

Neither Shall They Learn War Any More

***“Nation shall not lift
up sword against
nation, neither shall
they learn war any
more.”
—Isaiah 2:4***

THIS IS THE TIME OF the year when the Christian world is reminded that approximately 2,000 years ago the Prince of Peace was born. It was then that Joseph and Mary arrived in the little town of Bethlehem, when Mary was “great with child,” and they could not find lodging in the inn. (Luke 2:5-7) They made the

journey from Nazareth because Caesar Augustus had decreed that all the world should be taxed. Since Joseph and Mary were both of the house of David, they had to go to Bethlehem at a difficult time for Mary. That evening she gave birth to the babe, Jesus.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The world did not know of this marvelous child being born, but the Lord revealed it to shepherds on the hills of Judea who were watching their flocks by night. An angel appeared unto them and said, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke 2:10,11

After giving them the sign they were to look for, “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:13,14

This was a promise that would be fulfilled in the future when Jesus would become king over all the earth, and bring lasting peace. Today the world still agonizes over broken peace pacts and cease-fire agreements where warfare exists and never seems to end. This is true of the very land where the multitude of heavenly hosts proclaimed peace on earth and good will toward men.

PARENTAL SUPPORT OF SUICIDE BOMBERS

The news media told of the constant interruption of attempts to cease fire in an article entitled, “*Israel Boosts Its Policy of Retaliation*,” which appeared on August 15, 2001 in the *Los Angeles Times*. It was interesting because it revealed how early in life children are taught to hate. The article read:

“Abde Adel, a slight 13-year-old, proudly displayed marks on his arm and his leg, scars he said are from having been shot by rubber bullets while throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers. ‘When I grow up, I want to be a Hamas militant and help plan suicide bombings,’ he said.

“As Abde beamed and the adults around him smiled, a woman came in looking for her husband. She said her 9-year-old son had collapsed at home, overcome by tear gas he was exposed to while throwing rocks at soldiers. Asked if she had warned her son to stay away from the troops, she said calmly, ‘Oh no, I want him to be brave.’ She said she has six sons and encourages all of them to throw stones. ‘God willing, they will all become martyrs,’ she said.

“Israeli officials are hoping that their strict payback policy will eventually wear away at such resolve and force the Palestinian leadership—if not the people—to blink first. Though he agreed this week to allow Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to carry on cease-fire talks with the Palestinians, Sharon threatened Tuesday to seize additional property—even though his government has been criticized at home and abroad for taking control of Orient House, the Palestinians’ de facto headquarters in Jerusalem.

“‘If Palestinian violence continues, the Palestinians will lose further property,’ he told a meeting of high-ranking police officers, ‘and from today on there will be no more violation of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem and no more terror activities.’”

PARENTAL EXCEPTIONS IN ISLAM

The attitude of the parents in Islam is not the attitude of all parents. The same paper, on August 26, 2001, published an article entitled, “*Anguish, Not Pride Fills Parents of Suicide Bomber*.” The article said, “By the norms that exist in Palestinian society after 11 months of bloody conflict with Israel, Shuhail and Fatima Masri should be proud. Their son, Izzedine, became an instant Palestinian hero the day he walked into

a pizza restaurant crowded with families in downtown Jerusalem and detonated explosives that killed him and fifteen other people.

“But the mood in the Masri household is one of profound sorrow at the terrible way their child chose to die.

“‘There is no mother who wants to see her son lost,’ Fatima Masri said. ‘Any mother who says she rejoices in her son’s death does so only because she is obliged to say such things by a society that celebrates such attacks as the ultimate patriotic sacrifice,’ Masri said.

“‘If he would have come to me and told me of his plans, I would have locked my arms around him and stopped him from doing this,’ she said. ‘I would have told him, I don’t want Palestine. I don’t want land. I just want you with me.’

“Shuhail Masri, a wealthy man who owns restaurants, shops, and land around the West Bank city of Jenin, says he grieves not only for his son but for his son’s victims.

“‘This wound is so deep in me,’ he said, ‘I didn’t wish this on anybody—not on Jews, or French or English. As I feel the pain of the loss of my son, I can imagine how the parents who lost children that day feel for their children.’

“The Masris’ expressions of grief and empathy are rare in a conflict that has so polarized Israelis and Palestinians that each side has difficulty seeing the other as anything but an enemy and itself as anything but a victim.”

In this case, the strong emotions of parenthood prevailed over the current trends in Muslim society to elevate those who are willing to sacrifice their lives in patriotism. There is a minority among the Muslims who cite their law as being opposed to terrorism. Nevertheless, as this last article notes:

“To Israelis and the outside world, Palestinian suicide bombers commit acts of inexplicable viciousness against innocent civilians. But to increasing numbers of Palestinians, the bombers are the ultimate patriots.

“They are respected not only for being willing to die for the cause of liberating the Palestinians, but for inflicting pain and suffering on Israelis. The death tolls from their attacks—even if they include children, as in the pizzeria bombing—are seen as a grim evening of the score for

the hundreds of Palestinians who have died and the thousands who have been injured since fighting broke out in September.”

In spite of efforts made by some Islamic clergy to convince the world that Islamic Law, as originally taught, was opposed to terrorism, it is recognized that modern Muslim terrorist groups are more rooted in national liberation ideologies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than they are in Islamic tradition. This is why in Pakistan there are over 8,000 Madrasas, or religious academies, that have sprung up during the past two decades because of Pakistan’s deteriorating educational system. More than a million youths are enrolled, and boys of 10 to 12 are told how they can go to heaven (as suicide bombers). They are prepared to join the jihad (holy war) and are taught military skills.

THE TWIN TOWER TRAGEDY

About fifty young men trained in philosophies and terrorist skills came to the United States of America and nineteen of these hijacked four commercial airliners, managing to destroy the famed twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. They commandeered the airliners and managed to strike the towers, causing them to collapse in a matter of two hours, with the loss of more than five thousand lives. A less devastating but equally destructive strike was made at the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C. Still another planned strike at the White House was averted when passengers on a fourth hijacked airliner fought with the hijackers and the plane crashed in a wooded area enroute to its target.

These events have focused the world’s attention upon the animosity and philosophy of fundamentalist Muslim groups against the Western world, and particularly the United States of America. A ‘holy war’ was declared by Afghanistan Muslim clerics against the United States. Meanwhile, the United States has laid plans for flushing out other members of the plot, their supporters and financiers. Also, bombing of military sites and terrorist training camps in Afghanistan began several weeks after the twin tower tragedy. In places where there is no battlefield, war has intruded.

THE ART OF WAR

The Western world continues to teach its young men how to make war by conscripting or enticing young men to become a part of their standing armies, navies, and air forces. Even the third world poorer nations manage somehow to do the same, using as an excuse self-defense, or in many cases to create armies for dictatorial leaders to control the nations. The learning of war continues even though some nations want to promote peace. The United States of America has wanted to promote peace in other parts of the world, but many times it is for its own self-interests. Recent statistics show that the United States is the leading producer and seller of munitions and weapons of war in the world. No nation wants war, yet in their eyes war is necessary. The devastating terrorist attack on this nation has stimulated advancement of more weaponry in the interest of self-preservation.

As a rule, people don't want war and don't want to develop the emotions that cause war and bigotry. During this country's pre-civil-rights era a Broadway play, "*South Pacific*," had lyrics written by Oscar Hammerstein II which explains the reason for the many ills of our society. The lyrics of the song by Rodgers and Hammerstein were called to this country's attention by a syndicated columnist who published them in her column.

You've got to be taught to hate and fear.
You've got to be taught from year to year,
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear,
You've got to be carefully taught!
You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade,
You've got to be carefully taught!
You've got to be taught before it's too late.
Before you are 6, or 7, or 8
To hate all the people your relatives hate;
You've got to be carefully taught!

PEACE THROUGH CHRIST'S KINGDOM

How will the angelic message of 'peace on earth' be fulfilled? Old Testament prophecies have made it plain that peace will come through the establishment of a world government that will arbitrarily impose upon the people of all nations just and righteous laws. The keeping of these laws will assure universal and everlasting peace. The announcement of the angel at that time was that the principal figure in the fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies had been born. This is similar to the beautiful prophecy of Isaiah when he wrote, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9:6

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."—vs. 7

This same prophet later refers to this ruler as the Arm of the Lord (Jehovah) saying, "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (Isa. 52:10) This is a prophecy that has not been fulfilled. A few verses later Isaiah asks, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1) As he continues, he mentions that this great leader would not be accepted by the people—"there is no beauty that we should desire him." He is described as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" and that he would be "smitten of God, and afflicted," and "wounded for our transgressions." The entire prophecy deals with our Lord brought as a "lamb to the slaughter," and made an offering for sin. (Isa. 53:1-12) It was necessary as a first step, that all of Adam's family should be redeemed from the penalty of death, and this is why this Prince of Peace first had to die as a "ransom for all."—I Tim. 2:6

A second step in bringing peace on earth consists of finding those who will assist our Lord in the dispensing of the kingdom blessings. These have not only been called but also chosen by our Lord. (Matt. 22:14) They are spoken of as being baptized into his death, or, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3) Nothing is made more

clear in the Bible than the fact that the disciples of Jesus in this age are invited to follow in his steps of self-sacrifice even unto death. Associated with these conditions of discipleship are the promises that those who prove faithful will reign with him in his kingdom.

As Paul wrote, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” (II Tim. 2:11,12) Again, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:17) After his resurrection Jesus said, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 3:21), and “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev. 2:10) Then there is that wonderful promise to these faithful ones that they shall come forth from death in the “first resurrection” to live and reign “with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:4-6

THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD

As the last members of that ruling class are being developed, the Scriptures say that the judgments of the Lord begin against the institutions and rulers in power now. One such prophecy is found in Joel. The Lord says, “Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.” (Joel 3:1,2) The timing of this prophecy is definitely when Israel is gathered back to her own land. The prophecy continues and tells of huge preparations for war and an attitude of the financially weak nations of boasting of their strength.

“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.”—Joel 3:9-12

We note in particular how the weak say, ‘I am strong.’ There is no comparison possible between the economies of Afghanistan and that of the United States. Yet Afghanistan, encouraged by her success in subduing a great superpower like Russia, is declaring holy war against the United States. This prophecy in Joel says that “the Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: ... So shall ye know that I am the Lord.”—Joel 3:16,17

THE DESTRUCTION OF WEAPONS OF WAR

These same events are described more dramatically in the forty-sixth Psalm, which says, “The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

“Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.”—Ps. 46:6-11

This prophecy tells of the cessation of war. The only way that this can be done is to destroy the weapons of war. Our Lord does this as he makes himself known to all nations.

To assure that wars never start again, the prophecies that tell us of the establishment of God’s Kingdom, such as Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-3, also say that nations shall not “learn war any more.” The destruction of all weapons of war, and the cessation of teaching the art of war, are the ways that the Prince of Peace will bring permanent peace to earth. Above all, the Christ will teach mankind to discard all emotions of hate and bigotry, and to develop the fruits of the Spirit such as kindness and love. Let us praise God for his wonderful plan!

The Gift of Light

Key Verse: “He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”
—Isaiah 49:6

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 49:1-6

IN TODAY’S LESSON the Prophet Isaiah introduces the character and office of Christ, the Messiah. The full extent of Christ’s commission is not only to restore the Israelites and reconcile them to their Lord, from whom they had so often revolted, but to also be a light to lighten the Gentiles. His commission is worldwide in scope and includes deliverance from the penalty of sin, giving universal joy and peace.

At the angel’s annunciation of Jesus’ birth to Mary, Luke, in his gospel, alluded to Isaiah’s prophecy. He said, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne

of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”—Luke 1:31-33

Isaiah’s prophecy, pointing to Christ, the Servant of God, would have moments of discouragement as our Lord met with almost universal misunderstanding, even from his disciples. In his humiliation he would be despised and rejected, even by his own nation, the Jews. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” (John 1:11) Under these circumstances, Jesus received strength praying, “If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” (Luke 22:42,43) Jesus also was given assurance by the Father, in answer to his prayer, that he would not fail in his mission. The 102nd Psalm is believed to be a part of this prayer, and the middle of verse twenty-four to the end of the psalm is the Father’s answer. It is quoted by Paul in

Hebrews 1:10-12. In this strength he would find his chief satisfaction in doing the will of God. (John 4:34) After his resurrection, however, in his exaltation, he would eventually be worshipped as Lord, even by heathen kings.

Prophecy in Isaiah, the Lord said of Jesus: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Isa. 49:6, *New International Version*) Jeremiah likewise prophesies of Jesus’ birth and his bringing salvation not only to Israel, but also to all the families of the earth when the word of the Lord came to him saying, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”—Jer. 1:5

Another prophecy says, “Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (Isa. 60:2,3) These speak of great blessings of light in store for all the world when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings!—Mal. 4:2

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The Gift of Peace

***Key Verse: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.”
—Isaiah 11:6***

***Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 11:1-9***

THE APOSTLE PAUL describes the present time while sin is prevailing, as “this present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) God’s Word assures us, however, that the time is near when the ‘rod’ out of Jesse (our Lord Jesus) “shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” (Isa. 11:4) It is clear that when his kingdom is first established there will not be only the poor needing assistance and succor, but there will also be those who were wicked followers of Satan. God’s remedy is to restore mankind to human perfection and harmony with his Maker. When the prophet Zephaniah comments on this point, he said, God will “turn to the people

a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.” (Zeph. 3:9) The people will then be able to speak God’s language of righteousness, because the Christ will then rule perfect mankind with justice and integrity. Perfect communications will be established.

Isaiah says in that day the animal kingdom will also undergo a great change. There is no intimation that the animals over which Adam had control were wild, vicious, or at enmity with man. The prophet informs us that when the present wild animal kingdom is transformed, “The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze; their young will lie down together; and the lion will eat straw like the ox. And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den.”—Isa. 11:6-8 (*New American Standard Version*)

Nothing shall be permitted to do violence or work injury throughout all God's holy kingdom after it shall have been established. Love will be the law and Divine power will be the means which will enforce that law. How evident it is that this kingdom has not yet come, when we see that amongst mankind selfishness is the rule and there are many influences of evil which hurt and destroy throughout the world today. We continue to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) We believe that this petition so long offered by the Lord's people is soon to be answered.

The Lord thus assures us that in due time the true light shall lighten "every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9) The Apostle Paul also declares God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2:4) It is in God's kingdom that all the world of mankind, many who never heard of the name of Jesus, will be given the necessary knowledge of how Jesus became their ransom. When Peter healed the lame man at the Temple, shortly after the Day of Pentecost, he said of Jesus, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Thus, salvation shall come because "the Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace."—Ps. 29:11

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The Gift of Comfort

Key Verse: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”
—Isaiah 40:8

Selected Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-5, 8-11

THE PROPHET ISAIAH’S mind ran forward to events far beyond his prophecy to Israel, when he spoke, “Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people,” recorded in Isaiah 40:1. The thoughts of the prophet move from this comforting message concerning Israel’s release by King Cyrus from seventy years of Babylonian captivity to even more important events connected with the coming and work of the Messiah.

Isaiah jumps ahead some seven hundred years to his prophecy pointing to John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus. He said of John and his message, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”—Isa. 40:3

Matthew quoted Isaiah’s prophecy concerning our Lord, saying, “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” (Matt. 3:1-3) When Jesus became thirty years of age, the time to begin his ministry, he came to John to be baptized of him and to be immersed into the will of God.—Matt. 3:13-17; Ps. 40:7,8

Jesus further amplified John’s words about the kingdom of heaven as he went about Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. He taught the multitudes who followed him, “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matt. 5:12

Again, moving along to the end of the present age the prophet introduces Christ, the Messiah, as the Arm of God. He says, “Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.” (Isa. 40:10) He pictures fallen man dying as withering grass and the fading flower, in

contrast to the Word of God which stands holding hope forever. The Apostle Peter quotes these sentiments in his epistle; (I Pet. 1:24,25) and adds, “this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

Isaiah relates some of the wonderful promise of peace that will bring great comfort to God’s people at the end of this age when he says, “He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Isa. 2:4

It is refreshing to our hearts and to our faith to know, as the Prophet Habakkuk declared, “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14) Also, Isaiah tells us, “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” (Isa. 35:1) The present process of withering grass and fading flowers will cease, and mankind will come forth from the grave, as the comfort of the resurrection replaces the sorrow of death in Christ’s kingdom.—John 5:28,29 *Revised Standard Version*

These promises are sure, for Isaiah also says, “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”—Isa. 40:5

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The Gift of Wholeness

Key Verse: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

—Isaiah 9:6

***Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 9:2-7***

JESUS PARTIALLY fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah 9:1,2 and Isaiah 42:7 as we read in Matthew 4:15-17. When he began to preach and do most of his mighty works in “the land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” Those people saw a great light of Divine Truth but the real fulfillment lies in the future Millennial Kingdom when the great light of the “Sun of righteousness [shall] arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2) We thus have prophetic assurance of the great light of knowledge

which God will bring to all mankind through Christ, “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John 1:9) Every one born into the world is promised enlightenment by that glorious Sun which assures them that “they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10

In this kingdom of the Lord, the Prince of Peace will be the supreme ruler. The prophet tells us that “in the last days, ... the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills.” This suggests that Christ’s kingdom will take a dominating position and control over all the nations of earth. The people will quickly recognize its governing authority “and all nations shall flow unto it.”—Isa. 2:2

All this will come to us because ‘unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting

Father, [and] The Prince of Peace.’ Our great Redeemer is eventually to bear these many titles of the many wonderful offices he will fill and the services he will accomplish. His great work in the past, his redemption work, was the foundation of all his future work. He will have the right to assume these various offices and use these various powers on account of his faithfulness.

First, he will be revealed to the world as the Wonderful Counsellor, the embodiment of Divine justice, power, wisdom and love. Christ will give assistance, guidance and direction that man may return through restitution into harmony with God.

His title, The Mighty God, will be recognized as he that God set forth “to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” and “to all that are afar off.”—Acts 5:31; 2:39

The title, The Everlasting Father, will apply to him as the life-giver of the world, during the thousand years of his reign. All the faithful world of mankind, regenerated on the human plane, will obtain their right as human beings in an earthly paradise.

As The Prince of Peace “the increase of his government and [of] peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:7) When his reign shall terminate at the close of the thousand years, it will be to deliver the perfect kingdom over to the Father.—I Cor. 15:28

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The Gift of Justice

Key Verse: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”
—*Isaiah 42:1*

Selected Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9

ISAIAH PROPHECIED OF Cyrus, a type of Christ, 150 years before Israel was released from Babylon. The mind of the prophet is led, however, to a far greater deliverer than Cyrus, at times losing sight of him and the restoration of the Jews to their own land altogether. In fact, Isaiah’s attention seems to be fixed wholly on the future Messiah. Today’s lesson describes this servant, guided by the Lord’s Spirit to deep compassion, going forth to bring justice to the nations.—Isa. 42:1

This prophecy says of our Lord he will not make the “bruised reed” or “smoking flax,” picturing those who are described as already broken down with a sense of sin and calamity, even more wretched. Nor will he deepen their afflictions, or multiply their sorrows. The sense is, that he will have an affectionate regard for the broken-hearted, the humble, the penitent, and the afflicted. (vs. 3) It continues, “He will not lose hope or courage, he will establish justice on the earth. Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching.” (vs. 4, *Today’s English Version*) Matthew, in 12:17-21, quotes Isaiah’s prophecy and attributes the fulfillment of it to Jesus.

According to God’s instructions it was the duty of his representatives to tell the Gospel to whoever had ears to hear—to the Jews first, but also to the Gentiles. The Lord showed that the lamp of Truth which God had now lighted was not for the Jews exclusively, but as the prophet had already declared, it was to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” and also salvation unto the “ends of the earth.”—vs. 6; Luke 2:32; Isa. 52:10

The prophet continues, “Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in

righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.” (Isa. 42:5-6) Isaiah here points to the blood of Christ which will seal the New Covenant by which Israel and the Gentiles will come into covenant relationship with God in Christ’s thousand-year kingdom.

The blessing of the world in that kingdom means the breaking open of the prison-house of death and the setting at liberty the captives, who for six thousand years have been going into the grave. For this reason our Lord is called the Life-giver, because his great work will give back life to the world of mankind who lost life in Adam. The Lord tells of this great work saying “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28,29 *Revised Standard Version*) When Isaiah said, “He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles,” this resurrection by judgment will be the opportunity to demonstrate willingness to obey God’s commandments in Christ’s kingdom.—Isa. 42:1

This is as the Lord promised, “The former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.”—Isa. 42:9

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The World's Best Seller

THERE IS NO book in the world, the name of which is so well known as the Bible. It is not a new book. In fact, it is probably the oldest book in the world, some parts of it having been written more than three thousand years ago. It has been translated into all the principal languages of the earth, and its moral and ethical teachings have undoubtedly done more to influence men and women to live nobler lives than any other single book that has ever been written. Today, in a pleasure-loving, unbelieving, and crime-plagued world the Bible is quoted by politicians, philosophers, editorial writers, and authors more than any other single book.

No book has had so many enthusiastic supporters, or has been so misunderstood by its friends; no book ever published has had such bitter enemies and has so successfully withstood their attacks. Thousands of its friends have died defending the Bible, while other thousands who have tried to discredit its teachings and destroy its influence are sleeping in death; yet the Bible lives, and continues at the top of best seller lists throughout the world.

In the fear-filled world of today there are increasing numbers of Bible believers who are convinced that this peer of all books contains the explanation, and points out the solution, of the continued world distress with which human wisdom seems to be so completely unable to cope. This solution, they claim, is not a mere theory presented by the Bible, but a plan designed by the Creator which, in his own time and way, is being carried out to its ultimate grand conclusion through the administration of a government backed by Divine authority and power.

If this is true, no one can afford to be uninformed concerning it, nor unacquainted with all the details pertaining thereto. If such information is contained in the Bible we will not want to let it remain in our bookcase, or on a parlor table, but will diligently endeavor to become familiar with the message it has for us in this time of frustration and despair.

With many, however, studying the Bible seems a difficult task; for strange though it may be, this best known of all books in the world is

probably the least understood. Years ago the general public had a fair knowledge of what the Bible contains, and the man on the street usually recognized a quotation from the Bible when he heard it. This is not so true today, especially of the younger generation. Frequently when politicians or statesmen use biblical phrases in their speeches many fail to recognize their source.

True, such expressions as ‘golden rule,’ the ‘sermon on the mount,’ ‘beating swords into plowshares,’ and at the Christmas season, ‘peace on earth, good will toward men,’ are associated with the Bible in the minds of practically all; but if asked the circumstances under which they were used, and where they are found in the Bible, many would be at a loss to answer.

Too frequently the Bible is considered a book principally for the use of the clergy, as a source of texts and sayings to suggest themes for their weekly sermons, and for use at weddings and funerals. Nearly all agree that it is a good book to have in the home, but for one reason or another it is being consistently read and studied by very few.

Just what is the Bible? What is its structural makeup, and what is its central theme, or message?

There are still thousands in the world who will say that the Bible is the Word of God, and we are among those. It seems to us, however, that more needs to be said to acquaint others with the Bible than merely to claim that it is God’s Word. It is necessary to get acquainted with the book’s layout and sequence of contents.

Generally speaking, the subject matter of the Bible might be divided into four classifications—historical, inspirational, doctrinal, and prophetic.

Its historical records cover a period of approximately four thousand years, beginning with the experiences of what the Bible declares to be the first man and woman, and ending about A.D. 96.

By inspirational, we mean the promises of God to his people, and his exhortations to faithfulness in doing his will.

The doctrinal portions of the Bible outline the Creator’s plan for the recovery of man from sin and death.

Its prophecies forecast the events of history down to our day, and for another thousand years yet to come.

These various subjects, with their ramifications, are not to be found separately in the Bible and under chapter headings. To a large extent, they are intermingled throughout the entire book. There are, of course, certain parts of the Bible which are more dominantly historical than others. This is true also of the other topics.

None of these principal topics of the Bible, however, is to be considered as its one central theme. They are merely incidental to it, yet supporting and clarifying it. The central theme is the redemption and recovery of a sin-cursed and dying race. The need for this is revealed very early in the book, and its final accomplishment forecast at its close, by the reassuring statement that there shall be “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:4

The Bible is divided into two main sections, to which have been given the titles, “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” The Old Testament historical records begin with the account of Creation and terminate shortly before the birth of Jesus. Its prophecies forecast his birth and give assurance that the Divine purpose of redemption to be accomplished by and through him would surely not fail.

The historical records of the New Testament begin with the birth of Jesus, testify to his unselfish devotion to the Divine cause, even to the voluntary sacrifice of his life, and present indisputable evidence that he was raised from the dead in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

The New Testament records also inform us concerning the experiences of the first disciples of Jesus, and the difficulties they encountered in the unbelieving world of that day. These thrilling narratives are found in the Book of The Acts of the Apostles.

Interwoven with New Testament history are frequent references to the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, identifying their application to Christ and his followers. These give assurance that the fruition of the Divine plan of redemption and recovery began with our Lord and will reach its glorious consummation at the close of the thousand years of his reign over the earth.

THE BOOK OF "BOOKS"

Not only is the Bible divided into Old and New Testaments, but these are again divided into books. There are, in all, sixty-six of these, thirty-nine in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. We are confident that they were all written under Divine inspiration, the Creator using human beings through which to speak.

In this very fact we have one of the strongest proofs that the Bible as a whole is the Word of God, although its writers penned its messages under vastly different circumstances, covering a period of nearly two thousand years, they are eloquent in their harmony, and convincing in their consistent emphasis of the main theme song of God. The Divine plan is designed to rescue the dying race from sin and death during the millennium or thousand-year reign of Christ.

The first book of the Bible is called "Genesis," meaning, appropriately, 'the beginning.' Moses is accredited as being its author, although his name appears nowhere in it. In fact, the book of Genesis closes before Moses becomes a figure in Old Testament history. It is believed that Moses, being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, compiled the book of Genesis from information which was available to him, and which had been handed down from generation to generation from the time of Creation.

The first chapter of Genesis contains an exceedingly brief account of God's creative work as it was concerned particularly with this planet Earth. It is not intended to be a full and scientific revelation of all the details involved in the work of Creation. Nor is such a detailed record necessary to the purpose of the Bible. That purpose is to identify the origin of man and explain why he is now a dying creature. It furthermore assures us that the Creator is carrying forward a glorious plan for man's recovery from sin and death, and explains the details of that plan.

The brief account of Creation as given us in Genesis, however, is found to be fully in harmony with all scientific facts, when properly interpreted. Its 'days' of creation, for example, are not periods of twenty-four hours, but long eras of time, each having an obscure beginning called 'evening,' and closing in a symbolic 'morning' of completion.

In the morning stage of the sixth day man was created, 'male and female.' They were commanded to multiply and fill the earth, and subdue

it. They were given dominion over the earth, and over all the lower forms of creation. So far as the earthly Creation was concerned, man was the Creator's crowning work.

In the command given to our first parents to multiply and to fill the earth, and to subdue it, and in the promise that they were to have dominion over the earth, we have a brief statement of God's purpose in the creation of this first human pair. They are said to have been created in the Divine image and likeness.—Gen. 1:27

The record of the general work of Creation contained in this first chapter of Genesis is merely in the nature of background material to help highlight the essential information concerning the creation of man, the account of which closes the chapter. The second chapter of Genesis, and of the Bible, then begins to present to us the details, not only of the creation of man, but also of the Divine will for him, the fact of his disobedience to Divine law, and his consequent condemnation to death.

From this point onward through its sixty-six books, the entire Bible continues to elaborate upon, and emphasize, the dire results of disobedience to Divine law. This is merely the background music in the great song of the Bible. The melodious notes of that song are concerned with the Creator's plan for the recovery of man from the result of his sin. If we fail to hear and to appreciate the heart-cheering strains of this Divine theme song of love, it means that we have missed the real value and the essential purpose of the Bible.

The first six chapters of Genesis present an exceedingly brief history of the antediluvian world, that is, from the creation of Adam to the Flood. It gives us a little information—although important—concerning two of Adam's children, Cain and Abel. It informs us that these two sons of Adam and Eve presented offerings to the Lord. Cain presented fruit of the field, and Abel presented a lamb. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but did not accept Cain's. Cain then became jealous and murdered his brother.

Two important facts are brought to light by this brief narrative. One is the terrible result of allowing selfishness to rule the heart. The other is that God, in accepting Abel's offering of a flesh and blood sacrifice, was beginning to unfold, by illustration, the fact that his plan of redemption

and recovery of the human race from sin and death was to be based upon the shedding of blood.—Lev. 17:11

At the time our first parents sinned against God and were sentenced to death and driven out of the Garden of Eden, God said that the “seed” of the “woman” would “bruise” the serpent’s “head.” (Gen. 3:15) Had God revealed his plan of redemption no further than this, no one could have known just what was meant by such a vague statement. As the story of the Bible unfolds, however, we discover that in reality it was the very first promise by God that he would send a Redeemer and a Savior into the world to rescue the human family from death. Having made this promise, his acceptance of Abel’s flesh and blood sacrifice shortly thereafter served to begin the disclosure of his plan of redemption.

The first six chapters of Genesis show the course of the world during that period as downward. It terminated in the deluge of Noah’s day. The story of the Flood is known to all. Some believe it confirmed the fact of a flood of waters in the Mesopotamian valley. It is claimed that proofs of such a flood exist in many other parts of the earth.

Not long after the Flood, a very important character in the story of the entire Bible appears on the scene. This is Abraham, originally called Abram. The remaining chapters of Genesis are concerned with the life of Abraham and his descendants down to the time when they were a nation of slaves in Egypt, and longing for deliverance.

In order to appreciate the Bible properly, it is necessary to recognize its Divine inspiration. This means that apart from the fact that its various books were actually penned by human hands, the Creator, by his power, exercised a guiding control, and made sure that his plans and purposes were properly set forth.

It has long been supposed that Moses, in writing the Book of Genesis, obtained the essential facts from those to whom they had been handed down from generation to generation. With Divine supervision this would have been entirely possible, and by this method we could have been given a truly accurate record of what occurred from the time of Creation down to the era when Moses was able to relate events—based upon his own personal observation and knowledge.

Recent discoveries of archaeologists show that Moses had something more definite to guide him than oral reports based upon the memory of

the ancients. Many clay tablets have been excavated which date back to the pre-Flood period. It has been discovered that a cuneiform style of writing was understood in those early days, and that clay tablets were used for the recording of family histories.

It seems that sometimes a whole series of tablets were employed to record the history of a single family, and that on the final tablet of the series the signature of the historian would be recorded. A noted student in England, who also was a firm believer in the Bible, discovered that the wording of these signatures was identical to a phrase which occurs several times in the book of Genesis. The first, to which a name is attached, reads, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man."—Gen. 5:1

It has been pointed out that the Hebrew word translated 'generations' in this expression figuratively means 'history,' or historical record. It is not, therefore, the introduction to a narrative, but in all probability the closing of a record, and the signature of the one who wrote it. Freely translated it would mean, This is the historical record of Adam, beginning from the day when God created him.

The Bible says, "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens." (Gen. 2:4) This is a reference to the preceding events and the word 'generations' in the Hebrew text would be much more properly translated 'historical records,' or 'the account of.'

The suggestion is that Adam inscribed these records on clay tablets, ending one narrative with Genesis 2:4 and beginning another shortly after the time of his creation, when he could write from personal experience and observation. Lending weight to this thought is the fact that throughout the account which precedes Adam's creation the expression frequently appears, "And God said," indicating that he had received this information direct from the Creator.—Gen. 1:26

This would be before Adam transgressed God's law, and when he still enjoyed blessed fellowship and communion with his Creator. After Adam's creation the expression, 'and God said,' no longer appears. It would not need to, for if Adam wrote the history of his own family, he could do so upon the basis of his personal knowledge.

Later in the book of Genesis, the expression ‘generations’ is accredited to Noah, Shem, Terah, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. It could well be that these actually recorded on tablets the information which, in each case, precedes this form of signature. If this be true, then all Moses needed to do was to compile this record into one complete book. And in doing this, he properly gave credit to those who had first recorded its various sections.

Another internal evidence tending to substantiate this very reasonable theory is the manner in which, in a few instances, the name of a city is mentioned, and then an explanatory note giving the current name of that city. One of these instances occurs in Genesis 14:8, where the name “Bela” is mentioned, and then in parenthesis the explanation “(the same is Zoar).” This indicates clearly that Moses was copying a record written at a time when the name ‘Bela’ was used, but for the benefit of clarity to his readers he inserted the information that Bela was now ‘Zoar.’

Two facts stand out in this style. One is that Moses was merely following copy, and the other is his meticulous loyalty to the copy, a loyalty which caused him to record the original in its every detail, and then explain it when necessary, rather than to edit it without giving the reader the exact wording of the original. With such loyalty displayed, it gives us confidence in the entire book of Genesis, especially in view of the fact that it was also written under Divine supervision.

EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY

The next four books of the Bible were also written by Moses. These are, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The book of Exodus, as its name implies, narrates the thrilling story of the deliverance of the children of Israel (descendants of Abraham) from their Egyptian taskmasters, and their exodus from Egypt. This involved many miraculous manifestations of God’s loving care, such as bringing them through the Red Sea, and providing them with manna in the wilderness.

The book of Exodus also narrates the miraculous manner in which, through Moses, God gave his Law to the Israelites. This Law is epitomized in the well-known Ten Commandments. The moral code represented in these commandments forms the basis of civilized laws in all the enlightened countries of the earth today. This attests their intrinsic worth, and a recognition by modern man that these laws given four

thousand years ago cannot be improved. Should not this fact give us profound respect for the book in which such laws were first recorded?

The name of the third book of the Bible, Leviticus, is derived from the name Levi, who was the head of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribe of Levi was the one selected by God to perform religious rites and services for the nation. This book presents in detail these various services, including the offering of many and varied sacrifices.

Later in our more detailed examination of the Bible, we will give further consideration to these services, and will note some of the wonderful lessons they contain. These lessons are intended to illuminate the Divine plan of redemption for the human family, and to assure us of the restoration of the willing and obedient to everlasting life on the earth, as God originally purposed.

The book of Numbers (the fourth in the Old Testament) probably gets its name from the opening chapter, in which the Lord gives instructions to Moses to “take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, ... with the number of their names.” (Num. 1:2) The entire book is largely a historical record of important events which occurred during the forty years when the nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness before they entered the promised land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy is the last of the five Mosaic books. As the name implies, this book consists largely of the repetition of important features of the Law previously given to Israel by God at the hand of Moses. This repetition appears chiefly as admonitions to faithfulness given by Moses in three discourses recorded in the book. This book also contains the recounting of some of Israel’s experiences during the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness before entering the promised land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy also contains prophecy. One of these is recorded in chapter 18, verses 18 and 19. The prophecy reads, “I [the Lord] will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee [Moses], and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

In the New Testament this prophecy is quoted by the Apostle Peter, and the explanation given that it will be fulfilled during what he describes

as the “times of restitution of all things.” That “Prophet” Peter indicates to be Christ Jesus, who will be ‘raised up’ following his Second Coming. This will be during the millennium.—Acts 3:20-26

The prophecy states of anyone who does not obey that Prophet that it will be required ‘of him.’ Peter interprets this to mean that such a one will be “destroyed from among the people.” In this is seen a complete change from God’s method of dealing with his people at the present time. It clearly indicates that the fulfillment of the prophecy is still future, and during the time when the righteous government of the Lord, described and promised throughout the Bible, will be exercising absolute control in the affairs of men.

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The Gifts of God

***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
—James 1:17***

FOR CENTURIES THE year’s end has been a season for the giving of gifts. It is a beautiful custom, the practice of which temporarily lifts the world out of its otherwise self-seeking course. It gives millions a taste of the revolutionary changes which will result in human relationships when, under the laws of Christ’s kingdom, the unselfish spirit of giving takes the place of the selfish spirit of grasping.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

The spirit of giving is the Spirit of God, and he is the greatest of all givers. Giving manifests the spirit of love, and “God is love.” (I John 4:16) The love of God which prompts him to give is described by the Greek word *agape*, which in our *Common English Version* of the Bible is sometimes translated “charity.” The original and true meaning of charity is the act of giving to those in need, where there is no hope of repayment. This is truly the case with respect to the gifts of God, both to his people and to the world in general.

Nothing that any of God’s creatures can give to him would add to his riches, and regardless of what they might withhold, he would not be made poor. He gives because he loves, and the rejoicing of those who receive his gifts is his joy. This, we believe, is true even in the case of his human creation, and despite the present fallen and dying condition of man. Solomon expressed this thought, saying, “Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.”—Eccl. 5:19

This text describes the sheer joy of living here on the earth as a natural man. All the natural things which contribute to this joy are the gifts of God. We are reminded of this in the Genesis record of the creation of

man, in which we are told of the garden which God prepared for his human creation “eastward in Eden.” In that garden, we are told God placed “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.” (Gen. 2:8,9) It was all designed for the joy of man. David wrote, “The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.”—Ps. 115:16

In bestowing the blessings which make for human happiness God has been impartial. Jesus assures us that his Heavenly Father causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall on the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. (Matt. 5:45) It is true, of course, that during the dark night of sin and death, when God has been permitting evil to reign, there is no assurance to any individual group of enjoying an adequate share of the natural earthly blessings. Today, seventy-five percent of the human race exists on scanty provisions of food and other necessities of life.

This is largely because of human selfishness, and the failure to provide adequate means of distribution prevents the bounties which the earth provides to be shared in measure by all. The Lord’s own people, living in various parts of the world, are subject to the conditions with which they are surrounded, sharing the common experiences of the world, whether they be lean or full. These have learned, as did the great Apostle Paul, to be content with whatever the Lord’s providence may permit, whether they “abound” or at times “suffer need.” (Phil. 4:11-13) They have learned that “godliness with contentment is great gain.”—I Tim. 6:6

THE GIFT OF SALVATION

In order to be a member of God’s family, and to sense the sweetness of the ‘blest tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,’ it was necessary to be a partaker of God’s gift of salvation. We say the ‘gift of salvation.’ We could have as well said the gift of God’s dear Son, or the gift of eternal life through the Son. (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23) “By grace are ye saved through faith;” wrote Paul, “and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”—Eph. 2:8

This wonderful gift of salvation through Christ had to be preceded by another gift of God, the gift of discernment. When Peter said to Jesus, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus replied to him, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 16:15-17) One cannot know and enjoy the Truth and

its blessings by reason of his own ability to interpret the Scriptures. Human reasoning —‘flesh and blood’— is not able to discern the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” This also is a gift of God.—Matt. 13:11

Psalm 119:144 reads, “The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.” The ‘testimonies’ of the Lord are his declarations, promises, and laws which reveal his Divine plan of the ages. It is only those to whom he gives understanding that are able to grasp their meaning, and it is through their obedience to this God-given understanding that they receive everlasting life. To know the Truth alone does not put one in the way of life. It is through the Truth that we learn to know God, and it is when we know him, and yield ourselves in complete and hearty submission to his will, that his gift of life through Jesus becomes ours. In prayer to his Heavenly Father Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”—John 17:3

“ALL THINGS”

Paul wrote, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32) This is a wonderful promise! It does not mean, of course, that the Lord gives his people all that they might desire of temporal blessings and advantages. The reference is to the spiritual needs of the consecrated people of God. These are all supplied, and abundantly so, in keeping with the riches of God’s grace through Christ Jesus.

In the context of the promise of ‘all things,’ Paul asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. 8:35) The devil uses discouragement to do so. Paul continues, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” (vss. 33,34) Certainly it is not God who condemns his people, for he has made provision through Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of their unwilling imperfections. From him we have received the gift of forgiveness.

Failing to separate us from the love of Christ through discouragement based upon our sins, then other methods are tried—“tribulation,” “distress,” “persecution,” “or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword.” Paul, quoting from the Old Testament, says, “For thy sake we are killed

all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” In all these things we can be “conquerors through him that loved us.”—Rom. 8:35-37

We can be conquerors in ‘all these things,’ not in our own strength, but because God, through Christ, has freely given unto us all things needful in order to be overcomers. The difficult situations which the Lord’s people face in various parts of the world would, from the natural standpoint, be cause for fear and defeat. But, as Paul wrote to Timothy, the Lord has not given us the “spirit of fear.” Instead, he has given us the “spirit ... of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”—II Tim. 1:7

The ‘spirit ... of power’ is the Holy Spirit; one of its many functions in our lives as Christians is to give us strength for our every time of need. At times our needs seem very great. One trial follows another in quick succession. Many times the Lord permits us to be severely tested along several lines at the same time. The enemy often ‘comes in like a flood’ to overwhelm us. But, as David wrote, “The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.” In other words, he is in full control of every situation, and as David further promised, “The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.”—Ps. 29:10,11

“The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (Ps. 84:11) God will freely give us all things that are good for us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. These are embodied in his gift of the Holy Spirit. Speaking to his disciples, and in anticipation of what his Heavenly Father would do for his consecrated people throughout the Gospel Age, beginning with Pentecost, Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”—Luke 11:13

GOD’S POWER

The Holy Spirit is the holy power of God by which he accomplishes all his works. The inspirational power of his promises, recorded in his Word under his direction, is one of the means by which he strengthens his people. The Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit, were given in order that the man of God might be “thoroughly furnished unto all good

works.” (II Tim. 3:16,17) In all things God has made provision for us through his Word, and thus we are thoroughly furnished.

God’s promise to give strength unto his people is a source of great inspiration and encouragement. To know that God is for us, to really believe that he is helping us in every time of need, serves to help us over many difficult places in the narrow way. (Matt. 7:14) We can press on because we know that greater is he who is for us than all they that are against us. The great battle may rage around us, but because the Lord has promised to strengthen and protect, we enjoy the peace of God that passeth human understanding.

We know that the promises of God are not empty words. We know he strengthens and protects his people, and some information is given us in his Word as to how he does this. We read, “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” (Ps. 91:11) What a precious gift this is to the people of God. We read again, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”—Ps. 34:7

We have never seen an angel, and our human minds cannot understand how these heavenly beings accomplish their work, but we know that they exist, that they are powerful, and that they are willing and ready always to do God’s bidding. Besides, they know the Heavenly Father’s will for his people. Jesus said, in this connection, that the angels always behold the face of his Father in heaven. (Matt. 18:10) They are in intimate contact with our God. They know his will for us and are prompt to do his bidding. His mighty power is exercised through them to deliver us.

One of the gifts of God to his people of the Gospel Age is, indeed, the privilege of suffering for, and with, Christ. Paul wrote, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” (Phil. 1:29) It requires great faith to appreciate this gift. The privilege of suffering with Christ is, however, a very precious gift; for, if we are faithful in thus suffering, faithful even unto death, it will lead to association with him in glory—“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:12

THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM

In Hebrews 2:10 we read that it was God’s plan “in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through

sufferings.” The thought is that the ‘many sons’ are also brought to glory through a pathway of suffering. Thus, just as the Heavenly Father did not shield Jesus from suffering, there is no reason to suppose that he will do so for us. However, God did provide a compensating portion for the Master: it was the “joy that was set before him,” which, as the apostle explains, enabled him to endure “the cross, despising the shame.”—Heb. 12:2

These same joys are set before us, the greatest of which is the prospect of seeing our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus face-to-face, and of spending eternity with them as members of the Divine family. David wrote, “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Ps. 16:11) Jesus entered into this joy after his resurrection. The apostle affirms that he “is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—Heb. 12:2

This glorious inheritance was first given to Jesus by promise. To be at the right hand of the throne of God meant the glorious privilege of carrying out the Father’s loving kingdom plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth. The promise was that the “pleasure of the Lord” would prosper in the hands of Jesus. (Isa. 53:10) By faith Jesus laid hold of these precious promises, and they served as a bulwark of strength while he was making his soul an offering for sin.

In prayer to his Father, Jesus said of his disciples, and those who would believe on him through their word, “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.” And again, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me [by promise]: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:22,24) ‘The glory which thou gavest me I have given them.’ What a gift! It means that all the exceeding great and precious promises which inspired and encouraged Jesus belong also to us, and are among the means which the Lord is using to fortify us against the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

One of the promises to Jesus was, “I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. (Ps. 2:8) In Psalm 111:6 we read, “He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.” “The

works of his hands are verity and judgment;” the psalm continues, and “all his commandments are sure.” (vs.7) God has shown us the power of his works. He has opened the eyes of our understanding to see and appreciate his great plan of salvation—the redemption through Christ Jesus, his covenants, his promised kingdom, the “great salvation” of the church, and the “restitution of all things” for the world. (Acts 3:20-21) Through the outworking of this plan we see the mighty power of God in operation. That power gave strength to the Ancient Worthies, enabling them to endure while they were being prepared to occupy the earthly phase of the kingdom, to be the “princes in all the earth.” (Ps. 45:16) This mighty power of God comforted and strengthened Jesus, and raised him from the dead. By faith we see God’s power in operation in the first resurrection of the church, already in progress, and by faith we anticipate the manifestation of Divine power in the resurrection of all the dead.—John 5:28,29

Truly God has shown his people the power of his works ‘that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.’ (Ps. 111:6) God promised Jesus that he would be given the heathen for an inheritance, and throughout the age he has been helping the church to enter into his same inheritance, helping them by showing them the power of his works. Not only has it been given us to see and know the mysteries of the kingdom—all the glorious features of the Divine plan—but all of the Lord’s people have experienced the mighty power of God in their own lives as they are being prepared to enter into their future inheritance with the glorified Jesus.

How inspiring are the promises of God pertaining to the various aspects of our inheritance. Through the Prophet Isaiah the Lord said, “I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.”—Isa. 49:8,9

Other aspects of our inheritance are promised by Jesus’ statement, “To him that overcometh will I give, ... the crown of life, ... the hidden manna, ... power over the nations, ... morning star, ... white raiment, ... make a pillar in the temple of my God, ... to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 2:10-3:21) All these promises pertain to our prospect of reigning with Jesus in his kingdom. He knew that it was his Father’s will that his

followers should share these honors and blessings with him, for had he not said while still with his disciples in the flesh, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”?—Luke 12:32

OUR GIFT TO GOD

How many and manifold are the gifts of God to us! Truly they are more than can be numbered. In return he asks but one gift from us—“My son, give me thine heart.” (Prov. 23:26) To give our hearts to the Lord means to give him our all. It means that we will search his Word to determine his will for us at every step of the narrow way in which we walk. And in this also there is great joy, great peace of mind, for we are assured of being guided aright, and of hearing the voice of the Word of God saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”—Isa. 30:21

Without this infallible guide, the world strays aimlessly through life, burdened with its cares, and fearful of what each day’s experiences might bring. But how wonderful it is to have given our hearts to the Lord, and to let him be our guide, as we endeavor to do his will and work. It is in thus giving our hearts to the Lord that we receive one of the most precious of his present gifts. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. 11:28-30

How precious is this rest which the Lord has given to his people. It is enjoyed by all of his consecrated saints, wherever they may be, and regardless of their circumstances of life. The measure of this rest is in proportion to our faith in the Divine arrangements, faith in God’s dealings with us, faith in the provision he has made through the Redeemer, faith in his ability to fulfill his promises, and faith in all the means of grace which he has provided.

All the gifts of God’s grace need to be accepted by faith—a vital and living faith—in order that they may enrich our lives as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. As we look ahead, may it be with a “faith that will not shrink, though pressed by every foe; that will not tremble on the brink of any earthly woe.” We do not know what the future holds for us. We know that the church as a whole will soon finish her earthly course, but just

when, we do not know. We do know that for many of us, as individuals, this may be the year. Let us live today as though tomorrow we would hear those welcome words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”—Matt. 25:21

Dawn Bible Students Association

The Language Spoken by Adam

*“The whole earth
was of one language,
and of one speech.”
—Genesis 11:1*

EVOLUTIONISTS CLAIM that man evolved from lower orders of animal life and appeared in different parts of the world, with each species or group developing its own language. This is their explanation for the great number of

different languages there are in the world today. However, the Scriptures disagree with this viewpoint, and indicate clearly not only the origin of the diversified languages of the nations, but also the language that was spoken by our first parents.

THE LANGUAGE OF ADAM

The Scriptures reveal that the first man, shortly after his creation, gave answers to God, that he conversed with his wife, and that he gave names to his subjects—the lower orders of animal creation. There seems no reason to doubt that Adam’s children spoke the same language he did, until the Flood, and until about two hundred years after the Flood when the confusion of tongues took place at Babel.

What was that original language which God communicated to Adam when he was created? There probably have been many language groups in the world which would like to have claimed that it was their particular tongue. However, we believe the Bible indicates that it was the ancient Hebrew language. The conciseness, simplicity, energy, and fertility of the Hebrew language, as well as its relationship to most oriental languages, are all points in favor of this view. There is evidence that the ancient oriental languages derived their origin from the Hebrew language.

The names of individuals appearing in the early chapters of Genesis, as well as the names given by Adam to the various species of the lower animals, all have a special significance. The names of animals describe the characteristics of the species to which they were assigned.

LANGUAGES CHANGE

All living languages change, as we know, but dead languages do not. If the Hebrew language was the one given to Adam then it remained a live tongue for nearly 4,000 years. During that time it would, like all other live languages, undergo constant change, and many words and phrases would be added to it. Even in the time of Moses, this language would already have undergone much change. This becomes apparent in the use of a Hebrew concordance of the Scriptures, where it is often explained that the root of certain words is now unknown.

However, this does not imply that the language originally given to Adam has been entirely lost. We believe that the Bible gives evidence that this language still exists, although changed in some respects from its original purity. Let us examine the evidence of this as contained in Bible chronology. These chronological records are given in Genesis 5:1-28; 7:6, 8:13, and 11:10-32.

In examining these records, we know that God promised a ‘seed’ to mother Eve. Eve bore two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain slew Abel and was punished by God.

Then God raised up another son to mother Eve, and he was given the name of Seth. Seth took the place of Abel. This is indicated in the text, “And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.”—Gen. 4:25

The genealogies recorded are those pertaining to the seed of promise. We know that the language given to Adam must have been spoken by one after another of his descendants, for in Genesis 11:1 we are told that ‘the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.’ This was at the time of the projected building of the tower of Babel, which was long enough after the Flood for Noah’s family of eight to have increased considerably.

LIVES OVERLAPPING

Besides having this definite statement regarding there being but one language many years after the Flood, it is interesting to note, taking the figures in chapters 5 and 11, that we find Noah’s life was overlapped by Methuselah by 600 years, while Methuselah’s life was overlapped by Adam for 243 years. Also that Noah’s life extended to within two years

of the birth of Abraham and that Noah's son Shem, who lived 98 years during his great-grandfather Methuselah's lifetime, did not die until Abraham was 150 years old, and Isaac was 50 years of age.

Without the statement of Genesis 11:1, it would seem reasonable to suppose that these men—Adam, Methuselah, Shem, and Abraham—and their families and very numerous contemporaries, would speak the same language which had been given to Adam, rather than that they and their families would adopt different languages. It is interesting to notice from the foregoing that Adam and Isaac, the seed of promise, were joined by but two connecting links—the lives of Methuselah and Shem. Shem's life of 98 years before, and 502 years after the Flood, connected the antediluvian period with the Patriarchal Age, as he lived 75 years after Abraham entered Canaan.

The closing verses of the tenth chapter of Genesis give us facts concerning the descendants of Noah through his son Shem. The place in which Shem and his descendants lived “extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar to the hill country of the east.” (Gen. 10:30, *Revised Standard Version*) After giving Shem's genealogy, the account continues and says, “As men migrated in the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.” (Gen. 11:2, *RSV*) These were the people who decided to build the tower of Babel, in this plain. Shem and his descendants settled in the hill country (Gen. 10:30)—not in a plain. As the population in the earth increased, certain ones migrated to the east. The conclusion would be, then, that not all the people on the earth at that time participated in what occurred at Babel when their language was confused by God, but only those who had migrated to that plain.

This is borne out by the fact that in verse ten of the eleventh chapter, following immediately the record concerning the confusing of tongues; the account of Shem and his descendants is picked up and carried on to Abraham. In other words, the record of Genesis 11:1-9 concerning the building of the tower of Babel, and what occurred there, is a parenthetical explanation of God's intervention in the affairs of a certain group which had migrated to the east and had attempted to make a name for themselves, ignoring him, and the glory that was due his name.

The motive for this effort on the part of those who migrated to the land of Shinar is described by the Lord, “And the Lord said, Behold, they are

one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing they propose to do will now be impossible for them.”—Gen. 11:6, *RSV*

It is very unlikely indeed that Shem and his direct descendants, who apparently were loyal to God, would be participants in this effort. If this is a proper conclusion, it means that the original tongue which was spoken all the way from Adam to this point in human history—the one language which the Scriptures show all spoke until that time—was not confused so far as Shem and his immediate descendants were concerned.

This also would mean, just as similar circumstances have always meant, that as each generation of the same family came on the scene, it spoke the language of the preceding generation. Children do not learn a different language from that of their parents unless they are forced to do so by being moved into another country.

THE LANGUAGE OF ABRAHAM

It seems clear, therefore, from the record, that Abraham, the one through whom God continued his promise of a coming seed, spoke the same language as Adam. As we have already noted, of course, this language would have developed and undergone many changes; but basically it was the original tongue.

Is there any way of knowing what that language was? We think there is a clue to this in Genesis 14:12,13, where Abraham is spoken of as being a Hebrew. It is not unusual today to recognize the nationality of a person by the language he speaks. If one is heard speaking French, we conclude that he is a Frenchman; or one who speaks German is usually considered to be German; one who speaks Italian we think of as being from Italy.

If Abraham was called a Hebrew because he spoke a certain language, however, what was that language? The name Hebrew derives from the name of Abraham’s progenitor who was called Eber, or Heber. In Genesis 10:21 Shem is spoken of as “the father of all the children of Eber.”

Shem was chosen by God from among the other sons of Noah as the one through whom the lineage down to Abraham, the father of the faithful, was to be counted. The fact that he is spoken of as ‘the father of all the children of Eber’ would indicate that one of the names God had

chosen for all these descendants would be derived from Heber, or be, in other words, Hebrew.

It is clear that Shem and Eber and all in this particular line would certainly speak the original language of Adam including whatever additions had been made to it through the centuries; Abraham would also speak the same language. The reference to the first use of the word Hebrew being applied to Abraham would be indicative of the language he spoke, the language itself being one of the things which separated him and his descendants from the rest of the human race, whose language had become mixed.

THE LANGUAGE OF MOSES

It is conceded by most students of the Bible that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. This seems clearly demonstrated by the following texts: Exodus 24:4; Exodus 34:28; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 27:3,8; 31:9,19,22,30. There seems also reasonable evidence today that the early chapters of Genesis, having to do with events with which he would not be personally acquainted, had actually been recorded on clay tablets by various patriarchs prior to Moses' time. One of the evidences of this is the few places where he makes corrections in names of places or identifications of locations with which those to whom he was writing would not be familiar. This indicates that Moses, in compiling these books, was following copy.

Moses was a learned man, and there can be no doubt but that he wrote these first five books of the Bible in the Hebrew language, which, if our deductions are correct, would be the language to which the original tablets had been written or recorded. The prophets also spoke and wrote in Hebrew. Thus the entire Old Testament came down to the beginning of the New Testament era in the Hebrew language.

HEBREW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus, as a boy of twelve, was found by his mother in the Temple asking and answering questions upon the Hebrew Scriptures. This indicates that Jesus spoke and read the ancient Hebrew language.

When Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus to do injury to the Christians, he was stopped by a light from heaven, and heard a voice speaking to him. Testifying concerning this later he said, "Whereupon as

I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”—Acts 26:12-14

Thus we see that Jesus, after his resurrection, in communicating with Saul, spoke the Hebrew tongue. He had used it more or less during the thirty-three and one-half years of his earthly ministry, and now continued to do so after his glorification, that is, when it was necessary to communicate with human beings, as he did in the case of Saul of Tarsus.

It will also be recalled that the inscription over the cross on which Jesus was crucified was written in Hebrew (as well as in Greek and Latin).

When Paul went up to Jerusalem just before his arrest, it is recorded of him in Acts 21:40 that he spoke to the multitude from the steps of the castle in Hebrew. The account reads that “when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence.”—Acts 22:2

These incidental references in the New Testament to the use of the Hebrew language indicate that God did not permit this ancient, and probably original, tongue of man to perish, but continued its use all down through the ages even to Jesus’ day. And now this same language is being revived in the new state of Israel.

LANGUAGE OF THE FUTURE

We think this is significant in view of the prophecies which indicate that Christ’s kingdom will begin to manifest itself in the Holy Land. The Scriptures clearly teach that in the beginning, the human representatives of the invisible Christ in the new kingdom will be the resurrected ancient prophets and other faithful ones who, during the ages prior to the coming of Christ, proved their fidelity to God.

Hebrew was the language spoken by most of these, and when they are raised from the dead it will be their natural tongue. And they will no doubt continue to speak it, especially in view of the fact that their first contacts will be with a people who by then will nearly all be speaking Hebrew. The Scriptures do not furnish the details in this connection, but

we think it is not unreasonable to conclude that Hebrew may become the official language of all nations.

In Acts 3:19-21 the Apostle Peter speaks of “times of restitution of all things,” which, he adds, were “spoken by the mouth of all God’s holy prophets since the world began.” Primarily this will be a restoration of the people to health and life. But it will also mean the restoration of paradise conditions worldwide. It may also be that one of the ‘all things’ to be restored is the ancient Hebrew language.

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