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The Nobel Peace Prize: A Corruptible Crown

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”
—*I Corinthians 9:24*

OUR FEATURED SCRIPTURE

is a portion of the epistle written by Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth. In this letter he makes reference to the Olympic Games to illustrate his point. Even when this was written many centuries ago, the Olympic Games was a well known sporting event that took place at Olympia, Greece every four years. It already had a long history that dated back to 776 B.C. The apostle's reference to the 'prize' provided the brethren with a visual illustration in connection with the special prize that would be given to the winning athlete. He told them that his reference to the Olympic Games related to the consecrated followers of Christ Jesus who are also running for a more valuable prize—the heavenly prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

A prize is the reward for winning something of value, or having achieved excellence in a particular competition. Various prizes have been offered to either individuals or groups for exceptional achievements or performance. Wealthy people have often left large sums of money, or other assistance, to those they believe indicate a high level of talent in a particular field of interest. One of the most highly sought prizes that may be won in our day is the Nobel Peace Prize. It is offered each year on December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Bernhard Nobel's death, and takes place in Norway, the country of his choice.

The foundation for the Nobel Peace Prize had its origin with Nobel, who was a Swedish inventor and industrialist. He designated funds for its establishment when he wrote his last will in 1895. The will stated that a prize would be awarded by a committee of five people elected by the Norwegian Parliament. The recipients were to be outstanding people, "who have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." Since its inception the Nobel Prizes have been widely regarded as the most prestigious awards given for intellectual achievement in the world.

Nobel died a short time later in Italy in 1896. Although he was born in Sweden, his wishes designated that a Nobel Committee be set up to administer the award from Norway. His intentions are not entirely known, but it is believed by many that he chose Norway instead of Sweden because the

Norwegian Parliament was closely affiliated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union which was involved in resolving military conflicts at that time. Other reasons are thought to include Nobel's longtime friendship with Bertha von Sutter who was a peace activist. As further evidence for this, she later became the Honorary President of the Permanent International Peace Bureau, was the author of books dealing with the subject of peace, and was the winner of the Nobel Prize in 1905.

THE LAUREATES

The first Nobel Peace awards were given on the fifth anniversary of Nobel's death, December 10, 1901. Since that time the prize has honored men and women from many parts of the world for their outstanding work in achieving peace, as well as others who were selected for their work in chemistry, medicine, literature and, in recent years, economics.

Between the years 1901 and 2009, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 90 times to 120 Laureates. Of these they were given to individuals 97 times, and to organizations 23 times. However, the International Committee of the Red Cross received the award 3 times, in 1917, 1944, and in 1963. Also the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees received the award twice, in 1954 and 1981 which lowers the number of organizations to 20. Throughout the years many individuals have received the distinction of becoming Nobel Peace Prize Nominees. The nomination requires the support of one qualified person, but does not necessarily represent the opinion of the Nobel committee.

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES

The first United States President to receive the Nobel Peace Prize was Theodore Roosevelt in 1906. He was given this honor because of his efforts to mediate the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. He presided over the Treaty of Portsmouth that was signed by Russia and Japan, but did not attend the award ceremony. Roosevelt sent Herbert Peirce who was a member of the United States State Department and was put in charge of the deliberations that were signed by Russia and Japan.

Woodrow Wilson was the second United States President to receive the Nobel Peace award in 1919, in recognition of his “Fourteen Points” peace program and his work toward achieving the Covenant of the League of Nations, in the Treaty of Versailles. Albert Schmedeman, who was the United States ambassador to Norway, accepted the award due to the President’s poor health.

In 2002, President Jimmy Carter won the prestigious award for his continued efforts to find peaceful solutions to the many worldwide conflicts of our time. He advanced democracy and human rights, and promoted economic and social development. He was also instrumental in Anwar al-Sadat and Menachem Begin sharing the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978.

United States President Barack Obama became the Nobel Peace Prize laureate on October 9, 2009. As the leader of the Democratic Party, he had only been a sitting President for a few months. In a statement that was issued shortly after the nomination, it was declared that he had been chosen because of his extraordinary efforts to strengthen

international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.

The Nobel Committee's selection has sparked considerable controversy. Some demanded that President Obama decline the award because of his short time in office. They point out that he lacks experience, and has made no particular achievements in making peace proposals. The United States is currently conducting two wars in the Middle East, one in Iraq and the other in Afghanistan. As of this writing, the President is planning to send additional United States forces for the war in Afghanistan.

CHARLES DAWES

In addition to the four American Presidents who have received peace awards, United States Vice President Charles Dawes should also be included, as he, too, received the prize in 1925. Dawes was a member of President Warren Harding's administration, as well as that of President Calvin Coolidge. He was recognized for his work as chairman of the Dawes Committee which worked to solve the difficult issues concerning German reparation after World War I. He became Vice President elect when Coolidge was elected in 1924, and is the only Vice President to be honored with the Peace prize.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Through the process of selecting names for eligible candidates, some regrettable decisions have been made. Among the most notable of these was the omission of Mahatma Gandhi. This has been a widely discussed issue for many decades, and attempts

have been made to rectify the situation. However, the Committee confirms that Gandhi was nominated for the prize in the years 1937, 1938, 1939, 1947, and again a few days before he was murdered in January 1948.

Gandhi was the preeminent political and spiritual leader of India, and was an inspiration to his people during their Independence Movement. His tireless efforts have led the way towards other civil rights and freedom movements from around the world. He is officially honored as the Father of India, and his October 2nd birthday is commemorated as a national holiday, and as the International Day of Nonviolence internationally. Although he was not the originator of the principle of nonviolence, he was the first to apply it in the political field on a large scale.

After his murder in 1948, the Nobel Committee made a decision to not award a Peace Prize during the year of his death. The Committee declined to award a prize on the grounds that there was no suitable living candidate to receive the honor that year. It is worthy of note that when the Dalai Lama was awarded the Peace Prize in 1989 the Committee's Chairman announced that this was "in part a tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi."

YASSER ARAFAT

Controversy arose over the nomination of Yasser Arafat, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994. Two others shared the award with him—Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin—for their successful negotiations resulting from the 1993 Oslo Accords.

The Oslo Accords were a culmination of agreements that had dated from the Madrid Conference of 1991. It negotiated between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization as part of a peace process which attempted to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite their efforts, the Accords were not fully implemented and the conflict has never been resolved. They had been officially signed at Washington, D.C. with Arafat signing for the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Peres also signed for the State of Israel, with Israel's Prime Minister Rabin as a witness.

The decision to award Arafat was based on the understanding that he had renounced his terrorist tactics, and had become a true participant in achieving peace. However, the Oslo Accords demanded Arafat to recognize Israel's right to exist, and to guarantee its people safety and security. He was also required to work toward resolving any remaining problems that may exist between the two parties. However, even during 1993 and 1994, there was a high rate of P.L.O. terrorism conducted against Israel resulting in many Israeli citizens being killed or injured.

Controversy arose within the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, and Kaare Kristiansen who was a member of the Committee resigned. He said he would not support the kind of peace prize that included Yasser Arafat. Due to Arafat's terrorist behavior, it soon became clear that he was not committed to the peace process, and it ultimately failed. Since that time various groups have come forward demanding that his peace prize be revoked. He died in 2004.

INFAMOUS NOMINEES

When the Nobel Peace Prize nominations for the fifty-year period 1901-1951 were released to the public, it was realized that it contained the names of some highly controversial figures. Included among the names of possible candidates were Benito Mussolini and Joseph Stalin, but neither of them received the nomination. Furthermore it was learned that Adolph Hitler had been officially nominated in 1939, just before the onset of World War 2. The nomination was retracted after a short period of time.

SEEKING A HIGHER PRIZE

For over a century, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has continued to recognize many outstanding men and women from various parts of the world who have achieved very high levels of success in their various fields of intellectual endeavor. These awards pale in significance however, when they are compared to the much higher and grander prize that is offered to the faithful followers of our Lord Jesus during this present Gospel Age. There are yet those who are giving their lives in complete consecration to our loving Heavenly Father, and striving to make their calling and election sure. This 'little flock' will receive the prize of spiritual life on the highest of all planes of life, the divine nature. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

A CROWN INCORUPTIBLE

Within the context of our featured scripture—I Corinthians 9:24—the Apostle Paul speaks of an

incorruptible crown that the Lord's faithful people will receive as an inheritance of their High Calling in Christ Jesus. From the apostle's letter, we consider his further words of counsel. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."—vss. 25-27

Paul's words 'so fight I' clearly reveal the covenant of sacrifice and self-denial that he had made with our loving Heavenly Father, and he thus encourages every one of the Lord's people to give diligence in seeking the prize of their High Calling. The apostle suggests the thought of Christian warfare, and our continuing battle to overcome the desires of our fallen flesh, the temptations of the world, and the wiles of the Adversary. He reminds us that we must carry out our lives of consecration with much determination and fortitude. This walk in the narrow way of sacrifice starts at the time we made our covenant with God, and it will end at the time of our death. From the words of the revelator, we read, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

The Apostle Peter emphasizes the merit of our Lord Jesus' precious blood, wherein we have the promise of receiving the spiritual inheritance in his future kingdom. He explains, "Forasmuch as ye

know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”—I Pet. 1:18,19

He then uses the word “incorruptible” to address the true value of the seed of promise. We therefore, “having been regenerated, not from corruptible, but from incorruptible Seed, through the living and enduring Word of God.”—vs. 23, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”—Heb. 12:1-3

ENDURING HARDNESS

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he introduced the thought of Christian warfare and combativeness by using the illustration of a soldier. He said, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.”—II Tim. 2:3-5

Soldiers of the cross of Jesus are thus encouraged to hold high the banner of truth and righteousness. They are instructed to do this with meekness and much patience, and with long-suffering and brotherly kindness. The true people of God are willing to forego the rights and privileges of the present life. They have learned to control the mind of the New Creature in Christ Jesus, and have willingly submitted themselves to doing the will of a loving and merciful Heavenly Father. All who have accepted the heavenly calling during this present Gospel Age will be blessed in proportion to the degree and level of their spiritual life, which is hidden in Christ Jesus. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."—Gal. 6:8,9

DENYING SELF

When making a full consecration to our loving Heavenly Father, we learn to accept his will in our lives, which points to a life of self-denial and sacrifice even unto death. This lesson was expressed by our Lord, and recorded by Matthew, which reads, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of

his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”—Matt. 16:24-27

PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING

In his letter to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul testifies to the goodness of God, his appreciation for the heavenly calling, and his determination to make his calling and election sure. His admonition is applicable to all of the Lord’s people who continue to strive for a place in the spiritual kingdom of Christ Jesus.

“What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:7-14

May we thus heed Paul's further counsel, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."—Heb. 10:35-39

ENTERING A NEW YEAR

As we leave the old year behind and enter the new year before us, we do so with the understanding that we are now living during the closing years of this present Gospel Age, and its accompanying time of trouble and distress of nations. This was foretold in the prophetic words of Isaiah, who wrote, "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." (Isa. 63:4) However, we trust that the heavenly calling which has been extended to a little flock of the Lord's followers will soon be completed. When this work is finished, Christ's kingdom will be set up for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

With this wonderful hope in mind, let us each strive with greater diligence for the prize of our High Calling in Christ Jesus. It cannot be compared with any other, and is truly the grandest and most wonderful gift that has ever been offered to a select few of the human creation. Paul said, "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

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”—Rev. 19:7-9 ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 7—“Speak evil of no man.”—Titus 3:2 (Z. '03-425 Hymn 267)

JANUARY 14—“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.”—I Corinthians 9:26 (Z. '03-421 Hymn 266)

JANUARY 21—“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”—Matthew 16:24 (Z. '00-118 Hymn 279)

JANUARY 28—“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”—Revelation 3:5 (Z. '97-16 Hymn 82)

Proclaimed in Baptism

Key Verse: *“Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*
—Matthew 3:17

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 3

JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS the forerunner of Jesus and, in preparation for that greater ministry soon to come, he went about preaching repentance to the Jewish people, so that their hearts and minds would be in a proper attitude to receive the Gospel message of Christ. John was “he that was spoken of by

the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”—Matt. 3:3

As John ‘prepared the way’ for the people to receive Jesus by preaching repentance, he exhorted them to do two things. First, he encouraged them to confess their sins. (vs. 6) This was important because it was necessary for the Jews to realize that, although the Law Covenant and its ceremonies typically cleansed them from year to year, it could not truly take away sin. By confessing their sins, they would give testimony of this realization and be in a proper frame of mind to receive Jesus—the only one through whom a true release from sin would be obtainable.

John’s second admonition to the people was that they “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.” (vs. 8) In other words, not only should they confess the fact that they were still sinners, but they should also demonstrate a desire to change their ways by examining their

words, actions, and course of life, and develop ‘fruitage’ which would give evidence that they were sincere in their repentance.

As John gave these admonitions to the people, he particularly warned the Jewish leaders that they were not excluded from these things, and if they did not comply they would be subject to God’s wrath and cut off from his favor.—Matt. 3:7,10

John instructed the people that they give public witness of their repentance by water baptism, but reminded them that there was a much greater baptism yet to come by the one who was to follow him—Jesus Christ. John states, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.” (vs. 11) He further said that the one to follow him would execute God’s wrath, spoken of earlier, by burning “the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (vs. 12) This was symbolically speaking of the cutting off from special favor those of the Jewish nation who did not come to repentance.

The final four verses of Matthew, chapter 3, specifically identify Jesus as the one who would follow John. He, too, came to John, as many people had, to be baptized. However, his was not to be a baptism unto repentance, for as a perfect man he had no sin to repent of. Jesus’ baptism, recorded in Matthew 3:13-15, was symbolic of his full and complete consecration to do his Father’s will, even unto death. This was shown symbolically by his being lowered into the water by John—‘buried’ into sacrificial death. Being raised out of the water gave indication of his begetting as a New Creature by God’s Holy Spirit, and was visibly shown by a dove lighting upon him. (vs. 16) Our Key Verse shows that God was pleased with this entire arrangement, and thus Christ’s redemptive work could begin. ■

Strengthened in Temptation

Key Verse: *“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”*
—Matthew 4:10

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 4:1-11

as to the ministry and work that lay before him.

At the end of the forty days, Satan perhaps thought Jesus might be in a physically or mentally weakened condition, and so he immediately sought to take advantage of the situation by tempting him. If he could get Jesus to sin, even in some small way, Satan would be able to thwart God's arrangements for man's salvation through his only begotten Son.

The first temptation is stated thus, “When the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (vss. 3,4) Satan's temptation was subtle. First, he

TODAY'S LESSON CON-
cerns the three temptations of Jesus which took place shortly after his baptism by John the Baptist. The account states that God's Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, and there he remained for “forty days and forty nights.” (Matt. 4:2) We can well imagine that Jesus spent this time in meditation, study, and in direct communion with God, receiving instruction

tried to plant a seed of doubt in Jesus' mind by saying 'if thou be the Son of God.' He also tried to prey upon Jesus' physical hunger—he had been fasting for forty days. However, Jesus saw beyond these subtleties and immediately responded that true life does not come by appropriating natural food—bread—to our bodies, but by taking in and digesting the words of God. In fact, Jesus' response was a direct quote from the Old Testament—Deuteronomy 8:3, God's words to Moses.

Satan's second temptation of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 4:5-7, "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Here again we see the subtlety of Satan, for in the temptation he quoted scripture—Psalm 91:11,12. Jesus knew that, although he had his Father's protection as described by the psalmist, such would not be the case if he tempted God by foolishly throwing himself off the pinnacle of the Temple. In this response also, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament.—Deut. 6:16

The third temptation recorded in our lesson is as follows: "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4:8,9) In this temptation, Satan sought a compromise with Jesus by suggesting they could share the rulership of the world if Jesus would only bow down to him. Jesus' response to this temptation, given in the Key Verse, was again a quote from scripture—Deuteronomy 6:13. Having turned away Satan decisively and swiftly in all three temptations, the account concludes by saying, "Then the devil leaveth him."—Matt. 4:11 ■

Demonstrated in Acts of Healing

Key Verse: *“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”*
—Matthew 11:5

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 9:27-34;
11:2-6

healed. “The Sun of righteousness [shall] arise with healing in his wings.”—Mal. 4:2

In today’s lesson, we see the account of two specific types of healing which Jesus performed during his ministry. The first of these is the healing of blindness. “Two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.”—Matt. 9:27-30

DURING THE THREE-AND-

one-half years of his earthly ministry, Jesus performed many miracles of healing. While these had much benefit to those specifically whom he had healed, as well as to their families and friends, they were primarily designed to be a foreshadowing of the glorious healing work of Christ’s future earthly kingdom. The Scriptures speak of this kingdom as a time in which all manner of sickness—physical, mental, and moral—will be

In the case of this miracle, literal blindness was healed because of the men's faith in the power vested in Jesus. In Christ's coming kingdom, literal blindness will also be healed, and permanently so, for all mankind. There is a greater blindness, however, that will be done away with at that time. Man's spiritual eyes, now blinded to a large extent by the great Adversary and the traditions of men, will be opened to the Truth of God's plan of salvation and his glorious character. Note these words, prophetic of that kingdom: "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight."—Isa. 42:16

The second example of healing shown in today's lesson is the casting out of a devil from a man who could not speak, the devil having caused this condition. "As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel." (Matt. 9:32,33) The devil, although literal in this case, is a fitting representation of the devilish influences—pride, hatred, malice, selfishness, etc.—which have befallen mankind since our first parents' sin in the garden of Eden. This has resulted in mankind being unable, by and large, to speak properly through the words and actions of their lives.

In Christ's kingdom, there will be no devilish influences. Indeed, Satan himself will be bound (Rev. 20:1,2), and man will be released from the bondage of sin and death, under which the Devil has possessed him. Being thus released, and taught the principles of righteousness, man will no longer be 'dumb,' but able to speak and act in a righteous manner, acceptable to God. "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9) The Key Verse summarizes for us the many types of miracles Jesus performed, giving us a foretaste of the great healing work to come. ■

Declared in Prayer

Key Verse: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

—**Matthew 11:28**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 11:25-30

can be divided into three sections. The first 15 verses contain Jesus’ testimony about John the Baptist, in which he shows that John carried out his ministry faithfully, but that it had now come to an end. Then in verses 16-24 Jesus upbraids the generation of Jews living at that time, in particular those cities in which both he and John had been preaching. In the last 6 verses of the chapter, Jesus turns his attention toward his disciples, those who were following him as their Master. These verses are the focus of today’s lesson.

How appropriate it is that as Jesus turned his attention toward his beloved brethren, he offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God. “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (vs. 25) Jesus was thankful that God had only revealed his plans and purposes to ‘babes’—those individuals having the childlike qualities of humility, meekness, love, and purity of heart. Most of the worldly ‘wise and prudent’ were not in such a condition of readiness, and so the Gospel message was hidden from them. So it has been throughout the Gospel Age, “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the

world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.”—I Cor. 1:26-28

In verse 27 of our lesson, Jesus identified the process by which such in a proper heart condition would come to know the Father and have fellowship with him. He said that no man truly knew the Father except himself, for he had been with him in his prehuman existence. However, to those whom he would reveal it, the Father would be made known to them, that they could have fellowship with both the Father and the Son. Apostle John states the matter in this fashion, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”—I John 1:3

The Key Verse of our lesson speaks of the fact that those who come to Jesus do so with the recognition that they have long been laboring and are heavy laden with sin and its effects in their lives, and they desire to be at rest from these. Truly that rest has been found by those who, through a complete consecration of their wills, have accepted the merits of Jesus’ sacrifice, and have had imputed to them his precious blood, releasing them from the condemnation of Adam. “For we which have believed do enter into rest.”—Heb. 4:3

However, entering into the above rest at the beginning of our consecrated walk is not the end of the matter. Jesus points out that there is a fuller rest, one which we can claim in each experience of life, if we learn of him. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. 11:29,30 ■

Revealed in Rejection

Key Verse: *“He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”*
—**Matthew 13:58**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:54-58;
Luke 4:16-30

ALTHOUGH THE POPULAR-ity of Jesus among the people was widespread, it seemed to be noticeably absent in the region of Nazareth, in which he grew up. Through the scriptural account (Matt. 13:54-56) we see that, because the people of his own country knew him so well as a boy and young man, that he was merely a carpenter’s son, and that his family did not seem to have any special credentials, they were taken aback by his preaching and mighty works.

Many of these who thought of Jesus as only a carpenter’s son, when presented with his powerful teachings, rather than desiring to learn more about him and search out the things which he taught, simply dismissed him as offensive to their fleshly desires and goals. “They were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.” (vs. 57) How ironic it was that Jesus had received much honor from total strangers, but not by those who supposedly knew him best.

In the Luke account of this experience (Luke 4:25-27), Jesus pointed out that the rejection of him by those of his own country was not new, but had also happened in the cases of both Elijah and Elisha. Elijah, who needed sustenance during a time of great famine, was ignored by the people of Israel and was sent to a

faithful widow in the heathen city of Sidon. In the case of Elisha, there were many lepers in Israel who could have come to him to be healed, but only Naaman the Syrian did so.

After Jesus recounted the examples of Elijah and Elisha, many were even more angry. “All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.” (Luke 4:28,29) This was hardly a godlike response to one who had done them no wrong, one whom they themselves had spoken of in this way—“All . . . wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.”—vs. 22

Many had revealed their true heart condition by rejecting him. They were amazed by his teachings, astonished at his works, and even acknowledged his gracious words, but because of their pride and self-conceit, they refused to accept him, desiring rather to continue in the traditions of their fathers. Jesus’ response to all this was very simple and clear. Luke 4:30 states, “He passing through the midst of them went his way.” The Key Verse gives the account of Matthew, which also indicates that Jesus simply left the area, moving on to places where his message would be better received.

The lesson for us is the same. There are many times in our lives when our message, our works, or how we live our life is an offense to those of the world, perhaps even to those who know us well. Yet we should not let that bother or discourage us, but rather we should simply continue to press on in our Christian walk, realizing that we are not subject to the judgment of men, but of God. “Who-soever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.” “[Since] God be for us, who can be against us?”—Matt. 10:14, Rom. 8:31 ■

The Noble Bereans

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

—Acts 17:11,12

AS WE ENTER ANOTHER new year, *The Dawn* magazine is introducing a new series of articles appearing under the caption “Searching the Scriptures.” The first of these articles will address the importance of diligence when studying the Word of God. Jude has written, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3) Future articles will feature various aspects of our fundamental beliefs as students of God’s Holy Word, and a wide range of topics related to our consecrated walk and character development in the narrow way of sacrifice.

THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible is readily acknowledged as the greatest book of all time, the book of books. Its far-reaching antiquity extends back to the very beginning of earth's marvelous creative work and its ultimate preparation as a home for God's earthly creation. Within its pages is found overwhelming evidence of its importance and meaning to the human family. For centuries, it has been accepted by countless numbers of people as the divinely inspired Word of our loving Heavenly Father, the great God of the universe.

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

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

The Bible is the textbook of Christianity, and it reveals the Heavenly Father's wonderful plan and

purpose in the creation of his human family, and its salvation. This message is being carried out to a grand and ultimate conclusion that will culminate in the future administration of Christ's glorious kingdom of power and authority over all the earth.

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

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

As the Early Church was being established, the Apostle Paul and his companion Silas travelled extensively to minister the Truth to the newly consecrated brethren in Christ Jesus, and to help them organize

new churches for study, service, and fellowship. By God's great wisdom and providence, Luke, the historian, has recorded many of these important events.

The knowledge of Truth which they and others were preaching, proclaimed the Heavenly Father's plan and purpose for the ultimate salvation and reconciliation of his sin-sick and dying human family. The Holy Spirit of Truth also opened the way for a little flock of Christ's faithful followers to strive for the heavenly calling and to receive a position in the bride of Christ. We are thus assured, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

Those who are faithful will be privileged to share with their glorified Lord in his future heavenly kingdom, and to extend blessings to all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:16-18) This glorious arrangement also provides for the resurrection of all who are in their graves—those who unknowingly wait for the establishment of that yet future kingdom under the rule of 'The Christ.'

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

In our featured scripture, Paul and Silas had just escaped by night to make the trip from Thessalonica to Berea. When they arrived they were blessed by the reception they had received at the local synagogue. They were greatly impressed by the brethren's keen interest and spiritual growth in their study of God's Word, and noted that this set them apart as being more 'noble' than those who were of the ecclesia at Thessalonica.

AN ADMIRABLE TRAIT

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

PROVING ALL THINGS

Paul's admonition to the brethren in the church at Thessalonica was, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:21) When writing

to his beloved brother Timothy, the apostle encouraged him to, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) Later he admonished, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—II Tim. 3:14-17

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

When accepted with a proper condition of heart, the admonition and encouragement of the apostles Paul, Peter and others will help develop a Christ-like spirit in all of the Lord's special people throughout this present Gospel Age. This would include their being proper stewards of the Truth, which is an important lesson for the consecrated class to emulate. This is especially true now for those who are living during the closing years of this age. (Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS

The wonderful words of Peter written nearly two thousand years ago continue to be a blessing to us as followers of Christ who walk in the narrow way of sacrifice. He proclaimed, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."—II Pet. 1:12-15

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

Peter emphasized that we receive the Truth by way of the Holy Spirit of God. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”—II Pet. 1:19-21

In his first letter, he made clear the fact that the words he spoke were to those who had given their lives in consecration to God, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”—I Pet. 1:7-9

HIDDEN FROM PROPHETS AND ANGELS

The words of Truth were not revealed to anyone else, not the prophets of old and not even the angels. He explained, “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”—vss. 10-13

WISDOM FROM ABOVE

The epistle of James is among the earliest of the New Testament writings, and represents the teachings that were first given to the Jews who had converted to Christianity soon after our Lord Jesus' earthly ministry had ended. James stresses, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1:17

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

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

TRUTH IS FIRST PURE

Our attention is being drawn to the fact that heavenly wisdom works in harmony with the divine character of love. Although the spirit of wisdom that comes from above is peaceable, the apostle did not place its importance before purity. True wisdom is peaceable only when it is consistent with honesty and purity, and can only be at peace with that which is pure. Gentleness then follows purity and is peaceable

when it is sanctified by the Truth. Heavenly wisdom then rejoices in true mercy; and fruitage of the Holy Spirit is developed in the hearts of those who have been illuminated by the wisdom from above.

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

The Prophet Isaiah speaks of light and its relationship to life and Truth. In presenting the divine purpose, he writes, “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” (Isa. 42:16) “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”—chap. 62:1

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

As a guide and spiritual perspective for the Lord’s consecrated people, we read, “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.”—Luke 11:33-36

MEDITATING ON GOD’S WORD

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

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

In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul wrote, “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there

any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”—Heb. 4:12-14

JESUS’ TESTIMONY

Jesus made clear the fact that he was the one who had been sent forth to carry out the Heavenly Father’s will and purpose, and not his own. His humbling words are recorded in John’s Gospel, where we read, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.”—John 5:30-32

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

LEGACY OF THE BEREANS

The Apostle Paul's observation that the church members in the city of Berea were noble-minded students of the Bible is a positive lesson for all of the Lord's consecrated people to ever keep in mind. These brethren sincerely believed in the infallible Word of God, and emphasized that it is the only true source for understanding. They deeply appreciated its value and meaning as a 'thus saith the Lord' for the final proof for what they believed.

The term *Sola Scriptura* (Latin, 'By Scripture Alone') was a slogan coined by Martin Luther when he was questioned in the Synod of Augsburg, Germany in October, 1518. It became a popular term during the Protestant Reformation. He was challenging the supreme authority of the established church. Their position maintained that church tradition and teachings, and the authority of the church must be recognized. Scripture by itself was insufficient, and there was to be no individual interpretation. In his appeal to the Council, Luther turned to the Bible as the only source of authority, and placed his own interpretation above that of the clergy.

"Now these [Jews] were better disposed and more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they were entirely ready and accepted and welcomed the message [concerning the attainment through Christ of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God] with inclination of mind and eagerness, searching and examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore became believers, together with not a few prominent Greeks, women as well as men."—Acts 17:11,12, *Amplified Bible* ■

The Substance of Things Hoped For

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

—Hebrews 11:1

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHING marks of those who desire to draw near to God is faith. In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul pointed to this and said, “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6) The apostle devoted the entire eleventh chapter in Hebrews to list several examples of faith as noted in the worthies of old who were pleasing to God because of their faith. These faithful people lived in pre-Christian times and were worthy of God’s favor since they exhibited great faithfulness to God under exceptional and trying circumstances. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises.” (vs. 13) The promises of which he spoke were those that our Heavenly Father had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was through their lineage that God’s ultimate purpose was to bless all the families of the earth.—Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY HOPES

The promise to Abraham concerned the earth, as did the repetition of it to his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Jacob's name was later changed to Israel, and as a nation they were promised earthly blessings if they served God faithfully. "Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." (Deut. 28:5) However, there were other promises that were not understood during Old Testament times, and these concerned a heavenly salvation. In reference to these promises, Peter wrote, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."—I Pet. 1:10,11, *New American Standard Bible*

The apostle further stated that even angels did not understand this. "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look."—I Pet. 1:12, *NASB*

Thus we understand the hope of an earthly reward which the worthies of old had been given, and the spiritual blessings which the members of Christ's church have received are very much different. However, faith is one of the identifying traits that is common to both groups.

DEFINING FAITH

In our featured scripture, the Apostle Paul gave us this definition. "Now faith is the assurance of things

hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1, *NASB*) No one can have faith without having something to base it upon. It is more than having a confident assurance of our hopes, because that for which we hope cannot be seen with the human eye.

Faith is a state of mind respecting our Heavenly Father and his promises to us. Paul explains the only way in which we may acquire this quality. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) Before we can have faith, we must have a measure of knowledge. We cannot have faith in something we know nothing about. The only authentic source of knowledge concerning our hope of salvation is found in the Word of God—the source of our faith. Just as knowledge is the foundation for faith, faith is the foundation for our glorious hope. We cannot have hope without faith, and neither can we have faith without knowledge.

All followers of our Lord Jesus have at times realized the need for an increase of faith, and have approached God in prayer with the request, “Lord, Increase our faith.” (Luke 17:5) Faith comes as a gift from God to those who make use of his provisions to obtain and increase it. These provisions include feeding upon his Word and promises, so that we may know his will for us. We submit ourselves to these arrangements and seek to abide by the terms and conditions of our covenant of sacrifice.

A PROPER ATTITUDE

It is not enough for us to say that we believe in God and his promises, and that he is calling out a people of faith for his name and selecting the church of Christ. This belief is of no benefit if we

feel so weak and unimportant that we could never attain to such a high position. Such an attitude would not be pleasing to God. It shows a lack of full assurance of faith in his power to accomplish that which he has begun in us. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:7

Creating doubts about our relationship to God is a much used tool of Satan. We must remember that we "are called in one hope of [our] calling." (Eph. 4:4) When God called us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus he knew how weak and imperfect we were. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) Paul proclaims, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouceable in his sight. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." (Col. 1:21-23) "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:16

PRAYER

Jesus taught that God is always ready to hear and to answer our prayers. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him

that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"—Matt. 7:7-11

One of the gifts that God is pleased to give us is a full assurance of faith, but such faith does not come instantaneously. It is a matter of growth, like that of a tender plant developing to maturity through a variety of gradual yet important steps. We must not be discouraged because we realize we have weaknesses. It would be a matter of concern if we thought we did not have weaknesses, failings, or shortcomings. Our faith grows as we strive to overcome our weaknesses and to lay hold upon the many wonderful promises of our loving Heavenly Father.

Some of our experiences may be very severe, but each is especially designed by God to provide a much needed lesson. With the passage of time we are able to look back on our experiences and see how we have grown from them. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Heb. 12:11

SPIRITUAL FOOD

In addition to prayer, there are other steps we can take to increase our faith. We can study and meditate upon the spiritual things of God. We can study the promises and doctrines, develop character and cultivate the fruits and graces of the Spirit. We must eat the pure and unadulterated food of God's

Word and avoid food that is contaminated with the traditions and theories of men. A balanced diet will enable us to grow into mature Christians. Paul said, "All scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for that discipline which is in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work."—II Tim. 3:16,17, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

Spiritual exercise is needed if we are to be strong and healthy. We should be active in telling others about the wonderful truths of the Bible. Jesus taught, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."—John 4:36-38

In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, Paul said, "Every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:13,14) Without spiritual exercise we could lose what we are trying to master. If we want to increase our faith, we must exercise our faith. The more we put our faith into practice, the stronger it will become. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works,

and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” (James 2:17,18) It is necessary that we continuously exercise our mind and our spiritual faculties to grow strong as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

Another form of spiritual exercise was addressed by Paul, who said, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” (Col. 2:6,7) One who walks makes progress, but it is also important that they walk in the right direction. “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”—I John 1:5-7

SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

When we ask God to increase our faith, we should remember that fellowship with our brethren is one of the means to reach that goal. Love and fellowship with our brethren indicates that we are walking in the light, and are making progress in the right direction. “We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”—I John 3:14

Because we love the brethren, we want to have fellowship with them at every opportunity. We will not voluntarily isolate ourselves from them for that would demonstrate that we have lost a measure of the Spirit of Truth, and that our faith has

grown weak. Christians are like glowing coals of fire. Grouped together they retain the fervency of spirit and the warmth of Christian fellowship and love that each imparts to the other. If the coals are separated, the glow is soon gone and all warmth disappears. The apostle counsels, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—Heb. 10:23-25

No Christian is self-sufficient. We need the assistance of other members of the body of Christ. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." (I Cor. 12:12) If God has placed each member where they are in the body, it is not possible for us to say we do not need their fellowship. Each one is indispensable to us for our development. "He [God] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."—Eph. 4:11-13

TESTS OF FAITH

As we progress along the narrow way, our faith will undergo many tests and Satan will try to discourage us. He will seek to emphasize our every weakness

and will point out our own unworthiness. He will put doubts in our mind that we could ever hope to achieve the high honor of receiving a place in Christ's future kingdom. Our faith will be assailed from every quarter, but this should reassure us that God is dealing with us as sons. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"—Heb. 12:6,7

When our faith is being tried, let us remember the words of this scripture. God is developing us according to his purposes, and that we may become mature and be able to perform our function in the wonderful body of the Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—I Pet. 1:3-7

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10 ■

Pilgrim Trip to Italy

Submitted by Brother Joe Panucci
September, 2009

CONVENTION AT PESCARA

The 2009 Italian convention was held this year on the weekend of September 5,6 in Pescara, Italy. Pescara is located on the east coast of Italy on the Adriatic Sea.

A warm welcome was extended by the chairman to all the brethren attending the convention. In the spirit of love, he told the brethren, "Last year the convention was held at the same time, and since then we are thankful to the Lord that we continue to walk in the narrow way, making small sacrifices and faithfully serving the Lord and his people. We hope that at the end of this convention we can say that it was a blessed time, and a blessing to meet some brethren for the first time."

In the spirit of humility, we can say that it was a miniature international convention, since there were attendees from Russia, Romania, the Swiss border area, and from the United States. However,

language was not a problem as all the brethren attending were conversant in the Italian language.

It is of interest to note that although all of these brethren came from different countries and cultures, the Truth and the power of the Holy Spirit of God united them all, as beautifully expressed by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus. He proclaimed to them, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—Eph. 4:4-6

During the convention, a brother from northern Italy symbolized his consecration by water immersion in the Adriatic Sea, which was near the hotel. In addition to the brethren singing during the immersion service, some people of the world who were staying at the hotel asked some of the brethren numerous questions in relation to our beliefs.

An interesting testimony service was also conducted, and some brethren spoke of difficulties they were experiencing in their place of work. There was also a wonderful testimony from one of the sisters from Romania who brought love from some of the brethren in her country to all those who were attending the convention in Italy.

The convention speakers brought encouraging and edifying discourses that were appreciated by all in attendance. The baptismal service was very inspiring, and reminded us all of the time and place that each of us symbolized our own consecration to the Heavenly Father by water immersion, and the effect that it has had on our lives.

A time was set apart during the convention to discuss a way that we could promulgate the Truth in Italy. One brother remarked, “For many centuries, Italy was a slave under the influence of the old beast Babylon, but now, according to the country’s constitution, we are free to proclaim the message of Truth, and we have many avenues to do so. Not only can we use the printing press, but also the internet. There is also the oldest system known, the personal contact with the people from house to house, and even speaking with people in the parks.”

It seems that the brother’s remarks gave incentive, because in the weeks following the convention we learned that in the city of Naples and surrounding area, 30,000 pieces of Truth literature were distributed from the house-to-house witness activity. This has been a great encouragement for others to share in this work. As usual, the convention ended with a love feast, and the decision was made to hold another one next year.

AT FLORENCE

After the convention, I travelled by automobile with some other brethren to the city of Florence. A service was held there with the ecclesia and we had further discussions about how to spread the message of Truth more effectively. One of the sisters in the Florence class is a professional writer, and she volunteered to help us with the booklets that had been translated several years ago, and to bring them up to date in modern Italian.

The film “For This Cause” was presented to the ecclesia. It had been translated into the Spanish language, and was used in the 1990s with Brother

Fernando from Peru, and shown throughout many countries in South America. The Italian friends were most impressed and are very desirous to record the film in the Italian language.

IN SICILY

After visiting with the ecclesia members at Florence, I travelled with brethren to Sicily, and stayed there four days. Meetings were held every evening with further discussion about spreading the Truth message throughout the island of Sicily. A spirit of love and cooperation was manifest in that area. It was learned later that the brethren plan to meet again in November to discuss ways they can spread the Truth in their area and the rest of Italy.

All of the brethren in Italy wish to express their appreciation to the Dawn Bible Students for their support and prayers, and especially to those who share in preparing the Italian *Dawn* for printing. ■

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 Edith Yates, Phoenix, AZ—September 4.
Age, 91

Brother Frank Nemesh, Detroit, MI—November 11. Age, 81

Sister Gertrude Kirkham, Seattle, WA—November 17. Age 100

Sister Bertha Pockoski, Hartford, CT—November 24. Age 94

General Convention Bulletin

July 17-22, 2010

THE 2010 GENERAL CONVENTION returns once again to the lovely facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style apartments (also air conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge in his own sleeping bag if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

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

A complete pricing table and registration form is provided for your convenience immediately following this announcement. We are pleased to announce that prices for 2010 will not increase from 2009. We encourage you to make your reservations early.

The convention theme text is taken from the words of Matthew 6:33, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Additionally, a series of three minitalks will be presented, based on lessons from Jesus’ three temptations in the wilderness; and assigned discourse subjects will include “The High Calling” and “Christian Suffering.” We encourage you to make your plans now to attend this year’s General Convention. ■

Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast	\$7.00	\$6.00
Lunch	8.00	7.00
Dinner	11.00	10.00
Total, three meals	\$26.00	\$23.00
Lodging (per night)		
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)	\$30.00	\$25.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)	\$25.00	\$23.00
**single occ (LLC)	\$55.00	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)	\$30.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals		
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)	\$325*	\$290*
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)	\$195*	\$160*
**single occ (LLC)	\$460*	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)	\$235*	n/a
If no breakfasts, deduct—\$35 **Air-conditioned ***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group		

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane — Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

E-mail: Nekora@aol.com (310) 454-5248

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 16, 2010				
Saturday, 17th				
Sunday, 18th				
Monday, 19th				
Tuesday, 20th				
Wednesday, 21st				
Thursday, 22nd				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals ☐
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) ☐

Check: ☐ private bath **or** ☐ shared bath
☐ double occupancy ☐ single occupancy
☐ interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2009

THE DAWN IS pleased to provide this annual report to our readers. It is a pleasure to have continued with the work in which so many have cooperated during the past year. During the fiscal year 2009, the Dawn was able to maintain its witness work as compared to the prior year due to increases in bequests. Although we had budgeted to reduce our cash and reserves by up to 11%, if necessary, in 2009 in order to carry on our witness work, we were actually able to substantially increase these due to bequests. The Dawn also purchased some much needed new equipment in 2009, resulting in substantial upgrades and increases in efficiency of day-to-day operations. Total revenues, excluding bequests, were 29% below budget for the year, operating expenses were 2% below budget, and witnessing expenses were 13% under budget. In total, we had a net loss, excluding bequests, of \$237,190, compared to a budgeted loss of \$100,000.

We have budgeted to increase radio, TV, Internet, and other witnessing work in 2010 by an aggregate of about 40%, but to limit to no more than \$250,000, or 10%, any reduction in total cash and reserves during the year. Further increases in witnessing

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
All revenue other than bequests	<u>\$219,695</u>	
Expenses		
Radio (domestic and foreign)		\$ 73,694
TV (includes spots and recordings)		25,371
Other Media and Editorial		38,834
Pilgrim Service (domestic and foreign)		17,349
Other Foreign Support		10,983
Shipping/Mailing (domestic and foreign)		66,086
Outside Printing		8,950
Shop Operating Expense		38,746
Plant Operating Expense		118,559
House Operating Expense		58,313
Total Expenses		\$456,885
Less Income	<u>219,695</u>	
Net Loss before Bequests	\$(237,190)	
Bequests	<u>2,427,782</u>	
Net Gain after Bequests	\$2,190,592	

efforts will be considered if revenue or bequests exceed budgeted amounts.

The Truth which was proclaimed by the apostles and others in the Early Church is still being declared today. The faith once delivered unto the saints is still believed by faithful children of God who are willing to spend and be spent witnessing it far and wide. This message which Jesus described as the Gospel of the kingdom is being proclaimed today in the United States, Canada, the British Isles, Europe, several African nations (which include Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa,) South and Central America, (specifically Panama, Brazil, Peru,) Australia, New Zealand, India, Asia, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, Moldova, Russia, Philippines, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Trinidad, and

others! There are faithful ambassadors for Christ in all of these various countries. Various media is used including television, radio, 30-second commercial spots, and a variety of magazines, almanacs, and other printed media.

The Dawn recorded lecture service and Dawn video service continue their work, and the Dawn Web page continues to bring in requests for literature from around the world. In the past 12 months, the web page has again exceeded 1.5 million visits. The Google and Yahoo Internet keyword ads provide thousands of requests for literature from around the world, both in English and Spanish languages, more details of which are provided below.

Hope booklets continue to be provided to funeral directors throughout the United States, as well as many individual ecclesias, bringing a message of comfort to those who have lost their loved ones in death.

The Dawn Devotional Radio internet radio station at *Live365.com* continues to provide witnessing and Truth programs 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Since its launch in November 2006, individuals have tuned to the station over 6,000 times and listened for an average of 69 minutes per occasion.

We continue our keyword advertising on Google and Yahoo for 19 booklets in English. During the past year, the number of individuals responding to this advertising and viewing a web page offering one of the booklets grew 11% to 46,290. User response to these web pages grew 22% to 12,994 as follows: Read the booklet online—5,449 times, downloaded a PDF version of the booklet—2,948 times, and requested a copy of the booklet be mailed to them—

4,597 times. The increased number of responses was due to modifying each web page to advertise 7 additional booklets and increasing the advertising budget.

In February, the Dawn expanded its keyword advertising for Spanish booklets to 9. The four booklets added were: *Day of Judgment*, *Hope for a Fear-filled World*, *How God Answers Prayer*, and *Jesus the World's Savior*. During the past year, 47,782 individuals viewed the web pages offering one of the booklets. User response to these web pages grew to 14,536 as follows: Read the booklet online—7,574 times, downloaded a PDF version of the booklet—2,494 times, and requested a copy of the booklet be mailed to them—4,468 times. As with the English booklets, the increased number of responses was due to modifying each web page to advertise 7 additional booklets and increasing the advertising budget.

Combined, all of the witness efforts we have been privileged to engage in have proven fruitful with many responses coming in as a result. We have taken this as an indication that the message of Truth is indeed giving hope and comfort to people throughout the world in these days of economic, financial, and political turmoil. For this, we are very thankful to the Heavenly Father.

As we look ahead to 2010, it is with confidence that he who led us once will lead us still. The work is the Lord's, not ours. Let us rejoice in whatever privilege of service he may entrust to us as individuals and collectively. Above all, let us continue to look to him for his guidance and blessing as day by day we seek to know and to do his will. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. Alexander

Chicago, IL January 1-3

D. Christiansen

Chicago, IL January 1-3

AUSTRALIA:

Melbourne 23-26

R. Goodman

St. Petersburg, FL January 17

GHANA:

Accra 24-27

L. Griehs

Phoenix, AZ January 1-3

GHANA:

Accra 24-27

M. Grudzien

Phoenix, AZ January 1-3

K. Humphreys

GHANA:

Accra January 24-27

E. Kuenzli

St. Petersburg, FL January 17

H. Montague

Phoenix, AZ January 1-3

GHANA:

Cape Coast, Kumasi 15

Dunkwa-on-Offin 16-18

Asma Camp 19

Kokoben, Asuofa 20

Tema, Ashaiman 21

Accra 22-28

D. Rawson

Los Angeles, CA January 31

T. Ruggirello

Los Angeles, CA January 31

“By love serve one another.”

—Galatians 5:13

“Dawn Devotional Radio” Internet Radio Station

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

—Web Address—

www.live365.com/stations/dawn_radio

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.

CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, January 1-3—Ramada Inn & Suites, 780 North Avenue, Glendale Heights, IL 60139. Phone: (630) 942-9500. Contact J. Farrell, 310 S. Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137. Phone: (630) 469-9511

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 1-3—Country Inn & Suites, 20221 N. 29th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Phone: (623) 879-9000 for reservations. For other information, contact J. Zardja. Phone: (602) 363-2612

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, January 23-26—57 Noble St Anglesea, Vic 3230. Contact R. Charlton or A. Kopczyk, PO Box 402, Rosanna, Vic 3084. Phone: Australia 0429-172-606

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 31—Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Contact R. Wojcik, 12807 Elkwood Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605. Phone: (818) 982-7253

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 12-14—Capitol City Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact J. Freer. Phone: (916) 967-0635

SOUTHWEST CONVENTION, February 27,28—Boys & Girls Club-Rose Lane Branch, 8250 E. Rose Lane, Scottsdale, AZ. Contact M. Humphreys. Phone: (480) 403-1198 or (623) 322-9082

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 6,7,8—Clarion Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify "Florida Bible Students." Deadline for special rates is February 24. For other information, contact E. Blicharz, 320 Raven Rock Lane, Longwood, FL 32750. Phone: (407) 260-8083

COLUMBUS PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 13,14—Der Dutchman Restaurant, 445 S. Jefferson Avenue, Plain City, OH 43064. Contact T. Alexander, 3278 Foxcroft Drive, Lewis Center, OH 43035. Phone: (614) 519-8282

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 19-21—Fresno Quality Inn, 4278 W. Ashlan Avenue, Fresno, CA 93722. Contact B. Wilson, 2103 N. Price Avenue, Fresno, CA 93703. Phone: (559) 255-2241

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 20,21—Holiday Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Phone: (248) 689-7500. Specify "Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia." Deadline for special rate is March 13. For other information, contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 2-4—Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen, 402 Bryn Mawr SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Phone: (505) 268-8170

BOISE CONVENTION, April 23-25—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 7558 W. Hathaway Lane, Boise, ID 83714, by April 2, 2010. Phone: (208) 375-6873

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, April 25—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. Phone: (215) 547-4100. Contact R. Eldridge, 37 Falcon Road, Levittown, PA 19056. Phone: (215) 949-0652

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 29-31—Radisson Hotel, 4545 MacArthur Blvd., Newport Beach, CA 92660. For programs and room reservations at the special convention rate of \$59/night (no tax), contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

Studies in the Scriptures

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD —peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35