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The King in His Beauty

*“Thine eyes shall
see the king in his
beauty: they shall
behold the land
that is very
far off.”*
—Isaiah 33:17

THROUGHOUT THE OLD Testament we find many prophecies and promises concerning the coming of a great one whom the Creator would send to be the Redeemer, Savior, and king of

all people. One of these prophecies contains words very familiar to millions among mankind: “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. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:6,7) Herein is the portrait of a ruler such as the fallen human race had never seen, and whose rulership has never been experienced—that of the Messiah, Christ Jesus.

The end of the year 2018, more than two millennia since the birth of Jesus, finds the world reeling in an increasingly hopeless state of chaos and confusion. The only thing which it seems can now save the world and the human race itself is some sort of

superhuman power, an unselfish being who would be wise enough to map out a new and better course for the people, order his plans put into effect, and have power to enforce his edicts. If the world could be convinced that a ruler such as this is on hand to assume authority, he would probably be universally acclaimed.

However, this is a great deal to expect, for such a king would, of necessity, have to break with human history and tradition along all lines. He would have to be a leader capable of establishing his authority without the necessity of leading millions of the world's youth into battle to be killed. Indeed, he would be little different from all the imperfect rulers of the past and present if he attempted to enforce his decrees under threat of destruction and warfare. He would also have to be a king who would take as much interest in the poor as in the rich, and who would respect the rights of all races, ages and nationalities equally.

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

Moreover, such a ruler would have to be very wise, acting as a counselor as well as a judge. He would have to possess the qualities which one of God's prophets ascribes to the foretold great Messiah of promise. Of this one we read, "The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of

knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And he shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.”—Isa. 11:2-5

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

Jesus is said to be capable of fulfilling still another prophetic picture, given to us by the psalmist. “Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. ... In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”—Ps. 72:1-8

NOT APPRECIATED

Jesus’ disciples believed that he was the one foretold in this and many other prophecies of the

Old Testament. Yet, Jesus did not have an army. He never tried to exalt himself at the expense of others. Rather, he was noted for his kindness. He loved all and was sympathetic even toward the erring. Those who observed him noted the “gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth,” and that he “went about doing good.”—Luke 4:22; Acts 10:38

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

This kind, sympathetic, understanding and self-sacrificing servant of the people whose birth the world again commemorates, was a Jew. When Pilate realized he could do nothing more to save his life, he permitted his soldiers to place a crown of thorns upon his head. Showing Jesus to the people, Pilate exclaimed, “Behold your King!” In reply, though, the Jewish religious leaders shouted, “Away with him, crucify him. ... We have no king but Caesar.”—John 19:14,15

The angels who announced the birth of Jesus declared that he would be a Savior, one who would save the people from their sins. (Matt. 1:20,21; Luke 2:10,11) To do this it was necessary that he give his life in sacrifice. Jesus knew this, so he did not resist when brought before Pilate to be sentenced to the cruel death of the cross. His disciples were perplexed.

They believed that Jesus was born to be a great world-wide ruler, but now he was dead. The angelic announcement of his birth, his many miracles, and the gracious words which he had spoken, now seemed meaningless.

HOPES REVIVED

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

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

The account continues: "When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—vss. 9-11

WORK TO BE DONE

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

Jesus had left them. They saw him taken up into heaven. Two angels had appeared and assured them that he would come again at some future time. Putting these thoughts together, they began to realize that the work of proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom worldwide was to be their part in God's plan during the time Jesus was away. Since it was to be a worldwide proclamation of the Gospel, they understood that this would take time to accomplish, which would mean that his coming was not to be soon, according to human thinking.

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

IMPATIENCE

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

If the time had come for the followers of Jesus to reign with him, Paul knew that he, too, would be reigning, rather than suffering ridicule, persecution, and injury in the Master's service. Paul, however, knew the truth concerning God's purposes. He knew that the present age is a time of sacrifice and suffering on the part of Jesus' followers. He knew that the kingdom period of glory was still future. However, the spirit of impatience, and perhaps also of ambition, continued to creep in among the professed followers of Christ. After the apostles fell asleep in death, a great "falling away" from the "faith once delivered unto the saints" soon came about. (II Thess. 2:3; Jude 1:3) Notably, this spirit of impatience and ambition gave rise to the development of a great church system which then united with civil powers and claimed to be reigning as the kingdom of Christ.

By this time, the real significance of the birth of Jesus had been lost to the vast majority of his professed followers. While with their lips they continued

to praise him as the promised “Prince of Peace” who would bring “good will toward men,” they helped to plunge Europe into one of the bloodiest periods of war in history. For centuries, armies of professed Christian nations and factions were pitted one against the other in deadly combat, mercilessly killing one another, all in the name of Christ.

Not even the angels who announced the birth of Jesus knew all that would be involved before his kingdom of peace would become manifest throughout the world. (I Pet. 1:12) More than two thousand years have passed since Jesus was born, and still the angry divisions of earth’s inhabitants continue to war against one another. Each passing year seems to indicate diminishing faith in God’s plan to establish a worldwide government through the one whose birth is still commemorated by millions.

WE NEED PATIENCE

Even among Christians who have been enlightened in these “last days” by the Word of truth, there is much need for patience in waiting for the fruition of the divine plan. Concerning the fact that we are in the “harvest,” which is the “end of the age,” there should be no doubt. (Matt. 13:39, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) This calls for faithfulness in continuing to make known the Gospel of the kingdom—that the kingdom of Messiah is close at hand. This glorious theme song of the Bible continues to be proclaimed throughout the earth, thus indicating that the harvest and its glorious work are not finished. This means that not yet are the righteous shining forth “as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—Matt. 13:43

We can appreciate more fully today than in the past the feelings of the disciples when they asked Jesus, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) We, also, would like to know when our glorious hope will be consummated in kingdom glory, and when the long-promised blessing of all the families of the earth will commence. The question, "How long, O Lord?" has no doubt been asked by God's faithful people throughout the age. (Rev. 6:10) It is now still close to our hearts, even though we know that the kingdom is "nigh, even at the doors."—Mark 13:29

How timely is the admonition, "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) Let us indeed maintain our confidence, knowing that to do so we need patience. We need "patient continuance in well doing" as we seek for "glory and honour and immortality." (Rom. 2:7) We need patience as we watch for the fulfillment of all God's gracious promises toward us of joint-heirship with Christ Jesus in his kingdom.—Rom. 8:17

A "LITTLE WHILE"

In the foregoing passage, Hebrews 10:35-37, Paul associates his admonition to patience with the return of Christ, saying, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." It is interesting to note that the entire age, from Paul's time to the return of the Lord at the time of the harvest, is spoken of as "a little while." So it has been, as God

views time. Now that we are in the harvest with which the age ends, how much more evident it is that only “a little while” remains between our harvest labors of today and the kingdom glories of tomorrow!

We do not know how much longer the harvest will continue. The Heavenly Father does, however, and if we are to be with Jesus in the kingdom it is essential that we be faithful to our commission now to proclaim the Gospel message of hope, health and life for all mankind at every opportunity. Kingdom honors and authority will be bestowed only upon those who are thus faithful, even unto death.—Rev. 2:10

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

The coming of Jesus was God’s great gift to man. (John 3:16) Our appreciation of that gift can be manifested by the giving of our all in the great Messianic cause which Jesus came to implement. The angels proclaimed the good tidings that Jesus, earth’s future king, was born. Now we, as messengers at the present time, have the privilege of continuing that proclamation. We not only announce his birth, but as the words of our opening text state, we joyfully make known “the king in his beauty.” Let us be faithful to our covenant with the Lord as we patiently and actively wait for the glorious consummation of our hope. ■

Love and Obey God

Key Verse: “*Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*”
—*Deuteronomy 6:5*

Selected Scripture:
Deuteronomy 6:1-9

WHEN CONSIDERING THE verses of our lesson, we are to realize and appreciate that faith in, and obedience to, God’s laws and his righteous principles should be of paramount importance to us. Although speaking particularly to Israel, God is here pointing out the type of response to his commands which he desires of all his chosen people. “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee.” (Deut. 6:3) God had instructed the people of Israel to reverence and respect him, not out of constraint, but from a sincere heart’s desire to do so. He wanted them to love him, giving them the all-important words of our Key Verse. Such love was to emanate from every fiber and power of their being.

Moses, in stating the principles of God’s law, said, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” (Deut. 6:4) This is an important statement, because it implies the unchangeable nature of God, as well as his law. His character and his instructions are always consistent and harmonious—they never change. To those who have entered into covenant relationship with God during the present age, this is especially reassuring. “My son, give me thine heart,” is the invitation we have accepted. (Prov. 23:26) In so doing, we have committed ourselves to daily submit to his leadings in our life,

responding in love and obedience.

To properly love and obey God means we are to highly esteem him, and his ways, as being much wiser than our own. What pleasure we should take in knowing that we have such a wonderful, all-knowing Father, who only desires what is eternally best for each of his children, and who provides them with many rich blessings. Our desire, then, must be to reciprocate by offering him our devotion and showing our dependence on and delight in his will for us in our daily experiences. It should be our constant joy to think of God, speak to him in prayer, and have his peace.—Phil. 4:4-7

As God commanded Israel, Jesus has similarly instructed us, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” (Matt. 22:37,38) Our love for God is to be sincere, and born out in action. The Apostle John says, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” By doing so, John continues, we show that “we are of the truth,” and reassured before God.—I John 3:18,19

Superlative love for God, and as further exhibited towards one another and to all with whom we come in contact, is the “mark,” or goal, toward which we must run diligently if we are to be found faithful. Paul said, “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:13,14

Let us love and obey God to the full extent of our ability, desiring to be one with him through our Redeemer, Christ Jesus. The Heavenly Father’s love has been “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us.” (Rom. 5:5) Thus, may the oneness of love we have with God and his Son guide us continually, and keep us until the end of our earthly sojourn. ■

Worship God Only

Key Verse: *“If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*
—Joshua 24:15

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 24:1-24

to his chosen people, Israel, in conjunction with giving them the Law Covenant, which they promised him they would keep. God knew that the basis for any success they might have in keeping his covenant would, first and foremost, lie in their worship and obedience to him only, and to no other being or object. He wanted all the affections, confidence and trust of his people. This was not selfishness on God’s part, but was for their ultimate good.

OUR LESSON IS A REMINDER

of God’s first commandment to Israel: “I am the LORD thy God. ... Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exod. 20:2,3) In addition, since no one can make a likeness or image of God because no human has seen him, Israel was given a second command: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God.” —vss. 4,5

God addressed these words

Looking at the words spoken by Joshua in our Key Verse, we see that, over time, the children of Israel had fallen well short of what God had commanded. Still later, in Elijah's day, we find yet further evidence of Israel's lack of obedience. Elijah confronted the people, and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him." (I Kings 18:21) The lesson contained in the words of Joshua and Elijah applied not only to Israel, but also to us. As Christians, we make decisions each day whether to serve God and his Son, Christ Jesus, or serve various other "gods" in our life.

With regard to our lesson, indecision is not an option. In fact, indecisiveness is one of the greatest foes of character building. We have the liberty of choice, of exercising our free will. This is one of the important elements of the image and likeness of God, in which we were created. As Joshua asked the Israelites to decide whether they would be faithful to the Lord, or serve other gods, we also must daily make positive decisions as respects our course of life. Thus, Joshua gave witness of his decision: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24) The word "Mammon" signifies riches, but also denotes any object, condition, or character quality that originates from fallen man or Satan. God has purposely put the matter so that we cannot be servants of any of these and also be servants of God. As James points out, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:8) In our decisions, we are brought to the testing point—"Is God first in our lives?"

We should have no idols, whatever they might be, which will attract our devotion away from God, and tempt us to ignore the rich blessings which he is now offering to us. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed, ... that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:2 ■

Bless God's Holy Name

Key Verse: *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”*
—*Psalm 103:12*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 103:1-18

THESE WORDS FROM THE Psalmist David should provide us great comfort and assurance. They allude to the Heavenly Father's plan to remove the curse of sin and death presently upon mankind. This, God promised, would be accomplished through the “seed,” or offspring, of the first woman, Eve. God said to Satan, who had appeared to Eve as a serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise [Hebrew meaning: crush] thy head.” (Gen. 3:15) God fulfilled his promise when he sent into the world his “only begotten Son,” who was the “seed” of promise, “made of a woman.”—John 3:16; Gal. 3:16; 4:4

Realizing that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, as followers of Christ we should have a keen desire to show our love for him and the Heavenly Father, and as our title says, to bless his holy name. Instilled within us also should be the desire to keep his commands, for indeed, obedience to the Lord is the way in which we show our love for him. Jesus said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.”—John 14:21

We have much cause for peace and contentment in the

realization of God's redemptive work on our behalf through Christ. His continual grace, wisdom and care are exercised towards us, and such experiences as he permits are those which are best for our eternal spiritual welfare. God's grace to us was manifest in great measure in that we have received forgiveness of sins. Speaking of Christ, Paul said, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7) Claiming the prophetic words of Isaiah, we can say, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, 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

If we have entered into a covenant relationship with God through sacrifice, he invites us to confide in him as children and speak to him in prayer of all that concerns us. He invites us to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) The Apostle Paul also reminds us: "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," to which the Apostle Peter adds, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."—Phil. 4:6; I Pet. 5:7

To properly bless God's holy name through prayer requires that we follow the guidance provided in the Scriptures concerning this wonderful privilege. First, we recognize Jesus as the only means of access to the Father. (John 14:14) We also have Jesus' model prayer, from which we can properly make our petitions. (Matt. 6:9-13) We are urged to be "instant in prayer," to "pray, and not to faint," and to "pray without ceasing."—Rom. 12:12; Luke 18:1; I Thess. 5:17

In the last two verses of our lesson the psalmist states, "The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, ... To such as keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do them." (Ps. 103:17,18) What a blessing to know that God has "removed our transgressions from us!" ■

The Gift of Jesus

Key Verses: *“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.”*
—*Luke 2:30,31*

Selected Scriptures:
Luke 1:26-31; 2:21-33

THE WORDS RECORDED IN Luke 2:29-35 are those expressed by Simeon, a Jew who “was just and devout, ... and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” (vs. 25) He had been assured by God that he would see Israel’s Messiah of promise before he died. When Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to Jerusalem in

accordance with the customs of the Mosaic Law, Simeon rejoiced to see him. He took the babe in his arms and blessed God. Through his enlightened eyes of understanding, Simeon spoke the words recorded in our Key Verse, which point to the fact that salvation had been “prepared” for all people. Moreover, he said that Jesus would come to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” and the glory of Israel.—vs. 32

The many promises made by the prophets concerning a savior began to be fulfilled when the angels announced, “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11) Truly, Jesus’ birth was a bright dawn of hope for the entire human race. This had been expressed earlier when the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary concerning her future son, 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 1:32,33

John, when later writing his Gospel, pointed to Jesus as “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John 1:9) The Apostle Paul further testified: “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” This, the apostle continues, would become a reality because the “man Christ Jesus ... gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:3-6) The full scope of this vital truth has not yet been revealed to the majority of mankind. The “due time” for their enlightenment will be during the Millennial reign of Christ.

In God’s earthly kingdom, Christ shall call forth all who sleep in their graves: “The hour is coming, ... when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” (John 5:25) Both the enlightenment of mankind in righteousness, as well as their healing from the effects of sin and death, are shown in these beautiful words of the prophet: “The Sun of righteousness,” the glorified Christ, shall “arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2) Christ, the “Sun,” will illuminate the whole earth with a knowledge of the Heavenly the Father. The “healing” will be in the form of a “restitution of all things,” and the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Acts 3:20,21,25; Gen. 12:3; 28:14

Of this time, the Prophet Isaiah said, “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. 35:10) This has been God’s eternal purpose for his human creation. Jesus was “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8) “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ... that the world through him might be saved.”—John 3:16,17 ■

Loving God by Serving Others

Key Verse: *“The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”*
—Matthew 25:40

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 25:31-46

DURING HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY, Jesus gave many parables to his disciples concerning the experiences of the church, including their preparation and development. It seems fitting, then, that prior to his death, Jesus would also provide a lesson to illustrate the work of his future earthly kingdom upon its establishment, showing its purpose and its effect upon the world of mankind.

The subject of our lesson, the parable of the sheep and the goats, has its fulfillment not at the present time, but in the coming age of Messiah’s glorious reign. At that time, the selection of the church class, Christ’s bride, will have been completed, and they will reign with him as “joint-heirs” in his kingdom. (Rom. 8:17) The parable’s opening words convey this setting: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”—Matt. 25:31

Following this, the parable describes the work of Christ’s thousand-year kingdom on behalf of the world of mankind. “Before him shall be gathered all nations.” (vs. 32) The word “nations” means “people.” All the people

of the world will be raised from the dead, freed from their previous bondage to sin and Satan. After being given an understanding of God's ways and an ample amount of time to willingly conform to his righteous laws, each will be judged as to their worthiness for life. All the obedient ones, identified as "sheep" in the parable, will receive everlasting life on the earth. Those disobedient ones, "goats" in the parable—relatively few in number we believe—will go into destruction after their period of trial ends.—vss. 33,34,41

Although the parable of the sheep and the goats applies in the future age of the world's judgment, many of its principles provide lessons for present Christian development. Our Key Verse, for example, points out the importance during the coming kingdom arrangement of mankind's love for God and for his Son to be shown by acts of kindness and service rendered to each other, their fellow-man. We now, as Christians, must already be doing this, demonstrating love for others and especially for our brethren in Christ. Paul says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—Gal. 6:10

This is a requirement for our development of the "mind ... that was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) Whoever serves any whom the Lord chooses as his brethren is really serving him, reiterating the thought of our Key Verse. Thus, all through the period of the sufferings, trials and experiences of the church during the present age, they are comforted with the knowledge and assurance that others of their brethren have been with them, providing help and encouragement.—John 13:14,15; Gal. 6:2

Jesus, our greatest example, demonstrated complete unselfishness in his service to others. His ultimate service was the laying down of his life for his fellow-man. We, too, should be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, realizing that all mankind will likewise learn to love and serve one another in the coming age. ■

Lessons from the Life of Hannah

*“She vowed a vow,
and said, ... I will
give him unto the
LORD all the days
of his life.”*

—*I Samuel 1:11*

NEAR THE END OF THE

time period of the Judges in Israel, there was a man named Elkanah who had two wives. Elkanah’s wife Peninnah had borne children, while his wife

Hannah had not. Each year Elkanah took his family with him to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to God. (I Sam. 1:1-3) Shiloh was located a few miles north of Jerusalem. It was the site of Israel’s Tabernacle at that time, and also of one of the nation’s annual feasts to God.—Josh. 18:1; Judg. 21:19

When Elkanah went to Shiloh each year, he gave a portion of the sacrifices he brought to each member of his family, but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her greatly. (I Sam. 1:4,5) Elkanah’s wife Peninnah regularly ridiculed Hannah because she had no children. This cruel behavior went on year after year, each time Elkanah took his family to Shiloh. These painful mockings were very troubling for Hannah, so much that she would weep and would not eat.—vss. 6-8

In her despair, Hannah silently prayed, pouring out her soul to God. (vs. 10) One of the initial lessons we can glean from Hannah's experience is that when we are troubled, anxious, distressed, or discouraged, and perhaps see no end nor any solution to a particular experience we are going through, we should draw near to God in prayer. By so doing we can obtain inner peace, and "find grace to help in time of need."—Phil. 4:6,7; Heb. 4:16

Hannah asked God if he would let her bear a son, she would give him to God all the days of his life. She would also never permit a razor to come upon his head. (I Sam. 1:11) We notice that Hannah did not ask for several children, but in humility she asked God for only one, a son.

A LIFELONG VOW

It may seem strange that Hannah would pray to have a son, and then vow to give him to God for all the days of his life. However, the scriptural account records a possible reason for Hannah's vow. We are told that Eli, Israel's priest at that time, had sons who "knew not the LORD," and whose sins were "very great." Furthermore, they "abhorred the offering of the LORD." (I Sam. 2:12-17) Eli's sons also practiced immorality, when they should have been examples to the people in righteousness. (vss. 22-25) Every year Hannah went with Elkanah's family to Shiloh in order to offer sacrifice to the Lord. On each visit they would have seen the increasing evil behavior of the sons of Eli, noting also that he was getting older and growing more feeble. After Eli's death, they reasoned, the tabernacle services would be completely profaned by his

sons. Thus, to Hannah, the future of the tabernacle services at Shiloh looked bleak.

We suggest this may have been the motivation for Hannah's prayer. As a faithful and dedicated Israelite, she prayed to God not just to have a child, but to specifically have a son. In her prayer, Hannah further promised that, if given a son, she would dedicate, or consecrate, him to serve the Heavenly Father at Shiloh. She greatly desired that there might be someone, other than Eli's two unfaithful sons, to continue the tabernacle services in a proper way.

THE LAW OF VOWS

The law of vows which God gave to Israel is recorded in Numbers chapter 30. One of the stipulations concerning vows was that a husband could disallow any vow his wife made, as long as he indicated his decision to cancel her vow the very first day he heard about it. However, if a husband knew about his wife's vow and kept silent on the first day he had knowledge of it, the vow would stand and must be kept. (vss. 3-8) In the case of Hannah's vow, her husband Elkanah agreed with the promise she had made to God.—I Sam. 1:22,23

In due time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, as she had desired. She named him Samuel, which means "heard of God," and gave the reason for his name, "because I have asked him of the LORD." (vss. 19,20) Hannah kept Samuel until he was "weaned." Various commentators suggest that the thought was not merely the weaning from the breast, but also from the general nourishment and upbringing provided by his parents, and thus he may have been around the age of twelve years.

From the time of Samuel's birth until the day his mother left him at Shiloh, Hannah would naturally have become very attached to her son. She saw him grow, learn to walk, talk, and become a young boy. The account tells us that when Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh, "the child was young," and that "the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest." (I Sam. 1:24-28; 2:11) If Samuel was around the age of twelve when he was presented to the priest at Shiloh, he would have been of sufficient age to be of some assistance to Eli, and to begin learning details of the many laws and precepts of God.

THE NAZARITE VOW

We believe the vow Hannah made to God is that which the Scriptures refer to as the "vow of the Nazarite." Nazarite means "separate or consecrated." The vow of the Nazarite could be taken by either a man or a woman, and included three requirements. The first of these was abstinence from wine, strong drink, and from eating anything produced by the grape vine. Secondly, during all the days of a Nazarite vow no razor was to be used on the person's head, but they were to let their hair grow long. Thirdly, one taking a Nazarite vow was not to go near any dead person, including members of their own family, when they died.—Num. 6:1-7

We note that the Nazarite vow was not a promise to live in an isolated place, neither was it to dress in a peculiar way with robes or collars, nor was it a vow to remain unmarried. Rather, the vow of the Nazarite was a pledge of dedication to God. It was a vow quite similar to that of Israel's high priests, who were also not permitted to drink wine or strong

drink, nor to approach any dead person. (Lev. 10:9; 21:10,11) Very few in Israel took the Nazarite vow for their entire life. The Bible records just three people who did so—Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist. (Judg. 13:5; I Sam. 1:11; Luke 1:15) The three requirements of the Nazarite vow contain some helpful lessons for the footstep followers of Christ, which we will now consider.

NO WINE OR STRONG DRINK

The first Nazarite vow requirement was to abstain from drinking wine or strong drink, and avoid eating any fruit or product which came from the grape vine. Here we see an illustration of the importance that we avoid having the potentially intoxicating “spirit of the world” enter into our heart and mind, wherein it might find a dwelling place.

Regarding this precept the Apostle John writes: “Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If any one loves the world, there is no love in his heart for the Father. For the things in the world—the cravings of the earthly nature, the cravings of the eyes, the show and pride of life—they all come, not from the Father, but from the world. And the world, with its cravings, is passing away, but he who does God’s will continues for ever.” (I John 2:15-17, *Weymouth New Testament*) James likewise states: “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”—James 4:4

In these verses the word “world” does not refer to our fellow human beings, nor to the planet earth on which we live. Rather, it is a translation of the Greek word *kosmos*, which signifies “orderly arrangement.”

The orderly, but often sinful, arrangements of today's world include such things as an increasing love of self, and a decreasing of moral standards. They also comprise sinful behaviors such as lying, evil speaking, and slander. These are all increasingly present in today's society and have become accepted by many as normal behavior. However, the children of God are not to follow such things, but are to strive after godliness and to set their hearts upon doing the Heavenly Father's will.—I Tim. 6:11,12

SECOND VOW REQUIREMENT

The second Nazarite requirement was for one to let his hair grow long and never use a razor upon his head. We suggest the letting of one's hair grow is a figurative illustration of the importance of trusting the Heavenly Father to increase our spiritual strength during the course of our experiences and trials of the Christian walk.

We recall the life of Samson, another faithful one from Old Testament times who also took the Nazarite vow. (Judges chapters 13-16) The Scriptures record Samson's zeal for God and for his people, faithfulness to his vow as a Nazarite, and his God-given great strength. They also note his undoing through fleshly weakness, brought to bear by the deceitfulness of his enemies. In these experiences we see many lessons. The Philistines, who knew Samson was a powerful enemy, planned for his seduction and submission by using a beautiful woman, named Delilah. Samson, who was so strong in nearly all other respects, was found to be vulnerable from this point of attack. One day, as Samson was resting his head on Delilah's lap, he fell asleep. Delilah shaved

the hair from his head. When Samson awoke, his strength was gone, because he had violated one of the requirements of the Nazarite vow.

What a lesson this is for us! We must realize that the church's great enemy, Satan, is on the alert to use any snare or trap for the undoing of those who are striving to faithfully follow in the footsteps of Christ. (I Pet. 5:8) Comparing Samson's temptation with those which come upon the Christian, we realize that we should be specially on guard against the enticements and allurements of the spirit of the world, the tendencies of our fallen flesh, and the deceitful workings of the Adversary along any and all lines in which he might see weakness in us.

One of the chief deceptions of Satan during this present Gospel Age, to which many have fallen prey, has been the unauthorized union of church systems with earthly governments rather than with "one husband," Christ. In the Book of Revelation, the term "harlot" is used to indicate church systems that had joined with the kings of the earth, causing them to commit "fornication" with her, resulting in their being made "drunk with the wine of her fornication." In this highly symbolic picture, we understand "the wine of her fornication" to be false doctrines, misunderstandings and misrepresentations of God and of his promises which are given in the Bible. Many throughout the world have been intoxicated by these false doctrines.—II Cor. 11:1-4; Rev. 17:1-5; 18:1-9; 19:2

If we have made a full and unreserved consecration of our all to God now, we could also be in danger of going to sleep in the lap of the modern Delilah, whether it be with the church systems themselves,

or by inculcating a similar spirit of formalism, self-confidence, or by allowing the spirit of pride to enter into our hearts. If we allow a spirit of drowsiness or rest from our study of the Lord's Word and our activities in his service, or a lessening of the fulfillment of our consecration vows, then we too could be at risk of falling into a spirit of slumber, just as Samson did.

The Apostle Paul's admonition to us is: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10) This exhortation has been applicable to the people of God throughout the Gospel Age, under all conditions and circumstances. As we consider all the devoted servants of God recounted in Hebrews chapter 11, we see that the secret of their strength of character, by which they endured and overcame many difficulties, resided in their life of faith and trust in God, and in his many promises. So it must be with us.—Prov. 3:5,6

CONTACT WITH DEAD BODIES

The third Nazarite requirement, avoiding contact with dead bodies, suggests the thought that we should avoid the earthly inclinations of our fallen, dying flesh. The Apostle Paul wrote: "If ... you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above. ... Give your minds to the things that are above, not to the things that are on the earth. ... Put to death your earthward inclinations—fornication, impurity, sensual passion, unholy desire, and all greed, for that is a form of idolatry. ... You also were once addicted to them, while you were living under their power. But now you must rid yourselves of every kind of sin—angry and passionate outbreaks, ill-will,

evil speaking, foul-mouthed abuse—so that these may never soil your lips. Do not speak falsehoods to one another, for you have stripped off the old self with its doings.”—Col. 3:1-9, *Weymouth*

We must do more, however, than just avoid earthly inclinations. Paul continues, “Clothe yourselves therefore, as God’s own people holy and dearly loved, with tender-heartedness, kindness, lowliness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; bearing with one another and readily forgiving each other. ... And over all these put on love, which is the perfect bond of union; and let the peace which Christ gives settle all questionings in your hearts, to which peace indeed you were called as belonging to His one Body; and be thankful.”—vss. 12-15, *Weymouth*

GROWTH OF SAMUEL

Prior to being given to Eli the high priest, Samuel undoubtedly received much in the way of instruction from his parents concerning the God of Israel, his principles, attributes, and promises. Samuel must have also learned the importance of living in a way that would please God. He must also have come to understand what the Nazarite vow meant, not just outwardly, but especially in his heart.

As the years went by Samuel grew from infancy into a young boy. When the proper time came, Hannah kept the vow she had made and willingly gave her young Samuel to God, to serve at the Tabernacle. In a certain sense, Hannah gave all that she had to God, because Samuel was her only child at that time.

When Hannah took Samuel up to the “house of the LORD in Shiloh,” she also brought with her for

an offering “three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine.” (I Sam. 1:24) These quantities are significantly greater than the measures which were required to be given when a burnt offering was made for a special vow. (Num. 15:8-10) Thus we have a further indication of the completeness of the vow which Hannah had made to God.

HANNAH’S PRAYER

When the time came for Hannah to leave her young son Samuel at the Tabernacle, where he would serve for the rest of his life, human reasoning might suppose that she was sad or even depressed. However, this was not the case at all. At the very moment when Hannah gave her son, she prayed saying, “My heart rejoiceth in the LORD.” Hannah’s prayer is recorded in I Samuel 2:1-10, and is among some of the longest and most beautiful prayers recorded in the Bible.

There are many similarities between the prayer of Hannah and the words of Jesus’ mother Mary to her relative Elizabeth. Perhaps Mary recalled the words of Hannah’s prayer, “My heart rejoiceth in the LORD.” Similarly, Mary said to Elizabeth, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God.” Hannah prayed, “There is none holy as the LORD,” and Mary said, “Holy is his name.” Hannah’s prayer continued, “The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength,” while Mary spoke the words, “He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.” Hannah had prayed, “They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased,” and Mary said to Elizabeth, “He hath filled the hungry

with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.”—I Sam. 2:1-5; Luke 1:47-53

After Elkanah and Hannah left their son Samuel at Shiloh, they returned home, and “the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.” Each year thereafter, Hannah made a small robe for Samuel, no doubt increasing its size as he grew. She gave him the new robe each year when she came with her husband to offer sacrifice at the Tabernacle.—I Sam. 2:11,19

A REWARD FROM GOD

Hannah’s faithfulness in fulfilling the vow she made to God did not go unnoticed by the Heavenly Father. After she had left her son Samuel at Shiloh to serve God for the rest of his life, we are told, “The LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters.” (I Sam. 2:21) Truly, God rewarded Hannah much more than she had ever hoped or asked for, allowing her to be blessed with five more children!

During the present Gospel Age, the reward God has promised now to the faithful consecrated followers of Christ is not material prosperity, good health, nor an abundance of friends. Rather, if we are faithful, to the best of our ability, in following and applying in our daily lives the lessons and instructions given to us in the Scriptures by Christ Jesus, the apostles and the other inspired writers of the Bible, we are promised that in the future, “great is your reward in heaven.”—Matt. 5:12

We are also promised, for the present time, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” (Phil. 4:7-9) As the Prophet Isaiah writes, “Thou

wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” (Isa. 26:3,4) Herein lies a key promise from God. If we keep our hearts and minds “stayed,” or focused, upon our Heavenly Father and upon the many precious promises which he has given to us in the Bible, this will help us to develop fully the peace and trust in God which is needed in all the experiences which he permits in our life.

SHE BOTH “GAVE” AND “LENT” HIM

When Hannah had prayed for a son, she vowed to “give him unto the LORD all the days of his life.” (I Sam. 1:11) However, when the time came for Hannah to leave Samuel with Eli at Shiloh in order to serve God, she said “I have lent him to the LORD.” (vs. 28) How can we reconcile this difference between her prayer to “give” her son, versus later saying she had “lent” him to God? Had she compromised her vow? We think not.

We believe the answer is that Hannah had faith in the resurrection of the dead. From the standpoint of the remaining years of her life at that time, she indeed gave Samuel to serve God for that entire period. However, in the future resurrection on earth, it will seem as if she had merely “lent” Samuel to God for a relatively short time, compared to all eternity and the future “ages to come.” Thus, Hannah had faith that one day she would be re-united with her son Samuel in the Messianic kingdom which will soon be established on the earth.

In the New Testament we are told that some of the faithful ones of old had trials of “cruel mockings”

and were “tormented,” meaning evil-treated. (Heb. 11:36,37) The bitter mockings and ill treatment from Elkanah’s wife Peninnah, which Hannah endured year after year, are an indication that she might be included among the ancient heroes of faith cited by Paul in Hebrews chapter 11.

A LIFE OF PRAYER

Hannah lived a life of prayer. She prayed when she was troubled, pouring out her soul before the Lord. (I Sam. 1:15) Likewise, so we should do. The psalmist writes, “My refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ... pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.”—Ps. 62:7,8

Hannah prayed when she was thankful. When she presented Samuel to Eli the high priest, she offered a prayer of thankfulness. Our prayers should also be full of thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father. In his letters to the brethren, the Apostle Paul repeatedly mentions the importance of continually giving thanks to God. Here are just a few of Paul’s admonitions concerning thankfulness: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God.” “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God.” “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God ... concerning you.”—Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17; I Thess. 5:18

Hannah made a great sacrifice. While still childless, she pledged that if blessed with a son, he would live the Nazarite vow of complete dedication to God. When she bore Samuel and, together with her husband Elkanah, nurtured him sufficiently as a child, Hannah gave him to God for the rest of his life. We, too, have made a lifelong vow of consecration to do

the will of our Heavenly Father. May the lessons from the life of Hannah encourage us to have greater zeal and love for God and for his son Christ Jesus, and that such devotion may be exemplified in everything we think, say, and do each day. ■

*Those who seek the throne of grace
Find that throne in every place;
If we live a life of prayer,
God is present everywhere.*

*When our earthly comforts fail,
When the foes of life prevail,
'Tis the time for earnest prayer;
God is present everywhere.*

*Then my soul, in every strait
To thy Father come and wait;
He will always hear thy prayer;
Thou shalt have his tender care.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 6—“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”—Proverbs 25:28 (Z. '01-295 Hymn 183)

DECEMBER 13—“Lay not this sin to their charge.”—Acts 7:60 (Z. '01-331 Hymn 186)

DECEMBER 20—“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Timothy 2:15 (Z. '02-318 Hymn 99)

DECEMBER 27—“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”—I John 5:21 (Z. '02 -284 Hymn 71)

Priorities

“Stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”
—*Philippians 3:13,14, Revised Version*

THE WORD “PRIORITY”

can be defined as that which is regarded as more important when compared to other matters in one’s life. This word is used quite frequently in the business world, as well as in the ordering of a person’s daily life. In times of war, the word priority gains frequent usage in the military. Certain orders

are issued which are identified as “Top Priority.” They are to be read and acted on immediately, being deemed of greatest importance.

People often speak of getting their priorities in order. Since priorities change from time to time, it is helpful to review them occasionally, and determine what adjustments should be made. For example, the status of our personal affairs generally changes as we age. Some priorities we have when we are young change as we mature, and they are often altered yet again in old age. Depending on each one’s varied experiences, certain priorities may change multiple times during the course of a lifetime.

THE CHRISTIAN'S FIRST PRIORITY

Although certain of life's priorities may properly be adjusted, in the life of a Christian there is one thing that never changes, and which we should call our "first priority" at all times. This is, as our opening text suggests, that of pressing toward the goal of our High Calling of God. In similar fashion, the Apostle Peter wrote these words concerning our top priority: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."—II Pet. 1:10

These words from Paul and Peter speak of an ongoing process of development in the life of a Christian. First, he comes to an awareness that God is drawing him to see and accept this great High Calling. (John 6:44; II Tim. 1:9) This is a tremendous idea to grasp and to realize that we are offered the opportunity of being made "partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) The Apostle Paul further expresses this High Calling, or invitation, in these words: "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."—Rom. 12:1

In Matthew 16:24, Jesus stated the same invitation with these words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." If we have responded affirmatively to the high calling, we have our top priorities established for us: to make our calling and election sure; to take up our cross; to deny ourselves; and to follow in the Master's footsteps. Thus, we begin our walk in the narrow way, and these priorities remain with us until we are "faithful unto death."—Rev. 2:10

JESUS—OUR PERFECT EXAMPLE

Let us first consider Jesus, for he is our best example of establishing proper priorities. Jesus' highest priority in life is spoken of prophetically in the Psalms: "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps. 40:7,8) When Jesus came to John at thirty years of age at the river Jordan and was baptized, he began to carry out that priority. It was the most important thing in his life, and for the following three and one-half years of his walk on earth it remained so.

We find in the Bible record of Jesus' childhood that the knowing and doing of God's will was already first in his life. At the tender age of twelve, his parents took him to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover feast in order that he could be dedicated at the Temple as a follower of the Mosaic Law. (Luke 2:40-52) After the ceremonies were over, Jesus' parents, along with a large company of those they had traveled with, left to return to their home in Nazareth, thinking that he was somewhere among the group traveling together. They were one day's journey away from Jerusalem when they found that Jesus was not in the caravan.

Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem to look for Jesus, and after searching for three days they found him in the Temple. He was sitting in the midst of the doctors of the Law, both hearing them and asking questions. All that heard him were astonished at the understanding shown by his questions and answers. Mary asked him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them,

How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—vss. 48,49

Although only twelve years of age, Jesus was already well aware of his first and only priority—to learn how to serve God acceptably. It is interesting to note that these are our Lord's first recorded words: "I must be about my Father's business." Throughout his life, from the age of twelve to the time of his death on the cross, his top priority continued to be to carry out his Father's will, which was to lay down his life in sacrifice.

On the occasion of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist heard God's voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) How we long to also hear these words spoken to us by our Father. It is certain that we will, if we follow the example of our Master, making his priorities our priorities, faithfully even to the end of our lives. If so, we will hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Matt. 25:21

MARY AND MARTHA

One example given to us in the Scriptures regarding the matter of setting priorities is in Luke 10:38-42. Here we have the record of two sisters, Martha and Mary. They lived with their brother, Lazarus, in Bethany, a town just outside of Jerusalem. The account tells us that Jesus "entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and

came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away front her.”

Martha was the homemaker, and she was concerned about providing properly for the guest whom she had invited into her home. She was engaged in preparing food and tables for a meal, which was a lot of work for just one person to do, and she felt that her sister should help her. Mary, however, was enthralled with the Gospel message of the kingdom. Her joy was to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him. That was her top priority. Martha’s priority, at the moment, was to prepare the meal and take care of the physical comfort of our Lord.

Nothing is to be taken away from Martha for her desire to serve. We note that although Jesus commended Mary for choosing a “good part,” he did not in any way criticize Martha’s service of preparing the meal. His only comment to her was a gentle reminder that she did not need to be anxious or stressed about the good work she was doing. Perhaps her anxiety lay in the fact that as she was engaged in the work of temporal service, she was also trying to listen intently to Jesus’ conversation with Mary. To do both simultaneously would be difficult for anyone. However, it seems that Martha, despite her momentary stress, was learning much.

Strong evidence of this is noted later in Jesus’ ministry, following the death of Martha’s and Mary’s brother, Lazarus. When Jesus came to Bethany

following his death, and first spoke to Martha alone, he found that her faith in him and in the resurrection which he taught was just as firm as Mary's. (John 11:20-27) Even though grieving, Martha emphatically stated, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection." Indeed, all along she had been learning and absorbing his teachings just as Mary had! A lesson for us is that we need both the "Mary's" and the "Martha's" in our fellowship. Together we are mutually edified, and gain both temporal and spiritual refreshment by the unique abilities of each as they are used in service to the Lord and the brethren.

PETER'S PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED

In John 21:1-17 we have another lesson in establishing priorities, centering in the lives of Peter and several other disciples. Soon after Jesus' resurrection, he made a number of appearances to the apostles to verify the fact of his having been made alive as a spirit being. Over a period of several weeks, these appearances became fewer in number, and then seemed to stop completely. Peter, formerly one of Jesus' most outspoken and loyal followers, became quite discouraged and confused as to what direction in life to take. He decided to go back to his former occupation of fishing, which he had abandoned to follow Jesus more than three years earlier. Several other disciples joined Peter, and they went fishing. However, things did not go well. Although they worked diligently all night, in the early morning they started back to shore, having caught nothing.

Then Jesus appeared to them. They saw him simply as a man standing on the shore and did not

recognize him. He advised them to cast their nets again on the right side of the boat. They did this and immediately drew in a net full of fish. This event made the disciples remember a similar experience with their Lord and Master. (Luke 5:4-9) Recalling this, John then recognized the man on shore as Jesus. Exuberantly, Peter jumped into the water and swam quickly to shore to greet his Lord. Once the others got the boat to shore, and the net was pulled in, Jesus called them together, saying, "Come and dine."

Over a meal of fish and bread which the Master had prepared for the disciples, Jesus gave them—and Peter in particular—much-needed instruction about their future work, and what their top priority in life should be. It was not to continue in the fishing business. After Peter's soul-searching and humble answers to the Master's queries—"Lovest thou me?"—Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs, ... Feed my sheep," and later, "Follow me." (John 21:15-19) This was much-needed encouragement to Peter. Despite his rejection of our Lord at the time of his trial and crucifixion, Jesus gave his pledge that Peter would have an important responsibility as an apostle, whose work would be central to the establishment of the Early Church. As such his work, words and example of life would strengthen all who would later walk in the steps of Jesus throughout the Gospel Age. (Luke 22:32) The record of the Bible bears out that Peter was faithful to this injunction, and it was his first priority for the rest of his earthly life.

PRIORITIES CHANGED SUDDENLY

The history of another young man has been recorded in the Bible as an example for us. He began

on what he thought was to be his main interest or first priority in life at an early age. He felt certain he had been called by God to stamp out a new sect which had sprung up in Jerusalem and was beginning to spread throughout all Israel—the Christian faith. His name was Saul of Tarsus.

Many years later we find this man, renamed Paul, standing before King Agrippa in the company of the Roman officials Festus and Felix, giving witness to them how his original course in life had been so dramatically changed. Paul started out by saying to Agrippa, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”—Acts 26:9-11

This, as Paul stated, was his priority before his conversion. It was the work he had dedicated himself to do, and as a zealous Pharisee, he actively engaged in this interest. He had devoted himself to the utter destruction of Christians, whom he considered to be enemies of the God of Abraham and the Law of Moses.

Suddenly, however, his priorities changed dramatically. “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? ... And I said, Who art thou, Lord?"—Acts 26:12-15

The Lord's response, Paul then recounts: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—vss. 15-19

NEW OBJECTIVES

Almost instantly, his priorities were completely reversed. Instead of persecuting the church and destroying the Christians, he became one of them. He followed the Lord's instructions precisely, which came to him through additional visions and revelations from God. Paul later wrote concerning these things in his letter to the Philippian church. First he described his position as Saul of Tarsus, and then went on to outline his new objectives in life.

Paul wrote concerning the fact that he had been "circumcised the eighth day, [was] of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the

righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung.”—Phil. 3:5-8

History tells us that Paul came from a highly regarded family. His father, although a Jew, was, nevertheless, a Roman citizen. Paul inherited from him his Roman citizenship, and was considered “free born,” which entitled him to many privileges. (Acts 22:28) Nevertheless, he sacrificed the earthly advantages which were due him through inheritance and worldly position, to become a Christian. As, a follower and minister of Jesus Christ, Paul counted all these previous benefits as not being worthy of consideration.

The apostle continued recounting his stand to the Philippians, stating his sole priority: “That I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:8-12

ATTAINING UNTO THE FIRST RESURRECTION

In his reference to “the resurrection of the dead,” Paul meant the “first resurrection,” which is described

in John the Revelator's vision. "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

Paul continues his testimony to the Philippian brethren, which includes the words of our opening text: "Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13,14, *RV*) How wonderfully to the point is this expression of his top priority—his only priority. "One thing I do!" Forgetting past advantages and priorities, Paul had turned his back upon the things which he had counted dear before his conversion. All else he counted as worthless compared to the opportunity, "if by any means," of attaining unto the resurrection of the dead—the first resurrection.

This is the prize that has also been set before us. To obtain it requires a daily striving to live up to our covenant of sacrifice by every means we can, and in whatever way the Lord directs. Like Paul, all that we have must be pressed into the Lord's service—our zeal, our enthusiasm, our talents, great or small, our assets, our time and our energy. Only by setting our priorities in this fashion, and fulfilling them to the best of our ability, can we be certain of receiving the fulfillment of our hope of the High Calling. "Ye are called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. 4:4) There is no higher priority than this for the Christian.

OUR CHIEF PRIORITY

As the Truth, through the power of the Holy Spirit, began to work its influence in our lives, more and more we discovered that ideas, positions, and possessions, once uppermost in our lives, diminished in importance. They have become secondary to the truth and our consecration vows. More of our time is taken up in study, in service to the brethren, and in the promulgation of the Gospel. These have become increasingly the most important things in our lives. They are now our first priority.

Indeed, there are lesser priorities which require us to responsibly meet and provide the necessities of life for us and our families. However, let these not deter us from the heavenly hope set before us. Let us always remember that the making of our calling and election sure is our top priority. No matter what experiences might come, or what the trials of life may be, let us keep in mind the goal before us, and the watchword, "One thing I do!"

We again recall the Apostle Peter, and his faithfulness in carrying out the priorities which he through personal experience came to realize were of utmost importance. To us, he thus exhorts and gives assurance. "Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure," by faithfully continuing to pursue your top priority until the end of life's pathway. "For if ye do these things," he continues, "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 ■

Be Slow to Anger

“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.”
—Proverbs 19:11

AS 2018 DRAWS TO A close, one word in particular seems to more and more identify itself with the many troubles and chaotic conditions in the world. It is anger. From the general citizenry to

the highest levels of government, anger seems to dominate the mood of society today. In our country alone, which has long been held up as an example of honest debate, tolerance and civility among its people and its leaders, unmitigated anger is now openly displayed, and even encouraged, on all sides of nearly every issue.

We should not be surprised by these conditions. The Scriptures speak prophetically of our day, and specifically of the anger that would come about as this “present evil world” is brought to an end, and the “new heavens and ... new earth” are established. (Gal. 1:4; II Pet. 3:13) “Why do the heathen rage?” the psalmist asks. “The nations were angry,” states John the Revelator. (Ps. 2:1; Rev. 11:18) The words “heathen” and “nations” in these verses are references to the masses of people. The rage and anger with which they speak and act, we are indeed witnessing at this very hour.

In the face of the anger which we now see about us on a daily basis, it is vitally important, as footstep followers of Christ, that we examine ourselves along this line. The true Christian cannot participate in, nor support, the sentiments of anger so much on display in today's world. Though we are to hate sin, we are not to be angry, vengeful or judgmental toward sinners. Judgment "in righteousness," the Scriptures state, will be the work of the next age.—Acts 17:31

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONSECRATED

Many Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testament, instruct us toward self-control and a proper rule over our own spirit. Such self-restraint allows us time to think and reflect prayerfully on the best way to respond in difficult or tense situations that arise during the experiences of life. Development of these traits is a very challenging part of our Christian growth and maturity, but is ultimately required if we are to be successful in our walk of faith.

"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (Prov. 14:29) The key to following the admonition of this verse lies within the innermost part of our being, the heart. One who finds himself habitually having difficulty controlling his anger most likely has a heart condition that is predisposed to argument and contention, rather than toward the sentiments of love, mercy or kindness. Before one can correct the more outward problem of displayed anger, he must first examine, and often cleanse, his impure heart. The Apostle Paul says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our

hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.”—Heb. 10:22

With our hearts centered on proper Godlike characteristics, we are then able to begin conquering our outward words and actions. We know that it is pleasing to our Heavenly Father that we avoid malice, anger and strife by displaying kindness, long-suffering and love in our dealings with others, even those who may speak or act against us. (Col. 3:8,12-14) “A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.”—Prov. 15:18

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” (Prov. 16:32) This verse suggests that, from God’s standpoint, one who exercises proper self-control in the affairs of life has an inner strength of character superior to the mighty deeds of men. God himself is the greatest example of these attributes. The psalmist says, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”—Ps. 103:8

By contrast, one who does not have proper control over his words and actions is described as, “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.” (Prov. 25:28) Such a city would be vulnerable to easy destruction by an enemy. A character in this condition would likewise be wide open to the penetrating darts of our Adversary, with little defense left for protection.

The opening verse of our lesson tells of a still higher level of development along these lines. It points out that while it is important for us to learn how to control our anger, it is even more pleasing

to God that, whenever possible, we overlook the transgression entirely, especially if it is not in direct violation of some vital principle of truth. The Apostle Peter identifies this deeper stage of development as relating directly to love, when he says, “Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins.”—I Pet. 4:8, *Revised Version*

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:31,32) Regardless of what we see in this troubled world around us, however much anger appears to be the norm, we must conquer this enemy, putting it far away from our hearts, thoughts, words and actions, if we wish to be faithful followers of Christ. ■

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.

Sister Dorothy Hall, Westerly, RI—October 11. Age, 88

Brother Adam Siwak, Prince Albert, SK, Canada—October 21. Age, 87

Sister Lois Montague, New Haven, CT—October 25. Age, 93

Brother Darcy Kuehmichel, Oxford, AR—October 31. Age, 70

Visit to Brethren in Germany

IN MAY OF THIS YEAR, the Dawn was pleased to have Brother Tim and Sister Dawn Krupa travel to Germany to meet with our brethren there. They also attended, and Brother Tim served at, the German General Convention in Korbach. Realizing the fact that we have many brethren of “like precious faith” throughout the world, we are glad to share Brother Tim’s report of their trip with our readers.

We are happy to present a report of our recent trip to visit our brethren in Germany. Starting with some history—back in 1953 there was a brother living in Los Angeles who had strong feelings that our brethren in Germany needed help and support. That was Brother Joseph Heinen, who was born in Germany, was fluent in German, and was a frequent visitor to his homeland. During the early 1950s, the German polity was still suffering from many of the aftereffects of World War II. They were a defeated country, and in spite of American perceptions that everything was being restored and the people were all being helped, in reality there was still much suffering and deprivation. As a result, in 1953 Brother Heinen persuaded a number of brethren on this side of the ocean to help our German brethren with

visits, literature and the printing of German Bible study aids. A committee and corporation was formed, which still exists today, and continues to function with those goals in mind.

The organization established through the efforts of Brother Heinen came to be known as the German Dawn Bible Students Association, with a committee established to help guide its services on behalf of the brethren. As part of these efforts, for many years the committee has organized and arranged the program of the annual German General Convention. This convention is held during the weekend of Pentecost, which is in May or early June. The committee is also responsible for the German edition of *The Dawn* magazine and oversees the publishing efforts of the Dawn's German literature.

The main objective of our trip was to participate in the annual German General Convention held in May 2018. During our visit the secretary of their association pulled out some of the archive documents and pictures of the original organization.



Original German Dawn Committee - 1953

I was able to recognize Sister Kreckler in the lower left hand corner, and in the upper right corner is Brother Willi Paul. They were still alive and functioning as part of that organization when I first visited the German brethren forty years ago. There were seven German brethren on the original committee and three Americans—Brothers Norman Woodworth, Russell Pollock, and Joseph Heinen.

Below are pictures of the current committee. The chairman is presently Brother Hubert Lipka from



Hubert Lipka



Stefan Thieme



Daniel Cap



Bohdan Szegidewicz



Helbring Schültz



Lutz Ruthmann



Martin Schlücker



Samuel Stalder

Hamburg. Brother Stefan Thieme is secretary-treasurer. Austria is also included in this committee, because their national language is also German. Brother Daniel Cap is a committee member from Austria.

The first time I went to Germany was in the 1970s. The recollection of my impression at that time was that the brethren were all rather elderly. This was, however, actually a perspective problem. On our visit this time, some forty years later, I perceived that they were all quite young. The point to be made is that the current group of Bible Students in Germany is a very robust, active and dynamic group of the Lord's people. Our meetings, fellowship, and the convention itself, were all full of activity, music, fellowship and lively conversations and discourses. In fact, there seemed to be an increased vitality now compared to my first visit many years ago. Today, many of the brethren speak English, and during our visit there was always a translating resource close at hand.

For the two weeks before the convention, we traveled through the western parts of Germany and visited congregations of our affiliated Bible Students. We visited Ludwigshafen, Bruchhausen, Dortmund, Munster and Hamburg. It was a most pleasant and spiritually profitable itinerary. It was made doubly sweet because after those stops most of the friends we had visited were able to gather for the three-day German General Convention in Korbach.



Bible Study at Hamburg



Ludwigshafen class members

The majority of the convention attendees were from Germany, but there were also friends from Poland, France, Romania and the United States. The convention is always held on the weekend of Pentecost, fifty days following the traditional Easter Sunday, because in most European countries Pentecost is a holiday resulting in a three-day weekend



Dortmund class members

and time off from work. At the convention there was an English translation table and a Polish translation table. Depending on the speaker's language, the discourses were translated into German, Polish and English. There were three musicians playing the hymns—on keyboard, flute and violin.

Following are some of the highlights recalled from the discourses presented at the Convention. You will perhaps appreciate how their thoughts parallel ours. These will be in short, bullet point format from each presentation.

- From Ecclesiastes 3:1-11: God has an appointed time for everything. One poignant translation says, "He made everything beautiful in His time." Our present day world is groaning, and technology is drawing people away from God. Most of the progress we see in this world is not God's progress, but new ideas and attempts from Satan. For example, Satan's attempts at prolonging people's lives are only an effort to continue his old order of sin and unrighteousness. So, it is important that we do not attempt to "lay up treasures on earth—for where your treasure is, that is where your reward will be." This is not yet the time of our Lord's kingdom reign. Satan is still here. The two of them are not going to be reigning at the same time. We are living in the time when we see many things happening, and we want to stay together as students of the Bible. We desire to study together and to ask for more of the Holy Spirit.

- There were presentations about Israel. In the discourse, "Watchman, How Far Is the Night?" Israel was shown to be a demonstration of God's timekeeping and the progress of his plan. In

another talk, “The High Places Which Were not Taken Away,” it was recalled that ancient Israel was to destroy all the idols in the land, but they failed to comply. God is now removing the current structures of this present evil world, but it is not accomplished in one moment’s time—it is a gradual process. An interesting current situation is that Israel’s enemies are now fighting each other. God’s original promise still stands, “I will drive them out.”

- A lesson from Baalam. Balaam was guilty of the mistake of not making firm decisions. He persisted in wanting to go and financially profit by cursing the Israelites. He kept equivocating with God and valued more the earthly riches than the blessing of the Lord.

- The story of Phineas and the Israelites. After entering the promised land the people lost their interest in God and in this instance “the people rose up to play.” They were easily seduced by the prostitutes of Moab. The Israelite men not only joined in the immorality, but also bowed down to the Moabite idols. 24,000 people died as punishment in this incident. Perhaps more importantly, the Lord decreed that the elders and the leadership of Israel, regardless of whether they had gone to Moab or not, were also destroyed. The question was posed, What is the responsibility of our elders? It is considerable.

- Discourse on “God’s Voice.” God talked to Noah; he talked to Moses; and he talked to Abraham. The speaker then moved to a quotation from the book of Hebrews, “In the old days, God spoke to us through His prophets, but in this time He has

spoken to us through His Son.” It was particularly thrilling to hear that our focus now is to be on our Lord and Savior!

•A talk on the subject, “The Faith Once Delivered to the Saints.” This was followed by a closing service and traditional Love Feast with the breaking of bread.



Munster class members

It was indeed a great joy to visit the individual classes situated and thriving in the western side of Germany—Ludwigshafen, Bruchhausen, Dortmund, Munster and Hamburg. We were richly blessed in every one of those meetings. What impressed us the most was the spirit among the brethren. You could feel the passion for God’s Word, for understanding his plans, and a passion for doing his will. It was obvious that it was the major part of their lives.

The convention at Korbach was likewise a special season of joyful fellowship. We encourage any of



Munster class members

the readers to consider attending next year's German General Convention. We stand by ready to assist any who would desire to join such a blessed gathering. I appreciate

being asked to serve at the 2018 German convention, and for Sister Dawn and myself, the trip was a wonderful blessing.



Dortmund class members

“I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

HOW OFTEN WE hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest one thing that practically all can do is to send one or more *Dawn* gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that *The Dawn* magazine enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of Truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only \$12.00, and you can have three names entered for just \$30.00! It is simple to do when you use the coupon(s) below, and on the next page.

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. Allard

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

M. Balko

Jacksonville, FL December 2

D. Christiansen

Chicago, IL December 29,30

M. Davis

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

R. Goodman

Atlanta, GA December 2

K. Humphreys

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

J. Parkinson

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

D. Rawson

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

D. Rice

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

T. Thomassen

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

R. Wojcik

Oakhurst, CA December 7-10

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

IBADAN THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, December 1—Ibadan Ecclesia place of worship, #24 Bola Faremi Street Coca Cola Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

SOUTHWEST CONVENTION, December 7-10—ECCO Conference Center, 43803 Highway 41, Oakhurst, CA 93644. Contact D. Rawson. Phone: (408) 997-6736 or Email: rawsondr@yahoo.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 29,30—Alta Villa Banquets, 430 N Addison Road, Addison, IL 60101. Contact J. Farrell. Phone: (630) 469-9511

AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, January 25-28—Camp Wilkin, Anglesea, Victoria, Australia. Contact R. Charlton. Email: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 15-17—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact hotel for room reservations. Phone: (916) 923-1100. Specify “Bible Students” to receive special rate of \$98.00. Rate good until January 20. For other information, contact J. Freer. Phone: (916) 879-4655 or Email: shootingln@aol.com

NIGERIA CONVENTION, February 22-24—Uzi Obudi Agwa Owerri Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu. Phone: 2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 2-4—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822. Contact hotel for room reservations. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify “Orlando Bible Students” to receive special rate of \$131.00. Online booking code: SBO. For other information, contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

MOVING?



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