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February 2010



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Our Aging Population: A Mounting Social Problem

*“The days of our
years are
threescore years
and ten; and if by
reason of strength
they be fourscore
years, yet is their
strength labour
and sorrow; for it
is soon cut off, and
we fly away.”*

—*Psalms 90:10*
were fashioned.

THIS PSALM IS A PRAYER

of Moses, the man of God. In it we are given a sobering account of the human family’s depth of sorrow because of sin and its sentence. It also speaks of the allotted portion of time they have been given, and their inevitable death when the elements of their bodies return to the dust of the earth from which they

GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE

The wonderful purpose of God was realized in the creation of an environment wherein man could dwell peaceably with his Creator, and the psalm’s author provides an important perspective when he wrote, “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born

Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. You turn man back into dust And say, ‘Return, O children of men.’”—Ps. 90:1-3, *New American Standard Bible*

The magnitude of divine wisdom and power is also brought to mind, “For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night. You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; In the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; Toward evening it fades and withers away. For we have been consumed by Your anger And by Your wrath we have been dismayed. You have placed our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your presence. For all our days have declined in Your fury; We have finished our years like a sigh. As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away. Who understands the power of Your anger And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You?”—vss. 4-11, *NASB*

NUMBERING OUR DAYS

The psalmist encourages those who would seek to know our loving Heavenly Father, and this has been especially true during this present Gospel Age. His faithful people take every opportunity and set aside their time to serve him and to fulfill their consecration vows. “So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.” (vs. 12, *NASB*) The Apostle Paul has admonished,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom. 12:1,2) We thus count the time, “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”—vs. 11

From another perspective, we note the humbling words of Job, who wrote, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” (Job 14:1-4) The psalmist spoke of numbering our days, and Job wrote, “Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.”—vs. 5

THE DEATH SENTENCE

From the scriptural account, we are given the record of man’s creation. “The LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”—Gen. 2:15-17

Our Heavenly Father's commandment to his earthly creation was made clear, and if Adam obeyed God he would live. However, he was not obedient and brought not only himself, but the whole human family, under the divine sentence of death. The Apostle Paul addressed this very point in his letter to the brethren at Rome. He explained to them, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Rom. 5:12

CREATION OF EVE

Soon after Adam was created, God provided him with a wife, and she became his earthly companion. Concerning Eve we read, "The LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18) We also learn the details of her creation. "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."—vss. 21-25

DYING THOU SHALT DIE

Further to God's commandment that Adam would die if he disobeyed the divine law, we previously noted, 'But of the tree of the knowledge of

good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’ The *Marginal Translation* of this verse reads, ‘dying thou shalt die’ and provides an important perspective concerning the divine sentence. The words ‘dying thou shalt die’ more clearly identify the dying process that would take place, and the gradual nature of the death sentence that would be carried out. In Adam’s case, he did not die immediately, but began a process that took 930 years to accomplish before he actually died and entered the grave.

Adam and Eve were witnesses to the world’s first murder that took place when their son Cain killed his brother Abel. Jealousy had arisen in Cain’s heart when God accepted Abel’s offering of a first year sheep from his flock, but did not accept his offering of the fruit of the ground. The scriptural account records the events as they took place.

“Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother:

and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand."—Gen. 4:2-11

From the terrible events that took place on that day, and even to the present time, the whole sin-sick human family has succumbed to the divine sentence of death. For six thousand years, all have entered the grave which is common to all, whether by sickness, war or accident.

FORMER TRADITIONS

In former times, families were often larger than they are today. Therefore, they were more likely and able to provide essential care for their parents, grandparents, and perhaps other family members when they became too old, sick, and unable to take care of themselves. This relationship was based on principles established by the Word of God, and addressed by King Solomon, when he wrote, "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old."—Prov. 23:22

This traditional old way of life that was common even a century ago has been upset by the faster moving pace and rapidly changing world of our day. This has greatly affected the infirm and those of advanced age, and it has put the burden of their care on others. Statistics show that there is now a declining birth rate, and that it is coupled with the

increasing longevity among the world's elderly people. This situation has upset the more traditional balance of life that existed in former times. During the closing years of this present Gospel Age this situation is being reversed, and the burden of caring for the rapidly growing number of elderly people is now beginning to outnumber the younger generation.

POPULATION TRANSFORMATION

Population figures indicate that in 1800 approximately half of the people living in the United States were 16 years old or younger. In 1900, older people comprised about 4 percent of the entire population, or one senior citizen for every twenty five potential workers. Since 1950, the number of Americans aged 65 or older has doubled, and those living to 85 years has quadrupled. It is estimated that by the year 2015 there will be approximately 43 million children under the age of 10 years, but 47 million people who will be over age 65. On average, these senior citizens are expected to live an additional 19 years, and will become totally dependant on the working population to support their pensions, and provide their health care and housing costs.

BABY BOOMERS

Following World War II, there was an enormous increase in population in many places throughout the world. Those who were born during this period of sudden growth were referred to as the baby-boomer generation. In the United States, it was unique in both size and duration. Between the years 1945 and 1964, there were 76 million children

added to the population. Since 1965, the fertility rate has plummeted dramatically.

The first of the 76 million baby boomers are now reaching retirement age. This overwhelming number will soon become part of the dependent group who will be needing services of all kinds, and will be one of the greatest challenges this country has ever faced. Senior citizens are the fastest growing group in the country. Analysts who study population figures point out that major changes, both publicly and privately, will be necessary to cope with the challenges that lie ahead.

PROFOUND CHALLENGES

At the present time, health care costs in America have reached nearly \$2 trillion a year, and a large percentage of this expense goes to provide care for the aged and infirm. Improved care and more efficient facilities for treating age-related and chronic diseases has increased the life span of elderly people, and is expected to rise dramatically in the future. This situation, however, is leading to the looming question of who is going to pay for all of this additional care?

It is now possible for the aged and the infirm to live a longer life. However, because there are now fewer children being born there is a greatly increased financial and social burden being placed on the working class population. It is foreseen by analysts that by the year 2030 the ratio of workers to the elderly will be about one to one. This means that every worker will be expected to support their own family, and also to share in caring for one other elderly person. This will create an enormous worldwide

problem that cannot easily be dismissed and will have to be addressed now to prevent a huge burden on the children and grandchildren of the present generation.

The accelerated number of older people poses great challenges to public institutions that must adapt to the situation. This problem is compounded by the shrinking number of workers who must support the system. In most developed countries this is placing an increased pressure on social security programs. In the United States, the social security system is facing a profound crisis if no radical modifications are soon enacted. This will inevitably result in cuts to benefits being received, lower cost-of-living adjustments, establishing later retirement ages or tax increases on the working population. Perhaps a combination of these and other factors, will make it necessary to find new ways to sustain the public retirement programs such as Medicare and Social Security.

With more senior citizens, the prevalence of disability, frailty, and chronic diseases is also expected to increase. The aging of the population is indeed a global problem that requires international coordination, and the implementation of national and local actions. The United Nations and other international organizations are considering various recommendations that are intended to lessen the adverse consequences of the aging population. These include a reorganization of social security systems, changes in family policies and the promotion of more active and healthy life styles among our older people. These agencies state that there must be more cooperation between the governments in

resolving the social, economic, and political problems of the elderly. The status of many older people can be improved by encouraging them to live more active and productive lives.

ELDER ABUSE

As the number of individuals 65 years of age and over has increased, so has the incidence of elder abuse. Unfortunately, the prevalence and nature of this growing problem has generally remained hidden from public view. It is necessary for professionals and lay persons to become more aware of the scope and the many issues surrounding this sensitive topic. The issues surrounding detection of elder abuse and ways to prevent it are being discussed.

Every year in America it is reported that countless numbers of our senior citizens are being abused. This may take place in their own homes, in the homes of relatives, and even in facilities that are designed and responsible for their everyday care. They are often being harmed physically or emotionally by a neglectful or overwhelmed caregiver. Some of these unfortunate people are also being preyed upon financially. Because of the rising number of these incidents, it is important to recognize some of the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, and how to act on behalf of a particular person who is being abused.

Abuse of our elderly citizens tends to take place where the senior person is living. This may occur in the home where the abusers are adult children or grandchildren, or the spouses of elders. Institutional settings, especially long-term care facilities, can also be sources of abuse. There are many different

forms of this type of abuse, some involving intimidation or threats, others involving neglect or financial trickery.

Physical abuse is the use of force against an elderly person that results in physical pain, injury, or sometimes impairment. It not only includes physical assaults such as hitting or shoving, but the inappropriate use of drugs, restraints, or confinement. In emotional or psychological cases, others may speak to or treat elderly persons in ways that cause emotional pain or distress. Verbal forms of abuse may be made through intimidation, yelling, or threats, and humiliation or ridicule. Nonverbal abuse may include ignoring the elderly person, or isolating them from friends or activities.

Neglect, or abandonment, by caretakers constitutes more than half of all reported cases of elder abuse. It can be either intentional, or unintentional, and may be based on factors such as ignorance or denial.

Financial exploitation involves the unauthorized use of an elderly person's property, either by a caregiver or others. It may involve the misuse of personal checks, funds, credit cards, or accounts. In some cases, the older person's signature may be forged, or certain household properties may be taken from them.

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGED

Except for those who die at a young age, everyone must face the inevitable difficulties and uncertainties of growing old. Throughout the approximately six thousand years since Adam disobeyed the divine law and brought death upon himself and

the entire human creation, our loving Heavenly Father has been developing a grand and long-range plan for the human family. His ultimate purpose for the sin-sick human creation is to deliver them from the sentence of death and to provide them with reconciliation. After sin had been introduced into the world, the Heavenly Father spoke, "Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."—Gen. 3:17

THE CURSE LIFTED

When all disobedience will have been removed during the future reign of our Lord Jesus and the faithful members of his bride, the human creation will be taught the ways of truth and righteousness, and will have opportunity to receive the wonderful gift of life here on a perfected earth. John the revelator wrote of that time, and proclaimed, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—Rev. 22:1,2

The curse, which had been instituted because of disobedience to God, will be taken away by the Christ, "There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."—vs. 3

FRESHER THAN IN YOUTH

In the writings of Job, he spoke of that glorious scene and used the word ‘fresher’ [to rejuvenate, Hebrew] to describe the state of perfection that mankind would attain under the administration of Christ’s future kingdom. We greatly rejoice to read, “If there is an angel as mediator for him, One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him, Then let him be gracious to him, and say, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom’; Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.”—Job 33:23-25, *NASB* ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

FEBRUARY 4—“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—Revelation 18:4 (Z. ’00-3 Hymn 177)

FEBRUARY 11—“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matthew 5:11,12 (Z. ’94-368 Hymn 261)

FEBRUARY 18—“The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”—Deuteronomy 13:3 (Z. ’98-40 Hymn 114)

FEBRUARY 25—“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”—Matthew 4:4 (Z. ’02-246, 248 Hymn 186)

2010 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Sunday, March 28, 2010.

A complete Memorial Service is available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on audio cassette or CD, and DVD.

The audio cassette or CD can be purchased for \$2.00, or is available free on loan, from:

Dawn Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

The DVD can be purchased for \$4.00. It is available free on loan, or can be purchased, from:

Dawn Video Service
4804 Laurel Canyon Blvd., #724
Valley Village, CA 91607

Cut-off date for ordering all tapes is March 21.

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Clenton Bryan, Anniston, AL—November 12. Age, 77

Sister Vivian Nalivka, Havre, MT—November 22. Age, 89

Brother Emile Herrscher, Phoenix, AZ—December 20. Age, 96

Brother Carl Harmon, Georgetown, IN—December 30.

Recognized by a Canaanite Woman

Key Verse: “*Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*”
—*Matthew 15:28*

A MAJOR PURPOSE OF Jesus’ miracles was to prove he was Israel’s Messiah. Although most of these signs were given to the Jewish people, a few of them were not. One exception was when Jesus was approached by a Canaanite woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon who asked him to heal her demon-possessed daughter.—*Matt. 15:21,22*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 15:21-25

She addressed the Master as the Lord, the Son of David; but as a Gentile who was not in covenant relationship with God, Jesus did not initially respond to her. Additionally, his disciples urged him to send her away. (vs. 23) Subsequently, there was an interchange between this heathen woman and Jesus, who indicated, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”—vs. 24

In a parallel account, the Master stated, “Let the children first be filled.” (*Mark 7:27*) This implied that Gentiles would have a ray of hope in the future, but at that time the benefits of the Gospel were meant exclusively for the Jewish ‘sheep.’

Going back to the Matthew account, “He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and

cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (Matt. 15:26,27) It is evident by her response that the woman understood the spirit of the Lord's reference to 'dogs' as being house pets that Jewish families frequently would esteem and care for.

Our Key Verse reflects the Master's appreciation of her humility in acknowledging that she was not one of the 'children' who would be favored with receiving God's special blessing. Nevertheless, the Lord's mercy was extended because of her great faith and earnestness. This resulted in her petition being granted and her daughter healed.

An important lesson can be gained by considering our Lord's mercy towards this Canaanite woman. Since we have received the Holy Spirit and an abundance of "exceeding great and precious promises" (II Pet. 1:4), how much greater should be our appreciation of God's dealings with us who are his spiritual children. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—I John 3:2

May we thus act upon the special favors we have received and add the various fruits and graces of the Spirit to our characters so we may obtain the great reward that is offered to all of the Father's children during this Gospel Age. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:10,11

The prospect of helping to bless all the families of the earth, and restoring mankind to the perfection that was lost because of Adam's fall in Eden, should inspire us to faithfulness in our Christian walk. ■

Declared by Peter

Key Verse: “*Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

—**Matthew 16:16**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 16:12-27

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?”—vss. 14,15

At the beginning of Christ’s ministry, John the Baptist affirmed that he saw a manifestation of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the likeness of a dove, and he bore record that the Lord was the Son of God, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.”—John 1:32,33

It should have been evident to the Jewish mind that Jesus could not have been one of the prophets of old who had died, because their return from the tomb awaited the time of the resurrection which was a future event.—John 5:28,29

Our Key Verse reflects Peter’s courage and, as a spokesman for the other disciples, he answered the Master’s query by declaring Jesus to be the Messiah.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 16:17

Additionally, our Lord acknowledged Peter’s confession of his Messiahship as the “rock,” or foundational truth which, when accepted by his prospective followers, would be the basis of becoming members of Christ’s church. The “keys of the kingdom” which Peter received related to his declaration to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, and subsequently to Cornelius on behalf of the Gentiles, concerning God’s plan to invite individuals of the human family to become members of the bride of Christ.—vss. 18,19; Acts 10:34-48

Peter’s commission—that whatsoever things he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven and whatever he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven—was an affirmation that he, as well as the other apostles, were authorized as God’s infallible spirit-begotten mouthpieces with respect to their teachings.—Matt. 18:18

This chapter closes with Christ’s description as to what constitutes true discipleship. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”—Matt. 16:24-27

Let us be inspired by these admonitions of the Master to the end that we may faithfully pursue our Christian course in the narrow way and ultimately be instruments of blessing to mankind in fulfillment of God’s grand and eternal purpose. ■

Witnessed by Disciples

Key Verse: “[Jesus] was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”
—Matthew 17:2

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 17:1-12

In a vision, Moses and Elijah seemed to be engaged in conversation with the transfigured Jesus. Furthermore, Peter inquired of the Master whether three tabernacles should be built, one for the Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.—vss. 3,4

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.” (vss. 5,6) Jesus comforted his three disciples, telling them not to be fearful but to arise, and not to reveal to anyone what they had seen until he was risen from the grave.—vss. 7-9

Many years later, Peter declared that this vision was a corroboration of God’s promised kingdom which was prophesied would occur following Christ’s Second Advent. (II Pet. 1:16-21) Since Moses and Elijah had long passed away at the time of the transfiguration scene,

FOLLOWING THE EVENTS

of the previous lesson, six days later, our Lord took Peter, James, and John into a high mountain.—Matt. 17:1

Our Key Verse indicates he was transfigured before these three disciples. This meant that his appearance changed as his face shone brightly and his garments became white like light.

these prophets may well symbolize two distinct classes that will be associated with Christ in the forthcoming glorious kingdom.

Moses may be illustrative of faithful Old Testament personalities who will serve as God's visible earthly representatives that will guide mankind in learning righteousness during the kingdom.—Luke 13:28

In the vision, Elijah seems to represent the faithful elect, heavenly, Gospel Age church that will reign with Christ Jesus for a thousand years to bless the human family. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:6, Heb. 3:1

Following the transfiguration scene, when Jesus and his disciples had descended to the foot of the mountain, they encountered a man who made a plea for healing on behalf of his son.—Matt. 17:14,15

Presently, there is a great work to be accomplished by believers in spreading forth the kingdom message to all who have a hearing ear, that they may be spiritually enlightened now and qualify as members of the bride of Christ. If faithful now, they will be empowered to help bring to fruition those conditions that have been spoken of by the prophets of old.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. . . And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:5,6,8,10

What a time of rejoicing that will be! ■

Anointed by a Woman in Bethany

Key Verse: *“Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”*
—Matthew 26:13

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 26:6-13

As the treasurer for the group, however, Judas spoke not out of genuine concern for the needy but, because he was a thief, he desired the money for himself.—John 12:4-6

“When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.”—Matt. 26:10-12

Our Key Verse demonstrates that the Master appreciated Mary’s performing this remarkable act of loving devotion, and immortalized it by declaring that it would

NEAR THE END OF HIS earthly ministry, Jesus attended a feast in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper. A woman, thought to be Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, approached the Master and poured some very expensive perfume on his head.—Matt. 26:6,7

His disciples, especially Judas, protested that her actions were wasteful and that the perfume could have been sold for a considerable sum and the proceeds given to the poor.

be retold through the ages as a memorial to her.

In striking contrast to Mary's appreciation of the privilege of anointing the Master, we note the spirit of treachery that permeated Judas' heart. "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."—vss. 14-16

An important lesson for believers is to avoid anything akin to the spirit of betrayal that Judas manifested. Instead, the example of Mary in anointing Jesus is one we should seek to emulate.

Although our Lord is no longer in the flesh and we cannot literally anoint him with perfume, if we manifest unto our brethren the fragrance of concern and devotion, such a spirit will surely be pleasing to Christ and to our Heavenly Father.

When we note the weaknesses, trials, and temptations of fellow believers, let us remember that we, too, are subject to the same attacks by the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. In our sympathetic desire to help others be more than overcomers, a reciprocal anointing of one another would imply close contact with loving thoughts of helpfulness.

There are many forms of service which each of us can provide, including sending messages of comfort to others, or visiting the ill or isolated. We should realize that we all have something to give for the edification of the body. We can be faithful in contributing to our Bible studies, praying for others, and being an example of one whose life is undergoing the transformation process. Let us be an example of a believer and demonstrate the attitude of Mary. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."—John 12:3 ■

The Marvelous Works of God

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”
—Psalm 139:14

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE Psalmist David speaks of the wonderful creative works of our Heavenly Father, who is the source of all life. His power is marvelous and beyond the ability of our finite minds to fully comprehend. Reflecting on this, we realize

that our loving God has created his human family with the ability to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. Man is also able to think for himself and to know the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, and love and hate. Father Adam was also created perfect and with the ability to worship his Creator.

A SYMBOLIC BODY

The human body, which David said was ‘fearfully and wonderfully made,’ is indeed a marvelous and intricate creation of divine wisdom, love, and power. The great God of the universe has thus very fittingly used it in the Scriptures to illustrate the

body of 'The Christ.' This symbolic body is composed of our Lord Jesus as the head, and his faithful followers as members of his body. It is also called a New Creation of God because the members of this body are being called from among the human family and are being developed during this present Gospel Age.

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul directed the brethren's attention to this symbolic relationship. He told them, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—Eph. 2:19-22

A NEW CREATION

The work of preparing this New Creation for a place in Christ's future kingdom has been taking place throughout this present Gospel Age. Paul spoke of the specific work that some of the members of the body would be engaged in. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."—Eph. 4:11-13

Further to this, the apostle addressed the harmonious relationship that would prevail among the people of God. He wrote, “Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”—vss. 15,16

PAINSTAKING NEEDLEWORK

In the psalm from which our featured scripture was taken, David used symbols to illustrate the various points he was making. He wrote, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”—Ps. 139:14-16

The words translated ‘curiously wrought’ in this scripture mean ‘to embroider.’ The same Hebrew word has also been translated ‘needlework’ when used to describe a weaving of beautiful and colorful threads. (Judg. 5:30) It is also the word used when speaking of the bride of Christ. “The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness

and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace."—Ps. 45:13-15

Needlework requires careful, patient, and painstaking effort, and thus symbolizes the character development that takes place in the Lord's people. It points to that which is being curiously wrought in the lives of the faithful members of the body of Christ. The majority do this while dwelling in the lower strata of earth's society.

THE SON OF MAN

God's Word teaches, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." (John 3:13) "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2:7,8

Jesus could have come to earth as a perfect man and kept himself separate from the fallen human race. The sacrifice of his perfect human life could have provided the ransom price even if he had never mingled with mankind at all. Even though he did associate with the earthly creation, it was to a large extent with the lowly and humble.

From the scriptural account, we read, "It came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" (Matt. 9:10,11) It was long before prophesied by Isaiah who wrote, "He made his grave with the wicked,

and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”—Isa. 53:9

GLORY FOR MANY SONS

Jesus' death as a perfect human being provided the ransom price for the whole sin-sick world. However, his association with the sinful world and the painful experiences he endured in connection with it, had much to do with his own development as a New Creature. It also served in the spiritual development of his body members. Paul explains, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”—Heb. 2:9-11

Jesus and his body members are all developed as New Creatures. Even of Jesus we read, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. 5:8) This does not imply that Jesus was not obedient to his Heavenly Father as the Logos before he left his heavenly home and came to earth. By his descending into the ‘lower parts of the earth’ he learned what it meant to be obedient to God under adverse and very trying circumstances. By taking on the body of flesh it cost him much in the way of suffering, ignominy, and finally death on the cross.

Yet these experiences perfected Jesus as the Captain of our salvation, and to be the Head over the members of his faithful body. This process prepared him for the great work ahead for the blessing of all mankind under the administration of his future kingdom. It is true, also, of each one of his body members who are being developed by the Holy Spirit of God in their walk in newness of life. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”—Rom. 6:3,4

Our Lord Jesus was also prepared to assist his body members who are being called from the fallen human family. They have inherited the weaknesses of the fallen flesh and require his patient and loving help. We are thus assured, “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”—Heb. 4:15

OBTAINING MERCY

Because of our interaction with other members of the human family and with the world, we are subjected to the same tests of obedience as Jesus was. However, being imperfect we are not ‘without sin’ as he was, and we need special provisions which the Heavenly Father has given us for our development as New Creatures in Christ. Prayer is one of these special gifts. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16)

By taking advantage of this blessing, it is possible for all the members of body of Christ to be developed for a place in his future kingdom.

BAPTIZED UNTO DEATH

The sins of the whole world were on our Lord Jesus' shoulders, as reflected in his statement, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50) The Master was witnessing to the divine purpose, and he knew that it would not be fully realized until his baptism unto death had been fully consummated. He had committed himself to a course of self sacrifice, and he could not be worthy to be exalted to the right hand of his Heavenly Father until he had been faithful even unto death. To receive the position as Head over the members of his body, he would be required to endure the ignominious death of the cross. It was the Father's will that he take the sinner's place, and descend all the way into the lowest parts of the earth in death.

DRINKING THE CUP

Near the close of Jesus' earthly ministry, James and John asked him if he would grant them a special favor. "He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?" (Mark 10:36) "They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." (vs. 37) The two disciples were no doubt disappointed with his answer. "Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (vs. 38) James and John did not realize the life of sacrifice that was necessary

to follow their Master. “They said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.”—vss. 39-41

Jesus made it clear that his Heavenly Father would place the various members of the body of Christ as he desired. To follow our Lord means to sacrifice our lives and to accept the Father’s will in all matters concerning our heavenly calling during this present Gospel Age. All of Jesus’ faithful body members must die with him in order to qualify for a position in the Christ. The Apostle Paul proclaimed to the brethren at Rome, “If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” (Rom. 6:5-8) The full development of the Christ Head and body will not be complete until all have descended into death. The faithful must stand every test, learn every lesson, and be profited by every experience that is directed by the Holy Spirit of God.

GOD’S WORKMANSHIP

Paul spoke further of God’s work toward the development of the New Creation and the body of

Christ in his letter to the church at Ephesus. He said, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) It was the Heavenly Father who raised up Jesus as a New Creature and exalted him to the divine nature, and the apostle explains that we are all being created in Christ Jesus.

"You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—Eph. 2:1-8

TESTING NECESSARY

The body of Christ as faithful New Creatures in Christ Jesus, are to be exalted to the very highest of all forms of life, the divine nature. Immortality is a condition that is indestructible. If they were raised to such a high position without being severely tested,

they would continue to live forever if not faithful, and be a possible detriment to the other orders of creation. Upon the basis of these tests, God knows that the faithful ones in Christ will always be loyal to him, and to the principles of righteousness that are represented in his perfect laws.

This principle is emphasized by David in our featured psalm. “O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.”—Ps. 139:1-4, *New American Standard Bible*

GOD’S LOVING CARE

This tender supervision is expanded by the psalmist who continues, “You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.”—vss. 5-8, *NASB*

The psalmist points to our Lord who appears to be lost in wonder and praise with the Heavenly Father’s love and care over his special people. This tender guidance and watchfulness is directed from an exalted position in the heaven of heavens, and reaches down to touch even those faithful ones in Sheol [Hebrew, the grave].

This passage is principally fitting to God’s dealings with the Christ, and his presence is especially

with them in death. His ultimate purpose is that upon the basis of their faithfulness unto death, he will give them a crown of life. Their resurrection to glory, honor, and immortality is evidence that he was well pleased with their devotion and loyalty to him. He supervised their consecrated walk in newness of life, and gave them strength to endure the trials and testing necessary for their faithfulness to him. The psalmist continues, "If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me."—Ps. 139:9,10, *NASB*

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is a separating work, or setting apart to God and to the doing of his will. Speaking of his faithful followers, Jesus said, "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."—John 17:14-19, *NASB*

The sanctification of the body members of the Christ does not mean perfection of their flesh, but rather a full heart devotion and loyalty to God. By heeding the divine call to consecration, we become separate from the world. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the

world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:19) “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”—John 16:33

Jesus taught his disciples that although they would experience tribulation because of their separation from the world and its spirit, they too would be able to overcome. This would not be in their own strength, but in the strength of the Lord and the power of his Holy Spirit. Our Heavenly Father discerns between the world and his consecrated people in the world, and works with those who take a stand on his side. “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Phil. 2:12,13

THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

It is written, “The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.” (Ps. 111:10) Paul taught, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”—Heb. 4:1-3

A proper reverence for the LORD is not only the beginning of wisdom, but those who are truly wise toward God will continue to reverence him by giving careful attention to all he has said, that their lives might be fully pleasing to him.

A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

Paul writes, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”—Rom. 8:28-30

The apostle was not speaking about the predestination of individuals, but of the characteristics each individual must possess in order to qualify as a member of the Christ. David wrote, “In thy book all my members were written.” (Ps. 139:16) It was the Heavenly Father’s will for those faithful ones to be written in his most blessed book.

The Prophet Malachi was moved by the Holy Spirit of God to write, “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”—Mal. 3:16,17 ■

Quietly Waiting on the Lord

“The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”

*Lamentations
3:24-26*

THESE WORDS WERE

written by the prophet Jeremiah, and mark the character of those who possess a humble disposition of heart, and have learned to put their hope and trust in the ways of our loving Heavenly Father and to quietly wait on him. “They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”—Ps. 9:10

The Psalmist David wrote, “Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.” (Ps. 25:1-5) “Wait on the LORD:

be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”—Ps. 27:14

A PARABLE OF JESUS

Many years later by the Sea of Galilee, our Lord Jesus was accompanied by his twelve apostles and spoke a parable to a multitude who had gathered together. He told them, “A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”—Luke 8:5-8

THE PARABLE’S THEME

The Lord explained the theme of this parable to his disciples. “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”—vss. 11-15

SEED BY THE WAYSIDE

The sower of the seed—the wonderful message of the Word of God—was our Lord Jesus. He explained that the seed which falls by the wayside portrays those who hear the precious Truth only with their ears. Having thus fallen prey to the many wiles of Satan—the great Adversary of the Truth—they have been rendered incapable of comprehending the beauty, wonder, and power of the divine message.

SEED ON STONY GROUND

Some of the sown seed of the Lord's parable fell upon stony ground which is insufficient to sustain that which springs forth from the seed. The Lord explains that this represents those who are initially joyful at hearing the Word of God and who believe it. However, having no root by which they might grow, their joy and belief falls away in an hour of temptation. Matthew's account of this verse is more informative. He wrote, "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but [en] dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." (Matt. 13:20,21) Those who receive the seed are subjected to trials because of the Word. Increasingly chafing under the constraints of tribulation, those who are merely professing disciples are eventually exposed.

SEED AMONG THORNS

Continuing in the parable, we find that some of the seed fell among thorns which sprang up with the seed and choked it. Jesus explains that this is a

portrayal of those who have heard and understood the Word of God to a degree, but gradually allow themselves to become entangled in the riches, pleasures, and cares of this world. In due course, the sense of mission with which these began their Christian journey, gradually becomes choked and dies, falling prey to another of Satan's insidious devices. However, those who hear and embrace the Word of God are not to abandon their various obligations to family, friends, and their fellow man to avoid the choking thorns.

Christ's disciples are cautioned that it would be a mark of infidelity if they would use Truth as an excuse to shirk those responsibilities. Paul told Timothy, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (I Tim. 5:8) It is manifest that one cannot avoid altogether the cares engendered by this world of imperfection. In his parable, the Lord was not overlooking that reality but was exhorting those who would follow him to avoid the pitfall of allowing earthly concerns to overwhelm their budding spiritual vitality. It is not possible for the Lord's people to attempt to please the world and our Heavenly Father at the same time. Matthew has written, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body."—Matt. 10:28

SEED UPON GOOD GROUND

The Lord concluded his parable with the seed which falls upon good ground (Luke 8:8), and portrays those who have a proper disposition of heart and mind. "That on the good ground are they,

which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15) He emphasized the important trait of ‘patience’ that is the difference between the believers who constitute the good ground of the parable and those of merely professing believers.

The stony-ground believers did not have sufficient depth in which to cultivate patience. They could not endure the tribulation that comes to all who attempt to hold fast the Word of God. Others who were enticed by the pleasures of this world could not abide the perceived thorny privations of a life of sacrifice. The ‘good ground’ believers on the other hand, patiently endure a variety of trials, and proceed to develop the proper fruits of the Spirit. They continue to trust the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to help them in every time of need. It is thus manifest that the Lord’s parable of the sower was given to strengthen and fortify those who would quietly wait on the Lord.

WAITING FOR THE VISION

Only those who have a ‘hearing ear’ could understand the importance of the Lord’s promises, and it is to these that the Apostle Paul especially addresses. “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” (Heb. 2:1) Paul referred to the writings of the Prophet Habakkuk who urges all who seek to pursue a life of righteousness in the Lord to exercise patience and wait for the vision. He wrote, “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am

reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”—Hab. 2:1-3

CHRIST THE VISION

Many centuries after Habakkuk’s prophecy, Paul wrote to the Hebrew brethren and referred them to the vision and its connection with our Lord’s promised Second Advent. He said, “Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Heb. 10:36,37) It is apparent that when Habakkuk spoke of the ‘appointed time’ and Paul ‘a little while’ they were both referring to the time of our Lord’s Second Advent.

PETER’S WARNING

Satan was always eager to exploit every opportunity to oppose the Lord and his earthly mission. He has taken full advantage of the long period of waiting for the Lord’s return, and it has sorely tested the patience of many. Some who have been unable to patiently endure have been used to wrest the Scriptures and pervert the Truth. The Apostle Peter forewarned his fellow disciples of these impatient ones saying, “They that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.”—II Pet. 3:16,17

PAUL'S WARNING

The Apostle Paul also foresaw the danger of impatience among the disciples of Christ. To alleviate some of that danger, the apostle directed Titus to appoint elders in Crete—stewards of God who would steadfastly uphold the principles of the Truth which Paul had earlier preached there. The apostle identifies some of the characteristics that would mark every child of God that is being prepared for a place in Christ's future kingdom, but especially those who would serve as elder of an ecclesia. "Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."—Tit. 1:9, *New American Standard Bible*

THE PROMISE

From Pentecost to our present day, there has been a great falling away from the sanctifying truths of sound doctrine once taught by our Lord Jesus and the apostles. One truth that has greatly sustained the faithful during this present Gospel Age is the Lord's promise that he would one day return to gather them unto himself. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 14:1-3

This is the promise cited by the Apostle Paul when he said, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done

the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Heb. 10:35-37) The consecrated who patiently wait will receive the promise of a spiritual inheritance in Christ’s future kingdom.

GATHERING DISCERNED SPIRITUALLY

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul addresses the spiritually mature. “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him. For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually

appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (I Cor. 2:6-16, *NASB*) Those who in our present day have the mind of Christ are able to discern that the Lord’s long-awaited return to earth as a divine spirit being has come to pass. The faithful class are being separated from among the worldly believers.

THE SIGN

At his First Advent, the Lord likened the separating activity that would occur at his Second Advent to that of a harvest; a harvest which would indicate the conclusion of the Gospel Age. To his disciples, he said plainly, “The harvest is the end of the age.” (Matt. 13:39, *NASB*) At a later time, they asked him for a single sign that could be spiritually discerned which would herald both his future invisible presence and the end of the age. Matthew recounts the occasion of that request, “As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”—Matt. 24:3, *NASB*

A DAY OF GATHERING

The day of gathering which those of the good ground patiently await is referred to by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippians. “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day

until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. 1:2-6

A divine work has been in process within all members of the fellowship in the Gospel since the time of our Lord’s First Advent. That work is the imparting of the mind of Christ—the nurturing and maturing of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit of God within the hearts of all the consecrated of this present Gospel Age.

In Romans 12:2, Paul refers to that imparting as a process of transformation, implying that it is a process to which the consecrated must consistently and patiently submit. The apostle says, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

In his epistle to the Colossians, the apostle specifies the result of the transforming process, and prays that it may be found in every heart that patiently endures. “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”—Col. 1:9-13

TAKE HEED

The Master knew that the great falling away of the impatient ones during the present Gospel Age would foster opposition and terrible crimes against those who would remain patient. Hence, he warned his disciples, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."—Matt. 24:4-13

THE DIVINE WORK COMPLETED

This wonderful work has been wrought throughout the present Gospel Age and within the spirit-begotten little flock to which the promises of our loving Heavenly Father have been given. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) Thus the divine work of transformation will be completed only when the last faithful, patient member of the fellowship of Christ has been gathered unto the Lord during this special day of his Second Advent on earth. ■

The Just Shall Live by Faith

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

—Romans 1:16,17

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

was Paul’s longest epistle and, in his opening salutation, he makes three important points. First, he defends his apostleship. An apostle is one who is called and sent out, especially to testify of the Gospel. Paul says that he was “called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” (Rom. 1:1) In this same verse he refers to himself as Jesus’ “servant” or slave. That is, his life was totally devoted to doing God’s

will and spreading the message of the Gospel.

Second, in his opening words, Paul states that the central theme of the Gospel is Jesus Christ. He says that Jesus was the Son of God, “which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (vs. 3) As the ‘seed of David,’ Jesus met one of the qualifications needed to be a ransom, or

corresponding price, for father Adam. That qualification was that he be a human being. Otherwise, he could not be a redeemer that would correspond to Adam, who was also of flesh and blood. The ransom required a man's [Jesus'] life for a man's [Adam's] life. As the son of God, Jesus met another important qualification, that being the requirement of perfection on the part of the one who would redeem Adam and his race. Jesus, although a human being born of a woman, received the spark of perfect life from God his Father, that spark being placed miraculously by God in the womb of Mary. An understanding of how Jesus met both these qualifications shows us how he was able to be perfect, separate from sinners, and yet be a true corresponding price, or ransom, for Adam.

The third point of Paul's opening words in Romans was that Jesus' life and ministry was not to be carried out for just a few people, or for certain select groups or nations. On the contrary, it was part of God's eternal purpose that the Gospel of Christ would eventually bring salvation to all, through "obedience to the faith among all nations."—Rom. 1:5

FAITH IS PROGRESSIVE

The verses quoted at the beginning of our lesson allude to one of Paul's fundamental teachings of this epistle, that being the importance of faith. The phrase 'justification by faith,' although not stated specifically here, is alluded to and later becomes one of the central themes of this letter. Faith was now to become an all-important principle in the lives of all those who would strive to obtain salvation

through the Gospel of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. In Romans 1:17, Paul reveals two important truths concerning faith. First, faith is a progressive matter, “from faith to faith.” By this, Paul meant that faith has various levels of development in the lives of God’s people. There is a more elementary faith—one that firmly believes in God and his plans, but has not been fully tested and tried in the experiences of life. As the child of God grows and develops, and his faith is put to the test, it develops a greater and more complete level of maturity, which eventually can be victorious in any experience of life regardless of its severity or difficulty.

Paul’s second point in verse 17 naturally follows his description of the progressive nature of faith. This character principle should progress to the point that our entire life is one of faith, where every thought, word, and deed; every decision, action and prayer, is a matter of total and complete confidence in God and his will. This is what is meant by his statement, “The just shall live by faith.”

ADMITTING NEED

In Romans 3:23,24, we find these words from Paul, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Paul states earlier in this chapter that Israel had much in the way of advantage in comparison to other nations of the earth because “unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Rom. 3:2) The phrase ‘oracles of God’ means the utterances, or words, of God. Israel had—through both its law as well as its teachers, leaders, and prophets—God’s instructions to show

how their life should be lived and to what principles their characters should be conformed. However, they lacked the necessary faith to keep God's instructions as intended by him, and so Paul asks these further questions, "What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" (Rom. 3:3) Paul immediately gives the answer, "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."—vs. 4

Paul realized the situation that the Jews suffered under, just as any nation would have that God might have chosen to receive his law, his words, and his oracles. God's laws are perfect, and as such they cannot be kept in their totality by an imperfect being regardless of how hard they might try, and how noble their intentions might be. The struggle of man against sin is present with all members of the fallen race. This lack of faith points out the situation in which all mankind finds itself. Paul points this out, when he says, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."—vs.19

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

The question remains, what about the faithfulness of God? What is his plan for the fallen race, both Jew and Gentile? Can they be recovered? Must God start over? Paul gives us the assurance that the answer lies in the former thought—that God does indeed have a plan for the recovery of man. "Now the righteousness of God without the

law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” (Rom. 3:21,22) Paul says in these verses that God’s plan for man’s recovery centers in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. He further indicates that it is through God’s grace, or unmerited favor, that this redemption is provided.

Paul continues his lesson by reminding us that although redemption is given freely through the grace of God, there is a responsibility on our part to obtain the benefits provided by the Redeemer. That responsibility is faith in God—the author of salvation—and faith in Jesus—the instrument used to provide it. Together with obedience to God in the daily dealings in our lives he shows us his will and guides us with his providences. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”—vss. 24-28

AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH

“What saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

(Rom. 4:3) No man, Jew or Gentile, could keep God's law perfectly, and we have learned of the great importance of faith in the lives of those who seek to be found acceptable to God. During this present Gospel Age, the foundation of this faith is seen in the redemptive work accomplished by Jesus. Paul tells us that such faith has always been especially pleasing to the Heavenly Father, and he uses the example of Abraham and his faith to show how God has taken pleasure in those down through the ages who have displayed this characteristic. Because of Abraham's faith, he was counted, or reckoned, as righteous before God. How was this possible? How could an inherently imperfect man, as Abraham was, be considered righteous simply by having this quality of faith?

The answer to this question lies in the great love and mercy of God, and in the great wisdom with which he designed his plan for mankind. In the case of Abraham, God knew well in advance that he could not be justified by the works of any law, "Because the law worketh wrath." (vs. 15) Yet he saw that Abraham had a great desire to serve him, and had a heart condition and motivation toward righteousness that he could use and develop. Knowing this, God devised a method whereby he, without violating his attribute of justice, could 'count' or 'reckon' Abraham righteous through his faith. Additionally, God tested and tried Abraham's faith in order to prove its depth and sincerity. A few of these tests were: 1) Asking him to leave his own country and kindred to go to a land he knew nothing about; 2) Not providing a seed to him until he and Sarah were both well past the normal age of

childbearing; and 3) Asking him to slay Isaac, his long-awaited son, and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham passed all of these tests of faith, as well as others. As a result, wonderful promises were made to Abraham—promises that would eventually carry down to all the families of the earth. Abraham's faith, his testing, and ultimate promised blessing, was not the result of his keeping any law, save the law of faith. "The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law [of Moses], but through the righteousness of faith."—Rom. 4:13

WE MUST ALSO HAVE THIS FAITH

In Romans 4:16, Paul says that Abraham was "the father of us all." This signifies that we, too, in order to receive the blessings of God, must display the same kind of faith that Abraham did. Additionally, our faith must be thoroughly tested as was his, in order for God to prove our loyalty to him under any and all circumstances. Further in this same chapter, Paul states concerning Abraham, that "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what he [God] had promised, he was able also to perform." (vs. 20) The child of God today must develop this same level of faith exemplified in Abraham.

Just as was the case with Abraham, we too can be counted, or reckoned, as righteous before God through the attribute of faith. As Paul says, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it [righteousness] was imputed [counted, or reckoned] to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed,

if we believe [have faith] on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”—Rom. 4:22-24

THE BENEFITS OF FAITH

Paul continues the theme of faith with the statement, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1) This is addressed to those who have, through faith in Jesus, righteousness imputed to them and is what is meant by the phrase ‘being justified by faith.’ As a result of this reckoned righteous condition, these have many potential benefits accrue to them. First, ‘we have peace with God.’ Formerly, as sinners condemned through our inheritance from father Adam, we did not have peace with God. In our undone condition, we were at enmity with him, just the opposite of being at peace. However, through the blood, or merit, of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, and by our full faith in it, we have obtained peace with the Almighty God and he is able to deal with us as his children. The prophet Isaiah speaks symbolically of how one obtains this peace by using the example of clothing which covers natural imperfections and blemishes. He says, “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.”—Isa. 61:10

Other of the benefits obtained by those in this ‘justified’ condition are that they have access to God which they did not have earlier as enemies, as well as a tremendous hope for the future. All this causes those who are in this condition to rejoice and glorify God. (Rom. 5:2) Paul continues this lesson by telling us that, as one justified by faith,

we will have a lifetime of experiences of all kinds, and that these experiences are specially designed for us by God himself to help us develop our faith even further, and to prove its loyalty under all circumstances. He says, “Not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”—Rom. 5:3-5, *New American Standard Bible*

GOD’S MERCY AND GRACE

Paul reminds us further in our lesson, lest we become conceited in our own minds, that God showed his love to us by sending his son, Jesus, “while we were yet sinners.” (Rom. 5:8) “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (vs. 10) The death of Jesus as the ransom provided the means possible whereby we might have ‘peace with God.’ In order to obtain the full salvation which God desired, it was required that Jesus not remain in death, but be raised again to life, to apply the merit of his sacrifice to the bar of God’s justice, and hence buy back Adam’s race from the condemnation of sin and death. All this was part of God’s intent and plan, and was made possible by his mercy and unending love for his creation. Truly Paul could say, “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [reconciliation].”—Rom. 5:11

Paul summarizes this part of our lesson by saying, “If by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. 5:17-21

EXPERIENCING NEW LIFE

It is one thing to receive the grace of God, but quite another to act upon that grace in a way that is pleasing to him. We cannot expect to continue to receive of his mercy and favor if we are not seeking to follow it up with proper daily living and character building in our life. This is the point of Paul’s statement: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4) Having freely received of God’s grace through Jesus Christ, we are asked to bury our will into his even unto death, and follow in the footsteps which he set before us. A godlike character includes service for others, suffering for righteousness sake, and loyalty to God under all circumstances. This is

what is meant by the phrase 'buried with him by baptism into death.'

We are reminded that, although Jesus died a sacrificial death he was 'raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.' The resurrection of Jesus was a most glorious event in God's plan. The scriptural account says, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

"Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith

unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.”—John 20:1-18

His own closest disciples did not at first fully understand its import. Later, after receiving the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, their eyes were opened to the grand meaning of Jesus’ resurrection. It truly was ushering in a new feature in God’s plan especially designed for those who would desire to be footstep followers of the Master. In Romans 6:3-5, Paul also ties in the truth of Jesus’ resurrection with the privilege his followers have of walking in his steps. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

Just as Jesus was the recipient of a new life upon his resurrection from the dead, so also we, having consecrated ourselves to God, and burying our wills into death with Jesus, are ‘raised up’ symbolically to walk in a newness of life, of attitude, and a newness of character.

NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

Paul in another place identifies this ‘newness’ by saying, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (II Cor. 5:17) As New Creatures we are to walk and live our life in newness of thought, word, and action, not serving sin as we once did, but serving righteousness to the best of our ability. Although we cannot do this perfectly, it should be our desire to do so if it were possible. Because we are covered with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, as previously discussed, God is able to overlook the unintentional failings resulting from our inherited sinful condition. It is not that we ignore those blemishes and failings but we must strive each day to overcome as much of the fallen condition as is possible. Having done that, God exercises his great mercy toward us by viewing us as New Creatures and looking at the robe covering us, and not at the blemishes residing underneath.

It is not only important that we strive to overcome as much as possible the sinful nature of the old flesh, but also that we replace it with the traits and characteristics that should accompany such a newness of life. Paul mentions a few of the characteristics and positive ways we can develop in this newness. He says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,

faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22,23) In many ways these characteristics of our new life in Christ begin in the mind and with our thoughts. This becomes the great battleground of life as we strive to have our mind and its thoughts conform to those that would please our Heavenly Father. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”—Phil. 4:8 ■



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K. Fernets

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L. Griehs

Southwest, AZ February 27,28

M. J. Balko

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B. Jakubowski

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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