

# The DAWN

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# All Shall Be Made Alive

*“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”*  
—*I Corinthians 15:17,18*

**ON APRIL 8, 2012, EASTER** Sunday, the professed Christian world will once again commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. How many, though, understand the true significance of this great event in God’s plan? How many realize that the only hope of life beyond

the grave is based upon the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of his Heavenly Father? If this be not so, then even Christians who have died—those who have “fallen asleep in Christ”—have perished, and all who die from henceforth will likewise perish forever.

If it were true that Christian believers perish in death and are not restored to life in the resurrection, there is surely no hope for unbelievers. This is what Paul clearly tells us in our theme text. The resurrection of the dead is thus seen to be a vital necessity in the divine arrangement for the rescue

of fallen man from death. This being so, our Heavenly Father, through his Word, has given us many assurances of his intention to restore the dead to life.

These assurances are found in both the Old and New Testaments, and in abundance. Addressing Felix, a Roman governor, the Apostle Paul said, “This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”—Acts 24:14,15

While the word “resurrection” is not found in the Old Testament, we would expect from this statement by Paul to find unquestionable references to this assurance of life beyond the grave. Jesus explained that the hope of the resurrection was implied by Jehovah when speaking to Moses at the burning bush. Jesus said, “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.”—Luke 20:37,38

Some have mistakenly used this statement by Jesus to prove that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not really dead, but this was not Jesus’ argument. They were dead and would be quite outside of God’s interest and care except for his plan to restore them to life in the resurrection. They “live unto him” in that he will use his mighty power, in his own due time, to restore them to life. It was for this

reason that even after they had fallen asleep in death he considered himself to be their God.

### **THAT PROPHET**

By firm implication, the teaching of the resurrection was set forth in a prophecy to Moses, when God said, "I will raise them [the Israelites] up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee." (Deut. 18:18) The Apostle Peter applied this prophecy to Christ, following his Second Advent, in "the times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-23) That this Prophet would minister to the Israelites of Moses' day meant that they would need to be raised from the dead. In a prayer of Moses recorded in the Psalms, he acknowledged to God his great purpose to restore the dead to life. "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men." (Ps. 90:3) Here the word "return" is used to describe the awakening of the dead.

This word is used a number of other times in the Old Testament for the same purpose. Isaiah 35:10 reads, "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Jesus ransomed all mankind, and their "return" is from death. The word "return" is used again by Ezekiel to describe the awakening of the dead. The text is addressed to the Israelites, and reads, "When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate."—Ezek. 16:55

“The LORD killeth, and maketh alive,” sang Hannah, “he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.” (I Sam. 2:6,7) This reveals her assurance, even in that ancient period of the judges, that there was to be a resurrection of the dead. Hannah believed that the Lord would not leave the people in *sheol*, the grave. There is also the comforting promise to mothers who have lost their children in death. “They shall come again from the land of the enemy,” the Lord assured, “And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.”—Jer. 31:16,17

### **FROM SLEEP**

David wrote concerning “the sleep of death,” and some of the Old Testament promises liken the resurrection to an awakening from sleep. (Ps. 13:3) The Lord promised Daniel, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” (Dan. 12:2) The word “many” is not used here to imply that only a part of those in death will be awakened. Rather, it is to emphasize the great number, the multitude that are dead and are to be awakened from the sleep of death.

They are “sleeping” in “the dust of the earth.” This expression is used to remind us that the ones to be awakened from death are those upon whom fell the penalty, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. 3:19) This is in keeping with Paul’s explanation, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—I Cor. 15:22

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, “Thy dead men shall live, . . . Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall

cast out the dead.” (Isa. 26:19) Here we have the assurance that the awakening of the dead will bring rejoicing, for they are bidden to “awake and sing.”

## **PRISONERS**

The Old Testament refers to the dead as being “prisoners,” held captive in death, and their awakening as a release from captivity. (Ps. 102:20; Isa. 49:9; 61:1) Job, after mentioning the death state of the young, the old, the rich, the poor, the rulers, the wicked—essentially all the varied categories into which the human race is divided—adds, “There [in death] the prisoners rest together.”—Job 3:18

In a promise to Christ and those who will be associated with him in the future work of restoring the world to life, the Father said, “That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.” (Isa. 49:9) In verse 8 of this chapter, we are informed that the purpose in calling these prisoners forth from death is that they might “inherit the desolate heritages.” This is a reference to man’s original heritage of the earth, a heritage which was lost and which was left desolate because of original sin.

The resurrection of the dead is again likened to the release of captives in the prophecy of Ezekiel 16:53. “When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.” The expression, “thy captives,” refers to the Israelites. The phrase, “bring again,” means “to turn back or away.” The thought from this

verse is that the captives in death of the Israelites will in due time have their captivity turned away. This will be accomplished through the resurrection of the dead.

We are assured that the Gentiles as well as the Israelites will participate in that glorious future release of the prisoners of death. Using similar words to those of Ezekiel, in Jeremiah 48:47 the Lord says, “I [will] bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days.” Of the Ammonites, we read, “I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.” (chap. 49:6) And the Elamites will also be released from their captivity—“It shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.”—vs. 39

## **LEADING THE CAPTIVES**

The Prophet David wrote concerning Jesus, “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.” (Ps. 68:18) This prophecy is quoted by the Apostle Paul and applied to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. (Eph. 4:8) In the *Marginal Translation* of Paul’s quotation, we are given the thought that Jesus, in his resurrection, became the leader from death of a “multitude of captives.”

Thus, in the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed to us as the one who leads forth all the prisoners of death from their captivity. When Martha said to Jesus that she knew Lazarus would live again in the resurrection at the “last day,” Jesus replied,

“I am the resurrection, and the life.” (John 11:23-25) Martha may well have had in mind the prophecies of the Old Testament stating that the prisoners of death would be released from their captivity in the “latter days.” Jesus simply explained that he will be the one to release or “lead forth” the captives.

This was confirmed by Jesus after his resurrection, when he said to John on the Isle of Patmos, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [*hades*] and of death.” (Rev. 1:18) Jesus purchased these “keys” by his own death. He will use them to unlock the great prison of death and set its captives free.

## **THE DIVINE ORDER**

When Paul wrote that “in Christ shall all be made alive,” he added, “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are [or become] Christ’s at his coming [Greek, ‘presence’].” (I Cor. 15:23) The expression “Christ the firstfruits” includes Jesus’ true followers, those who suffer and die with him. James confirms this, writing, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18) Concerning those who faithfully follow the “Lamb,” we read, “These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”—Rev. 14:4

These “firstfruits unto God” are led forth from their captivity in death in the “first resurrection.” Concerning this, we read, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be

priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) The fact that the “second death” will have no power over these implies that they receive the reward of immortality. These are those who, through “patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—Rom. 2:7

The Scriptures also refer to a “better resurrection.” (Heb. 11:35) This reference is in the context of Paul’s mentioning of many ancient faithful ones who lived prior to the First Advent of Jesus. They “endured” (vs. 27) many severe tests. Because of their great faith, some “received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance.” (vs. 35) These seemingly opposite results of their faith were, in both cases, temporary conditions. Those who were “raised to life again” eventually died, joining those “not accepting deliverance.” In both cases, however, they had faith that “they might obtain a better resurrection.” They looked for a resurrection which would result in eternal life and perfection, something “better” than they had ever experienced before.

Comparing the reward of these Ancient Worthies in the resurrection with the reward of those who follow the Lamb in this age, Paul wrote, “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (vs. 40) The implication here is that these ancient faithful ones will not be raised from the dead until the resurrection of the church is complete. Additionally, the “better thing” for Jesus’ followers is that they are raised to “immortality” and to the divine nature. (I Cor. 15:53; II Pet.1:4) In all these

things, we again see the divine order of the resurrection.

### **JUST AND UNJUST**

As quoted earlier, Paul explained to Felix that the Law and the Prophets taught that there would be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. Apparently, the Ancient Worthies had a clear indication of this and strove diligently to be worthy to participate in the resurrection of the just. Both the just and the unjust are also mentioned in God's promise to Daniel. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some [the just] to everlasting life, and some [the unjust] to shame and everlasting contempt." Although veiled in the language of prophecy, the next verse seems to point out that there are to be two classes of the just. "They that be wise [teachers—the church, *Marginal Translation*] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness [the Ancient Worthies] as the stars forever and ever."—Dan. 12:2,3; Matt. 13:43

The "everlasting contempt" to which the unjust are led forth from captivity is contempt that lasts to a consummation. That is, it lasts until its purpose has been accomplished. We have a more detailed reference to it in Ezekiel 16:48-54. Here the reference is to Gentiles and unjust Israelites when led forth from their captivity in death. This same prophecy shows that ultimately the "shame" will have accomplished its purpose in that these liberated captives will be brought into covenant relationship with the Lord.—vss. 60-63

Jesus also referred to the resurrection of the just and the unjust, speaking of these two classes as those who have done “good” and others who have done “evil.” (John 5:28,29) “Marvel not at this,” Jesus said, “for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment, *Revised Version*].”

The distinction here is between those who receive their full reward immediately upon being awakened from the sleep of death and those who come forth to “judgment.” The former includes the faithful of all ages, and the latter the unfaithful. The faithful receive “life” on the plane of existence God has set forth in his plan to give them as a reward for their faithfulness. For the followers of Jesus—the church—it will be immortal life on the divine plane with their Lord. For the Ancient Worthies, it will be life on a lesser plane of existence.

All others will come forth to judgment or, as the Greek states it, to a “*krisis*.” Our English word “crisis” conveys a similar thought. It means that the awakened prisoners of death will be confronted with a crisis. If they wish to continue living and to be restored to complete mental and moral human perfection, they will have to accept the provisions of Divine grace through Christ and obey the laws of his kingdom. It will be a turning point for them. They will be fully enlightened concerning the issues involved. If they then choose to turn to the Lord and serve him they will live. If they willfully turn away from him they will die in what the Scriptures

describe as “the second death.”—Rev. 20:14,15;  
Acts 3:23

### **WITH WHAT BODY?**

The Apostle Paul raised an important question concerning the resurrection, and answered it. “Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. . . . There are . . . celestial [heavenly] bodies, and bodies terrestrial [earthly]: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. . . . So also is THE resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body [in the resurrection], and there is a spiritual body.”—I Cor. 15:35-44

Certain important points should be noted in Paul’s reasoning. One is that, in the resurrection, the literal body that dies is not the one that is resurrected. In death, the former body returns to the dust, as stated in these words of Job, “All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.” (Job 34:15) Another point is that some in the resurrection will be given celestial or heavenly bodies, and that some will be given terrestrial or earthly bodies. The Lord is the one who determines this. “God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” The “it” is the

“seed,” the “bare” grain that is sown in death. This is the mind, personality, character, that which becomes the identity of the individual during their time in this present life.

Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth is addressed to those who were “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” (I Cor. 1:2) For this reason, he stresses more particularly the “first resurrection.” It is this that he describes as “THE” resurrection. However, he reminds us that a still further part of the order of the resurrection is that there will also be those who will receive “terrestrial,” natural, earthly bodies. These will be for all the unbelieving, unjust world of mankind. When released from their captivity to death, the appropriate earthly body they are given will not be entirely unlike the one which died. Indeed, the body given to each of mankind in the resurrection will not be racked with the sicknesses, diseases, and other physical ailments that afflicted the body that went into death. The Scriptures promise that these “former things” will have “passed away.” (Rev. 21:4) Those who appreciate the opportunities of the new day in which they are awakened from the sleep of death and who grasp those opportunities of belief and obedience, will be assisted up the ladder of progress to human perfection.

## **THE TIME**

Paul clearly sets forth the time sequence of the resurrection as it relates to those who receive celestial bodies and those who receive terrestrial bodies. “When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,

then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—I Cor. 15:54,55

Paul here refers to the promise, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8) He explains that the fulfillment of this wonderful promise must wait until those who are seeking the prize of immortality have all attained it, "when this mortal shall have put on immortality." Then will come the time, through the victory of Jesus as man's redeemer, for death to be swallowed up. This will be accomplished by the releasing of all the prisoners of death and their restoration to human perfection with the ability to obey God's law perfectly and live forever.

This is the great objective of the future earthly reign of Christ. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) Thus will be fulfilled the promise, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4

Let us then rejoice that Christ has been raised from the dead. Let us be confident in the scriptural promises that it is he who will lead a "multitude of captives" forth from death, even all who have died. This is the hope of every true follower of the Master, and it is our hope for the whole world of mankind. We can truly rejoice that "in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:22 ■

## 2012 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 5, 2012.

A complete Memorial Service is available for isolated brethren, or for any who wish to have it.

The audio cassette tape or CD can be purchased for \$2.00, and the DVD for \$4.00. All are also available free on loan, from:

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

**Please place your order by March 26, if possible.**

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**APRIL 5**—“My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.”—Psalm 63:5,6 (Z. '96-161 Hymn 274)

**APRIL 12**—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the participation of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread.”—I Corinthians 10:16,17 (Z. 01-76 Hymn 325)

**APRIL 19**—“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”—Matthew 12:34,35 (Z. '96-30 Hymn 267)

**APRIL 26**—“He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”—Hebrews 4:10 (Z. '02-205 Hymn 250)

# Jesus Testifies to the Truth

*Key Verse: "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."  
—John 18:37*

*Selected Scripture:  
John 18,19*

into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (vss. 10,11) Jesus knew the time had come for him to lay down his life in sacrifice as man's Redeemer. This was the "cup" of experience which the Father had given him. He was fully committed to drinking it faithfully, even unto death.

The soldiers first presented Jesus to Annas and Caiaphas, the Jewish high priests, who asked him concerning

## **AFTER PRAYING IN THE**

Garden of Gethsemane with his disciples, Jesus knew his departure was at hand. He was approached by Judas, who betrayed him with a kiss. Accompanying Judas were armed soldiers which had been recruited by the chief priests and Pharisees. Jesus inquired as to who they were seeking, to which they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." (John 18:5) Jesus replied, "I am he." (vs. 6) Simon Peter, not understanding the situation, attempted to defend Jesus and with his sword injured the high priest's servant. The Master gently rebuked Peter, saying, "Put up thy sword

his doctrine. Paraphrasing Jesus' reply, he reminded them that he had never spoken in secret and had taught openly in the Temple and the synagogue. These were places that the Jews had heard him on many occasions. Rather than explain his teachings to Annas and Caiaphas, who he knew were only intent on putting him to death, Jesus simply said, "Ask them which heard me, . . . they know what I said." (vs. 21) It was during Jesus' appearance before the Jewish high priests that Peter denied him three times, as the Master had foretold. (vss. 17,18,25-27) It was not until he received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (see Acts, chapter 2) that Peter understood the meaning of the events that were unfolding before his confused vision.

Jesus was next taken to the Roman governor, Pilate. He immediately concluded that Jesus had broken no Roman law and turned him back over to the Jews, stating, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." (John 18:31) The Jews told Pilate that their charge against Jesus was punishable by death, which they had no authority to carry out. Pilate agreed to call Jesus back into the judgment hall. He questioned Jesus concerning the charge made that he claimed to be a king. Jesus did not deny the charge, but explained that his kingdom was "not of this world." (vs. 36) In our Key Verse, he further responded that this was the very cause for his coming into the world. Throughout his ministry he bore witness to the wonderful truth that indeed he would one day establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace on the earth.

After hearing Jesus, Pilate said, "I find in him no fault at all" (vs. 38) As far as Pilate was concerned, Jesus was no threat to Rome and had committed no crime, certainly nothing worthy of death. The Jews, however, said that he had spoken blasphemy and insisted that Pilate sentence him to death. Pilate encouraged Jesus to defend himself, "But Jesus gave him no answer." (John 19:9) Finally, Pilate spoke these fitting words which echo to us even today, "Behold the man!"—vs. 5 ■

# The Living Word

**Key Verse:** “*When he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*”  
—John 20:20

**Selected Scripture:**  
John 20:1-23

## TODAY'S LESSON DETAILS

John's account of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Mary Magdalene had come to the tomb hoping to anoint the body of the Master with spices. Upon her arrival, she found the sepulchre open and the Lord's body missing. She frantically went and found Peter and another disciple, we assume John, and cried, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” (John 20:2) Peter and John ran to the sepulchre to see for themselves. What they saw was startling—“the linen [grave] clothes lying, . . . And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.” (vss. 5,7) Although they believed what they saw with their own eyes, they did not understand, and went back to their homes. Recording these events many years later, John comments, “For as yet they knew [understood] not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.”—vs. 9

Mary, weeping for her beloved Master, stayed at the sepulchre. She soon noticed two individuals, realizing later they were angels, who asked her why she wept. Mary replied it was because “they have taken away my Lord.” (vs. 13) She then turned and noticed a person

who appeared to be the gardener of the tomb area. She inquired as to whether he perhaps had moved the body. If so, she would be glad to take it to another burial location. What followed is one of the most moving accounts in all scripture. The gardener “saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” (vs. 16) This “gardener” was in fact the resurrected Jesus, and Mary’s recognition of him was in the manner in which he called her by name, “Mary.” She had heard his call many times before, during his ministry, and now recognized it once again. Her experience hearkened back to Jesus’ words concerning himself as the good shepherd, “he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them.”—chap. 10:3

Jesus said to Mary, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” (chap. 20:17) It would have been Mary’s natural inclination to cling to the Master and tarry with him, now that she knew he was no longer dead. However, she, too, did not know the full import of these events. Jesus explained to her that his appearance again in the flesh was only temporary, and soon he would ascend to his Father. For this reason, she should not cling to him according to the flesh, because she would again feel disappointment once he ascended. Jesus instructed Mary to go instead to the other disciples and tell them that he was risen from the dead. Obedient to the Master, she did so, telling them she had “seen the Lord.”—vs. 18

Later the same day at evening, Jesus miraculously appeared to the disciples, and said to them, “Peace be unto you.” (vs. 19) The words of our Key Verse show the joy and gladness of all the disciples, knowing that their Lord and Master had been resurrected from the dead. How these words echo to us today, “He is risen!”—Matt. 28:6

# Cleansing the Temple

**Key Verse:** “[Jesus] said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.”  
—John 2:16

**Selected Scripture:**  
John 2:13-22

**THE APOSTLE PAUL STATES** concerning Jesus that he was “made of a woman, made under the law.” (Gal. 4:4) Being a Jew under the Law, he was required to keep the various feasts mandated under that covenant arrangement. It is in this setting that today’s lesson finds Jesus in Jerusalem at the time of the Jewish Passover feast. As we might expect from one faithfully

keeping the Law, Jesus went directly to the Temple, the center of Israel’s religious worship.

The account states that upon his arrival, Jesus “found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting.” (John 2:14) At those times of the year when the Israelites came to Jerusalem to keep their required feasts, certain sacrifices and offerings were also made. The intent of the Law as originally given by God was that each family take care of providing the necessary animals and offerings for such occasions. Over time, however, the Jewish leaders saw these occasions as opportunities to engage in the “business” of selling these things to the people right there at the Temple. Doing so would eliminate the necessity of the people to go to the trouble of bringing animals and other offerings on the long journey to Jerusalem. As this became a more and more lucrative business, prices were raised and taxes

were charged, the benefits of which likely went into the coffers of the religious leaders of Israel.

When Jesus saw these things going on in the Temple, he “made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” (vss. 15,16) In a similar account in Matthew 21:13, even stronger language is recorded: “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

The sinful condition to which Jesus so strongly responded was really twofold. First, he saw the greed of the religious leaders as they overcharged and taxed the people for the animals and other offerings needful to keep the feasts according to the Law’s requirements. They were “thieves” carrying out their business in a “house of prayer.” Secondly, and no less important, was the fact that the people had allowed themselves to become part of this. No longer were they desirous of providing their own offerings to the Lord. They were willing to pay high prices and, in addition, be taxed for the “convenience” of not having to be bothered with such things. They were willing to “pay” their leaders in order to be counted as keeping the Law’s religious requirements.

Jesus’ disciples, seeing the swift action taken by the Master, “remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” (John 2:17) The *Moffat Translation* renders the last portion of the verse this way, “I am consumed with zeal for thy house.” Although Jesus displayed anger against the hypocrisy he saw at the Temple, his “zeal” was primarily directed in a positive way toward his Father’s house, represented by the Temple. Apostle Paul tells us that, in reality, Jesus and his church are the real temple. It was this symbolic temple for which Jesus had such a great zeal and desire that it be faithfully completed.—Eph. 2:19-22 ■

# Woman of Samaria

**Key Verse:**  
***“Whosoever  
drinketh of the  
water that I shall  
give him shall  
never thirst; but  
the water that I  
shall give him  
shall be in him a  
well of water  
springing up into  
everlasting life.”***  
—John 4:14

**Selected Scripture:**  
**John 4:1-42**

**WHILE TRAVELING BACK** to Galilee after the Passover feast, Jesus passed through the region of Samaria and came to the place of Jacob’s well. (John 4:4,5) Weary from his travel, he sat down at the well. The account continues, “There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.” (vs. 7) This request surprised the woman, who replied, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no

dealings with the Samaritans.”—vs. 9

Jesus answered, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” (vs. 10) These words were very puzzling to the woman, who replied that in order to get water from this well, Jesus would need something to draw with, because it was deep. She then questioned how he could provide better water than what came from this well. “Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?”—vs. 12

Jesus’ reference to the “gift of God” was in fact the

“living water” he had spoken of. However, this was not literal water from any well. It was the water of the Word of Truth, which would provide spiritual life to those who partook of it. This Word of Truth was that which was proceeding from his lips as he ministered. This was the “gift of God” because it was freely given to all who had a hearing ear. The Apostle Paul refers to this “living water” of the Word of Truth, stating that it is to have a sanctifying and cleansing effect on the church. He says, “That he [Christ] might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word.”—Eph. 5:26

Jesus explained to the woman, “Whosoever drinketh of this water [from the well] shall thirst again.” (John 4:13) He additionally said, in the words of our Key Verse, that the water he gave, the water of the Word, would quench the thirst for truth of anyone desirous of knowing it. Taking the matter one step further, Jesus stated that those who would partake of this “living water” would themselves become a “well of water.” This well would not need to be drawn from. It would rather be a spring, gushing forth from us. To this, the woman excitedly replied, “Sir, give me this water.”—vs. 15

There is a twofold meaning to the thought of the church as a “well of water springing up into everlasting life.” First, as we partake of the water of the Word of Truth and allow it to do its sanctifying work, it becomes a part of our very being. So much does this occur that the Word of Truth is shown forth, “springing up,” by our words, deeds, and examples to one another and the world. This process of development, faithfully carried out, leads us to “everlasting life.” Second, the glorified church will, in Christ’s future kingdom, give this same water of truth to all mankind. All who “thirst” (see Rev. 22:17) for it, and by it are sanctified, will then be led to “everlasting life” here upon the earth. ■

# Healing the Blind Man

**Key Verse:**  
***“Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.”***  
**—John 9:16**

**Selected Scripture:**  
**John 9**

**IN THE ACCOUNT OF TODAY’S** lesson, Jesus encountered a man who was blind from birth. The disciples mistakenly concluded that his blindness must have been punishment for some sin he or his parents had committed. (John 9:2) Jesus said such was not the case (vs. 3), providing us the first important lesson of this account. He knew the truth as stated throughout God’s Word. This man’s blindness, as well as all of mankind’s many sicknesses and diseases, even death itself, was the result of our first parents’ disobedience in the Garden of Eden and the resulting penalty pronounced upon them. (see Gen. 2:16,17; 3:17-19) This penalty, including physical ailments such as blindness and all other maladies, has passed down to all subsequent generations because all are part of the fallen race of Adam.

Jesus explained to his disciples that what he was about to do would be an example of the “works of God.” (John 9:3) He said his mission was to do “the works of him [God] that sent me,” and in doing so he was “the light of the world.” (vss. 4,5) This light was to be for the

benefit of his disciples, to help them know the purpose of his works. We understand, and as the disciples later realized, that the works of healing which Jesus did were a fore gleam of the larger “works of God” which would be done in his future earthly kingdom. John the Revelator speaks of some of these greater works, saying, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”—Rev. 21:4,5

Another important lesson is the manner in which Jesus healed the blind man. “He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.” (John 9:6,7) In this we see there was a part which Jesus accomplished—*anointing of the eyes of the blind man*. There was also a work for the blind man—he was to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Only by accomplishment of both parts of the work did he come away seeing. This illustrates that the healing of man’s diseases, not just physical but also diseases of character, requires both the work of our Lord as well as the work of those who are to be healed.

Jesus’ part in healing mankind is primarily shown in the ransom, by which Adam and his race are released from condemnation. He paid the ransom by “anointing” the Most Holy (Dan. 9:24), thus satisfying God’s justice. Mankind’s part in this work, once released from condemnation, is to cooperate in “washing” the remaining vestiges of sin from their character.

The Key Verse indicates the Jewish leaders did not appreciate the wonderful meaning of the works which Jesus did. How thankful we are, however, that we understand these things, and can say with the man who was healed, “I was blind, [but] now I see.”—John 9:25 ■

# Sinuing Against the Holy Spirit

*“Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.”*

—*Matthew 12:31-33,  
New American  
Standard Bible*

**THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT** the Holy Spirit is the third person in a trinity of gods, of which the Father and the Son are the other two and all co-equal in power and authority, would have difficulty in explaining this statement by Jesus. He says that while sin against himself would be forgiven, sin against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven. Certainly this disproves the absolute equality of the Holy Spirit and the Son of God. There is no need here, however, to be concerned with an erroneous doctrine which has come down to us from the Dark

Ages. When we understand what the Holy Spirit is and the circumstances under which these words

of the Master were spoken, all is clear, harmonious, logical, and satisfying.

In the context of our featured scripture, we are told of one of Jesus' miracles when a man was brought to him "possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." (Matt. 12:22) The people who witnessed this miracle were properly "amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?" (vs. 23) To these Israelites, the "son of David" was the promised Messiah. When they saw, through Jesus, the exercise of what they knew must have been divine power, they were convinced that he was indeed the great one whom the God of Israel had promised to send. In their simplicity of mind and humbleness of heart, they were glad to acknowledge the truth when it was so conclusively demonstrated to them.

It was not thus with the Pharisees. When they "heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." (vs. 24) These Pharisees, in their hardness of heart, refused to accept the logical explanation of what they had witnessed. They had seen the power of God—the Holy Spirit of God—manifested in the casting out of a devil from this afflicted man. However, they were ready and willing to deny the facts, closing their minds to the reality of what had happened.

This was the background of Jesus' statement in our text. By it, the Master implied that the Pharisees, in denying the truth of what they had clearly witnessed, had set themselves in opposition to the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed, as he said, they had

blasphemed against the Holy Spirit in that they had charged that its good work was in reality the work of the devil. Such a sin, Jesus said, could not be forgiven, neither in this world or age, nor in the age to come.

This account highlights the fact that the Holy Spirit is simply the holy power of God by which he accomplishes all his good purposes. In this instance, it was exercised through the Master in ridding this afflicted man of the "devil" which was causing him to be blind and dumb, and restoring him to health. It was a miraculous demonstration of divine power. The exercise of divine power is always miraculous in the sense that our finite minds are unable to understand it. However, to deny its accomplishments is a sin which God does not overlook.

Why is it that sin against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven? In a broad sense it is sin against light, against knowledge. In the case of the Pharisees, there was the chance that they could misunderstand Jesus' teachings. After all, while he spoke as never man spoke, their conception of him had to be based upon his words. No fault could be found with Jesus' "gracious words." In the imperfection and prejudice of the Pharisees, they could nonetheless have misunderstood the meaning of what he said. This, the Master indicated, could be forgiven, but to distort the meaning of the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit was not ignorantly done. It was a willful sin, so could not be forgiven. They had sinned against what they knew to be right.

The application of this principle is seen in God's dealings with Saul of Tarsus, who afterward became the great Apostle Paul. Saul was a bitter opponent

of the Christian cause. With what he supposed was a righteous hatred, he persecuted the early believers. On the way to Damascus on a mission of further persecution, he was struck down to earth by a blinding light shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday. He heard a voice speak to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4) The voice explained, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."—vs. 5

It was in all good conscience that Saul had been opposing Christ and the Christian cause. Now, though, given a demonstration of the power of God informing him that Jesus truly was the Christ of promise, it dramatically changed his whole outlook. Had he been like the Pharisees, he might have insisted that the devil was trying to interfere with his work. He might have even more zealously tried to stamp out the heresy of the Nazarene, Jesus, and continued on to Damascus to complete his mission of persecution. However, Saul's heart was right. He accepted the logic of events that had occurred, was convinced, and gladly entered into the service of the Messiah whom previously he had been persecuting.

The experience was a severe lesson to Saul which even as the great Apostle Paul, he did not forget. It served to keep him humble and ever to realize how easy it is to be in error. Writing about it later, he said, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with

faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”—I Tim. 1:12-14

Paul had been a “blasphemer” and a “persecutor.” He had done great injury to the brethren of Christ, but he had not blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. His sin was against Christ, whom he did not know. He had sinned “ignorantly” and in “unbelief” so mercy was extended to him. This was great mercy, indeed, for he was forgiven and exalted to the high position of a special apostle in the church. The situation would have been different if, when that great demonstration of power which he later characterized as a “vision” was given to him, he had been “disobedient” to it. This would have been an unforgivable sin.—Acts 26:19

### **LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

A very illuminating episode is related in Acts 4:29-5:11. The religious rulers of Israel were much disturbed over the successful ministry of the apostles at Pentecost and afterward. “They called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” (Acts 4:18) The Apostles did not obey these instructions. Instead, they reported to their brethren and held a prayer meeting. Their prayer concluded thus: “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.”—vss. 29,30

Immediately there was a miracle, for we read, “When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all

filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness; And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.”—vss. 31-33

These were the miraculous circumstances which caused the believers to sell their houses and lands and turn over the proceeds to the apostles. Little wonder, in view of the Holy Spirit’s demonstration among them, that they were induced to take this drastic action. Then we are told that a “certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price,” his wife agreeing to it. (Acts 5:1,2) As Peter told Ananias (vs. 4), he had a right to do what he wanted, for he had not been commanded by the Lord to sell his land or to give any part of the proceeds to the apostles to be used for the common support of the church. His sin was in the fact that he claimed he had turned in all the money when he had not.

Peter asked Ananias why Satan had filled his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. The meaning of this is apparent when we take into consideration the circumstances. The Holy Spirit had been working mightily in and through the apostles. The place where they held their special prayer meeting shook with its power. The sick were healed and other signs were brought by the Spirit’s power. Filled with the Spirit, the apostles’ preaching was powerful. The entire company was convinced that God

was in their midst, including Ananias and Sapphira. However, these later were not sincere in the matter. They were willing that their relationship to God, through Jesus, should cost them something, but not all. Yet they wanted their brethren to think they had given all.

The brethren could have been misled in this, but one of the special powers of the Holy Spirit which had been given to Peter was the ability to read the mind and heart. Through the power of God he discerned the deception. Peter said to Ananias, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (vs. 4) What a lesson this is for all the Lord's people! Let us remember that we stand or fall before the Lord, not before one another.

Peter then exercised the authority given him by the Holy Spirit and Ananias and Sapphira both perished. They had sinned against the Holy Spirit and it could not be forgiven them. It was not a sin of ignorance.

### **THOSE ONCE ENLIGHTENED**

It is not necessary that the miraculous power of God, his Holy Spirit, be outwardly demonstrated in order to sin willfully against it. In Hebrews 6:4-8, another and different situation is brought to our attention in which it is possible for one to commit sin which cannot be forgiven. We quote, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves

the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

Here the apostle is discussing those in whose hearts and lives the Holy Spirit has operated through the written Word. He makes it plain that in this situation also it is possible to sin against the Holy Spirit. They have been “enlightened,” so they do not have ignorance as an excuse. They have “tasted of the heavenly gift.” This evidently is a reference to Jesus whom God gave to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world. They have “tasted” of the wonderful gift of Jesus, which implies more than merely having heard of him.

They were made “partakers of the Holy Spirit.” The work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, through the Word of Truth, has been too evident to put aside lightly. While not spectacular, as the power of the Spirit was demonstrated to the Pharisees, yet its power in the life of a believer is even more convincing. Who could come under the baptism of the Spirit and the power of its anointing, the life-giving energy of its begetting, and not understand the great privilege of such a relationship with God? Who could receive of the Holy Spirit’s witness and seal and be filled with its power for holiness, its peace and its joy, without realizing that he has been enjoying the rich favor of God?

It is through the miracle-working power of the Spirit that the Word of God has reached us with all

its enlightenment and inspiration. Those who have “tasted the good word of God” have, as it were, been face to face with God. Indeed, the Word reveals him in his glory and outlines his wisdom, justice, love, and power. Millions read the Bible just because they believe it is a good book, others for its historical value. Some read it simply out of curiosity. Those who have devoted themselves to do God’s will and read the Bible that they might know his will and receive encouragement to perform it, find that it is a power in their lives. This is the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.

Paul indicates that some of these believers have tasted of the “powers” of the world to come. The Greek word here translated “powers” means force, and may be used either in a literal or figurative sense. Much miracle-working power will be operative in the age to come and the Hebrew Christians had already tasted some of it. We read, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”—Heb. 2:3,4, *New American Standard Bible*

From this, it is clear that the Hebrew brethren, in addition to being enlightened and given the Holy Spirit of Truth through the written Word, had witnessed some of the miracle-working power of the Spirit in the signs which were given to those early believers. Perhaps some of them had bestowed upon them one or more of the miraculous “gifts of the Spirit” mentioned in I Corinthians, chapter 12.

In this respect, they were in the same position as the Pharisees, and Ananias and Sapphira, who had witnessed the miracles performed by the Holy Spirit. These were “the powers of the world to come.” In the age to come, all the sick will be restored to health and all the dead will be awakened, the powers of regeneration then being in effect. How that will fill the earth with God’s glory!

Thus the apostle informs us that those who fall away from their loyalty to God after having enjoyed all these marvelous favors from him, favors which we might say are summed up in the one word “enlightenment,” that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. The falling away of such would be a matter of willfulness so gross that they would have no desire to repent. By having accepted Christ and enjoying the merit of his shed blood on their behalf, and then rejecting him, they put him “to open shame.” The “enlightenment” of these comes through God’s only source of enlightenment, which is the Holy Spirit of Truth, so in falling away they sin against the Holy Spirit and cannot be forgiven. Because they cannot be forgiven and there being no hope of their repenting, these die the second death. In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul wrote, “That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”—Heb. 6:8

A similar presentation of this general thought is found in Hebrews 10:26-29. “If we sin wilfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth (have been ‘enlightened’), there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which

shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" The Law given by Moses was typical. Those who died under its judgments will be awakened from death. Those who sin willfully in this age, after having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit of Truth, will go into oblivion forever.

### **DEGREES OF WILLFULNESS**

We see no reason from the Scriptures to suppose that a single act of sin against the Holy Spirit results in eternal destruction. True, when Jesus said to the Pharisees that sin against the Holy Spirit could not be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come, he implied that their sin in denying that his miracles were wrought by the power of God would not go unpunished. However, this does not necessarily mean that the punishment would be what the Scriptures describe as the "second death."

In Luke 12:47,48, Jesus lays down a rule governing the punishment of those who sin which is understandable, practical, and just. We read, "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." In other words, the degree of enlightenment determines the

extent of responsibility. Those mentioned by Paul in Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-29 are indicated to be sufficiently enlightened, and their sin against light so persistent and continuous that there is no repentance, no turning around. That is why their punishment is shown to be eternal death.

Notice also the principle set forth by Jesus is specifically said to apply to the Lord's servants. The unbelieving world, in its almost total ignorance of God, is not on probation now at all, but only the servants of God and those who profess to be his servants. This includes the Pharisees who in Jesus' day claimed that they were the representatives of God. This made them responsible, especially when they denied the power of him whom they claimed to serve. They will be punished and doubtless with many "stripes," but the Bible does not indicate that they necessarily died the "second death."

### **THE "GREAT TRANSGRESSION"**

It is apparent from the Scriptures that it is possible for those enlightened by the Holy Spirit of Truth, through the written Word, to "fall away." It is equally clear, however, that such a calamity does not occur suddenly. There is a gradual encroachment of sin, beginning perhaps with but a slight degree of laxity, but finally ending in what the psalmist describes as the "great transgression." This is a complete denial of the Lord, the Truth, and the power of the Holy Spirit in one's life.

In Psalm 19:12 and 13, David traces this gradual development of sin, and in verse 14 utters a touching prayer expressive of every true Christian's desire

to please the Lord. He asks, "Who can understand his errors?" (vs. 12) In the preceding verses, the psalmist speaks of the power of God's law, his testimony, and his statutes, his commandments being "pure" to make his people "wise" and to "enlighten" them. "By them," David says, are the Lord's servants warned, "and in keeping of them there is great reward."—vss. 7-11

In asking the question, "Who can understand his errors?" it would seem that David is implying that no one apart from the Word of God can enlighten or reveal them. Then he utters his prayer, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults"—faults that I do not realize I possess. Help me to turn on myself the searchlight of thy Word that the beginnings of sin may be detected. May the cleansing power of thy Truth make me clean and pure in thy sight.

David continues his prayer, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." Presumptuous sins are willful sins, sins against light, against the Holy Spirit. Perhaps nearly all the Lord's people at one time or another in their Christian life are guilty of one or more presumptuous sins. These are not "secret faults," although they might be the outgrowth of a wrong condition of mind and heart of which one is not aware. Notice David's prayer, "Let them not have dominion over me." In a moment of impetuosity one might commit a presumptuous sin, a sin which cannot be forgiven and a sin therefore that calls for some measure of punishment or "stripes." Still, it does not follow that such sins must necessarily have dominion over us.

For presumptuous sins to have dominion over one means that he has given up all effort to control his life in keeping with the directives of the Word. It would mean, as David continues, that such an one was guilty of the “great transgression.” Such transgression is so great, so willful, and so continuous, that the only suitable punishment would be the “second death.” Such is the growth of sin if not checked.

The only safe course for any of the Lord’s people lies in the attitude expressed by David when in further prayer to God he pleaded, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” (Ps. 19:14) We can cooperate with the Lord in the answering of this prayer through continued and earnest searching of his Word. In so doing, we will know the things which are acceptable to him and pleasing in his sight. Thus we will be safeguarded from sinning against the Holy Spirit. ■

### *Resurrection*

*May the joy of his resurrection*

*Fill your heart as you journey along.*

*May the peace he bequeathed be your portion,*

*May his love in your heart be a song.*

*May the hope thus begun become brighter,*

*May your faith in him firmer be,*

*Until soon in that first resurrection*

*His glorious face you shall see.*

—*Songs of the Nightingale*

# Jesus—Faithful Unto Death

*“Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”*  
—I Peter 2:21-23

## **THIS IS THE SEASON OF**

the year in which God’s consecrated people come together to keep the Memorial of our Lord’s death. As we do so, it is appropriate that we call to mind the perfect example which he set for us in every aspect of life and character. Meaningful glimpses into Jesus’ faithfulness during his brief earthly ministry are brought to our attention in connection with his trial, first before the religious leaders of his day, and then before the civil authorities.

Following the Master’s arrest in Gethsemane he was taken before the high priest. Jesus was asked by the high priest to tell about his disciples and of his doctrine. Doubtless the high priest thought that in complying with this request

he would say something which could be construed as blasphemy.

Jesus' reply to this request is revealing. He said, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why asketh thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said." (John 18:19-21) Jesus had not waited until the close of his life to bear witness to the Truth. A faithful witness before the high priest would not in itself have proven the Master's faithfulness, although it was a fitting climax to his entire faithful ministry of the Truth.

Jesus came to be "the light of the world." To fulfill this function it was essential that he let his light shine by teaching the people the great truths of his Father's plan. He faithfully did this from the beginning of his ministry. While only a minority of those to whom Jesus witnessed ever accepted and acted upon his teaching, they had learned about them to such an extent that he believed the high priest could have his question answered simply by asking the Jewish public.

This was undoubtedly true. The psalmist, in a prophecy concerning Jesus, puts these words in his mouth: "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation."—Ps. 40:9,10

The high priest was not satisfied with Jesus' answer, so he questioned him further. Matthew

reports him as saying, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus' reply to this was simply, "Thou hast said." (Matt. 26:63,64) This is what the high priest wanted to hear from the Master, for in his view it made Jesus subject to death for blasphemy. Jesus knew this, yet he did not hesitate to bear witness to the Truth under these trying circumstances, even as he had been faithful in declaring the kingdom message throughout his ministry.

### **BEFORE PILATE**

When Jesus was subsequently brought before Pilate he was asked to testify as to what his activities had been. "What hast thou done?" Pilate asked. (John 18:35) Pilate was not concerned with the religious aspects of the issue. There was a considerable degree of religious liberty throughout the Roman empire at that time. It was all right with Pilate even if Jesus did claim to be the Son of God. However, the accusation brought to Pilate was that Jesus claimed to be a king. This was different. If Jesus were aspiring to be a king it would be treason against Caesar. This Pilate could not ignore.

When Pilate asked Jesus, "What hast thou done?" the question was designed to learn if Jesus had been seeking to establish himself as king of the Jews. Jesus sensed this and replied to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (vs. 36) This was clear reasoning, and it was obvious to Pilate that Jesus was no threat to the solidarity of the Roman Empire.

Pilate continued his questioning, asking, "Art thou a king then?" (vs. 37) While Jesus had explained that his kingdom was not of this world, he fearlessly affirmed his kingship. He replied to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Having so unhesitatingly committed himself to the fact that he was born to be a king, there was nothing Pilate could do to save Jesus, although he testified that he could find no fault in this man.

Here again we find Jesus climaxing his life of faithfulness with this final testimony which he knew would lead to the cross. While Jesus had not raised an army or in other ways sought to establish himself as a king, he had done much in preparation for his kingdom and to illustrate what the kingdom would mean to the people when it was established. Any other prisoner before the bar, if asked what he had done, would probably have said, "I have done nothing." Jesus did not thus reply to Pilate. He simply explained that his kingdom was not of this world. In reality, Jesus had spent three and one-half years doing preparatory work for that future kingdom.

Jesus had committed no crimes that could be justly charged against him. On the contrary, he had been active in doing good. He had healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out demons, opened blind eyes, and raised the dead. Equally praiseworthy were the gracious messages of Truth which he had uttered. These were messages which had helped to loose the shackles of superstition which had been fastened upon the Israelites by their hypocritical leaders. These works of grace and goodness were

appreciated by many of the common people. They heard him gladly. Indeed, his popularity rose to the point where the Pharisees became fearful that if he were left alone the whole world would become his followers.—Matt. 4:23-25; John 11:47,48; 12:19

This is why Jesus was hated by those whose positions of power and authority in the nation were jeopardized by his teachings and his works of righteousness. As members of the fallen race, motivated by selfishness and unrighteous ambitions, they were unable to understand and appreciate the Master's selfless viewpoint and his untiring zeal for the blessing of others. To them Jesus was a misfit, one whose precepts and example exposed their unrighteousness and in time might prevent their selfish practices. They wanted to put a stop to his going about doing good because they selfishly desired to continue their own practice of doing evil. Their cry was, "Crucify him, Crucify him."—John 19:6

### **SIMPLICITY IN SERVICE**

The spirit of selfishness which motivated Israel's leaders was further manifested in their planned effort to make sure that what little good they selfishly did should be seen and heard of men. It was not so with Jesus. The Spirit of God which filled his life promoted a beautiful simplicity and straightforwardness in what he did, which was calculated to divert attention from himself and to direct it toward his Heavenly Father, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

When the centurion came to Jesus informing him that his servant was "at home sick of the palsy," Jesus' simple reply was, "I will come and heal

him.” (Matt. 8:6,7) There was no bargaining, no request that the miracle be publicized, no hint that the centurion, by accepting this favor, would be placed under obligation. Nor was there any attempt to wrest from him a pledge of future support. Jesus’ promise to heal the centurion’s servant was an expression of his loving desire to do good for the glory of God.

Matthew 8:14 reads, “When Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever.” Again there was no show, no unnecessary ado. Here was a woman who needed help, and Jesus helped her. Indeed, the Master had come into the world that eventually through him all might have health and life. Why should the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law be anything extraordinary for him to do? He did not so consider it, so we read that “he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose.”—vs. 15

### **DID NOT SEEK POPULARITY**

In Matthew 8:16,17, we read, “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” It seems that although Jesus made no effort to acquaint the people with his miracle-working power, his fame spread. By the close of this day he found himself the center of attraction and his popularity increasing. That the Master was not seeking this result from the good he was doing is apparent from verse 18, which

reads, "Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side."

The plan of God reveals that in due time all men will be drawn to Jesus, that he is the true light which yet is to enlighten every man that cometh into the world. Jesus was not desirous that the multitudes at that time be drawn to him. He did not want them to be attracted merely because of the temporary blessings he was able to bestow upon them. The drawing of all men in due time is based upon the fact that Jesus would be lifted up as man's Redeemer. This supreme example of love, even the sacrificing of life that the world might have forgiveness of sin, will be the real drawing power for those who come unto God through Jesus. To have divine favor, it is necessary not only to appreciate the unselfish sacrifice of the Master, but to partake of the spirit of unselfish love which prompted it.

### **UNTIRING SERVICE**

The good works of the Master were not occasional incidents, but his life's habit. He was never too occupied to give heed to the needs of those who came to him for help. Not only did he use the miracle-working power of God which was at his command to heal the sick and raise the dead, but he gave of his own strength as well. So unselfishly and generously did he thus give, that his perfect human body was practically worn out at the close of his short ministry of three and one-half years.

In a general way, Jesus' ministry was on behalf of all Israel. In this respect, he considered it a

privilege to do good unto all as later suggested by the Apostle Paul. (Gal. 6:10) However, he was particularly interested in his immediate disciples. These were being prepared to carry forward the work of the Gospel Age after the Master returned to heaven. A part of their training was in the observance of his life of unselfishness, in which he was fully committed to giving his attention and energy on behalf of others.

### **IN HIS STEPS**

Jesus said to his disciples, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.” (John 14:12) Those who are filled with the Master’s spirit of self-sacrifice and are faithful in following him into death by laying down their lives for others will, in the kingdom, share with him in the work of healing all the sick and raising all the dead. The healing of the sick in that day will be permanent. Those who are awakened from the sleep of death shall have the opportunity of living forever if they will be obedient to God’s laws. Thus, all the true followers of Jesus will share with him in doing works far greater than those which he performed at his First Advent.

Even now, and in order that we may demonstrate the spirit by which we are controlled, God gives us the opportunity as ministers of the Word to do all we can toward the opening of spiritually blind eyes and unstopping spiritually deaf ears. We also now have use of the Word of reconciliation to cleanse away the leprosy of sin. Those dead in trespasses and sins may even now, by accepting the Gospel message as proclaimed by the members of the body

of Christ, be awakened to righteousness and have their mortal bodies quickened by the Holy Spirit to serve the living God.

As in the days of Jesus, those at the present time who zealously lay down their lives in seeking to bless their fellow men will not be held in high esteem by the religiously influential of our time. It is far better that the servant of God have the reproaches of the world heaped upon him because of doing good than to have to confess that, having been called out of darkness into the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ, he had done nothing about it so far as proclaiming the message to others was concerned.

Jesus was hailed before Pilate because he had spent his life doing good in the Father's way. He had preached unpopular truth and had exposed popular error. Now the pent-up animosity of Israel's religious leaders was being heaped upon him. He was rushed to Calvary, not because he had done wrong, but because he had spent his life doing good.

### **FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE**

It would be a tragedy, indeed, for any follower of Christ to suffer on account of his own wrongdoing. Christian suffering is an evidence of God's favor, one of the witnesses of the Spirit. However, we should not confuse Christian suffering with suffering for foolish things we might do. Christian suffering is the result of faithfulness in showing forth the praises of the Lord through the proclamation of the great truths of God's plan.

It would also be tragic for a Christian, in order to avoid the ill will of the world or to maintain a

respectable standing in his community, to refrain from faithfulness in proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom. There is no other proper course for followers of the Master to take than to emulate his example of faithfulness. Jesus was consumed by the zeal of his Father's house, a zeal for doing good. It was a zeal for manifesting the same example of divine love which had prompted the Father to send him into the world, that the world through him might have life. For us not to be governed by this viewpoint would manifest a lack of the Holy Spirit, that divine influence and energy by which the faithful followers of the Master are conformed more and more into his image.

The Apostle Peter, through his association with the Master, observed the unselfishness of his life of sacrifice. He saw the wisdom of his methods and learned well the lesson of love which leads to the laying down of life for others. Peter expressed himself on the subject, saying, "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."—I Pet. 2:20-22

## **SUFFERING WITH HIM**

We should note well the many scriptures which emphasize that we shall reign with Christ only if we suffer with him. Let us also remember that the only suffering which is acceptable is suffering for doing good, not for doing evil, nor for merely doing nothing.

When we suffer for the Lord's cause and take it patiently and with rejoicing, we are thereby demonstrating our wholehearted devotion to God and to the spirit of divine love which must rule supreme in all those who will be blessed with life everlasting.

It will be the church's privilege during Christ's Millennial kingdom to instruct the world in the way of holiness. Hence, all its members must qualify in advance to share in such a glorious program of education, a program by which the knowledge of the glory of God will be caused to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. The world of mankind, while being restored to perfection, will not be called upon to suffer for doing good. They will, however, need to learn and to practice the principle of love in their dealings with others.

This is revealed in the Master's explanation of the parable of the sheep and the goats. To those who qualify as "sheep" in this parable the statement is made, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34) Jesus explains that the basis for the acceptableness of these "sheep" is the fact that they had manifested an interest in others. They had not busied themselves in acts of kindness in the hope of receiving a reward, but had cooperated in the restitution work then in progress because they had imbibed the spirit of God who had planned it.

These "sheep" had been so wholehearted in the manifestation of the love which ruled in their hearts that they were surprised to learn that what they had been doing had earned God's approval, and the privilege of entering into everlasting life in

the restored paradise. Although we say “earned,” life was actually provided for them through the ransom. However, by their faithfulness in displaying the characteristics of divine love in their lives, they proved worthy to enter into the life which had been purchased for them by the blood of Christ.

### **WHAT ARE WE DOING?**

Bringing the example of Jesus’ faithfulness back to ourselves, Pilate’s question to the Master, “What hast thou done?” serves as a reminder that there is indeed something good for us to be doing. By engaging ourselves in so doing we will prove worthy to suffer with Christ now, and later to live and reign with him.

We cannot hope to do some of the things that Jesus did. We cannot perform miracles. We cannot raise the dead. We cannot even teach and speak as he did. Surely we cannot be a perfect example in every way such as he was. We can, however, have the same heart dedication as he did. We can say with him, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:8) The Scriptures also tell us of the works we can do which he will accept. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” “Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”—Gal. 6:10; I John 3:16; John 13:14

These and many other scriptures remind us that there is much work we can engage in which is acceptable to God, with the help and guiding influence of his Holy Spirit. It is up to us to seek out ways to be so engaged. If and when the question is ever asked

of us, "What hast thou done?" let us be able to testify that we have, to the best of our ability, done heartily what the Lord has asked us to do. At this Memorial season, let us remember with solemn thankfulness the great example of Jesus, our Passover Lamb, and the privilege we have of following in his steps even unto death. "Hallelujah! what a Savior!" ■

## 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 Ailsa Harmes, Barhead, Canada—January.  
Age, 99

Brother Rodney Rice, North Bend, OR—January  
22. Age, 64

Sister Bonnie J. Gaunt, Mountain Home, AR—  
January 23. Age, 82

Sister Harriet Doctor, Chicago, IL—January 29.

Brother Johnnie Golby, Alberta, Canada—January  
30. Age, 77

Brother E. F. (Al) Lankford, Sacramento, CA—  
February 4. Age, 96

Brother Mike Rybka, Prince Albert, Canada—  
February 7. Age, 97

Brother Joseph Goulis, Hampton, NH—February  
11. Age, 89

Brother Eugene Homolka, Fort Collins, CO—  
February 20. Age, 76

Sister Sophie Jezuit, Chicago, IL—March 2. Age, 92

Sister Hildur E. Schiffner, Burlington, CO—March  
2. Age, 90

# Hope—Confident Expectation

*“Now abideth faith,  
hope, charity  
[love].”* **LIFE, FOR THE MAJORITY**  
*—I Corinthians 13:13*

of people in this present evil world, has been filled with despair. This should come to us as no surprise when we review our own previous condition and the condition of all the people in the world who do not have a knowledge of God and his plan. It is amazing that, under the circumstances, people can have any kind of hope. Yet, the old adage we hear so often is true, “Hope springs eternal in the human breast.” Innately, mankind continues to hope that a bad situation will get better, even though at the time it is a situation of despair.

Many are inclined to think of hope as meaning “desire,” but the true definition of hope is “desire with expectation of fulfillment.” Unfortunately, the hope that arises in most human breasts has not been fulfilled. This may explain why most of the world thinks of hope in terms of desire only. The expectation of fulfillment is, in so many cases, very dim.

The biblical use of the word “hope” is definitely that of expectation. Furthermore, the hope of the

Bible, by being associated with the promises of God, is a virtue which includes a “confident and favorable expectation of good.” It is a virtue that we as Christians are admonished to develop so that we will not despair, but be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

### **FORMERLY WITHOUT HOPE**

When the Apostle Paul described our former condition—before we came to a knowledge of God—he said, “At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” (Eph. 2:12) Notice he stressed that we had “no hope.” Now that we have come to a knowledge of Christ and of God and his plan, we have a most marvelous hope. We become especially aware of this hope when someone who is dear to us dies and we recall the Apostle Paul’s words in I Thessalonians 4:13: “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

The reason we do not sorrow as those that have no hope is that we have faith in the promises of God. Hence, in I Thessalonians 4:14, we see how, by the logic of Paul, this faith is tied to the resurrection of those who “sleep in Jesus.” From other scriptures, we see that Jesus has promised to raise all mankind from the dead. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the

resurrection of [judgment].”—John 5:28,29, *Revised Standard Version*

As we have noted, faith in the promises of God is directly related to our hope. Through faith we are able to assemble all the facts we find in God’s holy Word, leading us to certain important conclusions. We are glad that the truth we find in the Bible does not cause us to conclude that the great majority of mankind will find themselves in eternal torment, or that all mankind will merely return to the dust from whence they came, or that we alone will be saved. If our perusal of the Bible’s teachings would lead us to any of the foregoing incorrect conclusions, we would have no hope, or at best a limited, selfish hope.

Thanks be to God, who has given us our hope! We know that the wonderful hope we possess is not wishful thinking but comes directly from God. Our ability to see it revealed in his Word is because of the power of his Holy Spirit. This is clearly stated by the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:13: “Now the God of hope [the author of this hope] fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

## **HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION**

The very close association of this hope to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is evident from other scriptures. The Apostle Paul spoke of it in Acts 23:6, when standing before the Sanhedrin: “When Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the

son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.” Later, when brought before the governor, Felix, he told how he believed all those things which are written in the Law and the Prophets, saying, “[I] have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”—Acts 24:15

Still later, when standing before Festus and King Agrippa, Paul again mentioned this hope, saying, “Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”—Acts 26:6-8

The first indication of this hope and how it would be fulfilled was given by God in his statement to the serpent in the presence of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen. 3:15) This hope was to be based on the coming of one, born of woman, who would crush evil for all time. Later, the promise made to Abraham, “In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” further defined this hope as being associated with the seed of Abraham. Finally, when Jesus came as the promised seed of Abraham and was put to death, this hope became associated with his resurrection. The Bible assures us that all peoples are to participate in the realization of this hope.

## HOPE OF GLORY

The hope which footstep followers of Christ have goes beyond restoration to life. For these, there is the added hope of glory like unto that possessed inherently by the Father, and now possessed also by Jesus. This hope is mentioned in several scriptures: "The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." (Col. 1:5) Again, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (vs. 27) In Romans 5:2, the Apostle Paul mentions a rejoicing in the "hope [of sharing] of the glory of God." In Hebrews 6:18-20, we are told that it is a secure and sure hope: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

The Apostle in the above scripture is alluding to the Tabernacle and to the hope we have of entering into heaven itself, pictured by the Most Holy. A reward of the divine nature awaits all who are able to reach this condition by being faithful unto death. Jesus, our forerunner, was able to do so. Hebrews, chapters 5 and 6, provide the background for this picture. They give us an insight into the experiences of Jesus in carrying out God's purpose for him. We must follow his steps in order to realize this glorious hope.

In Romans, chapter 8, the Apostle Paul explains that we must be willing to suffer with Christ and walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. This is not easy. Sufferings for righteousness' sake will be encountered. Nevertheless, these sufferings are insignificant when compared with the glory of our hope. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Rom. 8:18

The Apostle Paul tells of the need for our willingness to undergo suffering for the attainment of this hope. "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." (Rom. 5:1-5, *RSV*) Hence we might say that we rejoice in our sufferings and have hope—a confident expectation of good from these experiences—because we can see God's love in our every experience. Hope, then, comprises our inspiration and incentive for continuing on in the narrow way to the best of our ability, even as we endure afflictions.

### **LINKED TO LOVE AND FAITH**

Although hope is associated with the future, God does not leave us without any evidence today of the assistance he liberally gives us for attaining

this hope. He convinces us through his love that what he promises to give us is true.

Hope is a virtue because, like faith, it is rare. Children have a sincere hope of good. Adults, however, because of the severity of life's experiences, become skeptical and absorbed by selfishness in preserving themselves. Hope is truly a link between faith and love. Faith uses facts on which to conclude matters. Hope is associated more with that part of faith which we call "heart reliance upon God." Such reliance is based on our supreme love for him. God, seeing that we have this hope together with faith and love, is pleased.

Paul says, "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24,25) Soon our hope will become reality, and then it will cease to be hope. Our confident and favorable expectation of good will be real and will be seen by all. Until then, let us continue to have a favorable and confident expectation of good and, with patience, wait for its fulfillment. ■

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*His oath, his cov'nant and his blood  
Support me in the 'whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He, then, is all my hope and stay.*



In Memoriam  
Brother E. F.  
“Al” Lankford

July 13, 1915 – February 4, 2012

**IT IS WITH GRATEFUL** and loving remembrance that we announce the passing of our dear Brother Al Lankford, who was 96 years of age. He was well known in the Bible Student community, both in the United States, as well as in other parts of the world.

Al grew up in Kokomo, Indiana. He and his wife, Betty, were married in 1941. In the early 1950s, Al and Betty came in contact with the Truth at about the time of the death of their second child, a daughter who only lived for six months. They both consecrated their lives to the Lord in 1955, and were members of the Sacramento, California, Bible Students Ecclesia until their deaths. Brother Al was predeceased by Sister Betty, who died in 2011. They have one son, John, two grandsons, and two great grandchildren.

For most of his consecrated life, Brother Al served as an elder in the Sacramento Bible Students

Ecclesia. He was also an active member of the Dawn Bible Students Association. He became a Trustee of the Dawn in 1982, and subsequently was a member of its Editorial committee for many years. He served faithfully in these capacities until 2010, when, due to declining health, he relinquished those responsibilities.

He was a wonderful example of a Christlike character, and was zealous in his service for the Lord. He was a deep student of the Bible, and had outstanding abilities in leading Bible studies and in speaking the Word of God. His labors and ministry will be missed by all.

One of Brother Al's favorite hymns was:

*“More Christlike”*

*How blessed, how glorious, how joyful to feel  
The love everlasting, of sonship a seal,  
The love that is perfect, the love that is pure,  
That we may with patience all things well endure.  
I want to feel humble, more simple, more mild,  
More like my blest Master and more like a child;  
More trustful, more thankful, more lovely in mind,  
More watchful, more prayerful, more loving and  
kind.*

—*Hymns of Dawn, #95*

We rejoice with Brother Al in the words of Revelation 14:13: “I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” ■

# 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.*

## **K. Fernets**

Boise, ID April 27-29

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

## **M. J. Balko**

St. Petersburg, FL April 15

## **G. Balko**

New York, NY April 15

## **D. Blencowe**

Boise, ID April 27-29

## **D. Christiansen**

Detroit, MI April 1  
Boise, ID 27-29

## **O. B. Elbert**

Detroit, MI April 1

## **E. Blicharz**

New York, NY April 15

## **R. Goodman**

St. Augustine, FL April 15  
Boise ID 27-29

## **R. Gorecki**

Boise, ID April 27-29

## **L. Griehs**

Boise, ID April 27-29

## **K. Humphreys**

Albuquerque, NM April 6-8  
Boise, ID 27-29

## **B. Keith**

Boise, ID April 27-29

## **P. Mora**

Boise, ID April 27-29

## **J. Parkinson**

Albuquerque, NM April 6-8

## **G. Passios**

Pittsburgh, PA April 29

## **T. Ruggirello**

Albuquerque, NM April 6-8

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## 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.*

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 31-April 1**—Quality Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Hotel reservations, phone (248) 689-7500. Specify “Detroit Bible Students” for special rate. Other information, contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

**ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 6-8**—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Reservation deadline: March 15. For information and reservations, contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170

**AGWA, NIGERIA, MEMORIAL SEASON CONVENTION, April 7**—Uzi Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact B. Obiukwu: [abiblestudecc@yahoo.com](mailto:abiblestudecc@yahoo.com)

**NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, April 15**—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Hotel Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact G. Passios. Phone (201) 939-3196 or E-mail: [gpassios11@verizon.net](mailto:gpassios11@verizon.net)

**BOISE CONVENTION, April 27-29**—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 7558 W. Hathaway Lane, Boise, ID 83714 by April 2. Phone: (208) 375-6873

**PITTSBURGH CONVENTION, April 29**—Greentree Best Western Parkway Center Inn. Contact C. Byrd. Phone: (412) 734-4702 or E-mail: [charlene.byrd26@gmail.com](mailto:charlene.byrd26@gmail.com)

**JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 6**—620 Wells Road, Orange Park, FL 32073. Hotel Phone: (904) 562-7400. Contact C. Hires. Phone: (904) 781-0506

**AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 19,20**—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001. Contact A. Gonczewski. Phone (863) 450-8299 or E-mail: aga49@yahoo.com. Hotel reservations only, contact M. Wardak. Phone: (413) 789-6198

**CHICAGO MEMORIAL DAY CONVENTION, May 26-28**—Location to be announced. Contact L. Manzuk. Phone: (630) 660-1874 or E-mail: secretary@chicago-bible.org

**LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 26,27**—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Room reservations contact N. Nekora. Phone: (310) 454-5248. Other information, contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

**BUFFALO CONVENTION, June 2,3**—Holiday Inn Buffalo International Airport, 4600 Genesee Street, Buffalo, NY 14225. Contact R. Morin for reservations by May 5, 2012. Phone: (585) 322-3430

**DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 10**—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. Contact R. Eldridge. Phone: (215) 949-0652

**MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, June 30-July 1**—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (262) 895-4583 or E-mail: Debfarhione@aol.com

**PRINCE ALBERT & SASKATOON CONVENTION, June 30-July 2**—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR1 Stn Mpp Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V5P8

**BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 21-26**—University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com