious thinking. Even in the United States many prominent religious leaders urge the influencing of the civil government in the passing of laws which it is thought will support their respective ideas.

One of the most misleading traditions of men is the idea that the promised kingdom of God is something that must be established by human efforts. Knowingly or unknowingly, this erroneous concept rejects Jesus as the head of the corner just as definitely as the Pharisees rejected him. They wanted their own kingdom. The religious leaders of today have lost sight of God's plan to set up a kingdom. They have little or no faith in the idea that divine power will be exerted to take over the rulership of the earth. They praise Jesus as a man, but give little attention to the teachings of the Word of God that he is to be the King of Earth, and will rule with "power over all the nations."—Rev. 2:26,27; Ps. 2:6-10; I Cor. 15:22-25

Jesus, the Headstone

Judgment came upon the nation of Israel, and judgment is coming upon the world in God's due time and own way. All Christendom will mourn because of its failure to achieve humanly-conceived purposes. As their house crumbles, Jesus, the promised King of earth, the headstone over his

new spiritual house which he has been in the process of building, will soon begin his righteous rulership. Truly it is God's doing and is marvelous in our eyes. The footstep followers of the Master, as they view the signs of the approaching kingdom, can truly say, "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."—Ps. 118:24

Let us rejoice, not because the churches are failing, but because we know that God has a better plan for the conversion of the world. His is a plan that will be gloriously successful, resulting in the promised blessing of all the nations of the earth. (Gen. 22:18; Acts 3:25) Let us rejoice in the knowledge and conviction that the day which the Lord has promised will be one of increasing brightness and joy. It will end in a glory to him that will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea—not because of human efforts, but because it will be his doing.—Hab. 2:14

This is truly marvelous in the eyes of all those who rejoice in the God of our salvation and humbly accept Christ, the head of the corner, as their Exemplar, Savior, and King. ■

Rewards of Faith

Faith soars into the realm of God

Where there is perfect peace;

There the heart is calm, contented,

All earthly strivings cease.

The unseen things the eyes behold,

All mysteries unfold,

The riches of eternity

Excel all earthly gold.

—While Marching to Zion, C. K. Hindle

“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?—Matthew 14:31

What must be done to overcome this lack of faith, and to have an increase of faith? We answer that, like the apostles of old, we should pray, “Lord, increase our faith.” And then, acting in harmony with this prayer, each should cultivate faith in his own heart: (a) By refreshing his memory continually with the divine promises, becoming very familiar with these in the Father’s Word, (b) He should seek more and more to remember that, having made his covenant with the Lord, these promises are his, and in his heart and with his lips he should claim them as his before the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. He should claim them in his own thoughts, and in his conferences on holy things with the brethren.—Daily Heavenly Manna, February 8

2026 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Tuesday, March 31.

DVD versions of the Memorial Service can be ordered free of charge. Please send your request to:

Dawn Bible Students Association
PO Box 521167
Longwood, FL 32752-1167

Please place your order by March 10.

Edifying the Body of Christ

Key Verses: *“He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”*
—*Ephesians 4:11,12*

Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 4:11-16

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (vss. 3-6) These verses emphasize that there should be no spirit of sectarianism among those who are devoted Christians. All such will acknowledge Christ as their leader and that the eternal Father is the Creator or First Cause.

After Christ ascended on high, the Holy Spirit came upon the Early Church on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:1-4, 9-14; 2:1-4) At that time, various gifts were

As this chapter commences, Paul implores believers to “live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Eph. 4:1, *New International Version*) This refers to one’s conversion to Christianity. The vocation of a true Christian goes beyond ordinary occupations. It involves embracing and exhibiting the values of faith, love, forgiveness, service, sacrifice, and unity in every aspect of life.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

imparted to the Master's followers, especially the apostles, who were divinely inspired representatives of God. Those things that they taught and wrote were intended to guide consecrated believers throughout their earthly sojourn.—Eph. 4:7-10

Our Key Verses outline the offices of spiritual leadership that the Lord established for equipping the Gospel Age saints in their work of ministry as God had ordained. Paul says this ministry was for the “edifying [or building up] of the body of Christ.” Many have appreciated the privilege of responding to the invitation to become joint heirs with Christ in his coming kingdom by virtue of their consecration and spirit begetting. At the present time, such Christians come together in meetings, conventions, fellowship, and engage in personal study and prayer as they strive to faithfully carry out their covenant of sacrifice.

How blessed we are to have received the grand privilege of consecrating our lives now in this “acceptable time.” (II Cor. 6:2, *Young's Literal Translation*) It is an opportunity that defies description. Great should be our humility, which acknowledges such an exalted prospect to which we of ourselves could never aspire.

In these “latter days,” we can reflect upon the marvelous heritage in having come to a knowledge and appreciation of “present truth.” (II Pet. 1:12,13) We must remember, however, that the ultimate object of our having received such understanding is not merely to give us an intellectual knowledge of God's plan. Rather, in addition, it is to assist us in the transformation process, that through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, we may develop a Christlike character and seek the “edifying of the body of Christ.”

Let us give great diligence to these matters in making our calling and election sure. If faithful, we will ultimately share in the work of reconciling mankind back to the Heavenly Father, as they are restored to the perfection that was lost in Eden.—II Pet. 1:10,11 ■

Christian Baptism

Key Verse: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
—Matthew 28:19

Selected Scriptures:
Matthew 3:13-17;
28:18-20

12:1,2; Rev. 2:10

Immediately after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, “the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like as dove, and lighting upon him.” (Matt. 3:16) Thus our Lord was anointed with the spirit, fully establishing his authority to give his life as a ransom for Adam and all mankind. (I Tim. 2:5,6) There was audible confirmation by God that he was pleased that his beloved Son willingly embarked upon this course of laying down his life in order to purchase the dying race. A voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—Matt. 3:17

After proving faithful unto death in his earthly ministry, Christ was resurrected and exalted to the divine nature. (Phil. 2:9,10) Although he would no longer be

Christian baptism is the means by which one makes a public profession of faith and discipleship. In adhering to Christ’s example during his First Advent, such individuals generally symbolize their commitment publicly through water immersion. Giving such a witness implies their commitment to know and to do the Heavenly Father’s will, whatever it may be, even unto death.—Rom.

physically present in their midst, he desired to give his disciples assurance that he would continue to strengthen them. Prior to his ascension into heaven, we read his parting words: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—Matt. 28:16-18

The following is an inspiring promise which addresses the grand reward to be attained by all Christ's obedient and faithful members of his body, those who have been "baptized into his death." (Rom. 6:3-5) "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, ... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."—Rev. 14:1-4

May the urgency of the moment bring renewed vigor to appreciate and apply in our lives those principles that will enable us to echo the words of one of our illustrious forerunners, the Apostle Paul. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—II Tim. 4:7,8 ■

The Sabbath Day

Key Verse: *“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”*
—Exodus 20:11

Selected Scriptures:
Exodus 20:8-11;
Romans 14:5,6

The institution of the Sabbath can be traced in the Scriptures back to the record of creation and its completion. (Gen. 2:1-3) At this time God had finished his design of preparing the earth for human habitation following six lengthy periods, or “days.” The Creator ceased from this activity after our first parents were created “in the image of God; ... male and female created he them.”—Gen. 1:27

Centuries later, following the Israelites’ deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Heavenly Father set forth a set of divine standards which they were to adhere to, in order to receive his favor and blessings as his covenanted people. One of these laws was to take time away from secular pursuits to especially worship and honor God for all his provisions on their behalf.

The following account specifies various features of this sacred day. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.”—Exod. 20:8-10

The weekly Sabbath was established as part of the Ten Commandments given exclusively to the nation of Israel. However, our Key Verse implies that all individuals, including devoted Christians, should take the time to especially render praise and gratitude to the Creator for the many blessings he has bestowed upon them.

Paul saw with great clarity that the Early Church was in a period of transition during his ministry. What was once obligatory under the Mosaic Law did not apply to Jews who had come into Christ, nor for Gentiles who never were under this restraint. Here is one of his quotes: “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”—Rom. 14:5,6

In these verses, Paul seems to indicate that a Jew might, because of religious conviction, choose to observe the Sabbath. However, it is not incumbent upon believers, who have accepted Christ, to obey the conditions attached to the Law such as literally keeping Israel’s Sabbath. To the Christian, every day should be a “Sabbath” day of devotion and praise to our Heavenly Father.

Entering into God’s Sabbath of rest involves faith, obedience, surrender, and reliance on Christ. It encompasses peace, assurance, salvation, and relief from striving for self-righteousness. God’s rest is both present and eternal. We enter it by trusting his precious promises, obeying Scriptural injunctions, and by casting our burdens upon the Lord. By striving to live in faith and obedience, we can experience God’s rest daily, while looking forward to the eternal rest promised in the “first resurrection” if we are “faithful unto death.”—Heb. 4:9-11; Rev. 20:6; 2:10 ■

Living Generously

Key Verse: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”
—II Corinthians 8:9

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians
8:1-15

sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.”—II Cor. 8:1-4, *New Living Translation*

The foregoing passage challenges a common notion that one must have an abundance of resources in order to give. The Macedonians did not wait until they had a surplus; rather, they gave sacrificially even in their time

In today’s lesson, Paul addresses the topic of encouraging the believers to participate in a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. His words provide valuable insights into the heart and motivations behind generosity. The apostle holds up the example of the brethren in Macedonia, who gave sacrificially, despite their own poverty, as a model for the Corinthians to emulate.

Paul writes: “Now I want you to know, dear brothers and

of want. This should cause us to rethink our own perspectives on this subject and to consider the ways in which we can contribute to the needs of the saints, regardless of our financial status. In this, we are reminded of the widow who gave a small offering but was commended by Jesus for giving all that she had.—Mark 12:41-44

Giving should always be on a volunteer basis. All devoted Christians should be motivated to give generously because of God's grace. This must come from their own heart, otherwise it is not pleasing to God. Though the Macedonians did not have much, they desperately wanted to share what they had. They begged Paul to be able to take part. What an example of generosity!

Our Key Verse provides an even greater lesson. It reminds us that the spirit of benevolence was manifested by our Lord to the utmost degree by his humility in willingly relinquishing his spiritual life to come to earth as a man. This he did in order to give his human life as a ransom and thus purchase the entire world of mankind because of Adam's original sin.—Rom. 5:18,19; I Tim. 2:5,6

Christians understand that one of the evidences we have passed from death unto life is that we love the brethren. Additionally, as Christ laid down his life for us, we should do likewise for the brethren. In other words, we should do whatever we can to help them make their calling and election sure.—I John 3:14,16; II Pet. 1:10

The Scriptures abound with lessons illustrating the compassion that we should have towards brethren in their hour of need, as well as for the world of mankind as we have opportunity. May our lives more and more reflect our appreciation of the following exhortation from Paul: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—Gal. 6:10 ■

A New Covenant

***“Behold, the days
come, saith the
LORD, that I will
make a new
covenant with the
house of Israel, ...
I will put my law
in their inward
parts, and write it
in their hearts;
and will be their
God, and they shall
be my people.”***
—***Jeremiah 31:31,33***

A covenant is a contract or agreement between two parties. The expression “new covenant” in our opening text implies there was an “old” covenant. This was the Law Covenant, which God gave to the nation of Israel, through Moses, at Mount Sinai. (Exodus chapters 19-24; Heb. 8:13) The Apostle Paul explains that the many features of the Law Covenant were a “shadow of heavenly things,” and of “good things to come,” under a future New Covenant.—Heb. 8:5; 10:1

The New Covenant promises have their origin in the Abrahamic Covenant, in which God promised Abraham, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22:16-18) The Apostle Paul tells us that “four hundred and thirty years” later, God gave the Law Covenant to Israel. (Gal. 3:15-17) Then he rhetorically asks, “Why, then, was the law [covenant] given at all?” He answers, “It was added because of transgressions until the

Seed to whom the promise referred had come.”—
vs. 19, *New International Version*

The Law Covenant was “holy, and just, and good,” and given by God so the Jewish nation might realize their own fallen and imperfect condition, that “sin ...might become exceeding sinful,” and to show they were unable to justify themselves before God. (Rom. 7:12-14; 3:20) Elsewhere Paul explains, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:24) The Law Covenant was to prove to Israel the need for the atoning blood of a Redeemer, Christ and his shed blood, in order to be justified before God.

Sacrifices on the Day of Atonement

When God gave the Law Covenant to Israel, precise instructions were also given on how to build the Tabernacle, along with directions concerning the offerings to be made there. On the annual Day of Atonement, sacrifices were made which required the shedding of blood.—Leviticus chapter 16

First, the “bullock of the sin offering” was slain by Aaron, to “make an atonement for himself, and for his house.” Its blood was taken into the Most Holy and sprinkled “upon ... and before the mercy seat ... seven times.” (Lev. 16:11-14) This pointed forward to the willing sacrifice of the perfect man Jesus, “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) Elsewhere, Paul states that “without shedding of blood is no remission” of sins.—Heb. 9:19-22

The consecration and spirit begetting of Jesus at the River Jordan, and subsequently his death and resurrection, were a guarantee that in God’s “due

time” the long-promised blessings under the New Covenant would become a reality in the Messianic Kingdom. Paul writes, “By so much was Jesus made a surety [Greek: pledge or guarantee] of a better testament,” or covenant. “By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place.”—Heb. 7:22; 9:12; 10:10

The Apostle Paul assures us that Jesus is the promised seed of blessing. He writes, “To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”—Gal. 3:16

Sacrifice of the Lord's Goat

A second sacrifice was made on Israel's annual Day of Atonement. It was the “goat of the sin offering, that is for the people,” whose blood was also taken into the Most Holy and sprinkled “upon ... and before the mercy seat,” like the bullock. (Lev. 16:15) The sacrifice of the goat represents the “living sacrifice” of the faithful followers of the Lord during the present Gospel Age, who are “not conformed to this world,” but instead are daily striving to “be transformed” by the renewing of their minds, and “to determine what God's will is—what is proper, pleasing, and perfect.” (Rom. 12:1,2, *International Standard Version*) The sacrifice of the faithful consecrated followers of Christ is only acceptable to our Heavenly Father because of the merit of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, pictured by the sacrifice of the bullock. As Paul explains, God has “made us accepted in the beloved [Jesus Christ]. In whom we have redemption through his blood.”—Eph. 1:6,7

There were many different sacrifices that God instituted with Israel under their Tabernacle arrangement in the wilderness. However, there were only two sacrifices whose blood was brought into the Most Holy and sprinkled on and before the mercy seat. These were the sacrifice of the bullock and the sacrifice of the Lord's goat, both on the Day of Atonement.

Understanding the symbolic meaning of these two sacrifices has been one of the great "mysteries" of the Bible. It teaches that the promised seed of blessing is composed of many members. (Eph. 5:23-32; Col. 1:26,27) "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:27-29) Paul also states, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."—I Cor. 12:12

Training of New Covenant Ministers

Christ Jesus, along with his body members, will bring blessings to all the families of the earth under the terms of the New Covenant. Paul explains, "Who has also qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant." (II Cor. 3:6, *ISV*) Our preparation that is occurring now will, if we are faithful unto death, qualify us to be associated with Christ in administering the New Covenant to natural Israel and eventually to all mankind. This preparation is by God's Holy Spirit, having his law "written in our hearts," in our lives and our conduct. Hence we realize, "By ourselves we are not qualified to claim

that anything comes from us. Rather, our credentials come from God.”—II Cor 3:2-5, *ISV*

The Apostle also explains how the body members of Christ are developed and proven during the present age under a special feature of the Abrahamic Covenant. This feature was pictured by Abraham’s wife Sarah. (Gal. 4:22-31) Sarah was a “free woman,” Abraham’s real wife, who after many years of barrenness bore Isaac, the seed of promise. In God’s arrangement, the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic Covenant was to produce and develop the seed of blessing. This seed would be used to bless all the families of the earth.

In the closing verses of Genesis chapter 24, we are told how Isaac, who in symbol represents Christ, married Rebekah, who symbolically represents the body members of the Christ, the church. Verse 67 states, “Isaac was comforted after his mother’s [Sarah’s] death.” Sarah represents the feature of the Abrahamic Covenant that is operative during the Gospel Age—the development of the seed of blessing, the “little flock.” (Luke 12:32) Hence, her death implies the end of the Gospel Age, after which, the New Covenant will begin to be operational in Christ’s kingdom.

A City Whose Builder Is God

The promise of a better day was given, starting from the time when God first began dealing with Abraham. The Apostle writes, “By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath

foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”
—Heb. 11:9,10

In the Bible a city is often symbolically used to represent a government. For example, the actual city of Jerusalem represents the government of Israel to the Jewish people. In the foregoing verses, we are told that this city, or government, that Abraham looked for, was to have “foundations,” that is, strength, stability, and permanency. These foundations are God’s holy principles of “righteousness and justice,” “lovingkindness and truth.” (Ps. 89:14, *American Standard Version*) The only builder who could give these qualities to such a kingdom is God.

Along these lines the Apostle John wrote, “I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Rev. 21:2) Then the following verses give a beautiful description of the work to be accomplished by this kingdom, which will function under the terms of the New Covenant.—vss. 3,4

Mediator of the New Covenant

The word “mediator,” meaning a go-between or reconciler, is used in the Bible only in connection with a covenant between two parties. Moses was the mediator of the Law Covenant, and was a type or picture of Jesus, the mediator of a new and better covenant. Paul writes that Jesus “obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” (Heb. 8:6) Here a comparison is made with the Law Covenant, under whose terms the nation of Israel was required to perform perfectly all the requirements of that

covenant in order to receive justification and life. However, because of their fallen condition, the nation was not able to keep those terms. Therefore, no one was able to attain life.—Rom. 3:19,20

The Apostle continues, “If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault, ... he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” (Heb. 8:7,8) The first covenant, the Law Covenant, was a measure of a perfect man’s ability to keep it. Only Jesus was able to fulfil the Law Covenant, because he alone was perfect.—Matt. 5:17,18

The Law Covenant was unable to permit its mediator, Moses, to act on behalf of each transgressor and make provision for them to eventually perform perfectly. This was because Moses himself was imperfect. Neither did this covenant have any provision to eradicate evil influences, which were a great deterrent to keeping all of its requirements. Thus, because of the imperfection of the people, of Moses, and many outside evil influences, a different covenant was required in order to bring the people into full and lasting harmony and favor with the Heavenly Father.

Concerning the making of the New Covenant, the apostle states: “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.” (Heb. 8:9) The New Covenant will be able to reconcile fallen mankind back into harmony with God

during the Messianic kingdom, because it will have a better mediator, Christ and his body members, the church. (Heb. 8:6; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30) Together “the Christ” will be sympathetic “priests,” administrators of the New Covenant.—Heb. 2:11, 16-18; Rev. 20:6

The Apostle Paul states: “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (Heb. 8:10) At that time, “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”—Jer. 31:34

Prior Events

When the Law Covenant was inaugurated at Mount Sinai there were thunders, lightning, a thick cloud, the loud sound of a trumpet, smoke, and the mount quaked greatly. (Exod. 19:16-18) The Apostle Paul writes, “so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” (Heb. 12:18-21) Each of these natural elements has a symbolic meaning. Just as these fearful sights and sounds preceded the establishment of the Law Covenant, likewise, a great time of trouble on earth will precede the inauguration of the New Covenant.—Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:1-11; Rev. 16:18-21

The fulfilment of Bible prophecies and signs of the times indicates that this period of great trouble

is drawing upon us. It is being manifested in “thunders,” calls for justice, along with rumblings of dissatisfaction; “lightnings,” flashes of truth and revealing of unrighteousness; a “thick cloud,” growing trouble and discontent; the “sound of a trumpet,” demands for rights, both real and imagined; “smoke,” resulting from the symbolic fire of destruction from anarchy; and an “earthquake,” removal of human social, financial, and religious institutions not in harmony with God.—Hag. 2:6,7; Heb. 12:26,27

Moses was absent from the Jewish nation, having gone up into the mountain to commune with God, while the mountain was clothed with smoke and shook. This suggests, in symbol, that when the last members of the body of Christ will have been proven faithful unto death and resurrected to the divine nature, then will come the climax of a great time of trouble, such as earth has never yet experienced. (Matt. 24:21) Thankfully, those days will be shortened, and the kingdom, under the righteous rule of Christ, will be established in the earth.—vs. 22

Earthly Representatives

The Scriptures inform us that God will have human representatives on Earth to administer the New Covenant. These will be the resurrected faithful and holy ones who lived prior to Jesus' First Advent, from Abel until John the Baptist. They will serve as “judges,” and as “princes in all the earth”—human leaders to assist mankind.—Matt. 11:11; Luke 13:28; Isa. 1:26; Ps. 45:16

The Apostle Paul lists by name some of these faithful ones, adding, “these all, having obtained a

good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Heb. 11:1-40) These men and women of God suffered greatly for serving the Lord faithfully. Yet, they were not heirs of the spiritual seed of promise. Although they received “a good report through faith,” each went down into the grave, until the time when Christ and his church would be complete and the New Covenant inaugurated. These Ancient Worthies will be resurrected “perfect,” as Adam was in the Garden of Eden. With their perfect minds and abilities, they will be examples and instructors of the people.

A Faithful Remnant

In addition to the Ancient Worthies, God’s holy prophets foretold that there will be a faithful “remnant” of Jews. These will be among the first beneficiaries of the blessings of the New Covenant. (Isa. 30:19; Ps. 107:6,28) Through the Prophet Isaiah, God tells us that this “remnant of Jacob [Israel]” would return “from the four corners of the earth.” (Isa. 10:21,22; 11:11-16) Also, through the Prophet Jeremiah, God declares that there would be a gathering of this faithful remnant, and they would “dwell in their own land.”—Jer. 23:1-8

This faithful remnant of Jews will eventually turn and cry unto the Lord for deliverance, not trusting in political accords with other nations, nor in human military might. Then, at that time, the Lord will deliver them. (Isa. 30:15,18,19; Zech. 14:1-3) The Prophet Zechariah wrote, “Thus saith the LORD; I ... will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem:

and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth,” and it will “be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, ... and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. ... These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.”—Zech. 8:3,6,12,13,16

Continuing, the prophet states: “Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. ... In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men [representing all the nations of the earth] shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” (vss. 22,23) Thus, beginning with a faithful remnant of Israel, together with the instruction of the Ancient Worthies, a way of reconciliation back to God will be available for all people.

The Prophet Ezekiel informs us that God would gather “the remnant of Israel” and give them not only “the land of Israel,” but also “one heart” and “put a new spirit,” his spirit of righteousness, within them. (Ezek. 11:17-20) Finally, the Prophet Micah describes the blessings of the New Covenant as being like “dew” and “showers” which will flow out to all mankind. He writes, “The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.”—Mic. 5:7,8

Sealed with Jesus' Blood

In the book of Hebrews, the inauguration of the Law Covenant is given as an example of how the New Covenant will be inaugurated. The apostle points out that a covenant with God, such as the Law Covenant and the New Covenant, must be sealed with blood. "For where a covenant exists, the death of that which has ratified it is necessary to be produced; because a covenant is firm over dead victims, since it is never valid when that which ratifies it is alive. Hence not even the first [the Law Covenant] has been instituted without blood." (Heb. 9:16-18, *The Emphatic Diaglott*) Jesus' death provided the merit, or value, for the blood which will seal the New Covenant.

On the night when Jesus instituted with his disciples the Memorial of his death, he gave the cup, inviting them, "Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:27-28; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25) Here Jesus indicated that his death would provide the value or merit to inaugurate, in due time, the New Covenant.

Partakers of Jesus' Sufferings

The disciples were invited, as have been each subsequent consecrated follower of the Master throughout the Gospel Age, to drink of the cup, symbolizing the acceptance of the merit of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. Based on this, they have been given the privilege of becoming "partakers of Christ's sufferings." (I Pet. 4:13; II Cor. 1:7) They are "justified by faith" in his blood as their Saviour. (Rom. 3:24; 5:1,9) These then have the opportunity

to be “dead with him,” that they might “live with him,” to “suffer” with him, that they might also “reign with him,” as “kings and priests.”—II Tim. 2:11,12; Rev. 20:6

The Apostle Paul explains, “The cup of blessing, for which we bless God,—is it not a participation of the blood of the Anointed one? The loaf which we break,—is it not a participation of the body of the Anointed one? Because there is one loaf, we, the many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf.”—I Cor. 10:16,17, *Diaglott*

In the book of Hebrews the Apostle continues, “When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats ... and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament [covenant] which God hath enjoined unto you.” (Heb. 9:19,20) In this typical picture, the blood of “calves and of goats” represents the sacrifice of the Christ, the Head, and his body members.

The Apostle Paul then adds, “Thus it was necessary for these earthly copies of the things in heaven to be cleansed by these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves are made clean with better sacrifices than these.” (vs. 23, *ISV*) The “copies”, or pictures of reality under the Law Covenant had to be cleansed and purified with animal sacrifices—bulls and goats. However, the “heavenly things”—the New Covenant and its arrangements—are made clean “with better sacrifices.” These better sacrifices are those of Christ and his church.

The Mediator of the New Covenant will be the resurrected and glorified “Christ” class, Jesus the

Head along with all his body members. Therefore, their mediatorial work of reconciling God and mankind, under the New Covenant, cannot begin until the last member of the body of Christ has been proven faithful unto death.—Rev. 2:10

We see, then, that the purpose of the New Covenant is for the reconciling of mankind back to God. This arrangement was provided at a great cost, by the willing sacrifice and death of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. (John 3:16,17) The New Covenant will thus demonstrate the love and concern of our Heavenly Father for all his human creation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." —Rom. 11:33 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

FEBRUARY 5—"This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification."—I Thessalonians 4:3 (Z. '99-4 Hymn 198)

FEBRUARY 12—"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."—James 1:4 (Z. '93-295 Hymn 95)

FEBRUARY 19—"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful nothing is pure; but both their mind and conscience are defiled: they profess to have known God, but by their works they renounce him, being abominable and disobedient, and as to every good work worthless."—Titus 1:15,16 (*Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) (Z. '99-214 Hymn 130)

FEBRUARY 26—"Rejoice in the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice."—Philippians 4:4 (Z. '03-7 Hymn 235)

The Salt of the Earth

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

—*Matthew 5:13*

to the Lord’s people and their consecrated walk in newness of life.

In the Bible, salt is used as a meaningful symbol in many and widely varying applications. In some cases, the word is used to point to that which is incorruptible and free from decay. In other scriptures, salt symbolizes that which is corruptible, or desolate. In our featured Scripture, Matthew has recorded Jesus’ statement wherein he used both illustrations of salt to emphasize important lessons concerning two very distinct characteristics of his followers.

Our opening Scripture is

taken from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. He had just finished teaching his followers many wonderful lessons called the Beatitudes. (vss. 3-12) Now he directed his listeners to the important characteristics of “salt” and how its unique qualities relate

Salt is known as a preserving and cleansing element, which keeps that which is good from decay or putrefaction. It also represents fidelity and other wholesome characteristics. Our Lord was pointing out that those of his followers who manifest these Christlike qualities are being faithful to their high calling, and he referred to them as the “salt of the earth.” They have been salted with the Truth, and they heed the instructions and commands of righteousness. The Apostle Paul said, “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”—Col. 4:6

In other applications, salt illustrates that which has become corrupt and barren. A worthy example concerns Lot and his wife as they were leaving Sodom and Gomorrah. From the scriptural account, we read, “His wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” (Gen. 19:26) Our Lord later recalled this episode by saying, “Remember Lot’s wife.” (Luke 17:32) Jesus was pointing to those who have the wrong spirit and have become careless with their faith. They love the world and remain in sympathy with it and its worthless allurements that should have been left behind. Their salt has lost its savor, and thus they are become barren and desolate.

Salt and its Savor

The word “savor” indicates that which is pleasing to the senses of taste or smell. To be “unsavory” suggests not only the opposite effect on these senses, but also points symbolically to those who are morally offensive and disagreeable. In his letter to

Titus, Paul spoke of those in such a condition and said, "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."—Titus 1:13-16

Valuable lessons concerning the significance of salt and its applications concerning the Lord's people are also recorded in the Gospel of Luke, which provide further perspective and insight. From Luke's gospel, we read, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Luke 14:33-35

Forsaking All Things

Luke included Jesus' statement that his disciples must forsake all things. This is vital among those who have given their lives in full consecration to the Heavenly Father and are striving to walk faithfully in the narrow way of sacrifice. They are admonished to deny themselves by giving up all earthly interests and pursuits and to walk even as Jesus walked, in newness of life.—Rom. 6:4

As clarification of this important point, we note Jesus' further reference: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,

and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—Matt. 16:24-26

The Apostle Paul also explained, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. ... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. 8:1,4-6

Salted with Fire

In Mark's record of the significance of salt, Jesus said, "Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."—Mark 9:49,50

In this scripture, Jesus brings to our attention the fact that his followers will be salted with fiery trials. Their faithfulness will be tested in proportion to the quality of the salt that was used in their sacrifices. Paul wrote, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (I Cor. 3:13) The Apostle Peter also said, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be

found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—I Pet. 1:7

Salt upon the Earth

The chemical and physical properties of salt, or sodium chloride, demonstrate its fitness as a spiritual symbol. It is abundant in nature and is found in many parts of the earth. Vast underground deposits of rock salt have been found, some of which are several thousand feet thick. Also, the oceans of the world contain about 3.5 percent sodium chloride by weight. A cubic mile of seawater holds approximately 120 million tons of salt.

The Dead Sea is up to ten times more salty than ocean water, and has provided the nation of Israel with a readily available supply of salt through evaporation of the Dead Sea waters. There are also salt bearing hills in the southern region of the Dead Sea.

Salt and the Human Body

Virtually every cell in the human body contains salt, and it is therefore an essential nutrient. Humans, as well as all other animals, cannot live without it. Salt plays a crucial role in keeping our bodies functioning properly. When we do strenuous work or exercise, our bodies become very warm, and salt maintains the balance of fluids which carry oxygen and nutrients to all parts of our system. Our body adjusts the amount of salt we consume by making us thirsty when it needs to dilute the salt. A healthy body processes the right amount of salt it needs, and the kidneys dispose of any excess.

The two major components of salt are sodium and chloride. Each performs important functions

in maintaining a healthy body. Sodium enables the transmission of nerve impulses. It regulates the electrical charges that move in and out of the cells and control taste, smell, and other processes. It helps our muscles, including the heart, to contract.

Chloride, an electrolyte, is essential for the digestion process. It preserves the acid balance in our body and absorbs potassium. It also helps blood carry carbon dioxide from respiring tissues to the lungs. If there is an insufficient amount of salt in our body, we may experience muscular weakness and cramps, and our body cannot perform all its vital functions.

Peculiarities of Salt

Salt has the peculiar ability to lower the point at which water freezes. Under normal conditions, ice forms when the temperature of water reaches 32°F (0°C). If a 10% salt solution is added, the freezing point drops to 20°F (-6°C), and with a 20% solution it freezes at 2°F (-16°C).

Highway maintenance personnel take advantage of this peculiarity by sprinkling salt on icy roadways during the winter months. Salt lowers the freezing point of the ice, thus dissolving it into liquid water. The ice immediately around the grains of salt melts, and the melting spreads out from that point. If the temperature of the roadway, however, is lower than 15°F, the salt will have less effect. In that case, sand is sprinkled over the ice to provide better traction.

This peculiarity of salt is also used when making homemade ice cream. The temperature around the ice cream mixture must be lower than 32°F to

make the mixture freeze. Thus, salt is mixed with ice to create a brine, and the temperature can be lowered to around 0°F. The brine becomes cold enough to easily freeze the ice cream mixture.

A Food Additive

In ancient times, man learned that salt could be used to preserve food by retarding the growth of micro-organisms that cause spoilage. It also became very effective as the world's oldest food additive. This is confirmed by Job who said, "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?"—Job 6:6

Salt is still an important commodity in the modern food industry. It is used for the preservation of our foods and to make them both safe and palatable. Food technologists rely on salt to satisfy consumer preferences such as texture, appearance, and aroma. It has the remarkable ability to enhance certain flavors to make them taste better. It can also mask naturally bitter foods, such as chocolate, to make them more palatable. Evidence suggests that most people prefer the many and varied attributes that only salt can offer. Because of the desirable qualities of salt in the food we eat, a majority of people use too much in their daily diets. This can cause bloating, water retention, high blood pressure, and increased risk of serious conditions such as heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and heart failure.

Salt Money

During ancient times, salt was used as a unit of exchange. In the early days of the Roman Empire, the price of salt was under strict control. Its cost could be increased to raise money for wars or other matters, or it could be lowered again to enable poor

people to afford this important part of their diet. At that time, Roman soldiers were given a ration of salt each day, but this practice was later replaced by an allowance of money. This was called their “salt money”—Latin: *salarium*—which is the basis for our English word “salary.”

To supply the expanding city of Rome with increasing amounts of salt, roads were built for its transport. Thus the Via Salaria, or “Salt Road,” was built leading from Rome to the Adriatic Sea, from which supplies of salt were taken. Other bodies of water were much closer to Rome than the Adriatic, but they did not have as good a supply, or quality, of salt. The Adriatic Sea had a higher salinity content because of its shallower water.

Salt and Fidelity

The Word of God provides interesting and important information relative to the use of salt. In the writings of Ezra the scribe, we read, “Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness king’s dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king.”—Ezra 4:14, *Revised Standard Version*

This statement was recorded at a time when salt was under the control of the monarchy, or the ruling powers of the elite. Thus, the thought of eating the “salt of the palace” was synonymous with receiving pay, accepting sustenance, or being in that person’s service. It was also a symbol of fidelity, friendship, and hospitality.

A Cleansing Agent

Salt was also used as a cleansing agent and as a disinfectant on newborn babies. When writing about

the abominations of Jerusalem, the Prophet Ezekiel used salt, or the lack thereof, as an illustration of God's condemnation upon his people. "As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing, nor were you rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths."—Ezek. 16:4, *Amplified Bible*

Desolating Effects

As a symbol of Moab's and Ammon's desolation, it is recorded, "Therefore as I live, saith the LORD Of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them."—Zeph. 2:9

In another illustration, we note that salt was also used as a desolating agent in military practice, by salting the earth of an enemy. This was an ancient custom whereby salt was strewn over a conquered city, or the land, to curse it and to make it barren. An example of this practice is recorded in Judges. "Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward and stood in the entering of the gate of the city [Shechem]: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt."—Judg. 9:44,45

The Prophet Ezekiel records God's message concerning the waters of life that will be offered to the human creation under the administration of Christ's

kingdom. Also recorded are the judgments that will be placed upon those who disregard the blessings available to all. We read, “The miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.”—Ezek. 47:11

The Tabernacle Services

Salt was used to make incense for the Tabernacle services, which had to be done exactly as shown to Moses in the Mount. The directions for the composition of the sweet spices, other ingredients, and their quantities are found in the scriptural records. “The LORD said to Moses, Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure, and holy.”—Exod. 30:34, 35, *RSV*

It is noted that one of the ingredients of the incense was salt. This was significant because it pointed to the importance of fidelity, loyalty, and purity. More importantly, it foreshadowed the sweet-smelling savor of our prayers that ascend to our loving Heavenly Father. They are called sweet-smelling because they are well salted with fidelity. The scriptural record states, “When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”—Rev. 5:8, *New American Standard Bible*

Later, we read, “Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to

the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand."—Rev. 8:3,4, *NASB*

Thus did the Apostle Paul admonish, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."—Eph. 5:1,2

The Salt of God's Covenant

From the early days of human creation, salt was widely known because of its freedom from corruption and decay. Even today, pure salt [though not iodized table salt, due to additives] is said to last indefinitely. It therefore well represents permanence, loyalty, and fidelity. These distinctive qualities made it a peculiar and fitting symbol and the accepted medium used in times past for the sealing of contracts and business arrangements. Salt was a chosen component of the ceremonial offerings and for the sealing of covenants. The preservative qualities of salt made it an excellent symbol of an enduring compact and indicated a pledge of fidelity.

God also used it to show that his covenants and promises would stand forever and that his Word is sure. Thus, God's instructions to Moses were, "Every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."—Lev. 2:13

The requirement of adding salt to the meat offerings stressed the importance of the fidelity, loyalty, and purity of God's covenant. We read further, "All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee."—Num. 18:19

The Whole Creation at Peace

When Christ's kingdom is established over all the earth, the entire human family will rejoice in the salt of God's promises. The animal creation will eat "salted fodder," and be secure and living in peace and harmony with mankind in a restored Earth. Speaking of God's everlasting promise, Isaiah wrote, "Then He will give you rain for the seed which you will sow in the ground, and bread from the yield of the ground, and it will be rich and plenteous; on that day your livestock will graze in a roomy pasture. Also the oxen and the donkeys which work the ground will eat salted fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork."—Isa. 30:23,24, *NASB*

There will be no more death, because the waters of life will be cleansed and made pure. In a prophetic picture of this time, we read, "The men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the

salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.”—II Kings 2:19-22

The Salt of the Earth

In our featured scripture, Jesus proclaimed, “Ye are the salt of the earth.” Our Lord is the central figure in this reference, and the faithful members of the Christ will share in the salt’s preservative, cleansing, and healing qualities. Together, they will carry out the Heavenly Father’s ultimate plan and purpose to reconcile the sin-sick human family from the terrible results of sin and death.

When Christ’s kingdom of righteousness is established, the salt of God’s covenant will be manifest to all as true, faithful, and everlasting. This was long ago illustrated by King David and his sons, who represent Jesus and his body members as they then share in blessing all the families of the earth. “Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?”—II Chron. 13:5 ■

The Source of the Shadow

As when a father stoops down to kiss a child, the shadow of his body falls upon it, so many of the dark misfortunes of our life are not God going away from us, but our Heavenly Father stooping down to give us the kiss of his infinite and everlasting love.

—Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

The Epistles of John and Jude

“These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”—I John 1:4

In addition to his Gospel account of Jesus’ ministry, the Apostle John wrote three letters, or epistles. The first is

styled a “general” epistle because it is not addressed to any particular group or individual. In our opening verse, John states his reason for writing the letter—that their “joy may be full.” What are “these things” which he writes in order to give Christians fullness of joy? One of them is mentioned in the three opening verses of the epistle.

We quote:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

The “Word” of life which John refers to is, in the original Greek, the *Logos* of life. It is the same “Word,” or *Logos*, which he writes about in the first chapter of his Gospel, which, he explains, “was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14) All the apostles understood clearly that Jesus had a prehuman existence, but John is the only one who speaks of him as the Heavenly Father’s *Logos*, Word or mouthpiece. John was evidently deeply impressed with this viewpoint, for the first chapter of his Gospel is devoted to it, as well as these opening verses of his first epistle.

In verse 5 of this opening chapter of his epistle John writes, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” In verse 9 of the 2nd chapter, we read, “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”

Thus John indicates that “light” manifests itself by love, and “darkness” by hatred. “God is love,” John tells us. (I John 4:8,16) God is also light. These single-word definitions of the characteristics of God would not give us a very clear understanding of him except as we find them enlarged upon throughout the Scriptures.

Light is used in the Bible as a symbol of truth, and the word “truth” embraces the entire divine plan for the redemption and restoration of a lost race. Every feature of that plan is prompted by divine love. It was because God loved the world that he sent his Son, the *Logos*, to be man’s Redeemer. (John 3:16,17) Every detail of his plan whereby the benefits of this gift will reach and bless the people is a further manifestation of his love.

Since darkness, the absence of truth, is manifested by hatred, and love is the manifestation of light, or truth, John could properly say that “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” Christian love, then, is not just an abstract principle. Neither is it an indefinite feeling of emotion. It is, rather, the outworking of the example of unselfishness we see in God as day by day we endeavor to learn the Truth and obey it. John wrote, “Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”—I John 2:5

Just as John seemed especially inspired by the thought of divine love, he was also impressed with the importance of the outgrowth of love in the lives of God’s people. Throughout the epistle he touches upon this theme again and again. We quote a few examples:

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”
—I John 2:10,11

“This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”—I John 3:11

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”—I John 3:14

“Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
—I John 3:17,18

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born [begotten] of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”—I John 4:7-11

“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”—I John 4:16-18

In these various texts we get a comprehensive view of the manner in which divine love will affect the life of a Christian. It reflects obedience to God's Word. It prompts to self-sacrifice on behalf of the brethren. The last text quoted speaks of a love which gives boldness “in the day of judgment.” This is not a reference to the world's future judgment day of a thousand years, for faithful Christians will not be on trial then. (Acts 17:31; II Pet. 3:8) Together with Jesus they will be the judges at that time. Rather, John's words speak of the present judgment time, which pertains only to the “the house of God.”—I Pet. 4:17

In I John 4:15, the apostle wrote, “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth

in him, and he in God.” For one in John’s day to make this “confession” required great courage. We recall that one of the charges the religious leaders brought against Jesus was that he claimed to be the Son of God. (John 19:7) Jews who later espoused his cause and confessed that he was the Son of God were also hated and persecuted by their countrymen. Gentiles making this confession were looked down upon even more.

Indeed, it required “boldness,” courage, to take this stand. The Greek word translated “judgment” in the expression, “boldness in the day of judgment,” is *krisis*. *Thayer’s Greek Definitions* offers one of the meanings of this word as “decision.” If we translate John’s words literally, then, we could say that love gives one boldness in the day of decision. In Christian experience this day of decision, trial, or judgment, begins with consecration and continues until death. Every day is a challenge to faithfulness. Every day is a trial, a test, of faithfulness. Every day, therefore, “boldness” is needed, a boldness that is born of love for God, for his Truth, and for his people.

John had the proper understanding of love. He did not see it as something which should cause the Christian to compromise on issues of truth and righteousness. He admonishes us to “try the spirits,” or teachings meant to influence us and our thinking. He says, “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.”—I John 4:1-3

This is a straightforward statement which shows no inclination toward compromise. Additionally,

this must be understood in the light of John's own explanation of the manner in which Jesus came in the flesh, as we find it in the first chapter of his Gospel. In this chapter he did not say that Jesus became incarnate in flesh, but that he was "made flesh."

During the Dark Ages an overzealous translator, who was evidently not satisfied with the way John explained this matter, endeavored to help by injecting an interpolation into the 5th chapter of his epistle. This unauthorized addition to the inspired Word is found in verses 7 and 8 of the *King James Version*, a portion of which reads as follows: "The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: and these three are one." This mistranslation was an attempt to insert the doctrine of a triune God into the Bible. These words, however, do not appear in any Greek manuscript prior to the fifteenth century, and all Bible scholars agree that they are spurious.

One of the most superb statements of John shows the awe-inspiring love of God towards his faithful people. It reads: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."—I John 3:1-3

John's Second Epistle

John's second letter was written to "the elect lady and her children." (II John 1:1) We have no certain

knowledge of who this Christian lady was. Verse 13 indicates that she had a sister, and that her sister had children. The letter reveals that she was a very devoted Christian, with great love for the Lord and for the Truth. John told her that he rejoiced greatly “that I found of thy children walking in truth.” (vs. 4) In verses 5 and 6 he admonishes her, “love one another,” and then explains, “This is love, that we walk after his commandments.”

The main purpose of John’s second letter seems to have been to caution this sister in the Truth against allowing her kindness and generosity to work injury to the cause of Christ. False teachers were plaguing the church. Their heresy was, as John wrote, that they “confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.” (vss. 7,9) According to John’s first letter, this meant that they were not of God, so were to be shown no cooperation of any kind.—I John 4:3

Continuing his letter to the “elect lady,” John wrote, “He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”—II John 1:9-11

In the action thus commanded by the apostle, we have the boldness of love manifested. It no doubt required courage for John to give what might easily be construed as harsh advice. It would require even greater Christian strength on the part of the “elect lady” to carry out the instructions. Perhaps, unwittingly, she had already been

entertaining those opposed to the Truth. If so, it would be doubly difficult for her to take the bold stand which the apostle urged.

It would not be over-emphasizing the importance of the Lord's providences to believe that John's attention was called to this situation in a manner to make necessary this short letter. Its purpose would be not only that this sister in Christ might benefit, but that the entire church throughout the age might have an authoritative precedent to guide them in matters of this kind.

The principle involved is very understandable. We need to ask ourselves where we would draw the line in matters of faith and practice. If we decide that it would be wrong for us to believe and preach certain views, or to conduct ourselves in certain ways, then it would be equally wrong to render assistance to others who may be doing so. Taking such a stand does not mean that we are to put hindrances in the way of those with whom we cannot cooperate. It does prevent us, however, from assisting them in teachings or conduct that we believe are fundamentally in error.

John's Third Epistle

The third and last letter by the Apostle John was addressed to "the wellbeloved Gaius, whom," John said, "I love in the truth." (III John 1:1) In verses 3 and 4 he wrote, "I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

John's reference to Gaius as one of his "children" indicates that the apostle was the one who had first

presented the Gospel to him. It was evidently under John's teaching that Gaius became one of the followers of Christ. The Apostle Paul had also used this affectionate manner of speech in referring to his "son" Timothy.—II Tim. 1:2

The immediate purpose of John's third epistle seems to have been to request Gaius' cooperation in caring, at least temporarily, for some brethren who were moving into the territory where he lived. (III John 1:5-8) John commended these brethren to Gaius very highly. According to tradition, Gaius was a wealthy man, and verse 6 indicates that he was using his resources faithfully to the glory of God.

An interesting sidelight appears in the letter. John explains that he had written to the church—evidently where Gaius attended—about the foregoing matter earlier, but he had received no reply. He blames this lack of interest on Diotrephes, "who loveth to have the preeminence among them."—vs. 9

John promised that if and when he came himself, he would remember Diotrephes' "deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."—vs. 10

Demetrius was evidently one of the leading brethren for whom John was seeking a place to reside. He assured Gaius that he was a brother having "good report of all men, and of the truth itself." Giving his personal recommendation, John said, "Ye know that our record is true." (vs. 12) Perhaps the important lesson of this epistle is the one stated by the Apostle Paul. In writing to the Hebrews he said, "Be not forgetful to entertain

strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”—Heb. 13:2

The Epistle of Jude

This is another “general” epistle, since it is not addressed specifically to a certain congregation or individual. Jude, or Judas (not Iscariot), the brother of James, was one of the twelve apostles. His purpose in writing the epistle is stated in verse 3, which reads: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

The reason Jude deemed it important to exhort the brethren to “earnestly contend for the faith” was the fact, as he then reveals, that “certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”—vs. 4

In his condemnation of these “ungodly men” who were mingling with the brethren, Jude uses language almost identical to that found in II Peter 2:1-19. Evidently he had been impressed with Peter’s arguments and felt he could do no better than to follow his line of reasoning and use the same Old Testament examples of ungodliness.

Some have endeavored to use Jude’s reference to “Sodom and Gomorrah” in verse 7 to prove the erroneous doctrine of torment in a fiery hell. He speaks of them as suffering “the vengeance of eternal fire.” However, this is poor reasoning. The “fire” referred to by Jude was not “hell-fire,” but the

literal fire which God caused to destroy those cities. (Gen. 19:24,25) The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were not tormented by it, but were destroyed, going into death.

These cities and their people, however, were not forever destroyed. Jesus taught that in the day of judgment it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for the Jewish cities which rejected him. (Matt. 10:15) Sodom is mentioned by the Prophet Ezekiel, who gives assurance that her people will be restored to their “former estate.” —Ezek. 16:55

What, then, did Jude mean by saying that those cities suffered the “vengeance of eternal fire”? They were “set forth,” he says, “for an example.” Fire is used in the Scriptures to symbolize destruction, and everlasting destruction will be the punishment of all willful sinners. What Jude meant was that the Sodomites were used by the Lord as an illustration of those who will suffer everlasting death. Because both Ezekiel and Jesus clearly taught that they will be raised from the dead, we know that the Sodomites themselves were not everlastingly destroyed.

In verse 21 Jude says, “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Then he adds, “And of some have compassion, making a difference.” (vs. 22) Throughout his short epistle, Jude is very outspoken against those who oppose the Truth. He spares no words of condemnation, but now he tempers his remarks with the admonition that the brethren should deal with the situation in keeping with the love and mercy of God. He realized that

there were some who had been ensnared by the devil and were not willful opposers of truth and of righteousness. So they were to make a difference, and endeavor to “save with fear” by pulling them “out of the fire,” those who gave the slightest evidence of wanting to do right.—Jude 23

Appropriately, in view of the subject matter discussed, Jude concludes his epistle by commending the brethren to God. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”—vss. 24,25 ■

Precious Savior at Thy Feet

*Precious Saviour, at thy feet,
Here I bow thy face to seek;
Take my life and by thy grace
Make my heart thy dwelling place.
Lord, I yield my tongue to thee,
Full of praises let it be.
May my hands thy will perform,
And my feet thy ways adorn.

Lord, I bring to thee my all.
Humbly now, on thee I call,
Burn the dross, and purify,
And to self, Lord, may I die.
Precious Saviour, guide me home,
I am weak, but thou art strong;
Fill my life from day to day
With thy spirit, this I pray.
—Songs of the Nightingale*

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

How to Study the Bible

DawnBible: God bless you. Today I learned about your ministry, and I would like to receive more information about your materials. Could you please send me the booklet on how to study the Bible [*How to Study the Bible and Have it Make Sense*]? God bless you.—AZ

Witnessing to Many

DawnBible: I'm 86 and have many health problems, I witness to many people and pray for over 1000 people weekly. I suffer from two strokes and have difficulty in remembering scripture. I thank you for your book. Many Blessings—CA

Hungarian Literature

DawnBible: Greetings! Thank you for your selfless service to Hungary. We read the Bible, Pastor Russell's books, and your magazine every week. Wishing you blessings.—HUNGARY

Resources for Teaching and Study

Dawn Bible: Thank you so much for the Bible literature you sent. I do receive a regular hardcopy of *The Dawn* magazine. Please do keep it coming.

My profound heartfelt appreciation and thanks to everyone who contributes and writes the edifying helpful articles in all Dawn Bible Student publications.

Online resources are not easy access to me, but hardcopy printed resources provide me with more tangible and huge amount of handy access to spiritually edifying helpful resources, and I can effectively use the same to teach and explain the Word of God to interested family members, friends, students and neighbors including interested colleagues at my workplace.

Thank you so much for your continued brotherly kindness and understanding. Yours sincerely in Christ—NIGERIA

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Drake Dimitry, Pensacola, FL—December 19. Age, 58

Sister Jackie Beard, Chicago, IL—December 20. Age, 98

Sister Pearl Owens, Berkeley, IL—December 30. Age, 97

Sister Janina Kieżun, Prezechojec, Poland—January 5. Age, 97

Brother Roman Zajączkowskiego, Białystok, Poland—January 8. Age, 79

Sister Teresa Sokołowska, Miechow, Poland—January 12. Age, 91

Sister Helena Kuźnik, Moszczanica, Poland—January 19. Age, 94

Sister Irena Czak, Kalisz, Poland—January 20. Age, 74