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Tumult in the Middle East

“It shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.”
—*Zechariah 14:13*

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE Prophet Zechariah was moved by the Holy Spirit of God to point to the tumultuous events that would mark the great “Day of the LORD,” and the end of this present Gospel Age. The prophet had earlier indicated, “This shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”—vs. 12

THE TIME OF TROUBLE

The word “tumult” means commotion or disturbance, and the same word has been translated “trouble” by Isaiah in his prophecy concerning the ending of this age. He wrote, “It is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD

of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.”—Isa. 22:5

The Prophet Joel also describes God’s great day of wrath. Using symbolic language, he wrote, “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.”—Joel 2:1-3

DESTRUCTIVE SYMBOLS

Joel’s reference to blowing the trumpet and sounding the alarm was to awaken all who are humbly watching for the great day of God’s vengeance and the events that would mark the closing features of this present Gospel Age. It would be a day of darkness because mankind is not yet aware of the significance and true meaning of our Lord Jesus’ Second Presence at the end of the age. The great and strong people such as was never before seen, and would never be seen again, is the Lord’s Great Army with which he will destroy the present social order and prepare the earth for the future kingdom of Christ. Fire is used to illustrate total destruction, after which Christ’s kingdom will usher in blessings for the people described as a Garden of Eden.

The Time of Trouble that was foretold to come upon the nations and the institutions established by men is termed the great “Day of the Lord” in the Scriptures. Many of God’s prophets of old served to warn the nations concerning the greatest revolution that the world would ever see. It would be a time when every principle of right and wrong would be made manifest to all the people. The wonderful promises of God assure us that under the soon-to-be-established kingdom of Christ, the blessings will flow to the sin-sick world. At that future time, everlasting life will be offered to all who obey God’s law.

AN AWAKENING

At the present time, there is evidence in nearly every segment of our society, which is made up of the social, financial, political, and ecclesiastical segments, that we are now living in this foretold Time of Trouble—the great day of God’s wrath. Thus do we see the awakening of the world’s oppressed people. There is a growing antagonism toward the dictatorial regimes that have flaunted their positions of power and privilege, while denying their citizens the most basic human rights, or disdaining to hear their many unresolved issues.

One of the most volatile regions of the world is the Middle East, and the dangerous situation in Syria threatens the peace of the whole area. The Middle East covers a wide area of North Africa and Western Asia with about two dozen countries, multitudes of races, religions, cultures, and subcultures. For centuries this area has been the center of important historical changes. During the past year we have been witnessing the beginning of a disintegration

in the culture of the Middle East that will have profound influences throughout the world. These powerful events have come about suddenly, and no one knows how it will turn out.

During the past half century, the United States and other western powers have invested huge sums of money and resources in an effort to control the predictability and stability of the area, and to influence the outcome of events. Therefore, puppet regimes were installed in many Middle Eastern countries. However, there was little concern shown about whether these autocratic rulers were accountable to their own people, nor was there concern that these regimes were spending their country's resource money on themselves and for their own lavish lifestyles. There was little attention paid to the needs of the people who were being abused, exploited, or oppressed.

In the meantime, the Western nations have had their own agenda—guaranteeing the flow of uninterrupted oil supplies, maintaining control of the critical Suez Canal waterway, keeping the Soviet Union at bay, and lending support to the newly established state of Israel.

MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Another factor in keeping the peace is the rapid advance in technology, which is based on satellite television, computers, mobile phones, and the Internet. Therefore, the younger generation is now better informed and connected. With the use of the new technology, they are able to communicate with one another and to gather large crowds to air their grievances.

Youth and modern technology have now teamed up and have been successful in removing from power some of the dictatorial regimes that have held repressive control over their people for decades. Many more people are being made aware of the inequities that have existed in the puppet regimes that were set up in the region decades earlier. These factors have served to empower the restless masses of people, while disarming the powers of the state.

TUNISIA

In the early part of 2011, dramatic events began to transpire in Tunisia which quickly led to the ultimate collapse of the Tunisian government, and the resignation of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali. A young street vendor living in a small remote community in the interior of the country set himself on fire to protest the strong-arm tactics of the police who had arrested him. His fruit and vegetable cart had been confiscated because he had not obtained a proper permit to sell his produce. His treatment, and subsequent death a few days later, served as the small spark that soon ignited the whole Arab world, and brought deadly demonstrations and riots throughout the entire region. After only a short time, Tunisia's powerful ruler was forced to step down after twenty-three years as one of the Arab world's strongest autocrats.

EGYPT

The events in Tunisia soon touched off another powerful and even more widespread uprising in its neighboring country, Egypt. Egypt is the region's largest and most important state, and was also considered to have the most stable and firmly entrenched

government. Under the ruling power of President Hosni Mubarak, it was a major ally of the United States and had kept the peace with its important neighbor Israel for a period of over three decades. However, protesters demanded change and urged the residents of Egypt's capital city Cairo to gather in Tahrir Square. Thousands of people gathered to demand the resignation of President Mubarak, who was forced to resign his office as leader of the country after only eighteen days of the revolt.

LIBYA

Inspired by the revolts in both Tunisia and Egypt, a series of protests and confrontations began in Libya, aimed at Libya's government, and especially its leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi, who had ruled his country since 1969. The unrest soon spread from the nation's capital city Tripoli to many other cities and regions in the nation. Remaining firm in his commitment of selfishness and pride, Gaddafi would not relinquish his dictatorial power. It took several months of intense fighting, in which NATO, the United States, and some of their European allies were involved, to end the chaos and violence. Over a period of several months, there was great loss of life and destruction of property before Gaddafi was finally captured and killed. The nation of Libya is in disarray, and only time will tell what lies ahead for the people and their neighbors.

SYRIA

In May, 2011, political strife also began to erupt in Syria and has continued to the time of this writing. For several months, the world's attention has been focused on the growing crisis in the Syrian

Arab Republic, under control of President Bashar-al-Assad and his government. Violence has erupted in many parts of the country, and the government has responded with overwhelming and brutal force to put down the unrest. Thousands of civilians have been killed, or seriously injured, while countless others have been arbitrarily arrested, tortured, or have simply disappeared.

AN ANCIENT CULTURE

The modern state of Syria is situated in the area where several ancient kingdoms and empires once existed. It shares a border with its neighbor Turkey on the northern frontier, with Lebanon in the west, Iraq on the east, Jordan to the south, and Israel to the southwest. The territory of Syria is slightly larger than that of the state of North Dakota. Its capital city, Damascus, is located on the Barada River, and is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world.

The people of Syria are separated along profound ethnic and sectarian divisions, including groups divided by politics, language, and religion. Arabs constitute the major ethnic group, while other minority groups such as Kurds, Armenians, Turcomans, and Assyrians make up the remaining portion of the population. Sectarian divisions include the Sunni Muslim majority, and a small number of Shiites. The Christian population in Syria is very small, and Jews number only a few thousand.

THE MODERN STATE

The modern state of Syria was established after the end of World War I as a French mandate. It was the largest of the Arab states that emerged from the collapse of the former Ottoman Empire as a result

of the war. In 1920, the Arab Kingdom of Syria was established under King Faisal. However, his rule ended after only a few months when a clash occurred between Syrian Arab forces and those of France. In 1925, Syrian resistance to French rule broke out in a full-scale revolt. Despite French attempts to restore order, the revolt had served to unite the various factions of Syrian Druze, Sunnis, Shiites, Allawis, and Christians. The rebel forces besieged Damascus, and the French responded with brutal and overwhelming force that included executions, population transfers, and the use of heavy armor in urban neighborhoods. The rebel forces were eventually subdued by the superior French.

Syria gained their independence from France in 1946. Two years later in 1948, they entered the Arab-Israeli War against the newly established state of Israel. Syria, however, remained in a state of political instability throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In a coup in 1970, Hafez-al-Assad, who presided over the Baath party, assumed power. Syria was then ruled autocratically by Assad during the period from 1970 until his death in 2000. He was succeeded by his son Bashar.

BASHAR AL-ASSAD

The present leader of the Syrian people since 2000 is Bashar al-Assad who serves as president and regional secretary of the ruling Baath party. He was born in Damascus in 1965 and succeeded his father Hafez-al-Assad who died after ruling his country for twenty-nine years. Bashar was reelected as Syria's president in 2007 and remains in power until now.

Bashar al-Assad grew up in the shadow of his father Hafez who had taken over the presidency after the Corrective Revolution of 1970. He received his primary and secondary education in the Arab-French al-Hurriya School in Damascus. After graduating from high school in 1982, he enrolled in Damascus University where he studied medicine. Later, he went to London, England, and began his postgraduate work at the Western Eye Hospital as a physician specializing in ophthalmology.

BRUTAL FORCE

As a result of the revolt, President Assad's government has cut off all communications and access to his country, and the outside world. He has deployed troops and tanks in a brutal campaign to quell the uprising with deadly force in cities and towns across the nation. The International Federation for Human Rights has reported that the Syrian government has deprived its citizens access to essential supplies of food, water, and medical provisions as well as restricting admission to hospitals.

Violence has been reported in cities and towns including Kanaker, Erbin, Albul, Kamal, and Zor. International alarm is increasing as the level of violence escalates. Human Rights experts are denouncing the grave violations of human rights by the Syrian government under Assad. There has been a unified response to end the targeting of its civilian population. The indiscriminate targeting of civilians has led to thousands of Syrians fleeing to Turkey for refuge. In an effort to prevent further escapes, Syrian troops have been sent to the Turkish border to deny them the opportunity to escape the carnage.

THE ARAB LEAGUE

The Arab League is a regional organization of Arab states in the Middle East that was formed in Cairo, Egypt, in 1945. Currently the League has twenty-two members whose main goal is to establish relations between member states and to coordinate collaboration between them. They also want to safeguard their independence and sovereignty.

The Arab League says it will maintain the sanctions that have been imposed upon Syria. This move is in response to the Assad government's demand to remove the sanctions as conditions for allowing monitors to enter Syria. Some member states are accusing Syria of attempting to bargain with the Arab League. Sanctions were imposed because of President Assad's violent crackdown against his own people. The Syrian government reports they would agree to let Arab League monitors enter their country provided that Syrian membership in the League is restored and that the sanctions are ended in an agreement that could be signed in Damascus. However, Arab League Secretary-General Nabil el Arabi stated that this agreement would not lead to suspending sanctions against Syria. The League ordered a freeze on the assets of nineteen Syrian officials, and a ban on their travel. This included a reduction in flights to Syria, the release of political prisoners, and an end to the crackdown against the protestors. The ultimate impact of this action will depend on the effectiveness of enforcing these regulations.

Assad faces growing economic and political pressure to end the violence against the unrest that began several months ago. These events are similar

to those that were inspired by the movements that toppled leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. However, the increasing violence risks moving Syria closer to a civil war as military personnel defect and take up arms against the government, the United Nations, and top human-rights officials.

WESTERN RESPONSE

Leaders in both France and Great Britain state that concerted action is necessary to contain the Syrian crisis before it deteriorates into a civil war. They believe that the situation is even more dangerous than the Iraq war. In the meantime, Syria continues to intensify their war preparations, fully expecting that diplomatic efforts will fail. Washington sources report that their pessimism emanates from the conviction in the region that, even if Bashar al-Assad pretended to cooperate, it is the government's determination to fight until the last man before relaxing their grip on the Syrian uprising.

As part of the drive for negotiations, Washington and Paris have returned their ambassadors to Damascus after an absence of several weeks. Their goal is to open direct channels to President Assad and to accept an orderly transition of power to avert a regional war and to save Syria from plunging further into civil war and chaos. Leaders from the United States, France, and Great Britain are of one mind about pursuing diplomacy to end Assad's rule, although there is yet no sign that he is willing to cooperate and step down from the presidential palace in Damascus. Even the Arab League's proposal to send monitors into Syria was met by rejection.

SYRIA'S ALLIANCE

If the Assad regime were to collapse, it would upset a major strategic alliance in the Middle East. Syrian opposition forces that have been challenging the regime, are shaking the very foundation of the axis formed between Damascus and Tehran, along with their Lebanese ally Hezbollah. Furthermore, the alliance is at the core of the Islamic Republic of Iran's intention to ensure its supremacy over the region. If this alliance collapses and Assad is forced to step down as Syria's president, it will cause a major reshuffling in the entire Middle East. The three partners also form a unified front of rejection that is particularly opposed to any changes in the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

WIDENING THREAT

When the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya were removed and their leaders forced to resign, a virtual tumult of revolutionary fervor was released that will ultimately transform the entire Middle East. However, the potential collapse of the Syrian regime could wreak even more havoc. The fall of President Bashar al-Assad and the collapse of his government would unleash sectarian strife and extremism that would spread far beyond its borders. It could threaten not only the entrenched rulers that are already battling the movement for democratic change, but also the entire balance of power in one of the most volatile regions in the world.

Syria's minority Shiite Alawite government has control over a majority Sunni population. Furthermore, Syria has a strategic location, and alliances with Iran and the radical Hamas and Hezbollah

movements. If the regime were to collapse, it could lead to a civil war that would spread throughout the region, including Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Reporters have pointed out that the Western powers, including the United States, have offered a tempered response to the bloodshed in Syria, the latest Arab country to be swept up in the tumult in the Middle East. For example, hundreds of people were detained recently as the violent crackdown of government military forces swept through towns and villages all over the country, and raided homes in search of those who may have participated in the protests. Yet, there has been no call for Bashar al-Assad to step aside. One analyst describes Syria as the Middle East equivalent of a bank that's too big to fail. The spillover effect is difficult to contemplate.

Little is known about what could happen next if Assad is forced to resign. Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya were faced with much uncertainty when their regimes fell, but in each case the army asserted its independence and seized power to oversee the transition. In Syria, however, the army is tightly bound to Assad's Alawite Shiite government. The fall of the regime could lead to its disintegration, and set the stage for the majority Sunni to seek revenge on a minority that has asserted their own interests. Thus a struggle for control of Syria would thus be ignited.

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS

Despite the tumult in the Middle East at this time, we rejoice in the knowledge that our loving Heavenly Father has all things under the control of

his mighty hand. As we witness the tumultuous winds gathering, let us continue to rejoice in the prophetic words of Haggai, who wrote concerning the wonderful promises of God, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”—Hag. 2:6,7

When the shaking work will have accomplished its purpose under the mighty hand of God, the nations will be humbled, “Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.”—Isa. 25:5

Christ’s kingdom will establish true righteousness over all the earth. Then will blessings of life be made available for all who will obey the law of God. “In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—vss. 6-9 ■

Wisdom's Part in Creation

Key Verse: “*Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.*”
—*Proverbs 8:33*

Selected Scripture:
Proverbs 8

AS WE CONSIDER THE subject of creation as taught in Genesis, we should immediately see the evidence of an intelligent Creator. (Gen. 1:1-31) One needs only to look into the night sky with a telescope, or even with his eye alone, and see the immensity of creation. When we note its order, beauty, harmony, symmetry, and diversity, there can be no doubt that the Creator of these is greatly superior both in wisdom and power. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” (Ps. 19:1) Every plant and flower speaks volumes of testimony on this subject. Life on the plant, animal, and human levels reveals the intricate construction and exquisite beauty in form and texture, and each speaks of a wisdom and skill above anything that can be explained by mere chance. This one, whose wisdom planned it and whose power so greatly transcends our own, we should instinctively seek to worship and adore. “The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”—Prov. 9:10

The existence of an intelligent Creator is a clearly demonstrated truth, the proof of which lies all around us, and within us. We do know that God was pleased with his creation as is evidenced by the words, “God saw

every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” (Gen. 1:31) Adam was created physically, mentally and morally perfect. “God created man in his own image.” (vs. 27) Man is his workmanship, and every power of mind and body reflects a marvelous skill beyond our comprehension.

God is the designer and creator of what we term as nature. He ordered and established the laws of nature, the beauty and harmony of whose operation mankind cannot replicate or create. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33) The Apostle Paul’s conclusion is that such depths of wisdom and knowledge and grace prove that the plan of God is superhuman. We should also be reminded that the Heavenly Father possesses the attributes of justice, mercy, and love, in addition to his power and wisdom. We, however, are told in Proverbs 4:7, “wisdom is the principle thing.” Another important saying is recorded for us in the words, “Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”—chap. 8:11

A further acknowledgement of the wisdom of God is provided for us in the scripture, “The wisdom that is from above is first pure.” (James 3:17) That wisdom is more than just a belief in an attribute of God, or in the will of God. It is a full acceptance and belief “that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4) It involves an acceptance of his will in every matter of life.

What could be more reasonable than that, in creating man, God endowed him with reason and judgment, and the capability of appreciating his Creator’s works, and his wisdom, justice, love, and power? He is wise, just, loving, and powerful; and the scope of his attributes is grand. Truly, “Blessed is the man that heareth me.”—Prov. 8:34 ■

The Word Became Flesh

Key Verse: “*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*”
—John 1:14

Selected Scripture:
John 1:1-14

THROUGH HIS WONDER-ful wisdom, the Heavenly Father created his son, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” (John 1:1) This scripture points out the prehuman existence of Jesus, and reveals to us that Jesus was the first and only being directly created by God. In the beginning of God’s creation, Jesus was there in heaven with him, before anything was created, and when none existed except God. At this time, the *Logos*, or “Word” existed with God; he was first created and the first, or highest, in rank. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” (Rev. 22:13) The Greek word *Logos* would be properly translated by the words “intention, plan, purpose, or expression.” It also signifies mouthpiece or special messenger. As the mouthpiece of his father, the beloved Son would come to exemplify all of the attributes that pertained to the “only begotten of the Father”—John 1:14

God continued to create through his Son as co-creator, but Jesus was “the firstborn of every creature.” (Col. 1:15),

and “the beginning of the creation of God.” (Rev. 3:14) As we continue reading in the first chapter of John, we find the words, “All things were made by him [*Logos*]; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:3) The power was of the Father, but it was exercised through the Son.

These verses are in full harmony with the statement made by the Apostle Paul: “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.” (I Cor. 8:6) The Father is the life-giver, and existed first, and Jesus refers to this, when he says, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28); “I can of mine own self do nothing, . . . but the will of the Father which sent me” (chap. 5:30); “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God” (chap. 20:17); and “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (chap. 17:3) Jesus himself declared, “Before Abraham was, I am.” (chap. 8:58) This statement serves to identify the man Jesus with his previous condition before he “was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

As we recall from the scriptural account, Jesus would be born of Mary, and was begotten by the Holy Spirit; therefore, the life principle by which Jesus was conceived came directly from the Heavenly Father. (Heb. 1:5) It was because of this that he was then able to be born as a perfect man—“and the Word was made flesh.” The *Revised Standard Version* renders it, “The Word became flesh.” He was born perfect, and as a result he was free from the Adamic curse of sin and death. He knew no sin, while all other men are sinners by nature. (II Cor. 5:21) Our Key Verse tells us that he was “full of grace and truth.” In him dwelt all of the fullness of the Father, so that he was designed in all things to have pre-eminence above all others, for “in him was life.”—John 1:4 ■

The Wedding at Cana

Key Verse: *“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”*

—John 2:11

Selected Scripture:
John 2:1-12

drink of the fruit of the vine with his disciples until he would drink it anew with them in the kingdom. To partake of the cup of the Lord in the present time signifies to share in his sufferings, humiliation, and death. “Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Mark 10:38) This cup signifies experiences, as shown when our Lord said, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11) To partake of his cup in the coming age will mean to share in his glory and joy. That will be the new wine of the kingdom.

We also have the prophecy, “In this mountain [the kingdom of God] shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.” (Isa. 25:6) In these words, we should recognize

AS THE SCRIPTURAL CITATION points out to us, these verses highlight the first of many miracles that were performed by our Lord Jesus. The circumstances of our Lord’s providing wine for a festive occasion such as a wedding, would come to signify far greater blessings that he will one day bring to all the people of the earth.

Matthew 26:29 points out to us that our Lord would no more

wine as a fitting symbol of joy and gladness.

This first miracle was given to symbolize the ultimate object of the work upon which our Lord was then entering. His goal was to glorify his church and then to spread a feast of fat things (of rich blessings) and of wine (of joy) before all people. “They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, . . . for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow.” (Jer. 31:12,13) How fitting that this first miracle that our Lord performed would serve as a foreshadow of future glory.

In observing the features of this miracle, we notice that it followed the wedding ceremony. So the joy and blessing of Christ’s kingdom, both to the church, his bride, and also to the world, will follow the marriage of the Lamb—“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” (Rev. 19:7) Next, we should note that the marriage was on the “third day.” (John 2:1) This points us to our Lord’s words, “I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” (Luke 13:32) and “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . He spake of the temple of his body.”—John 2:19,21

The miracle consisted of turning water in the vessels for purification into the desirable beverage—the “good wine.” (John 2:6-8) Water is a symbol of truth (Eph. 5:26), the use of which is for refreshing and cleansing the Lord’s people. Through this very cleansing agency, the church will be glorified, and the world blessed. The divine Truth that flows from God will then be realized in the blessing and joys of the kingdom.

The Lord’s reply to his mother, who informed him of the lack of wine, is also significant. “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, . . . mine hour is not yet come.” (John 2:4) The hour for his exaltation and glory had not yet come.—Ps. 30:5; Rev. 2:10; Matt. 25:23 ■

God's Word Saves

Key Verse: *“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

Selected Scripture:
John 3:11-21; Num. 21:4-8

“AS BY THE OFFENCE OF one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Rom. 5:18,19) An explanation of this verse reveals to us that as many as have shared death on account of Adam's sin will have life-privileges offered to them by our Lord Jesus, who died for them and sacrificially became Adam's substitute according to God's plan. Jesus gave himself “a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:6) He died, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”—I Pet. 3:18

The apostle's statement is that the sentence of condemnation extended to all the seed of Adam, and was able to be lifted through the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the Father's plan. “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:8) By the willing sacrifice of himself on the cross, a free gift is then able to be extended to all. This gift is one of forgiveness which, if accepted, will constitute a justification or basis for

everlasting life. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa. 53:11) So, by the “obedience of one many shall be made righteous.”

This is also illustrated for us in the scriptural account from Numbers 21:4-9. Fiery serpents “bit the people.” This represents sinners bitten by sin and suffering the consequences of the fall. The “serpent” that Moses fashioned was a symbol of sin. (Gen. 3:14,15) Although the ransom price was paid by the Redeemer, only a few during the Gospel Age have been made righteous, or justified, “through faith in his blood.” (Rom. 3:25) Since Christ is the “propitiation [satisfaction]” for the sins of the world (I John 2:2), all men will, on account of this, be released from the penalty of Adam’s sin, under the New Covenant. God is perfectly just and righteous, so “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—I John 1:9

The completeness of the ransom is the strongest argument for the restitution of all of mankind who accept it on God’s terms. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17) The very character of God in justice and honor stands pledged to it, and has made it possible by the sacrifice of his Son—“The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Since death is the penalty for sin, when sin is canceled the wages must also cease.

This is truly a demonstration of God’s love for mankind, for “God so loved the world.” The whole world has been provided for in the glorious offering and sacrifice of Jesus, and the whole world is to have the benefits resulting from that sacrifice—“they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10; Gen. 22:17,18; Gal.3:8; I Tim. 2:6,4:10 ■

The World's Judgment Day

“He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

—Acts 17:31

majority of the human race have been unbelievers for whom it is thought that the judgment day will be one of terror, it is frequently spoken of as “doomsday.”

Let us note well that this concept of the world's coming judgment day is merely a tradition, another of those misconceptions handed down to us from the Dark Ages. The judgment day which the Bible

IN THE MINDS OF MANY, the coming day of judgment is to be a period of twenty-four hours. It is thought that in this day the righteous and the unrighteous will be summoned before a judgment seat occupied by Jesus to hear their eternal fate declared. According to this belief, the righteous will be sent to heaven and the unrighteous to a place of torment. Since history indicates the vast

describes is a period of one thousand years, during which mankind in general will be on probation for the purpose of proving their worthiness, or unworthiness, of everlasting life here on the earth.

A PAST JUDGMENT DAY

The need for the world's future judgment day arose at the time when our first parents were tested in the Garden of Eden. They failed under that test and came under condemnation to death. This condemnation was passed on to their children, and thus Adam and his descendants became a dying race. Paul wrote, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Rom. 5:12

When Jesus came, he explained that he had not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have life. (John 3:17) On this point, Paul wrote, "As by the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Rom. 5:18,19

The life provided by the ransom sacrifice of Christ is not thrust upon anyone. It is obtainable only upon the basis of acceptance and obedience. At the present time, this is upon the basis of faith, and those who receive it are called upon to lay down their lives in sacrifice, even as Jesus did. Few, indeed, have been willing to meet these rigid conditions of discipleship. In the first place, the vast majority have never had an opportunity really to

know about Christ in an understandable manner. Those who died prior to the First Advent had no opportunity to believe on him. Even since Jesus' earthly ministry millions have lived and died never hearing of Jesus. They likewise had no chance to know him and accept the provisions of divine love available through him and his work of redemption.

GOD'S WRATH MANIFESTED

Jesus said that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all . . . unrighteousness." (Rom. 1:18) This does not mean that God is vindictive. It is a reference, rather, to the death condemnation which came upon our first parents because of their failure to obey God's law, and to the manner in which it is manifested in their children, the human race.

This death condemnation is indeed visible on every hand. We see evidences of it in every graveyard, in every funeral home, in every doctor's office, in every hospital. We each experience it in every ache and every pain. The Bible speaks of this death condemnation as an evidence of God's anger against sin, but it also tells us that this anger endures but for a moment, adding, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."—Ps. 30:5

This foretold morning of joy is in reality the morning of the world's coming thousand-year judgment day. This coming new "day" is to be one of enlightenment, during which all will have a full opportunity to know the Lord. The people will then be on probation to determine whether or not they will, under those favorable conditions, turn to the Lord in belief and obedience. Those doing so will

receive the provision of life made for them through Jesus, their Redeemer.

TO LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Isaiah 26:9 declares that when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness. This educational program is essential if the world of mankind is to have a full opportunity to know the Lord and to know his will concerning them. In this future judgment day, the people will not be judged in their ignorance, but upon the basis of an understanding of the provisions of divine grace made for them through Christ.

There is no salvation outside of Christ, but one must know Christ in order to believe on him. Paul wrote, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:13,14) The purpose of the judgment day is to enlighten the world so that they may know and believe and obey.

In a glowing description of the people's rejoicing during the judgment day, the psalmist informs us that the Lord "shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." (Ps. 96:10-13) This is another way of saying that the people will be judged upon the basis of the Truth which will then be revealed to them. This will be the Truth concerning the provision of life made for them through the death of Jesus and the Lord's requirements of belief and obedience.

Through another of his prophets, the Lord declares, "Then will I turn to the people a pure

language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.” (Zeph. 3:9) This text shows that the enlightenment of the people will lead to their united worship and service of the Lord. No longer will contradictory creeds and the influence of false gods hinder the people from knowing the true God and intelligently serving him.

JESUS’ TESTIMONY

Jesus said, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” (John 12:46-48) The expressions “last day” and “latter days” are used a number of times in the Bible to describe the period of Christ’s thousand-year earthly kingdom. At that time, the dead will be awakened from the sleep of death and the world in general will be enlightened and given an opportunity to believe, obey, and live forever. “[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”—I Tim. 2:4

The above scriptures inform us that the knowledge of the Truth provided in this prophetic “last day” will be Jesus’ word and teachings. This knowledge, together with man’s response to what he then learns, will be the basis upon which the people will be judged. This agrees with the other testimony of the Scriptures which we have examined indicating that the future judgment day of the world will be a

time of enlightenment. It will be a time when the people will learn the real truth concerning the Creator's grand design for their eternal blessing.

BOOKS OPENED

This fact is further confirmed in Revelation 20:12, where the Apostle John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." This is, of course, symbolic language. It does not mean that all the millions of the dead will literally stand before God. The word "stand" is here used in much the same way as it is today when we say that one has a "standing" in court.

When our first parents transgressed God's law, they lost their standing before God. Without his favor, they could not continue to live. They died, and so did their progeny. God, in his love, provided redemption through Christ Jesus and, during the future judgment day, all will be awakened from the sleep of death for the purpose of being judged. In this position, the original condemnation upon man will have been lifted. Through Christ, all the willing and obedient will gain a standing before God, or as John explains, will "stand" before him.

In this position, mankind will be judged—judged by the things contained in the books which will then be opened. Many suppose that those books contain a record of the past lives of the people. This is not the thought at all. The Lord knows that upon the basis of their past lives these "dead, small and

great” would not be found worthy of everlasting life. The “books” contain the Truth by which the people are judged.

This is the Truth concerning Jesus and his work of redemption. It is also the Truth concerning God’s standards of righteousness to which all worthy of life must adhere. It is the “pure language” which will be turned to the people at that time. It is the words or teachings of Jesus which he said would judge the people in the “last day.” It will be man’s response during that time to the teachings of God’s “book,” both in heart as well as by action, that is to be judged.

No longer will the world be shrouded in heathen and other forms of darkness. The greatest cause of darkness and superstition in the world today is the deceptive influence of Satan. We are assured that Satan, who has deceived all nations, will be bound during that judgment day, that he may deceive the nations no more. (Rev. 20:1,2) With the light of God’s truth flooding the earth, every individual will know that only by accepting Christ as his Redeemer and then obeying the righteous laws of the Messianic kingdom can he gain eternal life.

THE BOOK OF LIFE

The thought of attaining life in the judgment day is symbolized in Revelation 20:12 by a “book of life” in which the names of the worthy ones are written. Like the “books” of knowledge, the “book of life” is also said to be opened at that time. Clearly the thought of the entire text is that the people will be enlightened, and upon the basis of their response to this enlightenment they will be judged. If their

response, their “works,” are favorable, their names will be placed in the book of life and they will attain everlasting life.

This is a “book” of human life, and during that future period of probation, those who prove worthy of having their names entered and remain therein will live on the earth as humans forever. They will no longer be imperfect or afflicted with disease and pain. Rather, they will be restored to the perfection which Adam lost when he transgressed God’s law in the Garden of Eden. Revelation 21:4 declares of the culmination of that future day of blessing, “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

ASSOCIATE JUDGES

The future judgment day of the world will not be for the purpose of determining who are Christians and who are not. The faithful followers of Jesus will already have passed through their trial, or judgment period, having proved worthy of “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) These will be associated with Jesus in the work of judging the world of mankind in general. Paul wrote, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (I Cor. 6:2) These will be the “angels” (Greek, “messengers”) who will be with Jesus in his judgment throne of glory when all nations are being judged by him, as stated in the parable of the sheep and the goats.—Matt. 25:31-46

In this parable, those during the future judgment day who qualify for everlasting life are symbolized by sheep, while those who *(Continued on page 35)*

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(Continued from page 31) do not thus qualify are referred to symbolically as goats. The “sheep” are shown to be those who are motivated by a loving interest in their fellows and thus enter into the spirit of that new day. The “goats” are those who continue, even under those favorable conditions, to pursue their selfish ways. The parable indicates that there will be such a class of willful sinners. These are the ones who Peter said would be “destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:23

Those who through obedience to the spirit of the open “books” manifest the spirit of love will, as Jesus said, “go away . . . into life eternal.” The wicked will go into “everlasting punishment,” symbolized in the parable by the destructive element of fire. Many have misinterpreted the statement “everlasting punishment” to mean eternal torture, but this is not the correct thought. The punishment, or “wages,” of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23) If the death is eternal, which it will be in the case of willful sinners, then it will be everlasting punishment or, as the Greek text puts it, an everlasting cutting off.

In this parable, Jesus says to the “sheep” class, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34) This is the kingdom, or dominion, that was given to our first parents when they were created. It was the dominion over the earth and over the lower forms of creation on the earth. The Genesis record reads, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing

that creepeth upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:26) This is the kingdom that was given to mankind in the beginning, and this is the kingdom that will be restored to the willing and obedient at the close of the world’s thousand-year judgment day.

A FUTURE TIME

David wrote concerning man, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands.” Paul quotes this, and adds, “We see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Ps. 8:6; Heb. 2:8,9) Thus, Paul explains that the death of Jesus provided for the eventual restoration of man’s life and dominion.

It is Jesus who, in his parable of the sheep and the goats, explains when man’s lost dominion will be restored. It will be at the close of the world’s judgment day, when he will say to those proven righteous at that time, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” When this great event in the plan of God is accomplished, none will need to say as Paul did, that “we see not yet all things put under” man. All will then know that the grand design of the Creator through Christ has been fulfilled and that all things have been put under man. His lost dominion shall have been restored.

GOOD AND EVIL

The sin of our first parents consisted in their eating of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” (Gen. 2:9) The fact that God planted this tree

together with the others in the Garden of Eden suggests that he desired his perfect human creatures to have an understanding of both good and evil. That he made eating of the fruit of this tree a test of obedience indicates his foreknowledge of the fact that this knowledge could be acquired only by experience.

God informed Adam that disobedience would lead to death. (Gen. 2:17) He knew that his human creation would experience much evil as a result of disobedience. Since Adam's disobedience, the world has been filled with sickness, sorrow, and death. Truly all have received an experimental knowledge of evil and its terrible consequences. This has come about as a result of that original act of disobedience in Eden—the partaking of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

During all this time, mankind has had little opportunity to learn about good and its results. True, probably most people in every generation have experienced moments, perhaps days or even a few years, of relative happiness. However, for the most part the dying human race has continued to groan under the weight of sin and death. Man has increased this suffering by his inhumanity to man, and selfishness in all its ugly forms has continued to plague the human race from Eden until now.

This situation will change with the establishment of Christ's kingdom. Under the laws of that kingdom evil will be restrained, Adamic death will be destroyed, and the dead will be restored to life. Then, for the first time in a universal way, the human race will experience good. Only then will they be in a position to judge upon the basis of

actual experience whether to choose evil and die, or to choose good and live.

This is the divine purpose in the permission of evil. God did not wish his human creatures to be like robots, obeying him because they had no choice to do otherwise. He wanted them to obey and serve him because they delight to do so. He desired them to do righteously because they realized upon the basis of a full knowledge of the issues involved that this was the only proper thing to do.

It is this willing desire to serve the Creator that will be manifested by the restored human race at the close of the thousand-year day of judgment. The people will then know the Lord and appreciate the advantages of being in harmony with him. They will have learned fully of his love in providing redemption and salvation through Christ. As those ransomed by the gift of God's dear Son and his sacrificial death, mankind "shall return . . . with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10) Let us then not fear, but look forward to this time, soon to come, spoken of in our opening scripture—the day "in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." ■

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 Evelyn Doran, Louisville, KY—January 10.
Age, 98

Sister Wilma Dutro, Valparaiso, IN—January 12.
Age, 91

Purging Out the Leaven

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.” —*I Corinthians 5:7*

IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS leading up to this year’s Memorial celebration, which will be after sundown on April 5, it should be especially helpful that we take to heart the important lessons concerning the subject of leaven. The Bible’s first references to leaven are in connection with the Lord’s instructions concerning the original Passover supper, which was eaten by the Israelites the night before they were delivered from their bondage in Egypt. Unleavened bread was to be used at the Passover supper. At this time, God also gave instructions concerning a seven-day feast to immediately follow the Passover supper. “Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.”—Exod. 12:15

The use of leaven was specifically prohibited by God in connection with nearly all the sacrifices

which the Israelites offered to him. Literally speaking, leaven is actually yeast. Although yeast adds much flavor to bread and other foods when properly used and preserved, it also ferments easily. When fermented, it soon spoils any food in which it is mixed or even comes within close contact. We gather from this natural characteristic that God uses leaven in the Bible as an illustration of sin in all its various corrupting aspects. This thought is borne out by Jesus. "Then Jesus said unto them [the disciples], Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."—Matt. 16:6-12

LEAVEN OF FALSE DOCTRINE

From this quotation, it is evident that Jesus used leaven as a symbol of the false doctrines, or teachings, of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Scriptures do not indicate in detail a great deal concerning these false doctrines. However, we do

know that the Sadducees taught that there is no resurrection of the dead, and this teaching alone corrupts and destroys one of the main doctrines of Christ.

Jesus said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell [Gehenna] than yourselves.” (chap. 23:15) How this emphasizes the corrupting influence of false doctrines! Surely it makes clear to us the importance of being sure that the doctrines which we believe and teach are fully in harmony with the Word of God.

The scribes and Pharisees, without doubt, held to some of the truths set forth by the Law and the prophets, but they had gone beyond these inspired sources of truth. They had accepted and allowed themselves to be influenced by the teachings of tradition, most of which had no basis in the Law originally given by God to the Israelites through Moses. It was these teachings which had corrupted them in belief and in practice to the extent that their efforts to serve the Lord were not acceptable to him.

LEAVEN IN PRACTICE ALSO

Not only had the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees leavened, or corrupted, the teachings of God’s words by their traditions, but they had also, symbolically speaking, permitted leaven to enter into their hearts and to influence their course of action with respect to their service to God. Although technically they still “sat in Moses’ seat,” Jesus advised his followers not to follow their example, their way of life.

Jesus said, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."—Matt. 23:2-7

In verse 13 of this chapter, Jesus continues his denunciation of the corrupt practices of these religious leaders of Israel. We quote again: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation [condemnation]."—vss. 13,14

Jesus continues to denounce these "blind guides" for their hypocritical ways, but we have quoted sufficient to establish the point that in character, as well as in doctrine, they were corrupted by symbolic leaven. In Mark 8:15, Jesus speaks of "the leaven of Herod." Herod was not a teacher in Israel, but a ruler representing Rome. His "leaven" was in the fact that he tried to please Rome and at the same time curry favor with the influential among Israel. This double-minded condition of hypocrisy

was illustrated by Jesus as leaven which had entered and was influencing him.

We need not conclude that all of Israel's religious leaders had been corrupted by symbolic leaven. There was Nicodemus, for example, who went to the Lord in sincerity to learn more of the truth concerning this man whom his associates so generally opposed. There was also Joseph of Arimathaea, who actually, at last, became a full believer in Jesus as the Messiah. There were probably others, too, who were sincerely striving to follow the Law as originally given.

Certainly, among the people who were not leaders in Israel, were those who served the Lord with sincerity of heart and purpose. Jesus identifies one of these. When speaking of Nathanael, he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47) Here was a man pure of heart. He was straightforward, having no guile, no "leaven" of the Pharisees. There were others in Israel who likewise were without guile, who became followers of Jesus.

LEAVEN CORRUPTS THE CHURCH

Later, in the church at Corinth, there was an individual who was not deporting himself in harmony with the principles of righteousness. The Apostle Paul instructed the brethren "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." To this, Paul added, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"—I Cor. 5:5,6

Here, the unfaithful brother in the church is symbolically likened to leaven who, if allowed to

remain in the assembly, could lead to the corruption of the entire congregation. A similar use of leaven as an illustration of a corrupting influence is found in Galatians 5:9. In the context, Paul refers to one or more who had come in among the brethren with teachings contrary to the Truth, specifically, that they should be circumcised. Some apparently had been influenced by this false teaching and had ceased for a time to “obey the truth.” (vs. 7) Paul emphasizes that this false teaching they had accepted did not come from the Lord, and then adds, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” How careful we must be to ensure that a leavening influence is not permitted to corrupt the church of God, the ecclesia arrangement.

PARABLE CONCERNING LEAVEN

Jesus gave a parable concerning leaven, stating, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” (Matt. 13:33) This parable furnishes another interesting study regarding the symbolism of leaven. To understand this lesson, however, it is essential to know what Jesus means in this parable by the expression “kingdom of heaven.”

This expression is sometimes used in the New Testament with respect to the preparatory aspects of that kingdom rather than to the kingdom established in power and great glory. Paul wrote that the Heavenly Father “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” (Col. 1:13) Here the Lord’s consecrated people are said to have already been

translated into the kingdom. This obviously is the kingdom in preparation. This work of preparation has proceeded throughout the Gospel Age, and it will continue until the harvest work is completed at the end of the age.

Jesus said, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. 11:12) Here the Lord's people, called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and to live and reign with him in his kingdom, are spoken of as "the kingdom of heaven." The "violence" alluded to, and the taking of the kingdom by force, are a reference to the persecution of the kingdom class, beginning with Jesus, and continuing throughout the Gospel Age. After the kingdom class is completed and established in authority and power, they, with Jesus their head, will rule the nations with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall those nations be broken to pieces.—Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27

In another parable, Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." (Matt. 13:24,25) Jesus explained later that the good seed are "the children of the kingdom" and the tares are "the children of the wicked one." (vs. 38) Here the kingdom class, described again as "the kingdom of heaven," is shown to have had evil introduced into its midst. The parable shows, in other words, that during the development of those who will live and reign with Christ in his kingdom, they become subjected to efforts by Satan to divert them from their goal of joint-heirship with Christ.

LEAVEN PUT INTO THREE MEASURES OF MEAL

In the short parable concerning the leaven put into three measures of meal until the whole was leavened, we are presented with another aspect concerning the development of the kingdom. Here again, as universally throughout the Scriptures, leaven is used as a symbol of corrupting influence. In this case, the corruption takes place in the spiritual food—the doctrines—which were originally supplied by the Lord for the nourishment of his people as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

Jesus said, quoting Moses, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4) The words of God recorded in the Bible for us set forth his plan of salvation for both the church and the world. They also include an expression of his will for the guidance of his people, especially those of the Gospel Age who are following in the footsteps of Jesus and who have been made partakers of the heavenly calling. This is their food, or “meal,” which was given to the apostles by Jesus, and through them to the entire company of saints that they might be nourished as New Creatures. By this nourishment, they are to be made ready for their glorification with Jesus in his kingdom of power and glory, through which all the families of the earth will be blessed.

However, it was not long after the apostles fell asleep in death that error—symbolic leaven—began to be injected into this pure food which the Lord furnished. It was almost imperceptible to start with, but this leavening continued to such an extent that the whole body of truth from the Lord became corrupted. Largely responsible for this was

the great deceiver, Satan. To accomplish this corruption he used human instrumentalities and, finally, a counterfeit church system, which Jesus identifies in the parable as a “woman,” to complete the corrupting work.

This “woman” is identified in the Book of Revelation as “Babylon.” “He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” (Rev. 17:3,4) This is the false church system which, throughout the Dark Ages, was united with many of the earthly civil powers.

DOCTRINES CORRUPTED BY LEAVEN

In the parable, Jesus speaks of three measures of meal being corrupted. One of these might well represent the teachings of the Bible with respect to the condition of the dead and the penalty for sin. God told Adam that if he partook of the forbidden fruit he would die. (Gen. 2:17) The Apostle Paul wrote, “The wages of sin is death.”—Rom. 6:23

This simple truth was corrupted by the “leaven” put into the “meal.” The erroneous theory of the immortality of the soul developed, which stated that when a man dies his soul remains alive and that, actually, there is no such thing as death. Out of this error came other false teachings, including eternal torment as “the wages of sin” instead of death. If, according to this corrupting theory, no

one really dies because they have an immortal soul, then there can be no resurrection of the dead. Thus the hope of the resurrection also became corrupted. How plain, though, is the simple statement of the Bible concerning the soul—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."—Ezek. 18:4

Even more fundamental was the manner in which this particular false theory corrupted the doctrine of the ransom as set forth in the Word of God. According to the Scriptures, Christ died for the sins of the people, being a substitute in death for father Adam and, through him, for the entire race. If there is no death, however, this beautiful doctrine of redemption through Christ Jesus is corrupted and destroyed.

Another of the corrupted "measures" of meal might well be the teachings of the Bible with respect to God's Messianic kingdom arrangement for the blessing of all the families of the earth. According to the Scriptures, this kingdom in power and great glory is to be set up following the Second Advent of Jesus, with Jesus as its Head and those who have suffered and died with him as associate rulers.

This simple truth also became corrupted. Instead of waiting for this development in the plan of God, people were taught that the union of church and state was in reality the kingdom of Christ on earth and that there was no future kingdom to look forward to. This cast a shadow over the promises of God with respect to the blessings of the people through the agencies of the kingdom. Additionally, if the church were reigning with Christ in this life, the promises of future glory with him in the kingdom would be made meaningless.

MAN'S ETERNAL HOME

Perhaps the third measure of meal corrupted by leaven was the teaching of the Bible with respect to God's provision of the earth to be man's eternal home. The teaching developed that when people "die" they are merely transformed to another place of abode, for, according to the corrupted teachings previously noted, there is no death. As these corrupting influences continued, the false theory emerged that one day the earth would be destroyed and man would no longer enjoy it as his home.

The glorious truth, as set forth by God in his Word, is that "the earth abideth for ever" (Eccles. 1:4) and he created the earth "not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited." (Isa. 45:18) The hope of the restoration of man to live on the earth forever, described in the Scriptures as "restitution" (Acts 3:21), was completely corrupted by the false teaching that the earth would be destroyed. The ultimate purpose of our Lord's return was thus made void, and millions of the professed followers of Jesus were left in darkness so far as the real plan of redemption was concerned.

Thankfully, there was always the one here and one there whom the Lord specially protected against this leaven while the masses of professed Christians were led almost completely away from the real teachings of the Bible. In this end of the age, however, the Lord has furnished his faithful people with meat in due season. In this we rejoice, for this meat has brought back to the forefront the simple and unleavened doctrines of the Bible.

“YE ARE UNLEAVENED”

Turning to our theme text in I Corinthians 5, we find Paul admonishing us to “purge out” any leaven in our lives, “as ye are unleavened.” (vs. 7) Elaborating further, he says, “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—vs. 8

Notice the expression, “leaven of malice and wickedness.” This is a true explanation of what is represented in the Scriptures by leaven—“malice and wickedness.” Nothing good or noble or praiseworthy is ever symbolized by leaven, but, as we have seen, it does represent false doctrine and hypocrisy. From Paul’s words here, we realize that leaven additionally represents any fallen trait of character in our life. These have a corrupting influence on our heart, mind, words, and actions, and we must rid ourselves of this leaven to the greatest extent possible. As noted earlier, the Israelites were instructed to “put away leaven out of your houses” during the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. We too must put away the leavening influences of sin as we daily feast from the Lord’s table.

The phrase “purge out” in our theme text literally means in the Greek text to cleanse thoroughly. The “old leaven” is a similar phrase to that which Paul speaks of in other places as the “old man.” One such reference is found in these words: “Put off concerning the former conversation [conduct] the old man, which is corrupt.” (Eph. 4:22) Notice that Paul says the old man is “corrupt,” just as is the “old leaven.” He continues, “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new

man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (vss. 23,24) The “new man” is the “new creature” (II Cor. 5:17), which is begotten by God’s Holy Spirit. It is not contaminated with the “old leaven,” but is a new work which God has begun in his consecrated children. It is Christ’s character which is the “new creature,” the “new man.” Through its development by the guiding influence of God’s Holy Spirit, the “new man” is able to conquer the “old man” and make us acceptable servants of God. Translating this thought to our daily lives, the purging or cleansing of the “old leaven” is to be done primarily by the shifting of our wills, efforts, thoughts, and actions to the service of God. Thus we become an unleavened “new lump,” usable to God.

In Galatians, chapter 5, Apostle Paul contrasts the fruits of the old man with those of the new. He enumerates many of the “works of the flesh” which have a corrupting effect on us if allowed to be a part of our character. He states that those who “do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (vss. 19-21) In their place, Paul says, are to be developed the fruits of the Spirit. He identifies these as “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance,” and then adds, “against such there is no law.” (vss. 22,23) There is no law against these because they are “unleavened.” They emanate from the “new man” and are in full harmony with God’s perfect law.

In this study, we have seen that leaven is symbolic of that which corrupts. There is the leaven of false doctrine, the leaven of hypocrisy, the leaven of malice and wickedness, and the leaven of the sinful

flesh in its various manifestations. As we prepare our hearts during this Memorial season, let us remember the lessons concerning leaven. Let us also remember that these are lessons which all the consecrated should take to heart and apply every day of the year. Remembering that we “are unleavened,” we should always be on the alert lest leaven in any form should find its way into our hearts and lives to corrupt our hope and destroy our faith. May it be the determination of all of the Lord’s consecrated people to be daily faithful to our Heavenly Father.

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.”—I Corinthians 5:7 ■

2012 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

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

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

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

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Able Ministers

“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

—II Corinthians 3:5,6, New American Standard Bible

who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”—II Cor. 5:17-19, NASB

OUR LOVING HEAVENLY

Father has never ceased to love his human family and he has made abundant arrangements to bring about their reconciliation from sin and death during the administration of Christ's future kingdom. In his letter to the brethren at Corinth, the Apostle Paul further proclaimed, “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God,

who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”—II Cor. 5:17-19, NASB

Through disobedience to the divine Law, our first parents, Adam and Eve, brought the entire

race under condemnation to the death penalty. As an illustration, or type, of the great work of reconciliation, Moses served as the Mediator of the old Law Covenant that God gave to the people of Israel. From the scriptural account, we read what happened next. "Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do."—Exod. 24:3

Having explained to the Israelites the order and judgments of God, the record then states, "Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words."—Exod. 24:4-8

Part of Moses' work was to provide the blood that was necessary to sprinkle both "the book and the people." In the antitype of these instructions, the Scriptures inform us that our Lord Jesus will be the mediator of a new and better covenant which will be offered to all the people and that will provide the blessings of life to all mankind who will

be given opportunity to learn righteousness and Truth.—Heb. 12:24

THE NEW COVENANT

In preparation for his work as Mediator of the New Covenant, it was necessary that our Lord Jesus also provide blood. However, this was not to be the blood of animals which had been used as an illustration by Moses in the type, but by the shedding of his own precious blood. Thus does blood become a symbol of our Lord's sacrificed, or poured-out, life on behalf of the sin-sick world of mankind. We see that Jesus' sacrificial ministry was in preparation for mediating the New Covenant during his future kingdom.

We also learn from the Scriptures that Jesus will have associates in his great work of mediating the New Covenant. Concerning them, the psalmist long ago declared, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Ps. 50:5) In the antitype, the associates of our Lord Jesus are being called during this present Gospel Age, and are referred to by the Apostle Paul in our theme text as the "able ministers" of the covenant. He was speaking of the faithful followers of Jesus who have taken up their cross and have followed him into death. From the scriptural account, we read, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."—Matt. 16:24

These dedicated Christian people are spoken of as epistles of Christ "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone,

but in fleshy tables of the heart.” (II Cor. 3:3) Paul is here comparing the epistles of Christ with the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. The entire Gospel Age has been set aside in the plan of God for the preparation of these epistles, or representatives, of Christ, referred to as “able ministers” of the New Covenant. Not until all of these ministers have been prepared can the inauguration of the New Covenant take place. All of these were originally members of the sin-cursed and dying human race. Therefore the blood of Christ is essential to give them a standing before God and to make their sacrifice acceptable to him. Paul thus wrote, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”—Rom. 12:1,2, *NASB*

IMPORTANT ASPECTS

There are two aspects in connection with the ministry of the New Covenant. The sacrificial or first phase was begun by Jesus, and it is the privilege of the “able ministers” of the New Covenant to share with him in this work of sacrifice. This explains the reason why the faithful followers of our Lord are invited to take up their cross and follow him into death during this present age of acceptable sacrifice. The glory or second phase of the ministry of the New Covenant comes after the work of sacrifice has been completed. In his letter

to the church at Corinth, Paul pointed to the glory which was displayed when the Law Covenant was inaugurated. It served as an illustration of the greater glory which, under the administration of Christ's future kingdom, will be associated with the ministry of the New Covenant on behalf of the people.

Paul explained, "If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech."—II Cor. 3:9-12

Paul emphasizes that the great glory which will be attached to the ministry of the New Covenant is to be realized in the future. In his letter to the church at Rome, he speaks of it as our great hope. "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24,25) We are now in the sacrificial phase of our ministry of the New Covenant. It involves trials and afflictions. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—II Cor. 4:17

The important work for all who have made a covenant of sacrifice concerns our willingness to accept the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and that the knowledge of the Lord and his Spirit may become a very part of our being. We must understand that

our trials are as light afflictions that are preparing us for the future work of the kingdom. Daily we must present our bodies as a living sacrifice in the service of the Lord. By doing so, we may rejoice that, if faithful even unto death, we will share as able ministers of the New Covenant and share in bringing blessings to all the families of the earth under the arrangements of Christ's future kingdom. ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 1—“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:7 (Z. '03-8 Hymn 233)

MARCH 8—“God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”—I Corinthians 12:18 (Z. '03-59 Hymn 154)

MARCH 15—“The just shall live by faith.”—Hebrews 10:38 (Z. '95-92,93 Hymn 263)

MARCH 22—“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world.”—I Corinthians 11:31,32 (Z. '03-3,4 Hymn 161A)

MARCH 29—“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”—Ephesians 2:8 (Z. '03-90 Hymn 191)

General Convention Bulletin

July 21-26, 2012

THE 2012 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. Once again the convention returns to the facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style apartments (also air conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge in his own sleeping bag if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

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

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 20. There

will also be a shuttle bus leaving the college in the early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 27.

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.

A complete pricing table and registration form is provided for your convenience immediately following this announcement. ■

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$7.00	\$6.00
Lunch		9.00	8.00
Dinner		12.00	11.00
Total, three meals		\$28.00	\$25.00
Lodging (per night)			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$35.00	\$30.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$28.00	\$26.00
**single occ (LLC)		\$60.00	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$33.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
**dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$325*	\$290*
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)		\$195*	\$160*
**single occ (LLC)		\$460*	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$235*	n/a
If no breakfasts, deduct—*\$35 **Air conditioned ***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group			

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 20, 2012				
Saturday, 21st				
Sunday, 22nd				
Monday, 23rd				
Tuesday, 24th				
Wednesday, 25th				
Thursday, 26th				
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 are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

K. Fernets

Orlando, FL March 3-5

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

T. N. Alexander

New Orleans, LA March 10,11

W. Austin

New Orleans, LA March 10,11

D. Christiansen

New Orleans, LA March 10,11
Detroit, MI 31-April 1

O. B. Elbert

New London, CT March 25
Detroit, MI 31-April 1

R. Gorecki

Orlando, FL March 3-5

L. Griehs

Fresno, CA March 23-25

S. Jeuck

Atlanta, GA March 18

B. Keith

Orlando, FL March 3-5

T. Krupa

Fresno, CA March 23-25

E. Kuenzli

St. Petersburg, FL March 18

H. Montague

Orlando, FL March 3-5
New London, CT 25

M. Nemesh

Orlando, FL March 3-5

J. Parkinson

Fresno, CA March 23-25

T. Ruggirello

Fresno, CA March 23-25

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CONVENTIONS

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

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 3-5—Howard Johnson Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Hotel reservations, call (407) 862-4455. Specify “Florida Bible Students” to receive special convention rate. Deadline for special rate is February 20, 2012. Other information, contact R. Goodman. Phone: (407) 695-6815

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 10,11—Holiday Inn, 9515 Highway 49, Gulfport, MS 39503. Phone: (228) 679-1700. Contact M. Costelli, PO Box 6235, Gulfport, MS 39506. Phone: (228) 861-2822

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 23-25—Fresno Quality Inn, 4278 W. Ashlan Avenue, Fresno, CA 93722. Hotel reservations, phone: (559) 275-2727. Other information, contact R. Evans: ers13@sbcglobal.net

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 25—Bayview Lodge, East Lyme, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 823-7099

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

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

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

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

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

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

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 21-26—(see pp. 59-61 this issue) University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Johnstown, PA. Contact E. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707.

*Precious sons of Zion!
Like gold refined and pure.
Esteemed as earthen pitchers,
Moulded to endure.*

*Precious sons of Zion!
True branches of the vine.
At one with Christ our Master,
In spirit and in mind.*

*Precious sons of Zion!
His bride we're called to be,
To share his throne of glory
And reign eternally.*

—Poems of the Way