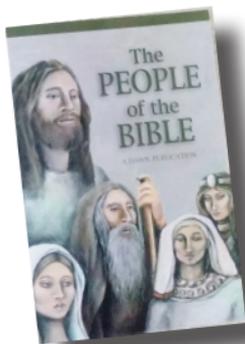


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“It Shall Come to Pass”

“In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”
—Micah 4:1

IN THIS INSPIRED PROPHECY of God’s Word, we are given a preview of coming events which assures us that the peoples of earth are not always to be plagued with fear, war, unrest, division and perplexity. In verse four of this prophecy, we are told that “none shall make them afraid.” In the same verse is the assurance that this

brighter and better day will indeed come to pass, for, as the prophet declares, “The mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.”

It has become increasingly clear that human wisdom is unable to find a solution to the many complex and distressing problems which confront the nations. Every effort that is made by the world to extricate itself from the quicksands of despair leaves the people and nations sinking deeper into the mire of confusion and hopelessness. Most in

the world want peace and security, and are feverishly seeking them, but thus far all efforts to reach these goals of human happiness have fallen well short of man's desired outcome.

Because of the continued failure of the nations to find workable formulas to resolve their many problems, the people are becoming increasingly apprehensive of that terrible cataclysm of events which could result. Take, for example, the fear of war and its potential for death and devastation. Despite such fear, much of human wisdom insists that the only way the potential holocaust of modern war can be prevented is to continue the production of more and better armaments. This, of course, only increases the probable horrors of any war that might break out.

Such preparations offer a slim hope of security, but the lesson of history is that war is seldom prevented by becoming better prepared for it. However, the world's leaders have no other knowledge to guide them than imperfect human wisdom, so, while hoping for the best, they prepare for the worst. However, the words of the prophet assure us that this will not always be the case, that the time is coming when, recognizing their own failure, the nations will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, ... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."—Mic. 4:2

Our opening text informs us that this is to be one of the developments of the "last days." Many have misunderstood the meaning of the prophetic expression "last days," supposing it to be synonymous with "doomsday." It has been misinterpreted to denote the last days of time and the beginning of

a dreaded eternity of torment for the majority of the human race. Along with this has been the thought that the “last days” means the destruction of the earth, and the end of all human experience and life on the planet.

This viewpoint, however, is incorrect. The “last days” are indeed synonymous with the prophetic “end of the world,” but the “end of the world” does not mean, as many have supposed, the destruction of the earth, nor the end of human experience. The Scriptures assure us that “the earth abideth for ever.” (Eccles. 1:4) In Isaiah 45:18 we are informed that God has established the earth, that “he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.”

This is fully in keeping with the Genesis account of creation, where we read that when God created man, he commanded him to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen. 1:28) It is true that man sinned and forfeited his right to live on the earth forever, but the Scriptures reveal that through God’s plan of redemption accomplished by Christ, the death sentence against the human race is to be lifted, so that all who desire may be restored to life and health and enjoy the blessings of an earthly paradise forever.

The Apostle Peter describes this work of recovery as “restitution,” and informs us that in the divine arrangement the work of restitution follows the second coming of Christ. (Acts 3:20,21) This is the ultimate objective of the return of Christ, and it is obvious that this great feature of God’s plan for human restoration to life on the earth could not be accomplished if, at his return, the earth is destroyed.

It is true, however, that the prophetic “end of the world” is associated with the second coming of Jesus, but the prophecies pertaining thereto refer to the end of a social order, not to the destruction of the literal earth. The Greek word mostly used in these prophecies is *kosmos*, meaning, an order or arrangement, not the planet itself. It is this word that the Apostle John used when he wrote to Christians, saying “Love not the world [*kosmos*], neither the things that are in the world [*kosmos*].” —I John 2:15

Jesus used this word when to his disciples he said, “I have chosen you out of the world [*kosmos*].” (John 15:19) It is this “world order” which Christians are not to love, from which they are to keep themselves separate, and that comes to an end. It is a selfish, sinful world order. It is characterized by greed and graft and oppression, by crime, war, pain, death, and by all the evil things which right-thinking men and women despise and hate. The coming to an end of such a world or arrangement, rather than spelling “doomsday” for the human race, will prove to be a great eternal blessing for all mankind.

SATAN’S EMPIRE DESTROYED

When properly understood, the “last days” of our text is seen to be a period in human experience during which the present “world” comes to an end, and a new order under the rulership of Christ is established in its place. Jesus referred to Satan as the “prince of this world” which comes to an end, and Paul refers to the devil as being its “god.” (John 14:30; II Cor. 4:4) The destruction of this world,

therefore, means the end of Satan's rulership, and that of his empire of wickedness.

The time in which this "present evil world" comes to an end is also prophetically described as the "day of the Lord." (Gal. 1:4; I Thess. 5:2) It is the time in which God no longer refrains from interfering in human affairs, but exercises his power, through Christ Jesus his Son, over this Satan-controlled world order to bring it to an end. The Apostle Paul refers to this "day of the Lord," saying that it would come "as a thief in the night," and that God's people would be able to identify it by the fact that there would be a cry of "peace and safety," followed by "sudden destruction" which would come "as travail upon a woman with child." —I Thess. 5:2,3

In Isaiah 42:13,14 Jehovah's relationship to events in this day of destruction is described by these words: "The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once."

In this prophecy, even as in Paul's forecast of events in the "day of the Lord," the foretold destruction is described as coming like "travail" at childbirth, indicating that while the first seizure of pain would come upon the nations suddenly and unexpectedly, the world or social order would not be completely destroyed by one short and crushing blow. Rather, the pattern of destruction was to be a series of spasms, increasing in intensity, as in

childbirth, with ever shorter periods of easement between.

There is much reason to believe that the first of these spasms of destruction began at the time of the First World War. In addition to its toll of death and destruction, it was a war which resulted in the toppling of many of Europe's hereditary ruling houses—governments which had constituted the mainstay of so-called civilization for centuries. Little more than twenty years later, the Second World War raged for six years, resulting in another swathe of global destruction, and leaving civilization still nearer to the brink of chaos. Since then, many other wars, large and small, have raged throughout the earth almost continuously, with no country immune from possible devastation and calamity.

Meanwhile, as Paul foretold, there has almost constantly been the cry of “peace and safety.” Many peace societies and peace fronts came into being in the years just prior to the beginning of World War I. In 1938, just a few months before the outbreak of the second global struggle, Neville Chamberlain, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, returning from the Munich, Germany peace conference, waved a treaty before the crowd which welcomed him and said, “It is peace for our time.”

However, peace did not result, nor have the nations since, on either side of the great ideological struggles in which they are striving for control, gained “peace for our time.” The prophetic pattern of this time of great tribulation will continue until, in the final convulsion of this present world order, the Lord will reveal himself to the nations, and their eyes will be opened to behold his glory.

“LET US GO UP”

When the eyes of the nations are thus opened to recognize the hand of God in their affairs, preventing them from accomplishing their selfish designs, they will begin to look to him in humility and dependence. It will be then, as the prophet declares, that they will say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, ... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.”—Mic. 4:2

The “mountain” of the Lord is symbolic of his kingdom of righteousness. The prophecies were originally addressed to the Jewish nation, and this people were accustomed to thinking of God’s control in their midst as being located on a mountain—Mount Zion, in Jerusalem. (Isa. 8:18; 18:7) From Mount Zion God ruled over the ancient nation of Israel through their various kings, of whom it is written that they sat upon the “throne of the LORD.”—I Chron. 29:23

Our text speaks of the “mountain,” or kingdom, of the “house” of the Lord. This is language which should readily be understood by those who are acquainted with history. Beginning from very early in ancient times, the nations and empires of the old world were governed by ruling “houses.” These were “royal families,” in which the right to rule was passed on from one generation to another.

God uses the term “house” in connection with the kingdom he has promised to establish because that kingdom will also be governed by a royal, or ruling, family. It will be his own family, or sons, of which Jesus is the chief, the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) Jesus will have

associated with him those who have faithfully followed in his footsteps during the present age.

The opportunity to become joint-heirs and rulers with Jesus in his kingdom was first offered to the Jewish nation. This was at the time of his earthly ministry. Concerning this we read that Jesus “came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the right or privilege] to become the sons of God.” (John 1:11,12) However, not enough from among the Jewish nation accepted him and responded to his call to sonship, so the Lord turned to the Gentiles to seek the remainder of those who were to make up this ruling house of sons.—Acts 15:14

These believers in Jesus, from among both Jews and Gentiles, qualify to be members of God’s ruling house of sons upon the basis of their faithfulness in sacrificing and suffering with Jesus. Paul, faced with death in a Roman prison, wrote to Timothy and said, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:11,12

In Romans 8:16,17 we read: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The work of this present age has been the calling out from the world, by the message of the Gospel, those who have been willing to live a life of sacrifice and service, even unto death, according to the pattern set forth by Jesus. This is the people “for his name,” referred to in Acts 15:14.

When this work is completed, then will come the establishment of “the mountain of the house of the LORD.” The mighty power of God assures us of this. He began to operate toward this end nearly twenty centuries ago by raising Jesus from the dead. It was part of the divine arrangement that Jesus should die for the sin-cursed race, for it was God’s design that the kingdom reign should be over a living race rather than a dying race. Thus, Jesus died for his subjects in order that they might have an opportunity to live. (Rom. 5:18,19; I Cor. 15:21,22; I Tim. 2:3-6) When Jesus’ enemies put him to death, one of the charges against him was that he claimed to be a king. (John 18:33-37; 19:12) Satan may have thought that he had triumphed over God’s plan to establish a kingdom in the hands of Jesus. Satan failed, however, for divine power raised the king from the dead.

That was at the beginning of the present age. At this end of the age, divine power accomplishes another mighty miracle in the setting up of the long-promised kingdom. Those who throughout the age have suffered and died with Jesus, are also raised from the dead. This is referred to in the Scriptures as the “first resurrection,” and the purpose of it is that these might live and reign “with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:4,6

Jesus, together with his church, as the ruling “house” of God, will be the invisible rulers of the new world order. Throughout past ages, as Jesus explained, Satan has been the ruler of the old, sinful order which, in fact, he contrived and assembled. He has exerted his power through human agencies of one sort and another, but Satan himself has been invisible to the people. So it will be with

the kingdom of Christ. Jesus and his associate kings will be unseen by the world. However, they will exercise their righteous power and authority through human representatives, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets.—Luke 13:28

These human agencies also have been educated, trained and disciplined in advance. They are the faithful servants of God who lived and proved their fidelity to him prior to Jesus' earthly ministry. Righteous Abel was the first of these, and John the Baptist was the last. Jesus said that of those "born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."—Matt. 11:11

This does not mean that John the Baptist will not be saved. Jesus simply meant that he will not be in the spiritual phase of the kingdom, referred to in the foregoing verse as the "kingdom of heaven." John the Baptist, who died prior to Jesus' death as man's Redeemer, was the last of those referred to in Psalm 45:16 who will be made "princes in all the earth." They will not be kings, but will represent the king, Christ Jesus and his church, as "princes."

Near the end of the current period of "great tribulation," when divine intervention is manifested upon the earth, these princes—"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets"—will be raised from the dead to live here on earth. They will become the recognized leaders and statesmen in the new world order, under the direction of the spiritual rulership of Christ. This is referred to in Luke 13:29, where we are informed that from all parts of the earth—east, west, north, and south—the people will recognize

the resurrected Ancient Worthies as their instructors and guides in “the kingdom of God.”

These human representatives of the kingdom are those who proved their fidelity to the Lord in ages past and will be made up mostly of the natural seed of Abraham. However, their sphere of influence will quickly spread until it embraces all the earth. All people, regardless of nationality or background, will be given an equal opportunity to become a part of the new world order and to partake of its blessings. Indeed, as Isaiah 2:2 says, “All nations shall flow” unto the mountain of the Lord.

When this takes place, all people and nations will learn the ways of peace instead of war. A genuine disarmament program will be put into effect, for the promise is that they shall, symbolically speaking, “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.” (Mic. 4:3) How wise this is! For centuries the nations have tried to establish peace by preparing for war but have failed. The laws of God’s kingdom of righteousness will reverse this procedure, for the instruments of war will be destroyed and the people will be educated in the ways of peace.

The economy of the nations then will no longer be geared to the necessity of continued preparation for war and conflict. Peace, universal and lasting, will become the heritage of all people, and at the same time they will be economically secure. The reassuring thought is given us in the symbolism of dwelling under a vine and fig tree, and the promise is that “every man” shall dwell “under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid.”—vs. 4

Today, shortsighted human wisdom and selfishness have brought the world into a state of chaos

and fear. The people fear war, with its horrible consequences, but they also fear the economic uncertainties with which the world is continually surrounded. Unemployment, depression, and economic hardship are a constant concern for many. However, we thank God, this too will not plague mankind when, in the “mountain of the Lord,” the people not only beat their swords into plowshares, but also dwell in economic security, each under his own “vine” and “fig tree.”

In addition to peace and economic security, blessings of health and life will be made available in the mountain of the Lord. The promise is that in this kingdom God will “swallow up death in victory,” and will “wipe away tears” from all faces. (Isa. 25:6-9) This is the thought implied by the Apostle Paul when he wrote that Christ must reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet, and that the “last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—I Cor. 15:25,26

This promise of life is not limited to those who will pass through the present time of distress and trouble and be alive when the divine kingdom takes control of earth’s affairs. The Scriptures assure us that all the dead are to be raised, that they also may have an opportunity to enjoy the blessings of that kingdom. In one of the beautiful kingdom chapters of the Bible, the Apostle John tells us that “death” and “hell” will deliver up the dead which are in them.—Rev. 20:13

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus tells us that he has the “keys” of hell. In this verse the word “hell” is a translation of the Greek word *hades*, which means “unseen.” Hell—or *hades*—is the condition of death,

not a physical place. The Bible describes it in this way: "There is no work nor calculation nor knowledge nor wisdom, in *hades*, whither, thou, art going." (Eccles. 9:10, *Rotherham Emphasized Bible*) The testimony of the Scriptures assures us that Jesus will use the "keys of hell" to unlock the death condition, and set free its prisoners. Awakened from the sleep of death, they will be given the same opportunity of obeying the laws of the kingdom as those who live through the present trouble into the kingdom. Those who accept the provision of life made for them through Christ, and obey the laws of the kingdom administered by the "princes in all the earth," will live forever.—Rev. 21:3-7

The glorious work of the kingdom will not be accomplished in a few days, or even in a few years, but it will require a thousand years, the Scriptures show. As previously noted, this period is described by the Apostle Peter as "times of restitution of all things," which, he reveals, follows the return of Christ. In Peter's prophecy he refers to Jesus as "that prophet" promised by Moses, and says that in the "times of restitution," having then been fully educated to God's laws, all will be required to obey from a heart of love and devotion, the divine precepts, summed up in love.—Acts 3:20-23; II Pet. 3:8

Thus, with the work of the kingdom, the "mountain of the house of the LORD," fully accomplished, the human race will be restored to the home and dominion that was lost because of sin. This will be the full answer to the Christian's prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) It is this which, according to the sure Word of God, will soon "come to pass!" ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 2—“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently”—I Peter 1:22 (Z. ’03-207 Hymn 95)

SEPTEMBER 9—“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.”—Philippians 2:15,16 (Z. ’03-358 Hymn 230)

SEPTEMBER 16—“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.”—Psalm 29:11 (Z. ’96-163 Hymn 202)

SEPTEMBER 23—“Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—Jude 3 (Z. ’03-423 Hymn 164)

SEPTEMBER 30—“The love of Christ constraineth us.”—II Corinthians 5:14 (Z. ’03-55,58 Hymn 166)

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Zdzislaw Kozub, Melbourne, Australia—July 22. Age, 84

Brother Rudolf Lenort, Raciborz, Poland—July 27. Age, 90

Brother Wojciech Litwinski, Naleczow, Poland—July 29. Age, 74

Sister Anna Miksa, Kedzierzyn, Poland—July 31. Age, 91

Brother Jeremiasz Purwin, Bialystok, Poland—August 6. Age, 69

The Song of Moses

Key Verse: “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?”
—Exodus 15:11,
New King James
Version

Selected Scripture:
Exodus 15:11-21

of their ruler’s hardness of heart. The people of Egypt held Moses in high regard, as did the members of Pharaoh’s court. (Exod. 11:3) Because of this, we believe, Moses had empathy for their suffering.

How grievous it must have been on the morning after the last plague, which brought death to all the firstborn of Egypt. The cries of the people must have pained Moses. Yet now, what a relief and joy it was to be finally delivered out of Egyptian bondage. As the Lord had prophesied to Abram centuries before, Israel’s oppressor was vanquished, the people were delivered, and were blessed with precious gifts of gold, silver, jewels and garments. (Gen. 15:14; Exod. 12:35) It is no wonder that Moses sang the song of deliverance referred to in our Key Verse!

We likewise sing the praises of our great God for his

deliverances in our lives, both small and great. We have been liberated from the bondage of sin and given the glorious stature of sons of God. We do well to take time each day to ponder our deliverances by his mighty hand. Paul did so, writing, “We do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope.”—II Cor. 1:8-10, *New American Standard Bible*

Our Lord Jesus taught us that we should pray for deliverance. “Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (Matt 6:13, *NASB*) If we are to pray for it, then we must surely expect it. May we daily reflect on the many times God has delivered us from evil, harm or sin. Thanks be to God who gives us victory—our ultimate deliverance.—I Cor. 15:57

When we have gained our final victory, then we too will sing as Moses did. We will offer praises to God who delivered us, as prophesied in Revelation. “I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy.”—Rev. 15:2-4, *NASB*

The Revelator concludes verse 4 by saying that then “all the nations will come and worship” before God. Perhaps they will be moved too, in part, by the sweet melody of the song of Moses and the Lamb. They will surely be drawn by the wonderful message of deliverance. ■

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

Key Verse: “So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.”

—II Samuel 6:17,
New King James
Version

Selected Scripture:
II Samuel 6:1-19

rest of Israel’s tribes proclaiming him to be their king.

David was a leader of great integrity, and a man after God’s own heart. (I Sam. 13:14) He led Israel in their military victories, and was blessed by Jehovah in basket and store. God gave him victory in battle even over the Jebusites in their reputedly impregnable fortress in Mount Zion—Jerusalem, the City of David.—II Sam. 5:5-10

The crowning glory of David’s accomplishments would

OUR KEY VERSE CELEBRATES King David’s successful installation of the Ark of the Covenant within the confines of Jerusalem. His persecutor, King Saul, had perished in battle against the Philistines by falling upon his own sword. The news of his passing did not please David, but rather it grieved him deeply. Yet David was now the singular chosen one of the Lord. As such the people of the tribe of Judah first anointed him to be their king, and he established his rule in Hebron. Shortly thereafter, the Lord’s favor toward David was further testified by the

now be to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the city of Jerusalem. Great preparations were made. Thirty thousand men allied to David would march in the grand procession. A new cart, pulled by oxen, was built to convey the Ark to its new home. Multitudes of musicians with all kinds of instruments such as lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals accompanied the spectacle. It was surely an exhilarating moment for the new king, but it was quickly disrupted. The oxen stumbled, and the Ark teetered. Uzzah reached out to steady it, and God in his anger slew him. The joyous celebration abruptly ended, and David was angered with the Lord, perhaps embarrassed that his moment of glory was shut down by God.—II Sam. 6:1-9

The Ark was moved quickly to the house of Obededom. David's immediate plans were scuttled, but God was not done with him. It did not displease the Lord that David wished to bring the Ark into Jerusalem, but he was displeased with the manner in which it was done. It became evident to David that the Ark should not be transported by beasts of burden, but by men who were authorized by God to do so—not with a cart, but on their own shoulders. That the time was now right to bring up the Ark was attested to by the wondrous blessings being showered on Obededom's household. We are not told what the blessings were, only that they were so apparent that they could not be ignored. During the three months' time the Ark remained there, Obededom's family and home received manifestations of God's great favor.—vss. 10-12

Those three months stand in stark contrast to the more than seventy years the Ark abode in the house of Abinadab. There is no record of Abinadab and his household being blessed by the presence of the Ark. The lesson for us is that we may possess God's truth and spirit, but if we do not properly enthrone him in our hearts, shouldering the burden and privilege of service to him, we may impede his blessings to us. Let us set God's presence firmly in the midst of our hearts. ■

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

Key Verse: “So Jesus answered and said to him, *What do you want Me to do for you? The blind man said to Him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.*”
—*Mark 10:51, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Mark 10:46-52

conceived me.”—Ps. 51:5, *New American Standard Bible*

Jesus came to be our Savior, and to deliver us from our undone condition. In the present time, a spiritual healing is being generously granted to his disciples. In one of his first sermons, Jesus read from Isaiah chapter 61: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed. To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” Jesus then closed the book and announced, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:18-21, *NASB*) Throughout the Christian era the

OUR LORD JESUS’ MIRACLES inspire us with awe, wonder and hope, and they were often a stage for teaching a deeper allegorical lesson. The restoration of blind Bartimaeus’ sight was such an instance. According to Greek lexicons, the name Bartimaeus means “son of the defiled or unclean.” Taking the lesson to a higher level, we, as descendants of father Adam, are all defiled by sin. The psalmist declared, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother

Holy Spirit has been enlightening God's people, giving them restored sight in a spiritual sense. In God's kingdom the entire human family will also have the opportunity to have their sins washed away and experience literal healing of all their diseases, including blindness.

The Prophet Isaiah speaks of that time when "the ransomed of the LORD will return," in the resurrection. "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy."—Isa. 35:5-7, *NASB*

Presently, we may experience the joy of enlightenment through God's Holy Spirit. Our spiritual eyesight grows more acute as our Christian walk progresses. Principles of righteousness become more focused until they guide our lives with sharp clarity. We do not wish to be like those who were admonished by Jesus, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides!"—Matt. 23:23,24, *NASB*

The church of Laodicea was warned, because they wrongly equated earthly riches and honor with spiritual blessings. "Because you say, I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see."—Rev. 3:17,18, *NASB*

Out of loving devotion for Jesus and a desire to be enlightened even in the midst of the world's darkening atmosphere, we echo Bartimaeus' request of the Lord, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." Let us pray for spiritual sight that we may walk in the paths of righteousness.■

Many Believe at Pentecost

Key Verse: *“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*

—*Acts 2:42, New American Standard Bible*

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2:32-47

new dimension in the prayers they offered, as they were granted the privilege of addressing him with the opening acknowledgement, “Our Father.”—Matt. 6:9

“Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.” (Acts 2:43, NASB) The teachings, signs, wonders, fellowship and prayers were enabled by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter confirmed that all these extraordinary happenings were the result of one very important event—the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we

OUR KEY VERSE CONVEYS

the excitement shared among believers who constituted the newly founded Christian church. They were fully devoted to learning the new doctrine, founded upon Christ, which illuminated the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They now understood that the Messiah had to first suffer and then enter into his glory. These new revelations were the theme of their daily fellowship even as they gathered and broke bread together. Their relationship with God took on a whole

are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”—vss. 32,33, *NASB*

Although we are nearly twenty centuries removed from the events of Pentecost, we continue to delight in its blessings even now. We still enjoy the great comfort of praying to God, our Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit continues to lead the church. “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father!” (Rom. 8:14,15, *NASB*) Paul emphasizes this point again when he states, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!”—Gal. 4:6, *NASB*

We still share in the blessings of fellowship with our brethren in Christ. We are privileged to comfort them with the same comfort that we have received from our Father in Heaven. (II Cor. 1:3-7) We are one in the spirit and in our mission because, “through Him we ... have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”—Eph. 2:18-22, *NASB*

We continue to enjoy the illumination of the Scriptures by the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The words Jesus spoke to us are still both spirit and life. (John 6:63) All of these blessings are as relevant to us today as they were to our brethren two millennia ago. Therefore, as is recorded in our Key Verse, may we find joy and excitement through continual fellowship, study, community, and prayer each day of our lives. ■

Admonitions for Overcoming

*“To him that
overcometh will I
grant to sit with
me in my throne,
even as I also
overcame, and am
set down with my
Father in his
throne.”*

—*Revelation 3:21*

THE WORD OF GOD AS

contained in the Bible is the source from which true believers derive their strength. It commends itself to us by providing direction, hope, peace and understanding to all who are spiritually enlightened and apply its precepts in their

lives. The Apostle Paul, describing the power of the Bible, asserts, “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 [Greek: complete], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—II Tim. 3:16,17

Those who fully appreciate the importance of studying God’s word are engaged in the process of being changed from earthly to spiritually-mindedness so that their lives can more nearly reflect the Christ-like character. Such individuals who have accepted the present invitation to become disciples of Christ

through self-denial and sacrifice, find their acceptance to God manifested by an increasing ability to adhere to the words of Paul, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) Let us now consider twelve scriptural admonitions which, if faithfully applied in our daily lives, can assist us in becoming members of the body of Christ under the leadership of our Head, Jesus Christ, to bless all the human family during God’s kingdom.—Matt. 6:10

BE FERVENT IN PRAYER

One of the greatest privileges afforded to consecrated believers is access to the Heavenly Father through the means of prayer. Our faithfulness in coming often and tarrying at the throne of grace is indispensable to our Christian development. Thus we are encouraged to seek instructions as to the kinds of things for which we should petition our loving Creator. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13) After having petitioned the Lord for his blessings we need to demonstrate vigilance, that we will exercise ourselves in ways which are pleasing to him. This can be done through the use of fellowship with our brethren, study, and careful scrutiny of our thoughts, words and deeds, to the intent that we will be pure in our hearts.

Consider the Master’s petition on our behalf before his crucifixion. “I pray not that thou shouldest take

them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” (John 17:15) We want to be delivered from temptation and danger by exercising ourselves along those lines which will keep us safe, and by avoiding those things which are unclean. Thus we will stay very close to the Lord, his word, and his practices. Here is another helpful exhortation. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” (James 1:5) An interesting consideration about our petitions is that the Lord expects us to work at them, to seek the answers to our prayers. If we desire wisdom, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we should engage in activities such as thinking deeply upon God’s Word, devotion and discussion by meeting with others of the brotherhood so that we might be instructed aright from the oracles of God. We also should pray for our brethren in their efforts of spreading the Gospel, of prospering such activities in their capacity as ministers of God. Surely prayers which seek only self-interest could not be acceptable to the Heavenly Father, for we are all part of the one body of Christ.—I Cor. 12:12; Col. 4:2,3

VIEW ADVERSITY AS DIVINELY PERMITTED

With regard to the world of mankind, the permission of evil has been allowed to teach humanity the exceeding sinfulness of sin in order that during God’s kingdom, they will be able to contrast the fruitage of disobedience with the blessings of life and happiness that will be enjoyed by all who obey the righteous government then in existence. With regard to the present, adversity also is permitted to test and

develop the believers' faithfulness to the end that they might have a crystallized character. Of the Master, during his earthly sojourn we read, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—Heb. 5:8,9

Jesus demonstrated his ability to remain fully submissive to the Father under every difficult circumstance, thus being made complete as a New Creature and worthy of his subsequent high exaltation. Sometimes as believers, God permits troubles to come upon us for our character development when we are not progressing as we should. "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

DEMONSTRATE LOVE FOR ALL

Here is perhaps the best known Scripture on the subject of love in the Bible. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) As we examine this passage, it gives us some understanding as to the depth of love which must be ours as Christians. It would not have surprised us if this text indicated that God loved the holy angels, who as perfect spirit beings have remained loyal and true from their creation to the present, serving him always, as he desires. As imperfect beings, but desirous of serving God in spirit and in truth, we also are not surprised that our Heavenly Father would manifest his

abundant love towards us, because we have turned from sin unto righteousness. However, when we realize that his unsurpassed love has been provided for the entire world—dying beings who through centuries of sin and degradation have lost much of the original image and likeness of the Creator—that is astounding!

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34,35) The love described here is not to be simply a non-negative love in that we would not knowingly injure anyone. Rather, it is to be a love that is active, positive, and delights to do good for others, even at the expense of our time, energy, means, strength and convenience as we have opportunity. Such is indeed a high standard.

AVOID MEDDLESOME BEHAVIOR

Peter admonished, “Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters.” (I Pet. 4:15) One important point to be kept in mind is that the New Testament writers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, provide an abundance of exhortations as to the things we must do in order to merit the Heavenly Father’s approval. We do, indeed, wish to manifest concern and sympathy for all, especially the household of faith. We do not want to be indifferent to the needs of others, but should always be ready to lend a helping hand to those who require assistance.

With regard to our brethren, we should be alert to opportunities to assist the sick, the isolated, to

be encouraging to those who are bereaved, or who are suffering in some way because of an error in judgment or action which seems to overwhelm them. In manifesting compassion, we should be less inclined to publicly share what we do for others because we desire to have more of that Christlike character which prompts the doing of good without any personal recognition or gain. If we are made aware of the trials experienced by our brethren, our motivation should dictate how we handle such matters. We should not broadcast them indiscriminately if there is any likelihood that mentioning such matters would engender gossip, rather than discreet, helpful assistance. Let us not cultivate any of those tendencies which are connected with the fallen human nature.

BE PATIENT TOWARDS OTHERS

By nature, in view of our fallen flesh, we are impatient about many situations. Often, we manifest this trait towards others because they do not do things the way we think they should be done. We also have dealings with merchants of one kind or another who may disappoint us in the manner or speed in which they provide a particular service. Do we suppose God knows all about these occurrences in advance? Is it possible such an experience is designed to test our characters as to whether we would be complainers that people no longer have a sense of responsibility or pride in their workmanship? How about our brethren? Are we ever impatient with them because they do not view certain matters the way we do and then perhaps begin to comment to others about their seeming peculiarities and

deficiencies? “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But you must let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”—James 1:2-4, *International Standard Version*

In thinking about the Heavenly Father, who has greater patience than he? Is God impatient with Satan’s wickedness, and is the Creator going to change his plan, and not wait for the Bride of Christ to be completed before blessings flow to the human family? What should the Heavenly Father do to us when we make repeated failures during our Christian sojourn? We surely need God’s patience extended towards us as we come short of his requirements on many occasions. Let us employ self-examination along these lines and be merciful towards others, while at the same time not make excuses for ourselves where we could and should do better.

DO NOT BE HYPERSENSITIVE

During his last night on earth, the Master left his true followers a legacy of peace that is not available to others who are not in covenant relationship with God. (John 14:27) How can we maintain this peace in a world where sometimes we are unjustly criticized? How can we claim the promise, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee?” (Isa. 26:3) One of the most important steps in this regard is to improve our prayer life. This will assist us in accepting all of our experiences, whether painful to the flesh or not, as being under divine supervision. What

comforting assurances we receive when we demonstrate fervency in this area and cast all our burdens upon the Lord.

We also should consider God's Old Testament servants as examples of faithfulness under adversity and determine that we will be encouraged to trust the Heavenly Father no less than they did. One of the factors which may disturb our peace is a feeling that our difficult experiences are unique and that others could not possibly understand nor appreciate what we have gone through. That may be partially true, but sometimes others have more difficulties than ourselves. For example, have we ever been stoned or sawn asunder like any of the prophets of old? (Heb. 11:37) We can gain strength and encouragement to endure through Paul's exhortation, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." —I Cor. 10:13, *New American Standard Bible*

DO NOT RENDER EVIL FOR EVIL

Jesus totally ignored the scorn and ignominy heaped upon him by the Scribes and the Pharisees. How was this possible? It was for the joy set before him of pleasing his Father, which enabled him to do this. He humbled himself to the death of the cross. He who knew no sin permitted himself to be ridiculed, evil spoken of and considered a blasphemer. (I Pet. 2:22,23) When we look upon Jesus, are we willing to despise the shame? Do we ever get a little self-righteous and inquire, "How dare someone treat us in a certain manner" (Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) or speak about us in a certain way?” There was none of that kind of attitude in Jesus. He did not respond to personal attacks but submitted to the taunts of evil men. What is the lesson for us? The servant is not above the Master. All manner of evil may be said against us falsely, but let us strive to walk as he walked. “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.” —I Pet. 2:20,21

RECTIFY GRIEVANCES SCRIPTURALLY

In dealing with serious problems involving our brethren, we should always go to them directly, and in the spirit of love, to resolve issues needing to be addressed. “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” (Matt. 18:15) If we need guidance in how to approach such an individual, it might be appropriate to go to someone very mature in the Lord, for counsel, using a hypothetical circumstance and without being specific so that no connection could be made as to the identity of the seeming offender. Sometimes we may have done something against our brother knowingly and with some degree of willfulness. What shall we do? The principle is the same. We are to go to our brother, but in this case, we are to confess our wrong and to seek forgiveness. This might be a little hard to do, and we may be ashamed

for fear he will not readily forgive. We might be inclined simply to pray to the Heavenly Father for forgiveness in an attempt to square our account. Scripturally, however, we are not to do that.

If we have evil thoughts, spoken malicious words, or done wrongful deeds against our brother, even if he does not know it, we cannot bring our worship, praise or service to the Father in an acceptable manner if we do not first go to our brother to make amends. “Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”—Matt. 5:23,24

RESIST INCLINATIONS TOWARDS PRIDE

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (II Cor. 10:5) In this scripture, Paul directs our attention to the fact that sinful tendencies are often entrenched in our minds, in our imaginations, in our thoughts. Sometimes it is a little pride, or selfishness, or the adherence to superstitions or false doctrines. Only the Holy Spirit, and the influence of God’s Word will cast down imaginations, ignorance, unholy ambitions, speculations, and every form of thought which would be detrimental to our spiritual growth and development.

The high things in this passage might relate to a sense of superiority, caused by a desire to be recognized by others, to be well thought of, to receive the empty honors of the earth, to have wealth, influence, or to be held in esteem, either by the world or even by our brethren. Such a desire for self-exaltation is a deeply rooted characteristic that

is part and parcel of our fallen nature, and must be striven against by hearkening unto the word of God. Surely, we must avoid entertaining pride as we would a plague. “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.”—Prov. 16:5

FOCUS UPON SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS

“Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.” (Tit. 3:9) This admonition reminds us to avoid spending time striving with controversies over and over to persuade others to accept our beliefs. In thinking about this concept, we would want to be certain that we are exercising our combative “strivings” upon conquering our own flesh, as opposed to dwelling repeatedly on speculations. Certain passages of Scripture are very interesting. Nevertheless, the use of a “thus saith the Lord” for what we believe is a critical matter of focus. If the Bible states and teaches something in an unambiguous manner, then we should accept it. There are, however, many areas where we have not received explicit instructions from the Lord or the apostles. If they are merely matters of personal choice, we should be of such a mind as to allow differences of opinion, and not permit these to become a bar to our hearty fellowship with one another.

STRIVE FOR A PURE HEART

“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 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. 19:12-14) Secret faults may be of two varieties. First, there are those unintentional shortcomings, which may be unknown to ourselves when we commit them. If we have the proper heart attitude, our devotions will always embody the spirit of this prayer, because it is our desire to be found pure and clean. The other category of secret faults relates to those which are unknown to others, but recognized by us as well as the Lord. When such thoughts enter our mind, we must be careful to repulse them so that they do not lead to presumptuous sins of wrongful conduct, such as backbiting, or evil surmising. Thus, if the meditations of our hearts are proper, they will assist us so that the words of our mouths will be acceptable to God, because it is true, that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.—Matt. 12:34

DO NOT TRUST YOUR NATURAL CONSCIENCE

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9) This is a very hard saying because Christians are, in a sense, dual beings. We have this treasure of the new mind in an earthen vessel. Here is another quote that addresses this same battle with which even Paul had to contend: “O wretched man that I am? who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Rom. 7:24,25) The new mind, will, heart and conscience all struggle to overcome our fallen human nature.

However, success comes only when we are consistent in striving to do God's will by carefully scrutinizing our thoughts, words, and by rooting out all tendencies not in accord with godly principles.

MANIFEST REVERENCE TO GOD

Gospel Age believers are admonished to learn from the unsatisfactory example of Israel. We are to manifest a reverent sobriety with regard to our walk, lest we neglect to properly act upon the exceeding great and precious promises which are given to us by failing to make our calling and election sure. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1) Our reflection upon fleshly Israel's failure as a nation to inherit the chief spiritual blessings should sensitize us as to the need for demonstrating our faith in God, and by being obedient to the various admonitions which are given in Scripture to guide us in the doing of his will.

Let us heed the foregoing admonitions so that we may bring forth fruitage in our lives that will be pleasing to God. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
—II Pet. 1:8-11

Joshua, a Leader of God's People

“And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.”
—Joshua 4:19

PART TWO OF OUR REVIEW of the life of Joshua will focus on the experiences of Israel under his faithful leadership which occurred following their entry into the land of promise. As noted in our opening text, the Israelites crossed over the Jordan

River on the tenth day of the first month.

FIRST DAYS IN THE LAND

During Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness, circumcision had not been practiced, so the Lord's first instruction to Joshua upon their entering the land of Canaan was to have all the males born in the wilderness circumcised. (Josh. 5:2-8) Then on the fourteenth day of the month they observed the Passover. Forthwith the manna ceased to fall, and the people began to “eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan.”—vss. 10-12

The Israelites had entered Canaan at the eastern border of Jericho, and pitched their tents nearby at

Gilgal. However, Joshua knew they were not to remain here, for they had before them the task of conquering the land which they had now entered. Apparently making his own investigation, we find that “Joshua was by Jericho” when “he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”—Josh. 5:13

Under the circumstances, we can well understand why Joshua was cautious. He was in enemy territory, and it was wise to make sure with whom he was speaking. The man quickly identified himself, saying, “As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.” (vs. 14) The Lord’s “host” mentioned here by their “captain” evidently referred to the angelic forces so often employed by God for the accomplishment of his purposes. Their commander had appeared to Joshua in human form to instruct him in the proper procedure for capturing Jericho.

As we have noted, Joshua himself had considerable experience as a military general, but he bowed worshipfully before this mighty one from the angelic world, and in the spirit of true soldierly obedience asked, “What saith my lord unto his servant?” “The captain of the LORD’S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.” His true spirit of obedience to Jehovah is eloquently displayed in the words, “And Joshua did so.” (vs. 15) Happy are all God’s people who, when they hear his command, hesitate not to obey, but do so.

GOD'S PLAN TO CAPTURE JERICHO

The people of Jericho were fearful, and when they realized that the Israelites had crossed Jordan, they closed the doors in the walls so that “none went out, and none came in.” As for Joshua, his responsibility was great, but the Lord reassured him. Even before instructing him on the plan of action for capturing Jericho, he said to Joshua, “See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.”—Josh. 6:1,2

Joshua's faith must have been tested somewhat when he learned from the “captain of the LORD'S host” the method to be used for capturing this heavily walled city. As a military man he would naturally think in terms of heavy and continuous assaults upon the walls, coupled with attempts to scale the walls and thus get as many soldiers within as possible. However, nothing like this was to be done. No usual military strategy was to be employed.

All of Israel's military men were to “go round about the city once” each day for six days. Seven priests preceding the ark were to accompany them, blowing upon rams' horns. On the seventh day there were to be seven encirclements of the city. At the conclusion of the seventh round of the city the priests were to blow their trumpets, when commanded by Joshua, and the people were to “shout with a great shout.”—vss. 3-5

The assurance was given to Joshua that with this shout the walls of the city would crumble, and the Israelites were to immediately march in, every man from where he was located. The walls did crumble, as had been promised. The “LORD'S host,” under the leadership of their “captain,” saw to that. The

same powerful forces that parted the Red Sea and caused the convulsions of nature at Mount Sinai would have no difficulty in destroying the walls of Jericho.

The part played by Joshua and the Israelites, nevertheless, was important. For forty years, according to Rahab, or from the time they first heard of the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the Canaanites had been fearful. Now that this much-feared people were encamped just outside of Jericho's walls, their hearts must surely have melted with fear. To know that an army, accompanied by priests blowing on trumpets, was encircling their city each day, but not striking a blow, would add to their confusion. Then, with that mighty shout, to see and hear the supposedly impregnable walls of their city crumble and fall, they would be well-nigh paralyzed with fear, making it comparatively easy for the Israelites to march into the city and take possession. Had the people within the city been composed and alert, they might have held off the Israelites for a long time, even with their walls destroyed.

However, Jehovah knew how to gain this signal victory for them. It was just as Joshua had said, "The LORD hath given you the city." (Josh. 6:16) The city of Jericho was accursed. Doubtless the wickedness of the people was great, and their presence among the Israelites as captives would have been detrimental, so the orders were that all should be destroyed "both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass."—vs. 21

In keeping with the promise of the two spies, Rahab and her family were saved and continued to

dwelt with the Israelites. The silver and the gold found in the city was put into “the treasury of the LORD,” but the Israelites were strictly commanded not to save anything for their private use.—vss. 17,19

A DEFEAT FOLLOWS

Following the victory over Jericho, we read that “the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.” (Josh. 6:27) However, disappointment awaited him. The next fortified stronghold of the enemy to be taken was the small city of Ai. Following his usual custom, Joshua sent men to “go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.”—Josh 7:2

Unintentionally, we believe, they brought back what turned out to be an inaccurate report to Joshua. Having conquered the mighty and heavily walled city of Jericho, the little city of Ai seemed insignificant. Thus the spies said to Joshua, “Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.”—vs. 3

Joshua took this advice, but the small army he sent against Ai suffered a humiliating defeat. As a consequence, “the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.” (vs. 5) How quickly they forgot the miracle of the river Jordan and of the crumbling walls of Jericho! Even Joshua, to whom the Lord had said, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,” felt that God had deserted him and the people.

Verses 6 and 7 read, “Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua

said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!”

Time and again the Israelites had complained to Moses in much this same vein. They asked why they had been brought out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. However, Moses never expressed such sentiments. Joshua did not fully measure up to Moses’ stature in faith and courage. Here, when in difficulty for the first time after taking over the leadership of God’s people, we find him asking the Lord why he had brought them over the Jordan, only to be delivered into the hand of an enemy.

“What shall I say,” Joshua asked Jehovah, “when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?” (Josh. 7:8,9) Because two or three thousand of Israel’s soldiers had been defeated, Joshua imagined the worst, visualizing all Israel destroyed by their enemies, with even the national name perishing.

Joshua, however, was concerned over something even more important. In such an event, what would happen to God’s great name? The glory which had accrued to Jehovah through the deliverance of his people from Egypt, their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, their being sustained by manna in the wilderness, their passage over Jordan and the defeat of Jericho would be lost, if now the Israelites were to be destroyed.

Joshua's reasoning was correct, but was based upon a wrong premise, resulting from a lack of faith. God had no intention of allowing his people to be destroyed by the Canaanites. However, there was a lesson he wanted them to learn—that of obedience. He told Joshua that the Israelites had sinned and that a curse was upon them. In the capture of Jericho they had been instructed not to take any of the spoils for themselves. (vss. 10-13) The silver and gold found in the city was to be put into the treasury of the Lord, but everything else was to be destroyed, and without exception.

One of the Israelites had disobeyed this order. It was Achan, of the tribe of Judah. He coveted and stole a “goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight.” (vss. 20-22) He had hidden this spoil under his tent, supposing that no one knew about it. However, the Lord knew and, because of it, allowed the defeat at Ai, in order to bring the matter to the attention of Joshua and the people to impress upon them the great importance of obeying instructions if they expected him to continue fighting their battles for them.

With this situation cleared up and Achan himself destroyed as an object lesson to the people, Joshua again undertook the capture of Ai and was successful. This time he acted under direction from God, who said to him, “Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.”—Josh. 8:1

The victory was complete. Now Joshua paused long enough from further conquest to build an altar

to the Lord according to instructions given by Moses. “He wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.” (Josh. 8:32) Then the law was read to all the people. It served to remind them of their covenant with God, and of the necessity of obedience in order to continue receiving his blessings.

The news of Jericho and Ai spread throughout the land, and all the various kings among the Canaanites “gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.” (Josh. 9:1,2) The inhabitants of Gibeon, however, decided upon another course. By a ruse they made Joshua believe that they had come from a far country and were without food and clothing and offered to become the servants of the Israelites, “and Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live.”—vss. 3-27

THE SUN STANDS STILL

This led to another crisis. Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, an Amorite, heard that the people of Gibeon had made peace with Joshua, so he formed a league with four other kings—Hoham, Piram, Japhia, and Debir—also Amorites, to fight against the men of Gibeon. These, in turn, called upon Joshua and the Israelites to assist them, with the result that the Amorites were defeated. Again the intervention of the Lord played an important part in this victory for the Israelites, for “he cast down great [hail] stones from heaven upon them.”—Josh. 10:1-11

It was at the time of this battle that Joshua called upon the sun to “stand still,” or, as the marginal

translation states, to “be silent.” *Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary* defines the words used here as “to be dumb,” also “to perish.” Faith does not require an explanation of miracles, but it is important to discover as accurately as possible the nature of any miracle which the Bible relates. It is so in this case.—vss. 12-14

A casual reading of this passage suggests that the sun and the moon actually stood still and did not move for an entire day. However, judging from the literal meaning of the Hebrew word used, and the fact that it was a stormy day, apparently what actually happened in answer to Joshua’s prayer was that the sun and moon remained hidden behind clouds. They were “silent,” so to speak, failing to speak in terms of light—their usual effect having “perished” on that day. This played into the hands of Joshua and the Israelites. It is thought that the Amorites were moon worshipers, and for the moon to remain hidden when it would have normally been visible, and for even the sun to fail to shine upon them, would cause them to believe that their god had forsaken them. Thus their morale was weakened and, panic-stricken, they gave up the fight and fled. The five kings hid in a cave, but were found by Joshua, and slain.—vss. 16-26

DIVIDING THE LAND

In the remainder of chapter 10 of the Book of Joshua, through chapters 11 and 12, are related the further victories of Joshua which God gave him over the Canaanites. However, all the land had not been conquered. The Lord said to Joshua, “there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.”

(Josh. 13:1) Verses 2 to 6 of this chapter list the remaining places to be conquered.

The Lord said to Joshua at this time, “Thou art old and stricken in years,” so he did not look to him to serve any longer as the general of Israel’s army. Instead, he directed him to proceed with the task of dividing the land among the various tribes, with the expectation that each tribe, when receiving the outline of its portion in the land, would undertake the task of wresting it from the Canaanites. The remainder of chapter 13 through chapter 19 record God’s instructions in this regard.

This was never fully accomplished, however, as indicated in Hebrews 4:8, where the name Joshua is translated “Jesus.” The text states that Joshua did not give the people rest in the land. Many enemies yet remained, and these continued to plague the Israelites from time to time. God’s blessings upon his typical people, even as with us, were upon the basis of their faith. Because of their unbelief they failed to enter into the full rest and blessings which might have been theirs.

Joshua 23:1 reads, “It came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.” While this speaks of Israel having rest from their enemies, it was based in some instances upon the fact that they made peace with the inhabitants of the land, and this later led to much trouble for them. (vss. 11-13) Caleb had been a notable exception to this. He “wholly followed the LORD,” and the record is that he drove out enemies from his portion of the land, and “had rest from war.”—Josh. 14:6-15

JOSHUA'S FINAL MESSAGE

Joshua, like Moses, made a farewell speech to the Israelites, recorded in chapters 23 and 24. He reminded the people of the wonderful manner in which God had dealt with and blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and of how he had brought the whole nation out of the land of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and kept them alive in the wilderness. He recounted their miraculous crossing of Jordan, and the victories the Lord had given them since entering the land of promise.

With this faith-strengthening background of divine providences as an inspiration to obedience, Joshua warned them against worshiping false gods and called upon them to continue serving the true God. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, ... or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”—Josh. 24:15

The people renewed their covenant to serve Jehovah, and again Joshua warned, “If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.” (vs. 20) The people again affirmed their determination to serve the true God, saying, “The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”—vs. 24

Joshua was a faithful servant of the Lord, and a strong leader of God's people. He “died, being an hundred and ten years old.” (vs. 29) Verse 31 informs us that “Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the

works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.” What a wonderful tribute to the faithful example of this man of God!

Many helpful lessons may properly be drawn from Joshua’s experiences associated with leading the Israelites across the Jordan River, conquering much of the land of promise, and dividing the land to the various tribes. As Christian soldiers, fighting the “good fight of faith,” we have many enemies to conquer, and it is only by faith in the Lord and the obedient following of his instructions, making use of all the means of grace which he has provided, that we can hope to be victorious, and to enter the heavenly “Canaan” promised to those who are faithful, even unto death.—I Tim. 6:12; Rev. 2:10

Let us “wholly follow the Lord,” as did Caleb, and be “strong” and of “good courage,” as the Lord encouraged Joshua to be, exercising faith that the Heavenly Father will always be with us to help in our every time of need. By so doing, we will enjoy that wonderful rest of faith now, and at the end of the way be counted worthy to receive our heavenly inheritance, and enter into the rest that “remaineth” for “the people of God.”—Heb. 4:9 ■

*It is by grace that you have been saved through
faith; and that not of yourselves.*

*It is God’s gift, and is not on the ground of
merit—so that it may be impossible
for any one to boast.*

*For we are God’s own handiwork, created in
Christ Jesus for good works
which He has predestined us to practise.*

—Ephesians 2:8-10, Weymouth

“Exceeding Great and Precious Promises”

*“Whereby are given
unto us exceeding
great and precious
promises: that by
these ye might be
partakers of the
divine nature.”*

—II Peter 1:4

THIS IS A SUPERLATIVE expression—“exceeding great and precious promises.” There are others assuring us that God “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,” and “is able to make all grace abound”

toward us, “having all sufficiency in all things.” (Eph. 3:20; II Cor. 9:8) Many similar statements are recorded in the Scriptures. They generally relate to what our loving Heavenly Father will bestow upon those who put their trust in him.

The Apostle Peter’s salutation at the commencement of his second epistle is, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you,” who “have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Pet. 1:1,2) The Apostle Paul uses similar expressions to strengthen

our resolve towards faithfulness. Contrasting our afflictions with the glory to be received, Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—II Cor. 4:17

It is like our Heavenly Father to give freely, and to do so in a most superlative manner. The measure is "pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." (Luke 6:38) God's love has no limit; his grace has no measure; his power has no boundary known to men. Out of his infinite riches, he gives and gives and gives again. Jesus said to the people that God is full of mercy and compassion, even "kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." He admonished his followers to be the same, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."—vss. 35,36

Peter states in the opening words of his second epistle that God "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (II Pet. 1:3) Nothing has been forgotten or omitted, on God's part, to complete our calling and election. It is for this very purpose also that he has provided us "exceeding great and precious promises," that they might assist us in attaining to the divine nature.

The promises given to us from God and our Lord cover every feature and phase of our spiritual and temporal experiences. It was so with the patriarchs and prophets. We are exhorted to be followers of them who, through faith and patience, will inherit the promises given to them.—James 5:10,11

For the comfort and encouragement of the followers of Christ Jesus during the present Gospel Age

we read, “When God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”—Heb. 6:17-20, *English Standard Version*

Let us recall a few of the many great and precious promises by means of which, if faithful, we will become partakers of the divine nature, changed from human to spiritual. We realize, too, that God himself is the author of this great change and is operating within us toward that goal. “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

The faithful people of old saw many of God’s promises afar off. Today, however, we are privileged to see many of these great promises in course of fulfillment. Like the patriarchs, we should be “persuaded of them,” and embrace them, confessing that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”—Heb. 11:13

MANY PRECIOUS PROMISES

“The LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”—Ps. 84:11

“They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.”—Isa. 40:31

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee.”—Ps. 55:22

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”—Isa. 26:3

“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me. ... The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me.”—Ps. 138:7,8

“He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”—Ps. 91:11

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go ... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”—John 14:2,3

“He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”—John 6:35

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.”—John 6:51

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper.”—Heb. 13:5,6

“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 4:19

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

“What he had promised, he was able also to perform.”—Rom. 4:21

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the

flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—II Cor. 7:1

Why are we slow at times to claim as our own these wonderful words of life, joy, comfort and peace—these exceeding great and precious promises? Let us be assured, these promises are not given to excite a vague hope of some unknown and elusive future prospect, nor to be a vehicle for false anticipation. They are predetermined promises of God himself, the Almighty Creator, personally given to each of us as his children, that we might be satisfied in that lifelong desire of heart to become New Creatures, complete in Christ Jesus.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

In the first chapter of the Book of Psalms is beautifully illustrated how we can become complete in Christ. This psalm is a commendation of a godly life and what can make a person God-fearing, or spiritually minded. Its opening verses give an expression of admiration for the one who lives a godlike life, which it then describes in a simple and engaging manner by telling what such a person avoids, what they delight in, and what they resemble. The first verse says how happy, or blessed, “is the person, who does not take the advice of the wicked, who does not stand on the path with sinners, and who does not sit in the seat of mockers.” (Ps. 1:1, *International Standard Version*) Such a one will revere the laws of nature, and they will welcome and obey the slightest revelation from the Word of God. They will be so happy to know Christ that they will find in him the spirit and source of all love.

Christ Jesus and his Word will be the law of their being, and toward the Master's example their mind and heart will gravitate. In the Lord they will discover his songs of hope, joy and peace continually. "He delights in the LORD'S instruction, and meditates in his instruction day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding its fruit in its season."—vss. 2,3, *ISV*

Jesus, using the figure of a well of water, reveals similar expressions and observations of the life of such a one. Jesus said, "The one who believes in me ... will have rivers of living water flowing from his heart." To the woman of Samaria Jesus declared, "Whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never become thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become a well of water for him, springing up to eternal life."—John 7:38; 4:14, *ISV*

A deep well obtains its water not from the surface only. Indeed, it depends on localized rain which seeps into the ground, but it also is supplied by means of natural springs and streams which feed it from a wide area. Thus, the man spoken of in Psalm 1 draws his supplies of refreshment and life from his Creator, and can say, "All my springs are in thee."—Ps. 87:7

To the Lord's dear people today come the words of Paul. "[I] cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers," he wrote, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." (Eph. 1:16,17) As the mind and heart are filled and fed with the things of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord, as well

as looking forward to the blessings of life that will soon flow to all mankind, then life in the truest sense finds a swelling, springing up within, which finds expression through our heart, mind, tongue and actions.

PRODUCTIVE OF FAITH AND FRUITAGE

All of the great and precious promises and assurances from the Word of God are productive of strong and enduring faith, as well as abounding spiritual fruitage. Peter continues concerning the promises by which one can be partaker of the divine nature by saying, “Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith” other qualities—moral character, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. “If you possess these qualities, and if they continue to increase among you, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in attaining a full knowledge of our Lord Jesus.” (II Pet. 1:5-8, *ISV*) Jesus said plainly, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”—John 15:8

Faith alone is not sufficient to insure an entrance abundantly into the heavenly kingdom. Other virtues and qualities of character need to be developed and maintained to the end of our earthly course. For this reason, how necessary it is to accept the apostle’s word and give all diligence to regulate our conduct of life by furnishing faith with these virtues. Thus, all our contributions of effort and faith will give proper response to the promises that God has so graciously given to assist us.

The Bible is full of examples of faith for our benefit. Abraham stands out admirably in this respect. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out

into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (Heb. 11:8) Not knowing where he was going, he believed. It was as though Abraham said to sight, “Stand back;” to the laws of nature, “Hold your peace;” and to a misgiving heart, “Silence, thou tempter, I still believe God.” Later we see his great faith manifested again. “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: ... Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”—vss. 17,19

To have the type of faith which Abraham exhibited implies strength of will, the power of resistance, and humble submission to God’s instructions. We need this mindset early in our walk of faith, and all along our pilgrim journey. Such a focus encourages singleness of purpose, firm decisions of acceptance and resistance, whereas “a double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”—James 1:8

Daniel is another great example. He purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the king’s meat or wine. (Dan. 1:8) Later, he knew the writing was signed that “whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days,” except it be asked of the king, “he shall be cast into the den of lions.” (Dan. 6:7) Knowing this, Daniel went into his house, and his windows being open, he kneeled three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before God, as he had always done.—vs. 10

Let us have the same spirit of confidence and restfulness—unmoved, unperturbed, strong and faithful—as did Daniel. Let us emulate these stalwarts of faith and fortitude.

“Dare to be a Daniel; dare to stand alone;
Dare to have a purpose firm; and dare to make
it known.”

LOVE—THE SOURCE OF GOD’S PROMISES

Christ Jesus is our example, copy and pattern. (John 13:15; I Pet. 2:21) God, our Heavenly Father, is the Creator and the Potter who shapes our lives. (Isa. 64:8; Rom. 9:20-23) Together, it is their mutual love which is the source of all the promises of the Scriptures. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (II Cor. 8:9) “The love of Christ, ... passeth knowledge.” “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”—Eph. 3:19; John 13:1; I John 4:16

Paul urges that we reach the unity, or oneness, of faith, “and of the knowledge of the Son of God,” to the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13) Indeed, faith in the exceeding great and precious promises requires growth to maturity in Christlikeness in order to be assured of an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter concludes, telling us to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, for if we add these fruits and graces of the Spirit—the works of faith—which are gained by embracing the exceeding great and precious promises, we shall never fall. “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:10,11 ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

O. B. Elbert

Online Broadcast of Convention
Seattle, WA September 3-6
Online Broadcast of Convention
Grand Rapids, MI 25,26

A. Fernets

Online Broadcast of Convention
Seattle, WA September 3-6

R. Goodman

Online Broadcast of Convention
New York, NY September 4,5

L. Griehs

Online Broadcast of Convention
New York, NY September 4,5

K. Humphreys

Online Broadcast of Convention
Seattle, WA September 3-6

S. Jeuck

Online Broadcast of Convention
Grand Rapids, MI
September 25,26

T. Krupa

Online Broadcast of Convention
New York, NY September 4,5

A. Loutsky

Online Broadcast of Convention
Seattle, WA September 3-6

H. Montague

Online Broadcast of Convention
West Suburban, IL
September 4,5
Huntsville, AL 10-12

D. Rice

Huntsville, AL September 10-12

T. Ruggirello

Online Broadcast of Convention
Grand Rapids, MI
September 25,26

J. Trzeciak

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SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 3-6—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact J. Christiansen. Email: jrchristiansen@comcast.net

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 4,5—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact G. Passios. Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

TENNESSEE VALLEY CONVENTION, September 10-12—IN PERSON AND WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (HWY 72), Huntsville, AL 35806. Phone: (256) 562-2525 Contact R. Armstrong. Phone: (256) 281-6807 or Email: robin@exzaktec.com

COLUMBUS, INDIANA HARVEST CONVENTION, September 18,19—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact E. Ledwinka. Phone: (812) 546-5311 or Email: eledwinka@outlook.com

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, September 25,26—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact T. Malinowski. Phone: (616) 304-7691 or Email: malinowski.tjm@gmail.com

COLORADO CONVENTION, October, 2,3—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact M. Homolka. Email: cnmhom345@charter.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, October 2,3—IN PERSON, NO ONLINE BROADCAST—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 10—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact F. Sansom.

Phone: (860) 861-6881 or Email: elshaddai144k@sbcglobal.net

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 30,31—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE AND POSSIBLY IN PERSON ALSO—Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (321) 422-1862 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, November 7—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact D. Farchione. Email: debfarchione@aol.com

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 7—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact A. Suraci. Email: annasuraci@comcast.net

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 20,21—WILL BE BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact R. Brand. Email: blatbrand@aol.com



“There shall no evil befall thee.”—Psalm 91:10

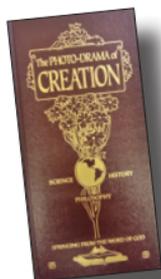
Nothing shall by any means hurt us. Things may interfere with our fleshly interests or comfort or course of affairs; but when we remember that we are not in the flesh but in the spirit, that it is as New Creatures that the Lord has promised us the kingdom in his due time, we can realize that no outside influence can interfere with our real interests, nor hinder our attaining to the glories of the kingdom which the Lord has promised to his faithful one. Only our loss of confidence in the Lord and our unfaithfulness to him could separate us from his love and his promises.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, September 6

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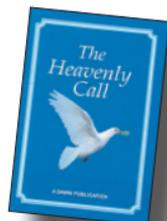
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To us the Scriptures clearly teach . . .

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 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. 55

