

The Dawn

A Herald of Christ's Presence



The DAWN

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Renewing Our Vows

*“When thou shalt
vow a vow unto the
LORD thy God,
thou shalt not
slack to pay it: for
the LORD thy God
will surely require
it of thee; and it
would be sin
in thee.”*
—Deuteronomy
23:21

For generations, the start of another year has often been associated with the resolve to set certain new goals. It is thus a proper time to be thinking about making commitments that will improve our lives. As we enter the New Year 2026, many of the Lord’s people will also take the opportunity for solemn

reflection regarding their consecrated walk in newness of life. They will rededicate, refocus, and strive for higher attainments of growth as footstep followers of Jesus, and to be more faithful in carrying out their vows of dedication, sacrifice, and service to the Lord, even unto death.

Turning over a new page on our calendars is an excellent time to reflect on the abundant goodness, mercies, and blessings received from the loving hands of our Heavenly Father during the year now ending. We do so with much joy and thankfulness.

It is also a time to look forward with increased anticipation and hope as we see increasing evidence that Christ's long-promised kingdom is nearer than when we first believed. (Rom. 13:11) We look forward to using our time, talents, and opportunities in new ways to serve our loving Heavenly Father and his people. We also will continue to prepare ourselves to share with him in his ultimate plans and wonderful purpose to bring blessings of life and peace to the poor sin-sick and dying human family, and to provide reconciliation for all of the obedient under the administration of Christ's coming kingdom of peace.

Making a Vow

To "vow" means to make a solemn promise, or pledge, to do a certain thing. When the sincere follower of our Lord Jesus makes a vow, it reflects the heart condition of the brother or sister, and represents a life of total commitment and service to the Heavenly Father. It involves the sacrifice of all that we have and all that we hope to be. (Ps. 50:5; I Pet. 2:5) Making a vow to God must be done with our full heart intention to carry out that pledge and to be faithful to it. David's son Solomon spoke of the seriousness of making vows and faithfully keeping them when he wrote, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."—Eccles. 5:4,5

A Living Sacrifice

All like-minded children of God are energized by the wise counsel of the Apostle Paul, who wrote,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:1,2

Paul’s inspiring exhortation to give our lives as a sacrifice to the Heavenly Father is addressed only to those who have fully given their hearts and lives to the Lord and have been justified by the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice. (Rom. 5:8,9; I Pet. 1:18,19) These have been called and selected by God during this present acceptable time of sacrifice. As the ancient high priests of Israel offered themselves to God, so also did Jesus. “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.”—Heb. 7:27,28

The apostle appreciated his privilege to live a life of sacrifice to God. He reminded his beloved Timothy in his letter to him, saying, “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: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”—II Tim. 2:11-13

Highest Priority

The Apostle Peter spoke of our walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and stressed the importance of making

it our highest priority in life. “By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”—II Pet. 1:4-7, *English Standard Version*

Continuing, the apostle adds, “Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—vss. 10,11, *Revised Standard Version*

Gaining Christ

Paul wrote a very personal account of his own experiences in his letter to the church at Philippi that are meaningful lessons for us. He said, “Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his

death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”—Phil. 3:7-11, *ESV*

The apostle tells us that he was ready to give up all personal hopes, ambitions, and honors to receive a position of favor with Christ. It should be the same with the Christian. All other interests and earthly advantages have no lasting value. They fade into insignificance in comparison with the heavenly hope, and to attain the divine favor and blessing as “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”—Rom. 8:16,17

Jesus Taught in Parables

An important lesson in connection with how we pay our vows to the Heavenly Father was given to us by the Master when he gave the parable of the talents. “The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.” (Matt. 25:14,15) Since Pentecost, each of Jesus’ consecrated followers has been responsible and accountable to God in accordance with our own several abilities. This is shown in their faithfulness to use what they possess in their service to him, including their time, influence, and opportunity. “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”—II Cor. 8:12

The Five Talents and the Two

Continuing the parable, Jesus said, “Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money." —Matt. 25:16-18

Responsible stewards will seek and find ways and places where they can use the talents they possess that are fully dedicated to the Heavenly Father. They use sanctified wisdom and judgment to their best advantage under the providence and guidance of God's Word. It is our duty to study how we may best use our talents to receive the greatest advantage and bring glory and honor to the Lord. The servant who had one talent did not show proper judgment, but carelessly buried his talent in earthly desires and pursuits, thus indicating a lack of love and appreciation to God for the blessings received from him.

Jesus then said, "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, 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. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, 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. 25:19-23

The statement in the parable that the Lord later reckoned with his servants points to the fact that

each of Jesus' footstep followers are being judged as to their faithfulness in using the talents, abilities, and opportunities afforded them during their walk as Christians. The Apostle Peter said, "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." (I Pet. 4:17) To this thought, Paul added, "We labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—II Cor. 5:9,10

The Unprofitable Servant

Continuing from the parable, we read, "Then the one who had received one talent came forward and said, Master, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you haven't planted and gathering where you haven't scattered any seed. Being afraid, I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here, take what is yours! His master answered him, You evil and lazy servant! So you knew that I harvested where I haven't planted and gathered where I haven't scattered any seed? Then you should have invested my money with the bankers. When I returned, I would have received my money back with interest."—Matt. 25:24-27, *International Standard Version*

The unprofitable servant who had the one talent serves as an important point of reference, as shown in the verses that follow: "Then the master said, Take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the ten talents, because to everyone who has something, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the person who has

[gained] nothing, even what he has will be taken away from him.”—vss. 28,29, *ISV*

Through this parable, Jesus taught that those who fail to use the opportunities and privileges that are available to them to serve God will have these privileges taken from them. They will be given to others who have been faithful in using their talents and opportunities profitably.

Satan’s Challenge

Our Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of total commitment for us to follow. He demonstrated that dedication soon after he was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. It was at that time that the Heavenly Father allowed Satan to tempt him according to the flesh, the world, and the Adversary. The Gospel account reads, “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.”—Matt. 4:1,2

Jesus challenged Satan’s first suggestion that if he were the Son of God he could command that the very stones be made bread to satisfy his hunger. Jesus quickly responded with a scriptural answer, when he proclaimed, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”—Matt. 4:3,4, Deut. 8:3

In his second attempt, Satan quoted a scripture—Psalm 91:11,12—that seemingly assured Jesus that if he were indeed the Son of God, he could cast himself from the pinnacle of the Temple with no fear of harm to himself. Again the Lord turned to a scripture for his answer—one that properly qualified the meaning of that which Satan had deceptively

quoted. Jesus said: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”—Matt. 4:5-7; Deut. 6:16

Satan’s third attempt against Jesus was to take him mentally to a very high mountain from which they could view all the kingdoms of the world. The Devil offered to give them to Jesus if he would fall down and worship him. However, our Lord answered again, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”—Matt. 4:8-10; Deut. 6:13,14

Later the Apostle Paul identified Satan as the god of this present evil world. “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Cor. 4:4) When Jesus was before Pilate, he acknowledged that he would have a kingdom, but it would not be “of this world.” He said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world: ... now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John 18:36) By this we understand that any sharing with Satan in the rule of this present evil world would have been sin on Jesus’ part. Knowing this, the Lord was not duped by Satan’s offer.

Preparing for the Warfare

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul urges, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:10-12) The apostle encouraged the brethren

toward greater faith, confidence, and trust in the strength of our Lord. This is especially important at the time in which we now live.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—vss. 13-17

Putting on the entire armor of God is necessary to protect us from the fiery darts that may come our way, because our warfare is against the prince of darkness and wicked spirits in heavenly places. If Satan realizes that we are well protected and resisting him with the Heavenly Father’s provisions of grace and strength, he will retreat from his attacks, though he will always be watchful to see if we have in any way put aside the Christian armor through lack of vigilance.—James 4:7; I Pet. 5:8,9

Facing This Troubled World

As we enter the New Year 2026, we do so with awareness of the fear and uncertainty that now grips the nations. Within many so-called western countries is increasing polarization of government and people’s views toward nearly every domestic and world issue. This has resulted in increasing political and social unrest and, in some cases, violence and killing. Along a different front, Artificial

Intelligence (AI) is growing exponentially throughout the world. With this are many fears of its use in destructive ways, both against individuals as well as society in general. A gradual weakening of hiring and the job market is also of great concern to many people and families. This concern is exacerbated due to the prospect of AI eliminating vast numbers of jobs as it becomes more widely used.

On the world scene, the Russia-Ukraine war continues without any agreement on a definitive peaceful solution. Though Israel and Hamas recently agreed to a cease-fire and certain other provisions, the situation in Israel and the Middle East in general is still a tinderbox of potential trouble, attacks, and possibly resumption of all-out war. Added to this is increasing antisemitism in many countries, as people and nations are increasingly blaming Israel for the many problems confronting that part of the world. Terrorist organizations still operate in various parts of the world, causing many to fear when and where another attack may come. These, among many other evidences of the growing turmoil in the world as we enter 2026, surely hearken back to Paul's words, "In the last days perilous times shall come." (II Tim. 3:1) How important it is to Christians, therefore, that we all the more recognize the necessity of putting on the whole armor of God, and maintaining our resolve to fight the good fight of faith.—I Tim. 6:12

A Daily Reminder

Many students of the Bible are familiar with the reading of "My Morning Resolve," which has been a wonderful source of daily help and encouragement to many Christians. Let us continue to rejoice

in its wonderful scope of blessings as we strive to make our calling and election sure. We include it here as a reminder of our responsibility and privilege to renew our vows to the Lord now and throughout the New Year just before us.

My Morning Resolve

My earliest thought I desire shall be, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD [for grace to help]. I will pay my vows unto the most High.”—Ps. 116:12-14

Remembering the divine call, “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Ps. 50:5), I resolve that by the Lord’s assisting grace I will today, as a saint of God, fulfil my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I may attain unto the Heavenly inheritance in joint-heirship with my Redeemer.

I will strive to be simple and sincere toward all.

I will seek not to please and honor self, but the Lord.

I will be careful to honor the Lord with my lips, that my words may be unctuous and blessed to all.

I will seek to be faithful to the Lord, the Truth, the brethren and all with whom I have to do, not only in great matters, but also in the little things of life.

Trusting myself to divine care and the providential overruling of all my interests for my highest welfare, I will seek not only to be pure in heart, but to repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement.

I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord’s providence may permit, because,

“Faith can firmly trust him, come what may.” ■

Stirring Up to Righteousness

Key Verses: *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

—I John 1:8,9

Selected Scriptures:
I John 1:5-10; 2:1-8

6:20, Revised Version

John’s epistle was written to fortify Christians against these subversive teachings of philosophers. He exhorted them to hold fast only to the doctrines of Jesus and the apostles, and to consider these philosophizing teachings as lies. All such false teachers were to be considered representatives of the “many antichrists,” or opponents of Christ, which the Apostle John warned were “even now” in the world.—I John 2:18

John’s object in writing this epistle was to stir them up to righteousness: “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.

This epistle is supposed by

scholars to have been written around the year A.D. 90. By then Christianity had attained considerable prominence, and believers were scattered throughout the Gentile world. Many things in Christianity commended it to the Greek philosophers of that time. However, they sought to combine with it their pagan philosophies, and many became so-called “Christian philosophers.” This, the Apostle Paul warned, was “knowledge which is falsely so called.”—I Tim.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”
—I John 2:12-14

At the time of this writing, the Apostle John was quite old. He had become very mellow in character because of his experiences and thus spoke very tenderly to those both mature and new in the faith. He desired that they might realize the important responsibility of abstaining from sin, continuing in God’s love, and thus maturing in Christ.

It is a noteworthy fact that the majority of Christians never experience the fullness of joy and peace and blessing that they might possess. Many are content with first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and as “babes,” do not go further to the full development of these principles in sacrifice and service. (I Cor. 3:1) John desired to stir up the minds and hearts of believers to an appreciation and use of their privileges in Christ, that thereby they might grow and develop in him.

“That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,” from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, was John’s testimony. (I John 1:1) He, and the other apostles, had seen Christ in his life and in his death; they saw him after his resurrection; they knew these things were true. The apostles suffered the loss of all things in proclaiming the word of Truth.—Phil. 3:8

The testimony on which Christian faith rests is not man’s, but is God’s. Man had no testimony on this matter worth listening to until God spoke, first through Jesus, and afterward the apostles. Because they saw and knew Jesus, we have their sure testimony, and their “testimony is true.”—John 21:24 ■

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Key Verse: *“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”*
—Luke 15:24

Selected Scripture:
Luke 15:11-24

The parable of the prodigal

son begins with these words: “A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey

into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, ... he began to be in want.”—Luke 15:11-14

This parable illustrates in a general sense God’s dealings with all mankind. The younger son, having received much from his father, left his father’s house and wasted all that he had received, spending it “with riotous living.” Having left the privileges of his father’s house, he illustrates all those who have fallen into sin and have become “dead in trespasses and sins.”—Eph. 2:1; Rom. 3:23

After realizing his waywardness, the younger son later humbly returned to his father. He said: “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when

he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”—Luke 15:18-20

The wayward son realized his mistakes and returned to his father, who accepted him gladly. He was dead, as far as the father was concerned, while he was away. He was alive again, however, when he willingly returned. How grandly this illustrates to us the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God. In giving this parable, Jesus desired that his hearers should have an illustration of God’s goodness and care in his desire to recover the lost race of mankind. Indeed, all were lost due to Adam’s sin, but all will have the opportunity for life through Christ. “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—I Cor. 15:21,22

In another lesson from this parable, the father well represents Jehovah God; the elder son illustrates Israel’s faithful servants and prophets of the Old Testament; and the younger son represents the remainder of the nation who were largely inclined to willfulness and waywardness as respects divine law. Because the nation of Israel as a whole rejected Jesus as their Messiah and crucified him, they were rejected by God. Jesus said, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”—Matt. 23:38

Like the wayward son, however, Israel will also return to full favor with God. “All Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. ... For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”—Rom. 11:26-33 ■

The Pharisee and the Publican

Key Verse: “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”
—***Luke 18:14***

Selected Scripture:
Luke 18:9-14

The Pharisees were thought to be a very religious class among the Jews. They were devout, at least outwardly, and very exact in keeping their traditions. Inwardly, however, as the Lord tells us, as a group they were far from right. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” Jesus, because he could read their hearts, was competent to make the additional pronouncement that they were like sepulchers, beautifully white on the outside but inwardly full of corruption.—Matt. 23:27

There are similar groups among Christendom today—those who are outwardly moral, very particular, exact, scrupulous, and yet not pleasing to the Lord. They are proud of their righteousness and fail to realize that even though they may be naturally less depraved than others, they have nothing wherein to boast. They, like all mankind, are far from being actually perfect. “There is none righteous, no, not one. ... They are all gone out of the way.” (Rom. 3:10-12) The parable of our lesson is intended to show that God looks with more sympathy and compassion upon the more sinful person, who is humble and recognizes his condition, rather than on the morally better

individual, who boasts of his supposed righteousness.

The parable begins, “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luke 18:10-12) The self-righteous Pharisee was evidently, in many respects, a good moral person. However, he was very proud, and he boasted of his righteous deeds. He also was very quick to condemn others, a telling sign of a poor heart condition.

The other man in the parable—a publican, or tax collector—was of a lower class and generally despised by the people. He had many weaknesses and sinful blemishes, but he realized his condition. “The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”—vs. 13

All Christians, by virtue of their relationship to God, the covering of their sins, the begetting of the Spirit, and the transforming work progressing in their hearts, have every reason to give thanks to the Lord. However, they have nothing whereof to boast, or as the Apostle Paul puts it, “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? ... why dost thou glory?”—I Cor. 4:7

If, therefore, the difference between ourselves and others be recognized as of the Lord and his work of grace in us, rather than of ourselves, this is the proper attitude of heart. All who have this realization may properly give thanks to the Lord that in this respect they are different from others. Only by God and his Son, Christ Jesus, are we different. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.”—Eph. 2:8-10 ■

Jesus and Peter

Key Verse: *“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”*
—John 21:17

Selected Scripture:
John 21:15-19

denial of the Lord, clearing him of any further rebuke.

In his question of Peter, the Lord simply asked, “Lovest thou me?” The Master did not berate him for his three denials, but now merely wanted to be assured of the depth of Peter’s love and devotion. Perhaps we might have felt it necessary to make Peter apologize first. Let us learn well this lesson of reproving others very gently, by a hint rather than by a direct charge; by an inquiry respecting their present heart condition, rather than

In our Key Verse, the resur-rected Jesus asked Peter for the third time if he loved him. Hearing this question the third time must have sent the memory of Peter back to the scene in Caiaphas’ Judgment Hall, when he denied his Master three times, even with cursing. (Matt. 26:69-75) Three times Peter had denied the Lord, and now three times would the Lord have him reaffirm his devotion to him. By doing so, Peter would receive additional assurances of his full reinstatement in his Master’s love and favor. These three inquiries asked of Peter are the only recorded mention made that hearkened back to his

respecting a former condition, in which they may have erred. Jesus' questions to Peter also served the important purpose of countering his tendency to love and serve his fishing business more than serving the cause of Christ.

When our Lord asked Peter "lovest thou me?" in the first two inquiries, the Greek word "*agapao*" is used, which signifies love in its highest form—selfless, sacrificing, and fully devoted, regardless of circumstance or reward. Now, in his third question, the Greek word "*phileo*" is used, signifying familial love, brotherly affection, and friendship. Peter was grieved at this. He knew that he loved the Master with brotherly love and affection, but realized that he had not yet reached the highest form of love—*agapao*.

One of the most praiseworthy traits in Peter's character was his perseverance. If he made a misstep, he was quick to change course once it was brought to his attention. He felt remorse that there was any cloud between him and the Lord that his repentance had not fully removed. Jesus knew Peter's heart condition was pure. Rather than belabor his former mistake, he let Peter know of the work he wanted him to do. By asking Peter to "feed my lambs" and "my sheep," Jesus is emphasizing that tending his flock, not fishing, was to now be Peter's occupation. (John 21:15-17) The Lord was reminding Peter that he had previously called him to be a "fisher of men." Knowing his heart to be still loyal and zealous, Jesus renewed that commission.—Matt. 4:19

Had Peter continued in the fishing business and neglected the Lord's sheep, his actions would have contradicted his reply. This would have been loving in word, but not in deed and in truth. We also are to learn the lesson of this experience. In harmony Jesus' words, let us leave worldly aims and ambitions behind and be heartily engaged, as Peter became, in ministering to the needs of the spirit-begotten sheep, our fellow brethren in Christ. —I Pet 4:10,11 ■

In Season and Out of Season

***“Preach the word;
be instant in
season, out of
season; reprove,
rebuke, exhort with
all longsuffering
and doctrine.”
—II Timothy 4:2***

The Apostle Paul’s second letter to his beloved Timothy was written during his imprisonment at Rome. He was to soon end his consecrated course in death, and these are among his last written words. His wise admonition and

counsel represented many years of experience and hardship in the narrow way of sacrifice, and in preaching the Truth to those who had an ear to hear his message. His words thus take on added meaning and perspective, and they are worthy of our deep consideration, study, and meditation.

The apostle loved his younger brother Timothy very much, even referring to him as a son. As he began this final letter, Paul opened his heart to him and wrote, “To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my

prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.”—II Tim. 1:2-4

It was not uncommon for Paul to address Timothy as a son. He had done so in his first letter on two occasions. (I Tim. 1:2,18) Once again in his second letter, he said, “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (II Tim. 2:1-3) The apostle had also spoken of him as a son in a letter written to the church at Corinth. He explained to them, “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.”—I Cor. 4:17

Tender Memories

Paul recalled many tender memories and his long-time association with Timothy and other members of his family. We read, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”—II Tim. 1:5-7

A Partaker of Afflictions

The great apostle was in a Roman prison awaiting his inevitable fate. It was surely an “out of season”

experience for him to continue being faithful even unto his death. Yet, as an encouragement to his younger brother he took the opportunity to write to him. He told him, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” —II Tim. 1:8-10

Timothy gladly received the wonderful message and further counsel from the apostle. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” (II Tim. 2:4,5) “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: if we deny him, he also will deny us.” (vss. 11,12) “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [Greek: handling] the word of truth.”—vs. 15

Our Featured Text

Our featured scripture is taken from chapter four of Paul’s letter. Following this he continues, warning Timothy: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own

lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”—II Tim. 4:3-5

Sound advice was given to Timothy in our theme text that he should be ready to preach the Truth at all times and places, even under inconvenient and uncomfortable circumstances—that is, “out of season” for him. However, Paul cautioned Timothy to not intrude himself upon others if it was not a convenient time—“in season”—for them to receive his words. Perhaps an opportunity to proclaim the glad tidings of joy might be made available to him at a future time. It would be more appropriate to use patience in such an instance.

Reprove

In our text, Timothy was encouraged to reprove, rebuke, and exhort when preaching the wonderful doctrines of truth, while at the same time exercising much longsuffering. To “reprove” means to refute or convince, and suggests the delicate art of exposing a particular error of belief or personal behavior, and then carefully and thoughtfully seeking to correct it.

In the apostle’s letter to Titus, he used the same word on three occasions that indicate the proper manner for reproof. In the first instance, Paul wrote, “Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute [reprove, convince] those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9, *New American Standard Bible*) Again he pointed

out, “This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith.” (Titus 1:13, *NASB*) The third time he chose this word he wrote, “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” —Titus 2:15, *NASB*

In connection with the importance of reproving with the proper spirit, Jesus said, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” (Matt. 10:16) The Apostle Peter also admonished, “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” —I Pet. 3:15, *NASB*

Rebuke

Paul also included the word “rebuke” in his letter to Timothy. To rebuke means to censure, admonish, or to forbid a certain thing. It is used in a wide variety of ways in the New Testament. For example, during the course of Jesus’ earthly ministry he explained to his disciples that it was necessary that he encounter much hardship and suffer many trials before being put to death at the hands of Israel’s religious leaders. However, he assured them that he would not remain in the grave, but that his loving Heavenly Father would resurrect him after three days.—Mark 8:31

The scriptural account of this particular instance includes two references where the word rebuke was used. We read, “He [Jesus] spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But

when he [Jesus] had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.”—vss. 32,33

Peter loved Jesus very much, but he had to learn to not contradict, correct, or rebuke the Master. Jesus himself then rebuked his disciple to teach him a very important lesson. He made the distinction between our Heavenly Father’s ultimate purpose, “things that be of God,” and that of human wisdom and the opposing spirit of evil and the Adversary.

The word rebuke was used another time when Peter’s mother-in-law was sick with a severe fever. They called for Jesus to come and help heal her sickness. “He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.” (Luke 4:39) We are not told the details of how she ministered unto the others. However, this action showed the remarkable power that Jesus was given, which serves to illustrate the greater healing power that will be available to him for healing the entire sin-sick world during his coming kingdom.

Another illustration of the word rebuke, and Jesus’ miraculous power, occurred when he and his disciples were together in a ship. We read, “There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”—Mark 4:37-39

In a larger sense, this “great storm” represents the storms of life and the tempest-tossed waves with which the Lord’s people have done battle since the Day of Pentecost. This has been the experience of these throughout their present earthly sojourn. There is also an even more particular meaning related to the end of this age, and the great “time of trouble” and restless waves that are now upon the nations.—Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; Luke 21:25

It was the Master who then said, “Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” The psalmist also reassures us: “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.” (Ps. 107:29) That “desired haven” will be the glorious kingdom of Christ, which will bring blessings to all the families of the earth.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8

Exhort

Paul’s final admonition to his beloved Timothy was to “exhort.” This word means to call near or invite. It is usually used in a positive sense and, in his letter, the apostle used it to encourage and urge his younger brother to pursue a course of action and conduct that would be pleasing to the Heavenly Father. He was to maintain this attitude of heart especially during his preaching activities.

When writing to the Thessalonian brethren, Paul chose the same word to encourage them to greater faithfulness in the Lord. He wrote, “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more

and more.” (I Thess. 4:1) Later, he told them, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded [fainthearted], support the weak, be patient toward all men.”—I Thess. 5:14

In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, Paul also urged them by saying, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”—Heb. 3:12-14

The Apostle Paul’s tireless ministry for the Lord and his people is unparalleled in the history and development of the Early Church. The accounts of his pilgrimages and writings occupy a major portion of the New Testament scriptures. He willingly suffered affliction and severe trials on behalf of the true followers of our Lord Jesus. He was faithful to his ministry, whether it was “in season” or “out of season” to himself. He also encouraged those to whom he preached to share in the present sufferings of Christ and the grand heavenly calling.—II Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1

An Acceptable Time

In his letter to the brethren at Corinth, Paul said, “Working together also we call upon you that ye receive not in vain the grace of God—for He saith, In an acceptable time I did hear thee, and in a day of salvation I did help thee, lo, now is a well-accepted time; lo, now, a day of salvation.”—II Cor. 6:1,2, *Young’s Literal Translation*

We have been invited to become workers together with God, and in the carrying out of his ultimate plan and purpose for the reconciliation of the poor sin-sick human family. The apostle has thus admonished that we not receive the bountiful grace of God in vain, but fulfill our covenant of sacrifice faithfully even unto death.—Ps. 50:5; Rev. 2:10

For the true Christian, now is “an acceptable time” to offer our lives in total consecration to our loving Heavenly Father. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:1,2

Full Assurance of Faith

Having given our lives in consecration to God, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”—Heb. 10:22-25

Ministers of God

We have received of the marvelous grace of God. Therefore, let us heed the further admonition of the apostle. “Giving no offence in any thing, that the

ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”—II Cor. 6:3-10

“To Die Is Gain”

Paul’s greatest desire was to be faithful to his heavenly calling and share with our Lord Jesus in his future kingdom beyond the veil of death. Nevertheless, he was willing to leave all matters pertaining to his earthly pilgrimage in God’s hands. This is clearly shown in the letter he wrote to the church at Philippi. He told them, “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”—Phil. 1:20

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) needful for you.” (Phil 1:21-24) The apostle was hard pressed by the two aspects of God’s providence, to live and continue to serve the special people of God, or to die and be with the Lord. By the Heavenly Father’s wonderful grace, he permitted Paul to remain a little while longer in the flesh to serve the members of the body of Christ.

Out of the treasures of Paul’s heart he continued to speak the words of Truth. With this spiritual hope imbedded deeply in his heart, he said, “Having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”—vss. 25-27

Paul had faithfully kept the faith that was addressed by Jude. In his short epistle, he wrote, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 1:3) “The faith” centers on the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, and the merit of its application on our behalf. The apostle abided faithfully in the wonderful promises of God’s Holy Word. He could therefore write to the church at Rome with encouragement. “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, [shall be] eternal life.”—Rom. 2:7

Paul's Final Testimony

Paul knew that he had come to the end of his consecrated walk in Christ Jesus, and that he was to soon give his life as a final sacrifice to the Heavenly Father. To Timothy, he thus acknowledged, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—II Tim. 4:6-8

The apostle did not complain about his confinement in a Roman prison. He did not murmur concerning the many trials and tribulations he willingly endured along the narrow way in which he had walked for so long. There were many times when he endured great affliction and suffering, yet he went forward with the task that our loving Heavenly Father had given him to do. (II Cor. 11:23-30) Neither did he take the opportunity to boast of his vast knowledge of the Scriptures, or of his many accomplishments as the greatest of the apostles. His last testimonial serves as an inspiration to all of the Lord's consecrated people who are yet striving to attain to the "mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:14

As Paul closed his letter to Timothy, he recalled some of the disappointing circumstances he had experienced with certain brethren who had caused him much pain and had forsaken him. He wrote, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." (II Tim. 4:16) However, he acknowledged

that our Heavenly Father had been with him throughout his Christian ministry. “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear.”—II Tim. 4:17

In Paul’s final letter, he gave Timothy wonderful counsel that was surely an encouragement to him at that time in the history of the Early Church. However, it has also been a source of rich blessing for all the Lord’s people since Pentecost. “The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”—vs.18

“In Due Season”

To the church in Galatia Paul wrote, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:9,10

We are thus encouraged to renew our determination to be faithful to our heavenly calling. Let us take every opportunity to share the message of Truth, especially as the days in which we now live become more violent and troubling. May we endeavor to do this whether it be for us “in season” or “out of season.” ■

2026 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Tuesday, March 31.

The Noble Bereans

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”
—Acts 17:11,12

As we enter another year, it is an appropriate time for all Truth-seeking students of the Bible to be reminded of the importance to diligently study the Word of God. The Bible is readily acknowledged as the greatest book of all time. Its far-reaching antiquity extends back to the very beginning of earth’s marvelous creative work and its ultimate preparation as a home for God’s earthly creation. Within its pages is found overwhelming evidence of its importance and

meaning to the human family. For centuries, it has been accepted by countless numbers of people as the divinely inspired Word of our loving Heavenly Father, the great God of the universe.

The Bible’s teachings and righteous principles have set it apart from all other books, and it remains

the standard for Truth even in our modern-day world. Its principal theme of redemption, and the ultimate recovery of the human family from the ravages of sin and death, may be found in its various books that were written by many authors over long centuries of time. This serves to emphasize the Bible's divinely inspired harmony and purpose. Our attention is thus drawn to the various principles of Truth, in which each inspired writer harmonizes with those that others have written, yet in a different time and place.

The Holy Word of God has been referred to as the very torch of civilization. Its moral and ethical teachings have done more to influence the minds of mankind to live a nobler life than has any other book. It is a nearly inexhaustible source of inspiring and consoling messages. Many have found the Bible to be a source of comfort during times of sorrow. Others have found strength to face the uncertain scenes of life, while some turn to its many lessons to find reassurance.

In particular, the Bible is the textbook of Christianity. It reveals the Heavenly Father's wonderful plan and purpose in the creation of his human family, and its salvation. This message is being carried out to a grand and ultimate conclusion that will culminate in the future administration of Christ's glorious kingdom of power and authority over all the earth. This, the Bible says, is "according to a plan of the ages," which God "formed for the anointed Jesus our Lord."—Eph. 3:11, *The Emphatic Diaglott*

With respect to the Bible's wonderful author and his eternal purpose, the Psalmist David wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament

sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”—Ps. 19:1-10

Ministering for the Faith

As the Early Church was being established, the Apostle Paul and his companions traveled extensively to minister the Truth to Christian converts. They helped these new brethren in Christ organize congregations for study, service, and fellowship. By God’s great wisdom and providence, Luke, the historian and author of the Book of Acts, has recorded many of these important events.—Acts 1:1,2; Luke 1:1-4

The knowledge of Truth which Paul and others were preaching proclaimed the Heavenly Father’s plan and purpose for the ultimate salvation and reconciliation of his sin-sick and dying human family.

(Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:20; Tit. 2:11) The Holy Spirit of Truth also opened the way for a little flock of Christ's faithful followers to strive for the heavenly calling and to receive a position as part of the bride of Christ. We are thus assured, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

Those who are faithful will be privileged to share with their glorified Lord in his heavenly kingdom, and to extend blessings to all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:16-18) This glorious arrangement also provides for the resurrection of all who are in their graves—those who unknowingly wait for the establishment of that yet future kingdom under the rule of Christ.—John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:25,26

Conflict Along the Way

During the apostle's extensive travels to spread the glad tidings of joy, many new Christian believers were brought into the fold, and to an appreciation of the Truth and fellowship with the Lord's people. However, prejudice and conflict often arose and followed Paul and his companions wherever they went. Friction existed between those who strongly held to the familiar teachings of the Jewish Law, and those who were teaching the new doctrines of Christ Jesus. These teachings, in the majority of cases, many heard for the first time.

Just prior to our featured scripture, Paul and Silas had escaped by night to make the trip from Thessalonica to Berea. (Acts 17:10) When they arrived they were blessed by the reception they had received at the local synagogue. They were greatly impressed by

the brethren's keen interest and spiritual growth in their study of God's Word, and they noted that this set them apart as being "more noble" than those who were of the congregation at Thessalonica.

An Admirable Trait

The word "noble" as it is used in this instance, points to the admirable quality of mind and character that the brethren in Christ at Berea manifested when they searched the Scriptures. It was, evidently, their desire to make the doctrine and teachings of the Truth their own. An improved reading of this scripture expands the thought of noble-mindedness, and has been so rendered in other Bible translations. For comparison we read, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men." (Acts 17:11,12, *New American Standard Bible*) Thus is emphasized the desire that these brethren had, not only in searching the Scriptures daily, but striving to examine and prove them carefully and with "great eagerness."

Paul and Peter's Testimony

Paul admonished the brethren in the church at Thessalonica: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:21) When writing to his beloved brother Timothy, the apostle encouraged him: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [handling, *NASB*] the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) Later he admonished, "Continue in the things which thou

didst learn, and wast convinced of, knowing by whom thou hast been instructed; and that from a child thou hast known those holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise for salvation, through that faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for that discipline which is in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work.”—II Tim. 3:14-17, *Diaglott*

In his first epistle, the Apostle Peter similarly urged, “As each one has received a free gift, so minister it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold favor of God. If any one speak, let it be as the oracles of God; if any one serve, let it be as from the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ; whose is the glory and the power for the ages of the ages. Amen.”—I Pet. 4:10,11, *Diaglott*

When accepted with a proper condition of heart, the admonition and encouragement of the Apostles Paul, Peter, and others have helped develop a Christ-like spirit in all of the Lord’s footstep followers since Pentecost. This includes their being proper stewards of the Truth, which is an important lesson for all Christians to emulate. This is especially true now for those who are living during the closing years of this “present evil world.”—Gal. 1:4

In Remembrance of These Things

The wonderful words of Peter written nearly two thousand years ago continue to be a blessing to us as followers of Christ. He proclaimed, “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these

things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.”—II Pet. 1:12-15

The apostle continually spoke the words of Truth that he had received from our Lord Jesus during his earthly ministry. “We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming [Greek: presence] of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”—vss. 16-18

Peter emphasized further that we receive the Truth by way of the Holy Spirit, the power and influence, of God. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”—vss. 19-21

In his first letter, Peter made clear the fact that the words he spoke were to those who had given their lives in full dedication to God, “That the trial

of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing [revealing] of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end [result or outcome] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”—I Pet. 1:7-9

These words of Truth had not been revealed to anyone else, not the prophets of old, nor even the angels. He explained, “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”—vss. 10-13

Wisdom from Above

The epistle of James is thought to have been among the earliest of the New Testament writings. It represents the teachings that were first given to the Jews who had converted to Christianity soon after our Lord Jesus’ earthly ministry had ended. James stresses, “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

The Heavenly Father is the source of all Truth, and by way of his Holy Spirit he gives his people understanding. “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”—vss. 18,19

Concerning the wonderful provisions of God to his people, James also pointed to the significance of God’s wisdom always being pure and holy. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”—James 3:17,18

In the foregoing verses our attention is drawn to the fact that heavenly wisdom works in harmony with the divine character. Although the spirit of wisdom that comes from above is peaceable, the apostle did not place its importance before purity. True wisdom is peaceable only when it is consistent with holiness and purity. It can only be at peace with that which is holy. Gentleness then follows purity and is peaceable when it is sanctified by the Truth. Heavenly wisdom then rejoices in being “full of mercy”; and the “fruit of righteousness” is developed in the hearts of those who have been illuminated by the wisdom from above.

The Light of Truth

The Prophet Isaiah speaks of light and its relationship to life and Truth. In presenting the divine

purpose, he writes, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."—Isa. 42:16; 62:1

Many other scriptures also bring our attention to the special gift of light. "With thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance." "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—Ps. 36:9; 89:15; 119:105; Prov. 4:18

As a guide and spiritual perspective for the followers of Christ, we read, "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."—Luke 11:33-36

Meditating on God's Word

Meditation is a mark of Christian character of those who seek to walk in the ways of our loving

Heavenly Father and who abide in his Word. Centuries before Jesus was born, the psalmist wrote, “Your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are righteous forever; Give me understanding that I may live. I cried with all my heart; answer me, O LORD! I will observe Your statutes. I cried to You; save me, And I shall keep Your testimonies. I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words. My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.”—Ps. 119:143-148, *NASB*

The psalmist further said, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”—Ps. 1:1-3

In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul wrote, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”—Heb. 4:12-14, *NASB*

Jesus’ Testimony

Jesus made clear the fact that he had been sent forth to carry out the Heavenly Father’s will and

purpose, and not his own. His humbling words are recorded in John's Gospel, where we read, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true." —John 5:30-32

When Jesus said, "There is another that beareth witness of me," he was pointing to John the Baptist. He was the forerunner of Christ and had prepared the way for his ministry. "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. ... Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."—vss. 33-37,39

Legacy of the Bereans

The Apostle Paul's observation that the church members in the city of Berea were noble-minded students of the Bible is a positive lesson for all of the Lord's people to ever keep in mind. These brethren sincerely believed in the infallible Word of God, and emphasized that it is the only true source for

understanding. They deeply appreciated its value and meaning as a “thus saith the Lord” for the final proof for what they believed.

Quoting once again our opening text, from the *Amplified Bible*, we read this concerning the legacy of the Berean brethren: “Now these Jews were better disposed and more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they were entirely ready and accepted and welcomed the message concerning the attainment through Christ of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God with inclination of mind and eagerness, searching and examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore became believers, together with not a few prominent Greeks, women as well as men.”—Acts 17:11,12, *Amplified Bible* ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 1—“O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.”—Psalm 66:8,9 (Z. '03-3 Hymn 45)

JANUARY 8—“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”—I Thessalonians 5:15 (Z. '01-297 Hymn 267)

JANUARY 15—“What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”—Micah 6:8 (Z. '02-172 Hymn 312A)

JANUARY 22—“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”—Psalm 31:24 (Z. '01-79 Hymn 126)

JANUARY 29—“The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”—Psalm 111:10 (Z. '96-155 Hymn 89)

Activity and Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2025

It was once again the privilege of the Dawn to engage during the past year in the blessed work of spreading the glorious Gospel of the kingdom by means of the printed page, radio, television, and the many forms of electronic media available today. By God's grace, this message has gone to individuals and groups throughout the world to use in their personal Bible study, as well as in their witness efforts. The past year was another most blessed one, highlighted by many activities which will be detailed on the following pages. With God's providence evident throughout the year, we are pleased to present this annual report to our readers.

During 2025 the Dawn increased its expenditures in two major areas compared to the previous year. Operating expenses of the Dawn facility and foreign witness work both grew substantially, resulting in increases in aggregate of 21% from 2024 in these two areas. Other expenses in total saw only a 1.3% increase from 2024 to 2025.

In fiscal year 2025, the Dawn showed a net operating deficit, excluding bequests and investment

income, of (\$392,132), compared to a 2024 deficit of (\$456,045). The table below provides details of operating revenue and expenses for the 2025 fiscal year:

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
Revenue (excluding bequests and investment income)	\$ <u>123,295</u>	
Expenses		
Radio and TV (domestic)		\$ 59,922
Radio and TV (foreign)		41,369
Internet and Other Media		80,574
Pilgrim Service (domestic and overseas)		22,995
Foreign Witness Work		58,327
Shipping/Mailing (domestic and foreign)		71,706
Print Shop Operating Expense		50,504
Plant Operating Expense		130,030
Total Expenses		\$517,427
Less Income	<u>123,295</u>	
Net Operating Deficit	\$(392,132)	

The Dawn projects to maintain expenses related to printing and witness activities in 2026 at similar levels to 2025. Increases in these efforts, however, will be considered if additional opportunities arise, and for which necessary resources are available.

Activities in 2025

The printed version of *The Dawn* magazine continues to be published in eight languages and is sent to recipients in more than 100 countries. In total, more than 30,000 *Dawn* magazines were printed and sent out during the year. In addition, the English Dawn is printed in India and Nigeria for the brethren and their witness efforts in those areas. Total magazines printed in those two countries during the year were approximately 27,000.

During the year, *Hope* booklets, both English and Spanish, were printed and sent upon request to funeral homes in the United States, continuing this ongoing work. Some were also ordered by brethren to use in local obituary work.

The *Frank & Ernest* radio program is currently broadcast in the United States on twelve stations in twenty-five different time slots. *Frank & Ernest* is also aired on stations in East Africa, South Africa, West Africa, India, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Asia, Australia, United Kingdom and North America short wave. In addition, a radio station in East Africa broadcasts material obtained from the Dawn's website and translated from English to the local language for live airing in a weekly one-hour time slot.

In 2025 the Dawn again placed ads in various almanacs. Our featured ad in 2025 was on the subject, *Israel in History and Prophecy*. Almanacs have long been an effective method of advertising, as they typically reach a more rural audience which seems to be especially receptive to the message of the Scriptures.

One of the most exciting initiatives of the Dawn during 2025 was the launch of a completely re-designed website in May, which was the culmination of a two-year project. The website now includes digital material in 26 languages. Content consists of 339 booklets; 151 books; 8,752 Dawn magazine articles from 1932 to present, all fully searchable by title; 158 children's lessons; home pages and *The Dawn* magazine electronic subscriptions available in 26 languages. New foreign language booklets are added each month to digital content on the website.

Recently, a Dawn “Shop” was opened for ordering of printed literature, with 139 items currently offered, with payment by credit card. We invite all our readers to peruse the new website at www.dawnbible.com

In 2025 the Dawn’s Internet keyword advertising was converted so that it now functions through the Dawn’s new website (see above). There are several advantages to this: 1) It leverages the latest Dawn website content; 2) Audio can now be offered, a better fit for mobile devices; 3) Greater exposure is provided to other Dawn content on the website; and 4) It enables electronic follow-up to those who respond. In 2025, as part of moving Internet advertising to the Dawn’s website, we increased our advertised booklets to 54 in English, 15 in Spanish, 12 in French, and 11 in German. In 2026 we will expand booklet offerings to additional languages and also begin advertising current issues of *The Dawn* magazine.

The Dawn’s YouTube channel, “The Dawn Magazine—Monthly Video,” continued to broadcast the message of Truth during the past year. In 2025, 16 new videos were added, bringing the total number posted on the channel to 236. Those added include a series of *Dawn* magazine articles taken from the year 2006 on the general topic, “God’s Word in Prophecy.” During the year, the Dawn’s YouTube videos were viewed 3,214 times, for a total of more than 16,000 minutes. The channel currently has 643 subscribers. In 2026, we will continue adding more archived material as opportunity permits. Added material includes audio narration of original text, with the addition of supporting video content.

During the past year, a free, electronic subscription to *The Dawn* magazine continued to be offered

to any who wish to subscribe. As of November 2025, the electronic issue of *The Dawn* was sent to more than 500 e-subscribers. Each subscriber receives on the first day of every month an email, from which they can link directly to either the entire magazine or to individual articles that can be read online or downloaded to a computer or other electronic device for later reading.

During 2025, the Dawn continued its Pilgrim Service work, sponsoring three domestic trips and one extended overseas pilgrim trip taken by various brethren. We look forward to continuing this important service in 2026, according to the Lord's will and direction.

One of the great privileges of the Dawn is to cooperate and assist with the work of local ecclesias and individuals in their efforts to serve the brethren and to give witness to the Gospel message. Just two examples to note here: 1) During the past year, and still ongoing, has been the printing of a children's magazine in both English and Spanish, published by brethren in Alabama; 2) As advertised in various issues of *The Dawn* magazine, color posters are available upon request to individuals and classes for placement in store fronts, senior centers, and other similar locations, with a link directing the reader to a Dawn booklet which gives a message of peace and hope in this troubled time.

Books and Booklets

In 2025, the Dawn continued the project of reprinting books and booklets that have been either in short supply or temporarily out of stock. This has included standardizing size, format, and editing con-

tent as necessary, as well as selecting new color covers. Over the past three years, nearly all of the Dawn's booklets and numerous books have been republished as described above.

In total, over the past year, the Dawn filled nearly 1,600 orders and printed 31,755 booklets and books in both English and foreign languages. This excludes Dawn magazines printed.

Staffing

The Dawn could not have accomplished any of its activities without the assistance of many willing hands who volunteer their time and talents. Currently there are approximately twenty brethren in North America involved in these efforts, working both on-site and remotely, each one playing a vital role in the work of the Dawn.

Overseas, we have the assistance of brethren in numerous foreign countries, including Australia, Germany, France, India, Italy, the United Kingdom, and several countries in Africa and South America.

Locally, we had several days during 2025 in which various local brethren came to the Dawn for the stuffing, sorting, and mailing of the English and various foreign language *Dawn* magazines. In addition, a group of the younger members of the local ecclesia, including their children, have been coming to the Dawn one Saturday a month to work on special projects and have fellowship together. All of this help and support is most appreciated and of great assistance to the work of the Dawn.

We thank all the brethren, both near and far, who have assisted and supported all of the Dawn's efforts. It is a privilege to labor with you in our Father's vineyard.

The Year Ahead

We are looking forward to the prospects for 2026, realizing that all of our efforts and plans are in the all-wise hands of our Heavenly Father. Most of all, we rejoice in the privilege of sharing with others God's wonderful plan that he has provided through his Holy Word. We look forward to continuing to bear witness to the Gospel message and the hope of the kingdom for as long as the Lord allows.

We ask for your prayers on behalf of the activities of the Dawn, as daily we seek to proclaim the Gospel message throughout the earth and strive to be good stewards over the opportunities which God's providence has made available to us. ■

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 Melody Ault, Chillicothe, OH—March 4. Age, 69

Sister Joy Blackman, Salem, OR—November 4. Age, 92

Brother Henry Miksa, Northampton, NY—November 9. Age, 77

Sister Maria Pilarska, Chorzów, Poland—November 30. Age, 78

Sister Rae McWhorter, Decatur, TX—December 5. Age, 88

Sister Joanna Christiansen, Seattle, WA—December 16. Age, 63

Brother Kenneth Fernets, Vernon, BC, Canada—December 17. Age, 94

General Convention Bulletin

July 11-16, 2026—Olympia, Washington

We are pleased to announce that the 2026 General Convention will be held in the beautiful Pacific Northwest at the facilities of The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, on the dates shown above. **Please note the earlier dates.**

A wide variety of room options are available on campus in dormitories (Dorms) as well as apartments (Apts). We are happy to announce that there will be no price increases from last year for those who take the double occupancy package price option, and a small reduction in price to those taking the single occupancy (limited availability) package price option.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the room and meal cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid at the door.

This year's Convention Theme Text is taken from *The Emphatic Diaglott* translation of I Timothy 4:12. "Become a pattern of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." Our privileges, responsibilities, joys, and challenges in the service of the Lord and his people will be considered in the light of this Scripture.

The program includes a panel discussion on "Light versus Darkness," based on II Corinthians 4:4. It will

probe the advantages of leading an enlightened life and the disadvantages of walking in darkness. Two special discourses are also planned: a family-oriented message entitled “Teach these things to your children,” based on Deuteronomy 6:6,7; and “We are of the day,” taken from I Thessalonians 5:6-8. Other special program features are planned, to be detailed in coming months.

A pricing table and registration form is provided immediately following this announcement. We encourage you to register early. Advance payment is not required. We look forward to the prospect of seeing our brethren once again and encourage each of you to begin making plans to attend this year’s General Convention. ■

Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast	\$13.00	\$12.00
Lunch	15.00	14.00
Dinner	16.00	15.00
Total, three meals	\$44.00	\$41.00
Lodging (per night)		
dbl occ (DORMS or APTS)	\$45.00	\$40.00
single occ (DORMS)	\$60.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals		
dbl occ (DORMS or APTS)	\$445*	\$410*
single occ (DORMS)	\$535*	n/a

*If no breakfasts, deduct—\$40

***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group.

NOTE: A Convention Fee of \$15.00 per person, regardless of age, length of stay, or lodging and meal arrangements, will be added to your invoice to help offset convention expenses unrelated to lodging and meals.

*“The faithful love of the LORD never ends!
His mercies never cease.
Great is his faithfulness;
his mercies begin afresh each morning.
I say to myself, “The LORD is my inheritance;
therefore, I will hope in him!”
The LORD is good to those who depend on him,
to those who search for him.
So it is good to wait quietly for salvation
from the LORD.”
Lamentations 3:22-26, New Living Translation*

A New Year's Prayer

A Prayer for grace to help, in the coming days, that I may be:

*More humble and reverent with more striving within,
More patient in suffering and more sorrow for sin.*

*More faith in my Savior with more sense of his care,
More joy in His service with more purpose in prayer.*

*More grateful for blessings with more trust in the Lord,
More awe in His presence with more hope in His Word.*

*More meekness in trial with more strength to o'er-come,
More freedom from earth stains and more longings for home.*

*More versed in the Scriptures with more light on my way,
More like my Redeemer with each passing day.*

*More fit for the kingdom, dear Lord, help me be,
Reflecting more truly the likeness of Thee!*

—Pebbles and Poesies, B. Sennewald