

The DAWN

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Seasons of Refreshing

*“Repent ye,
therefore, and
turn,—unto the
blotting out of your
sins; To the end
that in that case,
there may come
seasons of
refreshing from the
face of the Lord.”*

*—Acts 3:19,
Rotherham
Emphasized Bible*

THE APOSTLE PETER

preached a very enlightening sermon on the Day of Pentecost, and a short time later he gave another message, recorded in Acts chapter three. The background for this latter message was the miracle performed by Peter and John, in which they healed a man who had been unable to walk from birth.

(Acts 3:1-8) The people gathered there were both excited and curious about this miracle, so Peter took the opportunity to explain certain matters to them.

Peter reminded his audience, evidently mostly Jews, that they had been directly responsible for the death of Jesus, but that God had raised him from the dead. He then told them that it was through faith in Jesus that the man who had been lame was healed. (vss. 12-18) Peter then spoke the words of our opening text, hoping that perhaps

some might have had a change of heart, desiring to repent and change their course of conduct.

In the *King James* translation of our text, the last phrase reads, “from the presence of the Lord.” The Greek word translated “presence” means “face” or “countenance.” For this reason we have used the *Rotherham* translation, since it conveys more accurately the meaning of the Greek. The thought is that the turning of one’s face toward another denotes favor, or friendship, while to turn the face away is a symbol of disfavor. Moses, for example, enjoyed God’s favor, and the Scriptures say that “the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.”—Exod. 33:11

The people addressed by Peter when speaking of “seasons of refreshing” were, for the time being, very much outside of the smiling countenance of God. He assured them, however, that if they repented and turned their hearts back to God, they could have their sins blotted out and be refreshed by the return of his favor to them. Peter did not stop with the good news of “refreshing” from God, for those who then repented and turned to him.

He continued, saying, “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things.” (Acts 3:20,21) The foretold “times of restitution,” Peter explained, had been spoken of by all God’s holy prophets. He then added, “all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed

shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”—Acts 3:24-26

How meaningful was Peter’s explanation of God’s promises! He wanted his hearers to know that through repentance they could enjoy the smile of God’s countenance, even though they had crucified the “Prince of life.” (vs. 15) Yet, as verse 26 states, they were merely the “first” to receive this blessing. When God would again “send Jesus Christ,” there would be “times of restitution of all things.” Then, Peter says, God would “raise up” a prophet like unto Moses. Hearing and obeying him would be mandatory upon all who would live, for any who should fail to do so would be “destroyed from among the people.”—vss. 22,23

REFRESHING FROM GOD

The word “refreshing” in our text is translated from a Greek word signifying “a recovery of breath,” or reviving of life. Indeed, repentant and consecrated believers of the present Gospel Age are justified to life upon the basis of faith in the shed blood of Christ. They obtain this justified life for the purpose of laying it down in God’s service, and are begotten as New Creatures. (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 9:14,15; II Cor. 5:17) During the next age, when mankind will be raised from the tomb, all those who “hear that prophet” and are faithful to the laws of the kingdom will be restored to actual perfection of human life.

Applying the meaningful symbols used by Peter, we see that God turned his face away from man

because of his transgression of the divine law. The psalmist wrote, "In his favour is life." (Ps. 30:5) If the refreshment of life results from God's favor, the reverse is true. Death is the result of his disfavor. Thus it was, when God no longer caused his face to shine upon his human creatures due to their disobedience, death was the result.

With the lack of God's favor came sickness, suffering, and sorrow. The blessings experienced by those upon whom God causes his face to shine have been unknown except by comparatively few throughout the ages. Only a relatively small number have, by faith, sought the Lord and been taken into his confidence and shown his plans and purposes. For most, however, the present nighttime of sin and death has been characterized by the nightmares of fear, lest the uneasy lot of today be engulfed in worse calamities tomorrow. How well Job expressed it when he said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble."—Job 14:1

The bitterness which followed in the wake of transgression, when God turned his back upon his human creatures, is not to last forever. In the same verse quoted earlier from the Psalms, we also read, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." It was the withdrawal of divine favor that caused darkness to settle over the race, taking away human happiness and peace. The coming of Jesus, however, as the gift of God's love and the "light of life," implies the return of favor to those who accept him and obey his laws.—John 3:16; 8:12

This is what Peter meant when he said that "seasons of refreshing" would come from "the face of the Lord." That refreshing has come through

faith to those who have repented throughout the present age and given themselves in full consecration to God. Likewise, in the next age, God will cause his face to shine upon, and refresh, all mankind who then will hear “that prophet,” and obey from the heart the laws of Christ’s kingdom then operating throughout the earth. Indeed, “seasons of refreshing” imply life and light. The wilderness of sin and death has been as arid as the night has been dark. David called it “the valley of the shadow of death.”—Ps. 23:4

WORLD PRESENTLY KNOWS NOT GOD

The Bible speaks of a famine in the land for “hearing the words of the LORD.” (Amos 8:11) How true this has been. Man has suffered greatly because he has not heard and understood God and his true character. As a result, he has groped through the darkness in an endeavor to find some comfort, hope, or assurance that out of all the present uncertainties and afflictions, there will come a happy tomorrow. In doing so, however, man has laid hold upon the poisoned waters of error and superstition, the drinking of which, instead of refreshing the soul, has filled his mind with deceptions and imaginations that have plagued him all the more. Satan, the great deceiver, has ever been ready to offer one or another of his false concoctions, mixed for the express purpose of deluding man’s mind concerning the character and purposes of God.

In the confusion caused by the various false teachings of Satan, those affected are not able to properly reason, and have become blind and deaf to the light and sounds of the Bible which ring out the assurance

that “God is love.” (I John 4:8,16) The Bible states plainly that “the wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23) Yet, many whose minds have been deceived by Satan’s lies insist that eternal torture, not death, is the penalty for sin. As we look at both Christian and non-Christian beliefs alike, we find, with few exceptions, that attempts to approach God and understand his purposes are thwarted by various misleading notions and theories. These, in turn, instill fear into the hearts of the people and obscure their vision of the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

GOD’S COUNTENANCE LIFTED UP

Once the needed lessons are learned by man from his experience in this “famine” condition of separation from divine favor, God will lift up his countenance upon mankind, and all who repent and obey will be refreshed in heart and soul. After more than six thousand years in the wilderness with the Creator’s back turned toward him, what an abundance of refreshment and favor will result from the return of God’s face toward man.

Peter told his audience, some of whom had been party to the crucifixion of Jesus, that they could, through repentance and by faith, be refreshed as a result of the redemption provided in Christ Jesus. It is upon the basis of this same redemptive work, and the opportunity for life which it provides, that mankind will be similarly refreshed. Without this “ransom for all, to be testified in due time,” the human race would remain in darkness, and the famine resulting from the loss of God’s favor would continue spreading its blight of death. (I Tim. 2:5,6) We thank God for the assurance that he will soon

lift up his countenance upon the people and they will be refreshed.

Man's refreshment will be along many lines. They will be refreshed with a true knowledge of God and of his plan for their eternal life and happiness. They will be refreshed with the assurance of peace, security, and prosperity of heart, mind, and body. They will be refreshed with health, mentally and physically, so vibrant that sickness of all kinds, even the disease of old age, will become but vague memories of the past, for "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."—Rev. 21:4

No single word picture is adequate to portray fully the contrast between the experiences of man during the time God's favor has been withheld from him, and the time, now close at hand, when the Creator will lift up his countenance upon the fallen race to refresh the people. It is not an understatement to say that it will be as different as the brightness of noonday and the darkness of midnight. Even with such a comparison as this, our finite minds fail to grasp the full significance of what "seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord" will mean to this poor, groaning creation.

Although we may not fully appreciate the richness of God's loving provisions for man's recovery and blessing, it is a truth harmoniously taught throughout the Word of God. As such, it is not mysterious, vague, or beyond ability to be comprehended. It has, as its roots, the oft-repeated promise of the Bible that it is God's plan to bless "all families of the earth" with life, peace, security, health, and happiness.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8

RESTITUTION ALSO PROMISED

A time of refreshing through justification to life by faith came upon those who repented as a result of Peter's preaching. Part of this refreshment, which has come to all the called and chosen of the present age, has been the prospect of having a share, with Christ in his kingdom, in the work of recovering the human race from sin and death. Peter called this work restitution—"times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:21) According to *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*, the Greek word here translated "restitution" means "restoration." While on earth, Jesus said that he came "to seek and to save [restore] that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) His First Advent prepared the way for man's return to God through the provision of the ransom. During his Second Advent, Christ, along with his faithful footstep followers of the present age, will oversee the work of man's restitution and the restoration of everything he lost as a result of sin, suffering, and death.

Job was one of God's "holy prophets" of whom Peter spoke. His whole life's experience was a portrayal of God's dealings with the human race. Job was a faithful servant of God, but divine wisdom permitted affliction to come upon him, just as God has allowed evil to afflict the entire human race. However, God eventually intervened on behalf of Job, his health was restored, and blessings of life, similar to those he had lost, were restored to him. After learning the lessons of his experiences, Job exclaimed, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee."—Job 42:5

To figuratively "see" God will perhaps be the most refreshing experience enjoyed by man as a result

of his restoration, when divine favor is returned to him. There have been many among the billions who have lived and died that have heard of God “by the hearing of the ear.” His name has been professed by the lips of multitudes, but has truly been in the hearts of only a few. Only when given a correct knowledge of God in the Messianic kingdom will man be able to “see”—perceive, consider—him with eyes of understanding. Even Job will then “see” God much more clearly than was possible during the time when death was reigning in the earth.

While his affliction was still weighing heavily upon him, Job asked God to let him fall asleep in death until the time of divine disfavor was past. (Job 14:13) Job was willing to die because he had faith that the time would come when God would turn his face back toward mankind, that the dead would be restored to life, and be refreshed by the blessings of his favor. “I will wait,” Job said—wait in the sleep of death—until “thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” (vss. 14,15) Indeed, man is God’s creation, the work of his hands. Man has fallen from his original perfection, but God’s work in creating him has not been in vain. He will hear God’s call from death, and live again!

TIME REQUIRED

The limitations of our finite minds make it difficult to visualize the work of restitution in all its aspects. Time enters into it as an important element for consideration. We are so accustomed to thinking in terms of our own short span of life that we may

be inclined to suppose what God has promised to do must be accomplished speedily, perhaps in a period similar to today's average lifetime of seventy to eighty years. The Scriptures tell us, however, that a thousand years is set aside in the plan of God for the accomplishment of this purpose.—II Pet. 3:8,9; Rev. 20:4,6

The Prophet Malachi speaks of the time when “the Sun of righteousness” will “arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2) When the healing rays of the “Sun of righteousness” begin to manifest themselves, those who respond and are blessed will perhaps realize they no longer need to die. Then, those asleep in death will begin to be awakened. All the billions who have ever lived will be educated in the knowledge of God and his righteous ways and works, and be given ample time to conform their thoughts, words, actions—yea, their hearts—to the divine will. Not until the end of that age of healing sunlight will all the mist of darkness be scattered, and all the desert conditions of the past be made fruitful and plenteous.

It will require the entire Messianic reign of Christ and his church to bring to completion the blessing, refreshment, and restitution of mankind. Even then, the only ones to be blessed eternally by the life-giving rays of that “Sun of righteousness” will be those who respond in heart obedience. Those who close their minds and shut up their hearts to the light, refusing to conform themselves to the divine will then made known, “shall be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:23) For all others there will be eternal “seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord.” ■

Be Doers of the Law

Key Verse: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”
—Romans 2:13

Selected Scripture:
Romans 2:11-29

THE HEAVENLY FATHER

established righteous rules and principles to be observed and practiced by all intelligent beings. In his perfect capacity, Adam had the ability to follow them, thus permitting him to live in happiness and experience continued life, fulfillment, and peace.—Ps. 119:165

Commencing with Adam's disobedience in Eden, the entire human family has become contaminated with sin and, therefore, incapable of keeping the Divine law. Except for God's Son, who left his heavenly home and came to earth to be a ransom sacrifice for Adam and all of mankind who inherited his sin, there have been “none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10) Thus we see that humanity is under the death sentence and continues to perish. Unknowingly, though, they are awaiting another feature of God's plan that will provide for their awakening from the sleep of death.

“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10) In view of this statement, condemnation is upon everyone who sins. All are guilty, even those who deceive themselves by thinking they are not as flawed as others who may manifest seemingly more reprehensible conduct than they do. Presently, there are two classes of individuals guilty of sin. One group, the world in general, will continue to

presume upon God's goodness, and stubbornly fail to repent from wrongful deeds. At the present time these remain estranged from the Heavenly Father. Such, therefore, will await instruction "in righteousness" and an opportunity to change their present ways during God's kingdom. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."—Acts 17:31

Other individuals during this Gospel Age have learned that through repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ, as the means of having a relationship with God, they may devote their lives to him in consecration. These receive justification and entertain the hope of attaining glory, honor, as well as eternal life, for the purpose of helping to restore mankind to human perfection during God's kingdom.—Rom. 2:7; Rev. 20:6

Nearly two thousand years ago, when Jesus came to the earth, he presented himself to Israel as their long promised and hoped for Messiah. If a sufficient number of the Jewish people had accepted the offer of becoming a nation of priests and kings, Gentiles would not have had an opportunity of becoming joint heirs with Christ in his heavenly kingdom to bless all the families of the earth. Except for a remnant, however, the Jews did not receive our Lord as their King and Redeemer. Eventually, this High Calling was extended to others. Thus the body of Christ will include representatives from all nations, because God is not a respecter of persons.—Gal. 3:16,27-29; Rom. 2:10-12

The Key Verse reminds us that the Jews could not attain justification because of their inability to keep perfectly the Mosaic Law. We who have come into Christ may be acceptable to God only if our actions and walk of life are guided by the principles outlined in the Scriptures. Let us resolve to make the import of being "doers" of God's Word rather than "hearers" only as an ever present reality in our lives. ■

All Are Under Sin

Key Verse:
*“Therefore by the
deeds of the law
there shall no flesh
be justified in his
sight: for by the
law is the
knowledge of sin.”*
—Romans 3:20

Selected Scripture:
Romans 3:9-20

hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”—Amos 3:1,2

Those individuals born of Jewish parentage received the “oracles of God” through prophecies, symbols, types and admonitions contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. They were greatly advantaged, even though their lives were not in conformity to the intent of those inspired writings. God is faithful, infallible, and righteous. Thus, any reasoning employed in an attempt to justify sinful human conduct falls far short of God’s absolute standards of holiness.—Rom. 3:1-8

Paul also refutes the concept of innate Jewish superiority above Gentiles. “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both

PAUL STRESSES THE FACT that all members of the human family are guilty of being sinners. However, during Old Testament times the Heavenly Father recognized Israel in a special manner, by means of a covenant he made with that nation. Gentiles, on the other hand, were considered as aliens and strangers, apart from God. “Hear this word that the LORD

Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.”—vss. 9-13

A major thrust of Paul’s argument is the need for acceptance of Christ’s ransom sacrifice as it pertains to both the Jews as well as the Gentiles. Israel was especially favored by God from the time its national existence commenced at the death of Jacob. Yet, being imperfect, they were unable to meet the demands of the Mosaic Law. Conversely, the Gentiles failed to live in accordance with the law of their conscience. Thus, neither group could be justified by their deeds, but all were guilty before the standard set forth by the righteous Heavenly Father.—vs. 19

Our Key Verse thus silences the mouths of every individual. Without the provision of divine mercy being applied to remove past disobedience and present guilt, God’s righteousness would forever condemn Adam and all of his descendants. The Heavenly Father lovingly provided his Son to be “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

May we whose eyes have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit proclaim the great truth to all who may have a hearing ear that the sacrificial death of Christ has opened a new and living way. With the completion of his church, blessings will flow to all people so that ultimately sin may be eradicated. Thus, the earth “shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD,” They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD.”—Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34 ■

God Justifies

Key Verses: *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*
—Romans 3:22-24

Selected Scripture:
Romans 3:21-31

however, could never effect actual atonement from sin for the Jews.—Rom. 3:20; Heb. 10:1-4

Our Key Verses indicate, nevertheless, that righteousness or justification from God is available to believers who have faith in the efficacy of Christ's ransom sacrifice. This redemptive offering is a manifestation of God's abundant grace, regardless of one's former background of being either a Jew or a Gentile.

FROM THE TIME THAT

Adam sinned in Eden, he lost the privilege of communion with God that he had enjoyed in his perfect state, and eventually he died. Because of Abraham's faith and obedience in preparing to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice, this act was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called “the Friend of God.” (James 2:23) Nevertheless, Abraham experienced the effects of inherited sin from Adam, and he also died.

During the Jewish Age, a sacrificial system that required the shedding of animal blood to effect the reconciliation of that nation back to God was instituted. These repeated rituals,

The philosophy of this mechanism for obtaining reconciliation with God is elaborated further as follows. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”—Rom. 3:25-27

The foregoing clearly explains that the law of works does not justify. Instead, a man is justified by faith, which allows all believers in Christ to become sons of God. This affirmation eliminated any cause for boasting by the Jews who had been nurtured under the Law Covenant, which they could not keep and was no longer operative. “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3:24-26

Access to God has become available to believing Jews and Gentiles through justification by faith. “Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.” (Rom. 3:30) Nevertheless, the Mosaic Law was a righteous standard for morality. Indeed, it served to convict the Jews because of their inability as sinners to live up to its strict demands. Through his ability to keep all its features perfectly during his earthly sojourn, Christ magnified and established God’s law.—vss. 28-31

As a result of Satan’s being bound and evil being restrained, the human family will be given an opportunity to be reconciled to God and attain perfection. Ultimately the benefits of the New “Law” Covenant will accrue to all mankind, who will then be able to keep its provisions, both in the letter as well as in spirit. ■

Hope Based on Faith

Key Verse: *“Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”*
—Romans 5:5

Selected Scripture:
Romans 5:1-11

ALTHOUGH ABRAHAM’S faith justified him to friendship with God, through faith in Christ Jesus’ ransom sacrifice, consecrated believers today are reckoned as being justified to life. The imputation of the merit of Christ’s righteousness covers our sins, and we have peace with God through the begetting of the Holy Spirit.—Rom. 5:1

Justified believers may now entertain the hope of the High Calling which, if faithfully pursued, will result in attainment of the divine nature. In view of this vital relationship we now enjoy with the Lord, our perspective is such that we can rejoice in our tribulations. We appreciate that such difficult experiences are necessary to crystallize our character as we patiently endure such trials. We can be confident that if we hold fast to the promises we have received, having begun the good work of transformation in our lives, the Lord will see it through to a successful completion.—Phil 1:6; Rom. 5:2-4

Our Key Verse should be a source of great encouragement to us. It affirms that the hope we entertain will not be a source of disappointment because it is an outgrowth of God’s great love for us. We experience this love through the influence of his Holy Spirit, as it daily works in and through the experiences of our life.

Our lesson continues with an expansion of God's love that became manifest through the unfathomable gift of Christ on our behalf. All this, Paul says, was when we were estranged from God and slaves to sin. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—vss. 6-8

The capacity for keeping God's law is an evidence of perfection. Adam willfully sinned and as a consequence, all of his progeny were born imperfect. As sinners by birth, it was impossible for them to keep God's perfect law. It is for this reason that Jesus came to earth. Having his perfect life principle transferred by God into Mary's womb, he was born with human perfection. (Gal. 4:4) In God's grand plan of salvation, Christ had the ability to render perfect obedience in every particular. Thus he could provide the ransom price as he laid down his life in sacrifice. He purchased the nation of Israel, who were under the condemnation of the Mosaic Law, as well as the entire human family who inherited sin as a result of Adam's disobedience. "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."—Rom. 5:18

Consecrated believers in Christ are especially blessed at this time. By accepting the benefits of Christ's sacrifice and being justified to life, they are freed from the condemnation that rests upon the remainder of the human family. In addition to this, if faithful they will also be used as instruments of reconciling mankind back to God during his kingdom. May the prospect of reigning with Christ for the purpose of forever eradicating sin encourage us towards faithfulness in our Christian sojourn each day.—Rev. 20:6; 21:1-5 ■

Death Becomes Life

Key Verse:
*“Therefore we are
buried with him by
baptism into
death: that like as
Christ was raised
up from the dead
by the glory of the
Father, even so we
also should walk
in newness of life.”*
—Romans 6:4

Selected Scripture:
*Romans 6:1-4, 12-14,
17-23*

ALTHOUGH GOD’S GRACE

refers to the unmerited favor he bestows upon us, it would be an absurdity for us as believers to conclude we may willingly practice sin in order to receive more of divine favor. God’s object in justifying us is that we might lay down our lives in sacrifice. This is with a view to becoming a part of the sympathetic royal priesthood that will help to eradicate all unrighteousness in God’s kingdom, when the benefits of Christ’s ransom sacrifice are applied on behalf of mankind.

All consecrated Christians who have received the Holy Spirit, therefore, have been baptized into Christ’s death. Through self-denial they engage in crucifying their human wills, instead striving to practice holiness in all that they say and do.—Rom. 6:1-3

Our Key Verse affirms that just as our risen Lord will accomplish the ultimate purpose for which he died, we also as New Creatures, who have been baptized into Christ’s death, are to walk in newness of life throughout our Christian sojourn. At the end of our course, faithfulness in this endeavor will result in our attainment of the first resurrection. Then, united with Christ in heavenly glory and power, we will share in the task of uplifting

mankind from sin and degradation back into harmony with God.

The serious nature of the consecrated lifestyle for believers continues to be emphasized by Paul in this chapter. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”—vss. 11-13

Elsewhere in Scripture, we are likewise reminded of the need for diligence in our walk to avoid becoming ensnared by unrighteous practices—sowing to the flesh as opposed to sowing to the Spirit. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”(Gal. 6:7,8) We should carefully examine our activities, our interests, and our speech to determine whether seeking to glorify God is uppermost in our minds. Are we seriously striving to keep our body of flesh under control? In those instances where we may have failed, have we petitioned the throne of Heavenly grace and then made a determined effort to overcome our deficiencies?—I Cor. 9:27; Heb. 4:16

The invitation of being associated with Christ Jesus as part of his bride in order to help eradicate sin during God’s kingdom is profound. Let us value this great privilege by exercising faithfulness in our consecrated walk. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”—Col. 3:1-3 ■

Heirs of the Promise

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.”
—***Galatians 3:29,***
New American Standard Bible

AFTER JESUS WAS RAISED

from the dead, he appeared to his disciples on a number of occasions. He convinced them “by many infallible proofs” that he was alive again, and spoke to them of “things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

During the last of these appearances, the disciples boldly asked him, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (vs. 6) It is evident from this, that Jesus’ disciples were now convinced beyond any doubt that he was the Messiah of promise, the one whose kingdom was to be set up in Jerusalem and which would extend its influence throughout the entire world. Naturally, they also concluded that first in order would be the reestablishment of Israel’s kingdom, which had been overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar centuries before.

Jesus’ reply to their inquiry concerning Israel’s kingdom was not a direct answer to the disciples’

question. Nevertheless, it was very revealing, for it indicated that there was yet a great work to be done before the Messianic kingdom, for which they hoped and longed, would be established. Jesus said to his disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." To this he added, "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."—vss. 7,8

Whatever expectation these ardent followers of the Master may have had of immediately becoming associated with him in a powerful government which would eventually rule the whole world, they soon realized from his response that there was no prospect of at once entering into kingdom glory. The task assigned was a comprehensive one, and though they may have thought of the "earth" as being that relatively small area which we now speak of as the "Middle East," it still would require time to "be witnesses unto" Jesus throughout even this limited territory.

The disciples waited at Jerusalem as Jesus instructed until they received the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24:49) This gift of "power from on high" came upon them on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4) It was a wonderful and miraculous demonstration of the favor of God upon this little company of despised disciples of the Nazarene who had been charged with treason against Rome and put to death.

Under the influence of this holy power, the Apostle Peter preached a moving sermon to the thousands of Jews who had assembled within reach of his

voice. (Acts 2:5-36) He boldly charged them with the sin of crucifying Jesus, with the result that many of them were “pricked in their heart” and inquired, “What shall we do?” Peter’s reply to this question was, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” As a result of Peter’s words, “the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”—vss. 37-41

THE CHURCH

In Peter’s reply to the repentant Jews who asked what they should do, he introduced a new aspect of the Messianic hope contained in the promise to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. He assured them that as Israelites this promise was given to them and their children. He added, however, that it would also be extended to the Gentiles, those who were considered “afar off” by the Jews, so that “as many as the Lord our God shall call,” would be given the opportunity to be heirs of the promise made to Abraham.

The “three thousand” who heard Peter’s Pentecostal sermon, and responded in accordance with his instructions, were among those whom the Lord called. In addition, the Lord “added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (vs. 47) The word translated “church” in this verse is the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “a calling out,” and appears over one hundred times in the New Testament. Thus

the church is composed only of those whom the Lord calls. God never intended that the whole world should be brought into this special arrangement.

The church is a called group of believers who accept Jesus as their Head, and consecrate, or dedicate, their lives to the doing of God's will. The Apostle Paul said this dedication is likened to a burial, or baptism, into Christ, describing it as being "buried with him by baptism into death." (Rom. 6:3,4) Concerning this called class, Paul also wrote: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:27,28) Our opening text immediately follows, stating that those who thus "belong to Christ" will be heirs of the Abrahamic promise.

These statements of the apostle show that the called-out ones—those who constitute the true church of Christ because they have accepted his headship in their lives, and are faithful to that calling—are considered by God to be part of the promised seed which is to be the agency for blessing all the families of the earth. This explains why the work of blessing all nations did not begin with the First Advent of Jesus. It also explains why, when the disciples asked about the reestablishment of David's kingdom, he indicated that first they were to be his witnesses throughout all the earth. Indeed, it is through this witness work that God calls various individuals to be part of the assembly which he identifies as the church, and which, under Christ, will constitute the spiritual seed of Abraham.—Gal. 3:16,29; Heb. 2:9,10,16

THE GENTILES

The rapid influx of believing Israelites into the church beginning at Pentecost only continued for a short time. The Jewish religious leaders fiercely opposed the work, and before long it was merely one here and one there who accepted the Gospel when it was presented to them. God knew that it would be this way. Since he had predetermined the number he wanted in the church as the “faith” seed of Abraham, he also prearranged that in due time his call would be extended to the Gentiles.

The first Gentile convert identified following Pentecost was Cornelius, “a centurion of the band called the Italian band.” He was, the narrative states, “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”—Acts 10:1-6

For centuries the Jewish people had been schooled in the belief that they alone were God’s chosen race. Indeed, God had said to them, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) They supposed they alone were the inheritors of the promises made to their father, Abraham, concerning the seed that was to bless all

nations. For this reason, even Jesus' apostles were not fully prepared for the great change in God's arrangements which permitted Gentiles, through faith and obedience, to become fellow heirs with them of the promises of God.

Having selected Peter as his servant to proclaim the Gospel to Cornelius, God knew that he would need special preparation for this assignment. As the men sent by Cornelius neared Joppa with a message for Peter, the Lord gave a vision to the apostle while he was praying on the roof of Simon the tanner's home. "He became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven."—Acts 10:9-16

Coming out of the trance, Peter was perplexed, and wondered what the vision meant which he had just seen. As he pondered this, the messengers sent by Cornelius arrived at Simon's home and asked whether Peter was there. Then, "while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I

have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?"—Acts 10:17-21

The three messengers related to Peter the purpose of their visit, explaining that Cornelius had been directed by an angel of God to send for him, and that he would explain to Cornelius what he ought to do. The messengers were invited to remain overnight, and the next day Peter accompanied them on their return to Cornelius, who lived in Caesarea. In expectation of their arrival, Cornelius "called together his kinsmen and near friends."—vss. 22-24

After meeting Cornelius, Peter entered the home where this little company of Gentiles had assembled. "He said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying [hesitation, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*], as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?"—vss. 28-29

CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD ACCEPT

Peter properly understood the lesson of the sheet filled with unclean animals which God had called clean. Upon the basis of this he went to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, and now he wanted to know what further responsibilities devolved upon him. Cornelius related his experience of being visited by an angel of God, who instructed him to send for Peter, and the assurance the angel had provided that Peter would speak unto him. Concluding, Cornelius said,

“Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.”—vss. 30-33

Peter then preached a short sermon to his Gentile audience, recorded in verses 34-43. He explained that Jesus was specially appointed by God, and commissioned to be the judge both of the “quick”—the living—and the “dead.” In this, one of the great foundations of the Gospel which was first preached to Abraham is emphasized. It is the fact that through the promised seed, the dead would be restored to life. Peter also assured Cornelius and his friends that through Christ they could receive “remission of sins.”

While he was yet speaking, the Holy Spirit came upon the gathering, giving the same evidence of God’s acceptance of these Gentiles into his family as had been given to the Jewish disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Witnessing this, Peter said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”—vss. 44-48

THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

Peter was prepared to accept the fact that Gentiles could now, through faith and obedience, enter into the family of God and become fellow heirs of God’s promises with Jewish believers. However, others in the Early Church had not been specially enlightened. As a result, a controversy developed among them. None was inclined to keep Gentile believers out of the church, but there were

those who insisted that they could not obtain salvation unless they were circumcised.—Acts 15:1

Because of this controversy, it was considered wise to hold a conference in Jerusalem to weigh this issue and decide upon some official position to take with respect to the Gentile believers. Meanwhile, these were increasing in numbers, especially as a result of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, who were present at the Jerusalem conference and bore eloquent testimony of the marvelous manner in which God was manifesting his favor toward Gentile believers. Peter also told of his experience in connection with Cornelius.—vss. 2-12

James appears to have been the chairman of this conference. After hearing the testimonies of Paul and Peter, he answered, saying, “Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon [Peter] hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” (vss. 13,14) James was convinced that now, for the first time, God was “visiting” the Gentiles, and inviting non-Jewish believers to participate in his plan. As he stated it, God was taking out from the Gentiles a people for his name—those who would be members of his family and, through Christ, bear his name as sons. This was the opportunity which Jesus first extended to all in the Jewish nation, but only a few accepted. We read concerning this that Jesus “came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”—John 1:11,12

Beginning with Cornelius, God turned to the Gentiles, as he had previously favored the Jews, for the purpose of calling and selecting those who

would constitute his “house of sons.” James reminds us that all of God’s works are foreknown by him. (Acts 15:18) It was not a failure of his plan that caused him to turn to the Gentiles. Jesus had prophesied that the Gospel would be “preached in all the world for a witness.” (Matt. 24:14) Moreover, as God looks upon them, those whom he calls are “neither Jew nor Greek,” but are “all one in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3:28

“AFTER THIS”

After explaining that God had visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name, James added, “To this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the Tabernacle of David, . . . That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.” (Acts 15:15-17) James did not say that the coming of the Gentiles into the church in his day was the fulfillment of the words of the prophets concerning “all the Gentiles.” Rather, he said it was in agreement, or harmony, with those prophecies.

The time when “the residue of men” and “all the Gentiles” will be given their opportunity to call upon God is after the building again of the Tabernacle, or house, of David. Prior to this, as James says, must be the work of calling out from the Gentiles a people for the Lord’s name. When the disciples asked Jesus, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” he could have explained this point in detail. However, the disciples, not having received the Holy Spirit, and not being otherwise prepared for it, could not

(Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) have understood an explanation which involved inviting Gentiles to become fellow heirs with them in the hope of reigning with Christ. Thus he simply told them that their commission for the present was to go into all the world as his witnesses, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jesus is the one who is to sit on "the throne of David, . . . to order it, and to establish it." (Isa. 9:6,7) The sons of God of the present age, called from both Jews and Gentiles, are to share in that kingdom with him. Hence, its establishment must wait until all of these are gathered out from the world and are proven worthy, even unto death, for the exalted position to which they are called.—Rom. 8:16,17; II Tim. 2:11,12; Rev. 2:10

This work of taking out from the Gentiles a people for God's name has lasted nearly two thousand years, and it is still in progress. Meanwhile, countless millions, in a professed sense, have associated themselves with the name of Christ. Yet, the vast majority of these have had no conception of the divine purpose centered in his Son, or what it really means to be one of his footstep followers.

The masses of Christianity have not known that Jesus was sent into the world in fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob concerning a "seed" which would ultimately bless "all the families of the earth." (Gen. 22:18; 28:14) Neither have they known that by suffering and dying with Jesus, his consecrated footstep followers qualify to be joint-heirs with him in the inheritance of the Abrahamic promise and that they, too, can thus be part of the seed through which blessings of life and happiness will yet flow out to all mankind.

Nevertheless, the work of calling, selecting, and proving those who will constitute the people for his name—the heirs of promise—has gone steadily on, unnoticed and unknown to most. The world has not known these in their true light, even as it did not know Jesus. (I John 3:1) Many times true believers have been persecuted by the world and by churches claiming the name of Christ, just as Jesus was persecuted by his own Jewish brethren. (Luke 21:12; John 15:19,20; II Tim. 3:12) The “enmity” [hostility, *Strong’s Dictionary*] which the Creator said would exist between the seed of Satan and the seed of the woman has often led to acute suffering by these, even as it led to the crucifixion of Jesus.—Gen. 3:13-15

BLESSINGS TO ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH

Eventually this phase of God’s plan, the completion of the “seed,” will be finished. Then will follow the glorious consummation of his divine purpose, the blessing of all the families of the earth. It will be then that the antitypical kingdom of David, with Christ and his church as its rulers, will govern and “judge the world in righteousness.” (Acts 17:31) It will be through the agencies of that kingdom in the hands of Jesus and his joint-heirs that all the families of the earth will be blessed.

This will be the purpose of reestablishing the throne of David with Christ as king. As James expressed it, “That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.” (Acts 15:17) God’s promise concerning the seed not only gave assurance that he would provide a Deliverer, but also that all nations would be

blessed through him. (Gen. 22:18; Acts 3:25) All Gentiles and Jews as well, will be the recipients of the promised blessings of the kingdom, which will flow to them through Christ and his faithful “little flock,” called from among both Jews and Gentiles to be associated with him.—Luke 12:32

God has foreknown and foretold his wonderful works on behalf of the children of men. Let us rejoice in “the hope set before us,” that if faithful followers of Jesus, we will be “heirs of promise,” and associated with him in the rulership of the Messianic kingdom. (Heb. 6:17-19) Let us also be joyful that mankind in general—the living and those who have died—will be given an opportunity, through belief and obedience, to be restored to perfection of human life here on the earth. Truly, ours is a great and wonderful God! ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Stanislaw Kuc, Kozy Dolne, Poland—May 2.
Age, 64

Sister Evelyn Taylor, Portland, OR—May 9. Age, 82

Sister Rachel Hasty, Huntsville, AL—May 12. Age, 88

Brother Charles Irvine, Los Angeles, CA—May 13.
Age, 89

Sister Eunice Beeman, Portland, OR—May 15. Age, 85

Brother Boniface Obiukwu, Owerri, Nigeria—May 19.
Age, 56

Sister Venice Tsimonis, Waterbury, CT—May 28.
Age, 92

Brother Leonard Szczesny, West Suburban, IL—
June 1. Age, 91

Living by Faith

“The just shall live by his faith.” **FAITH IS THE ABILITY TO** believe as true that which

—*Habakkuk 2:4* cannot be demonstrated to the physical senses. Accordingly, the Scriptures define faith as the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) Faith in the existence of God is a good example of this ability. We cannot see God nor hear his voice. We cannot touch him. Nevertheless, when we think of the vast universe around us, our reason tells us that there must be a supreme intelligent Creator. We accept the testimony of our reason and believe that God exists.

This is faith in its simplest form, but true Christian faith goes beyond this. We not only believe that God exists, but we have faith in his character attributes of justice, love, wisdom, and power. We have faith in his divine purposes as they pertain to us individually and to his people collectively. We also have faith in his plan for the world in general. This is the minimum of faith which one must possess in order to approach God and receive blessings from him. Paul wrote, “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—Heb. 11:6

We do not need to exercise faith in the existence of our next door neighbor, because we can see him. Yet, if we are to enjoy a friendly relationship with our neighbor we must have faith in him, and he in us. We would have to know that he is truthful, honest, upright, and dependable, and he would have to be assured of the same concerning us. Similarly, if we are to enjoy a close relationship with the great God of the universe, we must believe not only that “he is,” but also that we can depend upon him to fulfill all his gracious promises.

When Adam and Eve fell from perfection, their children were born into sin, with the resulting condemnation to death passing on to their entire progeny. Because of this the Bible tells us that “there is none righteous, no, not one,” and “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:10,23) However, among the fallen race there have been some who exercised faith in God despite their physical and mental imperfections. Some of these God has invited to cooperate with him, thus giving them an opportunity to demonstrate their faith.

Abram was one of these—whose name God later changed to Abraham. God asked him to leave his own people and to go into a land that he would show him. A wonderful promise was associated with this call. God said to him, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12:1-3) Abraham believed this promise, and demonstrated his faith by obedience to God’s request. (vs. 4) Paul observes that when Abraham received this call, he “obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”—Heb. 11:8

Abraham was richly rewarded for living by his faith. “He believed in the LORD; and he counted it

to him for righteousness.” (Gen. 15:6) Paul quotes these words in Romans 4:3, and in verse 22 adds that his faith was “reckoned” for righteousness. (*Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) Abraham, like all other members of the fallen and condemned race, was imperfect. It was impossible for him to live up to the divine standard of righteousness, yet he had strong faith in God and in his promises. God counted Abraham’s faith as an evidence of his integrity, knowing that he would serve him to the best of his imperfect ability.

Because of Abraham’s faith, he was called “the Friend of God.” (James 2:23) Here was a genuine basis for friendship. Abraham “believed God,” and because he did, God had confidence in him. This beautiful friendship continued throughout Abraham’s lifetime. On various occasions God spoke to him, reiterating and enlarging upon the original promise made to him.—Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 17:6; 18:18

Abraham’s faith in these promises caused him to look for a “city,” or government, “which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Finally, when put to the supreme test, Abraham’s faith was such that he believed God would raise his son, Isaac, from the dead. Willingly offering up “his only begotten son” as a sacrifice, Abraham indeed “received him in a figure” from death. Because he obeyed God’s voice in this great test of faith, God enlarged still further on his promises to him.—Heb. 11:10,17-19; Gen. 22:15-18

FAITH COMES FROM GOD’S WORD

Paul wrote, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) The inference here

is that an active, demonstrated faith, based on hearing the instructions of God, is what he is pleased to “count” as righteousness. The Bible mentions some of these who God thus honored—Abel, Enoch, and Noah, prior to the Flood. Following this, there were Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. (Heb. 11:4-22) These, and no doubt others not named, were especially blessed by God because of their faith.

Beginning with the death of Jacob, God chose his twelve sons and their families, and began to deal with them as a nation—Israel. Through his servant Moses, another man of faith, God gave Israel his Law. (vss. 23-29) God sent his judges, teachers, and prophets to the nation of Israel, to give them an opportunity to know his plan as it was then due to be understood, and to cooperate therein. Only a few responded in obedience, because they believed God.

Some of these faithful ones received marvelous evidences of God’s favor. They “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” Some even “received their dead raised to life again.”—vss. 32-35

Strong faith was essential in these victorious experiences, and it enabled them to see the overruling providences of God in connection with them. For example, Daniel 3:14-27 gives the account of the three Hebrews who “quenched the violence of fire” through their faith. They told King Nebuchadnezzar that the God whom they served was able to deliver them, but also said that even if God permitted them to die in the fiery furnace, they

would not bow down to the image which the king had set up. Their faith was not that God would deliver them, but simply in God. They believed that whatever God did would be right. It is this type of faith that God counts for righteousness.

In contrast, Paul speaks of others who “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; . . . they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”—Heb. 11:36-38

To pass through experiences such as these required a faith that could trust God even though there was no visible evidence of his care and protection. It was faith in the promises of God pertaining to the future that sustained them. They endured these things in order that they “might obtain a better resurrection.” (vs. 35) Their concern was in the fulfillment of God’s plans and purposes. Like Abraham, with respect to Isaac, they believed that God was able, and would raise them from the dead in his own due time. This was the faith that was counted to them for righteousness.

While the whole nation of Israel was selected by God as his typical people, only a few individuals “obtained a good report,” and were counted as righteous in the sight of God. (vs. 39) They did this by their faith, which was demonstrated by their obedience under the most trying circumstances. Because they thus proved their worthiness, these faithful “fathers” will be made “princes in all the earth” during the promised Messianic kingdom.—Ps. 45:16

FAITH IN THE GOSPEL AGE

The attribute of faith is unchanged from age to age in the plan of God. It was true in the past as well as now that it is impossible to please God and enjoy friendship with him without faith. Those who are able to live by faith are rewarded with whatever blessings the Lord may be dispensing at the time. Jesus said to the woman he cured of a disease of severe bleeding, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." When healing two blind men, Jesus told them, "According to your faith be it unto you." They exercised faith and received their sight.—Matt. 9:20-22,27-30

The Bible reveals that there are degrees of faith. The disciples had faith to believe that Jesus was their Messiah. However, on the storm-tossed Sea of Galilee they became fearful. (Mark 4:40) On another occasion, Peter demonstrated faith by walking on the water toward Jesus, but when he became afraid and began to sink, Jesus rescued him and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. 14:29-31) These and other similar incidents prompted the disciples to finally say to Jesus, "Increase our faith."—Luke 17:5

Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; . . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." (Rom. 1:16,17) Herein is indicated that the "gospel of Christ" is received by faith, but it is revealed gradually, as faith is able to receive and act upon it. The apostles are examples of this "faith to faith" revealment and receiving of the Gospel. Even before hearing of Jesus they knew something of

the Messianic promises and had faith in them. When they came into contact with Jesus and his wonderful ministry, they believed that he was the Messiah, leaving all to follow him. Based upon this further revelation of faith, God specially dealt with them.

In his prayer, Jesus said to his Father concerning his apostles, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." (John 17:6) These men were wholly dedicated to God. They had faith in his Word, and were obedient to it. Prior to Pentecost, they did not clearly understand many of the details of God's plan, but they believed and obeyed that which they did know. Because of this, God looked upon them as his people. "Thine they were," said Jesus. Like Abraham, they were God's friends, and how richly their faith was rewarded!

KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY

Faith that opens the door to a relationship with God is not blind belief. It is faith in the plans and purposes of God to the extent he has revealed them. It was Abraham's faith in the promises given to him that constituted the basis for his friendship with God. This was true of the apostles, and is still true today. During the Gospel Age, God has revealed his purposes through his Word. The purpose of this, even as in the past, is to invite cooperation in the outworking of his plan. During the present age, this cooperation is manifested through association with Jesus, and under his headship. Jesus said, however, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) This shows that there is a certain selection on God's part. He

is not at the present time drawing the whole world, but only those whom he chooses.

God chooses those whom he knows are able to exercise faith in him and in his promises. In addition to their ability to exercise faith, these are also humble of heart and willing to learn. The first evidence of God's drawing power in their lives may well be in an experience, or series of experiences, which cause them to realize the futility and worthlessness of the material values so highly esteemed by the world in general. Their hearts thus prepared, they are brought into contact with the Word of truth. This also is by the providence of God in the exercise of his drawing power. When they hear his Word, or read it, and their minds and hearts begin to respond to it, God is pleased, for this was the object of the exercise of his drawing power in their lives.

One of the first things learned from the Word of truth is the fact that all are sinners—members of a sin-cursed and dying race. If faith lays hold upon this fact, and the heart properly responds, the result will be repentance. Like the publican of Jesus' parable who went up to the temple to pray, those who repent will cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:10-13) The Lord is indeed merciful, for his providences have been working to bring about this very state of repentance. If God loved the whole world of sinners so much that he sent his Son to be the Redeemer, surely his love goes out much more to those who, when learning of his gracious provision through Christ, begin to respond to his drawing power and demonstrate their faith by repenting of their sins, and asking for forgiveness.

Although Jesus said that no one could come to him unless drawn by the Father, he also explained that only through him could anyone have access to the Father. (John 14:6) This means that the truth by which God “draws” points the way to Jesus and to the redeeming merit of his shed blood. During this Gospel Age the only object of being drawn to God through the Redeemer is to become disciples of Christ. To be Christ’s disciple means to follow in his footsteps of self-sacrifice. It means to deny self and to take up one’s cross and follow Jesus into death. It means to be “planted together in the likeness of his death.”—Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:3-5

The footstep followers of Jesus walk in a path that is difficult to tread. It is a “narrow” way. (Matt. 7:14) To walk in this path means shame, ignominy, persecution, affliction, suffering, and death. In Revelation 20:4 it is described as being “beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God.” Even though the word “beheaded” is used symbolically, it denotes suffering and the loss of life.

These are some of the sobering facts that are revealed to those whom God is drawing. After repenting of their sins, they realize that they are now faced with the necessity of making a decision as to whether or not they will accept the invitation to become disciples of Christ and share in his sufferings. (II Cor. 1:5-7; Phil. 3:7-10) God wants them to weigh this matter very carefully. This is indicated by Jesus in his parable concerning the man who was to build a tower. He would be very foolish, the parable teaches, unless he first of all sat down and counted the cost.—Luke 14:28-30

UNDERSTANDING INCREASES

Not long before his death, Jesus asked his disciples if they were able to follow in his footsteps of sacrifice. They had reached this decision in their hearts, and replied, "We are able." (Matt. 20:22) Indeed, at the beginning, when they became Jesus' disciples, they had given up all to follow him. (Mark 10:28) There were many things which they did not understand, and could not until begotten of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. There were also many tests which would come upon them. Yet, their hearts responded in obedience to the truths which they did understand.

No one who is drawn by God and responds through repentance and full consecration has, at first, a full understanding of his will. Just as the apostles needed the Holy Spirit to reveal the will of God more perfectly to them, so it is with all who dedicate their lives to his service. The only difference is that the apostles had to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Since Pentecost, upon acceptance of the full surrender and consecration of each one whom God has drawn, he immediately blesses them with the Holy Spirit and its enlightening influence.

At this point in God's loving dealings, a whole bounty of riches is opened up as the result of faith. From righteous Abel to John the Baptist, those who believed God, and upon the basis of living by their faith were dedicated to the doing of his will, were taken into his care as friends. He loved them, watched over them, gave them a limited vision of his loving Messianic purpose, and provided them hope of a resurrection. Yet, so far as the present

life was concerned, they remained under the condemnation to death which had come upon the whole world.

This was a necessity, for the price of redemption from sin and death had not yet been provided. It is true, however, that God's dealings with the Ancient Worthies were because of his great plan of redemption through Christ. The Heavenly Father was pleased to take to himself as friends those whom he knew would qualify to receive life through the blood of Christ. Because God saw their deep faith and earnest endeavors to prove worthy, he intended that they would, in due time, be "made perfect" in the "better resurrection."—Heb. 11:35,40

Beginning at Jesus' First Advent, a new feature of God's plan began to operate. This has been the age of sacrifice—"better sacrifices" than those of past ages, prior to Christ. (Heb. 9:23) Jesus was "made flesh," "crowned with glory and honour" of human perfection, in order that he might give himself in death "a ransom for all." (John 1:14; Heb. 2:9; I Tim. 2:6) Subsequently, his followers have been invited to "present" themselves "a living sacrifice."—Rom. 12:1

It is possible for these to offer an acceptable sacrifice to God only because they are made free from Adamic condemnation through the meritorious blood of Christ. (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) When Paul speaks of their bodies being offered as "a living sacrifice," it can be so only because they are no longer reckoned by God as being under death condemnation. Rather, through faith in Jesus as their Redeemer, they have been made alive in him—"justified by his blood."—Rom. 5:8,9

What a glorious result of faith this is! From God's standpoint it is as though, through accepting Jesus as our Redeemer, we have been restored to perfection of life such as the world will enjoy at the close of the Messianic kingdom. Through faith, we are reckoned as having a righteous, "justified" life to offer in sacrifice, even as Jesus did. This is a blessing of faith which the Ancient Worthies did not enjoy. To us, however, it means that we can offer a sacrifice considered "holy, acceptable unto God," and in a manner harmonious with his will, lay down our lives both for the brethren and in the interest of God's plan for the whole world of mankind.—Rom. 12:1; I John 3:16

NO CONDEMNATION

Paul reminds us of how we were motivated by "the love of Christ" to dedicate ourselves fully to God's service. He speaks of one who has taken this step as being "in Christ, . . . a new creature," and a member of his symbolic "body." (II Cor. 5:14,15,17; I Cor. 12:27) In another place the apostle writes that to those who are "in Christ Jesus" there is "no condemnation." (Rom. 8:1) Surely, to have "no condemnation" is another wonderful result of living by faith!

In Romans 8:2, Paul reiterates this blessed condition, stating that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Later in this chapter, Paul further explains, saying, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [sonship],

whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”—vss. 14-17

The privilege of sonship with our Heavenly Father has also come to us through faith. Abraham received the blessing of friendship because he believed the truth of God’s plan which was then revealed and due to be understood. We receive the honor of sonship through our belief in the more complete revealment of the divine purpose that has come to us. In this further unfolding, we see the truth concerning Jesus’ death—that he was “an atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (I John 2:2, *Weymouth New Testament*) We see him raised from the dead, giving evidence that the Heavenly Father was well pleased with his sacrifice, and proving also God’s ability to fulfill his promises pertaining to the resurrection of the dead.—I Cor. 15:20-22

By faith we accept this further understanding of truth. We believe that Jesus was “raised . . . for our justification” to life, and that he “ever liveth to make intercession” for us. (Rom. 4:25; Heb. 7:25) Living by faith in these truths day by day, we are able to go “boldly unto the throne of grace,” and there “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”—Heb. 4:16

“PEACE WITH GOD”

Again Paul wrote, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Rom. 5:1) Abraham, and all the faithful ones of old, had “peace” in the sense that they were God’s friends. Their faith in God’s promises removed fear and anxiety from their hearts. However, to have the “peace with God” referred to by the apostle implies separation, through justification, from the condemned and dying family of Adam. Now, through faith in Christ, demonstrated by presenting ourselves in full consecration to God, we may enjoy this rich reward of “peace with God.”

“By whom also,” Paul continues, “we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (vs. 2) Indeed, faith has opened the door to this further “grace,” or favor—the glorious hope of sharing the glory of God. “And not only this,” Paul adds, “but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”—vss. 3-5, *New American Standard Bible*

Our opening text, “the just shall live by his faith,” is quoted in the New Testament in various contexts. The first of these is in a verse quoted earlier which speaks of God being revealed “from faith to faith.” In this same verse, Paul then tells us how this progressive development of faith is to occur: “as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Rom. 1:17) In Galatians 3:11, emphasizing fallen man’s inability to keep God’s perfect law, the apostle again quotes these words, stating, “No man is justified by the law in the sight of God.” Rather, he says, “The just shall live by faith.”

Finally, Paul quotes this statement again: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” (Heb. 10:38) Living by faith, as mentioned here, means that faith in God and in his promises is a way of life. It is the only way that a Christian can live day by day with rejoicing, and truly be at peace with God. If we “draw back” from a life of faith, he will “have no pleasure” in us.

Living by faith, the abundant mercy and love of God are our daily portion. Living by faith is to live free from condemnation. Living by faith is to rejoice in the hope of sharing in the glory of God. Living by faith we triumph in tribulation. Living by faith we are led by the Spirit of God and enjoy the blessings belonging to the sons of God.

Living by faith we can go boldly to the throne of grace to receive strength for our every time of need. By faith we know that “all things work together for good” because we love God and are “the called according to his purpose.” By faith we know that nothing can “separate us from the love of Christ,” and that since “God be for us,” nothing can be successfully “against us.”—Rom 8:28,31,35-39

Living by faith we dwell in the “secret place of the most High,” and are sheltered under the “shadow of the Almighty,” safely “under his wings.” (Ps. 91:1,4) Surely, the just do live by faith, and the Lord finds pleasure in them as they lay hold more firmly upon his promises, zealously devoting themselves to the doing of his will, and realizing that “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—I John 5:4 ■

Report of Trip to Australia

WE ARE PLEASED to include in this month's issue of *The Dawn* the following report from Brother Byron and Sister Margie Keith of their trip to visit the brethren in Australia earlier this year. We pray that their report might be a blessing, as we remember our dear brethren throughout the earth who share the "one hope" of our calling.—Eph. 4:4

Sister Margie and I had the blessed privilege of traveling to Australia for a three week trip in January and February, 2016. We attended the annual Australia Convention at Anglesea, which is just south of Melbourne, following which we visited the Melbourne



AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION AT ANGLESEA

Polish class and the small ecclesia in Sydney.

Leaving on Tuesday, the 19th of January, we arrived in Melbourne on Thursday, the 21st, after “losing” most of January 20th—Sister Margie’s birthday—when we crossed the International Date Line.

We were met at the airport by Brother Ray and Sister Sue Charlton and spent Thursday night in Melbourne. The following day we drove to the Convention site in Anglesea, a beautiful seaside town popular as a tourist destination.

The convention began on Friday afternoon and continued through Monday afternoon, with thirteen discourses given by twelve speakers, plus four studies and a Testimony Meeting. Approximately eighty were in attendance, with some missing due to sickness, travel, or work conflicts. Australia is a large country and the brethren are scattered throughout the continent.

Yet, many spend great amounts of their time and resources to assemble together in accordance with the Bible’s admonition to do so. (Heb. 10:25) Their love for each other, manifested by the desire to come together in fellowship, was very encouraging.

During the convention, I was privileged to attend the annual business meeting of the Berean Bible Institute. The “BBI” publishes a twelve-page periodical



MARGIE KEITH, TED & ANNA ZUREK,
BYRON KEITH



HENRY & MARGARET GREENHALGH



**MARGIE, ZOFIA SIEDLECKA, WANDA WALCZAK, DAVID WALCZAK,
REBECCA HUMMEL, MIRKA WALCZAK**

titled *The Peoples Paper* four times a year, and also offers booklets from the Dawn. Due primarily to the popularity of many outdoor leisure activities in Australia, interest in religious ministry and witnessing is minimal. However, despite limited resources and few responses to their efforts, the BBI continues its witness endeavors while there is still “light” to do so, and brethren willing to participate in this important work.—John 9:4,5

At the conclusion of the convention, Brother Ray and Sister Sue gave us a guided tour of the south-eastern part of the country, including Australia’s



PAUL & REBECCA HUMMEL AND JEREMIAH

Great Ocean Road. Each day was filled with admiration of the beauty of God’s creation and spiritual discussions of God’s Word. On Wednesday, we met Brother Colin and Sister Sylvia Giles of Melbourne, and her

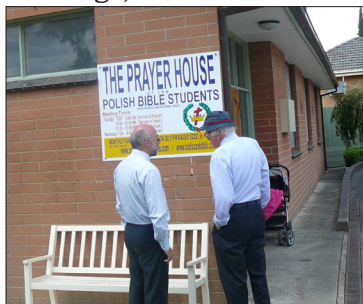
sister in the flesh, Sister Irene Webb of England, for brunch and fellowship at the coastal town of Port Campbell.

On Friday, January 29th, we arrived at the home of Brother Joe and Sister Ewa Czaplă and their three sons, Matthew, Mark, and Simon. There we



CZAPLA HOME: MARGIE, MATTHEW, EWA, SIMON, GRAEME & DAWN SMITH, JOE, MARK CZAPLA

spent a wonderful weekend of fellowship, which began that evening by serving the young adults of the Melbourne Polish Bible Students with a study on the Abrahamic Covenant. This group includes about fifteen young adults in their twenties who hold their own meetings on Thursday and Friday evenings, as well as a Sunday meeting which pre-



ANDREW MISTARZ, JOHN MERCER IN FRONT OF POLISH MEETING HALL

cedes the regular class meetings. It was thrilling to see the interest and love of the Truth displayed by such a large group of young brethren.

On Sunday we met with the Melbourne Polish ecclesia at their meeting hall along with



KRYSTINA KOZUB, MIREK WITKO, IREK KOLACZ

other brethren in the area, giving two discourses and visiting with the 60-70 in attendance. After lunch and a song service, the meeting was closed by voting to send the message of Ephesians 6:23,24 with us to all we would come in contact with in our travels and correspondence. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." We sang



JOE CZAPLA

Hymn 214, "Only Waiting," and I Peter 1:7 was also sent with us: "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 of Jesus Christ."

After the meetings with the Melbourne Polish class, we visited

Brother Joe's father in the hospital. Although the elder Brother Czapla speaks only Polish and we speak only English, we were able to have a nice visit with him. We were all mutually encouraged through our "fellowship of kindred minds," which is "like to that above."

Brother Adam Kopczyk gave us a tour of the city of Melbourne on Monday before spending the afternoon and early evening visiting his parents, Brother Les and Sister Lydia. Brother Les shared



LYDIA, ADAM, LES KOPCZYK

his incredible experiences at the hands of German authorities before and during the Second World War, describing how the Lord delivered him from death on more than one occasion. He and Sister Lydia have shared a dedicated spiritual life together since those experiences, and use them to encourage others to trust fully in the Lord during their particular trials of faith, and to grow as New Creatures.

Returning to Brother and Sister Czapla's that evening, we were greeted by Sister Lidia Witko, who had come to see us off with a gift. Soon afterward,



MIREK & LIDIA WITKO

Brother David and Sister Mirka Walczak came by to visit. We spent the rest of the evening in fellowship together and sharing our love of God and his promises made possible through the gift of his "only begotten Son."



**SUSAN CHARLTON, RUTH & ROY LARIA, PETER HILLS, DAISY YOUNG,
RENATO & AILIN PICCINI, MARGIE, RAY CHARLTON, DAWN & GRAEME SMITH**

Tuesday morning we were picked up by Brother Graeme and Sister Dawn Smith for a two day drive to their home in Australia's capital city of Canberra. We enjoyed wonderful fellowship with these brethren, who are the only Bible Students in Canberra. On Saturday morning we left Canberra for Sydney, where we had two studies at the home of Sister Ruth Laria and her husband, Roy. Meetings are held on Saturdays in Sydney because that is the only day they can all meet together. There were a total of eleven in attendance for the studies, which were on the topics, "The Time of God's Wrath" and "Liberty in Christ."

The following day we were given a tour of Sydney harbor and the surrounding area by the Charltons and the Smiths. Finally, on Monday, February 8th, Brother Ray and Sister Sue took us on one last beautiful



COLIN GILES, GRAEME SMITH

morning trip to the top of the Blue Mountains before returning to the Sydney airport, where we caught an evening flight to Melbourne. We left Melbourne just after midnight, February 9th, and arrived home in Seattle just after noon the same day, having “gained” back a day crossing eastward over the International Date Line.

It was a blessed privilege to have taken this trip to visit and serve the brethren in Australia. We made many new friends in the Truth who we will remember forever. The Australian brethren share the same “blessing of the gospel of Christ” as we do, and are zealous in gathering together as often as possible to share the good news of the kingdom. (Rom. 15:29) Everywhere we traveled, the brethren told us to send their special love to the brethren in North America, and to let them know they are praying for us. We are happy to do so, and to share this report with you! ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 7—“Behold the Lamb of God!”—John 1:36 (Z. ’99-14,15 Hymn 177)

JULY 14—“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, . . . and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”—Ephesians 4:31 (Z. ’99-71 Hymn 256)

JULY 21—“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”—John 18:37 (Z. ’99-123 Hymn 259)

JULY 28—“If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye.”—I Peter 3:14 (Z. ’99-166,167 Hymn 307)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

B. Keith

Vernon, BC	July 8-10
Sioux City, IA	13
Valparaiso, IN	14
West Newton, PA	24
Indianapolis, IN	25
Des Moines, IA	26
Moorhead, MN	27
Selkirk, MB	28
Yorkton, SK	29
Saskatoon, SK	30
Red Deer, AB	31
Vernon, BC	August 1

J. Freer

Erwin, TN	July 11
Carthage, IN	12
Indianapolis, IN	12,13
Reynoldsburg, OH	13,14
West Newton, PA	22-24
Buffalo, NY	24,25

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

O. B. Elbert

Vernon, BC	July 8-10
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K. Humphreys

Vernon, BC	July 8-10
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B. Jakubowski

Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
Vernon, BC	8-10

T. Krupa

Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
Vernon, BC	8-10

P. Mora

Vernon, BC	July 8-10
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R. Niemczyk

Vernon, BC	July 8-10
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A. Oystryk

Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
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T. Ruggirello

New Brunswick, NJ	July 2,3
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B. Siwak

Vernon, BC	July 8-10
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B. Sweeney

Prince Albert, SK	July 1-3
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"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

—I Thessalonians 5:11

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.

PRINCE ALBERT AND SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 1-3—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR1 Stn Mpp, Prince Albert, SK Canada S6V5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692 or Email: ahsiwak@inet2000.com

VERNON CONVENTION, July 8-10—Schubert Centre, 3505 30th Avenue, Vernon, BC, Canada. Contact T. Fernets. Phone: (250) 558-3055 or Email: afernets@telus.net

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—University of Pittsburgh, 450 Schoolhouse Road, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 2-7—Orle Gniazdo Conference Center, Szczyrk, Poland. Contact L. Griehs. Phone: (267) 688-8617 or Email: griehs@comcast.net

RED DEER CONVENTION, August 12-14—Pioneer Lodge, 4324 47th Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. Contact J. Neumeier. Phone: (403) 746-5052 or Email: jbneumeier@live.com

OHoba CONVENTION, August 27—Ohoba place of fellowship. Contact M. E. Uzor. Ohoba Ohaji, Imo State, Nigeria. Phone: +234-809-716-1428 or Email: kelechi4u@yahoo.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 3,4—FaHoLo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. For information, contact B. Davis. Phone: (517) 788-6552 or Email: r2d2lad@comcast.net. For programs, contact V. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or Email: raylumley2531@comcast.net

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 3,4—Double-Tree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ.

Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3-5—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 10,11—[New Location] Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (Hwy. 72), Huntsville, AL 35806. Phone: (256) 562-2525. Mention “Huntsville Bible Students” when making reservations. Contact J. Cothren. Phone: (256) 852-8505 or Email: jimmycothren@att.net

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 24,25—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact S. Kuenzli. Phone: (414) 257-2672 or Email: song_of_hope@sbcglobal.net

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 1,2—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone (724) 771-0139

AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 2—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. For accommodations, contact M. Wardak. Phone: (413) 789-6198 or Email: mtwardack@verizon.net. For other information, contact A. Gonczewski. Email: aga49@yahoo.com

COLORADO CONVENTION, October 7-9—YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO. Phone: (888) 613-9622. Mention “Colorado Bible Students 2016” when making reservations. Contact D. Moss. Phone: (303) 238-4936

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2963 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com