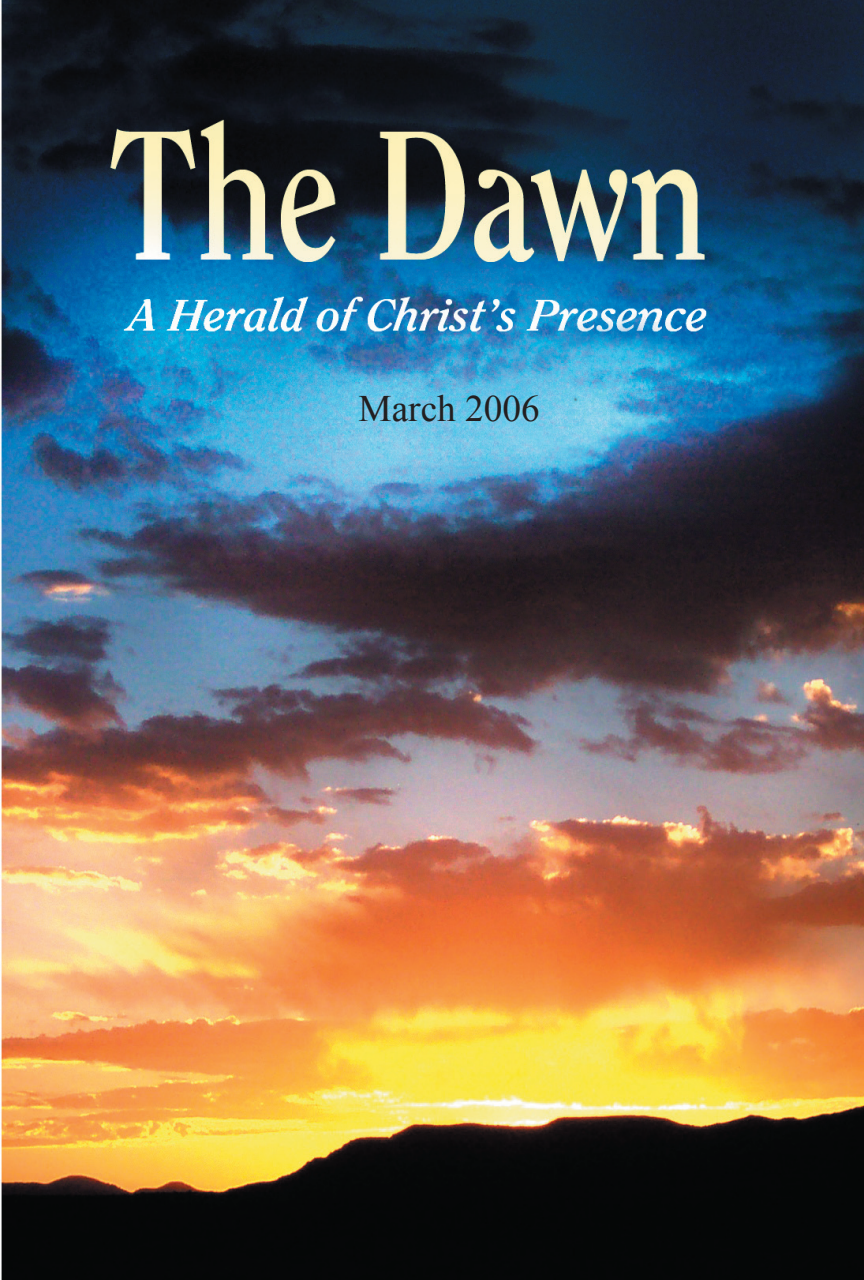


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The New China

A Sleeping Giant Awakens

“I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.”
—Isaiah 49:11,12

to it as the ‘land of Sinim.’ The world was much less populated at that time and there was little communication with the land of Sinim which was most likely seen as the virtual end of the earth.

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

wrote the words of this text over seven hundred years before our Lord left his heavenly home, and was born into the world to become the Redeemer of the fallen human race. Although Isaiah specifically mentions the directions ‘north’ and ‘west’ in his prophecy, he brings special attention to the east by referring

ISAIAH’S PROPHECY

Looking down the stream of time, the prophet draws our attention (vss. 8-12), to an “acceptable time”—“the day of salvation”—that will usher in a new social order that will be established over the affairs of mankind. This promised kingdom, under the administration of our glorified Lord, together

with his faithful bride class, will be manifest over the whole world, to bring blessings to all under the terms of a new and better covenant between God and mankind. This kingdom will include the calling forth of the countless numbers of humanity who yet remain as prisoners of death. There will no longer be any “hunger nor thirst” among earth’s inhabitants, and nothing will “hurt nor destroy” under the administration of Christ’s kingdom of blessings for all. (Isa. 49:10; 11:9) The powerful symbol of water is used by the prophet to illustrate the gift of life and blessings that will become available to all, including those living in the furthest outreaches of the earth, even to the inhabitants of the land of Sinim.

BIBLE STUDENTS’ HELPS

Students of the Bible living in these closing years of the present Gospel Age have come to value the outstanding helps that have been made available to them for serious study, including J. B. Rothham’s translation of the Bible. They acknowledge his meticulous scholarship that was designed to set forth the exact meaning of each word in the original Hebrew and Greek texts, of which he was most proficient. They also have appreciated the close attention that he paid to proper terminology as noted in his translation of the Hebrew word [*Strong’s Bible Concordance*, #5515, ‘a distant oriental region] which has thus been rendered Sinim in our common English Bibles. Quoting our featured text from his version, we read, “Then will I make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be upraised. Lo! These from afar shall come in, And lo!

These from the North and from the West, and these from the land of Sinim [footnote: China].”

Gesenius, in his well-known Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, provides us with interesting and important information concerning the land of Sinim. He emphasizes that the context of Isaiah 49:12 suggests a very remote region of the world—the land of the Seres or Chinese—from which the name Sineses has been derived. He also points out that this was a very ancient and celebrated nation which was probably known by the Arabians and Syrians, and perhaps some in Babylon, but acknowledges that its origin is not entirely clear.

As we noted, Rotherham includes the reference to China in a footnote to the text, and the message of Isaiah’s prophecy clearly points to the far-reaching effects of Christ’s kingdom that will ultimately be made available even unto the most remote and distant places in the world.

THE REMOTE EAST

It wasn’t until many centuries after the words of our featured text were written, that traveling merchants from the Mediterranean region of Western Europe, one of the most notable being Marco Polo [1254-1324], began to arouse interest in this far-off mysterious land of China. In the 13th century, he related to Westerners that the Chinese were already using paper currency and that they had an efficient postal service.

Until modern times Westerners continued to consider China as a remote, strange, and distant place. With increasing interest in trade, however,

merchants from the Eastern Empire began to be confronted with growing challenges from seafaring western nations that were determined to open trade with Chinese merchants. This created internal economic pressures within the country, and numerous problems arose as a result.

The Portuguese were the earliest pioneers in establishing trade with China, and they managed to establish a foothold on the mainland from which they were then able to monopolize foreign trade entering the country. Soon afterward, Spanish merchant vessels arrived, followed by the British and the French. After 1760, all foreign trade was confined to a few officially licensed Chinese merchant firms.

China's first bilateral agreement with a European power was made with Russia in 1689 with the Treaty of Nerchinsk, which established their north-east boundary between Siberia and Manchuria. With the Treaty of Kiakhta in 1727, the remainder of the eastern portion of the Sino-Russian border was agreed upon.

Trade was not the sole basis of contact with the West, however, as for centuries Roman Catholic missionaries had attempted to establish their religion in China. Although there had been little success in conversion to Christianity, most of these Jesuit missionaries contributed greatly in bringing to the Chinese people a new perspective of knowledge in many fields of western learning.

THE OPIUM WAR

By the 1830's, England had become the major drug trafficking nation in the orient. Opium, which was grown in India, was then shipped via the East

India Company to Canton. From there it was traded with the Chinese for manufactured goods and tea. This huge import of opium into the country led to devastating human misery and suffering of utmost proportions as 'opium parlors' began to appear throughout the country. When the Chinese government tried to bring an end to the tragedy that had been imposed upon their people, and when Chinese junks attempted to turn back British merchant vessels, they were met by powerful British warships. After what is known as the Opium War [1839-1842], China was forced to agree to the terms of a humiliating peace treaty in which British interests were maintained.

THE NEW CHINA

China may still remain largely a mystery to many Americans today, but a nation of 9.6 million square km., with a population of over 1.3 billion people, and a rapidly expanding high-technology military power, cannot help but attract our attention. Furthermore, with the tremendous importation of 'Made in China' products that are found on shopping shelves all over the United States, our citizens are becoming constantly aware of the close trading links that exist between the two nations.

This huge oriental country, with its expanding economic power, presently holds billions of dollars of United States' debt, and its numerous companies are increasingly competing with those in the United States for a broadening market for their products. There is also a threat to certain vital resources, including oil. At this same time, some analysts are predicting that China's geopolitical

behavior may have a negative impact on key and important issues to United States policy makers.

There have been indications that many Americans, including some high United States officials, find China's rapid rise to economic power as a source of much anxiety. Some are warning that China is manipulating its currency to keep its multiple production of goods cheaper when compared to the North American market. They point out that this practice has a negative impact on the American economy and its jobs. Others are saying that China is stealing intellectual property from United States firms, although this may be more difficult to prove.

An interesting item appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* (June 29, 2005) that provides an important perspective on the growing Chinese economy. Under the title "The Great Malls of China," the author William Kowinski writes, "The news that China is now more popular around the world than the United States, according to a Pew Research Center survey, is just the latest Chinese challenge to the American ego. The Chinese are also buying United States businesses with hallowed American brand names, such as IBM (its PC unit), and they're bidding for Maytag and Unocal. They hold a substantial interest in the future of the United States by financing much of the national debt. And they've even surpassed us in the most characteristic icon of American life, the shopping mall.

"The Mall of America in Minnesota has been the biggest in the United States for more than a decade, and the North American title goes to the mall in west Edmonton, Canada. But, this year, the largest mall in the world is the Golden Resources Mall in

Beijing, and it will soon be eclipsed by the South China Mall. There are now four malls in China that are bigger than the Mall of America. South China Mall will be three times its size. By the end of the decade, China is expected to have at least seven of the world's ten largest malls.

“But this trend does suggest a few things. China has become one of the world's primary producers of retail goods, based partly on its ability to undercut prices with cheaper labor. Chinese producers are supplying cheap consumer goods sold in the United States, mostly at Walmart and other low-price retailers, resulting in a huge trade imbalance. Much of the \$3 billion in United States exports to China consists of cotton, scrap metal, and waste paper used to make \$36 billion worth of mostly manufactured goods (and the boxes they arrive in) coming from China.”

CHINA'S QUEST FOR OIL

With the growing demand for energy resources, China has become eager to tap foreign supplies to help satisfy their growing appetite for oil. Jeff Erikson, in his column in *Green Biz News Center* under the caption “Energy; A Red-Hot Issue” writes, “The bid by the China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) to purchase Unocal generated a flurry of activity in Washington. Some members of Congress expressed serious concern about the deal, and bills have been proposed alternatively to require a national security review, or impose an outright ban on the deal.”

It seems that the China oil company's (CNOOC) failed bid to take over the Unocal Corporation has been a severe and disappointing lesson for Chinese

officials who were eager to quickly close the deal. China's huge population, and tremendous economic growth, impel them to seek energy and other natural resources whenever and wherever they can. They are being driven by political and commercial interests to seek out new sources, and China is unlikely to give up on its quest for oil, including United States markets.

MILITARY CONCERNS

Another growing concern points to the fact that China seems to be engaged in a crash program to modernize its armed forces, a growing fear among Americans that must be recognized. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, speaking in Singapore in June 2005, asserted that China's defense expenditures are much higher than their government has acknowledged. Furthermore he asked, if no country is presently threatening China why do they continue to increase their purchases of large numbers of modern military weapons?

These are high-technology weapons, such as warships, submarines, missiles, and a maneuverable warhead designed to defeat United States missile defenses. Recent intelligence reports also show that China has stepped up military exercises involving amphibious assaults, viewed as another sign that it is preparing for an attack on Taiwan.

In response to these concerns, a news report appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* (July 20, 2005) submitted by Mark Mazzetti under the caption "Pentagon Says China Seeks to Extend Military Reach," says, "China has long-term ambitions to extend its power across the Asian continent, and

its leaders in the future may be tempted to resort to force or coercion more quickly to press diplomatic advantage, advance security interests, or resolve disputes, the Pentagon told Congress.

“In a report that could stoke growing anti-Beijing sentiment in Congress, the Pentagon declared that China was looking beyond its long-standing confrontation with Taiwan and that its rapid arms buildup was increasingly aimed at expanding its military power in the region. The Pentagon assessment of China’s military, required annually by Congress, goes far beyond previous reports in its attempts to discern the strategy behind China’s arms buildup.”

THE CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

From the viewpoint of the average Chinese man or woman, the situation takes on a different perspective in which they see the world finally being put back into proper balance once again. Reflecting on their long history, it is known that for many centuries, during an earlier period of their history, China was the most advanced nation in the world. Hundreds of years prior to western civilization’s advances they far outpaced the rest of the world in many pursuits such as the arts, sciences, and medicine, including acupuncture. Ancient Chinese inventors were the first to discover the art of making paper, books, ink, and printing. They were responsible for giving us silk. Other inventions included the compass, clock, umbrella, wheelbarrow, chain pump, gunpowder, fireworks and matches. They developed the process to make iron and steel.

Today, however, after five hundred years during which time they ‘fell asleep,’ many believe that it is

once again time to resume their rightful place of honor and dignity among the great powers of the modern industrialized world. The outside world needs to reflect on this period in China's history with the understanding that the Chinese people have endured long years of humiliation and chaos as a result of having their doors forcibly opened to foreign commerce.

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS

Throughout the long and bitter history of the world, there has been injustice and cruelty of all kinds perpetrated against the human family in all parts of the earth. This condition has come about because of sin, and the alienation it has caused between God and man. Under the administration of Christ's future kingdom of truth and righteousness, this condition among mankind will be made right, and humanity will learn the futility of their own endeavors and look to the Lord for the desired peace. The Prophet Haggai, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote concerning that blessed time saying, "The desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."—Hag. 2:7

During that promised time of blessings, all peoples of the earth, including even those in far-off Sinim, will then come to love and appreciate our great God and his wonderful plan for the recovery of mankind from the penalty of sin and death. "The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."—Isa. 52:10 ■

God Made Us Special

Key Verse: *“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.”*
—Psalm 8:4,5

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 8

‘WHAT IS MAN?’ THIS SUBJECT is so all-important to those who would know the Truth, and have the full benefit of the same in its influence upon their hearts and lives. The Bible view of man does not speculate, but properly, as the voice or revelation of God, speaks with authority and emphasis, declaring the beginning, the present, and the future of man. Hence, the Bible view is the only consistent one, and the only truly scientific and orthodox view of this subject.

The true Bible view gives God the glory for his original creation—Adam—in the Divine likeness. “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: let them [Adam and Eve] have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.”—Gen. 1:26

Here the Bible makes it clear that, in God’s original plan, mankind would be perfect—in God’s likeness—and be crowned with glory and honor. The Apostle Paul, speaking of Psalm 8, says, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Heb. 2:6) God was mindful of the original purpose spelled out in Genesis 1:26, and that, in the time to come, he would send Jesus Christ to restore

that which was lost in the fall of Adam.—Acts 17:31

The Psalmist David recognized the intricate beauty of God's special creation, man. He says, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." (Ps. 139:14) In himself, although fallen from original perfection, David saw clearly the handiwork of a powerful Creator, and praised God as a result.

In the first verse of Psalm 8, we read, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" The Prophet Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the God of the universe, asking us the questions, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."—Isa. 40:12-14,21,22

What a wonderful Almighty God we have who condescends to look upon us. We are told to look to the heaven which is but the work of God's "fingers." (Ps. 8:3) The psalmist again reminds us that the heavens "declare the glory of God." (Ps. 19:1) We are also told that we are made a "little lower than the angels," yet crowned with "glory and honour." (Ps. 8:5) It is God's purpose to have man be given dominion over what he [God] has made. "How excellent is thy name in all the earth!"—vs. 9 ■

God Created Wonderful Things

Key Verse: “*Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*”
—*Psalm 104:1*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 104

IN TODAY’S LESSON, WE

will see some of the wonderful things the God of the universe has created. The psalmist starts this lesson by reminding us of God’s greatness. In verse one, he states how God is clothed with ‘honour and majesty.’ Looking at these two words, honor and majesty, we find it hard for the psalmist to describe the God of the universe. In the Hebrew text there are

several meanings of the word honor: an imposing form, beauty, comeliness; and the word majesty is described as splendor or glory.

Just what is God’s form? No one has ever seen him except the Lord Jesus and the angels. Our Lord Jesus was with the Father “in the beginning.” (Prov. 8:22-30) We are also told, the angels in heaven “do always behold” his face. (Matt. 18:10) In Revelation 4, verses 2 and 3, the Heavenly Father is described like a “jasper and a sardine stone.” This majesty is beyond mere understanding. We do not know what God looks like, but know his glory and honor is mighty.

In verse 2 of Psalm 104, God is said to be covered with “light.” The Scriptures describe God as “light.”

“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light.” (I John 1:5) The meaning is to shine, be luminous. In Psalm 104, the Hebrew word means glorious, or to shine. In our earth’s atmosphere, our sun is a great light giving forth life to all under its influence. The great Creator of the world shines to give forth life.

The heavens above the earth, we are told, are stretched out “like a curtain” (vs. 2), and there are billions of planets. From this verse, throughout the rest of Psalm 104, we are told of God’s creations—animate and inanimate. We are told that God established the earth on its sure foundation and it shall not be removed. (Eccles. 1:4) What a promise that God made the earth and all in it for man, his higher creation. The waters are sure and made to establish life, not death. No more shall there be a flood to destroy.—Gen. 9:11-13

It is our loving Heavenly Father who gives food for the cattle, and the green herb for man to grow his food. (Ps. 104:14) That which God creates shall make “glad the heart of man.” (vs. 15) The sun and the moon direct the seasons of the year. (vs. 19) Verses 20 through 23 tell us that there will be day and night, animals will be fed by God, and mankind will go forth “unto his work.” The earth is filled with God’s creations, everything God made.

Verse 29 goes back in time when God’s face was turned from man, and death came. Then comes the promise that God will send forth his Spirit, and the curse will be lifted. God shall renew “the face of the earth.”—vs. 30

The psalmist sums up his treatise saying, Let the glory of the LORD be forever, “the LORD shall rejoice in his works.” (vs. 31) Let us sing praises to the LORD, let our meditation be sweet to him, let us rejoice in the LORD. Our prayer is that all sinners shall fail from off the earth, and all transgressors. “Bless thou the LORD, O my soul.”—vs. 35 ■

Searched and Known by God

***Key Verse: “I will
praise thee; for I
am fearfully and
wonderfully made:
marvellous are thy
works; and that my
soul knoweth right
well.”
—Psalm 139:14***

***Selected Scripture:
Psalm 139***

WHAT A SOUL-SEARCHING

statement, ‘I am fearfully [reverently] and wonderfully made.’ The psalmist recognizes his being a marvelous creation. God exclaims in Genesis, “The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”—chap. 2:7

The LORD God formed man from the elements of the earth and breathed life into him. From this we see it took a body formed from the elements of the earth, and the life-giving spirit, to make a soul.

In our lesson for today, the psalmist begins by saying “O LORD, thou hast searched me,” (Ps. 139:1)—that is, examined me intently; you know “my downsitting.” (vs. 2) This word has the thought of being established. You know “mine uprising.” This word ‘uprising’ brings with it the thought of knowing all of our accomplishments.

Our God knows our every thought. (Ps. 94:11) The Apostle Paul says, “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword.” (Heb. 4:12) In verse 3 of our psalm, we are told that God com-

passes, (spreads out our path), knows our lying down (Ps. 139:3) (that is, watches us in our sleep), and is acquainted with all our ways. This is a mighty God who has formed us from the very ground of our universe.

Such knowledge is “too wonderful for me.” (vs. 6) The psalmist acknowledges that he could not attain unto the knowledge of God. In verses 7 and 8, David says that whether he went to heaven, or even in his grave, God is there. No matter where he was, God’s right hand holds him. (vs. 10) The psalmist was acquainted with the night watches. (vss. 11,12) He looked up into the sky and saw all the myriads of stars—the lights of night—and he praised God.—Ps. 19:1

He says, in verse 13, that he was known from his “mother’s womb,” and then says that “his substance” was not hid from God, when he was made “in secret, curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.” (vs. 15) What is it to be made ‘in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth’? My ‘substance [body],’ was known before I was born. I was made in secret. Only God knows the interworking of the human body. ‘Curiously wrought [literally embroidered], in the lowest parts of the earth,’ from the womb.

“Thine eyes did see my substance [my body], yet being unperfect”—that is, my body being yet just a mass in the womb, was known by thee. “In thy book all my members were written”—all “were fashioned,” even before I was begotten.—vs. 16

Now the psalmist praises Almighty God by saying, “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them.” I cannot count thy thoughts for they are “more in number than the sand.”—vss 17,18

The Psalmist David sums up his praise to God, saying, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”—vss. 23,24 ■

Worthy of Praise

Key Verse: “*The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*”
—*Psalms 145:8*

Selected Scripture:
Psalms 145

THE PSALMIST DAVID HAD learned from the days of his youth the greatness of Almighty God. As a shepherd, he became acquainted with God’s protection over him when animals, such as bears and lions, would attack the sheep. At night, he would gaze up into the sky, marveling at the heavens spread over him. He wrote of these heavens, saying, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” (Ps. 19:1, *New International Version*) The billions of galaxies were formed by the fingers of God. In his life, David had witnessed God’s mercy, love, and power. “Greatly to be praised” is our God, writes David.—Ps. 145:3

The psalmist writes, “One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.” (vs. 4) This Hebrew word ‘generation’ has the thought that from age to age mankind will praise God for his mighty works of old, and for his great compassion and love.

David wanted us to know that he would speak to all who would hear of God’s honor and majesty, and all his wondrous works. This should be our theme as well, to tell to all we come in contact with about our loving, all-wise God.

In verse 8, the psalmist says, ‘The LORD is gracious.’ What does this mean? This word gracious literally means

to stoop down to one who is inferior. Imagine the great Creator of the universe stooping down to his creation, to shower them with his love and compassion. Going on in verse 8, he says, God is ‘full of compassion.’ Here this word means to be merciful. We read, “As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear [reverence] him.”—Ps. 103:11

The saints will praise God, and will bless him, and speak of the “glory” of his kingdom. (Ps. 145:10-12) Here the majesty of God’s coming kingdom is spoken of. This kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion will endure throughout all generations. The saints—those faithful followers of Christ—will praise and bless God in that kingdom by assisting in the restoration of the remainder of mankind back to the perfection lost in Adam, but which was purchased back by the ransom price provided by Jesus, and which will be made available to the world in that future day of promised blessings.

In verse 14, the psalmist says, “The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.” It is the humble, the teachable, that Almighty God will deal with during his coming kingdom on earth.

Who is it that we are dealing with? It is the Creator of heaven and earth “who satisfieth the desire of every living thing.” (vs. 16) We find that God “is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”—vs. 17

Our God is ever nigh to those who “call upon him,” yea, those who call upon him “in truth.” (vs. 18) This word ‘truth’ has the thought of one who is trustworthy. All coming to God must be trustworthy. The question for all coming to God is, How trustworthy are we? If we reverence him, God will always hear our petitions. In verse 20, we are told that God “preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.”

In closing, the psalmist again says his mouth will praise the LORD, “let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.”—vs. 21 ■

A Shining Light

***“The path of the
just is as the
shining light, that
shineth more and
more unto the
perfect day.”***

—Proverbs 4:18

WHEN JOHN THE BAPTIST began his ministry, there was a question in the minds of many of the devout Jews as to whether or not he might be the promised Messiah. Luke 3:15 reads, “The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.” John answered, saying that there was one coming who was “mightier” than he, one whose shoe latches he was “not worthy to unloose.”—Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16

This ‘mightier’ one was the Messiah. Doubtless, many in Israel at that time knew of the unusual circumstances associated with the birth of John the Baptist. Not so many would know of the miraculous birth of Jesus, who was six months younger than John. (Luke 1:13-26) Even so, there was an air of expectancy in the land. This may have been due to a partial understanding of Daniel’s prophecy concerning the “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks” “unto the Messiah the Prince.”—Dan. 9:25

John the Baptist realized that he was not the Messiah, but he discerned that Jesus was. In an announcement concerning him, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel."—John 1:29-31

While there seemed to be no doubt in John's mind concerning the true identity of Jesus, later we find him wondering. He had been cast into prison, and, hearing of "the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus' reply was, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."—Matt. 11:2-5

We can understand John's concern over this question which was so vitally important to him. Having believed that Jesus was the Messiah, he expected him to set up the Messianic kingdom in Israel, and, through his authority and power, deliver the Israelites from their Roman taskmasters. Instead of this, he found himself in prison; and while he had heard of the miracles being performed, he perhaps wondered why a loyal friend of the Messiah, and a relative, should be permitted to languish in prison with no effort being made toward his release. Was one who was able to raise the dead, powerless to intervene on his behalf?

The answer Jesus sent to John's question should have been very reassuring, although the record does

not say whether or not John was convinced by it. The Old Testament prophets had foretold that the Messiah would do all the things that Jesus was doing, including the raising of the dead. When Messiah's kingdom is established, these miracles of healing and life-giving will be worldwide. But the fact that Jesus was able to perform such miracles on a local basis, and while still in the flesh, should have been proof enough that he actually was the Messiah.

Not long after this, John the Baptist was beheaded. Even if his faith in Jesus as the Messiah had been restored, it seems evident he did not understand clearly just why his kingdom was not being established more quickly. If John had continued to live until Jesus was crucified, his bewilderment would have been even greater.

NO "OUTWARD SHOW"

Jesus' disciples did not grasp the situation any more clearly than John. On one occasion, they heard the Pharisees ask Jesus "when the kingdom of God should come." His reply to this question was, "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show. Neither shall they say, Lo here! Or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is among you."—Luke 17:20,21, *Marginal Translation*

The kingdom of God was 'among' the people of Israel at that time in the sense that the king was in their midst. Certainly the Pharisees did not realize this, and the disciples only vaguely comprehended the meaning of the events taking place around them. They did believe, however, that Jesus was the Messiah, and doubtless wondered why he did not do more about establishing his kingdom.

On another occasion, Jesus said that he would give his flesh “for the life of the world,” but his disciples did not understand from this that their Master expected to die a sacrificial death and thus redeem the world from sin and death. (John 6:51) They thought only of the powerful government which the Old Testament prophets foretold the Messiah would establish.—Isa. 9:6,7

The disciples knew that Jesus had enemies—enemies who would not hesitate to put him to death if they had the opportunity to do so. His enemies were located mostly in Judea, and particularly around Jerusalem. Jesus realized this, and for some time had conducted his ministry in the northern province of Galilee. However, when Lazarus died, he announced his intention of returning to Bethany, which was near Jerusalem. The disciples were perplexed by this. Thomas said to them, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”—John 11:16

Matthew 16:21,22, reads, “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

While Jesus thus plainly told his disciples that he expected to be put to death, they could not find it in their hearts to believe it. How could this be if he were the one who had come to establish a kingdom? While they had confidence in what Jesus said, they seemed to hope that in this matter he was overly concerned, and that what he predicted would not come true.

Jesus emphasized that it would be in Jerusalem that he would be apprehended by his enemies, so we read, "Because he [Jesus] was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."—Luke 19:11,12

From this parable the disciples evidently gathered the thought that Jesus, whom they correctly believed to be the Messiah, was going away and that it would not be until he returned that he would establish the long-promised kingdom—that government of peace which was to extend its sphere of influence worldwide. They knew not where the 'far country' was to which Jesus indicated in the parable he was going. They seemed not to be particularly concerned with this. What they did want to know was when he would return, and what signs there would be to indicate the fact that he was again present.

Just a few days before Jesus was crucified, we find him on the "mount of Olives" with his disciples and they are questioning him. "Tell us," they said, "when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3) Just before asking these questions Jesus had told his disciples that the beautiful Temple at Jerusalem was to be destroyed, that there would not be one stone left upon another. (Matt. 24:1,2) It was evidently, in part at least, to this prophecy that the disciples referred in their question, 'When shall these things be?'

They were interested in more than this. They remembered the parable in which Jesus pictured himself as a 'certain nobleman' going away into a far country and returning to establish a kingdom. They were concerned about this, for had not Jesus promised that they would share with him in the glory of that kingdom? How long must they wait for this exaltation, and how would they know when the time of waiting was ended?

The *King James* translation does not bring out the real import of the disciples' questions concerning these important matters. A translation more true to the Greek text would be, "What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age?" It is the Greek word *parousia* which, in the *King James Version*, is mistranslated 'coming'; and the Greek word *aion* is mistranslated 'world.' The disciples did not ask him for signs which would indicate that the coming of Christ was near. They wanted to know how they would be able to discern the fact of his Second Presence, and that the 'age' of waiting for his return had ended.

It was natural for the disciples to ask for signs of the Master's Second Presence, for it was only by means of signs that they recognized that the Messiah was then in their midst. There was nothing in the prophecies to describe the appearance of the Messiah—the contour of his face, the color of his hair, or his height. Jesus had ministered throughout Israel for more than three years. He had healed the sick and raised the dead, but practically the entire nation was blind to the fact that he was the Messiah.

The disciples were favored in being able to recognize him as the Messiah, and this was because

they saw, and correctly interpreted, the signs which accompanied his ministry. When Jesus would reassure John the Baptist, he simply called attention to some of these signs. So now, the disciples reasoned, if Jesus was going away and returning later, they again wanted to be among the favored ones who would discern the fact of his presence. Since signs had revealed his First Presence to them, they reasoned, and correctly so, that his Second Presence would also be revealed by signs, hence their question, 'What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age?'

JESUS' REPLY

Jesus did not tell the disciples that their question was out of order, that when he returned he would be suspended in the sky where everybody could see him, hence that signs would not be needed to reveal the fact of his return. Instead, Jesus acknowledged the appropriateness of the disciples' questions by the fact that he gave them a long list of 'signs' by which the fact of his Second Presence would be revealed to his people. In other ways, too, Jesus' answer to the question, What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the age? showed its pertinence to the subject in hand.

Naturally, the disciples were also interested in the time of their Lord's return. This event was doubtless included in their question concerning when these things would take place. In his humility, Jesus acknowledged that he did not then know the time of his return. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man," Jesus said, "no, not the angels

of heaven, but my Father only.” (Matt. 24:36) After Jesus was raised from the dead, and when he appeared to his disciples for the last time, he said, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”—Acts 1:7

Many students of prophecy are in the habit of reading more into these statements by Jesus than he intended. He did not say that he would never know the time of his return. He merely said that he did not then know. Nor did his statement that the ‘times’ and the ‘seasons’ of the Divine plan were in the hands of his Father imply that the Father, in his own due time and way, would not reveal some of the time features of his plan to his faithful people.—I Thess. 5:1

In humbly confessing that he did not then know the time of his return, so could not answer this part of the disciples’ question, he prepared their minds for a basically important truth, which all the Lord’s people should know. He said, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” (Matt. 24:42) This indicates clearly that the time of our Lord’s return would not be known in advance. But even more important, it suggests that only those who watched would know that he had returned.

In order to grasp this thought with clarity, it is essential to realize that Christ does not come as a man at his Second Advent. He sacrificed his humanity for the sins of the world. Or, in fulfillment of Jesus’ own statement, he gave his “flesh” for the life of the world. (John 6:51) Jesus was not raised from the dead as a man, but as a glorious Divine

being. He was present with his disciples for forty days before he returned to heaven; but they saw him only on a few brief occasions, and then it was necessary for him to miraculously appear to them else they could not have seen him at all.

Since his resurrection, Jesus is the “express image” of his Heavenly Father, the “invisible God,” “whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15; I Tim. 1:17; 6:16) The existence of God is recognized, not by our ability to see him with the natural eye, but because we discern the signs which prove that he “is, and . . . is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6) Just so, it is only by means of the signs which were to accompany the return of Jesus, that we are able to discern the fact of his Second Presence. This is why Jesus admonished his disciples to watch.

“Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”—Mark 13:32-37

Let us take heed, therefore, to the increased light of our Lord’s presence now in the closing years of the Gospel Age. ■

God's Work of Faith

“Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

—Hebrews 11:6

THOSE WHO ARE DRAWN

by God and respond to the High Calling with a true sense of faith, and a full consecration of their lives to the doing of his will, are promised to be led step-by-step in their understanding of his Word for them. As the apostles needed the Holy Spirit to reveal the will of God more perfectly to them, so also is it with all who dedicate their lives to the service of God. Although the apostles had to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:8), God has so arranged the matter that since that time those who are being drawn receive this blessing at the time of their full surrender to him.

At this point in God's loving dealings, a whole treasure-house of riches is opened up as the reward of faith. From righteous Abel to John the Baptist, those who believed God, and upon the basis of their

faith were dedicated to the doing of his will, were, symbolically speaking, taken into his bosom as friends. He loved them; he cared for them; he gave them a limited vision of his loving Messianic purpose; he promised them a resurrection. But so far as the present life was concerned, they remained under the condemnation to death which, through Adam, had come upon the whole world.

This was a necessity, for the price of redemption from sin and death had not yet been provided. God's dealings with the Ancient Worthies were a result of his great plan of redemption through Christ. He who speaks of things that are not as though they already were, was pleased to take to himself as friends those whom he knew would qualify to receive life through the blood of Christ, when raised from the dead and made "perfect" in the "better resurrection" for which they endeavored to prove worthy.—Heb. 11:35,40

Beginning with the Gospel Age, a new feature of the Divine plan began to operate. This is the age of sacrifice—the "better sacrifices" mentioned by Paul in Hebrews 9:23. Jesus was "made flesh" (John 1:14), "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9) of perfect human nature, in order that he might give himself in death a "ransom for all." (I Tim. 2:3-6) And now his followers are invited to suffer and die with him. Their bodies also are presented in sacrifice.

It is possible for these to offer an acceptable sacrifice to God only because they are made free from Adamic condemnation through the merit of the blood of Christ. Paul speaks of their bodies being offered as a "living sacrifice." (Rom. 12:1) This can

be only because, through the merit of Christ's blood, they are no longer under death condemnation, but through faith have been made alive in Christ.

What a glorious reward of faith! From God's standpoint it is as though, through accepting Jesus as our Redeemer, we had been restored to perfection of life such as the world will enjoy.—Acts 17:31

NO CONDEMNATION

In II Corinthians 5:14,15, Paul reminds us of how we were constrained by the love of Christ to dedicate ourselves fully to the Divine service. He speaks of those who have taken this step as being "in Christ," or members of his mystical body. (vs. 17) In Romans 8:1, he writes that to those who are "in Christ Jesus" there is "no condemnation." 'No condemnation'—what a glorious reward of faith!

To continue enjoying this no condemnation standing before God, it is necessary also to walk "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (vs. 4) Paul adds that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—vs. 2

In verses 14-17, Paul further explains, saying, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [or, of sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

How rich is the reward of sonship with our Heavenly Father! This also has *(Continued on page 35)*

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(Continued from page 31) come to us through faith. Abraham received the reward of friendship because he believed all the truth of the Divine plan which was then revealed and due to be understood. We receive the reward of sonship through our belief in the more complete revealment of the Divine plan that has come to us.

In this further unfolding of God's plan, we see the truth concerning Jesus who gave himself a 'ransom for all.' We see his death upon the cross as the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (I John 2:2) We see him raised from the dead, giving evidence that the Heavenly Father was well pleased with his sacrifice, and proving also God's ability to fulfill his promises pertaining to the resurrection of the dead.

By faith we accept these advanced truths. We believe that Jesus was raised for our justification to life, and that he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Believing this, we go boldly to the "throne of grace" there to "obtain mercy" and to find "grace to help in time of need." This is another reward of faith.—Heb. 4:16

"PEACE WITH GOD"

Again Paul writes, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Abraham, and all the Ancient Worthies, had 'peace' in the sense that they were God's friends. Their faith in his promises removed fear and anxiety from their hearts. But to have 'peace with God' referred to by Paul implies separation from the condemned and dying family of Adam. It implies that peace with God is the heritage of those

who belong to the family of God. Through faith in Christ which is demonstrated by ‘works’ of full consecration, we may now enjoy this rich reward of faith.

“By whom also” Paul continues, “we have access by faith into this [further] grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” (vs. 2) Faith has opened the door into this glorious hope of the Divine nature, and of sharing the glory of God. “Not only so,” Paul adds, “but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”—vss. 3-5

Since without faith it is impossible to please God, the reverse is also true. Through the exercise of faith in God and in his promises, the floodgates of his love and favor are opened wide for consecrated believers. We read that “the just shall live by his faith.” (Rom. 1:17) In the New Testament, this is quoted in various contexts, revealing that through faith we receive justification to life; and also that through faith in the promises we receive strength to continue on in the way of sacrifice.

Paul quotes this statement in Hebrews 10:38, saying, “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Living by faith, as mentioned here, means that faith in God and in his promises is a way of life. It is the only way that a Christian can live day by day rejoicingly, at peace with God, and enjoying the peace of God.

Living by faith, the abundant mercy and love of God are our daily portion. Living by faith is to live

free from condemnation. Living by faith is to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Living by faith we triumph in tribulation. Living by faith we are led by the Spirit of God and enjoy the blessings belonging to the sons of God.

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

By faith we dwell in the “secret place of the most High” (Ps. 91:1), and by faith we are sheltered under the “wings,” of the Almighty. (Ps. 91:4) Truly the just do live by faith, and the LORD finds pleasure in them as they lay hold more and more firmly upon his promises, zealously devoting themselves to the doing of his will. ■

“Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, . . . Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.”

“The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.”

“My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to me.”

—Psalms 31:23,24; 101:3,4,6, New
International Version

God's Unspeakable Gift

THE APOSTLE PAUL, when writing to the brethren at Corinth concerning their privilege of giving material aid to their less fortunate brethren of Judea, climaxed his remarks with the statement, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15) God is continually bestowing his benefactions upon his human creatures, the worthy and the unworthy. Jesus said concerning his Heavenly Father, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—Matt. 5:45

In Jesus, we have the greatest of all God's gifts. No member of the fallen race is worthy of this gift, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Although unworthy, we do have the privilege of accepting this 'unspeakable,' or indescribable, gift, and being enriched thereby. By accepting this gift, we receive life and all the joys that accompany it. This fact is simply stated in the Bible—"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

It is appropriate when receiving a gift to examine it in order to more fully appreciate its value, and the more heartily give thanks to the giver. Should we not also examine God's greatest gift to us? Indeed, the better we learn to know God's 'unspeakable gift,' the more we will cherish him, and the greater effort we will put forth to be like him.

Jesus is prophetically described as the One "altogether lovely." (Song of Sol. 5:16) There was nothing unlovely about Jesus. Depending upon our own inclinations, we may see and appreciate in Jesus certain praiseworthy traits of character and think of him almost entirely from these limited viewpoints. If we are of a mild, gentle disposition, it is likely that we especially admire in Jesus his kindness and gentleness; if by nature we are combative, we will note with approbation Jesus' encounters with the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus was indeed gentle and kind. The "gracious words" which fell from his lips must have warmed the hearts of many who heard them. (Luke 4:22) He was also bold in his stand against the false teachings of the "blind guides" of his day. (Matt. 23:16) Being able to read the hearts of those with whom he came in contact, he did not hesitate to expose hypocrisy wherever he found it. Where there was no willful intent, Jesus was ready to extend mercy to the erring. He was 'altogether lovely,' and the more we see of his loveliness the greater should be our appreciation of God's unspeakable gift.

One of the lovely traits of Jesus' perfection was his unswerving devotion to his Heavenly Father. This always had been true of him, even in his pre-human existence. Speaking through the prophet

concerning his Creator, the Heavenly Father, the Logos said, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."—Prov. 8:30

When the Logos was "made flesh" (John 1:14), and while waiting until he reached maturity under the Law, he sought out the doctors of the Law in the Temple to ask questions and reason with them. Chided by his mother for leaving his parents, Jesus replied, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—Luke 2:49

He probably learned from his elders in the Temple that according to the Law he would not be entitled to enter upon any special ministry for God until he was thirty years of age. So, when he was thirty, he immediately went to John at Jordan, to be baptized. The sentiment of Jesus' devoted heart at that time was, as expressed by David, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."—Ps. 40:8

"LOVELY" IN PRAYER

Some like to think of Jesus almost exclusively from the standpoint of his life of prayer. Surely he did delight to commune with his Heavenly Father in prayer. In a prayer beside the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to his Father, "I knew that thou hearest me always." (John 11:42) Jesus knew that in every situation of his life of sacrifice he needed the guidance and strength that he could obtain only through communion with his Heavenly Father. Since he was assured that his Father's ear was always attuned to hear his every word of thanks and his every request for help, what delight Jesus must have experienced through prayer!

Too frequently, prayer is looked upon as the need we have of going to God in times of distress and trouble. And surely every Christian will seek the Heavenly Father's help and comfort in such times. Actually, however, we need the LORD's assistance as much when the circumstances of life are favorable, as when they are calamitous. Is everything going well with you? Are you popular with your friends, and as far as you know, have no enemies? If so, you need to go to the throne of heavenly grace asking your Heavenly Father to help you realize your need of him.

Jesus understood this. Surely he must have placed himself in a very favorable light before that multitude which, by a miracle, he had fed with loaves and fishes. Altogether there were about "five thousand men, beside women and children." What did Jesus do? The record says, "When he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray."—Matt. 14:21,23

We do not know the nature of this prayer. At the moment Jesus was riding a wave of popularity. When tempted by Satan to use his God-given power to turn stones into bread to satisfy his own hunger, he refused to do so. Now he had used that power to create food for the multitude. Would their appreciation and praise turn him aside from his own course of sacrifice? These thoughts may have gone through his mind. In any event, at such a time he realized his need of communing with his Father.

FOR GUIDANCE

The prayer life of Jesus is again brought to our attention in connection with the selection of his apostles. We read, "It came to pass in those days, that

he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.”—Luke 6:12,13

Jesus was confident that the Father, in answer to prayer, guided him in the selection of his apostles. Later, in another prayer, he referred to them as those whom the Father had given him. (John 17:6) What a lovely example of belief and trust! True, Judas was among those whom the Father had given to him, but Jesus made no exception. At times we may seek the LORD’s guidance, and yet, if our experiences are not such as we would prefer, we would be inclined to doubt. But he who was altogether lovely had confidence in his Father’s wisdom and in his ability to direct.

Jesus said, “I thank thee, O Father, . . . because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” (Matt. 11:25,26) Here again we find Jesus completely in harmony with his Father’s judgment.

From the human standpoint, Jesus may have preferred the friendship and cooperation of the elite of his day, the scribes and Pharisees, the doctors of the Law, and other professionals in Jewish society. But since the Father did not reveal the Truth to these, they were in bitter opposition to him.

Those to whom the Father did reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were, for the most part, the unlearned, the fishermen, publicans and sinners. (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11) It was these, therefore, who became his followers and friends. But they were simple people, honest at heart, and appreciative

of the message. He loved these and thanked his Father for choosing them.

Jesus' interest in his apostles, and in those who would believe on him through their ministry, is evidenced in his prayer on their behalf. He said, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—John 17:9-17

What depth of interest Jesus thus displayed in those whom the Father had given to him to be his brethren and friends! Through this prayer we can see another aspect of the glorious character of the One who is altogether lovely, the One who is the Father's 'unspeakable gift' to us, and, by and by, to the whole world.

The love of this lovely One embraced the world, and this is revealed in his prayer life. Even when

praying for those whom the Father had given him to be his ambassadors, he did not hide his interest in the world. In praying for them, Jesus added, "That they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."—John 17:21

In that precious text, which tells us of God's loving gift of his 'only begotten Son,' we are informed that 'whosoever believeth in him' will not 'perish, but have everlasting life.' So, when Jesus prayed that the 'world may believe,' he was petitioning his Father for the life of the world. This is in keeping with the prayer he taught his disciples: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) This, in reality, is a prayer for the blessing of the world. Jesus was interested in the world. He came to give his life that all mankind might have an opportunity to live.

JESUS' LOYALTY

Just as in his prehuman existence Jesus, because of his loyalty, was daily the delight of his Father, so he was also during his earthly ministry. Soon after his baptism, Satan attempted to swerve Jesus away from his course of obedience, but failed. First, it was suggested by Satan that Jesus use his God-given power to turn stones into bread in order to satisfy his hunger. His reply was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matt. 4:4

We will appreciate the absolute obedience of God's unspeakable gift a little more by noting his insistence on the need, and importance, of every word uttered by his Father. This is in sharp contrast to the attitude of many of Jesus' professed followers,

who, in their weaknesses, seek out and obey only those instructions of the Bible that harmonize with their own ways of thinking and doing. But the perfect Jesus was alert to obey every word, regardless of what the cost might be to him. In the circumstance under consideration, the cost of obedience was hunger and the increased antagonism of his “adversary the devil.”—I Pet. 5:8

Failing in his first attempt, Satan approached Jesus from another standpoint. “If thou be the Son of God [Satan said], cast thyself down [from the pinnacle of the Temple]: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”—Matt. 4:5,6

Here was a temptation to disobedience supported by a misapplication of scripture. It was an appealing temptation for it suggested a way of suddenly attaining popularity and notoriety. One who could demonstrate that he enjoyed the protection of angels, even though he defied the laws of nature, could have the world in his hand.

In less spectacular ways, many since have yielded to this type of temptation. It is, in principle, the temptation to make a display of great and wonderful works as proof of heaven’s blessings. (Matt. 7:22)

The perfect Jesus, God’s unspeakable gift, did not yield to this temptation. His reply again was, “It is written.” Every word that had been written must be brought to bear for the guidance of his lovely life. This word that he here applied was “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”—Matt. 4:7

Only forty days prior to this, Jesus had heard the voice of his Father in those reassuring words, “This

is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:17) With this assurance there was no ‘if’ in Jesus’ mind concerning his Divine sonship. Therefore, to expect his Father to say or do more to convince him would have evidenced his own lack of faith, hence tempting God to withdraw his favor from him.

Jesus was not concerned as to whether or not the world believed that he was the Son of God, although he probably knew that this issue would eventually lead to persecution and death. But that did not matter, for the very purpose of his being ‘made flesh’ was that he give his humanity in death for the life of the world. He knew that he was the Son of God, and this was all that mattered. How heart-searching this example should be for us!

Satan’s third approach was again different. As “prince of this world” (John 12:31), he offered to share his authority with Jesus. The condition was, “If thou wilt fall down and worship me.” (Matt. 4:9) No scripture was used here. It was simply a vicious attempt to lure Jesus into disobedience. But every word by which Jesus lived was brought to bear by him in resisting the temptation. The Master’s reply was, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”—Matt. 4:10

Jesus, God’s unspeakable gift, had come into the world to be a king. He knew that in his Father’s due time the uttermost parts of the earth would be brought under his dominion. But Jesus also knew that first he must sacrifice his life to redeem mankind from death. His rulership was to be over living subjects, not those condemned to death and dying. There was only one way to obtain this position in his Father’s plan, and that was by humble obedience.

He had no desire to take any other course, for this One, who was altogether lovely, loved God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength.

DIRECTED BY THE WORD

Jesus loved the world—all the world. His natural desire would have been to bestow blessings or healing upon, and proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom to, all—Jews and Gentiles alike. But in this also he put aside what might have been his own preferences, and served in harmony with every word of his Heavenly Father. When he sent his disciples into the ministry he forbade their going to the Gentiles. “Go rather,” he said, “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matt. 10:6) Later, when a Gentile woman sought a blessing from him for her daughter, he said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”—Matt. 15:24

This woman persisted, and Jesus explained further, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” To this the woman replied, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” (vss. 26,27) Jesus’ heart of sympathy was touched by this display of humility and faith, and he granted the woman’s request. The fact that Jesus made this exception emphasizes the restriction that the Father’s Word had placed upon his ministry, a restriction that he respected and obeyed.

The obedience of Jesus to his Heavenly Father’s Word is further revealed through his observance of the times and seasons in the Divine plan. The enemies of Jesus, who desired to put him to death, were concentrated more particularly in Judea.

Knowing this, he was conducting his ministry in Galilee. "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest." Jesus' reply was, "My time is not yet come."—John 7:3-6

Jesus was still in Galilee when Lazarus died. After two days he announced to his disciples that he was returning to Judea. They reminded him of the dangers involved. He replied, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" indicating his consciousness of time. (John 11:6-9) In Matthew 26:18, we find Jesus saying that his time had come. So he did not then hesitate to return to Judea, even though he well knew that he would be arrested and put to death. Thus his observance of the Father's times prevented him from recklessly throwing away his life, and also challenged obedience to his covenant of sacrifice when his hour did come.

JESUS' HUMILITY

Another lovely trait of Jesus' character was his humility. "Never man spake" as this man did, yet he was glad to testify, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 7:46; 14:10) "My Father is greater than I," Jesus testified. (John 14:28) Again, "I can of mine own self do nothing."—John 5:30

Another display of Jesus' humility was in his willingness to leave the glory that he had with the Father in his prehuman existence, to become a man. As a man, he humbled himself still further by becoming a servant and suffering the humiliating death of the cross. Paul's way of expressing it was that Jesus made himself of "no reputation," and that he "humbled himself,

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—Phil. 2:5-8

Jesus was also humble in his willingness to admit his lack of knowledge with respect to some of the time features of the Divine plan. When asked about the time of his Second Advent, he humbly acknowledged that he did not know. He said that at that time only his Heavenly Father knew this. (Matt. 24:36) How this contrasts with the attitude of many of his followers, who, even though they do not know, would like to have their brethren think that they know a great deal about the times and seasons which have not yet been revealed to the LORD’s people in general!

In this end of the age, when we are living in the *parousia* [Greek for ‘presence’] of our Lord, all the consecrated are properly concerned as to how long it will be before the last member of the church passes beyond the veil, and the kingdom is established. This is the question most frequently asked by the LORD’s consecrated people. The majority admit, as Jesus did, that they do not know. Others, apparently hesitant to admit their lack of knowledge, will speculate about it, setting one date after another. How much better it is for all to follow the example of Jesus in this respect, and admit outright that we do not know. Truly this lovely One, who is God’s unspeakable gift to us, is an exemplar in every aspect of true godliness, which we should endeavor to imitate.

JESUS’ SUBMISSION

Jesus was submissive to whatever the Father’s will was for him. Submission is closely allied to humility. It involves humility in the face of severe trial and suffering. Peter wrote concerning Jesus, “When he

was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”—I Pet. 2:23

Jesus knew that not a single experience, bitter or sweet, could come to him without the Father’s permission. He did not, therefore, seek retaliation against those who persecuted him, but simply looked to his Father for wisdom to learn whatever lesson might be involved, and for strength to accept the buffeting with that humility which would enable him to look up to his Father and say, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”—Luke 22:42

JESUS’ COMPASSION

Jesus was sympathetic and compassionate. We read, in Matthew 9:36, that when he “saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” An exhibition of the manner in which Jesus’ compassion moved him to sacrifice time and strength on behalf of the multitude, is given us in connection with his miracle of feeding the multitude.

This occurred on the same day, and very shortly after, Jesus had said to his disciples, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.” The reason for this invitation is explained thus: “For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” (Mark 6:31) In an attempt to escape from the crowd to be alone and rest, Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat and crossed to the opposite shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was apparently near the end of the Sea, and many, noting what had happened, hurried around the edge

of the water reaching the opposite shore in time to greet the Master when he arrived.

The attempt to escape the multitude failed. What did Jesus do about it? He could have directed his disciples to sail the boat back into the middle of the lake so that there they could rest. But he did not do this, and the record explains why. We quote, "Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." (Mark 6:34) This was at a time when he was tired, needing rest. But his compassion for the multitude would not permit him to rest. After teaching the multitude 'many things,' he then performed that marvelous miracle of feeding them by causing the increase of the few loaves and fishes.

How does our attitude toward the service of the LORD compare with this? Do we serve the LORD merely when it is convenient, and when we feel up to it? Or are we willing to forego needed rest, give up our personal plans, and ignore our personal preferences because our compassion for those whom we have the responsibility and privilege of serving compels us thus to deny self by sacrificing the flesh and its interests? This was Jesus' attitude. He was truly a "man of sorrows" (Isa. 53:3), not on account of his own circumstances in life, but because of his sympathy for the sin-sick and dying world.

In the shortest verse in the Bible we are told that "Jesus wept." (John 11:35) This was when he was standing beside the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Surrounded by mourners, and realizing that the great enemy Death would continue to claim its victims for a long time to come, spreading sorrow and

suffering everywhere, the sympathetic heart of Jesus was overwhelmed.

ZEALOUS

Jesus was consumed by the zeal of his Father's house. (Ps. 69:9) He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4) Again he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34) Later, within the shadow of the cross, Jesus said in prayer to his Heavenly Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—John 17:4

This statement was made by Jesus with the knowledge that his active ministry had been completed. He was still to be tried. He would still need to bear up under mocking and scourging. Even when hanging on the cross, he witnessed concerning his coming kingdom and the paradise conditions that it would restore worldwide. Finally, when his last bit of strength was gone, he looked up to his Father and said, "It is finished." "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," my life.—John 19:30; Luke 23:46

Faithfully, even unto death, this unspeakable gift of God had exemplified all those commendable aspects of perfection, the sum of which had made him the One altogether lovely. In his death there came his greatest accomplishment, for it provided an opportunity for life to all who believe on him. It was for this that the Heavenly Father had sent his Son into the world, and now Jesus had vindicated his Father's trust in him.

So, when we think of the birth of Jesus, let us remember that he would have been born in vain unless

he had been willing to lay down that perfect life which was his in birth. Let us thank God for Jesus' birth, but seek his mercy, guidance, and help through the merit of his sacrificed life. Rejoicing in the birth of God's unspeakable gift, let us remember our lifetime privilege of emulating him in obedience and devotion; in prayer; in loyalty to the Word of God; in resisting temptation; in humility; in submission to the Father's will, and in sympathetic compassion for the entire groaning creation. As with Jesus, may the zeal of our Father's house continue to consume us until the last ounce of our energy has been devoted to his work and glory! ■

2006 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 11, 2006.

A complete Memorial Service is available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on audio cassette or CD, and video cassette or DVD.

The audio cassette or CD can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available free on loan, from:

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

The video cassette, available in both VHS and PAL format, can be purchased for \$6.00. The DVD can be purchased for \$4.00. Either is available free on loan, or can be purchased, from:

Dawn Video Service
4804 Laurel Canyon Blvd., #724
Valley Village, CA 91607

Cut-off date for ordering all tapes is April 1.

The Lamb's Wife

“Come hither, I will shew thee the bride.”

—Revelation 21:9

THE WORD ‘BRIDE’ IN THE

Hebrew is *kallah*, which is from a primitive root meaning ‘to complete,’ also ‘a son’s wife.’ The Greek word used in the New Testament is *numphe*, and means ‘a betrothed girl,’ ‘a son’s wife.’ We read in Genesis 2:18 that Eve was made to be a “help meet” for Adam; in other words, to complete Adam; for while he remained alone, he was not from God’s standpoint complete. Different illustrations are used in the Scriptures to convey the thought of the unity of Christ and the church. The term bride particularly applies to the marriage day, but no one picture can adequately reveal all the glories that will come to the church. During the Gospel Age, the church is the body of Christ, called unto his eternal glory, after that they have “suffered a while” (I Pet. 5:10), and have been made perfect to do God’s will.

Paul, in II Corinthians 11:2, says, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” God does not want the affections of the church turned to the world. The term ‘chaste’ suggests that we should not set our affections on

any one else, or allow them to stray to the world; for James 4:4 says, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." Paul feared that as the serpent beguiled Eve through subtlety, so we might be allured from our Lord. (II Cor. 11:3) Satan's attack on Eve was, "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat? God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." (Gen. 3:1-5) Similarly, Satan seeks to beguile the church by suggesting doubts regarding the fulfillment of the Divine Word. Let us see that we are not corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

The account of Abraham's servant seeking a bride for Isaac is found in Genesis, chapter twenty-four. Abraham admonished him not to seek a bride from the people of the land, but to go to Abraham's own people. This illustrates the selection of the bride of Christ. Rebekah made the journey to the bridegroom she had not seen; so also it is written of the church in relationship to her Lord. "Whom, not having seen, you love; . . . but believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and glorious." (I Pet. 1:8, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) In Revelation 19:7, we read, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Upon the robe provided by her Lord, the needlework of the approved character must be worked out. She proves herself faithful, and to her is "granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."—vs. 8

Revelation 3:4 says of those in Sardis who had not defiled their garments, "They shall walk with

me in white: for they are worthy.” All the overcomers will be worthy because of their faithfulness, and on the marriage day, in glory and beauty arrayed, will be manifested as the bride of Christ. The panorama of Revelation can only be seen by those in the Spirit during the Lord’s day. (Rev. 1:10) We read in Revelation 21:10, “He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city”—for the bride had become the holy city. As stated in verse two, John saw the “new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

The illustration of the bride specifically refers, as we have seen, to the marriage day. Thereafter, the bride class has become the new heavenly government for the blessing of humanity. The term bride alone could not adequately show the splendor of the church glorified. This is better portrayed under the heading of a city having the glory of God, and of which the Lamb is the light thereof, where God dwells. This will be the capital—the center of world government—and the nations being saved will walk in the light of it, for there shall be no night there. It will be for the salvation of humanity. Should we not thank our Heavenly Father for having invited us to be of the bride class and, as the espoused, watch carefully every step that would draw us away from our Lord, remembering that the Adversary is very subtle and would lead us away from the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: What is the lesson intended for us in this text of Scripture? “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”—Jeremiah 12:5

ANSWER: Jeremiah proclaimed God’s message fearlessly, even though it was unpopular. We cannot avoid noting the remarkable similarity of Jeremiah’s position to that of the LORD’s people today, who are enlightened with the Truth of the kingdom. As he saw in his day, we now see efforts being made to save this civilization through human efforts. We know that these efforts, no matter how well intentioned, will fail. We cannot disguise or withhold the prophetic fact that the time of trouble in which we live will increase in intensity until the present order of things is destroyed. At the same time, Jeremiah-like, we present a reason for real optimism; that the kingdom will soon come when God’s will is done in earth as it is in heaven. Jeremiah heard the words of the LORD saying, “He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully,” and so do we.—Jer. 23:28

Jeremiah had been discouraged and ready to quit, as is told us in the texts preceding the one quoted in our question. The way of the wicked had prospered and brought forth fruit, while his prophecies seemed to wait for fulfillment. Then God answered him in the words of our text, ‘If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how

canst thou contend with horses?’ His answer to Jeremiah is an answer to those of his people today who would quit through discouragement. It is a challenge to the sincerity and completeness of our consecration to God. It is as if he said, “Why do you complain about your providence? What you have endured so far for the Truth’s sake is as nothing to what you may be called upon to endure in order to prove your complete submission to the Father’s will, as you enter further into the time of trouble.”

Such comfort is only for the strong in the LORD; but what comfort it is! Of the Apostle Paul, our Master said, “I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” (Acts 9:16) The one who is a Christian in name only has avoided this requisite of discipleship through inactivity. Those consecrated to God find the echo of these words deep down in their own lives, stirring and challenging them to speak his word, faithfully, even as did Jeremiah. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Doris J. Houle, Clinton, MI—April 3. Age, 82

Sister Doris Lorenz, Portland, OR—November 12.

Brother Edward Walsh, FL—December 12. Age, 86

Brother Michael Rozwarski, Houston, TX—January 9.
Age, 29

Sister Agnes Mason, Akron, OH—January 16. Age, 99

General Convention Bulletin

July 15-20, 2006—Johnstown, Pennsylvania

THE 2006 GENERAL CONVENTION is only a few months away. Now is the time to make your plans to attend, and participate, in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. As announced previously, the convention this year will once again be held at the beautiful facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family style apartments (also air-conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air-conditioned) in other facilities are available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge, in his own sleeping bag, if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

The cost of meals for those 5 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. Once again, 50% of the cost of those from 6 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid in cash at the door.

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown, on Friday, July 14, and one shuttle bus leaving the college in the early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport, on Friday, July 21.

Once again, there will be special programs for young people of all ages. Five different age groups, beginning at age 3 up to age 25, will have daily studies, fellowship, recreation, and other activities designed especially for them. Well-qualified brethren have been selected to coordinate each of these groups.

We encourage you to make your plans now to attend, and participate in the blessings of this year's convention. ■

Ages	18 & up	**13-17	**6-12
Breakfast	\$6.00	\$5.00	\$4.00
Lunch	7.00	6.00	5.00
Dinner	9.00	8.00	6.00
Total, three meals	\$22.00	\$19.00	\$15.00
Lodging (per night)			
*dbl occ (LLC or APTS)	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$15.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$10.00
*single occ (LLC)	\$45.00	n/a	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)	\$25.00	n/a	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
*dbl occ (LLC or APTS)	\$275+	\$240+	\$190+
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)	\$195+	\$160+	\$100+
*single occ (LLC)	\$395+	n/a	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)	\$235+	n/a	n/a
<p>If no breakfasts, deduct—+\$30 or +\$20 *Air conditioned **50% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group</p>			

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane — Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

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

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 14, 2006				
Saturday, 15th				
Sunday, 16th				
Monday, 17th				
Tuesday, 18th				
Wednesday, 19th				
Thursday, 20th				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals <input type="checkbox"/> or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) <input type="checkbox"/>				
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath <input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> interested in APTS				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below, in cooperation with the Dawn, are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

A. Allers

Orlando, FL March 4-6

W. Austin

Orlando, FL March 4-6
Fresno, CA March 31-April 2

R. Goodman

Fresno, CA March 31-April 2

R. Gorecki

Orlando, FL March 4-6
Pittsburgh, PA March 26
Fresno, CA March 31-April 2

S. Jeuck

Atlanta, GA March 26

B. Keith

Fresno, CA March 31-April 2

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 2—"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, . . . think on these things."—Philippians 4:8 (Z. '03-9 Hymn 130)

MARCH 9—"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."—Hebrews 6:10 (Z. '03-59 Hymn 261)

MARCH 16—"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren . . . and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."—I John 3:14,16 (Z. '99-88 Hymn 154)

MARCH 23—"Ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used."—Hebrews 10:32,33 (Z. '03-40 Hymn 13)

MARCH 30—"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."—II Peter 3:11 (Z. '96-33 Hymn 143A)

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 4,5,6—Clarion Hotel, Orlando International Airport, 3835 McCoy Road, 32812. Phone: (407) 859-2711 or (888) 266-2711. Specify “Florida Bible Students Group.” Contact R. Sconyers, 601 S. Winter Park Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 339-0970

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 11,12—Hilton Garden Inn, 3330 Harding Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70807. Phone: (225) 357-6725. Specify “New Orleans Bible Students” to get discounted room rate. Other information, Contact M. Costelli. Phone: (228) 861-2822

DETROIT AND METROPOLITAN ECCLESIAS JOINT CONVENTION, March 19—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road. Contact F. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, March 19—Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. Contact D. Gorecki. Phone: (845) 758-0223

PITTSBURGH SPRING CONVENTION, March 26—Best Western Parkway Center Inn. Contact C. Byrd. Phone: (412) 734-4702

FRESNO CONVENTION, March 31-April 2—Best Western Garden Court Inn, 2141 N. Parkway Drive, Fresno, CA 93705. Contact B. Wilson, 2103 N. Price Avenue, #112, Fresno, CA 93703. Phone: (559) 255-2241

COLUMBUS PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 1,2—Church of the Resurrection Banquet Facility, 6300 E. Dublin Granville Road, New Albany,

OH 43054. Contact T. Alexander, 5463 Eaglesnest Drive, Westerville, OH 43081. Phone: (614) 519-8282

GREATER NEW LONDON AREA PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 2—Bayview Masonic Temple, Niantic, CT. Contact R. Armstrong, 65 E. Town Street, Norwich, CT 06360. Phone: (860) 204-9702

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 7,8,9—Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Road, Warren, MI. Contact F. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

BOISE CONVENTION, April 28,29,30—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 2438 Bruins Circle, Boise, ID 83704. Phone: (208) 375-6873

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, April 30—Sheraton-Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Phone: (215) 547-4100. Contact R. Eldridge, 37 Falcon Road, Levittown, PA 19056. Phone: (215) 949-0652

METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, May 6,7—Southfield Hotel, 48075. Phone: (248) 552-7777. Contact N. Hummel. Phone: (248) 485-6357

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 7—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136. Contact J. Krasonic, Sr., 1106 State Route 136, Belle Vernon, PA 15012. Phone: (724) 872-6215

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 16,17,18—Ramada Inn, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue, 97220. Phone: (503) 255-6511. Contact G. Black. Phone: (503) 659-6930

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 15-20—University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. See Bulletin, page 59.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 6-11—Nowy Sacz, Poland. (International Youth Seminar follows in Baia Mare, Romania, August 14-18. Contact T. Machacek. Phone: (219) 662-8107

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

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

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

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

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

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