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New Zealand: P.O. Box 1358,
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Spain: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21,
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Highlights of Dawn

“Thine Eyes Shall See the King in His Beauty”

—Isaiah 33:17

THROUGHOUT the Old Testament we find many prophecies and promises concerning the coming of a great one whom the Creator would send to be the Redeemer, Savior, and king of all people. One of the prophecies concerning Jesus is that very familiar one, Isaiah 9:6,7: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Here is the portrait of a ruler such as the fallen human race had never seen, and whose rulership has never been experienced.

The end of another year since the birth of Jesus finds the world still floundering in a hopeless state of chaos and confusion. The only thing which it seems can now save the world and the human race itself is some sort of superman, an unselfish one who would be wise enough to map out a new and better course for the people, order his plans put into effect, and have power to enforce his edicts. Convince the world that a ruler like this is on hand to assume authority and he would probably be universally acclaimed.

But this is a great deal to expect, for such a king would, of necessity, have to break with tradition and go along the line. He would have to be a king capable of establishing his authority without the necessity of leading millions of the world's youth into battle to be killed. He would be little different from all the imperfect rulers of the past and present, if he attempted to enforce his decrees under threat

of destruction by nuclear bombs. He would have to be a king who would take as much interest in the poor as in the rich, and who would respect the rights of the black man equally with those of the white man.

A king qualified to lead the world out of its present chaos could not be an advocate of one race over another. He would have to be a promoter of the interests of just one race—the human race. Because all people are members of this one race, he would need to be just as interested in the bad as in the good, the uneducated as in the scholars, and—yes—the dead as in the living!

Moreover, such a ruler would have to be very wise—a counsellor as well as a judge. He would have to possess the qualities which one of God's prophets ascribes to the foretold great Messiah of promise. Of this one we read, "The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and he shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."—Isa. 11:2-5

This is one of the prophetic descriptions of Jesus, whose birth is once more commemorated by millions. No king, no ruler, no government possessing less wisdom and justice and power could hope successfully to assume the rulership of the world today and bring peace and satisfaction to all the people.

Jesus is capable of fulfilling still another prophetic picture. It reads, "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the

poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."—Ps. 72:1-8

Not Appreciated

Jesus' disciples believed that he was the one foretold in this and many other prophecies of the Old Testament. But Jesus did not have an army. He never tried to exalt himself at the expense of others. He was noted for his kindness. He loved all, and was sympathetic even toward the erring. One of the most revealing observations concerning him states that he "went about doing good."—Acts 10:38

But the world was too evil to appreciate so noble a character. He was hated by the rulers of his day, and the charges brought against him aimed at his life. His own people said that he claimed to be a king, and they brought him before a Roman governor for trial. He was asked by Pilate, "Art thou a king then?" To this Jesus replied, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." (John 18:37) In stating this, Jesus knew that in effect he was sentencing himself to death, because such a claim would be considered treason against Caesar.

This kindly, sympathetic, understanding and self-sacrificing servant of the people whose birth the world again commemorates, was a Jew, and when Pilate realized he could do nothing more to save his life, he permitted his soldiers to place a crown of thorns upon his head. Showing Jesus to the people, Pilate exclaimed, "Behold your king!" But in reply the people shouted, "Away with him, crucify him."

The angel who announced the birth of Jesus declared that he would be a Savior, one who would save the people from their sin. To do this it was necessary that he give his life in sacrifice. Jesus knew this, so he did not resist, and he died the cruel death of the cross.

His disciples were perplexed. They believed that Jesus was born to be a great worldwide ruler, but now he was dead. The angelic announcement of his birth, his many miracles, the gracious words which he had spoken, now seemed meaningless.

Later their hopes were revived. Jesus was raised from the dead and the resurrected one explained to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die before entering into his glory. (Luke 24:25-27) Yes, Jesus' true disciples at that time soon learned that all the promises of kingdom glory and blessings which they believed Jesus had come to fulfill were not to be realized immediately.

Jesus appeared to his disciples a few times after his resurrection, and at his last appearance they made bold to ask him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" To this Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:6-8

The account continues: "When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts 1:6-11

Work to Be Done

Much truth is revealed in this incident. First the disciples learned they were not at that time to be given a great deal of information concerning the time elements of God's great plan of salvation as centered in Christ. Instead of being concerned about time, they were to go forth, after the Holy Spirit came upon them, to be witnesses for Jesus. This witness work was to be worldwide—

"unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Jesus had left them. They saw him taken up into heaven, but then two angels appeared and assured them that he would come again. Putting these thoughts together it would not be difficult for them to realize that the work of proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom worldwide was to be their part in the divine plan during the time Jesus was away. Since it was to be a worldwide proclamation of the Gospel they would know that his coming was not to be soon.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples they embarked on the mission which Jesus had assigned to them. They learned through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit that just as it was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die in order that the world might be blessed through his kingdom, they and all dedicated believers of the present age had the privilege of suffering and dying with him. Indeed, they realized that unless they followed faithfully in his footsteps of suffering even unto death, they could not hope to be associated with him as rulers in his future kingdom.

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Impatience

But as time went on, a spirit of impatience manifested itself among some of Jesus' followers. They wondered why his kingdom was so long delayed, and seemingly concluded that although he had not returned to them as promised, his kingdom must in some way already be functioning, and that they were sharing that kingdom with him. The Apostle Paul addresses some of these, saying: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."—I Cor. 4:8

If the time had come for the followers of Jesus to reign with him, Paul knew that he would be reigning—not continuing to suffer and die in the Master's service. But Paul knew the truth of the divine plan. He knew that the present age is a time of sacrifice and suffering on the part of Jesus' followers. He knew that the kingdom age of glory was still future. However, the spirit of impatience, and perhaps also of ambition, continued to creep in among the disciples. It resulted in a great falling away from the faith, and the development of a great church/state system which claimed to be reigning with Christ.

By this time, the real significance of the birth of Jesus had been lost to the vast majority of his professed followers. While with their lips they continued to praise him as the promised Prince of Peace, they helped to plunge Europe into its bloodiest period of war in history. For centuries, so-called Christian armies were pitted against one another in deadly combat, with 'Christian soldiers' mercilessly killing one another, all in the name of the Prince of Peace.

Not even the angels who announced the birth of Jesus knew all that would be involved before his kingdom of peace would become manifest throughout the world. (I Pet. 1:12) Nearly two thousand years have passed since the Prince of Peace was born, and still the angry factions of earth continue to war against one another, and each year indicate diminishing faith in the divine plan to

establish a worldwide government through the one whose birth is commemorated by so many millions.

We Need Patience

Even the LORD's people, enlightened by present truth, find that they need patience in waiting for the fruition of the divine plan. Of the fact that we are in the "harvest" which is the end of the age (Matt. 13:39), there is no doubt. This calls for faithfulness in continuing to make known the Gospel of the kingdom. This is the harvest message; the glorious message that the kingdom of Messiah is at hand. This glorious theme song of the Bible has now been proclaimed throughout the earth for over a century, and still the harvest work is not finished. This means that not yet are the righteous shining forth "as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matt. 13:43

We can appreciate more fully today than in the past the feelings of the disciples when they asked Jesus, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom again to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) We, also, would like to know when our glorious hope will be consummated in kingdom glory, and when the long-promised blessing of all the families of the earth will commence. The question, "How long, O LORD, how long?" (Rev. 6:10) has no doubt been asked by the LORD's people throughout the age, and it is now close to our hearts, even though we know that the kingdom is at the door.

How timely is the admonition, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:35-37) Let us indeed maintain our confidence. But to do so we need patience—patient continuance in well-doing—in order to receive the promise; that is, the fulfillment of all God's gracious promises of joint-heirship with the Prince of Peace in that kingdom which will bring peace, health, and life to all the families of the earth.

A "Little While"

Paul associates his admonition to patient endurance with the return of Christ, saying, "Yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (vs. 37) This is interesting; the entire age from Paul's time to the return of the Lord is spoken of as "a little while." And now that he has come, and we are in the harvest with which the age ends, how much more evident it is that only "a little while" intervenes between our harvest labors of today and the kingdom glories of tomorrow!

We do not know how much longer the harvest will continue; the LORD does, and if we are to be with Jesus in the kingdom it is essential that we be faithful to our commission now to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom, for kingdom honors and kingdom authority are bestowed only upon those who are faithful unto death.

So what should the birth of the Prince of Peace mean to us today? Its commemoration should be a signal to redouble our efforts in doing the Father's will. It should mean an increased rejoicing in our hope; a rejoicing that will enable us to remain firm unto the end of the way of sacrifice and service. It should remind us afresh of how much mankind really needs the kingdom, and of the blessed privilege we have of telling the whole world the blessed tidings that the kingdom is at hand!

The coming of Jesus was God's great gift to man. Our appreciation of that gift can be manifested by the giving of our all in the great messianic cause which Jesus came to implement. The angels proclaimed the good tidings that Jesus was born; and now we, as messengers—or angels—have the privilege of continuing that proclamation. Let us be faithful in this while we patiently and actively wait for the glorious consummation of our hope! ☐

"THOU Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." —Matthew 2:6

International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 6

Time for a Change

KEY VERSE: *"This is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."*—Matthew 3:3

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 3:1-12

MANY Jews from Judea and the region round about Jordan went out to hear John, who was indeed a voice crying in the wilderness! He apparently did not go from place to place in the conduct of his ministry, but instead, the people went to him. They found a man with "raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey."—Matt. 3:4

Jesus made a revealing observation concerning John's desert ministry, and his clothing. He said concerning him, "What went ye out to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet, for this is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before

thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." (Matt. 11:7-10) John called upon his hearers to repent, and those who did he immersed in water as a symbol of their cleansing from sin.

"The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem" to ask John, "Who art thou?" (John 1:19) He made it clear that he was "not the Christ." (vs. 20) Then they asked, "What then? Art thou Elias? [Elijah in Hebrew]" Again his answer was, "I am not." Their final question was, "Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No."—vs. 21

The question they asked John, "Art thou Elias?" was based on the prophecy of Malachi 4:5,6, which reads, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers,

lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." This prophecy describes a work of reformation such as John was conducting in Israel, and it was natural that he should be asked whether or not he considered himself to be this foretold "Elijah."

John denied that he was "Elijah," yet Jesus said to his disciples, referring to John, that "Elias is indeed come." (Mark 9:13) This does not contradict John's statement concerning the matter. The more complete viewpoint is expressed in Matthew 11:14, where Jesus is quoted as saying to his disciples, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." This means that to those who repented under the ministry of John, and were prepared to accept Jesus, he was the promised Elijah, for he had accomplished the foretold work of reformation in their hearts and lives. His service accomplished the introduction of God's program for a new age—the Gospel Age—and that is why Jesus referred to John as "more than a prophet."

This prophecy of the coming Elijah suggests an alternative fulfillment—"Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." In other words, if the attempted work of reformation failed, the foretold curse would come upon the nation of Israel. This curse was in reality what

John referred to as "the wrath to come."

Since John himself denied that he was actually the foretold Elijah, we are warranted in looking for a larger fulfillment. The voice crying in the wilderness, starting with John, has continued throughout the age, first by our Lord Jesus and his apostles, and subsequently by every disciple who has given voice to a vision of the kingdom to come. And while it might seem to have failed of its purpose in worldwide conversion, quite the contrary is true. The voice has been instrumental in the development of the complete Elijah—the church—through whom the full Elijah work of worldwide repentance and reformation can and will prosper in the Millennial Age.

Jesus assured us that the work of the Elijah will not fail, when he told his disciples, The "*Elijah will indeed come and restore all things.*" Malachi's prophecy is just as reassuring when it uses the word "shall" in describing the reformation work of the antitypical Elijah: "He *shall* turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers."

John was a faithful voice. His faithfulness inspired Jesus to say of him: "Among those born of women [up to that time] there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist!"

Making a New Beginning

KEY VERSE: *"She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 1:17-25*

NEARLY two thousand years ago, about October 1st, Jesus, the world's Savior, was born. It was toward the end of December of the preceding year that the angel, Gabriel, announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of this promised one. The angel said, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the LORD God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."—Luke 1:26-33

Naturally Mary was astonished to hear this announcement, and inquired of the angel how it could be, "seeing I know not a man?" The angel explained, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be

called the Son of God."—Luke 1:34,35

Prior to Jesus' birth an angel communicated with Joseph, Mary's husband, in a dream, and explained the situation to him. The angel said to Joseph, "Thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:20,21) Then follows the explanation, "Now all of this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted is, God with us."—Matt. 1:20,23

This promise of long-standing from Isaiah 7:14 is presented on an interesting background. Enemies of Israel were attempting to destroy Jerusalem, but the LORD would not

permit this. He promised, instead, that those who were then plotting against the house of David would themselves be destroyed. Then, out of this local scene came the long-range prophecy of the birth of the Messiah. This was to be a sign that God had not forgotten his people; that all his promises would be fulfilled in his own due time and way.

The following captivity of the Israelites, and the subsequent vassal status of the nation should have taught the people that without God's help the messianic cause was lost. And when God's due time came for the Messiah to be born, how wonderfully the LORD impressed upon all concerned that this was indeed something HE was bringing about. In the first place there was the case of a virgin conceiving—a miracle, a sign that God was intervening to carry out his purposes.

Much that happened in connection with the birth of the Messiah was calculated to build up this same thought in the minds of those concerned. Mary did not casually discover that she was to become a mother, and left to wonder how it came about. Instead, the angel, Gabriel, was sent to announce to her the important role she was to have in the outworking of the divine plan. Later, angels announced the birth of

the Messiah, and sang glory to God in the highest, affirming that this expression of God's goodwill toward men would lead to peace on earth. Yes, it was the LORD who was working—working to accomplish his plans, not the plans of men.

Throughout, God was teaching his people lessons, one of the important ones being that the blessings which he had promised through a coming "seed" could not be realized by human efforts; that there must, and would be, divine intervention in the affairs of men to fulfill his promises. God began early to teach this lesson. Note the experience of Abraham and Sarah in connection with the birth of Isaac. Isaac's birth was a miracle because so much time had elapsed that the parents were past the age of having children; besides, Sarah was barren to start with. Angels were sent to affirm his coming and to emphasize the fact that God would cause it to happen.

When the time came for Jesus to be born, the holy angels were again used, one of them making the announcement of his birth to a group of humble shepherds. The record of this is ever new and refreshing: "Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!"

Experiencing Great Joy

KEY VERSE: *"When they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."—Matthew 2:11*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 2:1-12*

WITH the birth of Jesus, the divine purpose to bless all the families became more than a promise. The promised king of glory had now been born. The light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel, had come. It was the Son of God, the Logos, who had humbled himself, and was now found in fashion as a man. This was the one who had come to inherit David's throne, and to rule over the house of Jacob forever.

Jesus had come to be a Prince and a Savior, the great Messiah of promise. He had come to sit at the head of a government which would extend its sphere of influence worldwide. He had come to enlighten the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles, concerning the true God and his love for the sin-sick and dying race.

How fitting that he should be honored by men. Even though as foretold at that time he would receive little recognition, in the action of these three who had traveled far to bestow such precious gifts, there was a meaningful sign pointing to the future.

At the time Jesus was born, nearly four thousand years had elapsed since God had said that the "seed" of the "woman" would bruise the "serpent's head"; and about two thousand years had passed since God had promised Abraham that through his "seed" all the families of the earth should be blessed. But all the while, through his servants, God had continued to make promises which gave assurance of his love for the human race, and of his intention

one day to deliver the people from their bondage to sin and death. These promises were directed specially to the natural descendants of Abraham, who became the nation of Israel. They constituted the basis of Israel's hope in the coming of a Messiah, a great king who would establish a powerful government in Jerusalem, and eventually extend its rulership over all the earth.

The theme of God's promises to Israel was a "joyful sound" to all the devout and faithful of that nation. (Ps. 89:15) As this theme song of God's love unfolded, it gave assurance that through the promised Messiah all the ills of the world would be cured, and that all the problems created by human selfishness would be solved. Death was to be swallowed up in victory, and tears wiped away. (Isa. 25:6-9) Blind eyes were to be opened, and the lame were to "leap as an hart." (Isa. 35) While, because of sin, God had turned man to destruction, in due time he was to say, "Return, ye children of men," in a resurrection which would include both the "just and the unjust."—Ps. 90:3; Acts 24:15

All these blessings were to reach Israel and the world through the agencies of the promised messianic kingdom. In a prayer David wrote: "Among the gods there is none like

unto thee, O LORD; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O LORD; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things; thou art God alone."—Ps. 86:8-10

The gifts of the wise men nearly two thousand years ago might have seemed out of time. The world has continued on in darkness. That true light which will yet lighten every man that has come into the world has as yet enlightened only the few. The Sun of Righteousness has not yet risen to enlighten the world, which becomes more and more engulfed in sin. Indeed, today, we are in the midst of what the Scriptures foretold would be a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."

But there is every reason to believe that now the kingdom of the Messiah is about to be manifested in power and great glory, when all the righteous desires of the people will be realized and they will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isa. 25:9) And men, even from the far corners of the earth, will come with their precious gifts to honor so great a king!

Sharing in Ministry

KEY VERSE: *"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."*—Matthew 4:23

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:12-25

JESUS conducted a very vigorous ministry, allowing little time for rest, and no time at all for things other than those which pertained directly or indirectly to the kingdom of God.

Regardless of the standpoint from which we view the Master; we find in him those traits of character which reveal the closeness of his walk with God, and the wholehearted manner in which he endeavored to do the will of God. His activity in preaching the Gospel and in healing the sick is no exception to this.

Paul tells us that the Gospel was preached beforehand unto Abraham when the Lord said to him that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gal. 3:8,16) This theme song of good news was very prominent in the messages God gave through his holy prophets of the Old Testament. And Jesus was so thoroughly in accord with the divine plan ex-

pressed through this Gospel that it was his principal purpose in life to proclaim it to all who had a hearing ear.

We should not, as followers of the Master, overlook this important element of his character, for we cannot be truly like him unless we too are actively interested in making known the glad tidings. We should not assume that it is our privilege to select those traits of the Master's character which we would like to copy and emulate him merely in these things. Paul speaks of growing up into Christ in "all things," and these all things include his self-sacrificing zeal in bearing witness to the truth.—Eph 4:15

Our lesson indicates that Jesus centered his activity in Galilee when he learned John the Baptist had been put in prison. This event seemed to mark a definite period in the plan of God which served to guide Jesus with respect to the appropriate time for him to begin his

ministry in Galilee. John the Baptist had immersed Jesus, and had announced his presence as the Messiah. From that time forward John's ministry was to decrease while that of the Master was to increase, but Jesus was careful that he did not encroach upon John's privileges of service.

When Jesus did enter Galilee preaching the Gospel it was with the announcement, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." The expression, 'kingdom of God', is a poor translation of the Greek text. The thought, rather, is, "God's Royal Majesty has approached," and the reference is to Jesus himself. (Mark 1:15, *Diaglott*) John had announced the coming of this great one, saying, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." (Mark 1:7) Now, Jesus, in keeping with this, announced that the one mentioned by John had come, for the time was fulfilled when this Royal Majesty should appear.

On this first missionary visit to Galilee, Jesus selected four of his apostles: Simon, Andrew, James, and John. These were all fishermen, and very appropriately his invitation to them to become his followers

was phrased in language which they could best appreciate.

"I will make you fishers of men," he said. By this the Master revealed his ability to get down to the level of his hearers and talk to them in language they could understand. Mark's account records the many acts of healing and the casting out of evil spirits, which Jesus tirelessly included in this ministerial work.

One morning soon after, rising early, Jesus went out into a solitary place to pray. When the four disciples found him, they said, "All men seek for thee." Jesus replied, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." "For therefore came I forth"—this expression is very much in harmony with a statement Jesus made to Pilate when he said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37) It was not merely that he had gone into Galilee to preach the Gospel, but rather that this was one of the main purposes of his coming into the world.

Jesus was not commissioned to convert the world by preaching the Gospel, nor are his followers; but we are to sow the seeds of truth beside all waters, knowing the LORD will direct that the 'meek' will hear, and be blessed by it.

Christian Life and Doctrine

THE SEARCH FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, Part 7

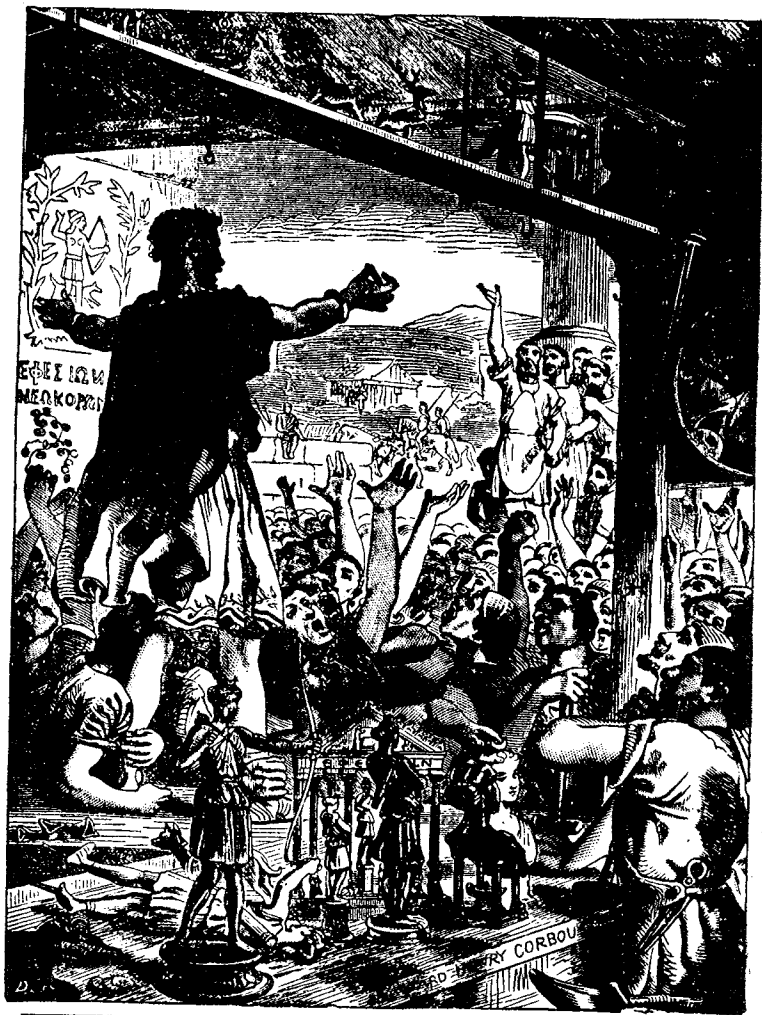
Paul at Ephesus

WHEN a door of opportunity for witnessing to the truth opened at Ephesus, during Paul's third journey, he extended his stay in that city for three years—from A.D. 55 to A.D. 58. In time, Paul became a well-known figure to many of the townspeople as a result of his extensive preaching, and the reform that it precipitated. But his work also created some mortal enemies.

An imposing temple had been erected to the pagan goddess, Diana, in the city of Ephesus. It had been impressively built four hundred and twenty-five feet long, two hundred and twenty feet in width, and seventy feet in height. One hundred and twenty-seven huge pillars graced the structure, twenty-seven of which bore intricate carvings. So outstanding was its architecture that it has since been called one of the seven wonders of the Ancient World.

The people believed that the heathen goddess, Diana, had been sent by Jupiter to select Ephesus as the site for this temple. The time of its construction spanned one hundred years, and its preservation was considered a sacred responsibility. Every year thousands made pilgrimages to worship this Asian goddess of nature—an emblem of motherhood, of wild things, and of fertility. When visitors came to see this great mother of gods, they wanted to return homeward with a souvenir which they could worship. And so a very profitable trade was brought into existence by silversmiths who produced miniature replicas of the temple, as well as small images, charms and amulets to be worn.

During Paul's stay in Ephesus, their business fell off sharply! One of the leaders of the silversmiths, named Demetrius,



DEMETRIUS INCITING THE EPHESIANS AGAINST PAUL

investigated the reason for this, and found that Paul's influence in the city was no doubt the probable cause. He assembled all the craftsmen of the city and explained that Paul had convinced many in Ephesus and throughout all Asia Minor that gods made by the hands of man were false gods. Their once-profitable business had dwindled since many people were now holding these charms in contempt. Shrewdly, Demetrius did not make their loss of business his chief concern, but stressed, rather, that since the effective preaching of Paul was directed against Diana, her worship was diminishing, and as a result the great temple eventually would be left in neglect, or even destroyed.

Paul, of course, had not primarily directed his preaching against Diana. He emphasized instead a belief in a living, powerful God of Creation, who had given everyone life, who was an invisible spiritual being, and whose form could not be copied in material substance. Demetrius, however, was successful in inciting his fellow tradesmen into action, as well as other citizens of Ephesus. These quickly developed into an angry mob who poured through the streets crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," as if to safeguard her interests, and save her from extinction.

The mob action soon grew into mass rioting which filled the city with confusion. The silversmiths, it seems, had only one objective in mind, and that was to seize Paul and silence him. Exactly how they planned to accomplish this is not completely clear. But from Luke's brief account of these events, it is obvious that Paul's life was in extreme danger.

At that time there was a council of ten men chosen from the prominent cities of Asia Minor. These rulers were called Asiarchs and they were men of wealth and influence whose tasks included presiding over religious observances and public games. The chief Asiarch lived in Ephesus, but the other nine were present in Ephesus due to either special religious rites, or games being planned or happening there at the time. They were well acquainted with Paul as a respected friend.

Demetrius and his cohorts went to the home of Aquila and Priscilla, hoping to find Paul, but he was not there. Instead, they found Paul's companions, Aristarchus and Gaius, whom they seized. We can imagine what a difficult experience it was for all of them, including Aquila and Priscilla, who must have undergone rough treatment and threats to disclose the whereabouts of Paul. The confrontation that took place with this unruly throng gives meaning to the apostle's words when he later wrote: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."—Rom. 16:3,4

So Aristarchus and Gaius became hostages in Paul's stead. This is the first time in Luke's writing that Aristarchus is mentioned. We learn that he was a Macedonian from Thessalonica, one of the faithful Gentile brethren of that ecclesia. (Acts 20:4) The Thessalonians were a great inspiration to Paul because of their zeal for the Gospel, and Aristarchus was an excellent example of these faithful brethren. He well fits Paul's description of their spirit of love and loyalty as commended in his first epistle to them, specifically in chapters one to three. Aristarchus had come to Ephesus to assist Paul in his ministry, and from that time until Paul's death in Rome, he never left his side, and is mentioned in several of Paul's letters.—Acts 27:2; Philem. 24

As far as Gaius is concerned, we know he was the Gaius from Derbe who was with Paul in Ephesus at this time. Both he and Aristarchus had been seized by the angry crowd and carried into the amphitheater. Apparently some kind of religious ceremonies or tournaments were being held, and the arena was packed—it had a capacity of about fifty thousand people! Soon there was great confusion. Some were shouting one thing, and some another, and no doubt many of those present had no idea what was going on. As the purpose of this uproar was unclear, various contentious groups took advantage of the situation and began to exploit their own interests.

Meanwhile, Paul heard what had happened and he wanted to go to the coliseum and secure the release of his friends. But the brethren restrained him. After he received a special message from the Asiarch advising him not to go near the amphitheatre, he decided to take their advice. They had learned that the riot had been caused by the silversmiths for the particular purpose of getting rid of Paul.

Things really got out of hand when the mob started to become anti-Semitic. Because of Paul's background and association with the Jews, many things were said against them. The Jews who were present put forward a man named Alexander as spokesman in their defense. He tried to explain to the people that to them, Paul was a renegade Jew, and that they took no part in his preaching. But the crowd, only realizing that he was a Jew, shouted continuously for two long hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And so Alexander was not heard.

Finally a town official was successful in quieting the people. He pointed out that Paul and his associates were not temple robbers, nor blasphemers of the goddess Diana. He suggested that if Demetrius had a charge against Paul, there were courts and proconsuls who would handle the matter. He also explained that they were all in danger from the Roman authorities should they decide to take action against the instigators of the tumult. The assembly was then dismissed, and no harm was done to Aristarchus or Gaius.

This was, no doubt, an attempt to disrupt Paul's work in that city by the adversary, but he was unsuccessful for the time being. However it seems that subsequently some brethren were deluded and drawn away from the truth. In a later letter to Timothy, who had been in Ephesus at the time of the uprising, Paul instructed him to continue his admonitions to those who were separating themselves from the faith. It seems, as he said, that they were involving themselves in fables, endless genealogies, and disputes about the Law. In concluding his letter he wrote, "This

charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”—I Tim. 1:18-20

It has been supposed that this Alexander was the same as the one involved in the mob experience. Since he was a coppersmith, he had a profession similar to that of Demetrius, but exactly how he opposed Paul is not clear. It is believed that he had at one time joined the disciples as a follower of Christ, and then later returned to Judaism, becoming an ardent enemy of the apostle. Paul wrote of him again in his second letter: “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the LORD reward him according to his works: of whom be thou wary also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.”—II Tim. 4:14,15

Tradition has it that the wife of Demetrius the silver-smith, later became converted to Christianity, and then influenced her husband to the point of conversion. If this be so, and we cannot be certain that it is, the question arises, was the Demetrius mentioned in III John 12 one and the same man?

While Paul stayed in Ephesus, he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. In this letter he refers to some of the difficulties they were undergoing, and showed that the will of the brethren to endure was an expression of how firmly they believed the truth and the hope of a future resurrection. He said, “Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.” (I Cor. 15:30-32) His reference to ‘beasts’ undoubtedly meant the unruly men who opposed him on such teachings as the resurrection. Paul’s point was that if there were no hope of a resurrection, why would he risk his life in speaking about such

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things, as he had on numerous occasions!

Before this uproar had occurred, Paul had planned to go to Macedonia for the purpose of visiting the church at Thessalonica, and then on to Corinth. From there he knew he would be going to Jerusalem and Rome, having been made aware of this by God's Holy Spirit. (Acts 19:21) He had already sent Timothy and Erastus in advance, and now he was ready to join them. So he embraced all the disciples at Ephesus and bidding them farewell, left for his new destination.

His trip to Macedonia is described only in brief by Luke. However, it is evident from even this abbreviated account that Paul was a great blessing to the brethren there. Although the churches are not named, it seems reasonable that he went to Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. From Macedonia he went on to Achaia, as he had planned, visiting Corinth for about three months.

When a plot was made against his life by the Jews, he returned to Philippi, where he was met by Sopater and Luke. Luke had been living in this city for nearly six years. Still other brethren who were Paul's missionary assistants, went on ahead, and were waiting for the three to join them at Troas. These were Aristarchus and Secundus, Gaius and Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus. They would all accompany Paul to Jerusalem. The

enormous task of searching for God's people could not be accomplished by one man alone. We do not know the names of the numerous brethren who toiled in the service of the LORD aside from those mentioned in the writings of Luke in the Book of Acts, and some named by Paul in his letters. But it was through the efforts of these many brethren, known and unknown to us, that the important work of starting the churches was accomplished.

Two of the helpers acquired on this journey, as we mentioned, were Tychicus and Trophimus. These two men served him faithfully to the end of his life. They were used to fulfill assignments for Paul, serving brethren, carrying messages, and assisting him in any way possible. In his letters, some several references are made to these lovingly performed services.—Acts 21:29; II Tim. 4:12, 20; Tit. 3:12; Eph. 6:21,11; Col. 4:7-9

Another loyal aide not mentioned in the Book of Acts was Titus. From the time of Paul's first journey he supported Paul in various assignments. Paul entrusted Titus with a letter he had written to the brethren who were having trouble in the church at Corinth. Paul wanted to go personally to see them, but was unable to do so. He sent Titus to assist the brethren in their problems in his stead.

Paul's appreciation of Titus is evident in II Corinthians 7:5-16. He explained that he was having troubles on every side, but that when Titus came he was comforted. Titus brought a cheering message to Paul that things were better in the Corinthian church. "We were comforted in your comfort." Paul wrote the Corinthian brethren. "Yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all." We see from this passage that Paul's message was softened by Titus' explanations, so that the brethren in Corinth would not misunderstand the harsh words Paul had written to them. And this was a very useful service indeed, to Paul, and to the LORD.

Titus also was instrumental in bringing a gift from Corinth to the poor among the brethren in Jerusalem. Other

churches in Macedonia had also made such a contribution already. This was a delicate matter, as the collection of money for others always is, but Titus handled it well. "Thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he is going to you of his own accord. . . . We intend that no one should blame us about this liberal gift which we are administering, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the LORD's sight but also in the sight of men. And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many manners, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker in your service."—II Cor. 8:16,17,20-23

Still another incident which shows Paul's admiration of Titus' Christian character and the role he played in removing misunderstandings and in promoting the Spirit of Christ, was when he wrote to the Corinthians establishing his apostleship. He asked the brethren, "Did I [Paul] take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit. Did we not take the same steps? . . . It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved."—II Cor. 12:14-21, RSV

After Titus had completed this assignment for Paul—really for the LORD!—and rejoined Paul's traveling group, he was asked to establish congregations on the island of Crete. The letter written there to Titus by Paul explains more concerning this commission, and gives us greater insight into the faithfulness of this dear brother in Christ.

The Holy Spirit then indicated that a change would occur in the work of searching for God's people. This search would not cease. On the contrary, the LORD would continue it through those whom Paul had found. But Paul himself would be giving special testimony, and would no longer be free to move around as

he had previously.

A period of twenty-three years had elapsed since Paul was intercepted by our Lord on the road to Damascus, and was immersed into the body of Christ. During that time, many ecclesias of God's people were established in remote areas of Gentile lands. These came into being and flourished in the truth through the energy, zeal, and untiring efforts of Paul and those associated with him. □

"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

—II Corinthians 9:15

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Christian Life and Doctrine

The Trial of Our Faith

"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 honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

—1 Peter 1:7

SINCE the creation of Adam, it has been a universal principle that our Heavenly Father administers trials or tests to prove those with whom he deals. The first man was placed on trial, as were the angels. This principle is so all-inclusive that even his own Son had to undergo testings and trials. We are told that Jesus learned obedience by the things which he suffered.—Heb. 5:8

The Apostle Peter wrote about the trial of our faith as being precious. Yet how easy it is to view a trial out of context with the totality of our experiences—to bemoan our lot, and think any trial is a terrible thing. But, as our subject text implies, the trial of our faith is used by God to develop us as we walk the narrow way.

The opening words of the epistle of James reads: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." (James 1:2,3) It will help us whenever we are going through difficult experiences to remember that the LORD has a lesson for us in life's trials just as in life's blessings.

The **Living Bible's** translation does make James' words 'come alive' with its translation of the original Greek text: "Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations?"

Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete."

Our trials are really opportunities. We can never become the purposed instruments of God's grace in the future kingdom of Christ unless we have been rightly exercised by the trials and testings we have in this life. So we should view our vicissitudes as primarily developing the graces of the Spirit within us. Although James particularly mentions patience, all the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit are being developed and tested: love, faith, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, humility, and self-control, as well as patience.

Israel As an Example

Although we usually reserve the use of the word 'consecration' as applying to those who offer themselves to God during this present Gospel Age, the term can also be applied to Israel. Each Israelite dedicated himself to the Law Covenant; they swore allegiance to it. They were "baptized in the sea and in the cloud." (I Cor. 10:2) At Sinai they said, "All the words which the LORD hath said will we do."—Exod. 24:3

The Law put Israel on a high moral plane. A brief summary of that Law was given by Jesus when he was asked what was the greatest commandment in the Law. He replied, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. [Quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5.] And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. [Quoted from Leviticus 19:18.]" (Matt. 22:37,39) If they had truly followed the Law, the Israelites would not have been preoccupied with themselves, but would have loved and sacrificed for their neighbors also.

As Christians during the Gospel Age, we come to God as Israel did, and say we will do all that he has asked of us. "All the words which the LORD hath said," has been distilled into loving the LORD with all our hearts, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. When we love the LORD with all our hearts, our priorities will be set, and we will know how to live and act. Daily the LORD tests us to see if we really mean what we say, just as he tested Israel. "The LORD your God proveth you to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."—Deut. 13:3

We will not be surprised when, during a trying experience, we do not fully understand how or where the LORD is leading us! He has never promised to explain why something was happening to us while it was occurring. On the contrary, "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33) While undergoing these vicissitudes we may not understand what the LORD's purpose is, because his ways are higher than our ways. Although, if we were directing our experiences, we might do things quite differently, the LORD's decision has been made, and we must learn to accept it.

Israel had many difficult problems to face during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. But they were blessed when they finally entered into the Promised Land. Moses, in reminding Israel of the leadings of the LORD, gave the reason for all their experiences as being "to humble and to test [them] so that in the end it might go well with [them]." (Deut. 8:16, NIV) And so it is with us. First come the trials, and, if we are rightly exercised by them, in the end come the blessings. Faith in the LORD tells us that he is doing what is best for our spiritual interests. Later we will understand.

A Partnership

The eighth chapter of Romans contains this wonderful promise: "We are assured and know that [God being a partner in

their labor], all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to those who love God and are called according to [his] design and purpose." (Rom. 8:28, **Amplified Bible**) The thought suggested by this translation is a good one: things work out for good when we are partners with God.

It is all too easy in our Christian walk to make a motion, second it, and then proceed to implement it. If it results in disaster, we act surprised and wonder what went wrong. Did we involve our partner in our plans? If we did, then all things will work together for our good. We may not completely understand any one trial or blessing, but this text says our experiences "fit into a plan." Just as the *individual* pieces of a puzzle make little sense, but the big picture is beautiful when *all* the pieces are properly brought together.

A human parent might withhold something his child wants because he knows that at this stage of his life it will hurt the child's development or character in the long run. The Heavenly Father sometimes does the same thing. He may deny us things we want because he knows it might damage us at this point in our Christian development. Our faith should see God's appointment even in life's disappointments. If we knew everything, we would have no need for faith. But when we cannot understand all his ways, yet try to live close to him, following his commandments as though we did know everything, then we will have the victory that comes through faith.

Joseph As an Example

Joseph stands out as an excellent example of one who trusted God even though he had many dark and perplexing encounters in his life. He accepted whatever happened because he loved God with all his heart.

When Joseph was a young man, he had a dream. He saw eleven sheaves of corn standing upright and bowing down before one sheaf. Because of his youth, he discussed this dream with his

(Cont'd on Page 37)

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U.S. BROADCASTS—Spanish

ARIZONA		
Nogales	KFBR 1340	9:15 a.m.
FLORIDA		
Miami	WRHC	8:30 a.m.

CANADIAN BROADCASTS

ALBERTA		
Banff	CFHC-1340	11:45 a.m.
Canmore	CFHC-1450	11:45 a.m.
Lethbridge	CJOC-1220	7:15 a.m.
Wetaskwin	CJOI-1440	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA		
Castlegar	CKQR-780	8:45 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY-1500	9:00 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY-1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF-1340	9:00 a.m.
Langley	CJUP-800 AM	9:30 a.m.

LABRADOR		
Churchill Falls	CFLC-FM 97.9	7:15 a.m.

MANITOBA		
Winnipeg	CKJS-810	9:00 a.m.

NEWFOUNDLAND		
Corner Brook	CFCB 570	7:15 a.m.
Deer Lake	CFDL-FM 97.9	7:15 a.m.
Goose Bay	CFLN 1230	7:15 a.m.
Port au Choix	CFNW 790	7:15 a.m.
Pl. aux Basques	CFGN 1230	7:15 a.m.
St. Andrews	CFCV-FM 97.7	7:15 a.m.
St. Anthony	CFNN-FM 97.9	7:15 a.m.
Stephenville	CFSX-910	7:15 a.m.
Wabush	CFLW-1340	7:15 a.m.

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Yellowknife	CJCD-1240	9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO		
Hamilton	CKOC-1150	7:00 a.m.
Leamington	CHYR-710	5:00 p.m.
St. Thomas	CHLO-1570	10:45 a.m.

QUEBEC		
Montreal	CFMB-1410	5:15 p.m.

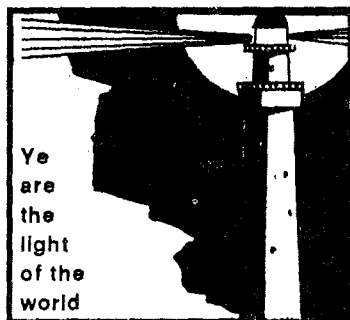
SASKATCHEWAN		
Prince Albert	CKBI-900	7:30 a.m.
Weyburn-Estevan	CFSL-1190	7:15 a.m.

YUKON		
Whitehorse	CKRW-610	9:30 a.m.

OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

BRITISH ISLES		
Radio Caroline-Tues.	KHZ 962	8:45 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES		
Grand Cayman	Radio Cayman	9:30 a.m.
CEYLON		
Columbo-Sat.	Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.
FRANCE (French)		
Lyon-Sat.	Radio Ciel	6:30 a.m.
HONG KONG		
Radio Villa Verde-Fri.		6:00 p.m.
ITALY (Italian)		
Europa Radio Milano	83.3-FM	11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri.		
	MHZ 102	5:30 p.m.
Radio Corleone Centrale		
	FM-88-500 FM-92	11:00 a.m.
MEXICO (Spanish)		
Mazatlan	XECQ	8:30 a.m.
NEW ZEALAND		
Dunedin	4XD	11:15 a.m.
Whakatane	IXX	6:45 a.m.
NIGERIA		
Radio Africa-Wed.		8:00 p.m.
PANAMA		
Panama City	HOQ 1250	10:30 a.m.
PHILIPPINES		
Manila-Sat.	DZAM 1026 KHz	7:15 p.m.
SOUTH AFRICA		
Joubert Park-Thurs.	SWAZI Music	
Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60		9:00 p.m.
SPAIN (Spanish)		
Radio Gerona-Mon.		9:45 p.m.
TONGA		
Nuku' Alofa-Mon.		10:15 a.m.
URUGUAY (Spanish)		
Montevideo	Radio El Espectador 810	9:15 a.m.
VIRGIN ISLANDS		
St. Croix	WSTX 970	9:00 a.m.



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CALIFORNIA			MICHIGAN		
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FLORIDA			MISSISSIPPI		
Miami	WKID		Jackson	WAPT	
Jacksonville	Channel 17		MISSOURI		
GEORGIA			Springfield	KOLR	
Albany-Sun.	WTSG-31	7:30 a.m.	NEW MEXICO		
Atlanta	WATL		Roswell	KSWS	
ILLINOIS			NORTH CAROLINA		
Champaign-Springfield	WBHW		Hickory	WHKY	
IOWA			OHIO		
Cedar Rapids	KTS-13		Dayton	WHIO	
Mt. Vernon	WMVL Cable	7:00 a.m.	TEXAS		
Lisbon (every weekday)			Lubbock	KCBD	
			WEST VIRGINIA		
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			GUAM-Sun.	KUAM	9:00 a.m.

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brothers, who did not like it at all. They were skeptical that a time would ever come when they would bow down to Joseph. They called him a dreamer after that, and the dream remained a puzzle even to Joseph.

Until the age of seventeen, Joseph was blessed with the favor of the LORD and his father, Jacob. The LORD used these blessings to prepare him for a future purpose. But at this tender age, because of the hatred and jealousy of his brothers, he was cruelly sold by them into slavery. This must have been an overwhelming ordeal for one so young.

But, despite the evil motive which forced him into this position, when he arrived in Egypt he prospered in his occupation at Potiphar's house. He could see clearly that God was protecting him, and overruling for good the events of his life. However, he was soon hit by another completely unexpected trial: he was thrown into prison for something he did not do! What was to be the fulfillment of his blessing his brethren, and their bowing before him? He did not know. For three years he simply had to endure what the LORD permitted to come upon him.

Later it all became plain. He was elevated to the right hand of Pharaoh, and supervised the collection of grain during the seven fat years so there would be food enough during the seven lean years. All the pieces of the puzzle fell into place when there was a famine in Canaan, and the sons of Jacob came down to Egypt to find food.

They did not recognize their brother, Joseph. After he revealed himself to them they were very distressed—terrified that the one whom they had so mercilessly wronged was now powerful and in control. They trembled. Yet Joseph said that although they meant to do evil, God made good to come out of it. "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance, so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."—Gen. 45:7,8

As he reviewed his life, Joseph did not see the trials and difficulties—he saw the good. He knew he was to extract from every experience the good that God had put into it.

When we are perplexed by some difficulty, taking it to the LORD in prayer, we may wait a week, a month, or sometimes a year, to see how he means it to be for our good. But Joseph had to wait twenty-two years until all the pieces came together and he could see the complete picture. So we should not become discouraged simply because we still do not know how to interpret all the events that constitute the pattern of our lives. God's purposes often seem to develop slowly according to our perceptions. It is not for us to demand of God why we must go through one experience or another.

Abraham As an Example

Abraham was a mighty man of God—the father of the faithful. He too walked with God for long periods when he could not understand everything that was happening to him. He was about seventy-five years old when the Covenant was ratified with him in Haran, just prior to his entering into Canaan. He was promised that it would be through him that all the families of the earth would be blessed.

But Abraham did not have all the pieces of the puzzle. For twenty-five perplexing years he wondered how God would do this because he and Sarah were of advanced age. But as the father of the faithful, he kept his faith and followed the LORD even when he could not trace him.

Some eleven years later, he and Sarah decided that it must be through her maid, Hagar, that the promised seed of blessing would come. (Gen. 16:2,16) The LORD rejected this arrangement. Abraham could not understand what God planned to do. Finally, when Abraham was one hundred years old, God told him he was to become a father, and Sarah, his wife, would be the mother. But Abraham had his doubts: "Shall a child be born unto

him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee."—Gen. 17:17,18

Sometimes we are like Abraham. We want the LORD to see things our way, and to accept our solutions. We must learn what Abraham learned: the judgments of the LORD are unsearchable and his ways past finding out! We must keep our faith in him even when the answers to problems are not apparent. God is fitting the pieces of our life into a complete picture which will only be fully seen when he is ready to reveal it.

If we have prayed and worried over our lack of understanding of what the LORD is accomplishing in our lives, we should not be discouraged because a year or two goes by without an answer. Abraham had to wait twenty-five years from the time the promise was made to him before he understood how God would fulfill it!

So, let us acknowledge that God is indeed working out great things in our lives. Let us work with God in every experience, making ourselves his partners. Only then can it be said that all things are working together for our good.

My life is but a weaving, between my LORD and me.

I cannot change the colors, for He worketh them, you see.

Of't times He weaveth sorrow, and I in foolish pride,

Forget He sees the upper, and I the underside.

And not until the moon is dark, and the shuttles cease to fly,

Will God unroll the canvas, and explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as useful in the Weaver's skillful hand,

As the threads of gold and silver, in the pattern He has planned.



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Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

DECEMBER 3—"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."—Revelation 3:10 (Z. '01-118 Hymn 145)

DECEMBER 10—"Them that honor me, I will honor."—I Samuel 2:30 (Z. '01-318 Hymn 89)

DECEMBER 17—"Beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Philippians 2:12,13 (Z. '97-147 Hymn 192)

DECEMBER 24—"Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:21 (Z. '00-8 Hymn 243)

DECEMBER 31—"What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows unto the LORD, now, in the presence of all his people."—Psalm 116:12-14 (Z. '99-286 Hymn 336)

Christian Life and Doctrine

Job Sees God

JAMES wrote, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the **LORD**, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the **LORD**; that the **LORD** is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5:10,11) "Take, my brethren the prophets. . . . Ye have heard of the patience of Job." We understand from this couplet of expressions that the **LORD** considered Job to be one of his holy prophets, and in his experiences there is encouragement for all the **LORD**'s people as, like Job, they find themselves passing through fiery trials.

We do not know very much about the historical background of Job. From Genesis 46:13 it appears that he was a grandson of Jacob, and among the seventy souls who went to Egypt to be near Joseph and to be assured of a plentiful supply of food. If the Job of Genesis 46:13 is indeed the same one whom James identifies as a prophet, it means that his ministry was performed prior to the giving of the Law, and that he was a descendant of Abraham. There are those, however, who hold that Job was in reality a Gentile, although all agree that he lived long before the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt.

However, the important things concerning Job are not his exact identity and the time he lived, but the manner in which the **LORD** dealt with him, and how he reacted to the providences of God in his experiences. The first verse of the book which bears his name, reads, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil."—RSV

Job had a large family—seven sons and three daughters. He was wealthy; “he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and very many servants; so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts’. Thus Job did continually.”—vss. 1-5, **RSV**

This bit of information concerning Job's children, and his great concern that they would continue to enjoy the blessings of God, are a clear indication of his own reverence for the LORD and desire to please him. He was indeed a man of God. The time came when Satan set his heart upon destroying Job's faith and integrity. There was a meeting of the sons of God “and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence cometh thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”—vs. 7

Then the LORD asked Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” Satan replied, “Does Job fear God for naught: hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face.”—vss. 6-11, **RSV**

The faith and loyalty of many of the LORD's professed people throughout the centuries have been based upon the material good things with which the LORD blessed them. So many people lack faith, and depend upon the things which can be seen

and felt as evidences that the LORD is blessing them with his love and care. Satan, with his corrupt heart, could not conceive of anyone serving God unless he was being well-rewarded for it by material advantages of one sort or another.

But God could read Job's heart, and he knew that he would maintain his integrity regardless of any material blessings which he might possess, so he said to Satan, "Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand." (vs. 12) With the LORD's restraining hand removed, Satan worked quickly against Job. The account of this reads:

"Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; and there came a messenger to Job, and said, 'The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them; and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them, and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you'. While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, 'The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you'. While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three companies, and made a raid upon the camels and took them, and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you'. While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you'."—vss. 13-19

Job Remained Faithful

Seldom, if ever, has such a series of calamities come into the life of one individual. These calamitous events came without warning, yet Job was not turned away from the LORD because of the reports. He was shocked and saddened, but instead

of blaming the LORD and bemoaning his lot, he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."—vs. 21, RSV

But Satan was not satisfied, and he informed the LORD that if he would permit him to inflict harm upon Job personally "he will curse thee to thy face." God granted this permission, but with the stipulation that Job's life would be spared; so again Satan acted quickly and he "afflicted Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes."—Job 2:1-8, RSV

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Then a further trial came to Job. His wife lost her confidence in him, and said, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God, and die." But Job said to his wife, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of the LORD, and shall we not receive evil?" We are told that in all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Three of Job's friends, hearing about his trying experiences, arranged to visit and comfort him. The account states, "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes from afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great."—Job 2:11-13

Job's Comforters In Error

While these 'comforters' said nothing at all to Job during the first seven days of their visit—which must have been a trying experience for Job under the circumstances—when they did begin speaking with him they revealed a general viewpoint which was not true. God was displeased with what they had said, and told them so. We read, "The LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."—Job 42:7

The central concept these comforters had, and which they communicated to Job, was wrong. They insisted his sufferings were due to sin he had committed, and which he had not confessed to God nor to his fellows. In other words, they as much as accused Job of being a hypocrite, and of course this greatly

added to his sorrow. In this respect Job's experiences were somewhat like those endured by Jesus, who, while born to be a king, and truly the Son of God, had these great realities concerning him contradicted, and was finally put to death as a result of this "contradiction of sinners."

This does not imply that everything Job's comforters said concerning him was untrue. Eliphaz said to him, "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it touchest thee and thou art troubled."—Job 4:3-5

This statement by Eliphaz indicates that Job was rather an important man in the land of Uz, a religious teacher and comforter. But human weakness is much the same wherever we find it. It is true that while we do what we can to comfort others in their trials, when troubles come upon ourselves we often lose sight of the viewpoint we expressed to them, and we wonder why the LORD is permitting us to experience so much suffering.

The Wicked Flourish

In pressing the accusation that Job was suffering because of some gross but secret sin, Eliphaz said, "Who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed."—Job 4:7-9

Job was not disturbed by this accusation, because he knew that it was not true. He knew that often the most wicked of the earth flourish. Malachi stated the matter correctly, saying, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Mal. 3:15) This was true in Job's day. It is still true today, and will continue to be true until Satan is bound and the "new heavens and

a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" are functioning. Job's way of stating this fact was, "The tabernacles of the robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure."—Job 12:6

Pressing the charge of hypocrisy still further against Job, Eliphaz said, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." (Job 22:21) This is a well-known text, but its setting in the Book of Job is usually overlooked. Here Job's comforter is saying to Job that the reason he is not enjoying peace is because he is alienated from God through his sin; and he urges Job to go to the LORD and correct the situation.

It is not true that all who are acquainted with the LORD are assured of enjoying peace. Many, in their severe times of trial, are often troubled of soul. They do not lose faith in God, necessarily, even as Job did not lose faith, but they do wonder why the LORD permits such bitter experiences to come to them, and in their perplexity they are unsettled and disturbed.

Following up this argument, Eliphaz continues: "Receive I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then thou shalt lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defense, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. For then thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy ways. When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands."—Job 22:21-30

Job's Reply

Job knew he could not return to the Almighty, for he had never turned away from his fidelity to his God. He realized clearly that his comforter did not have the right viewpoint, for he knew he had not lost his wealth because he had disobeyed God. Job's difficulty was in understanding why God had permitted such severe calamities to come upon him, so he had lost his contact with his God, and cried out, "Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!"—Job 23:3

Job explained how desperately he was trying to find the LORD. He said, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." (vss. 8,9) Here Job is using figurative language, and how well he pictures the experiences of many of the LORD's people, who in their deep sorrows seek to know the meaning of the LORD's providences in their lives. In these experiences we reflect on our own attitudes as we face up to the various aspects of life, and carefully examine our motives to discern if we may have erred.

But Job did not lose his faith, for in the next verse we find him saying, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." Job could not find God, but God was watching over Job. Job realized that his bitter experiences were not evidences of the LORD's displeasure, but merely that he was being tried; and he was confident also that in due time the trial would be over, and that by the LORD's grace he would triumph in it, and would come forth as gold; that is, he would stand the test.

God Speaks to Job

There was much discussion between Job and his comforters, and finally a fourth person joined his comforters—namely, Elihu. He did not condemn Job as directly as did the oth-

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ers, nevertheless he was of no special help to him. "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof?"—Job 38:1-6

These questions continue almost uninterruptedly throughout chapters thirty-eight through forty-one. Then Job answered the LORD and said, "I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." (Job 42:2) This was the lesson which the LORD was teaching Job by means of the many questions which he propounded to him. Job knew he had not committed gross sin which would justify the suffering that had come upon him; but he had failed to understand the greatness, the power, the wisdom of the Creator in trying to discover the meaning of his experiences. Now he realized that a God so wise and so great could, and did, have reasons far beyond his

ability to understand, and that he should accept this fact, and upon the basis of faith continue to serve him and to rejoice in him.

And how wonderfully Job learned this lesson! He said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." (Job 42:5) Earlier in his experience, after lamenting the fact that his friends, his wife, and the servants in his household despised him, Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."—Job 19:25-27

Here Job seemingly expressed his hope in the "better resurrection," and believed that when he is restored to life in the flesh (or as a human, is the thought) he will then see God. This, however, will not be literal sight, but an understanding of God such as he expressed as having come to him even before he died, when he said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." What a wonderful experience that must have been for Job, and how he must have rejoiced that he had again found the LORD, and could understand the meaning of his providences!

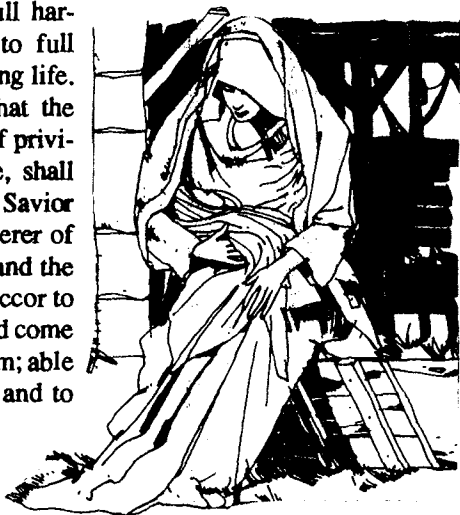
It will be in this sense that all mankind during the thousand-year reign of Christ will "see" the LORD. In Isaiah 25:6-9, where the messianic kingdom is symbolized as a mountain, we are informed that in this mountain the LORD will "destroy . . . the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."

Job said that the Redeemer would stand in the latter day upon the earth, and this is true. He is the great king and Mediator who will rule and bless the people. In one of the symbols applying to him he is referred to as the Arm of the LORD, and concerning him we read, "The LORD hath made bare his Holy Arm in the

eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”—Isa. 52:10

Then all mankind, having passed through the long night-time experience of suffering and of death, mostly without benefit of any clear knowledge of the LORD, will be able to see him in the rich experiences of blessing which will come to all flesh at that time. Yes, Job finally saw and appreciated God more clearly than ever before, and this will be the lot of all mankind; those, that is, who accept the provisions of God’s grace through the Redeemer, and who obey the righteous laws of the kingdom. ☐

Great joy for all people! Our broad faith is confirmed by the Scriptures, which hold firmly that our God graciously has arranged that every member of our poor, fallen human race shall yet be blessed with a clear understanding of the great redemption price paid by the Savior. All may share in the glorious opportunities thus secured to return to full harmony with God and to full blessings, and everlasting life. The angels declared that the good message of joy, of privilege, of love and hope, shall extend to all people! A Savior had been born, a Deliverer of the weak, the helpless and the dying, who is able to succor to the utmost all who would come to the Father through him; able to open the blind eyes and to unstop the deaf ears, that all may come to an appreciation of the goodness of God!



Encouraging Letters

Received from Video Cassette Service Users

A Help in Bible Study

Dear Gentlemen: I would like to order the video cassette, "World without Death." Please send me the free catalog of the Bible Answers Video Cassette Series. Your magazine is a source of inspiration and I use it a lot for my personal Bible studies. Keep up the good work.—*FL*

Appreciates Video Service

Dear Sir: Please send the free loan materials as listed. We appreciate your free service very much. We do not at this time have official school stationary. We hope this will not stop us from receiving this service. Again thank you! P.S. Can these be ordered during summer months for evangelistic purposes?—*WI*

Video Cassettes Enjoyed Immensely

Dear Sirs: I am sending a contribution for the cassette you last sent me entitled, "The Old Made

Young," and "The Blessings of Christ's Kingdom." I hope this is OK with you. Please keep me on the mailing list to receive more. I enjoy them immensely. Sincerely.—*KS*

A Blessing Anticipated

Please send me the Bible Answers video cassette, "World without Death." Also send your catalog. I am looking forward to this because I am unable to get your radio or TV programs. The Dawn magazine has been a comfort—I am sure this is going to be wonderful also. Thank you.—*PA*

For a Nursing Home

I was so excited when I received the information about your VCR tapes. We have recently purchased a VCR and need good tapes to show the residents at our facility. Yours will be perfect! Let's begin by your sending me "God and Creation," and "God and Science." When I return this one, will it be another four weeks before I get the next one?

Thank you!—*MS*

Student Likes Films

Dear Dawn Bible Students: Hi! I am fourteen years old, and go to middle school. I would like to compliment you on your service. I think you have some good films. I would like to ask if you could send me the video cassette, "Coming Back from Hell Soon," if this would not be any trouble. I look forward to hearing from you soon.—*KY*

Heard

Wonderful Comments

Dear Brethren: I am most interested in viewing the complete series of The Bible Answers, which is available on video cassettes. These programs are not available on television in my area, but I have read and heard wonderful comments about them. My wife and I look forward to seeing them. Please start sending these cassettes on your loan basis, starting with numbers VC1 and VC2. Please let me know if any deposit is required. Sincerely yours.—*LA*

A Renewal of Faith

"Thanks so much" is little to say considering the enjoyment we

got with the renewal of faith and lively discussion created by these films. They are viewed by people seventy-four to ninety-seven years of age. I would appreciate having the films, "The Unknown God," and "Paradise Lost and Restored." The film that is being returned was shown several times to special small groups in the nursing facility and the residential facility too. Thank you.—*AR*

Cassettes

Especially Fulfilling

Dear Brethren: I would like to keep the video tape with the films: "The Old Made Young"—"The blessings of Christ's Kingdom." This tape was greatly appreciated by my husband and neighbors. What a comfort to be able to illustrate to others the wonderful blessings the coming kingdom will provide! Words can be said or read concerning these precious scriptural accounts, but somehow when it is put in visual form it never fails to make an impression. This video is *especially* fulfilling in this respect. May the LORD bless and prosper this fine work. Sincerely in his name.—*MI*

1986 & 1987 General Convention Tapes

AUDIO tapes of the 1986 and 1987 General Conventions at Albion, are still available. If you wish to order the entire set, the price is \$40.00; or you can order individual tapes at \$2.00 each.

THE VESPERS tapes are especially nice to have, and include the choral groups which we enjoy listening to so much.

WRITE TO: The Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

Enjoys Film

Dear Sir: I am writing this letter for the residents at a nursing home. They enjoy this kind of film especially since we are located in the Bible Region. We would like to start out with VC21, "Mary and John Reminisce." Thank you so much.—*TN*

Video Tape Very Good

Dear Brother: I received your video tape yesterday. I played it, and it was very good. I hope to make use of it in our class, but also, when I have the opportunity, to show it to others. I will be looking for the next tape. Your brother in Christ.—*PA*

Highly Recommends

Dear Brethren: Thank you so much for the loan of tape VC1, "God and Creation"/"God and Science." My wife and I have heard much about your series, The Bible Answers, but are unable to receive it in our area. We now know that the programs are every bit of what we expected, and more. We highly recommend these tapes to all who have not seen your programs on television. Please send, "Creation or Evolution?"/"From Darkness to Eden," and, "The Bible Examined in the Light of Science,"/ "Paradise without Pollution." Christian love.—*LA*

"I Wish I Knew What To Do!"

HOW often we hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest that one thing practically all can do is send one or more "Dawn" gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that The Dawn enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only one dollar, and you can have six entered for five dollars. And it is simple to do when you use the coupon below.

Dawn Bible Students Association East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073

Dear Friends: I appreciate the privilege of proclaiming the truth through the pages of The Dawn magazine. Please enter the following subscriptions to begin with the January issue:

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Voices from the Past

BROTHER CHESTER SUNDBOM, SAGINAW, MI

God's Workmanship

*"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus
unto good works, which God hath before
ordained that we should walk in them."*

—Ephesians 2:10

OUR text pictures God as a workman, a creator, making a new creation "in Christ," entirely separate from his original creation in Adam. His work in us began even before we came into the body of Christ.

Jesus sowed seed—"the Word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:19)—that God was to establish a government to enforce righteousness in the earth; that because Jesus tasted death for every man, each human being would be called out of the grave and given a full, fair opportunity to return to human perfection; and that a little flock of joint-heirs was being selected to rule with him then, if they would now suffer with him.

We heard this Word, thought about it, and a new idea came into our minds: "I ought to serve God." We began to realize that this would cost us considerable, our self-will, our humanity—all that we had. What we received would far exceed what we gave up, but could we finish our building?—Luke 14:28-33

As we continued to think, we learned that God would be "for us" (Rom. 8:31,32) and give all needed help. When we decided to consecrate, our original idea changed from I 'ought' to serve God, to "I will serve God." Our Heavenly Father recognized this determination as the beginning of the new creature. We were begotten of God's Holy Spirit. Subsequent immersion in water indicated to others what had happened in our hearts.

Thus we came into the body of Christ and God's creative work in us began. The decision, "I will serve God," became his power in our lives. It impelled us to study his Word. The Holy Spirit gave us understanding of his plan and what he wanted us to do. Thus we began to grow in knowledge, learning that we must be doers of the Word; and we made sincere efforts along this line. In this way we began to get practical experience in obedience to God's will. To determination is added knowledge, and then experience. These three things form Christian character, and make us different from others—even good people of the world.

Our determination to serve God is not so strong at first. A severe trial might cause it to falter. But God is the Workman and will not permit this. (I Cor. 10:13) On the other hand, the determination to obey is usually strengthened by trials endured. Uncertainties and difficulties turn us to God for help. Trials force us to appropriate the promises. They necessitate a good fight of faith. (I Tim. 6:12) We must overcome to reign with Jesus. (Rev. 3:21) Trials provide the opportunities to overcome. They also cause us to study God's Word for special wisdom, which adds to our experience. They are a necessity to our development as new creatures.

Since God is developing us, we conclude that an important part of his work is superintending our trials and disciplines. They will not be more than we can stand, and they will be 'tailor-made' to suit the particular characteristic he is forming in us. His Holy Spirit also does an important work in enlightening our minds with particular truths necessary to help us overcome. God's work in us and for us includes arranging our experience, and giving us the Holy Spirit.

Paul's experience with his "thorn in the flesh" is an example. (II Cor. 12:7-10) His poor eyesight was a great hindrance in his work for God. False apostles seeking their own glory seemed to have every advantage. (II Cor. 11:12,13) They said his bodily presence was weak. (II Cor. 10:10) This moved Paul to

pray that the thorn be removed. He had to pray three times, and then the answer was, "No."

In this waiting period, Paul was being prepared to appreciate the answer God gave. He was trying to figure out why God did not remove this thorn so that the interests of the truth might prosper. When the Holy Spirit finally gave the answer, Paul understood that the 'thorn' was necessary to keep him humble. He had learned that it was better to have infirmity and retain the power of Christ. God had arranged every incident and timed them perfectly to bring out just what he wanted in Paul. It was a great step in his development as a new creature.

A university creates scientists and other professionals by work done on the mind. Instructors make the subjects clear to the students; they are required to recite; expression deepens impression; practical experience is gained in laboratories. If the student retains his will to learn, he gains the knowledge and experience which make him a scientist. Similarly, God produces his new creatures by working on our minds. His Spirit enlightens our minds. We get actual experience in overcoming our weaknesses, and in telling others the glad tidings.

What is a doctor? Not the grains of dust which form his body. It is what he has in his mind—knowledge, experience, skill. These make him what he is. Similarly the new creation, who also have a profession as priests of God, are a combination of knowledge and experience motivated by the determination to obey God. The body, the "house" (II Cor. 5:1-4), though necessary, is only the vehicle of expression for the new creature, the Christian character composed of the three elements described. The divine body which we will receive in the first resurrection is also God's workmanship, but we have no part in its creation.

God's work on our minds is of greatest concern to us because we must cooperate by maintaining our determination to learn and do his will. This determination gets stronger each time we overcome. Our Christian character is thus enriched by knowl-

edge and experience. It is God's workmanship and will be completed in the first resurrection. The greatest fact in our lives is that God is now working in us largely by discipline and instruction. Let us view trials from this standpoint and thank God for them: "All trials are worth millions; do not waste any of them!" □

Obituaries

Brother Bernie Suraci, New Haven, CT—September.

Sister Sophie Wisneski Wnorowski, Orlando, FL—October 14.
Age, 85.

Sister Ruth Poland, Indianapolis, IN—October 31. Age, 91.

"The Dawn" Magazine on Tape

LISTEN TO *"THE DAWN"* WHILE:

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FOR years, "The Dawn" magazine has been recorded monthly on tape for the blind. Recently we have been able to upgrade the quality of these recordings with a very fine reading voice. We are so pleased with the result that we wish to offer copies of these readings to all who might find a use for them.

Requests should be sent to the DAWN RECORDED LECTURE SERVICE, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. Cassettes may be purchased for \$2.00 each. If you would like to subscribe to this service on an annual basis, the cost is \$20.00 for twelve months.

Christian Life and Doctrine

Deliverer, Lifegiver

*"Thou shalt call his name Jesus:
for he shall save his people from their sins."*

—Matthew 1:21

THE story of the angel's visit to the shepherds, informing them of the birth of Jesus, is one that never grows old. It was "good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10) then, and it is the same today. Throughout the centuries since that holy night, many millions have had their hearts made glad by this story, and yet its real fulfillment is still future. Eventually it will be glad tidings to all people, not merely as a story, but in the fact that salvation from sin, sickness, and death will be made available to all.

That the shepherds were in the fields tending their sheep the night Jesus was born would indicate that December 25th is not the correct anniversary of his birth. While the winters in Israel are not as severe as they are in many other parts of the world, they are too cold for sheep to be kept in the open fields. The approximate date of Jesus' birth is October 1st. This is deduced from the fact that he was crucified in the spring of the year, at the time of the Jewish Passover. (Matt. 26:2) Jesus was thirty years of age (Luke 3:23) when he began his ministry—a ministry which lasted for three and one-half years. Thus he was thirty-three and one-half years old when he was crucified. This being in the spring of the year would mean that he was born about the first of October.

Of course the date of Jesus' birth is not too important. The important thing is that he was born, that thus he was "made flesh" for the "suffering of death," and that by the grace of God

he tasted "death for every man." (Heb. 2:9) The infant Jesus could not be the Savior of the world. Only the "man Christ Jesus" could give himself a "ransom for all." This he did, and the glorious fact of the redemption from death thus made possible, will, in God's due time, be testified to all mankind.—I Tim. 2:3-6

A "multitude of the heavenly hosts" sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." (Luke 2:13,14) In modern times this has been translated to read, "Peace on earth among men of goodwill." But this is an erroneous translation, devised to compensate for a lack of understanding of just what was implied by this prophecy of the angels. The professed Christian world knows that peace has not been established as a result of Jesus' birth, so they assume that the angels meant that peace would come only to men of goodwill.

Actually, men of goodwill have always had peace among themselves. (John 14:27) It did not require the birth of Jesus to bring this about. What the angels really told the shepherds was that the birth of Jesus was a manifestation of God's goodwill toward men; for God, in his love, had sent his Son to be the Deliverer and Lifegiver of the world.

Except in the making of promises through his prophets, God's goodwill had not been manifested toward mankind since our first parents were driven out of the Garden of Eden and sentenced to death because of sin. He had shown limited favor to a few who exercised faith in his promises, but he had given life to none. He had given the Israelites an opportunity to gain life by keeping the Law, but they had failed. But now, in fulfillment of his promises to send a Deliverer and Lifegiver, Jesus was born as a marvelous manifestation of God's goodwill.

The name Jesus means 'savior'. In order for Jesus to be the Savior, it was necessary for him to die as the Redeemer. And in his death we see another manifestation of God's goodwill toward men. Then Jesus returns to prepare for the establishment of his kingdom, that through the agencies of that kingdom the world

might be enlightened, and given an opportunity to benefit from his death as their Deliverer and Lifegiver. This opportunity will reach the living, and also the dead, who will be brought forth from the grave (John 5:25)—another manifestation of God's goodwill! And in his kingdom, peace will also come to the world.

The ministry of the disciples was at first confined to the Israelites, but with the conversion of Cornelius the Gospel began to be preached more and more to the Gentiles. (Acts 2:39) However, only in a limited sense did this begin the fulfillment of the angel's prophecy that the glad tidings of Jesus' birth as a Savior would be to all people.

The purpose of the general witnessing of the Gospel in this age is to reach those who respond in terms of full devotion, to follow in the footsteps of Jesus which lead to sacrificial death. Those who now react to the Gospel, and meet the terms of this "high calling" (Phil. 3:14), will be exalted to immortality (Rom. 2:7) in the resurrection, to live and reign with Christ for the blessing of the remainder of the resurrected world of mankind. (Rev. 5:9-13) Only then will they know the full meaning of the titles given to Jesus—Deliverer, Lifegiver!



Speakers' Appointments

MINISTERING THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn, or by classes associated with the Pilgrim Service. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

M. Nekora		F. Nemesh	
Fresno, CA	December 13	London, Ont.	December 13

Conventions

CHICAGO, IL, New Year's Convention, January 1-3, Elk Grove Village High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd. Elk Grove Village. Contact: Mr. Joseph Megacz, 1431 S. Fairview, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Phone: (312) 692-3609

PHOENIX, AZ, January 1-3, 1988—Days Inn, 502 W. Camelback Road 85013. Contact: Mildred Enteman, 542 W. Southern Avenue 85041

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, January 10—Majestic Park Homes, Inc., 8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19) Contact Mrs. John Slavich, 3401 Rochelle Court, Clearwater, FL 33519 Phone: (813) 786-3795

PALO ALTO, CA, January 23,24—San Jose Masonic Temple, 2500 Masonic Drive, San Jose. Contact Irene Altuvilla. Phone: (208) 296-1913

O Glorious Night!

THE little lambs slept with their mothers all, under the starry sky,
And dreamed of the lilies that lay in the grass and the waters that glided by.
The stars overhead twinkled midnight, 'twas midnight solemn and calm,
As the shepherds sat on the grey, old rocks and chanted an ancient psalm:
When I survey the heavens and the things Thy hands have wrought,
Oh LORD, what is man, that mindful of him, thou knowest his every thought?

THEN around the chanting shepherds there suddenly shone a light,
And wearing a glory that dimmed the stars, came an angel out of the night.
"Fear not," said he, "fear not," for the men were sore afraid—
And unto the LORD of life and death, each one in his terror prayed.
"Fear not," said he, "fear not"; and his voice like a flute-note fell:
"I bring you tidings of greatest joy, to you and the earth as well.
For the time foretold by the prophets, that wondrous time is here,
And a child is born in Bethlehem—the child that should appear."

THEN, lo, an angels' anthem rose, swelling to vast increase,
"Glory to God, goodwill to men, on earth shall never cease."
The shepherds humbly kneeling, praised the mighty God of heaven,
O'erawed by the angels' promise which that night to them was given.
And the lambs lay still asleeping, as the waters murmured by,
When all became dark and silent, and the stars returned on high.

—Contributed