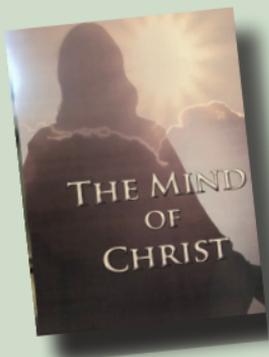


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

God's Plan of the Ages 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

The Day of Pentecost 16

Healing the Lame Man 18

The Ethiopian Eunuch 20

Saul of Tarsus 22

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

"Learned He Obedience" 24

Lessons from Jonah 42

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 41

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin 53

General Convention Program 56

OBITUARIES 41

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

God's Plan of the Ages

*“Study to shew
thyself approved
unto God, a
workman that
needeth not to be
ashamed, rightly
dividing the
word of truth.”*
—II Timothy 2:15

IN HIS SECOND LETTER to Timothy, the Apostle Paul reveals that there were some in his day who taught that “the resurrection is past already.” (II Tim. 2:18) It is evidently in view of this false teaching that Paul admonished Timothy three

verses earlier to “rightly divide the word of truth”—that is, “handle aright, to teach the truth directly and correctly.” (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*) The lesson is obvious. The resurrection of the dead is one of the most prominent teachings of the Bible. It is so important in the plan of God that Paul himself wrote, that if there is no resurrection of the dead, “Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” (I Cor. 15:16-19) The erroneous view mentioned by Paul to Timothy was not that there was no resurrection of the dead, but that the promised resurrection was “past already.”

This helps us to understand what Paul meant by rightly dividing the word of truth, which was that we should learn to place the various promises of God, and the prophecies of the Bible, in their proper place relative to the time sequences in the divine arrangement. The Bible emphatically teaches the resurrection of all the dead, “the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:15) However, it does not state that the resurrection was to take place at the time of the Early Church. The proper time for the general resurrection of the dead is still future.

THE “DUE TIME”

The Bible states, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” (Eccles. 3:1) God has a “due time” for every feature of his plan of salvation. There was a due time for Christ to come and to die for the sin-cursed world, and there is a due time when the knowledge of this provision of divine love will be “testified” to all. (Rom. 5:6; I Tim. 2:5,6) It is only as we recognize this element in the plan of God that we are able to discover the marvelous harmony of his Word.

A simple illustration of this would be an architect’s plans and specifications for a three-story building. While there would be some similarity between the plans and specifications for the various floors, in many respects they would differ. Should one attempt to apply the specifications for the third floor in place of those for the first floor, they would certainly be contradictory.

The divisions in the plan of God, of course, are not from the standpoint of height, as in a building,

but in terms of purpose and time. As to time, we find that there are three major divisions in the plan of God. In a very general way these might be designated as past, present, and future. More specifically, however, the Bible refers to these three time divisions as “the world that then was,” the “present evil world,” and the “world to come.”—II Pet. 3:6; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:5

The world that “then was” came to an end at the time of the Flood. This was the antediluvian world, which began with the creation of Adam. The “present evil world” began after the Flood, and continues to the completion of the church and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom upon the earth. The “world to come” subsequently begins and continues into the endless ages of eternity, the first thousand years being the period of Christ’s reign.—Rev. 20:4,6

In the third chapter of Peter’s second epistle, he describes the main component elements of these three worlds by the symbolic terms “heavens” and “earth,” meaning the spiritual, and material—or earthly—aspects of these worlds, or social orders. (II Pet. 3:7) In “rightly dividing” God’s Word, it is also essential to determine when literal language is used, and when the Lord is speaking to us in symbolic language. This can be determined by applying the known facts concerning the divine purpose in the creation of man. The Scriptures reveal clearly that it was God’s purpose that the earth should be man’s eternal home. We have the assurance that “the earth abideth for ever,” and that God created it “not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.”—Eccles. 1:4; Isa. 45:18

SYMBOLIC HEAVENS AND EARTH

This means that prophecies which refer to the passing away of the “heavens” and the “earth” must of necessity be symbolic. By way of example, the literal planet Earth itself did not perish at the time of the Flood, although Peter declares that the heavens and the earth, or world, of that time did perish. (II Pet. 3:5,6) By the same token, when we read that the heavens and the earth “which are now” will also be destroyed, we know that the literal Earth will remain. (vs. 7) It is the symbolic earth, or present world order, that is “removed,” to be replaced by a new earthly order in which God’s name will ultimately be exalted, when he says to the raging nations, “Be still, and know that I am God: ... I will be exalted in the earth.”—Ps. 46:2,10

Thus, the Apostle Peter assures us that there will be a “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) This will not be a new sun, moon, and stars, or a new planet Earth, but a new and righteous social order. It will be the kingdom of Christ—that divine government which will cause God’s will to be done in earth as it is now done in heaven. (Matt. 6:10) In that new “world to come” there will be peace, joy, health and everlasting life for all who obey the laws of Christ’s kingdom.—Rev. 21:3-7

In our study of the Bible, it is essential to discern which texts, or portions thereof, apply to the first world, which to the present world, and which to the “new heavens” and “new earth” of the coming Messianic kingdom. We read, for example, God’s instructions to Noah concerning the building of an ark. We know those instructions applied exclusively

to the first world, and particularly to Noah. This illustration highlights the fact that certain instructions and promises which apply to one period in the plan of God might not necessarily apply to another.

So far as general conditions in the present evil world are concerned, Malachi says, "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 harmonizes with what we know to be true in the present experience of the human race. However, the Bible also tells us that in "his days" the righteous shall "flourish." (Ps. 72:7) We know that this is not true at the present time. Therefore, in rightly interpreting the Scriptures, we apply this text to the third world, to the time when Christ's righteous kingdom will be in operation.

Jesus referred to Satan, the Devil, as the "prince of this world." (John 14:30) Paul speaks of him as the "god of this world," and explains that he blinds the minds of those who "believe not." (II Cor. 4:4) Jesus will be the king, the ruler, in the righteous world of tomorrow. This, in fact, is what guarantees that it will be a righteous world. Knowing this, we properly apply all the texts of the Bible which refer to a time when righteousness will flourish and be triumphant, to the "world to come."

ADDITIONAL TIME DIVISIONS

The Bible indicates that in this present evil world there are additional time divisions in the plan of God. These we often speak of as "ages." The first age, or era, following the Flood we refer to as the age of the Patriarchs, because it was during this

time that God dealt exclusively with the patriarchs, or “fathers”—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Acts 3:13; 7:32) To these God made various promises, the principal one being to Abraham, which was the wonderful assurance that through his “seed,” or offspring, all the families of the earth would be blessed.—Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18

This promise indicated God’s interest in all the people, yet during that age he did little to show his favor to any other than the patriarchs. For example, he allowed the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah to continue in their sin until it came to the full; then he destroyed them. (Gen. 19:23-25) Centuries later Jesus explained that if the same efforts had been made in Sodom and Gomorrah as he had made in Israel, they would have repented and not been destroyed. He said, also, that it would be “more tolerable” for Sodom and Gomorrah in the “day of judgment” than for the Israelites who rejected and persecuted him.—Matt. 10:15; 11:21,23

These statements reveal that God’s due time for extending his favor to the Sodomites is still future, and that it will be during the “day of judgment.” Paul told the Athenians that God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.” (Acts 17:31) This again emphasizes the due time element in God’s plan. The judgment day, when God will deal with and offer his blessings and the opportunity for life to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, is an “appointed” day in God’s plan, and we may be sure that he will keep this, as well as all of his divine appointments and purposes.

THE JEWISH AGE

The age of the Patriarchs ended with the death of Jacob. On his deathbed, Jacob gathered his twelve sons around him and pronounced blessings upon each one. They were the nucleus of the nation of Israel. Thus, from the death of Jacob to the First Advent of Christ, God's dealings were almost exclusively with this nation. He visited and delivered the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt. Through Moses, he gave them his Law. He sent his prophets to them. Through the Prophet Amos the Lord said to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2

Jesus came in the closing years of the Jewish Age, and he respected his Heavenly Father's special dealings with Israel and the Jewish people. When sending his disciples into the ministry he said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5,6) This was no indication that Jesus did not love the Gentiles, nor did it mean that God's promise to bless all the nations of the earth had been forgotten. It was merely that the due time had not yet arrived for divine favor to be extended to other than this one nation.

After his resurrection, Jesus removed this restriction, saying to his disciples just before he left them, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) This broadening of the ministry of Christ represented the beginning of another age in the plan of God—the Gospel Age—which we might also call

the Christian age. During the Jewish Age God dealt primarily with a single nation—Israel. During the Gospel Age he has carried on his work through the proclamation of the “gospel of the kingdom” to all nations, and he has accepted and blessed as his people all those who have responded to the message of Christ, regardless of their race or nationality.—Matt. 24:14; Gal. 3:26-29

AGES OF PREPARATION

One thing, however, has been common to both the Jewish and Gospel Ages. In both of them the work of the Lord has primarily been to prepare a people through whom the promise made to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth would be fulfilled. The natural descendants of Abraham were given the first opportunity to become the “seed” of blessing. (Gen. 22:18) It was offered to them on a national basis, but was dependent upon obedience to God’s law. Through Moses, God said to this nation, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”—Exod. 19:5,6

The priestly family within Israel served the nation as God’s representatives in extending his blessings to the Israelites. God’s promise that upon the condition of faithfulness the whole nation would be a “kingdom of priests” indicates that the nation could have become the means of blessing, the natural “seed” through which his promised blessing to all the families of the earth would come to pass in due time.

The nation of Israel struggled mightily for many centuries to be faithful to their covenant; and eventually, due to their unfaithfulness, there began a long period in which they were in bondage to Gentile kingdoms. Israel's climactic test of worthiness for this high position in the plan of God came when Jesus presented himself to them as their Messiah at his First Advent. As a nation, however, the Israelites rejected him. The Apostle John wrote, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11) This rejection of Jesus confirmed their unworthiness, as a nation, to be a kingdom of priests.

From that time forward the selection of the seed of Abraham, the future means of God's blessings to the world, has been conducted on an individual basis. The first opportunity for individuals to qualify for this high honor was offered to the Israelites. John explains that while the nation rejected Jesus, "As many as received him [individually], to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."—vs. 12

However, the number of individual Israelites who accepted Jesus was too small to make up God's foreordained number of the "seed" class. Hence, as we have seen, soon after Pentecost the Gospel invitation began to be extended to the people of other nations. This was in keeping with Jesus' final instruction to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.—Matt. 28:19

GENTILES INVITED

It was not the divine intention, however, that the witness of the Gospel among all nations would convert the world to Christ during the present

Gospel Age. God's purpose in the work of this age, which began at Pentecost, is clearly expressed in Acts 15:14, where we read that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." This "people for his name" are called and prepared to be joint-heirs with Jesus, who is the Head of the promised "seed" class.—Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:8,16,27-29

The faithful members of this class are shown to be with the "Lamb," Jesus, on Mount Zion. They are said to have the Lamb's "name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." (Rev. 14:1, *Revised Standard Version*) The first of these to be called were the individual Jews who accepted Jesus, and to whom he gave "power to become the sons of God." The remaining number are called out from the Gentile world. These also are taken into the divine family, the "Father's name" being written in their foreheads.

The call and preparation of this "little flock," through the medium of the Gospel, has been the principal work of God in the earth throughout the present age, and will soon be completed. (Luke 12:32) It is after this Gospel Age call of a "people for his name," quoted earlier from Acts 15:14, is concluded, that the work of God will then be extended to embrace all mankind. Hence, the account in Acts 15 continues: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."—vss. 16,17

Through David, and other kings of Israel, God ruled his ancient people. But that arrangement ceased with the overthrow of their last king, Zedekiah. The “crown” and the “diadem,” the right to rule, were then removed, and the Prophet Ezekiel stated, “It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is.” (Ezek. 21:25-27) Jesus is the one “whose right it is,” and it is at his promised return and subsequent presence that he establishes his Father’s kingdom. Concerning this we read, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:7

In this reestablished “kingdom” of the greater David, divine rulership will not be limited to the one nation of Israel, but will embrace all nations. We recall the foregoing words, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” With the inauguration of this kingdom under the righteous rule of Christ Jesus and those called from Jews and Gentiles to be a people for his name, the present age will close and the first age of the “world to come” will begin. The Scriptures indicate that it is a thousand years in length, hence it is often referred to as the Millennial Age. (Rev. 20:1-4,6) It is also sometimes referred to as the Messianic Age, or Kingdom Age.

It will be during the Millennial Age that the “residue,” or remainder, of mankind will have an opportunity to “seek after the Lord,” and this will include “all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.” (Acts 15:17) The Gospel has been widely

witnessed to the Gentile world during the present age, but only a small number have responded to its call to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. However, those who have not responded to the Lord's call during this age will still have an opportunity to seek after him.

This means that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, who throughout the age did not respond to the Gospel call of self-sacrifice will need to be raised from the dead if they are to have an opportunity to seek after the Lord during the Millennial Age. This is exactly what the Bible teaches. Not only will the whole world then be enlightened with a knowledge of the glory of God, but it will also be that glorious age in the plan of God when sickness and death will be destroyed, and when the dead will be raised and given an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom.

We note these clear statements of the Bible to the effect that in God's coming kingdom all who have died will be awakened from the sleep of death. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth." "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (John 5:28,29; I Cor. 15:21,22) Upon being awakened from death, all mankind will be given the opportunity through the educational process of the kingdom to gain everlasting life by developing the qualities of a Christlike character.

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

During the Messianic kingdom, Satan will be bound. No longer will he go about as a "roaring lion"

seeking whom he may devour. (Rev. 20:1-3; I Pet. 5:8) “No lion shall be there,” Isaiah assures us, “nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion [where the Christ class are enthroned to administer blessings of life] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:9,10

The “ransomed of the LORD shall return,” Isaiah says. Jesus gave himself a “ransom for all,” Paul explains, and this glorious fact is to be “testified” to all “in due time.” (I Tim. 2:3-6) The ransomed billions of the human race will “return” from death that they may be made acquainted with the loving provision of everlasting life which has been made for them through the redemptive work of Christ. The “due time” for this in God’s plan will be during the Millennial Age.

Let us, then, rejoice at the prospect of the soon establishment of God’s kingdom, under the rulership of Christ, and the glorious consummation of the divine purpose and plan of the ages for mankind. “In this mountain [kingdom] shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath

spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, 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. 25:6-9

The Glory of God Revealed

*Great God who hast forever been,
Whom thru thy Word we know
As giver of each perfect gift
To creatures here below.*

*In wonders of thy Universe
Thy power is not concealed.
For day to day and night to night
Thy glory is revealed.*

*To prophets and those Saints of old
Thy might and power were shown.
They bowed in awe before thy face—
In reverence sought thy throne.*

*Thou art revealed in thy great plan,
Lost Eden to restore.
When all mankind shall live again
In peace forever more.*

*For by thy love thou did'st send forth
Thine only Son to die.
That he might pay the debt of sin
That o'er the world doth lie.*

*When to the earth thy Kingdom comes,
Thy glory shall be shown
In love revealed to all the world
Thy name shall then be known.*

—*Poems of the Way*

The Day of Pentecost

Key Verse: *“The promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”*

—*Acts 2:39, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2:1-42

THE DAY OF PENTECOST might, with propriety, be recognized as the day of the birth of the Christian church. That day bore witness to a wondrous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Christ’s disciples had gathered together “with one accord in one place.” (Acts 2:1) There surely must have been an air of great expectancy among them. Reflecting on the earlier words

of Jesus, who “being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”—Acts 1:4,5, *NKJV*

Jesus’ words echoed and amplified those previously spoken to the disciples when they were gathered together after Emmaus. “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49, *NKJV*) “Power from on high”—what did that mean, and how would they know? What would they then be empowered to do? Their questions would soon be answered.

The day we now refer to as Pentecost was commonly known to the people of Israel as The Feast of Harvest or The Feast of Weeks. (Exod. 23:16; 34:22) The celebration

was timed to coincide with the harvest of the firstfruits of spring grain. It was one of the feasts of Israel that required attendance at Jerusalem for worship at the Temple. This was a masterful stroke of God's omniscience. On that day Jews from all around the known world would be present. In God's great wisdom, many witnessed the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit on that day. The result was a worldwide dissemination, by many witnesses, of the new era in God's plan for man. That era continues to the present day and is manifested by the "fruit of the spirit" in Christ's followers. —Gal. 5:22,23

Such fruitage is a powerful evidence both of Christ's resurrection and the authenticity of the Christian faith. Peter declared, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear." (Acts 2:32,33, *NKJV*) Our Key Verse notes that the promise of the Holy Spirit is "to you [Israel] and to your children, and to all who are afar off." We who were once "far off" have also been blessed by the spirit working in us as Apostle Paul observed, "The gospel ... is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."—Rom. 1:16, *New International Version*

The risen Lord Jesus opened "a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." (Heb. 10:20-23, *NKJV*) The promise remains even now to us who once were far off. May we always find strength and encouragement in this assurance. ■

Healing the Lame Man

Key Verse: “So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.”
—Acts 3:8, *New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Acts 3:1-10

entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.” (Acts 3:2,3, *NKJV*) He was therefore known for years to many Jews in Jerusalem, and on occasion some kindly offered him assistance.

Jesus had previously performed a miracle on a man who was “blind from birth.” He too frequented the Temple area. All knew that this man had been born blind. When he was given sight it was acknowledged, “Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.”—John 9:1,32, *NKJV*

The point in both instances was that the disability afflicting these men was well documented. They were blind or lame from infancy. They were not planted as accomplices by the Apostles in order to perpetrate a hoax. Such methods would be cynical and a lie,

THE MAN NOTED IN OUR Key Verse had been lame from birth. Apparently, he grew up in the vicinity of the Temple and, at some point, began to solicit alms from passersby. The account states, “A certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who

although some modern “faith-healers” have chosen to use this practice in their revival meetings. These men were truly disabled—an indisputable fact, and it was the miraculous power of Christ that healed them.

Peter experienced great joy in healing the lame man, yet he did not claim the glory but gave it to Jesus—the one the Jews had rejected. “As the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them, ... greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ... And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”—Acts 3:11-16, *NKJV*

In this account we are awed by the fact that this man’s legs, feet and ankles were instantly healed. That was indeed miraculous. We are also impressed that the man was instantly given the muscle coordination and skill to walk and leap about, though he had never done so in his life. This speaks to the omnipotence of God’s healing power. It takes most newborns about a year, on average, to learn to walk. Others, having suffered physical damage of one kind or another, may take months or years to learn to walk again. This happened instantly.

In this journal we have often spoken of the great healing of the nations in God’s coming kingdom. Then the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will leap, and the mute will sing. (Isa. 35:1-10) In the fashion of the man born lame, the human family will then leap for joy and sing praises to their great God! ■

The Ethiopian Eunuch

Key Verse: “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.”

—Acts 8:38, *New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Acts 8:26-40

OUR KEY VERSE DEMONSTRATES the spontaneity and immediacy of the early church’s evangelizing work. Regarding the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, many Christians delight in his enthusiastic observation that, “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”—Acts 8:36, *NKJV*

Leading to this moment, the Lord’s angel instructed Philip to “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.” The eunuch was reading Isaiah—the kingdom prophet. This was a golden opportunity. The Lord’s spirit gave Philip encouragement saying, “Go near and overtake this chariot. So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the Prophet Isaiah, and said, Do you understand what you are reading?”—vss. 26-30, *NKJV*

In God’s providence the eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, the prophecy of the suffering of Christ. Philip was invited

to come up into the chariot and, starting with Isaiah's prophecy, he began to preach Jesus. Many Scriptures were likely considered, as well as Philip's personal testimony and that of many who had known Jesus. Convinced of the Truth, the newly converted Ethiopian desired to give his life to the Lord. "The eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (vss. 36,37, *NKJV*) Then, as stated in our Key Verse, Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, and he was baptized.

We desire to be as responsive and sensitive to the will of God as this Ethiopian. May our aspirations be guided by the commission that Paul urged upon Timothy: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."—II Tim. 4:1-5, *NKJV*

We too should bear in mind that the time will come when judgment will be rendered. All wrongs shall be made right, and all that is righteous shall be rewarded. "God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil." (Eccles. 12:14, *NKJV*) Be ready to preach the word in season and out of season. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to serve the Lord. Philip was of this mind and recognized a marvelous opening to approach the Ethiopian. The Lord opens doors for us to serve him. We desire that hesitancy will not bar us from entering them. ■

Saul of Tarsus

Key Verse: *“And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*
—Acts 9:17, New King James Version

Selected Scripture:
Acts 9:1-18

SAUL’S ZEAL FOR GOD

was evident. He facilitated the stoning of Stephen, standing by and approving the event, as he watched the cloaks of the murderous mob. Not long after, Saul went to Israel’s high priest to obtain letters of authorization. He obtained formal permission to persecute the new Christian converts in Damascus. Men or women found to be in the “Way” would be bound and brought to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1,2) In his own words, later in life, he would note those who “have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2, *NKJV*) Saul’s emotional enthusiasm was soon to be tempered. On his way to

Damascus he experienced a life-changing epiphany. His uninformed zeal would be dramatically altered by Truth!

The account of Saul’s conversion is notable: “As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? And he said, Who are You, Lord? Then the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

So he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what do You want me to do? Then the Lord said to him, Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”—Acts 9:3-6, *NKJV*

The Lord Jesus’ awe-inspiring revelation of himself to Saul effected an immediate change of heart. His zeal was now “according to knowledge”—the knowledge of the one who declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”—John 14:6

Repentance is one of the profound tenets of Christian faith, allowing the sinner to find forgiveness and the paths of righteousness. It is often easier for the repentant one to grasp the fact of their change than for others to accept it. Let us not doubt the heart sincerity of any who profess to follow Christ. Rather, we should seek to identify Christian fruitage in their lives. Jesus commended this approach, “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ... Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”—Matt. 7:16-20, *NKJV*

Instructed in a vision to meet Saul, Ananias had to learn trust in the Lord’s choice, and he was thus assured. He went his way and entered the house pointed out by the Lord. There lay Saul, his sight impaired and in his mind waiting for the risen Lord’s next instruction. Ananias went in, and as noted in our Key Verse, told Saul that he had been sent by the Lord Jesus to welcome him into the brotherhood of Christ. He layed his hands on Saul to heal him from his blindness and to convey upon him the Holy Spirit. Immediately the scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he received his sight. He arose, was baptized, and served Christ to the end of his life. May we actively encourage those who have experienced true repentance to serve our Lord and Master. ■

“Learned He Obedience”

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
—Hebrews 5:8,9

AS WE CONSIDER THIS

text of Scripture from the Apostle Paul, it can easily be divided into three parts. First, Jesus learned obedience by means of suffering, something he had not experienced in his pre-human existence. Second, by experiencing difficult trials and tests, he was made perfect, or complete.

Third, by his faithfulness in all such experiences, even unto death, Jesus became the author of salvation to all rendering obedience to him.

What is obedience? What does it entail? What kind of obedience is required of us by the Heavenly Father? Obedience, in general, implies submission to an authority. For those striving to follow the divine will, they accept God only as the supreme authority in all matters. Paul connects faith to pleasing God by way of obedience, when he says, “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he

that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Heb. 11:6

Throughout its pages, the Bible establishes God as the supreme authority, and either commands obedience to him, or invites obedience of one’s own choice or volition. The Scriptures are pronounced in giving many examples and lessons regarding both of these aspects of obedience—whether dutiful or voluntary.

DUTIFUL VS. VOLUNTARY OBEDIENCE

Voluntary obedience to God requires faith and loving confidence to his divine will. This is because, in his wisdom, the Heavenly Father may see that we can be more fully developed by suffering temporal loss in some measure. On the other hand, Adam was not asked to render obedience which entailed loss. Every possible blessing of the needs of life, and life itself, would be maintained if he dutifully obeyed.—Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15-17

The Israelites were commanded to obey, and only prosperity and blessing came when they did such. Only their disobedience would entail loss. (Exod. 19:4-6; Lev. 26:1-39) By contrast, those who desire to follow in the footsteps of Jesus are invited to voluntarily give up their own will and do God’s will, knowing that doing so will bring sacrifice and suffering.—Rom. 12:1; I Pet. 4:12-14

Suffering and sacrifice are generally contrary to human nature and, hence, difficult to endure. However, God has chosen this means to test the fidelity of those who accept his invitation to joint heirship with Christ. Through suffering comes completion

of the divine character in the hearts, minds, words and actions of the Lord's chosen people.

In the day-to-day affairs of life, obedience, in a general way, is often first of the dutiful kind, and may not necessarily imply faith or confidence. For example, in the case of a king and his subjects, or an employer and his employees, obedience may be rendered with little or no confidence. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:1,5 admonishes children to obey their parents, and servants to obey their masters. Confidence in these and other instances is desirable, but not necessarily expressed, and perhaps in some cases is not even merited.

There are also examples of involuntary obedience. These are cases in which there is no choice in the matter. When God created man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, man became a living soul. (Gen. 2:7) The ability to breathe involuntarily was miraculously planted by God in the human organism and, barring some physical disease, requires no thought, whether of duty or voluntary, on our part. We breathe when we are awake, or are asleep, and at every moment of activity, without giving any thought to it.

Let us then keep in mind that obedience is often first an expression of duty, whereas in relation to faith and confidence, obedience is elevated to a higher plane, and with a greater reward attached to it. Paul said, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." (Heb. 10:35) Such obedience based on faith and confidence in God engenders boldness, fidelity and trust, without fear of the possibility of any eternal injury, though temporal loss may result.

A child may at first only dutifully obey his parent, but over time, he will gain full confidence, and the good parent likewise will develop confidence in him. It was perhaps this kind of desire which prompted Solomon to say, when he first became king over Israel, “I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. ... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.”—I Kings 3:7,9,10

FULL SUBMISSION TO GOD

The spirit of confidence finds its expression in the disposition of humility and meekness. Humility is the foundation of a virtuous character, and includes the possession of an honest and sober estimation of ourselves, of being easy to approach as well as teachable. (Rom 12:3; James 3:17; Ps. 71:17) Listen to Job’s testimony of humility, confidence and submission toward God. “He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. ... Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”—Job 23:10,12

Confident obedience should embrace meekness. Meekness, however, does not imply weakness, but rather manifests itself in a disposition to serve zealously, faithfully, loyally and liberally as did Moses. It was said of him, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” (Num. 12:3) Yet, Moses was a

man of confident faith and a strong character, as were so many other faithful servants of the Lord found in the Scriptures. Let us seek to emulate them.

One who has the spirit of obedience, based upon faith, possesses full confidence in the one requesting that obedience. This is beautifully shown in the words of Exodus 21:5,6: "If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever." We read of this also in the prophetic words of the psalmist, speaking of Jesus, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened [Hebrew: digged]: ... Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."—Ps. 40:6-8

We each should ask ourselves: Am I a bond servant forever to my Lord? Has my ear been pierced or digged? If not, we are missing the richest blessings of rest, faith, full assurance, settled conviction, and of peace and joy which come only to such as have made a full surrender of their will, their all, to the Heavenly Father. God, through the Prophet Malachi, admonished Israel, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, ... and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—Mal. 3:10

EXAMPLES FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Let us look at some examples from the Scriptures along the lines of this important subject of obedience. We will briefly examine God's dealings with four prominent individuals—Adam, Abraham, Saul and Jesus.

ADAM

In Genesis 2:15-17, God commanded obedience of Adam as necessary to life. We read: “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” or as *Young's Literal Translation* more correctly renders the last phrase, “... dying thou dost die.”

Adam was mentally, morally, and physically perfect, and every provision had been made for his comfort and sustenance by God. His disobedience, however, meant loss and death, not only for him, but as progenitor of the human race, it plunged his entire posterity into sin and death. (Rom. 3:23; 5:12) Obedience by Adam to God's simple instruction would have meant continued life, health, peace and prosperity—at least until an additional test might have been put upon him.

ABRAHAM

Abraham was called “the Friend of God.” (James 2:23) Yet, he was approached by Jehovah with what might seem like a difficult set of instructions. “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham,

when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come to the land which I shall shew thee.” “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”—Acts 7:2,3; Heb. 11:8

Think of such submissive faith as Abraham had! No question was raised, no contrary suggestion or requests made, no thought of personal comforts or enjoyments was considered, but with prompt submission and loving confidence he obeyed. God had attached no penalty if Abraham had chosen to stay in his homeland. Thus we see that he voluntarily obeyed, giving an indication of his confidence in and loyalty to his Creator.

Abraham’s willing obedience was accompanied by difficult trials. He was called from his home and his friends. (Gen. 12:1) He and his wife Sarah were promised a son, but had to wait until they were long past child-bearing age for its fulfillment. (Gen. 21:1-7) Later, when their promised son Isaac was a young man, Abraham was instructed to offer him in sacrifice. He willingly obeyed and was only stopped when an angel of God physically intervened and prevented him from slaying his beloved son. (Gen. 22:2,3,11,12) Truly we can say with Paul, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Rom. 4:3) What was his reward? The promise, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”; the hope of a “better resurrection”; and the privilege in Christ’s kingdom to be one of the “princes in all the earth.”—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Heb. 11:35; Ps. 45:16

KING SAUL

By contrast, let us look at Israel's King Saul, his lack of obedience to the Lord, and its consequences. Examining the account found in I Samuel 15, we find these instructions from Jehovah, given to Saul by Samuel, concerning Israel's impending battle with the Amalekites. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (vs. 3) Saul and Israel's army quickly gained a great victory. "But Saul and the people spared Agag [king of the Amalekites], and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments."—vss. 9-11

Continuing, "Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, ... the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."—vss. 13-15

Samuel then reminded Saul that the Lord had instructed Israel to destroy all the Amalekites, including the king, and all the sheep and cattle, leaving no person or animal alive. Samuel then asked Saul, "Wherefore then didst *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?" (I Sam. 15:19) Fear and self-appointment had blurred Saul's vision, resulting in his loss of delight in God's purpose and command. Had Saul been obedient, his kingdom would have been secure and retained by him and his family.

How easy it is at times to think that the Lord will be more pleased with our idea than his word and command. We should vigilantly guard against such thinking. Samuel said to Saul, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (vss. 22,23) We recall a similar verse, which states, "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."—Prov. 21:3

In Jesus' day the Pharisees took pride in their detailed carefulness to pay tithes of certain herbs—mint, anise and cummin—but passed over the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." (Matt. 23:23) Others bragged that they had done many wonderful things in the Lord's name, such as prophesying, casting out devils, and other wonderful works, to which Jesus replied, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23) How alert we should be to the Heavenly Father's will, rather than our own will or that of others. Simply stated, sacrifices and works not appointed of God are not acceptable to him.

JESUS—A PERFECT EXAMPLE

At the age of twelve, Jesus accompanied his parents to a feast in Jerusalem. On the return journey home, it was discovered that he was missing. After three days, his family found Jesus in the temple questioning the doctors of the Jewish Law and listening to their replies. Upon finding him, his mother Mary gave a mild reproof, to which young Jesus replied, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49, *New King James Version*) Jesus was eager to know from the priests the course he was to take, and no doubt concluded from his discussion with them that his ministry could not start until he was thirty years of age. Always alert to obedience, the account states he went home to Nazareth and was subject to his parents.—vs. 51

Again in obedience, eighteen years later, now at the age of thirty, Jesus came to John the Baptist. He presented himself to John at Jordan to receive the symbol of water immersion. As we recall, John the Baptist had been calling the people of Israel to repentance. His words had touched the hearts of many and they came to him to receive a symbolic baptism of repentance. Jesus came to John, however, with a conscience unstained and a character untarnished by sin. He needed no repentance, yet he too presented himself to John for baptism.

To others who may have witnessed this event, they perhaps thought that Jesus was similarly being baptized unto repentance. However, John recognized his own unworthiness in the presence of the Master, and that Jesus had no sins for which he needed to repent. Nevertheless, Jesus urged him to

perform the ceremony, saying, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:13-15) Jesus recognized that his baptism was not symbolic of repentance from sin, but was emblematic of his "burial" into the will of God, even unto death.—Rom. 6:3-5

Jesus perceived, and had gladly accepted, the invitation from God to be the second Adam, to redeem the fallen race from sin and death. (I Cor. 15:45-47) Jesus accepted this of his own free will. He knew, too, that obedience to this invitation would be accompanied by suffering and sacrifice, rather than circumstances of ease and pleasure. There would be adverse conditions, privations, ridicule, persecutions, and finally death—all undeserved. He was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," the prophet foretold. (Isa. 53:3) Jesus himself said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20) Jesus fully set aside his own will to do that of his Father. His loss was to be of temporal pleasures and comforts, and many associations of life—home, family, friends—and the loss of his good name. Who would "declare his generation?" asked the Prophet Isaiah.—Isa. 53:8

In full obedience, Jesus emptied himself, made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant in every sense of the word. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:7,8) This was not a light matter in the mind of Jesus, for he had made a solemn covenant with his Father. Prophetically, he stated, "Lo, I come: in the volume of

the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart”—that is, “in the midst of my inward parts,” *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*.—Ps. 40:7,8

Jesus’ repeated testimony was: “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38) Thus, from his baptism at Jordan to the cross, Jesus acquired an obedience under conditions not experienced before—obedience learned and proven by adversity, suffering and sacrifice. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”—Heb. 2:10

John the Baptist declared that Jesus is the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Additionally, in the illustration of the Tabernacle arrangement, Jesus is pictured as a “bullock” on the Day of Atonement, his offering being specially to benefit “his house,” that is, the household of faith, the footstep followers of the Master. (Lev. 16:6; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19) Quoting again from Isaiah concerning Jesus, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”—Isa. 53:5,6

REWARD FOR OBEDIENCE

Jesus was fully set upon doing his Father's will in every experience, and we have been invited to become copies—in heart and intention—of God's dear Son. (Rom. 8:29) What a privilege is ours. How loving of our Heavenly Father to give us this highest, grandest, and loftiest privilege ever offered to angel or man. The giving up of ourselves daily in consecration to do the Lord's bidding should be a glorious experience in our lives. The privilege of presenting ourselves to God as a "living sacrifice," and the work of being "transformed by the renewing of our minds," is one of the greatest honors that could be conferred upon any member of the human race. (Rom. 12:1,2) Yet, this is the invitation God has presented to those desiring to follow in the footsteps of his Son. If we have availed ourselves of this great privilege, then we can say along with the Apostle Paul that our lives are "hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. 3:3,4

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—Heb. 4:14,15; 2:18

Let us, then, daily strive to fulfill our covenant with the Heavenly Father, and be faithful to the great favor he has bestowed upon us. Let us also render confident and loyal obedience, even in times

of adversity, affliction, and in the putting down of our human will through humble submission. “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” “He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” (Eph. 6:6; I John 2:17) May we daily give ourselves to prayer, the study of God’s Word, and service to him and his people, remembering always to obey the righteous and perfect instructions of our all-wise Heavenly Father. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Ron Palmgren, Wenatchee, WA—April 10.

Age, 83

Brother David Stone, Adelaide, Australia—April 12.

Age, 90

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MAY 4—“The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”—I Samuel 16:7 (Z. ’03-171 Hymn 198)

MAY 11—“For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.”—Psalm 44:22 (Z. ’03-408 Hymn 8)

MAY 18—“We which have believed do enter into rest.”—Hebrews 4:3 (Z. ’99-253 Hymn 273)

MAY 25—“Be not overcome of evil.”—Romans 12:21 (Z. ’97-267 Hymn 256)

Lessons from Jonah

“Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.”

—I Corinthians 10:11, Revised Version

SOMETIMES CHRISTIANS

do not pay much attention to the Old Testament, possibly because a large portion of it relates to Israel, and because there are lots of names, places and events that that occurred long before Jesus came at his First Advent. Perhaps these do not seem as relevant to

one's faith as the admonitions found in the Gospel accounts and the New Testament epistles. Prophecy oriented students of the Bible may see in the various Old Testament narratives possible fulfillments in New Testament events, but even if such is not the case, valuable lessons still may be gained from studying God's dealings with characters of ancient times and making profitable applications for the Christian's walk in the "narrow" way. (Matt. 7:14) Such are the lessons from the Book of Jonah.

Jonah is identified in II Kings 14:25 as a servant of God and a prophet. Thus, it would be expected that such a chosen one would do the Lord's bidding as required. Unlike other prophets, he was not sent to Israel but to the heathen people of Nineveh, a city in the kingdom of Assyria. The Prophet Nahum describes Nineveh as a "bloody city ... full of lies and robbery." (Nah. 3:1,7) After God directed Jonah to preach to the Ninevites, what was his reaction? He did not say anything, but simply fled and took a ship out of Joppa that was going to Tarshish. (Jon. 1:1-3) Jonah ignored God and was clearly disobedient. Bible characters often made serious mistakes. In looking at their deficiencies, we might even feel a little superior to them, thinking to ourselves that we would never have done what Jonah did.

FULFILLING RESPONSIBILITY

Do we ever ignore, or disobey, the will and Word of God? Do we utilize all the opportunities for telling others the good news of the Gospel as we should? (Matt. 28:19,20) As the Lord's people, we should not flee from our commission, as did Jonah, but understand that we are to fulfill our responsibilities. When Isaiah queried as to how long he should proclaim God's word, we read, "Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate."—Isa. 6:11

Concerning obedience to God, we are reminded of the following admonition. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,

where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection [Greek: exercise the mind] on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:1-3) While not condoning Jonah’s failure to hearken to God’s instructions in preaching to Nineveh, as followers of Jesus we might properly engage in self-examination. Is it true of us that our minds are exercised as fully as possible toward things that are above? If not, then to the degree that such is not the case, we are not fully hearkening to the Word of God.

Jonah was asleep in the ship when it was struck by a terrible storm. As it raged, the heathen sailors prayed to their gods for deliverance. They were aware something unusual was happening and cast lots to determine who it was that had caused their calamity. The lot fell upon Jonah. The shipmaster was rather astonished that he would be sleeping instead of calling upon his god, and inquired who he was. Jonah stated he was a Hebrew and feared the Lord of heaven. (Jon. 1:4-10) A consideration for Christians, in contrast to Jonah, is suggested by the following text, “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”—I Tim. 4:12

As children of God, do our actions and dealings with others in the world always reflect that something is different about us—that we have higher aspirations and standards of conduct? Could it be said of us, as it was of Daniel, that no fault could be found in us except it be concerning the law of our God? (Dan. 6:4,5) Although Jonah stated he feared the Lord, the God of heaven, if he had shown the

proper reverence for the Creator, would he have fled from his assigned task of preaching to the Ninevites? Would he not at the very least have been concerned about the men in the ship and have prayed to the Father on their behalf?

Those in the ship were amazed that Jonah, though stating that he was a Hebrew, would run away from his God, especially since they spent their lives trying to appease and pacify their own gods. The earlier question, as to why he was asleep and not praying, was indeed a reproof to one who was a messenger of the true God.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Do we ever fail to live up to our professions of Christian living? Have we ever had unguarded moments when we said or did something that does not represent the highest standards of devotion to the Master? Has the Lord ever permitted someone who was not a believer to reprove us for our conduct, thus making us feel ashamed? This is all part of self-examination.

The closer we are to the Lord the more we will be cognizant of the Apostle Paul's words and realize our need for cleansing and forgiveness through Christ's mercy. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."—Rom. 7:18,19,24,25

Jonah 1:11-17 contains lessons both with respect to God's mighty power as well as those of a prophetic nature. In these verses, Jonah urges the sailors to cast him into the sea because his presence was the cause of their distress. They showed nobility of character by rowing harder in order to avoid taking that step, but it was to no avail. Ultimately, they sought pardon from Jonah's God for throwing him overboard, after which the sea immediately became calm. The sailors recognized that the God of the Hebrews was true, and they prayed to him, offered sacrifices, and made vows. Concerning Jonah, he was swallowed and in the fish's belly for three days and nights.

Though not according to his character deficiencies, but in a prophetic sense, Jonah seems to represent Christ and also his body, members of his church. Jesus said, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12:40) Christ rose on the third day, receiving his spiritual resurrection. Thus, as Jonah willingly let himself be put symbolically to death by being cast into the sea, Christ willingly yielded his life in actuality as a sacrifice for father Adam and the whole race of humanity. (I Tim. 2:5,6) During the present Christian age, followers of Jesus also willingly give their lives in sacrifice and service, following in Jesus' footsteps.—Rom. 12:1; I Pet. 2:5

Jonah, chapter 2, depicts the prophet's experience while in the belly of the fish when he committed himself to prayer. He was in very difficult straits because of his disobedience in fleeing from God's

command. There is an element of hope when acknowledging that even though he was apart from God, he spoke of looking toward his holy temple again. Jonah perhaps recognized that God makes provision to grant forgiveness when one goes astray and then returns to him.

One obvious lesson for us is that even when we have done poorly, we should never neglect the opportunity for prayer. Not all prayers may be answered immediately or in the manner desired, but those who have been chosen by the Father may rest assured that as long as they have the desire to commune with the Lord, he will in his own time and manner, answer in accordance with his perfect will.—I Thess. 5:17; James 5:16

DISCIPLINE NECESSARY

Jonah's situation finds certain parallels in his experience with that of the nation of Israel. Like Jonah, Israel was especially chosen by God. They were to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and a peculiar treasure unto the Lord. (Exod. 19:3-6) However, they, as Jonah did, rebelled against God, neglected to obey him and thereby failed to fulfill their mission. Thus, they received disciplines from God in the form of abuse by other nations for many centuries.

The Master's words were very pointed as he wept over the nation of Israel. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you

desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—Matt. 23:37-39

Presently, Israel is still looking to military alliances and national defense as a solution to her problems. However, just as Jonah, from the depths of despair, acknowledged that “Salvation is of the LORD,” so too will Israel have to make the same acknowledgment when the work of restoration commences.—Jon. 2:9; Isa. 1:24-26; Zech. 12:10; Acts 3:20,21

When Jonah finally went to Nineveh and did as God commanded, the people repented. “The word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”—Jon. 3:1-4

The account continues, “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto

God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”—vss. 5-10

As we look at all the wickedness in today’s world, if we are living righteously, it must distress us as believers. The story of Nineveh’s conversion is an important one concerning the scope of the effectiveness of Christ’s coming kingdom. While the Bible indicates that some will have to be forever destroyed in the “second death,” that will probably include a very small minority of individuals. (Rev. 20:12-15) If it were not so, God’s permission of evil, so that mankind learns through his own experience the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and then makes the appropriate contrast during the kingdom when Satan is bound, would not really be effective.—Rom. 7:14; Rev. 20:1-3

Sodom was destroyed because ten righteous individuals could not be found dwelling there. “Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” (Matt. 11:23,24) If the people of Sodom are recoverable, we can be assured the same will be true for the overwhelming majority of mankind.

TRUSTING IN GOD

Jonah prayed, and said, "O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." (Jon. 4:2) Perhaps Jonah was thinking these heathen deserved to be destroyed, especially since they were a threat to Israel. How could God allow such people to live? Were not the Israelites his chosen people and, therefore, better than others?

God is an all-wise and merciful Father. He is ready to forgive when sincere repentance is made, regardless of one's previous circumstances. It is true that we are to love righteousness and hate iniquity, but it is also true that we cannot hate sinners and be pleasing to God. "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways."—Ezek. 33:11

Another reason Jonah may have been displeased was that he felt that he was made out to be a false prophet, since he preached that Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days and that it did not happen. He knew also that the people of Nineveh would be forgiven if they repented, but apparently he hated the Assyrians so much he did not want them to have a chance to repent. It seems unusual that Jonah, a chosen servant, should be angry with God. In recalling his experiences in the depths of the ocean in the belly of the fish, and the fact that in the Lord's providence he was saved and given a second chance to do what he was directed to do in

the first place, how is it possible that he could dare to be displeased with God? We should perhaps pose the same question.

Are we ever angry because we are going through difficult experiences? Do we ever wonder why we must go through them, or do we complain about them? Do we believe that as children of God, with guardian angels, sometimes things happen to us that are not permitted for a good purpose? The Apostle Paul answers, “No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it.” —I Cor. 10:13, *New English Translation*

In another place, the apostle adds, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Heb. 12:11, *English Standard Version*) Every true child of God can attest to experiences of discipline and training. We should always appreciate these as evidences of our sonship as opposed to resenting them, and, even if not expressed openly, be angry that God did not see fit to prevent them.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Subsequently, Jonah went outside the city, and he saw a plant prepared to provide him shade as an evidence of God’s graciousness towards him, but after that, a worm was appointed to attack the plant and it withered. “God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.” (Jon. 4:1-9) Jonah’s

anger upon the gourd that perished was more important to him than the fact the people of Nineveh repented.

Although Jesus died for all mankind, the offer of salvation now is only to his footstep followers during this present Gospel Age, and to the world at large, “the residue of men,” in the future. (Acts 15:14-17) At present, Satan, “the god of this world,” has blinded the minds of those who believe not, and it will take the work of Christ’s kingdom to set right the minds and hearts of mankind, when the “inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—II Cor. 4:4; Isa. 26:9

Like the citizens of all nations past and present, the people of Nineveh also must come back from the tomb and be given an opportunity for life and to learn righteousness. “For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.” “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” (John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15) The mission of faithful Christians now is to proclaim the soon to be established kingdom of Christ as the good news that will eradicate all the evils of this present order. ■

*Why do we long for an easier road
When greater strength comes
from bearing the load?*

*Why wish we to be spared when storms arise
When it's such things
that make us strong and wise?*

—*While Marching to Zion, Carol Kittinger Hindle*

General Convention Bulletin

July 15-20, 2023—Johnstown, Pennsylvania

THE 2023 GENERAL CONVENTION will begin in less than three months. If you have not yet made plans to attend, now is the time to do so. We encourage as many as are able to join in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. The convention will be held on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family style apartments (also air conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities are available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge if both beds are occupied.

The convention program appears in this issue of *The Dawn* on the pages following the General Convention registration form. In addition to the special program services mentioned in previous announcements, there will be an assigned discourse on the subject, "Peace of Mind and Heart," taken from John 14:27 (*NLT*); and a dialogue on the topic, "Proper Respect for Leaders," based on Romans 13:1-7. We believe these will be of benefit as we strive daily to walk in the Master's footsteps.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will

be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid for at the door.

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 14. There will also be shuttle bus service leaving the college in the morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 21. There will be a nominal charge each way per person for this service. ■

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$10.00	\$9.00
Lunch		12.00	11.00
Dinner		15.00	14.00
Total, three meals		\$37.00	\$34.00
Lodging (per night)			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$42.00	\$37.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$37.00	\$35.00
**single occ (LLC)		\$76.00	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$42.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$410*	\$375*
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$275*	\$240*
**single occ (LLC)		\$616*	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$319*	n/a
*If no breakfasts, deduct—\$40		**Air conditioned	
***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group.			
NOTE: A Convention Fee of \$10.00 per person, regardless of age, length of stay, or lodging and meal arrangements, will be added to your invoice to help offset convention expenses unrelated to lodging and meals.			

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707
E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 14, 2023				
Saturday, 15th				
Sunday, 16th				
Monday, 17th				
Tuesday, 18th				
Wednesday, 19th				
Thursday, 20th				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts)

Check: private bath **or** shared bath
 double occupancy single occupancy
 interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

Saturday, July 15

Chairman: O. B. Elbert, *Los Angeles CA*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Orientation by College

10:00 **Welcome Address**

Tim Malinowski, *Grand Rapids MI*

10:45 Intermission

11:15 Discourse

Todd Alexander
Columbus OH

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Brian Montague, *Highland Park NY*

2:00 Discourse

Randy Shahan
New York NY

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse

David Wittbrodt
Metro Detroit MI

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Michael Balko
Orlando FL

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **Mini Talks: I Corinthians 14:3,4 NIV**

“By Prophesying (speaking publicly) We May”
Strengthen the Brethren

Ninan Andrews, *Bellevue WA*

Encourage the Brethren

John Mottie, *Greenfield OH*

Comfort the Brethren J. Slavich, *Orlando FL*

8:15 Songs in the Night

Monday, July 17

Chairman: Michael Balko, *Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Discourse Robert Goodman
Orlando FL

10:30 Intermission

11:15 Discourse Aaron Kuehmicel
Chicago IL

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Ernie Kuenzli, *Orlando FL*

2:00 Discourse Austin Williams
Highland Park NY

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony Michael Costelli
New Orleans LA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse Brian Montague
Highland Park NY

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **Discussion: "Are Crowns Still
Available in 2023?"**
O. B. Elbert, *Los Angeles CA*
David Rice, *San Diego CA*

8:00 Songs in the Night

8:15 Elders' Meeting

Tuesday, July 18

Chairman: Matt Kerry, *Columbus OH*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 **Baptismal Discourse** Peter Mora
Los Angeles CA

10:30 Intermission

11:00 **Immersion Service** Mark Davis
Los Angeles CA

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Byron Keith, *Seattle WA*

2:00 Praise and Testimony Brendan Getchel
Tennessee Valley AL

2:45 Intermission

3:15 **Dialogue: “Proper Respect for Leaders”**
Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-3; II Tim. 2:4
Mark Davis
Los Angeles CA
Len Griehs
Phoenix AZ

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse Daniel Wojcik
Portland OR

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

Wednesday, July 19

Chairman: Stephen Jeuck, *Orlando FL*

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Convention Business Meeting
- 11:00 Short Recess
- 11:15 Convention Business Continues
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: David Stein, *Allentown PA*

- 2:00 Discourse Sven Kruse
Dortmund, Germany
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Praise and Testimony John Mottie
Greenfield OH
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse William Dutka
Metro Detroit MI
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:00 **Discourse: Ephesians 4:1-3**
“Walk Worthy of the Calling With Which
You Were Called”
Timothy Krupa
Seattle WA
- 7:45 Vesper Service
- 8:30 Songs in the Night

Thursday, July 20

Chairman: Jonathan Benson, *Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Praise and Testimony
Byron Keith
Seattle WA

10:30 Intermission

11:00 **Discussion: “Types/Shadows versus
Antitypes/Realities”**
Stephen Jeuck, *Orlando FL*
J. Slavich, *Orlando FL*

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: David Rice, *San Diego CA*

2:00 Discourse
Len Griehs
Phoenix AZ

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse
George Balko
West Newton PA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse
Brendan Getchel
Tennessee Valley AL

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **Closing Discourse**
David Stein
Allentown PA

7:45 Melodies of Praise

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

T. Krupa

Germany	May 10-25	
Hohenstein		Brodersby
Altenburg		Berlin
Hannover		Bruchhausen
Muhlhausen		Vorhout, Netherlands
Bergrheinfeld		Korbach, Germany-German
Reilasingen		General Convention May 27-29

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

T. Alexander

Jacksonville, FL May 21

R. Charlton

Chicago, IL May 27,28

R. Goodman

Boaz, AL May 19-21

S. Jeuck

Jacksonville, FL May 21

E. Kuenzli

Boaz, AL May 19-21

B. Montague

Hartford, CT May 7

Boaz, AL 19-21

H. Montague

Detroit, MI May 6,7

Boaz, AL 19-21

Chicago, IL 27,28

J. Mottie

West Newton, PA May 7

D. Rice

Detroit, MI May 6,7

R. Shahan

West Newton, PA May 7



MOVING?

If you are moving, please let us know six weeks before you move so that we can change the address on your Dawn subscription.

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167

METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, May 6,7—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Milford Senior Center, 1050 Atlantic Street, Milford, MI 48381. Contact B. Johnson. Email: beckystevej@aol.com

HARTFORD CONVENTION, May 7—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—West Hartford Senior Center, 15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT 06117. Contact J. Slivinsky. Email: djslivinsky@sbcglobal.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 7—IN PERSON ONLY—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lisa.mlinek@aol.com

BOAZ, ALABAMA STUDY CONVENTION, May 19-21—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Contact K. Getchel. Phone: (256) 744-9966 or Email: biblestudents@gmail.com

NIGERIA MISSION SERVANTS CONVENTION, May 19-21—Contact C. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 21—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact C. Johns. Phone: (904) 316-9587 or Email: johnsc11@aol.com

CHICAGO MEMORIAL DAY CONVENTION, May 27,28—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Doubletree by Hilton, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, IL 60532. Phone: (630) 505-0900. Contact T. Blackwell. Phone: (630) 750-1823 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 3—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact R. Griehs. Phone: (267) 456-8889 or Email: rgriehs@gmail.com

PRATO, ITALY CONVENTION, June 3,4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Hotel Delta Florence. Contact V. Prepelita. Email: prepelita.violeta@gmail.com

VANCOUVER CONVENTION, June 10,11—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Centre, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC Canada. Contact B. A. Smith. Email: bas@telus.net

PORTLAND CONVENTION, JUNE 17,18—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact J. Wojcik. Email: janetlwojcik@gmail.com

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 15-20—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA 15904. Contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

How Happy are We!

*O how happy are we who in Jesus agree,
And expect soon his kingdom to share!
We will sit in his throne, and his glory make known,
And his praises shall sound everywhere.*

*Lo! our King from the skies! Hark! He bids us arise
To the mansions of glory above,
O! with joy we'll ascend and eternity spend,
In proclaiming his wonderful love.*

*O how happy are we who in Jesus agree;
How happy, how happy are we!*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach . . .

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD

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

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING AND POLISHING

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

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

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

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH

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

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH

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

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD

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

