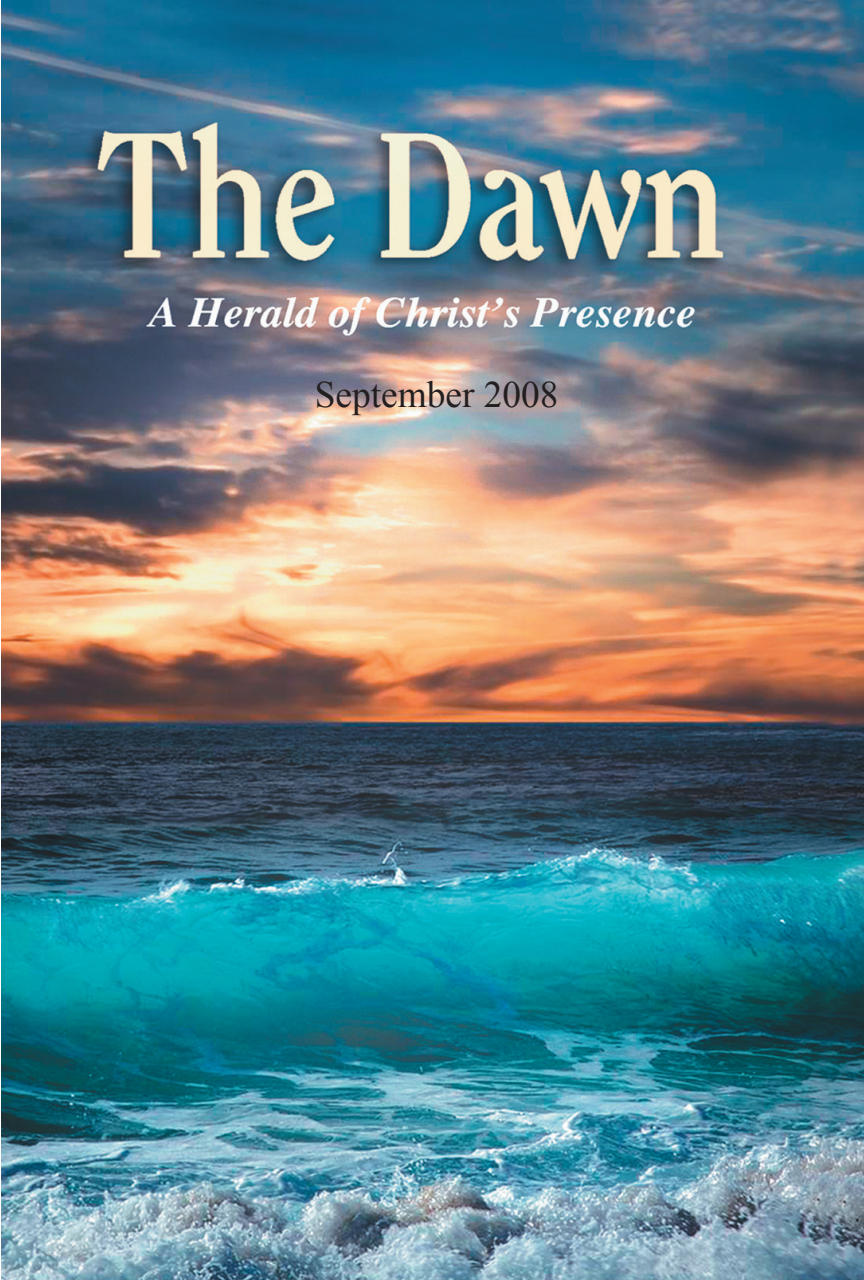


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Disaster and Devastation:

The Earthquake in China

“Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.”

—Isaiah 29:6

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE Prophet Isaiah is directing God’s righteous sentence of judgment and condemnation against the people of Ariel. He wrote, “Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city [the lion of God, *Marginal Translation*] where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.” (Isa. 29:1,2) Ariel was the symbolic name for Jerusalem [*Strong’s Bible Concordance*, #739, 740]. It was the city where King David lived, and where Israel’s holy Temple was located. Isaiah’s message thus predicted the city’s destruction at the hands of Gentiles under the Babylonian Empire, and the corruption of its Temple worship given to them by God.

SYMBOL OF CORRUPTION

Throughout the Bible, the term “Babylon” is used as a powerful symbol to identify and reflect corruption and false religion. The judgments, of which the Prophet Isaiah spoke, are thus pointing symbolically toward that false system known as Christendom. The warning of the coming judgment was meant to awaken the people of Israel who were being held in bondage in Babylon, and to liberate them from its unholy influence. The symbolic earthquake in our featured text thus marks the level of turmoil that would identify the debauched system that has existed and flourished throughout the long centuries of the Gospel Age, and especially during its present closing years.

BABYLON'S JUDGMENT

The revelator spoke of the final and greater judgment that would come upon this ecclesiastical system, when he wrote, “After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—Rev. 18:1-4

RESERVED FOR JUDGMENT

When speaking of our time and the closing years of this age, the Apostle Peter also used symbolic language to describe God's judgments that would come upon the earth. He said, "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved under fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (II Pet. 3:7) Further in his epistle, he wrote, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."—vs. 10

OBEDIENCE REQUIRED

Because of disobedience to the laws which God had given to earth's first parents, Adam and Eve were driven from their perfect surroundings of Eden's garden, and into a cursed and hostile environment. "Unto Adam he [God] said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:17-19) As a mark of the Father's righteous judgment, we further read, "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he

was taken. So he drove out the man; and and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”—vss. 23,24

These scriptures describe in part the terrible legacy of sin and death that has been handed down to the many generations of the human family for more than six thousand years. The history of mankind has been one of continual sorrow, pain, violence and corruption. It has been written in blood, and without exception has ended in the grave.

Furthermore, as a result of mankind’s first parents being driven out from the paradise of God, man has had to cope with thorns and thistles in a cursed earth because of sin.

A VISIBLE SIGN

As a powerful manifestation of the Father’s ultimate plan for the recovery of the human family from the sentence of death, an ‘earthquake’ marked the very time when our Lord Jesus died and gave his perfect human life for the sins of the world. Luke and Matthew both recorded the sobering event. “It was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost [spirit].” (Luke 23:44-46) In Matthew’s account, he referred to the earthquake that took place. “Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”—Matt. 27:51

Afterward, when the women came to Jesus' tomb, they were astonished to learn that he had been raised from the grave. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."—Matt. 28:1,2

EARTHQUAKES IN DIVERSE PLACES

As added testimony concerning the level of violence that was foretold to occur in the earth, both literally and figuratively, during the closing years of this present Gospel Age, Mark included in his Gospel account the following prediction in connection with earthquakes. He wrote, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows."—Mark 13:8

Earthquakes occur as a result of a sudden release of energy in the earth's crust that in turn creates seismic waves. This results in the rupture and shaking that usually takes place along a geological fault at the earth's surface. Minor quakes occur constantly around the world and larger ones less frequently, but with more substantial displacement. An area of particular high probability is located along the Pacific coastline that encircles the Pacific Ocean. These areas extend for thousands of miles along the entire western coasts of North and South America, as well as along the eastern coastlines of

Asia. Earthquakes in these areas often result in a great loss of life and property.

The term earthquake may be used in a symbolic sense, or it may identify an actual convulsion in nature. In our featured text, the Prophet Isaiah used the word 'earthquake' as a symbol to emphasize a particular feature of violence among men and their institutions. In its literal sense, it points to the earth and its physical characteristics that may react violently.

On May 12, 2008 there was a significant and major earthquake in China's Sichaun province. The Sichaun quake unleashed one of the most powerful and devastating sequence of events that has taken place in that particular location, or in other areas of the world, during the past several decades.

THE CHINA QUAKE

The great Sichaun quake measured 8.0 and 8.3 according to the China Seismological Bureau (7.9 as reported by the United States Geological Survey). It was powerful enough to be felt in Beijing 1,500 km away, as well as in Shanghai 1,700 km from the epicenter. At the time of this writing, the confirmed death toll stands at 69,136 people killed, with an additional 374,061 injured and 17,686 missing. It is also estimated that nearly five million homes were destroyed and ten million people affected. The official numbers are expected to rise dramatically. Within 72 hours of the initial quake there were 52 major aftershocks measuring between 4.4 and 6.0 which created further havoc.

Seismologists explain that the earthquake occurred in two major stages lasting about two

minutes. This sudden release of energy displaced approximately 9 meters along a fault line about 240 km long, and generated deformations of the earth's surface more than 3 meters. Because of the increased levels of stress along this fault, United States Geological Seismologists warn that there is high risk of major aftershocks over the next several weeks and months.

As a consequence of this displacement, roads were made impassable for relief workers because of numerous rock and landslides. Several 'quake lakes' were also created because of landslides blocking the free passage of water in nearby rivers. It was necessary for engineers to create man-made waterways around these rock slides to alleviate the rapid buildup of water behind these dams that were creating the 'quake lakes.' Further damage to dams along waterways required the evacuation of entire villages because of flood risk.

RESPONSE TO DISASTER

In an attempt to grasp the magnitude of the disaster, the *Los Angeles Times* (May 17, 2008) published a news report written by Ching-Ching Ni, a *Times* Staff Writer, under the title, "A Small Hospital with a Tall Order." We quote in part from Ching's report which was submitted from Jiangyou, China. "Outside a facility that is too damaged to use, hundreds of quake victims are treated in a tent-city triage center. There is no time to rest when hundreds of earthquake victims are still making their way to the small city hospital where Dr. Huang Dong works. The building remains upright, but unsafe. Patients must receive treatment

outdoors, where a tent city of tarps draped over hospital beds serves as an open-air triage center. 'I have never seen this much trauma, this many people screaming in pain,' said Huang. 'I can't begin to describe how that feels.' Thousands suffered gruesome injuries, straining the capabilities of humble facilities in Sichuan like this one, which was never equipped to cope with so many trauma patients at the same time.

"Sirens blared, and soldiers wheeled in people who were immediately assessed and treated under a couple of garden umbrellas shading them against the relentless sun. More than 100 families crowded the huge outdoor ward. Relatives kept patients cool with bamboo fans. Nurses rubbed alcohol on open wounds. Doctors read X-rays clipped to beds. Old people with their eyes shut moaned. For the medical staff, one of the biggest worries was keeping patients free of post-operational infections. 'Antiseptics, antibiotics, bandages, they are all in short supply.' Dr. Huang said."

AFTERSHOCKS

Several strong aftershocks have also caused further landslides, knocked out telephone lines, and buried vehicles and homes. These shocks severely complicated rescue efforts throughout the region. One powerful shock that measured 5.5 could be felt in Chengdu, a major city and the provincial capital 75 miles away from the epicenter. Many army trucks with heavy equipment were sent from Chengdu in response, and convoys of ambulances began transporting injured people from remote mountain regions to larger hospitals in the provincial capital.

MOBILIZATION

The People's Liberation Army mobilized one of its largest ever peacetime deployment of troops. More than 130,000 soldiers were reported to have reached the area, with thousands more soon on their way, according to the official New China News Agency. The railroads responded by sending 56 trainloads of soldiers along with 157 rail cars of ambulances and equipment. The military's role was not only one to rescue and care for quake victims, but also to repair and inspect damage to the country's infrastructure. Roads and railroads had to be cleared of landslide rubble. Numerous dams were a major concern, some with serious cracks that needed to be repaired. Many residential areas in the valleys were entombed in mud from the landslides. Government officials and citizens found themselves hard-pressed to cope with the earthquake's aftermath, the country's worst natural disaster in more than thirty years.

CHANGING TIMES

An interesting and revealing news article appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (May 17, 2008) that exposed a major change in China's twenty-first century response to natural disasters and world opinion. It was submitted by Barbara Demick and Mark Magnier under the caption "China's Old Ways Shaken by Quake." Quoting in part from this report, we note, "In a system with a centuries-long tradition of austere leaders laying down the law from behind their palace walls, China's response to its worst disaster in three decades has revealed a nation in the throes of political change."

“The China that emerged from the wreckage of Monday’s magnitude 7.9 earthquake in Sichuan province looked surprisingly modern, flexible and, if not democratic, at least open. It has admitted foreign rescue experts into disaster areas and tolerated reporting by a more aggressive news media. The leadership has appeared more responsive to the public, and the public in turn reacted with an outpouring of individual initiative to help.”

MASSIVE REBUILDING

A few days later another news report was published by the *Los Angeles Times* (May 22, 2008) under the caption “Survivor Unrest Prods China to Act.” It was submitted by Mark Magnier who wrote, “Beijing embarks on a \$10 billion rebuilding effort as it curbs media reports amid growing victim discontent. China moved to contain some of the political fallout of last week’s devastating earthquake with the launch of a major spending program amid growing survivor impatience and a tightening of media control.

“Beijing ordered state agencies to cut their budgets by 5% to help fund a \$10 billion reconstruction effort, the State Council, China’s Cabinet. Premier Wen Jiabao also called for a halt to new state projects that are not earthquake related. Many major newspapers featured an identical picture of government leaders mourning. The propaganda ministry tends to insist on uniformity when an issue is sensitive. New permit requirements for media reporting in the area have been imposed and checks stepped up.”

The State Council of China declared a three-day mourning period for quake victims. People stood

silent for three minutes while air defense, police and fire sirens, and horns of vehicles, vessels and trains sounded. All vehicular traffic came to a halt.

CHRIST'S FUTURE KINGDOM

It is our hope and prayer that the devastating and chaotic situation in China will improve in the coming months and that the Chinese people who have been so uprooted by the earthquake and its aftermath can soon begin to rebuild their lives. Christ's future kingdom of righteousness and peace will soon be established as the only answer for the sin-sick world. "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—Rom. 8:22,23

Our Heavenly Father's ultimate purpose and plan for our world and its inhabitants will be manifest to all mankind when Christ's future kingdom over all the earth is established and the New Covenant is in operation for the recovery of the human family from sin and death. Isaiah reminds us, "Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein." (Isa. 42:5) The psalmist confirms, "Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth. The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men."—Ps. 115:15,16

NOT IN VAIN

The Prophet Isaiah again spoke of the ultimate plan and purpose of the Father in preparing the earth for his human creation. “Thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.”—Isa. 45:18

A COVENANT OF PEACE

There is much scriptural evidence that reveals that our loving Heavenly Father cares for his human family and will grant them peace. The Prophet Ezekiel wrote, “I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.”—Ezek. 34:25-28

SCENES OF TRANQUILITY

God’s prophet put in perspective some of the wonderful characteristics that will be associated

with that blessed time. He wrote, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ [adder’s, *Marginal Translation*] den.”—Isa. 11:6-8

NOTHING TO HURT NOR DESTROY

This wonderful scene describes the security, tranquility, and peace that is promised by our loving Heavenly Father. Isaiah further emphasizes the promise with the blessed assurance of our loving Heavenly Father. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”—vs. 9 ■

“I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.

“And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. . . . There shall be showers of blessing.”

—Ezekiel 34:23-26

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A New Community

Key Verse: “*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*”
—*Matthew 3:2*

Selected Scripture:
Mark 1:1-8;
Matthew 3:1-12

THE PHRASE ‘KINGDOM OF heaven’ from our key verse is peculiar to the book of Matthew, and signifies the Messianic rule of Jesus Christ, the son of David. It is called this because it is the rule of the heavens over the earth. (Matt. 6:10) This phrase is derived from Daniel where it is defined, “The stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”—Dan. 2:34-36

As the scripture also points out to us, the first step in being part of this kingdom involves the act of repentance, which brings a believer back to the favor and blessings of God. It is a call to reform. It is saying, in substance, examine your life and your way of living. If you are not living up to the standard of life which you are capable of, then you are guilty. John here was speaking to the people of Israel. As he spoke, he realized that in most cases they were not in the proper condition of heart to be a part of the kingdom of heaven. Because of this, as a nation, Israel’s opportunity to have that kingdom was taken away from them and given to a new nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood. “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but

are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”—I Pet. 2:9.10

John’s mission was to announce the kingdom of God, for which the Jews had been waiting for centuries. It was an announcement that the fulfillment of the Divine promise was at hand. Repentance from recognized sin, violations of the Law Covenant, and a return to a condition of righteousness of heart was being stressed. Further, the preaching and baptism of John were a special call to God’s people to remind them of their failure as a nation, and as individuals to live up to their covenant. “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”—Mark 1:4

The Lord commenced his ministry with exactly the same announcement, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17) Not only was the kingdom the topic with which the Lord began his ministry, but it was the main topic of all his preaching. The apostles were sent forth with the same message.—Luke 9:2

The kingdom of heaven has three aspects in Matthew—the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist, the virtual rejection of the King, and the announcement of a new brotherhood to be called during the present age. (Matt. 3:2; 13:1-52) These are called out of the world of mankind to be associated with the Lord in his Millennial Kingdom. The message respecting the kingdom took on a special form. It became an invitation to become joint-heirs with the Messiah, and heirs of the kingdom. This would lead to the beginning of a new community, which would include the disciples of that day, and his disciples all through the Gospel Age. It points out that a certain class is permitted to join with their Redeemer in his sacrifice and sufferings in order to be granted a share in the glorious work of his kingdom. ■

The Birth of a New Community

Key Verse: *“Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”*
—Matthew 2:6

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 1:18-2:23

Our Lord was publicly recognized as the Savior as a babe; but it was only when he would fully complete his sacrifice at Calvary that he had the full right, and would become owner, or Lord. A life-giver is a father; Jesus is to be the “everlasting Father” to the world. (Isa. 9:6) The good tidings of a Savior shall eventually be to all people (Luke 2:10,11), but the special salvation from sin and death will come only to his people, to those who believe on him.

The church’s salvation begins now in the sense of reformation and rest in the Lord’s promises. “Not only

IN ORDER FOR THE POSSIBILITY of a new community to exist, there had to first be an actual opportunity for the old order of things to end. This was made a reality by the birth of Jesus, whose name means ‘Savior,’ and signifies life-giver. The entire work of our Lord Jesus is summed up in the meaning of the name Jesus. “He shall save his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21) So, when Jesus was born, the first step was taken in the Divine plan for our salvation from sin and death.

they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope.” (Rom. 8:23,24) This involves the deliverance of the church from the bondage of corruption into the wonderful liberty of sonship. This special group—members of the new community—will not actually be delivered from the power of death until the resurrection. If faithful, they will be raised to the Spirit condition, to the perfection of the Divine nature with its glory, honor, and immortality. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:6

It is of vital importance that each one who wishes to be his people makes sure that they have accepted him. “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6) We must be drawn first before we can come to Jesus, and then we must come to Jesus before we have access to the Father. In this manner, a believer can be “accepted in the beloved” by the Father, as sons. (Eph. 1:6) They have been “called according to his purpose.” (Rom. 8:28) This glorious purpose is to use his faithful ones as agents for the blessing of all mankind.

This will lead to a fulfillment of the prophecy “in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 28:14) In this wonderful promise lies the opportunity for all members of our human family to return to harmony with God. They will have the privilege of being “taught of God” (John 6:45), and live on a restored perfect earth forever. “The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10 ■

Core Values of the New Community

Key Verse: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

—Matthew 6:33

Selected Scripture: Matthew 5:1-7:29

things above.” (Col. 3:2) To do this, one must have an earnest desire and a singleness of heart. We must realize that God will look out for our earthly interests if we desire to do everything that is in harmony with his will.

The things that we value most are naturally those that we will seek after. “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:34) If the words and teachings of Christ have entered our heart, then our mind, aims, and ambitions are being transformed. “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) In this manner, we will seek ways to develop and to increase our love, trust, zeal, and devotion to God, and conformity to the character of the Lord Jesus.

AS WE CONSIDER THE SUB-

ject of this verse, our attention should be drawn to the order in which it is worded. The first and most important thing for a child of God to do is to strive to seek a place with the Redeemer in the true glory and power of his coming kingdom. It points out that we are to seek them by lifting our affections from earthly things. “Set your affection on

The Apostle Paul tells us that, “We have the mind of Christ.” (I Cor. 2:14-16) This means that we are endeavoring to think as Christ thought, and to do as he did, or would do, in our daily circumstances. It is to have a disposition that is loving and kind, generous and forgiving toward others. It also requires us to be reverential and obedient to God. If we do this, we will be able to appreciate spiritual things. These can only be discerned by those who have the Spirit, or mind, of the Father, of his plan, and the Spirit of truth. The Spirit of the Lord is the power or influence exerted upon those who have surrendered their own wills and are obedient to the Divine will. Only the Spirit-begotten may understand the deep things of God, and their understanding is in proportion as they develop more of the Spirit of God. They seek “after righteousness”—after that which is good and true.—Matt. 5:6

This development may be referred to as possessing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:22,23,25) “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.”—Eph. 5:9

These, along with brotherly kindness, are the core values that must be found in our heart if we are to be pleasing to God. (II Pet. 1:5-8) They are so important that the Lord Jesus put them into the form of a commandment. “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: . . . and love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Mark 12:30,31) Charity, or love, is one of the most important tests for membership in the body of Christ, for entrance into the new community, or household, of faith. It is an unselfish love, and one that shall be the standard by which all men in the coming age will live.—John 15:10-14 ■

Creating a Community of Servants

Key Verse: *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*
—**Matthew 20:28**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 20:1-28;
Mark 10:35-45

(Heb. 12:2) His joy also came to the support of his endurance and helped him to win the victory.

Jesus was an example to all of his footstep followers. All of his disciples must show such great loyalty to the principles of God's government, and a sincere humility of spirit that would be glad to render service to anyone in need. No other lesson requires that it be so carefully learned by the Lord's people.—Mark 10:40-45; I Thess. 5:13

“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) This includes those who have consecrated their lives to walk in the Lord's footsteps, and also to those who are counting the cost. We must do

THE MEANING OF THE

word ‘minister’ is ‘one who serves’ as exemplified by the Lord Jesus, and shown when he washed the feet of his disciples. (John 13:5) It was a touching act of service, which illustrated the true spirit of meekness. Our Lord looked at the privilege of serving the fallen race of mankind as their Redeemer with joy. “Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”

all of the good that we can, using any means that we have, in service. Every service lovingly rendered to God's called-out ones is rendered unto the glory of our Heavenly Father. Another requirement of this service is that it be made with joy, for "God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9:6-12) Let us use to our best ability the gifts that we possess to serve the Lord from a sincere heart. "Fear (reverence) God, and keep his commandments."—Eccles. 12:13

The thought of keeping focused on giving our all in service to God for his glory is further shown, "As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord." (Eph. 6:6,7) In this manner, we will be pleasing to God, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us . . . If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (Rom. 12:6-8, *New International Version*) These verses point out the importance of serving. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." (vs. 10) We should develop among ourselves that kind of affection that properly belongs in a family, or a new community of servants. In this family arrangement, or body, the blessing and honor of one member signifies the blessing, honor, and advancement of all. He that loves all others so that he is constantly seeking to do them good is following the holy law. "In obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."—I Pet. 1:22; I Tim. 1:5

Serving one another in this present life is our responsibility and, if faithful in all things, it will lead to a special work of service in the future—bringing blessings to all mankind in God's glorious kingdom.—Eph. 4:11-14 ■

Sweet Savor of the New Covenant

“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” **HAD ADAM NOT BREACHED**

—Genesis 22:18 the condition of his covenant relationship with God by partaking of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil, he and all future generations could have enjoyed the wonderful privileges inherent in that covenant—sovereignty of the earth, direct communion with God, and everlasting life. Instead, Adam’s precious covenant relationship with God and all its privileges were terminated as Divine justice responded to Adam’s transgression. He, Eve, and their entire progeny were sentenced to death. Mankind yearns to return to the covenant relationship and privileges that Adam once possessed in Eden. However, sin and its consequences bar the way of return to that lost relationship.

In our featured text, God acknowledges mankind's yearning and expresses his intention to satisfy it. Israel's patriarch Abraham is promised that all mankind is to be saved from sin and its effects through his seed. God's reference to Abraham's seed is an expansion of an earlier promise where God said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3) The reaffirmation of God's promise constitutes a Divine covenant with Abraham.

ALL TO BE BLESSED

The Apostle Paul provides the key to understanding the means by which God will accomplish his grand purpose through the seed of Abraham. He states that two of Abraham's wives symbolized two covenants related to the Abrahamic promise. "It is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."—Gal. 4:22-25

The apostle reveals that God's promise to Abraham will be fulfilled in the same number of covenants as Abraham had wives. Each covenant will bring forth its desired fruitage in the same manner that each of Abraham's wives brought forth the fruitage of their respective wombs. Only two were

mentioned by the apostle, but Abraham had three wives: Hagar (Gen.16:3), Sarah (Gen. 11:29) and Keturah (Gen.25:1). Paul invites the reader of his epistle to understand that the all-inclusive Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled in three subordinate covenants, each one symbolized by one of Abraham's wives. Of those three wives, Paul names only Hagar in Galatians 4 saying she, an Egyptian bondwoman of Abraham's household, symbolically represents the Law Covenant which was ratified at Mt. Sinai.

HAGAR

A marvelous prospect was placed before the Israelites at Mt. Sinai. If they remained obedient to the conditions of the covenant to which they had voluntarily agreed, they would become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people in permanent covenant relationship with God. The ratifying ceremony of that covenant is recounted in Exodus: "Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye 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. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded

him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.” (Exod. 19:3-8) Inherent in the covenant agreement at Mt. Sinai was the prospect of everlasting life promised those who kept the Law of that covenant: “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.”—Lev. 18:5

BOUND BY THE COVENANT

The covenant agreement to which Israel bound itself by ceremony was embodied in the Law. The Law was the full expression of the immutable principles of Divine justice. Those principles form the foundation upon which all aspects of God’s character rest. They demand perfect balance, perfect legal symmetry—full satisfaction at all times under all circumstances. Therefore, because the Israelites were imperfect, as are all men, the following caution was added to the wonderful prospect offered them at Mt. Sinai: “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.” (Deut 27:26) By saying ‘Amen’ the people unanimously signified that they both heard and understood.

A STANDARD RAISED

The Apostle Paul explains to his Galatian brethren that the Law, given at Mt. Sinai 430 years after the promise made to Abraham, was not a replacement for that promise but was the formal establishing in the earth of the Divine standard which that promise to Abraham had rendered necessary; a standard by which mankind’s inability to meet

God's righteous expectations could be measured until Christ would come who could meet those expectations. Paul says, "What I mean is that God made a covenant with Abraham and promised to keep it. The Law, which was given four hundred and thirty years later, cannot break that covenant and cancel God's promise. What, then, was the purpose of the Law? It was added in order to show what wrongdoing is, and it was meant to last until the coming of Abraham's descendant, to whom the promise was made."—Gal. 3:17,19, *Today's English Version*

THE STANDARD NOT MET

As God had foreseen, the Law was soon transgressed by Israel. The covenant agreement it had entered into became a curse. The perfect Law of God convicted the Israelites of their imperfection; emphasizing their inability to maintain the at-onement with God they had so recently attained through the covenant agreement ratified at Mt. Sinai. If the relationship of at-onement between God and Israel was to continue in any form and to any degree, it would have to be wrought through measures provided of God. Those came in the form of the Aaronic priesthood and the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement. By these, God rendered it possible for Israel to be annually reconciled to him afresh through the office of the high priest, Aaron, and the sacrifice of animals. For hundreds of years, Israel was bound to an annual cycle of condemnation and ritual atonement ceremonies, while never gaining more than a temporary relationship with God.

MERCY EXTENDED

As illustrated by the sacrificial types of the Aaronic priesthood, the curse that was incurred through transgressions of the Law had to be removed by the application of sacrificial blood. Permanent reconciliation was offered Israel through the sacrificial blood of Jesus. He died sacrificially in a very specific way on Israel's behalf. Christ suffered the penalty of the Law on Israel's behalf at Calvary. The apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written [Deut. 21:23], Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3:13) As a consequence of Christ's act of mercy, the national curse Israel engendered for failing to keep the Law was cancelled. Hence, only that first condemnation which is common to both Jew and Gentile through Adam remains; a condemnation to be canceled for all through the ransom blood of Christ.

MERCY REJECTED

Rejecting God's mercy offered through his Son, Israel continued to seek the prize of the earthly covenant which it had unknowingly already lost. The prize—eternal life promised in the Law—had been won and claimed by the man, Jesus, who had kept the Law perfectly. It would be that very prize which he would lay down in sacrifice at Calvary on behalf of all mankind, Jew and Gentile. What had been an exclusive offer to the Jew was subsequently opened to the Gentile. Christ, himself, declared, "Therefore say I unto you [Israel], The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43)

The transfer of the kingdom offer to the Gentiles is also declared to the Jews by the Apostle Paul: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."—Acts 28:28

LOST NATIONAL PROSPECT

In due time, Israel will come to know the full dimension of God's mercy expressed through Christ on its behalf, and will be profoundly moved. Foreseeing that time of gratitude, the Lord says, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zech. 12:10) Though it continually convicted Israel of its national imperfections, the Law was the means by which that nation could be schooled in advance of the world regarding the principles of God. Though the people could not keep those Divine principles, they became familiar with them through types, shadows, and prophecy. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."—Gal. 3:24,25

Had Israel heeded its 'schoolmaster' over the centuries of its instruction, it would have been prepared to embrace Christ Jesus as its Lord and Master at his First Advent. Its rejection of him cost Israel its wonderful national prospect. However, Israel's national loss under the Law does not disan-

nul the possibility of individual Jews attaining the kingdom. Beckoned to his home by Cornelius, a Gentile, the Apostle Peter declared, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."—Acts 10:34,35

The Apostle Paul, affirming Peter's declaration, explains, "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2:14-16) In the present Gospel Age, the individual Jew who is drawn by God (John 6:44), and who is willing to forego the bondage of the Law Covenant can, as do individually drawn Gentiles, enter the liberty of a different covenant by faith in Christ. That covenant of liberty is the covenant that Paul says is symbolized by Sarah; another of Abraham's three wives.

SARAH

Though she was not directly named as Hagar was, Sarah is the 'freewoman' to whom the Apostle Paul referred in Galatians 4:22-25. By that designation, he emphasizes that Sarah represents a covenant of liberty into which, if invited, both Jew and Gentile can enter during the Gospel Age. These, if faithful unto death will, with Christ Jesus, constitute the antitypical Isaac, the true seed of the Abrahamic promise. (Rev. 2:10) *(Continued on page 35)*

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(Continued from page 31) Paul confirms that Abraham's true seed is a spiritual seed composed of the Lord Jesus and his disciples of the Gospel Age. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: 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. 3:28,29) Christ and his glorified disciples are to be the seed of promise—antitypical Isaac. Once the followers of Christ are glorified, the remainder of mankind will, in the Millennial Age, through that seed—the Mediator—enter into a New Covenant relationship with God, the relationship for which it has so long yearned.

KETURAH

Abraham's third wife, Keturah, represents that New Covenant. She was not directly referred to as an allegorical figure by the Apostle Paul as Hagar was, nor was she indirectly referred to as was Sarah. (Gal. 4: 22-26) Keturah is an allegorical figure by inference. Given the Apostle Paul's assurance that two covenants related to the Abrahamic Covenant were symbolized by the first two of Abraham's three wives, it is within reason to conclude that Abraham's third wife likewise symbolizes a third covenant—the New Covenant. From her very name, much can be ascertained about the nature and purpose of the future New Covenant. Keturah in the Hebrew language means 'incense' [*Strong's Bible Concordance* #6989].

Incense is symbolically related to the earnest prayers of the saints, the disciples of Christ. The Apostle John says: "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was

given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." (Rev. 8:3,4) During the present Gospel Age, the prayers of the consecrated waft continually upward to heaven unto the golden throne of grace. Prayers of wonder, love and praise rise as a sweet odor to God from those who believe in him. They are the prayers of those who will constitute the spiritual body of the Christ—the Mediator of the New Covenant in the forthcoming Millennial Age.—Eph. 1:22,23

ACCOMPANIED BY INCENSE

For the entire 1000 years of the Millennial Age, the interposition of Christ and his church will be a necessity to mediate all communication between God and fallen mankind long contaminated by the effects of sin and death. "Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant [a New Covenant], which was established upon better promises." (Heb. 8:6) "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they

shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:4,6

Without that interposition, the petitions and supplications of mankind would be viewed as impure offerings from unclean hands, heathen offerings entirely unacceptable to God. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” (Ps. 24:3,4) Thus, in the forthcoming Millennial Kingdom, mankind’s offerings to God will be through the Mediator of the New Covenant accompanied by the figurative incense of its collective prayers.

HEATHEN PRAISE INCREASES

In the course of the Millennial Age, thanksgiving and praise will increasingly ascend to God as the heathen progressively comprehend his majesty, grandeur and wisdom. Offerings of the heart will increase until they become universal in the earth. God himself declares it in the first chapter of Malachi: “From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Mal. 1:11) This prophecy applies to the forthcoming Millennial Age at the beginning of which all mankind is characterized as Gentile or heathen.

PURPOSE OF MILLENNIAL AGE

Jew and Gentile at the beginning of the Millennial Age, will be Israelitish indeed at its conclusion.

Christ Jesus declared that a true Israelite was he who had no deviousness, no craftiness in his heart. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47) Though applied primarily to the Gospel Age, the Apostle Paul states what it means to be a true Israelite in any age. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. 2:28,29) The purpose of the mediatorial reign of Christ is defined. Mankind's collective heathenish heart is to be changed to that of an 'Israelite indeed.' It is to be methodically returned to atonement with God and to a perfect ability to keep his commandments, the commandments of a New Covenant.

A SEASON OF TESTING

In a 'little season' that follows that Millennial Age, mankind's newly acquired Israelitish heart will be tested to prove that it has not only the ability but the desire to keep the commandments of God, a test that Adam failed though he was likewise perfect and at one with God. The season of testing is referred to by the revelator. "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that

he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”—Rev. 20:1-3

UNACCOMPANIED AFTER TESTING

Once it has proved to be no longer heathen at heart, the prayers of mankind will be received into the Divine realm unaccompanied. Returned at last to the longed-for covenant relationship with God and all its attendant privileges, Adam and his progeny, in boundless gratitude, will offer up unceasing praise, thanksgiving and adoration. The earnest prayers of the entire earth will then ascend continually as a cloud to the throne of God, a universal hallelujah chorus, an eternal savor sweet as ‘Keturah’ and sweet as incense. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 4—“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.”—I John 4:18 (Z. ’03-329 Hymn 166)

SEPTEMBER 11—“Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”—Luke 14:27 (Z. ’03-345 Hymn 279)

SEPTEMBER 18—“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”—Exodus 33:14 (Z. ’03-376 Hymn 108)

SEPTEMBER 25—“Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness [justification], and sanctification, and redemption [deliverance].”—I Corinthians 1:30 (Z. ’03-440 Hymn 168)

Denying Self

*“Then said Jesus
unto his disciples,
If any man will
come after me, let
him deny himself,
and take up his
cross, and
follow me.”*

—Matthew 16:24

OUR LORD’S WORDS WERE

addressed to his disciples when Peter attempted to dissuade the Lord from risking his life by going to Jerusalem, and that his enemies were lying in wait to arrest and put him to death. Jesus had just rebuked Peter (vs. 23) and told him that his ad-

vice to not go to Jerusalem because of the danger involved was contrary to his own purpose in coming to the earth. It was a human viewpoint of self-preservation and, under the circumstances, out of harmony with the will of God.

He then addressed his little band of disciples in the words of our featured scripture, extending to them an invitation to suffer and die with him. He then added, “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (vs. 25) To the disciples, the Master’s words must have sounded very strange, for how could one save his life by losing it?

It was strange to them because, in their acceptance of Jesus as the promised Messiah, they had

no thought that it would lead to suffering and death. Having based their convictions on the promises of God, they believed that the Divine purpose through the Messiah was to give health and life. They understood that he was destined to establish a powerful government in Judea, one which would free the Jewish nation from its Roman captors. They believed it would extend its sphere of influence until the whole world would come under its control, and through its righteous administration receive the promised blessings of peace, joy, and life.

ACCEPTING THE FATHER'S WILL

Jesus had a deeper insight into the Divine will and plan, and knew that what they expected was to be accomplished in a future age. But he did not leave them entirely uninformed concerning this wider application in the Divine plan. Seeing that they erroneously expected the kingdom of the Messiah to be established immediately, he gave them the parable of a certain nobleman representing himself, who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and then to return.—Luke 19:11,12

They learned from the parable that he was going away and returning later to set up his kingdom. This perhaps explains why they asked him the question on the Mount of Olives. (Matt. 24:3) The parable did not say that their Master would go away in death, so it was the manner of his leaving them that constituted a severe test upon their faith. In various ways Jesus indicated to his disciples that he expected to die. On one occasion he said that he would give his flesh for “the life of the world.” (John 6:51) Toward the close of his ministry, Jesus

said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24) Also, in the upper room on the occasion of the last supper, Jesus invited his disciples to partake of the cup which he said is my "blood of the new testament."—Matt. 26:28

The disciples could not bring themselves to believe that these various teachings meant what they seemed to imply. As they viewed the matter, how could he possibly be the Messiah who would rule over the whole world if he surrendered to his enemies and allowed them to put him to death? It was to their consternation and confusion that he actually did this. We cannot fully appreciate the bitterness of their disappointment when they realized that their Lord and Master hung dead upon the cross.

As noble men having great confidence in the promises of God, they sought for the answer. Vaguely they perhaps recalled something which Jesus had said about being raised up in three days, and this may have bolstered their faith to some extent. After three days had passed, two of the disciples while journeying to Emmaus were joined by the resurrected Jesus. They no doubt had heard reports of his resurrection, but considered them to be idle tales. They did not recognize Jesus until he revealed himself to them. "Their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"—Luke 24:31,32

TYPICAL LESSONS

In Jesus' teachings, he called his followers attention to the typical lessons found in Israel's Day of Atonement services. A bullock and a goat were sacrificed, and their blood taken into the Most Holy, and sprinkled upon the mercy seat to effect reconciliation for the people. He probably also reminded them of the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, and how its blood was sprinkled upon the lintels and doorposts of the Israelites' homes, thus sparing the firstborn from death, and preparing the way for the deliverance of all Egypt from bondage. He no doubt quoted from Isaiah's prophecy, in chapter 53, which had foretold the suffering and death of the Messiah, showing that he would be led as a "lamb to the slaughter." (vs. 7) Hearing this wonderful explanation concerning the necessity of Jesus' death, the disciples were given a new vision. They saw, temporarily at least, that the death of Jesus did not mean a failure of the Divine plan, nor did it indicate that he was not the Messiah. Their faith in him, and in the Father's purpose centered in him, was restored.

THY FAITH FAIL NOT

A few days before this, when Peter was determined that his Master should not be put to death by his enemies, and after the last supper, Jesus said to him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:32) It required much instruction, discipline, and the revealing power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to convince Peter to understand and appreciate the necessity of Jesus'

death. To him, it seemed wrong that a man who had done no evil, and whose only aim in life was to help and bless others should be put to death.

With the aid of special instructions from the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit, Peter did comprehend. Jesus had explained that he who would lose his life would save it. At first he could not understand this, but when Jesus was raised from the dead he realized that the Master had voluntarily given his life, and that it had now been saved by the power of the Father who had raised him from the dead.

In one of Jesus' last appearances to his disciples, he said to Peter, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."—John 21:18,19

Peter did not grasp the full import of these words until the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Then he understood that Jesus' statement concerning the time when he would stretch forth his hand and allow another to gird him, meant that he would fully surrender himself to the Divine will. He would thus be girded for Divine service that would lead to sacrificial death. When one stretches forth his hand it implies surrender. It means full consecration to the Lord, and the doing of his will. Peter died a sacrificial death because he voluntarily surrendered to the will of his God, and permitted himself to be led in the narrow way of sacrifice to follow Jesus as he had been invited to do.

JOINT-HEIRSHIP

Most Christians who accept the inspired testimony of the Scriptures agree that Jesus voluntarily suffered and died for the sins of the world. But few seem clearly to realize that the true followers of Jesus are invited to likewise lay down their lives in voluntary sacrifice. The Apostle Paul explains, "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."—Rom. 6:5-8

This is what Jesus was teaching his disciples when he told them to take up their cross and follow him. They were to follow him into death, even as Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Jesus is portrayed as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8) He is also shown exalted on Mount Zion as "a lamb" with an hundred forty-four thousand faithful followers.—Rev. 14:1

Jesus died for the sin-cursed and dying earthly creation. He died that the way might be prepared for the children of Adam to return to life. Human reasoning might suggest that those who accept the provision of Jesus' shed blood and obey his laws of righteousness should have life, and should escape

from sickness and death. The Bible reveals that God has a plan that goes beyond the natural conclusions of human reasoning. It shows that in Christ's future kingdom those who believe in God and obey the laws of his kingdom will indeed receive life, and that they will be restored to perfection of human life and will not become sick and die. This will be true of all sincere believers under the administration of that righteous kingdom.

Prior to the kingdom, during the present Gospel Age, another feature of the Divine plan is being accomplished. God in his wisdom, knew that it would be good to have representatives of the human race associated with Jesus in the great future work of restoration. He designed that those who would be chosen to this high position in his plan should be tested severely as to their heart-harmony with his great and loving redemptive program. He is giving them the opportunity of demonstrating their love and loyalty to him, and their love for the human family, by their willingness to suffer and die sacrificially even as Jesus did.

When Jesus invited his disciples to deny themselves he meant that they should deny themselves completely, not merely to forego certain earthly privileges, but to deny themselves the right to govern their own way of life, and instead, by giving up their own wills to accept the will of God through Christ. We are invited to give up, to deny and surrender ourselves to the Lord, not for a day or a year but for life, that we might be planted together in the likeness of his death. It is this thought that Jesus expressed in his invitation that we take up our cross and follow him.

SUFFERING AND DEATH

The Apostle Peter evidently wrote his first epistle in obedience to his Master's commission to strengthen the brethren in their voluntary suffering and death. In the opening chapter of his epistle, he lays the scriptural foundation for this doctrine by asserting what the prophets had foretold. "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."—I Pet. 1:11

This is in full harmony with Jesus' discourse to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Peter carries the thought further than Jesus did on that occasion, for throughout the epistle he makes it clear that the followers of Jesus partake with him in the sufferings of the Christ which the prophets had foretold, and that those who are faithful will partake with him in the promised glory to follow. Peter speaks of this in other places of his epistle. He says, "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (chap. 2:20,21) And again, he says, "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (chap. 3:17,18) The word 'also' in the apostle's statement 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins' indicates that from the Divine

standpoint Jesus' followers suffer for sin. His explanation further points to the fact 'that he might bring us to God.'

Those who follow Christ are invited to participate with him in the work of reconciliation, and of bringing the world to God. They do this by their faithful use of the 'word of reconciliation' now, thus proving worthy of association with him in his future glory, when, through the Divine Christ, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9) Peter again emphasizes, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."—I Pet. 4:16

If anyone deny self and die with Jesus, they are thus reckoned by the Lord as dying for sin because they lay down their lives reconciling the sinful world to God. Paul expresses a similar thought. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:5) He then explains what that likeness is, "In that he [Christ] died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."—vss. 10,11

Jesus did not die 'unto sin' as a sinner under condemnation to death, but as a sin offering. Paul thus admonishes, 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.' Jesus died that he might bring the world to God, and we are invited to share in this work of reconciling the world. When sacrificing our lives in this great

purpose, Paul authorizes us to ‘reckon’ it as an offering for sin.

The world of mankind is sin-sick and dying, and the Heavenly Father, the great Physician, purposes to heal the sick and to restore life to all the willing and obedient. Before this could be done, the Divine penalty of death must be set aside by the Redeemer. This is the work of Jesus. “He is the propitiation [corresponding price] for our sins: and not for our’s only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—I John 2:2

When we consider our Lord Jesus as the chief physician who came into personal contact with the dying patient, we might say that he is the one who removes the malignant cancer of sin and thereby makes possible the recovery of the patient. In a hospital, there are also underphysicians and the nurses and attendants to help nurse the patient back to health after the cancer is removed. So, too, are we invited to share in the work of reconciling the world to God, and in restoring the sin-sick and dying to health and life.

That is why Paul says we are to reckon our dying with Jesus as being unto sin. It does not add to the purchase price by which the world is ransomed from death but, in the Divine plan, is necessary in the actual restoration of the ransomed world. It is God’s design to make provision for the blood of Christ to cleanse us in his sight from all unrighteousness, and thus make us acceptable as sacrifices. Paul says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—Rom. 12:1

TWO SPRINKLINGS

The blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat on Israel's typical Day of Atonement pointed forward to the blood of Christ. In the type, the blood of the bullock was first carried into the Most Holy and sprinkled on the mercy seat. This pointed forward to the time when Jesus would ascend to the heavenly courts. The apostle says, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."—Heb. 9:24

Jesus' blood is sufficient to be a propitiation, not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world, even though when first sprinkled it was only for 'us.' This suggests that the blood of Christ has been utilized through the present age to make acceptable the sacrifice of the church, which is represented by the slaying of the goat on Israel's typical Day of Atonement. The Apostle Paul shows clearly that the followers of Jesus were typified in that service, as he explained, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."—Heb. 13:10-13

Blood is symbolic of life, and we as members of the fallen and dying race have no life of our own—that is, which is not under condemnation. We have no life that we could offer to God in sacrifice.

However, through faith in Christ we receive his life, and this is what makes it possible for us to offer ourselves in sacrifice to God.

When writing to the brethren at Galatia, Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) We have no life outside of Christ. In the type, the blood of the bullock was given to the goat as a basis for life that could thus be offered in sacrifice. When the blood of the typical goat was taken into the Most Holy for sin, it pictured a second sprinkling of the blood of Christ. This sprinkling was applied for the whole world.

The apostle emphasizes that Christ offered himself but once. Then he explains that he entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us. He then says, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28) That is without a sin offering, or having again offered himself in sacrifice.

The Greek word translated 'look' in the expression, 'them that look for him,' is the same word rendered "waiteth" where Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome, saying, "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19) The 'sons of God' are Christ and his church, those who deny themselves and follow him. These will be with him when the glory of the kingdom is manifest and the whole creation, waiting in pain and sorrow until now, will receive the blessings purchased for them by the blood of Christ.

What marvelous grace that in return for self-denial and faithfulness in sharing in Christ's death, we may have the blessing of being associated with him in his glorious future work of extending human salvation to all mankind. We are not worthy in our own merit, nor could we be faithful in our own strength. As the Father promised to hold the hand of his beloved Son Jesus to give him strength (Isa. 42:6), so also has he promised to preserve us. (Isa. 49:8) We can surely depend upon this promise and thus attain the great objective for which our denial of self and our sacrifice unto death is designed. ■

NO CROSS—NO CROWN

*The purple grape must be crushed
to make the sweet red wine,
And furnace fires must fiercely burn
the drossy gold to refine;
The wheel must cruelly grind,
Else where the jewel's light?
And the steel submit to the polishing,
or how would the sword grow bright?*

*How then my soul, wilt thou
The Spirit's fruits possess,
Except thou lovingly yield thyself
To the hand that wounds to bless?
Then patiently let the fire
Consume all earthly dross
Thou canst not hope to wear the crown
if thou refuse the cross!*

—Selected

Meditating on the Laws of God

*“O how love I thy
law! it is my
meditation all the
day.”*

—Psalm 119:97

THE PSALMIST SPEAKS OF

his great love for the Creator’s wonderful laws, and further confesses, “Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.” (vss. 98,99) If this humble man of God could receive such rich blessings from his meditating upon the Divine laws that are prescribed and enforced by a supreme authority, it should be well for us to do likewise.

THE BASIS OF GOD’S THRONE

We also read, “Justice and judgment are the habitation [establishment, *Marginal Translation*] of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” (Ps. 89:14) God’s attributes of love, wisdom, justice, and power are the basis of his throne. These characteristics are of utmost importance and great interest. Those who have made a commitment by consecration and are members of the Heavenly

Father's family have a better understanding, a thankful appreciation and an admiration for his law as it relates to all his works. As we increase in our discernment of the ways of God, our love for him also increases, and with it our desire to walk more fully in the path of his light. We dwell, therefore, upon God's law as it pertains to man, but also his unspoken laws that rule the vast universe.

ORDER AND PRECISION

When we study the universe, we are at once impressed and in awe by the tremendous size, and the enormous distances of the heavens. It is estimated that on a clear night it is possible to see about 7,000 stars with the naked eye. Within the range of present day telescopes, millions of suns that are in the galaxies are seen that differ greatly in size, temperature, and density. The Hubble telescope is now greatly extending the range of modern telescopes in its nonending search.

Many of these suns are of enormous size which would dwarf our earth into a speck of dust by comparison. All the stars whose course astronomers have been able to observe move in an orderly fashion, each at a never-varying speed in set orbits through the heavens. The planet Earth travels in its orbit around the sun at a speed of eighteen and one-half miles per second, or 66,600 miles per hour. At the same time it rotates around its axis completing one revolution every twenty-four hours, while the moon speeds around the earth once every month. Their speed or course never varies.

From the movements of the earth and the moon, man obtains his units of time—the day, the month

and the year. For accurate time, he sets his time-piece by astronomical observation and, knowing the correct time, mariners in a similar way are able to determine their position. While the enormous distances in space, the immense size of the stars and the tremendous speeds at which they travel may not prove anything in itself, the accuracy of their movements through the heavens proves that they are governed by certain unspoken laws and that their movements are orderly.

GOD'S BUILDING BLOCKS

Let us consider the other extreme. Among the smallest things known to men are the electrons and neutrons. Certain combinations, according to their number, order, and arrangement make up various types of atoms. The number of neutrons and electrons orbiting around the nucleus varies according to the type of atom.

Atoms are called the building blocks of the earth. All things earthly—the water we drink, the air we breathe, the soil, the plants, the bodies of animals, and our own bodies—are in the final analysis made up of combinations of atoms. The structure of all things, whether they be atoms, molecules, plants or animals are not haphazard, but systematic in their nature, and they are wonderfully made and marvelous to behold.

All living things grow from a single cell. Into that tiny organism, smaller than a pinpoint, are packed the DNA blueprint. The ability to develop accordingly into a full grown plant or animal depends on the genetic code consisting of many billions of living cells, each group of which, making

up the roots, stems, leaves, or flowers as in plants, or the different structures and organs as in animals, will perform its proper specialized function necessary to maintain life in perfect coordination and harmony with all other groups.

Living things may be pictured as machines designed and constructed to carry on certain processes, such as the absorption of food, the changing of food into new chemical substances required by the organism, respiration, growth, repairs, elimination of waste material and reproduction. These machines build and maintain themselves, and manufacture cells which form wood, leaves, flowers, seeds, or bones, muscles, flesh, blood, skin, hair or feathers.

INTELLIGENCE AND ORDER

Even the simplest living organism is infinitely more complex than the most intricate machine man has ever been able to build. A critical study of all these facts discloses the overwhelming and indisputable evidence that the universe and life are the result of a high degree of thought, intelligence and order.

The whole arrangement, all the activities of the universe are highly complex and in accordance with certain fundamental laws and rules. These laws always function perfectly, and they never fail. Why? Because they are established by our Heavenly Father who is the all-wise and powerful Creator of the universe. Only thus is it possible for such complex organisms and matter as we know them to exist. No sequence of various complex activities necessitating cooperation and coordination with other complex

activities can possibly be produced by chance even in a single instance. Much less so when we consider that such complex activities go on around us continually throughout the earth in an astounding number and varieties of life.

UNSPOKEN LAWS

From whatever angle we consider any part or action of the universe, we come to the conclusion that its creation and its activities are the result of unspoken laws established by Divine wisdom and enforced by supreme power. Without Divine guidance and laws, the universe and life could not have been developed nor continue to exist.

Man can plan profitably because of the dependability and constancy of these laws. He can rely on the uniformity and constancy of the material with which he works, but he cannot change these natural laws according to his fancy. He may accomplish things only by complying with and taking advantage of these laws. He can build bridges or skyscrapers because he knows that a steel girder of a certain size and quality will support a certain weight, and any other girder of the same material, size and quality will support a like weight. Man cannot violate these laws without harmful consequences.

It is quite evident, therefore, that if man wishes to make the best of life, he must learn these laws of the Creator and use them as his guides. Do we not see here a wonderful illustration? Here are the laws of a great Creator, and all things are the result of his wisdom and his power. His laws and rules extend even to man and his behavior; and only the

acceptance of these laws will bring the blessings man so much desires, eternal life and happiness.

Matter performs only in conformity with certain fundamental laws and rules made by the Father. All forms of life on earth that are lower than man have implanted within them a certain amount of instinct causing them to perform all the functions necessary to preserve life according to the will of God, and to carry out his purpose.

THE MENTAL IMAGE OF GOD

Man is the supreme creation in the material world. Having been created a free moral being in the mental image of God, he has the ability to think and reason. (Gen. 1:26,27) He has the privilege to keep the law of his Creator or to disregard it. The fearful conditions existing on this earth are convincing proof that mankind has chosen not to live in harmony with that law—the very principles of God, his Creator. As a result, man is reaping the consequences of his disobedience, death.—Rom. 6:23

THE LAW OF LOVE

The law of God which man has failed to observe is love for God, his Creator. Our Lord explained the Father's law, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mark 12:30) Such love implies reverence and obedience to him, a recognition of the fact that God's authority is supreme. It recognizes the fact that man cannot violate either the laws covering the material world, or the laws concerning God's intelligent creation, without suffering harmful consequences.

If we hear the voice the natural world is preaching to us, it is a constant sermon on the existence of a supreme, intelligent, and loving Heavenly Father. "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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."—Rom. 11:33-36 ■

*I love thy will, O God!
Thy blessed, perfect will,
In which this once rebellious heart
Lies satisfied and still.*

*I love thy will, O God!
It is my joy, my rest;
It glorifies my common task,
It makes each trial blest.*

*I love thy will, O God!
The sunshine or the rain.
Some days are bright with praise, and some
Sweet with accepted pain.*

*I love thy will, O God!
O hear my earnest plea,
That as thy will is done in heaven
It may be done in me.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

FREE FROM FEAR

DawnBible: I thank you for the existence of your organization.

Since 1992 I've been convinced I was going to be thrown in the lake of fire, and burn and suffer for eternity. I was part of a non-denominational church. I messed up and left, and assumed I was doomed.

Your explanation of the Scriptures set me free from that fear, and for those I loved that passed away.

Thanks so much and God bless you!—MA

ARTICLES SHINE

DawnBible: Remarkable site! Articles published by Dawn wonderfully shine true about the Divine plan of salvation.

Let God bless works of all brothers and sisters which care for distribution of truth.—RUSSIA

MICHIGAN STATE FAIR

DawnBible: Greetings all. I signed up to receive *The Dawn* Publications last year at the Michigan State Fair. I have received *The Dawn* every month since. I enjoy reading your books and they help me to understand the Bible so much more.

One book that I picked up is *The Day of Judgment*. Beautifully written and very easy to understand. On page 9 of said book (In the Resurrection), you broke John 5:29, Rom. 2:7 down wonderful. Keep up God's good work.—MI

FAITHFUL BRETHREN

DawnBible: You all have been faithful brethren over all these years. I have been faithfully blessed all those years. I love you all and your conventions. Numbers 6:24-26—TX

E-PUBLISHING

DawnBible: I have been thankful for your service towards e-publishing The Dawn magazine.

I remember your service in my prayers. Praise the Lord!—INDIA

REACHING PEOPLE

DawnBible: Thanks for all of the wonderful Bible study information.

After reading about *The Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, it gave me a better understanding of the Bible. It is well explained and clear.

Keep the great work going, because it is reaching the people of God. Blessings—CA

TIME BY MYSELF

DawnBible: Really glad I found your website. I spend a lot of time by myself and enjoy reading God's Word and always looking for new reading for myself and to share with my mother. The Lord bless and keep you safe.—MS

ELISHA AND NAAMAN

DawnBible: I wanted to find out about the story of Elisha and Naaman. I went to www.ask.com and came up with your section. I was very happy.

Now I can ask whatever I want to know from www.dawnbible.com. Thank you.—UNITED KINGDOM

THE DAWN MAGAZINE

DawnBible: I am from Bangalore, India. I have been attending services in Bangalore at the Bible Students Association of Bangalore.

I read *The Dawn* magazine most of the time. It is very strengthening, by the grace of God Almighty.—INDIA

A VERY GOOD BOOK

DawnBible: *The Divine Plan of the Ages* is a very good book, and is excellent for the comprehension of the Bible and prophecy in this time of the end. God bless all.—ITALY

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

M. Balko

Clay City, IN September 26-28

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

T. Alexander

Huntsville, AL September 12-14

M. J. Balko

Seattle, WA September 1

Clay City, IN September 26-28

E. Blicharz

Louisville, AL September 7

B. Clark

Clay City, IN September 26-28

A. Fernets

Seattle, WA September 1

M. Grudzien

Seattle, WA September 1

S. Jeuck

Huntsville, AL September 12-14

B. Keith

Clay City, IN September 26-28

E. Kuenzli

St. Petersburg, FL September 14

J. Mottie

Clay City, IN September 26-28

T. Ruggirello

Huntsville, AL September 12-14

C. Willis

Clay City, IN September 26-28

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Bernice Forness, Ventura, CA—June 2. Age, 96

Sister Fern Freer, Rancho Cordova, CA—June 29. Age, 86

Brother Bertoldo Fonsaca, Brazil—July 13. Age, 75

CONVENTIONS

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

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 30,31,September 1—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 939-9838

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 12,13,14—Bevil Conference Center & Hotel, Huntsville, AL 35816. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505

COLUMBUS INDIANA OLDE HARVEST TIME CONVENTION, September 20,21—Dan Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E 550 N, Columbus, IN 47203. Contact D. McClellan, 3181 Martha Court, Columbus, IN 47302. Phone: (812) 344-0066 Or contact E. Ledwinka. Phone: (812) 546-5311

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 26,27,28—Canyon Inn, McCormicks Creek State Park, 451 McCormick Creek Park Road, Spencer, IN 47460. Contact S. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Pkwy, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Phone: (317) 578-2634

DETROIT CONVENTION, September 28—Best Western-Southfield Inn, 26111 Telegraph Road, Southfield, MI 48034. Contact M. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 879-1814

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 4,5—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136 West Newton, PA. Contact G. Balko, 308 Burger Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 11,12—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont, 6825

Clubhouse Drive West, Canadian Lakes, MI 49346.
Phone: (231) 972-4259

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 18,19—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 18,19—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact M. Allard, 637 Shamrock Lane, Pismo Beach, CA 93449. Phone: (805) 773-2962

DETROIT/METRO DETROIT JOINT GATHERING, October 19—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact M. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 879-1814

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 27,28,29, 30—Green Hall, Alliant International University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego, CA 92131. Contact B. Bach. Phone: (619) 445-4879

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 7,8,9—Clarion Hotel-Altamonte Springs, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify “Florida Bible Students” for special rate until February 20. Other information, contact J. Wesol. Phone: (407) 699-1829



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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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