

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

We ask ourselves the question, Have we any right ever to hope for peace? We have wanted peace for so long; we have been disappointed so many times; and we now hold within our hands the ability to destroy every living thing that exists on the earth, many times over. Are we justified in believing that the future holds peace and happiness for the human race?

Thoughtful people are asking the question, Where is the answer? Can the world's politicians give us the answer? They cannot even agree among themselves, and certainly, if that is indeed the case, they could not give us a unanimous answer as to what the future holds for us and for our children.

Where Is the Answer?

MANY OF THE WORLD'S leading statesmen entertain the earnest hope that the very uncertain conditions which exist in earth's society today will, in the not too distant future, give place to better understanding between the peoples of the world. Wise men and philosophers speak of a time when this world of ours will not be divided by strife, nor by national hatreds and prejudices, but will be united as one world. Global law enforcement is another large concern, and the projection for the future is that soon we will more effectively control crime and evil conditions through closer cooperation worldwide. 'One world' interests will function for the common good of all the people who live on the earth.

This is not a new hope. At the turn of this century, Christian nations were assured by their leaders that before the new century closed, a new era would be established on the earth—an era of goodwill toward men—and that peace on earth finally would be our heritage. They based the hope for

this peaceful, happy condition existing among people and nations upon the assumption that man had at last learned that war was not the way to peace. They believed mankind now knew that if ever there would be peace on earth it would not be attained through war.

In times past, it had always been said, "In times of peace, prepare for war, and in times of war prepare for peace." But men felt that they had at last learned their lesson, and that war would no longer be the way in which the world would seek peace. We know that the longing for peace burns in the human heart even to this time. The majority of mankind, regardless of the nation in which they live, wants peace. But here we are, living in the last decade of the twentieth century, and still we do not have the peace promised to us at its beginning.

In the intervening time we have lived through two terrible world wars, as well as many other wars—greater and lesser conflicts—from one end of this earth to the other. So in this century, certainly, wars have not ceased. No, conflicts have not even been abated. Both in the number of people involved and in the power of man to destroy, wars have become more appalling. It is obvious that we do not have an answer.

Then where is the answer? Does the Bible give us the answer? We believe it does. About one-third of the Bible is prophetic. The prophets were men inspired through the Holy Spirit by God. They foretold many events which they themselves did not understand. Many of their prophetic utterances concerned our present world events, as well as things still to come in the future. So if we really want to know what is happening in the world today, and what the future holds for the human race, it is incumbent upon us to take time to study the prophecies of the Word of God.

When we look into the future through the eyes of prophecy, we find a message that is not a fumbling uncertainty. In our study of the Bible we have a right to believe that we will find there a divine assurance based upon certain definite

facts. There is a saying that there is no such thing as a future certainty. If it has to do with the future of business, this statement is indeed true. If it has to do with banking, it is equally true; or with economics, environment, standards of living, population control, etc., it is again true! Generally speaking, the future is uncertain along all lines.

The Bible Gives Definite Assurance

But the statement that there is nothing certain as to what the future holds for us, and for our children, is wrong. The Word of God gives us definite assurances. God sent his prophets into the world to tell us what we could expect concerning the future of the human race, and their predictions were inspired by him. These holy men of God spoke for him with very definite assurance.

In II Peter 1:17-19, and 21, the apostle's statement is recorded as saying: "We have also a more sure Word of prophecy ["the prophetic Word more confirmed," ***Emphatic Diaglott***] whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in our hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." In other words, prophecy does not come from the prophet himself, but it comes from God, "for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

This scripture describes prophecy as a light shining in a dark place; that is a good definition. Darkness covers the earth today, and gross darkness the people. The majority do not even know that the great God of heaven has a plan for all his creation, and for the future of the human race. People in many lands of the world are in gross darkness concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But just as a lantern aids us to see our way in the dark, so prophecy is as a light shining in a dark place.

History in Advance

In II Peter 1:19 we read that we have been given a 'more sure Word of prophecy'. Prophecy is history written in advance, and only God can do this. And when God writes it, it is sure. Therefore the Bible says that we have in it something upon which we can depend—a sure Word of prophecy. And then it adds, "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." We know that many today are not taking heed. Many have rejected the Bible. Some claim to be wise, and their wisdom has become to them a snare. The Holy Word says that they are "wise in their own conceits," and Jesus condemned those wise ones of his day for their inability to see the signs of the time. So in our day the wise of this world are blind, and because of their blindness they are in perplexity and fear as to what the future holds for them and their children.

But the worst of it is that some of those who are blind to the great changes that are impending in the world today, and who have not taken heed to the prophecies, are pioneers in the fields of science and politics and religion. Some of these leaders feel they do not need God in the solution of the problems that confront humanity. The Bible states, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—Ps. 14:1; 53:1

Anyone who believes he could bring in the Golden Age of peace on earth and goodwill toward men without there having been born "in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" is blind to the prophecies, and doomed to sad disappointment. (Luke 2:11) The Bible says that "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. 29:14) Think of the efforts that have been made by sincere and conscientious people to bring about an ideal society in this world, and ask yourself if Isaiah's statement is true.

Prophecies Not Understood

In Daniel 12:8-10 we read, "I [Daniel] heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my LORD, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words

are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

No, Daniel did not understand how the prophecy spoken through him would be fulfilled. And the Apostle Peter said that the prophets of old inquired and searched diligently to understand the prophecies which they had recorded as the mouthpieces of God, but their meanings were not revealed to them. (I Pet. 1:10) They had been used to lay up treasures of wisdom and knowledge for a future generation. We are that generation!

Therefore it is incumbent upon us to take heed to the sure Word of prophecy, because these prophecies reveal the purposes of God in the affairs and the events of human history. However, some may ask, how can we be sure that these prophecies are accurate? How do we know we can depend upon these writings of the Word of God more than on the prognostications of men?

Fulfilled Prophecies

Let us look at some Bible prophecies that have already been fulfilled, and from them judge whether or not its prophecies concerning the future are accurate and dependable. Let us go back to the Garden of Eden. At the time of the betrayal in Eden, God said to Satan, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) This is the first prophecy that the Bible recorded, and it had to do with a Redeemer, a Savior, who would help humanity. It was a veiled prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ.

This statement indicates that Jesus was not to be born of Adam's stock. He was to be "the seed **of the woman.**" What is the difference whether he were Adam's child, or if he were Eve's child? It makes a great difference! We are children of Adam, because he was our progenitor. We are

imperfect, because we inherited the curse from our father, Adam—we were born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. (Ps. 51:5) Being imperfect, no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. Therefore, had Jesus Christ been simply of Adam's stock, he would have been imperfect, as we are, and could not have died the 'Just for the unjust'. Because of that, he was 'born of the woman', the 'seed' of the woman. That is the reason he was 'born of a virgin'—God being his father, and not Adam.

Now remember that hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophets of God said he would be the seed of the woman. Isaiah 7:14 says, "The LORD himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." That prophecy was fulfilled, and the seed of the woman came in fulfillment of that prophecy.

In Micah 5:2 we read another prophecy: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. 'Bethlehem, the beautiful' was to be the birthplace of this one who was to be born of a virgin. Hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born, these prophecies had told all about it. These are not opinions—these are facts—the virgin mother, and the circumstances of his birth. Do you think any human being could have shaped the accomplishment of these prophecies?

But these are only two of the numerous events in the life of Jesus Christ which had been foretold in the Scriptures. There were many, many more. The death that he should die was one; the draught that he was to drink while upon the cross was another. The sepulchre of the rich man in which he was entombed was also foretold. Could man have shaped the outcome of these prophecies? The length of time Jesus was to be in the tomb was foretold; that he would be resurrected from the dead was foretold, and the sending of the

Holy Spirit at Pentecost—all these things were predicted and fulfilled, and all were beyond human collusion.

That all these prophecies were fulfilled in the life of one man is sufficient reason, we believe, for either Jew or Gentile to accept the fact that Jesus Christ was the seed of the woman, the Son of God, and therefore able to give himself as a ransom, a corresponding price, for Adam and the human race yet in his loins. The sure Word of prophecy had been proven accurate in past performance.

Prophecies Concerning the Present

But what about the present time? Are any prophecies being fulfilled in the world today? Yes, indeed! One outstanding prophecy is the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. That fact alone is sufficient to prove that prophecy is being fulfilled in our day! Jeremiah 16:14,15 reads, "It shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers."

We are seeing that prophecy fulfilled before our eyes! If we continue on in this prophecy, it shows us how the LORD has forced them, in our lifetime, to go back to their own land: he sent fishers to fish them, and hunters to hunt them, and compelled them to go back into the land, in fulfillment of prophecy. We read in our daily newspapers about Jews in Russia and other countries fleeing to Israel, as anti-Semitism once again rears its ugly head. So if anyone tries to tell you that we are not living in a day when prophecy is being fulfilled, draw their attention to this prophecy!

Let us consider the prophecy of Daniel 12:1-4. It says: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [Israel]: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people

shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting [age-lasting] contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

The prophecy was then shut up until the proper time for it to be understood. The angel told Daniel, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (vs. 9) Now that we have come to the end of the age, and these utterances are becoming reality before our eyes, it is possible to connect the prophecies with the events. There are those who can see the fulfillment of the prophecy, while others are unable to do so. Prophecies which resisted deciphering until this generation are now easily understood, because they were only due to be fulfilled in our time.

Knowledge Increasing in Our Day

To repeat the points of this prophecy: first—there was foretold an increase in knowledge; second—a running to and fro; and third—a time of trouble among the nations. Do these descriptions in this prophecy fit our day? Yes, indeed they do. The increase of knowledge has affected all the many sciences which we have in the world today. Text books written last year must be discarded. Knowledge is increasing so rapidly, and the results of the proliferation of knowledge being recorded is so immense—due to the invasion of the computer into our world—to the point where last year's books are now obsolete. In some cases, material does not even get off the press before it is passe!

Many do not realize that a knowledge of God's Word is another part of the increase of knowledge in this time in which we live. Yesterday it was the creeds that were worshipped by the people, rather than the Word of God. People

depended upon the writings of men. Today fewer people do that, realizing that the creeds were written during the darker past, to instill, as Robert Burns put it, "the fear o' hell a hangman's whip, to hold the rich in order." That presents it very well. Since then there has been an 'increase in knowledge' so we know that "there's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea." We know that since the LORD made a promise to bless all the families of the earth, he will with certainty fulfill that promise.

Running to and fro—how remarkably the words of this prophecy are being fulfilled in the much, and farflung, and rapid travel of our day.

And the expression, 'a time of trouble', is another particularly significant point. The Bible says that this time of trouble will come as spasms of travail upon a woman who is in childbirth. When we read the history of the world from 1914 until the present time, we certainly see increasing spasms of trouble. Those of us who have lived through the many, diverse and terrible wars, and the periods of ease—uneasy peace—and depressions, followed by recovery through inflation—that have taken place since 1914, realize the reality of this. Yes, the descriptions well fit this generation on all three points of the prophecy in Daniel.

But does prophecy tell us of more than the time of trouble—the increase of knowledge—or of the running to and fro? Yes, it tells additionally of more than one class of people who are to be saved. In Daniel 12:3 we read of one class: "They that be **wise** shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." When the church of Jesus Christ is complete, in glory, the prophet looks beyond that time and describes a second class, saying that "many that **sleep in the dust of the earth** shall awake."—vs. 2

A Time of Trouble Foretold

The prophecy foretold the time of trouble, and now it is being fulfilled accurately. In answer to the question, "What

shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the world [age],” Jesus quoted this prophecy when he said, “There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation,” and then he added, “no, nor ever shall be [again].” So, when this trouble has reached its completion, when the kingdom is established, all will be aware that Jesus’ words have been fulfilled accurately. This will be the last great time of trouble that the world will ever know. Thank God for that! We are not through it yet—there will be more trouble still to come, as this day reaches its climax in Jacob’s Trouble, and finally in Armageddon. But nevertheless, when the trouble is over, the new order of society will be born, the order of society that we often pray for, saying, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The prophecy foretold the increase of knowledge. The prophecy foretold the running to and fro. We see the fulfillment of these things. The question is, are we able to accept the future part of the prophecy, which says, “Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake”? We can accept what we see. Have we faith to believe the future, as foretold in the remainder of the prophecy? Just as surely as it prophesied the increase of knowledge, the running to and fro, and the time of trouble, it also prophesied that those who sleep in the dust of the ground shall awake—the resurrection of the dead.

But this only introduces us to other marvelous prophecies of the future, of which there are many, and the first of these we will consider is a general one, but very beautiful and hopeful. It is found in Psalm 30:5: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Here we are assured of a new day—that is what this prophecy means. It says that there is to be a new day when the night of trouble is over, a day marked with the joy of divine blessing!

The Prophet Isaiah saw that day, and in his prophecy he declared: “Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.” (Isa. 21:11,12) We are still in the time of trouble—the dark

night—every one of us is well aware of that. According to this prophecy, it is not over yet. But just as surely also, according to this prophecy, the morning cometh, and a new day will dawn. The morning will come when the “Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2) Therefore, rejoice in the knowledge that a glorious new day is about to break! Surely the apostle saw that time when he said, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”—Rom. 13:12

Blind Eyes Will Be Opened

The time is coming when “the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” This is a prophecy, not just a wish. It is not just some mystical statement, but a truly prophetic utterance, and it also says that the lame man shall “leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” (Isa. 35:5,6) Think of what that will mean!

Here is another grand prophetic statement by the mouth of the same prophet: “They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”—Isa. 2:4

At special seasons of the year, such as Christmastime, we notice that people are more apt to attend church. On the radio we hear them sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men”—singing of “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.” (Luke 2) Then they come out of church after singing those wonderful words, and say, “There always has been war, and there always will be war.” They sing of the time of peace to come, but have little faith in the prophecies of God which promise peace.

Nevertheless we know that the nations ultimately will learn war no more. The Bible assures us, “He [God] maketh wars to cease.” And that is not all he has promised. “Thus saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write

it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”—Jer. 31:33

During the Gospel Age God has been taking out of the world his church, a little flock, “a people for his name.” (Acts 15:14) Then, after that little flock has been chosen and glorified, this present dispensation will come to an end. Then the age we have prayed for will be a reality, and all these prophecies, referring to conditions prevailing on the earth under which man will worship God, will be fulfilled.

When we read the Master’s words, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2,3), we realize that he is referring to the spiritual reward to be received by those who are faithful during the Gospel Age.

Again we read, “They shall build houses and inhabit them,” and every man shall sit “under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid.” (Isa. 65:21; Micah 4:4) That does not sound like heaven, does it? It sounds like what we have been praying for, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done **on earth**, even as it is in heaven.” Therefore if we take these scriptures and place their fulfillment in the appropriate dispensation, we can understand the development of the divine plan of the ages. The church receives the spiritual, or heavenly, reward; but all the families of the earth will be blessed with life here on the earth.

The Two-part Kingdom

Yes, it is when we understand the particular work of each of these two dispensations clearly, that we can study the Bible with understanding, putting the texts in their proper places respectively. As we do this, we realize that the kingdom of heaven is of two parts—the heavenly phase and the earthly phase. We know every knee does not bow and every tongue does not confess to the glory of God at this time. But the Bible clearly and repeatedly says the day will come when

they will. All the willing and obedient will recognize the power of God in the affairs of mankind. The Bible says they will return "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:10

The prophecies concerning Jesus during his First Advent were accurately and definitively fulfilled. The prophecies of our day are being accurately and definitively fulfilled. So the Bible tells us that in the new day of Christ's millennial reign, "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28), and that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." (Dan. 12:2) During that new age there will be a resurrection of the dead, and then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Revelation 21:3-5, which reads:

"I [John] heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

Before that new day ends, God's will shall be done as fully in earth as it is in heaven. So let us look forward to the future with definite assurance, and let us realize that our God is worthy of our worship and adoration, because he has arranged for the fulfillment of the promises he made to Abraham thousands of years ago, when he said he would bless all the families of earth. □

My soul waiteth for the LORD more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.—Psalm 130:6

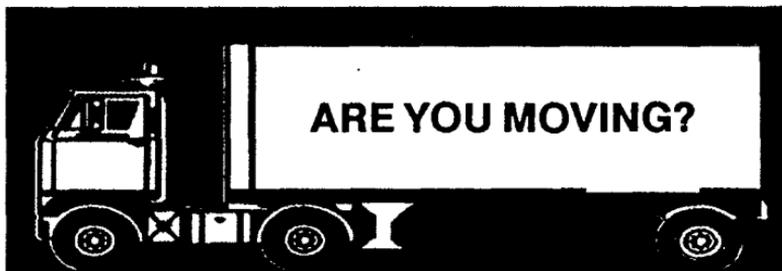
WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 6—"There shall no evil befall thee."—Psalm 91:10 (Z. '03-331 Hymn 293)

SEPTEMBER 13—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—Psalm 133:1 (Z. '03-363 Hymn 23)

SEPTEMBER 20—"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, . . . to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones.."—Isaiah 57:15 (Z. '03-383 Hymn 363)

SEPTEMBER 27—"Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God."—Matthew 4:7 (Z. '04-9 Hymn 260)



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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 2

Choosing a Leader

KEY VERSE: *“Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.”—I Samuel 10:24*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Samuel 10:17-23*

SAMUEL'S JUDGESHIP WAS terminated before his death by the demand of the Israelites that they have a king to rule over them. While, in reality, the nation, in making this demand, had rejected both Samuel and the LORD, the people did not go so far in their rebellion as to select and anoint their own king. Superficially, at least, they looked to the LORD and to Samuel to cooperate in their demand. “The LORD said to Samuel, Harken unto their voice, and make them a king”—I Sam. 8:22

Saul was presented to the people as king. When it became known that this son of a Benjamite family was the

LORD's choice for king, he was nowhere to be found. “Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.” (vs. 22) The fact that Saul kept out of sight on such an important occasion suggests that he felt insufficient for the task assigned to him. However, since the Spirit of God had come upon him, and he had received various evidences of God's direction in his choice, it may be that his hiding revealed a lack of faith in God and in the LORD's ability to help him.

The people showed no hesitancy. Presenting Saul to them as their king, Samuel spoke the words: "See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king." Then "Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."—vss. 25,26

Saul was a humble man, but the Scriptures reveal that when he began to assert himself as king he became proud and defiant of God's instructions. Throughout the ages, many who have begun humbly in the service of the LORD have similarly been affected by a measure of prominence with which they may have been favored by the LORD. Such pride of heart manifests itself in various ways and not infrequently by a tendency to be overcritical of others, and by assuming superior judgment in matters pertaining to the service of the LORD and his

people. Saul thought that his way of serving God was superior to Samuel's.

Samuel said to him: "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

By way of contrast in this episode, we discover the real stature of Samuel as a servant and prophet of the LORD. He had yielded obediently to the instruction of God to anoint a king over Israel, knowing that their demand for a king was a rejection of God and of himself as a representative of the LORD. Then he presented himself to the people and asked them to bear witness if he had at any time in his lifetime of service to the nation, ever defrauded or oppressed them in any way. They replied, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand."—I Sam. 12:4

Trusting God's Promises

KEY VERSE: *"Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."*—II Samuel 7:16

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Samuel 7:4-16

God made a covenant with David that under no circumstances would the kingdom be wrested, even from his descendants. This covenant is referred to as the "sure mercies of David"—sure mercies because mercy would be required in order to carry it out. (Isa. 55:3) This was not how God dealt with Saul, from whose line he removed the kingdom.

God said to David through Nathan, the prophet, "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his [Solomon's] kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he

commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men.

. . . But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."—vss. 12-16

Saul had not been shown mercy by God, but David had. God exalted the kingdom of Israel in his hands and had made him a great king. And now God had covenanted to preserve the kingdom within David's family "forever," even though his descendants, including his son, Solomon, who would succeed him on the throne, would transgress his laws. David was greatly impressed by this, and replied to God: "Who am I, O LORD God?

And what is my house, that thou hast brought me hither-to? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O LORD God."—vss. 18,19

David speaks again of that covenant: "I [God] have said, Mercy shall be built up forever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." (Ps. 89:2-4) "My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven."—vss. 28,29

The full understanding of this covenant with David is possible only through recognition of the fact that David's throne was typical of the messianic kingdom throne, on which Jesus sits as king. However, God's providences in protecting the typical throne in the hands of David's natural descendants are remarkable, as will be seen by a study of the exper-

iences of the Davidic kings down to the overthrow of the last one, Zedekiah, when the nation was taken captive to Babylon.

Here the typical kingdom of David ceased, but God's covenant was not broken. Ezekiel (Ezek. 21:27) did not say merely that the kingdom should be "no more," for this would have implied a broken covenant. Instead he explained that it would be no more "until **he come** whose right it is." In other words, the active operation of the covenant was merely suspended until the rightful king appeared.

The birth is foretold of this one "whose right it is" to occupy forever the throne of David: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder. . . . 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 forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

Facing Your Sin

KEY VERSE: *"David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."*—II Samuei 12:13

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: II Samuel 12:1-10,13

DAVID IS SPOKEN of by the LORD as a man after his own heart. (I Sam. 13:14) This does not mean that he had no faults, but it does mean that his heart was right before God. He committed a gross sin in arranging for the death of Uriah, and taking his wife to be his own wife. When this matter was called forcibly to his attention by the Prophet Nathan, he did not recognize himself in the picture the prophet had drawn, and expressed great indignation against the sinner portrayed. How stunned he must have been when Nathan said to him, "Thou art the man!"

As part of David's punishment for this great sin, he was told that his reign as king of Israel would be characterized by war. This proph-

cy came tragically true. His first son by Bathsheba, formerly Uriah's wife, sickened and died—a further punishment upon David for his great sin.

Under the Law David's sin called for the death sentence, but he was not destroyed. This was due largely to the fact that David was quick to acknowledge his sin when it was pointed out to him, saying, "I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David. The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."—vs. 13

The first seven verses of Psalm 32 seem to be an expression of David's feelings toward the LORD in connection with his sin and its forgiveness. He wrote: "Blessed is he whose transgression is

forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. . . . I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."

In this sixth verse, David suggests that his experience could be of benefit to others, and he advises all who have sinned before the LORD to be prompt in acknowledging their iniquity and asking for his forgiveness. This is a practical lesson to be learned from David's experience.

In David's life we are reminded that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. By heredity Adam's transgression brought death to all his children, and all, by nature, are looked upon as

sinners. Through the weakness of the fallen nature of man, control over human passions is made difficult. And like David, we sometimes fail. But God has provided a way of forgiveness for those who face their transgressions with repentant hearts.

God does appreciate those who at heart endeavor to keep his commandments. This is why he loved David, and showed mercy toward him when he was quick to repent and to acknowledge his sin. God does not deal with any of his people upon the basis of their actual accomplishments, but according to the desires of their hearts.

When David's son, Solomon, was born, he was referred to as Jedidiah, meaning "beloved of the LORD." (vss. 24,24, **Margin**) This additional name seems to have been suggested by Nathan, the LORD's prophet, as an assurance to David that he had truly been forgiven, and that the LORD's blessing would continue with him. □

thou killed, and also taken possession?" And then the pronouncement of divine judgment: "In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

And then concerning the position of his family as the ruling house of Israel, the LORD said, I "will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin."

In verse 25 we read that Ahab "did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." From this we gather that Ahab himself was not the instigator of the sins with which the LORD charged him, but, nevertheless, was just as guilty from the divine standpoint because he allowed himself to be used to further the schemes of the wicked queen. This is a principle which all the LORD's people will do well to observe.

The law of God for man requires one to love his neighbor as himself. This means we

should have great concern for our neighbors. Just because we have a strong desire to possess something which is enjoyed by another, is not a valid reason why we should have it, or be concerned because we cannot acquire it.

Those who, during this age, have made a consecration to do God's will, have entered into a covenant with him by sacrifice. (Ps. 50:5) This means that they have voluntarily agreed to give up all earthly things, and to set their affections on things above. The LORD, in turn, makes them stewards of that which they have presented to him, and expects them to use his "goods" wisely, to the furtherance of his cause, and to his glory.

To these it should matter very little just how much of earthly possessions the LORD permits them to retain for use in his service. But even so, we need to be on guard lest the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches lure us away from the straight and narrow path of sacrifice and service. It is so easy to covet a little more time and comfort for the flesh than it really needs.

Courageous Integrity

KEY VERSE: "Micaiah said, As the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak." — I Kings 22:14

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: I Kings 22:13-16, 19-23, 26-28

MICAIAH WAS A prophet in Israel who had repeatedly told King Ahab what he did not wish to hear. On this occasion the king was seeking advice as to whether he should lead his army against the Syrians to assert their right of sovereignty to some disputed land east of the Jordan River. Four hundred prophets had already been asked, and had assured the king of victory. Ahab's ally in this venture, the king of Judah, knew of Micaiah the prophet, and wanted his advice also. Ahab was displeased, but reluctantly called him in for council.

Micaiah, knowing that the king wanted only a favorable answer, advised him that he would speak only what the LORD revealed. Then mockingly, repeated what the

other four hundred prophets had said. Ahab apparently detected the sarcasm in his voice, and replied, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?" Then the prophet gave a parable which implied that the advice of the other four hundred prophets was a lie, and that the LORD had, in fact, predicted evil concerning Ahab.

The prophet must have known what the consequences of the truth would be. He was carried off to prison and suffered much affliction, there to remain until Ahab returned from his conquest, which, of course, he did *not* do, having met his death in the battle.

It is not easy to declare the Word of the LORD to those who would bring us persecution because of it. But, as with the prophets of past ages, so it has been also with those of this Gospel Age called to proclaim the Word of the LORD. The faithful ones have spoken the truth in spite of the persecution and suffering it might bring. Such has been the history of the LORD's true church.

If we truly love the LORD and his Word we will not be like those who, according to Peter, "wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction." (II Pet. 3:16) Instead, we will take God at his word, and obey his instructions, and speak his Word honestly, without hesitation. We know that the human heart is deceitful, and will influence our minds to interpret scriptures in such a manner as to make the narrow way of sacrifice a little less narrow, if permitted to do so. But if we give all diligence to study, and sincerely apply the LORD's instructions, we will be protected against all opposition and influences which would take us out of our

Heavenly Father's loving care. Even Satan will not be permitted to harm us if we remain faithful to God's Word and the doing of his will, submissive to all the providences which divine power permits and overrules for our good.

Just as divine power has provided all things necessary pertaining to life and godliness, we can also be assured that it will not allow anything to interfere with the accomplishment of the divine purpose in our lives. Truly this is a blessed assurance, for we know that greater is he who is for us than all who are against us. Let us continue to rejoice in the abundance of God's grace as we are strengthened by the certain knowledge that our Heavenly Father will care for us and protect us against all the enemies to our faith. If we put our trust in him, when the due time comes, we shall have an abundant entrance into that glorious kingdom, where we can prophesy of his wonderful plan for all people, and all will be glad to listen! □

Vessels of the Great Potter



“Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.”

—Jeremiah 18:2

JEREMIAH FOLLOWED THE LORD’s directions, as we read, “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”—Jer. 18:3,4

One of the important lessons of this allegory is that the LORD, who is pictured in this case as the potter, does not deal in an arbitrary manner with individuals or nations—the ‘vessels’ he is creating. The responsibility rests upon them—the ‘clay’ in this illustration—to allow themselves to become vessels fit for the Master’s use. They must yield themselves under his masterful hand to work in harmony with his plans for mankind, and for themselves in particular. Their usefulness to the LORD depends entirely upon the heart attitude they allow to develop in themselves, and their responsiveness to his direction throughout their entire relationship with him.

The context of this chapter in Jeremiah clearly shows that God reserves the right to extend or withhold blessings, or to administer punishments and rewards according to the demands of behavior. His actions are a direct result of the obedience or disobedience of those involved.

In the sixteenth century, the doctrine of 'Election' came into common acceptance in Protestant Europe, through the teachings of John Calvin. His doctrine taught predestination in the most complete sense. However, the Calvinistic mold is not compatible with the Word of God, for our Heavenly Father does not interfere with the free moral agency which he has given to each human being. Right from the beginning, God had a design for his human family, and he is successfully carrying it out despite the cooperation, or lack of it, from his creatures. They will all, eventually, have the liberty, and great privilege, of cooperation.

It was his will that all would become acquainted with him and his magnificent character, and each one be given an opportunity to serve him *freely*. They would thereby receive inexpressible blessings such as only he can bestow upon them. And it is his desire that every creature in heaven or upon earth, created or yet to be created, worship and obey him and his righteous laws because they love them, and are in full harmony with righteousness.

Light is thrown upon our subject of the vessels of the Great Potter by the words of the Apostle Paul, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Rom. 9:21) Now this is the **King James Translation**, but **Strong's Concordance** gives the meaning of the word dishonor as 'of less honor' or 'by comparative degree'. So in this study, we will endeavor to use the latter meaning as being the more accurate interpretation. In other words, there are many vessels being produced by the Master Workman, some to great honor through their more important usage—some to less honor comparatively, but still to some great purpose in his plan of the ages.

However, we must remember that it is important to keep the background of this lesson in mind, lest we get the erroneous thought that human beings are under the control of a divine being which arbitrarily governs everything they do. If this were so, God's creatures would be like robots that have

absolutely nothing to say about their destiny. This thought of predestination, which, obviously is not a correct premise, is not taught in the Bible. The study of Jeremiah 18, shows that the attitude of the individual determines whether he will eventually be formed as a vessel of great honor, or one of lesser honor. Also the particular use for which a vessel was designed very often determines whether it has special honor or not. Some were used for very menial tasks, and others were decorated with beautiful designs and colors, and were used as splendid ornaments in the home or synagogue.

Potter's vessels are spoken of in the Scriptures a number of times. They contain certain illustrations in connection with the professed people of God. When traveling through Israel and Jordan, even today, women can be seen gathered around a well, drawing water for the needs of their family. The vessels which they use generally hold four or five gallons of water. They must be nice, clean jugs, usually decorated with painted or embossed designs.

These vessels which are used for drawing water must be kept spotless, as we have stated, and this would be their most outstanding characteristic. From them was dispensed pure water for cooking and drinking, as well as for washing, and for these functions—essential for life—the containers must always remain pure and clean lest life-threatening disease should result. And so they were designated as vessels of honor.—Isa. 52:11; Rom. 9:21

As one would walk down a pathway toward the well, even if a stranger, he could say to the woman carrying her container of water, "Would you please give me a drink?" And more often than not, she would willingly take the vessel off her head and set it down, and allow you to take a drink. This vessel of honor dispensed a life-giving liquid, which so nicely illustrates the people of God. First they must be clean, pure, made so by the precious blood of Christ. They hold within themselves the pure water of life, which they freely share with all who desire to partake of it to quench their thirst. These vessels were formed from clay. They were earthen

vessels (II Cor. 4:7), but nevertheless they were vessels of honor because of the way they were used. And so also the church has been formed from material taken from the earth, and transformed into vessels fit for the Master's use.

When several vessels were made at one time, the potter did not make a decision as to which would be a vessel of honor, and which would be a vessel of less honor from the outset. What determined their position or honor was, first the way they yielded to the potter's hand while being formed; and second, how they were used by those to whom they eventually belonged. Here is another distinctive lesson. We ask ourselves, "Are we striving earnestly with all of our ability to become a vessel of honor? Are we endeavoring to exercise that generosity of spirit which would be willing under every circumstance to nourish and sustain any who would be benefited by a little sip of water from our vessel?" There is indeed no higher honor in the entire universe than to be used by God to dispense the water of life. God's people are continuing even until today to be engaged in doing just that, to the very best of their abilities.

More than six thousand years ago, near the close of the Sixth Creative Day, the Great Potter took some dust—**Strong's Concordance** translates the word dust as 'clay', and he formed it into the body of a man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and that clay became a 'living soul'. What a beautiful vessel Adam was—so beautiful that it would be impossible for us to describe his glory! (Ps. 8:5) He was a perfect man, a perfect human being. But, sad to say, Adam's disobedience made the human clay unfit, and the vessel which had been wrought in perfection became marred and imperfect.

One of the first men chosen by God from the human family to become a vessel of honor, in a very extraordinary and special way, was the patriarch, Abraham. The call of Abraham to leave his home and his family to migrate into a land of God's choosing, known only to God, showed that the Great Potter's intention was to work with a very particular

kind of clay—we find that faith was a necessary factor incorporated into the material God would select to use for the creation of his vessels.—Heb. 11:6

After Abraham's death, God dealt in turn with his seed—Isaac and Jacob—who were also part of the same original lump of clay from which God had formed Adam. They were his posterity. Later the LORD made a further choice of Abraham's descendants—stating that the nation of Israel was to be his chosen people (Amos 3:2), chosen for their father's sakes. (Rom. 11:26-28) God gave them many experiences and lessons which were designed to prepare them—to fashion and mold them—to a particular service God had in mind. It was God's plan to produce from Abraham's seed a heavenly class, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore.—Gen. 22:17

The lump of clay from which the Potter desired to form this vessel—the nation of Israel—was composed of mixed materials. It had to be ground, and reground, time and again, through the leading and chastening of the LORD over the centuries, to make it more plastic. However, many times it proved that it still was not pliable enough for the Potter's purpose. It evidenced a lack of faith. Nevertheless certain vessels, quite honorable ones, too, were formed to the LORD's great pleasure, during the Jewish Age. The Apostle Paul gave a partial listing of that group in Hebrews 11, with which we are very familiar.

Great though the work of developing the Ancient Worthy class was, a still greater work began with our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Here was a vessel, perfect in every aspect, created once again as was Adam, in the image and likeness of God—the human likeness of the Creator. Then followed the calling of the apostles, and then the disciples of Jesus, which work has proceeded throughout the entire Gospel Age. These would indeed prove to be gloriously artistic vessels! These were vessels of the very highest honor—called to glory, honor, and immortality!

There are many illustrations in the Scriptures to depict the followers of Christ. The following is not an exhaustive list, by any means, but it contains most of the familiar titles: "the body of Christ," "the Lamb's wife," "the Little Flock," "heirs of God," "Abraham's seed," and the "more than conquerors." These 'vessels'—still another picture—even in their preparatory stages, are considered the sons of God. We read, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—I John 3:2

We remember the occasion when Saul of Tarsus was struck down on the Damascus Road, and called to become a follower of Jesus. Ananias was given the wonderful privilege of lending assistance and comfort to this former terrible enemy of the church, whose life had once been dedicated to wiping out the followers of Christ. It is understandable to us that at first Ananias was reluctant to accept Saul as one called of God. But when the LORD said to him, "Go thy way: for he is a **chosen vessel** unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15), Ananias was ready to follow the LORD's bidding.

The expression, 'a chosen vessel', was a very common one to the Israelites of that day. It was a custom in the East when one desired a particular kind of vessel, to go to the potter's house and ask, "Please, would you pick out a very special vessel for me? I would like to give it as a gift." Or the purchaser might say, "It is my wife's and my anniversary, and I would like an especially nice vessel to commemorate the occasion." And so the potter would say, "I will gladly pick one out for you. I think I know just what you have in mind." And he would go back to look over his shelves where he stocked the jars he had completed.

He would look his wares over rather slowly, pausing here and there. And finally he would take one down from the shelf, saying, "I believe that this is the one you want. The material that went into its creation was exceptional. And it

(Continued on Page 37)

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was very difficult to obtain this special shape. The craftsmanship is unusually fine, and we have decorated it with beautiful designs as well. You will never be ashamed to display this piece in your home." This is what is meant by the chosen vessel.

Now an inexperienced purchaser of vessels might not be able to tell the difference between the real value of one vessel and another, but not so with a craftsman such as the potter. Likewise, our Heavenly Father—the Great Potter—never, ever makes mistakes! When Saul of Tarsus was designated by God as a chosen vessel, we can be certain that he was very special. This was not an arbitrary choice. God made this decision because he knew that Saul of Tarsus had qualifications which could be used in his service—faith, loyalty, zeal, honesty, love. We have learned through his short biography contained in the New Testament what a talented person he was, and how faithfully he laid down his life, using his abilities to the praise and honor of the Heavenly Father.

So it is with the selection of all the kingdom vessels. This is the way it was with Saul of Tarsus, and with Simon Peter, and all the rest of the apostles. So it was with Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and with each and every one who has been called to walk in Jesus' footsteps. We are chosen vessels unto God! And we are speechless when it comes to offering our thanks and appreciation to God for that great honor and privilege.

We read, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) The Heavenly Father considers our frame and he knows we have weaknesses and shortcomings. He knows that we have been born in sin and shapen in iniquity. With great patience and understanding he deals with our minds and wills, and with the spirit that motivates us—the intentions of our hearts. He works the clay of our beings in his own skillful way, magnificently fitting it, preparing it, and shaping it for a special place as a chosen

vessel in the glorious temple of God. Each of the 144,000 members of the church class will be unique. No two will be alike. Each one will be different, as "star differeth from star in glory." (I Cor. 15:41) Every one of the 144,000 faithful will be beings of extraordinary beauty, within and without.

If you have ever visited the fine china section of any famous museum, or quality store, you will realize that the choicest products of this form of art receive special molding and shaping by their designer and creator—or, in the case of our lesson, the potter. After all the lines have been carefully studied and beautifully fashioned, there is still one more very necessary step that must be taken before the item is useful. The material making up the porcelain, pottery, or china, is still soft and delicate. It can crumble very easily, or become marred and spoiled. Before it is valuable, it is necessary for it to be fired, or baked, in an extremely hot kiln.

But the vessels are never exposed directly to the raw flame, such as is produced by a fireplace, or a bonfire. They are carefully placed in an oven where the heat is regulated to an ideal temperature for the purpose of hardening the clay. From this rather severe treatment, the pottery benefits a great deal. It becomes sealed and firm—less apt to crumble—able to withstand reasonable usage. Likewise, our Heavenly Father—the Great Potter—after he has shaped and transformed us according to our perfect pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ, places us into the oven of affliction and tribulation, in order that we might be made strong and useful to him.

In this stage of development some of the vessels crack under the extreme temperature. Does the potter discard them if this occurs? No, he does not, because too much work and love has gone into the design and creation of the piece for him to simply discard the vessel. There is a special cement, which we can liken to the healing balm of the Holy Spirit, with which cracks can be resealed. Then, back into the kiln it goes for another period of firing, after which time it is examined again for flaws. More cement is used if another imperfection is discovered, and the process continues. But

our Potter has a great deal of patience and skill, and he has a particular end in view. He is willing to work long and hard, lovingly and patiently, to make each vessel perfect.

During the process of firing, there can be three different results. First, there are those vessels which are able to stand the heat without cracking. Second, there are vessels that do crack in the heat, but after repair work are beautiful and useful. And third, there are some vessels that crack so badly that they are useless, and must be discarded.

The Apostle Paul told us, "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor [less honor]." (II Tim. 2:20) In this important lesson we think that the gold vessels could appropriately represent the Little Flock, and the silver vessels might picture the Great Company. In Romans 9:21,22, we read, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor [less honor]? What if God, willing to show his wrath [displeasure], and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Here the Scriptures evidence the fact that there will be a class who will not submit to the correction or the craftsmanship of the Heavenly Father, even after they have been subjected to the tremendous heat more than one time. There is an important lesson in this for us.

Note that in the Timothy citation, in addition to the gold and silver vessels, Paul also mentions vessels made of wood and of earth. The Great Potter does not exhaust his skills in the creation of the church and the Great Company, who will receive the highest rewards—heavenly rewards. But God is also creating and will have great use for vessels of 'less honor'—vessels of wood, which could represent the perfected world of mankind. This lesson shows how the great Master Potter can utilize a variety of materials to develop different classes, all of whom will be vessels to bring glory to his name.



The Apostle Paul said, "If a man therefore purge himself from these [imperfections], he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (II Tim. 2:21) What imperfections does the apostle urge us to purge ourselves from? Starting to read in II Timothy 2:22, and continuing to the end of chapter four, we will discover what we must purge out of our lives in order to become vessels of honor. Summing up, the apostle advises us to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the LORD out of a pure heart." (II Tim 2:22) We must be clean vessels if we will be used to serve the LORD and then we are to be

filled with the pure, living water of God's precious truth, which we are to share with any and all who will receive it, and thirstily drink it.

There is a tale told which sounds like an old Persian fable. The story concerns some common clay that lay out on the ground of a field, with no distinction from all the other dirt which surrounded it. It was coarse and common. It was, however, resting high up on the bank of a river, and so it was very proud of its own importance. It listened as the trees spoke of their increasing glory when they leafed out in the Spring; and the flowers in their bright coats congratulated each other on their loveliness; the river made melody, rejoicing in its majesty. And so the clay began to conclude that it was something special too.

One day, all of a sudden, it found itself being dug up out of the bank, placed in a cart, and transported to a small shed. There the potter placed it on a whirling wheel which spun it around until it nearly fell off. Finally the potter pressed down hard and roughly until it began to think, "Surely this pain and misery will be worthwhile, because I will

become a beautiful object of art." But soon it was placed inside a very hot oven, when the clay gave up all hope. But it was not the end! The potter took the vessel out of the kiln and stood it alongside a pool of clear water. The pot, now completed and ready for use, could hardly wait to see what would happen next.

It glanced curiously down into the water to see its reflection, and what a shock it received! It discovered that it was just an ordinary flowerpot! How disappointed it was! But this was not the end of the story. Soon a lady picked up the flowerpot and took it inside a greenhouse. She instructed the gardener to plant a beautiful scepter of regal lillies in the pot. Then she carried it into the great cathedral, where everyone who saw it said, "What a beautiful treasure that is!"

How similar we are to the plain little flowerpot, as we are used to display the regal lilies of truth. We read, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—II Cor. 4:6,7

Soon the vessels will be complete. Soon the kiln of fiery experiences will end. Just a small finishing stroke here, and a little polish there will bring out the full beauty. Then one glorious day, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we will be transformed into spiritual vessels, and taken into that marvelous temple, where we will hear our Father's voice say, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys of thy LORD." □

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised.

—Hebrews 10:23



Rebekah's Twin Boys

ISAAC AND REBEKAH lived in the northern part of the land of Canaan after their marriage. (Genesis 25:11) They were married twenty years before they had their twin sons, Jacob and Esau, who were their only children. Just before they were born, Rebekah was feeling very uncomfortable, and she prayed to the LORD to inquire, "Why am I thus?" The answer the LORD gave her was a prophecy which she remembered and treasured. God told her she would have twin boys, and that his favor would be with the younger, which was contrary to the usual custom of honoring the eldest son with the birthright. (Genesis 25:22,23) A birthright is a privilege inherited

from one's parents. In Biblical times it went to the eldest son, and it included a special blessing from God.

Sure enough, Rebekah did have twins! They certainly were not identical twins—Esau, the older one, had red hair all over his body, while Jacob not nearly so hairy. As Esau was born, his brother held onto his heel; they were born just a few minutes apart. Rebekah remembered God's promise, so when the second twin was born, they called him Jacob. This name means 'supplanter' or 'to replace'.

As they grew up, their differences became more and more apparent. They did not look alike at all; but more important than this, they were very unlike in their personalities. Esau was an active woodsman—rugged and strong. In fact, his name meant 'rough'. Jacob was less adventurous, staying close to his home and family, and he had reverence and great love for God. Jacob was a pious man. (Genesis 25:29) Esau was a favorite with his father, Isaac, however, because his cunning as a hunter brought delicious venison to their table. But Rebekah was more fond of Jacob with his gentle nature, especially because she knew God intended his blessings for Jacob.

One day, while Esau was away hunting, Jacob began to simmer a large pot of soup. This time his brother's hunting trip was unsuccessful, and by the time Esau arrived home, he was discouraged, tired, and very, very hungry. In fact, he was so weary and faint that he begged Jacob to share his delicious smelling meal with him. Jacob answered him that he would gladly give him some soup, if he would only sell him his birthright. And Esau said, "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" And he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way." Thus we know that Esau did not have a proper appreciation for his birthright.—Genesis 25:28-34

When Esau was forty years old, he took two wives from the nearby heathen country, Heth, which were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I

am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, what good shall my life do me?" (Genesis 26:35) She was so unhappy about the matter, that Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." Isaac thought of his fine wife, Rebekah, so he sent Jacob back to his father's country to seek a wife from among his people. Jacob obeyed, and set off for Haran.

Rebekah had another urgent reason to encourage Jacob to leave at this time. She had learned that Esau was very angry with Jacob and intended to kill him as soon as their father, Isaac, died; and Isaac was old and feeble even then, and it seemed as if he might not live very long. (Genesis 27:41; 27:1) What had Jacob done to make Esau so violent?

This is what had happened:

Having overheard a conversation between her husband and her son, Esau, Rebekah set a plan into motion. Isaac had asked Esau to hunt some deer and make him a venison stew, so that he could eat it with pleasure, and bless him before he died. He said, "Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death." (Actually, he lived many, many years before he died at the age of one hundred and eighty!) So Esau went to the field to hunt, as his father requested. Rebekah knew the special blessing or birthright did not really belong to Esau, and that he did not value it, because he had sold it to Jacob. And she knew that Jacob was God's choice. Quickly, she found Jacob and told him to take two goats from their flock. She prepared from the goat meat the stew which Isaac loved so much, dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes, and put the skins of the goats on Jacob's hands and neck. This was so Jacob would feel like his hairy brother, Esau, when Isaac touched him! Because Isaac was nearly blind, he thought he was speaking to Esau when he gave him the wonderful blessing recorded in Genesis 27:28,29.

Jacob was just leaving his father's tent after receiving the blessing, when Esau came in with the venison. He learned that his father had eaten the stew his mother had prepared,

and had given Jacob the blessing. For this Esau hated Jacob and said in his heart, "I will slay my brother, Jacob." Rebekah was told that Esau planned his revenge after Isaac died, and for this additional reason, she was anxious to send Jacob away for a short time, until his brother's anger cooled.—Genesis 27:1-46; 28:1-7

Rebekah would no doubt have been surprised to know that twenty long years would pass before Jacob returned home! He had a great variety of experiences during that time, working for his mother's brother, Laban. He came face to face with angels several times. He saw visions from God. (Genesis 32:1,24; 31:12) He received God's promise, just as his father, Isaac, and his grandfather, Abraham, had: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 29:14; 35:9-12) His name was changed by God from Jacob to Israel, which meant 'a prince of God'! Jacob had twelve sons who became the heads of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel.

The first vision God gave to Jacob was on his journey to Haran to seek a wife. As he slept one night, with the stars over his head and a stone for a pillow, he had a dream that there was a ladder set up to heaven, and behold, the angels of God ascended and descended on it. (Genesis 28:11-15) And God repeated the promise he had made to Abraham and to Isaac: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The ladder to heaven represented God's promise that the way would be opened again for mankind to receive the blessings of heaven. We know these wonderful promises will come true!

Just as his father before him had found a bride in Laban's house, so Jacob did also. Laban had two daughters: Leah was the older and Rachel was the younger. Jacob loved Rachel, and he told Laban, "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter." And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her! But when the time came for him to claim her as his wife, Laban insisted that he marry Leah first,

since she was older. "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn," he said. So Jacob now had both sisters for his wives; but he had to serve Laban another seven years to receive Rachel.—Genesis 29:16-30

As the years went by, Jacob's wisdom and hard work made Laban a rich man, in cattle, sheep, and goats. But the time came when Jacob longed to take his family and return home to Canaan, and to make peace with Esau. For his long and faithful service, Laban gave Jacob wages of large herds. When Jacob arrived in Haran to take a bride twenty years earlier, he came alone. When he left Haran, he went with two wives, two concubines, eleven sons, many servants, and thousands of animals! God had certainly blessed his life.

And so, Jacob went on his way, and when he was nearing home, he received frightening news from messengers. They warned him that Esau had learned that he was returning, and was coming to meet him with four hundred men! That night Jacob took the matter to God in prayer, asking Jehovah's protection from his brother's anger and revenge, which is what he expected. And then Jacob had a thrilling encounter with an angel!

After he had sent his family, servants, and all his herds across the brook, Jabbok, Jacob stayed behind to pray. The angel came and wrestled with Jacob, and Jacob held him firmly in his grip all night, demanding a blessing from him. When morning came, the angel wanted to go, but Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Because of Jacob's steadfast insistence, the angel blessed him there.—Genesis 32:22-29

The following morning, Jacob sent a generous gift to Esau—over five hundred animals: cows, camels, bulls, donkeys, and goats. Soon Jacob saw his brother coming with his four hundred men, and he bowed down to Esau. But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept. Jacob and Esau remained friends from that day until the end of their lives!—Genesis 35:1-5

Until this point in Jacob's life he had eleven sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Joseph. When Jacob settled in Canaan after his return home, God spoke to him again, telling him to take his family and move to Bethel. His twelfth son, Benjamin, was born on the way to Bethel. Rachel had a very hard time delivering her little boy, and she died. Jacob buried her at Bethlehem. (Genesis 35:16-20) Now Jacob had twelve sons, who were destined to become the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. These all played important roles in illustrating the plan of God as shown in his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to bless all the families of the earth.

Toward the end of his life, Jacob gathered his twelve sons around him to bless them. To his son, Judah, Jacob said, "The scepter [a sign of kingship] shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver . . . until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 49:9,10) This prophecy meant that sometime in the future, a descendant of Judah would be born who would be called 'Shiloh'. Shiloh means 'peaceful', and this was an assurance that the "Prince of Peace," Jesus—the most important strand in the golden thread of promise—would come through Judah's family line. (Isaiah 9:6,7) Luke 3:33,34 assures us that Jesus did indeed fulfill this prophecy many hundreds of years later.

Jacob lived to be one hundred and forty-seven years old, and throughout all the events of his long life he always trusted in God, believing God was wise enough, loving enough, and powerful enough to keep all his promises!

QUESTIONS

1. Remember the family blessing Rebekah received as she left her home to marry Isaac? How many children did Rebekah actually have? What could the blessing have meant?
2. Were Jacob and Esau 'identical' twins?
How were they different?
3. What is a birthright?

4. Was Esau the rightful heir of the birthright? What was the birthright? Did Esau value it properly?
5. How did Jacob get possession of the birthright, first from Esau, and secondly, from Isaac?
6. What caused Jacob to go to Haran? Give two reasons.
7. Did the twins, Jacob and Esau, become friends again?
9. How many sons did Jacob have? What nation did they become?



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Those Things

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do. And the God of peace shall be with you.”—Philippians 4:9

THIS TEXT IS an exhortation to build up one another in our most holy faith. The apostle says that there will be a positive result from the **doing** of those things which we have learned: “The God of peace shall be with you.”

It might seem strange that the Apostle Paul would make a statement like this one, but it does not mean that he was putting himself before the Lord as an example of Christian faithfulness. In the opening verse of this epistle he wrote, “Paul and Timothy, the **servants** of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Also in the thirteenth verse of the fourth chapter he says, “I can do all things **through Christ** which strengtheneth me.” In I Corinthians 2:2, the statement that Paul made there in that prominent city, Corinth, was, “I was determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

So we see that he was not putting himself before Christ. But there was a reason why he felt he could make this statement to his brethren at Philippi. Perhaps it was because of his particular closeness to them. The Philippian epistle, we know, is one that offers no rebuke, but only expressions of love, and suggestions for their welfare, prayers and commendation. He felt that he could use this statement to them without seeming to be presumptuous.

Notice how he addresses them: “My brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in

the LORD, my dearly beloved." Twice in this one verse he expresses his love for them.

Let us go back for a few moments to the sixteenth chapter of Acts, where we find the account of his first association with them. After leaving Antioch, he and Silas had gone on through Galatia. We find this recorded in the early verses. It tells us that as they were thinking of going into Bithynia, a vision came to the Apostle Paul at night. "There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (vs. 9) The apostle, who had received instruction from the LORD at various times previously, heeded the message, and immediately made arrangements to go into Macedonia. And as they went they came to Philippi, which was a principal city and a Roman colony. You remember that it was there that some would go down by the river for prayer on the Sabbath. So Paul and Silas joined them, taking the opportunity to speak God's glorious truth of the Gospel of our salvation, the glad tidings that have so lifted the hearts of every one of us.

There at Philippi lived a lady named Lydia, a seller of purple, "whose heart the LORD opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the LORD, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."—vs. 14

The LORD knew, of course, when he arranged for them to go into Macedonia and to arrive at Philippi, that it was just the right time and place. There was even water there in the river, and so she and her household were able to be baptized immediately after hearing the wonderful message of salvation.

As the apostle and disciples joined those men of Philippi who would go down to the river for prayer, one day there was a damsel possessed of a spirit of divination which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. (vs. 16) She would follow the apostle and the disciples around, calling out and saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God,

which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.”—Acts 16:17,18

She was stating the matter accurately. Why did the apostle want to terminate that message? Perhaps there is a lesson in this for us. Paul knew that her masters made much gain by soothsaying, and of course she was not operating her own mind because she was possessed of the spirit. So her owners were using her and making merchandise of the truth. Furthermore, under the Law they were to have nothing to do with seers, diviners, magicians, etc. This is something for us to consider. The truth is too precious for us to allow it to be used in such a manner.

Of course the results were that the masters who had lost this source of gain arranged for Paul and Silas to be brought into the marketplace to the rulers for a trial. (vs. 19) They were brought before the magistrates and were evilly spoken against. They were beaten and put in prison. This is the occasion when, at midnight, Paul and Silas, even though being incarcerated in the dungeon, sang songs and prayed to their Heavenly Father. Then there was a great earthquake, so terrible that the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, and the bands were loosed from off them. The keeper of the prison wanted to kill himself because under the Roman law it was his responsibility to keep his prisoners from escaping. But Paul said, “Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.”—vs. 28

As a result, the jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spoke unto him the word of the LORD, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”—vss. 30-33

Evidently this was an additional reason, an overruling of circumstances by the LORD again, that they should go into the area of Philippi at that time rather than elsewhere. "When he [the jailer] had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go."—vs. 35

The magistrates wanted to let them go in peace, "but Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." (vs. 37) Now this took courage on the part of the Apostle Paul, but he evidently knew his rights, having been freeborn and a Roman citizen, educated at the feet of Gamaliel and fluent in several languages. "And they [the magistrates] came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."—vss. 37-40

They had had quite an experience there at Philippi! And those who had come into Christ during that time—Lydia and her household, in particular—had seen the Apostle Paul under several different kinds of conditions. Perhaps that may have had something to do with the reason why he could say to the brethren at Philippi that "those things which ye have learned, and accepted, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

In Philippians, the first chapter, the apostle wrote to his beloved brethren at Philippi telling them of his experiences and conditions that he was then undergoing. He was in prison and he wrote, beginning in verse 13, "My bonds in Christ are manifest in the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the LORD, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear, . . . knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel." Paul continued, "Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice,

yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Here was an insight into the apostle and his attitude of keeping his heart and mind in proper relationship to the LORD.

Then he goes on to explain to them that if he continued to live, it is for "Christ" and to die "is gain." If he had been given a choice, he said, it was far better to depart and to be with Christ! He knew that the best was yet to come, if he would be faithful unto death. This is the goal that we are all looking for. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.

However, he continues to say, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He expressed his heartfelt contentment with whatever experiences the LORD would send to him, as long as He would overrule each vicissitude to his best interests.

Continuing on in his letter, beginning with verse 27, Paul then gave this exhortation to them, "Only let your conversation [your conduct of life], be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition [or their destruction], but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

Going again to our text, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." Here is another instance in which the Philippians would do well to emulate his Christian behavior. He had sent Epaphroditus unto them, for their comfort and encouragement, to let them know of his condition there in Rome, and they had sent messages to him—"an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice

acceptable, wellpleasing to God." We see how he used every experience as an opportunity to encourage, benefit and instruct the LORD's people.

Paul went on to remind us of the great contrast between Christ and the Adversary—the great gulf between the motivating forces which drove those two outstanding figures, whose places in the great plan of the ages are central. Satan sought with an evil and ambitious spirit to be **equal** with God. And certainly that would not have satisfied him—we realize that he would have had to be **supreme**. But Christ Jesus—who was next to the Heavenly Father, the beginning of his creation, who had been with him the longest time from point of seniority, a faithful and obedient son on the plane next to God himself—was willing to give up that rich position and humble himself even to the ignoble death of the cross.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth [those in the tomb]; And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11) What a wonderful occasion it will be, when that glorious truth is made known. Paul said, "**confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the **glory** of God the Father," whom he came to reveal and serve so faithfully.

Paul suffered much, as a result of false brethren, at other times, and he felt it necessary to tell some of those details for the sake of the brethren. There was a philosophy extant called 'antinomianism', similar to the spirit of Balaam. It was the early seeds of the beginning of clergy and laity, and of serving for hire, taking advantage of a knowledge of the truth, or, again, making merchandise of God's glorious truths. Paul had to speak out against that philosophy, and in so doing he did something which he knew was 'foolish'.

When he advised the class that these false brethren were endeavoring to take advantage of them, he said, "I speak as

a fool." He reminded them that if they want to boast after the flesh, that he could 'outboast them'—he was born of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, that he was a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews', a Pharisee and a son of a Pharisee. (Acts, chapter 3) When he said, "I speak as a fool to be praising myself," he was well aware that to praise yourself means nothing. There's a statement that's been made that is so despicable that perhaps it can be helpful to us—'self praise stinks!' To have praise come from someone else is the correct posture of modesty, particularly when it is from someone we respect. And the apostle knew that very well. But he would resort even to self praise if it was necessary to help his brethren, to open their eyes to the fact that they were being taken advantage of.

We read in the ninth chapter of Acts concerning the time when the Lord appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus. He was going there to persecute the brethren as an authorized Pharisee, to rid the country of this new religion. You remember that a great light shown from heaven, and he heard the voice of the Lord calling him, and he answered "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." His very next question was, "What wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord told him exactly what to do.

His eyes had been damaged by the great light from heaven, and his soul had been shaken by the traumatic experience he had undergone—discovering that he had been persecuting the son of God. So he was led to Judas' home in Damascus, to recuperate. There another faithful Christian, Ananias, instructed Paul, and healed him that he might receive his sight. Jesus said he was to be a "chosen vessel" unto him, to bear his name before the children of Israel, and kings, and rulers, and the Gentiles.—vss. 5-15

Now these were Jesus' words after he was glorified and with the Heavenly Father. He said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." How many people would have responded to an invitation such as that one! Yes, the Lord knew full well that the members of the

Early Church would suffer much for the witness of the truth. Now the message is still privileged to go forth in this harvest time, because those who have been blessed by it are desirous of sharing it with others. But at this time we no longer have to fear being put into prison, being beaten, or killed, for the witness of the Gospel.

Paul was such a faithful follower of Christ. We remember the time when he would have ventured into the theater to be with his brethren who were being persecuted by their listeners. The disciples restrained him from going in because there was a mob spirit there, and you can not reason with a mob. So they successfully restrained him from joining his brethren, but he would have been willing to suffer with them.

The Apostle Paul, because of what he had given up, progressed before and ahead of those who were his peers in spiritual learning. He was reared at Tarsus, which was an educational center, and he was taught of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Since he was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, clearly his ability in the law was great. However, he met his match with the truth when it came to the martyr, Stephen.



Perhaps that is why the Lord told him, as recorded in a later account, "It is hard for you to kick against the pricks [the pricks of his conscience]," because he knew that what Stephen had been saying was truth. Paul knew the law and the history of Israel well enough to recognize truth.

When Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute the brethren, the LORD knew his heart was ready to receive the truth that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Jesus knew that when he revealed himself to him he would become a faithful follower and an important apostle to the church. Then he went into Arabia and studied diligently to confirm his belief in this new doctrine; from whence he went to Damascus. As we remember, his preaching there was not received favorably. Finally it was necessary for the brethren to let him down in a basket over the wall, and he was able to escape into another area, where his preaching would bear more fruit.

Paul had a similarity to Christ in that he had given up a great deal. We find this thought expressed when first he tells the Philippians of his background, and of the fact that he had been using all the power of his position as a Pharisee to persecute the brethren. (Phil. 3:7) "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."—vss. 8-11

Paul longed for the resurrection to be together with Christ, to be a member of that Christ body, with all the glorious opportunities that will lie before the faithful. The opportunities of service at that time will be so much more productive and blessed of the LORD than at present. The

Adversary will be bound; a pure message and language will be turned to all people; the truth will be clearly spoken; the overruling providences of the glorified Christ, the heavenly phase of the kingdom will be in effect; the restored Ancient Worthies, who will be perfect representatives to carry forward that law coming forth from Zion, will be the leaders on the earth. No wonder Paul longed for that time—no wonder our hearts also yearn for the kingdom to be established here upon this poor, sinsick and dying earth.

Yes how productive, how successful, that kingdom will be! What a blessing it will be to the world when they realize that finally they have turned the corner into the kingdom of God and of Christ that we have been taught to pray for! The beginning of that work will eventuate in God's will being done as fully and completely in earth as it is in heaven. There will be the inspiration of progress, and the encouragement of success to press them on. "Come . . . and . . . take the water of life freely," (Rev. 22:17) will be the invitation to all!

So then, the apostle says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [mature, complete]: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (vss. 13,14), "being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (vss. 10,11) "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:5

We see a similarity here between the Apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus, whom he was following. They both had a willingness to give up everything to do the LORD's will no matter where it led them. He was similar to Christ also in his love for the Father, and for the truth, and for his brethren in Christ, and he was willing to go through great hardships, and to experience many difficult experiences to serve God's truth and to serve his brethren—to do the will of God.

We remember how Paul reprimanded Peter when that apostle was dissembling a bit before the Jews by not eating with the Gentile brethren, because of still being influenced by the Jewish Law. Paul helped the Apostle Peter on that occasion, showing him the marvelous grace of justification by faith.

Our appreciation for the Apostle Paul grows when we realize his clarity in doctrinal matters. His help with our understanding of the resurrection of the dead, both terrestrial and celestial is exceptional. He explained so simply and clearly how God gives each one a body as it pleases him. He explained the extent of Christ's kingdom and of the work that it will do. He outlined with clarity doctrinal points of the ransom and the application of its merit in the sin-offering. His description of sanctification is without equal. When we think of the doctrines that he made clear to us, we realize how much has been brought to us by this apostle.

Of course we appreciate the other apostles greatly, also. We are reminded, too, of the faithful disciple, Luke, who brought us the Gospel according to Luke, and also the Acts of the Apostles. So we see that "God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (I Cor. 12:18), and for the service of the Christ as a whole. These things have been recorded for our benefit, throughout the Gospel Age.

The apostle desired fruitage in his beloved brethren in Philippi, so he was pleased to thank them for their gift to him. He told them he had all he needed, but he so greatly appreciated that they had communicated with him and had tried to help him when others did not. Notice how he states this: "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Phil. 4:16,17) The apostle knew that God would develop his Spirit in them, and that they would prosper as New Creatures in Christ through the exercising of their love to him. This singleness of purpose on

the part of the apostle is exemplary; it is beneficial for us to consider his wonderful attributes and emulate them.

Truly he followed in the steps of his Master, the beloved Lord Jesus Christ, very carefully, very faithfully. Yes, if eating meat made his brethren stumble, he would eat no meat as long as he lived. It is a thought of loving concern that he expressed, saying, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—II Cor. 7:1

What had he been describing in the sixth chapter as the 'filthiness of the flesh and spirit'? He was telling them to have nothing to do with idols, and to have nothing to do with those who were not walking correctly. He says, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty."—vss. 17,18

"Contention cometh only by pride." (Prov. 13:10) There were those who had opposed him because of their pride and ambition, the two most dangerous foes of the New Creation. These evil attributes were exhibited in the Adversary himself. May the LORD help us to be aware of and heed these lessons through which the apostle warned us.

As we think of Paul's loving concern for the brethren, his desire to see much fruit developed in them, and his warnings to protect them, there are a few words in the little book of Philemon we want to consider. Paul was growing old and he wrote to Philemon about Onesimus, a slave who had come into the truth. He said: "Though I might be much bold in Christ [as that chosen vessel, and an apostle] to *enjoin* thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather *beseech* thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 8) Instead of ordering Philemon through the authority of his apostleship, he preferred to beseech him through love!

As we consider those things which we also have "learned and received, [or accepted], and heard and seen," let us endeavor **to do** them. Perhaps the most helpful instruction is to realize that this one who had so bitterly persecuted the Early Church, and made havoc of it even to the point of arranging for the imprisonment and death of some faithful ones, had now become a humble, loving, diligent, faithful, mature Christian in Christ. He measured up as best he could to the image of God's dear Son. He had been prepared for an inheritance together with the saints in light. Perhaps it is in this—what he gave up—and the transformation that took place in him under the guidance and the operation of the Holy Spirit in his life, and the counsel of God's Word, that resulted in such an one as Paul, the aged, speaking to the Christian church in love.

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OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends in the loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Brother Clarence Oughton, Wombwell, Barnsley, England—June 22. Age, 86.

Brother John Wolvin, Delaware Valley Bible Students—July 5. Age, 84.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

These 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. Balko			
France	September 1-4	Victoria, B.C.	6
Poland	5-13	Portland, OR	8,9
Ukraine	14-17	Spokane, WA	12
England	20-30	Boise, ID	15,16
W. Blicharz			
Chatham, Ont.	September 16	G. Passios	
J.B. Brown & Jos. Panucci		Allentown, PA	September 9
Auckland, New Zealand		L.B. Post	
	September 18-20	Pittsburgh, PA	September 15,16
Melbourne, Australia	21-26	R. Shahan	
Camberra	28-30	Middletown, NY	September 23
Sydney	October 1,2	W. Vrooman	
Perth	4-7	Boise, ID	September 8,9
Adelaide	8,9	Mountain Home, ID	10
Sydney Area	10-14	Salt Lake City, UT	12
Nambour	15-17	Denver, CO	14
Brisbane	18-20	Kansas City, MO	15,16
R. Gorecki		Camdenton, MO	17
Pittsburgh, PA	September 16	St. Louis, MO	18
G.M. Jeuck		Indianapolis, IN	19
New Haven, CT	September 30	Cincinnati, OH	20
E.K. Penrose		Tuscaloosa, AL	21
Seattle, WA	September 1-3	Louisville, AL	22,23
Vancouver, B.C.	5		

It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.

—Lamentations 3:22

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CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. In order to ensure your convention being accurately placed in these columns, please make your request IN-WRITING and mail it to this address at least two or three months before the date of the convention: The Dawn, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

JACKSON, MI, September 1,2,3—Fa-Ho-Lo Park, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson 49203
Phone: (303) 776-3845

NEW YORK, NY, August 31, September 1,2—Holiday Inn, Route 46, Wayne, NJ. Contact for information and reservations: Mrs. Ann-Truth Lange, 76 Longview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605
Phone: (914) 948-5428

SEATTLE, WA, August 31-September 3—Convention held in Bellevue. Contact: Convention Chairman, Michael Brann, 201/2 East Intercity Avenue, Everett 98208, for information.
Phone: (206) 353-8983

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA, September 29,30, October 1—Canberra Pensioners' Clubroom, Barry Drive & Marcus Clarke St. Limited motel rooms available. **Make reservations early.** Write: Mr. Graeme

Smith, Kaleen ACT, Australia
Phone: (062) 4-4863

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, September 15,16—West Newton, Sewickley Grange. Contact: Mr. Charles Martig, 730 Dunster St., Pittsburgh 15226
Phone: (412) 563-6110

KALISPELL, MT, September 21-24—Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Lakeside, MT. Write Secretary: Mrs. Joy Thompson, P.O. Box 716, Columbia Falls 59912
Phone: (406) 892-2574

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 5-7—Quality Inn and Conference Center, Chicopee, MA. Phone (413) 592-7751. *Make reservations no later than August 15.* Write: Mrs. Richard Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518
Phone: (203) 248-3793

RICHMOND, VA, October 12-14—Roslyn Conference Center, 8727 River Road. Contact Miss Katharine R. Warren, 2805 Stonewall Ave., Richmond 23225

BUFFALO, NY, October 13,14—Unity Temple Masonic Lodge, 1940 Niagra Street, Buffalo. Contact for information: Mr. Eugene Buczkowski, 85 Rogers St., Cheektowaga 14225
Phone: (716) 634-2163

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, October 13,14—Kenowa Hills Jr. High School, 4252 Three Mile Road, NW, 49604. Contact: Mrs. Ruth Kowalski, 141 S. Park Lane Dr., NE, Grand Rapids 49605-3588

CINCINNATI, OH, October 27,28—Ramada Inn Sharonville, 11029 Dowlin Dr., Cincinnati 45241. (513) 771-0300. *Baptismal Service to be held. Make reservations no later than October 1.* Contact Secretary: Mrs. Edith Harp, 2609 Merrittview Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45231
Phone: (513) 825-4112 or 0183

ORLANDO, FL, October 27,28—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Dr. (Corner 17-92), Sanford. For information and accommodations, write: Mrs. Stanley Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry 32707.
Phone: (407) 699-8303

NEW HAVEN, CT, November 4—Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven. Contact: Cindy Mason, 19 Burr St., Branford, 06405
Phone: (203) 481-9935

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 17,18—Masonic Temple, 1912 Morris Ave., Union, NJ. Write: Mrs. Charlotte Teklinski, 84 Arthur St., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660 for information and accommodations.
Phone: (210) 440-0925

SAN DIEGO THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 22-25—LaJolla Village Inn, 3299 Holiday Court, LaJolla, CA. Phone: (800) 854-2900. *Reservations must be made by October 31st.* Write for information and reservations: Mrs. Anna Karavas, 6758 Mineral Drive, San Diego 92119.
Phone: (619)-6774