

The Dawn

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Our Day Star of Hope

***"We have the word of prophecy made more sure:
whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a
lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,
and the Day Star arise in your hearts."***

—II Peter 1:19, Revised Standard Version

IT IS AGAIN with a fear of the unknown future that the world enters another year, 1993. The glimmer of light and hope which always accompanies the inauguration of a new President of the United States will undoubtedly soon be snuffed out, as his policies and promises fail. Although the ending of the cold war has lessened the likelihood of worldwide destruction through nuclear confrontation, nevertheless wars continue to erupt and blaze in every corner of the world, and will continue to do so as long as we live in this present evil world.

How accurately Jesus foretold this time when he said that there would be upon the earth "distress of nations, with perplexity," and that the hearts of the people would fail them for fear, in expectation of the things they saw coming upon the earth. (Luke 21:7-26) The fear in the hearts of the people arises from their failure to find solutions for the increasing multitude of problems which vex the distraught world.

From the standpoint of worldly wisdom, the irony of it is that this situation has developed at a time when the world has supposedly reached the pinnacle of civilization, and when it is believed by many that war as a method of settling international disputes should be a thing of the past. So far as the world is concerned, this 'distress of nations with perplexity' has come as "a thief in the night"; that is, unexpectedly.—I Thess. 5:2; II Pet. 3:10

However, as the Apostle Paul explained, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” (I Thess. 5:4,5) The present time of ‘great tribulation’ upon the world is prophetically associated with the Day of the LORD, and since the LORD’s dedicated people are the children of the day, they know the meaning of what is transpiring. The Day of the LORD has not come upon them “as a thief in the night.”—Matt. 24:21,22

Faith Is Necessary

‘The children of light’ are guided by the prophecies of God’s Word, to which they take heed. But faith must lay hold firmly upon the inspired prophecies if they are to be a real guide in our lives. This has been true of God’s people in every age. Even the disciples who walked personally with Jesus during his earthly ministry, at times had their faith severely tested—especially as to whether or not he was truly the foretold Messiah of Israel and of the world. Jesus said to Peter, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”—Luke 22:32

It was no doubt to strengthen the faith of Peter and others that the transfiguration vision was given. (Matt. 17:19) Peter referred to this vision in the verses just preceding our text, and indicated what a blessing it had been to him. He wrote, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming [Greek, “presence”] of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”—II Pet. 1:16-18

This was a vision of the kingdom, and it came in fulfillment of Jesus’ statement, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” (Matt. 16:28) It was only six days after his

statement that Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain, where they saw him transfigured before them, and in vision Moses and Elijah appeared with him.

According to the **Revised Standard Version** and **Wilson's Diaglott** Translations, this vision made the word of prophecy "more sure," or "more confirmed." (II Pet. 1:19) It gave Peter the assurance that the declarations of all God's holy prophets concerning the Messiah, and the kingdom of power and glory which he was to establish, would indeed be fulfilled.

Prior to Pentecost, Peter did not understand clearly just how and when the Messianic prophecies were to be fulfilled. But now it was different. He had received the Holy Spirit, which, as Jesus had promised, had shown him "things to come." (John 14:26; 16:13) Peter now knew that the establishment of the kingdom in power and great glory for the enlightenment and blessing of all mankind must wait until the return of Christ, and that meanwhile the world would continue to be enshrouded in darkness, making it a "dark place, until the day dawn."

As Peter explained, the confirmed word of prophecy has been a light that shineth in the darkness of the world for the comfort and guidance of the children of light. The prophecies of God's Word have not enlightened the world, they were not intended to. But they **have** served to guide the LORD's own people, revealing to them all that they need to know respecting the outworkings of the divine plan.

Through the aid of the Holy Spirit the apostles not only learned that the kingdom would not be established until after Christ's return, but also, that in the meantime there would be a great apostasy from the faith once delivered to the saints, and that a powerful Antichrist system of iniquity would be set up in the earth. We can now look back over the history of the Gospel Age and see how accurately the prophecies pertaining to this "falling away" have been fulfilled.—II Thess. 2:1-13

Even more important, we can see the fulfillment of the prophecies pertaining to the end of the age, the time in

which we are now living. This, in turn, enables us to understand the significance of the events taking place throughout the world, so that our hearts are not filled with fear. Instead, we rejoice, for we know that the long night of sin and death will soon give place to the morning of joy for all mankind—a morning that will break upon the whole world as a result of the rising of the prophetic “Sun of Righteousness.”—Mal. 4:2

The morning star is one which makes its appearance just before the rising of the sun. In keeping with this illustration, the prophecies indicate that before the establishment of Christ's kingdom—before the world will enjoy the warming and healing rays of the Sun of Righteousness—the LORD's own people will recognize the presence of Jesus through the pages of prophecy and the signs of the times. They were to see him, in other words, as the Morning Star, the Day Star, while the world is still asleep and unaware of the significance of events occurring around them.—II Pet. 1:19, **Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott**

We believe that the Day Star is already visible by the eye of faith, and that soon the darkness and chaos of the world will give place to the stabilizing authority of Jesus, the new king of earth. The prospect is glorious, and we bid all to examine more diligently the prophetic testimony of the Word and be assured from its sacred pages that Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago, who died on the cross as man's Redeemer, who was raised from the dead as a divine being, is now present and about to manifest himself to the world through the fulfillment of all those glorious promises of God which describe the richness and universality of the blessings of health and life which all mankind will soon be privileged to enjoy.

Scoffers

In II Peter the second chapter, Peter mentions false teachers who arise in the church; but in the third chapter he comes back to the subject of Christ's presence and the establishment of the kingdom, which he locates in ‘the last days’. We quote: “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both

which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming [*parousia*, 'presence']? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—vss. 1-4

Here Peter continued to stress the importance of 'the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets', and by Jesus and all the apostles. But he declared that there would be some who, catering to their own desires, or wishes, would scoff at the conclusions reached by 'the children of light' as to the meaning of the prophetic testimony.

The real objection raised by the scoffers, however, is obscured by faulty translations of two of the Greek words used in this text. One of these words is *parousia*, which means 'presence', not 'coming', and the other word is *epaggelia*, which **Professor Strong** defines as 'especially a divine assurance of good'. While this word is often translated promise, it also contains the idea of assurance, and therefore is a stronger word than *epaggello*, which denotes merely a promise.

A revealing example of the difference in meaning of these two Greek words is found in Hebrews 6:13-15. We quote: "When God made promise [*epaggello*] to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise [*epaggelia*]." Abraham did receive at that time, the assurance, or evidence, that the original promise would be fulfilled. It is the Greek word *epaggelia*, that Peter used when he said the scoffers would ask, "Where is the promise [the assurance, or evidence] of his presence?"

No one who pretends to know anything about the Bible has ever questioned the fact that there are many promises that Christ would return. What some **do** question, however,

is that there is **now** any assurance, or evidence, that he has returned and is now invisibly present, like 'a thief in the night'.

The scoffers raise this question on the premise that 'since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of Creation'. This is often construed to mean simply that, as the scoffers understand it, there has not been any evidence that what is happening now in world affairs is any different than what has occurred throughout history—it is simply a matter of history repeating itself.

But we think the scoffers may have even more than this in mind. Peter had just mentioned the testimony of the holy prophets, who addressed their messages to the 'fathers', even as Paul reminded us in Hebrews 1:1. In one of his sermons Peter spoke of the return of Christ, "whom the heaven must receive, [or retain]," he said, "until the times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21) He explained that the glorious work of restitution, which was to follow the return of Christ, had been the theme of **all** God's holy prophets.

But, the scoffers say, where is there any evidence that the testimony of the prophets concerning the 'times of restitution' is being fulfilled? People continue to die now as they have done since the disobedience in Eden, despite the messages of the prophets to the fathers, so we have no evidence of the Master's presence.

Having foretold what the scoffers would say, Peter then proceeded to answer them. He declared that they would willingly be ignorant of a very important truth of the prophecies. He referred to the time of the Flood, and of the fact that at that time a world came to an end. The reason Peter could say with such definiteness that the scoffers would be willingly ignorant of this, is that Jesus used the experiences of Noah and the Flood as an illustration of the time of his second presence, when this present evil world would come to an end.

Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noe [Noah], so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage,

until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the Flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26,27) Just as Noah was present during 'the days of Noah', so Jesus is present during 'the days of the Son of Man'.

No student of prophecy needs to be ignorant of this plainly stated truth, as Peter said the scoffers would be. But being willingly ignorant of it, they refuse to believe that Christ is present until they see the work of restoring the dead world to life has actually begun, for they do not discern that prior to this, and as a necessary preparation for it, Satan's world must first be destroyed,

It was foretold, that "they shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall make them continue long to enjoy the work of their hands."—Isa. 65:21,22, **Margin**

The Apostle John was given a vision of the "new heaven and a new earth," and he tells us that when this new government is functioning "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:14) By then the Sun of Righteousness will be fully risen, and the darkness of earth's long night of sin and death will be dispelled.

What a dark place the world has been—a cheerless, dismal night indeed! It has been characterized by the chill of human sin and selfishness, and made gloomy by the wail of the suffering and dying. The brief span of a dying existence experienced by each individual has often been plagued by frightful nightmares of fear lest the uneasy lot of today be engulfed in the calamities of tomorrow. But before the Day of the LORD has ended, the Sun of Righteousness will have dispelled the darkness, healed the sick and dying, and restored the dead to life.

This is the bright hope for the future of the world which the 'day star' told about in prophecy has implanted in our hearts. We are given the assurance that we are at the very

threshold of this wonderful new day of human experience. The Apostle John was told that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit [or life] of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10) It is the great prophecy of Jesus, outlining the manner and signs of his presence, that enables us to discern that he has returned, and that his presence explains why the world is crumbling.

Thus the day star mentioned in our theme text, and given such vital meaning by the testimony of Jesus, has enabled us to hear him knock as he stands at the door of our hearts announcing his presence. We have invited him to enter, and he is feasting with us. What a privilege it is thus to have the bright and morning star as guest in our hearts! How bright is the hope which the knowledge of his presence has engendered!

This hope has sustained us in the past, and it will continue to do so through 1993, and whatever additional time we may have in which to make our calling and election sure. We know that Satan's world will continue to disintegrate as the elements melt with fervent heat, even as the antediluvian world was destroyed by the Flood in the days of Noah.

Peter made the comparison, saying, "The Day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (II Pet. 3:10) Note how clearly Peter states that it is in the Day of the LORD that the present symbolic heavens and earth are destroyed.

No wonder Jesus gave as one of the signs of his presence the fact that there would be a great tribulation upon the nations, causing all the tribes of the earth to mourn because of him! But how comforting are the prophecies which assure us that this period of distress upon the world is only temporary, and that soon, when the way is cleared, the kingdom work of blessing the people will begin.—Matt. 24:21; Rev. 1:7

New Heavens and New Earth

Peter added, "Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (vs. 13) This might well be an acknowledgment of the viewpoint expressed by the scoffers. They look for a new world, with its blessings of peace and health and life, and will not believe that Christ is present until they see these things. We also look for these restitution blessings, Peter explained, but the Word of prophecy which is heeded by the children of light makes it clear that first, when Michael stands up, there must be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1

The world is already in the throes of this time of trouble, with its climax of threatened global destruction. Will that climax come in 1993? We do not know. We do know from the Word of prophecy that the LORD will shorten the time of tribulation so that all flesh will not be destroyed. We have Jesus' own assurance of this.—Matt. 24:22; Mark 13:20


Yes, in due time there will be divine intervention in the affairs of men by our present Lord and his glorified followers. These will be the new spiritual rulers, elected by God. They will be represented on earth by the resurrected Ancient Worthies—those whom the psalmist calls "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) Together these will constitute the promised 'new heavens' and 'new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness'.

With this new government functioning throughout the earth, the blessings of restitution will flow out freely to all who obey its laws. These events will encourage mankind to diligence in serving the LORD.

But for us, now, Peter wrote, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." (II Pet. 3:11) If Peter were writing this verse today he could well say, "Seeing that all these things **are being dissolved,**" for man in his selfishness and lack of wisdom is rapidly destroying his own world. We know that the 'dissolving' will continue and **that it**

is more true now than ever that 'the world and its pursuits will perish'.

"Wherefore, beloved," Peter wrote, "seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless." (II Pet. 3:14) Yes, with enlightened hearts, we are to be diligent in serving the LORD, not slothful about his business. We do not need to fret over world conditions but can put our trust in the LORD and in his promises—we can have peace.

Besides this, with fear removed from our hearts, we can give a message to the world. We can say to the fear-filled people all around us, "Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance [for this is the Day of Vengeance against the slavery of sin and Satan], even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." (Isa. 35:4) How blessed to know that there will be divine intervention in human affairs to save the people from the ultimate result of sin and selfishness! May the year 1993 be a blessed one as we proclaim this Gospel of the kingdom far and wide! 



BLESS OUR GOD, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

—Psalm 66:8,9

THANKS be to God that his grace has preserved us, "kept us from falling," through another year—that so many of us are still of one heart and of one mind in respect to his Word and its service! When we remember that the Adversary is to be permitted to bring "strong delusions" upon the LORD's people for the very purpose of sifting out all not truly his (II Thess. 2:10-12), it should surely call forth our thanks to God that the opening of another year finds us still standing fast—appreciating the truth, and in full accord with all the divine appointments by which he has kept us from falling.—*January 1st comment from "Daily Heavenly Manna."*

International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR JANUARY 3

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

KEY VERSE: *"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*—Acts 2:4

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:1-7,12,13

WHEN JESUS WAS raised from the dead, he appeared to his disciples on a number of occasions in various places for a period of forty days. The last time he was with them, Jesus instructed them "not to depart from Jerusalem, . . . but wait for the promise of the Father. . . . Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1:4,5) Before his death, Jesus described the event in these words: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John 14:16,26

Obediently, the disciples remained in Jerusalem, and on the fiftieth day after our Lord's resurrection, on the Day of Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit as promised. This momentous event was accompanied by three important signs: First was a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind. God's power, was invisible and mighty, like the wind. Secondly, cloven tongues of fire came to rest on the apostles' heads, indicating that they now were God's chosen mouthpieces. Third was the gift of speaking in other languages. The witnesses to this amazing sign were "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."—Acts 2:2-4; Acts 1:5

Citizens of all the then civilized world who were gathered at Jerusalem now had a

representative who could converse with them in the language of their nation. The time had come for people of all nationalities to hear God's message, with no language barrier to impede its proclamation. A sample of the remarkable number of nations present is given in Acts 2:9-11; these proclaimed, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

The Jews, born in many lands, now heard—not gibberish—but rather, "the wonderful works of God." We are told that Peter stood up and delivered an enlightening discourse, as recorded in Acts 2:14-16. He referred to several Old Testament prophecies, showing how they were fulfilled by Jesus. In particular, he emphasized David's words, explaining that David could not be speaking of himself but rather of his future son, Jesus. In conclusion he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."—Ps. 16:8; 110:1; Acts 2:36

The opening words of Peter's discourse made reference to the fulfillment that very day of the prophecy of Joel 2:26-30. What the on-lookers in Jerusalem witnessed was the Holy Spirit, given by God, working in the lives of the apostles. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which gave them the capability to speak in languages other than their own, Peter showed that Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled—God's Holy Spirit was being poured out upon his "servants and . . . hand-maids."—vs. 29

Although Peter quoted Joel's prophecy in its entirety, God's Spirit will not be poured out upon "all flesh" (vs. 28) until the kingdom of Christ is established upon the earth. First, God's special servants, being chosen during the Gospel Age, would be the beneficiaries of this blessing. Later, after all the "elect" (1 Pet. 1:2) have been called and found faithful, the ransom benefits of Jesus will be made available for the entire world of mankind—"all flesh"—and God's Holy Spirit will then be poured out upon them. □

A Call to Holy Living

KEY VERSE: "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."—*I Peter 1:15*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Peter 1:13-25*

IN THE OPENING words of this epistle written by Peter to his brethren in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he reminded them that they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." After telling them of their great blessing, honor, and salvation, he exhorted them to holy living.

The word, holy (Greek, **hagios**), means 'separate' or 'set apart'. Peter cited Leviticus 11:44: "I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Here the Hebrew word for holy (**qadosh**) has the identical meaning to **hagios**. (*Young's Concordance*) As God is separate

and distinct from this present sinful world, so also his people are likewise to be separated and set apart.

We set ourselves apart from the world when we make a complete consecration of our lives to God to strive to know and do his holy will. Peter exhorts us, "Like obedient children, do not be conformed to desires you formerly had in ignorance. . . . You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish."—*I Pet. 1:14, 18, 19, Revised Standard Version*

By alluding to the unblemished lamb selected at the time of the first Passover, Peter reminds us of

that night in Egypt when the firstborn of Israel were in jeopardy of their lives. They were saved by the "blood of the lamb," which pictured how "the precious blood of Christ" saves us. The firstborn in Israel were set apart and belonged to God. (Exod. 13:2) Therefore "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven" belong to God, and are set apart as he is from all evil, sin, and unrighteousness.—Heb. 12:23

The ransom merit of Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to come to God and to consecrate our lives to him. This was in Peter's mind when he wrote, "Through him [Jesus] you have come to trust in God, who raised him [Jesus] from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God." (1 Pet. 1:21, **RSV**) We set ourselves apart by making a consecration to him. In turn, God sets us apart by "sanctification of the Spirit." This means he blesses us by giving us his Holy Spirit, holy influence, so that we can learn to be like him. The Holy Spirit guides us to a revelation of

God's character—his justice, wisdom, love, and power—through a study of his Word.

This reaction is described by Peter: "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart." (vs. 22, **New International Version**) We show our love for God by demonstrating our genuine love for one another. Since God is love, we can demonstrate holy living best by the interrelationships we have in the family of God. Our love must be very broad—it must extend to all with whom we deal, including our enemies.

Righteous principles found in God's Word now must form the basis of our new life. They are principles which will endure forever. If we incorporate them into our lives, making them an integral part of our very being, we will endure forever, even as God endures forever. Peter fittingly concluded, "The Word of the LORD endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."—vs. 25 □

LESSON FOR JANUARY 17

The Church Is for All People

KEY VERSE: *"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."—Acts 11:18*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Acts 11:1-18*

GOD GAVE EXCLUSIVE favor to the nation of Israel for a period of 490 years, even as promised to Daniel. (Dan. 9:24-27) This period came to an end in AD 36. After Jesus provided the ransom by his death on the cross, the Early Church selected by God was composed exclusively of natural Israelites. If an adequate number of "Israelites indeed" (John 1:47; Rom. 2:28,29), had been found by the time AD 36 arrived, God would not have needed to look further to find a "people for his name." (Acts 15:14) But this did not happen, so he turned to the Gentiles to seek among them for his purpose.

Cornelius and his household were the first of the Gentiles to be "saved" (Acts 2:21), or invited to follow in the footsteps of Christ. This was incomprehensible to the

Early Church. When Peter returned to Jerusalem after visiting Cornelius and his household, he was criticized by the circumcised believers. They asked, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"—Acts 11:3, *Revised Standard Version*

He told of his visit to Joppa, and how, at the time of evening prayer, he saw a vision of beasts of prey—reptiles, and fowls of the air. He heard a voice saying, "Rise Peter; kill, and eat." (Acts 10:13) These were all unclean animals, and Peter refused to comply. He was told, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common [unclean]." (vs. 15) This vision was repeated three times.

When three men sent by Cornelius from Caesarea arrived at Peter's home, he was able to associate the vi-

sion with their coming. These men told Peter how Cornelius had been visited by an angel of God, and instructed to send for Peter. So Peter returned to Caesarea with them, accompanied by six brethren from Joppa.

Peter found many assembled at Cornelius' home—his kinsmen, and close friends. As Peter spoke to them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as it had done three and one-half years earlier upon the apostles at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Peter said, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?'"—Acts 11:16,17

Peter was given the 'keys' of the kingdom of heaven by Jesus. (Matt. 16:19) He used one key when God had him explain the meaning of the events on the Day of Pentecost, and how they related to the death and resur-

rection of Jesus. On that day there were 3,000 who were immersed into Christ. He used another key when he was bidden to go to the home of Cornelius, to explain to the Gentiles assembled there, why Jesus was sent to earth. The Holy Spirit came upon these who also were immersed into Christ.

The title of this lesson, is not intended to convey the thought that anyone or everyone can be immersed into Christ, thereby becoming part of the church. The invitation to run for the high calling comes from God, and the exclusive invitation was made to natural Israel first. However, "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth [reverences] him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."—Acts 10:34,35

This is so. However, Jesus said, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) The church is comprised of "the elect [chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit."—I Pet. 1:2 □

Learning God's Wisdom

KEY VERSE: *"After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*—*I Corinthians 1:21*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *I Corinthians 1:18-31*

THE CHARACTER OF God can be described by his four attributes: justice, power, wisdom, love. We would expect then, that when God created man in his own image, he would give him not only his moral image; not only dominion over earth as king; but he also made him in his mental image—a creature who could reason. Throughout the ages man has striven to develop his mental capability, but not always wisely or well. As man becomes more educated, pride can enter in, which the Adversary encourages. Human wisdom is not often in harmony with God's wisdom.

In the verses of our Selected Scripture, the Apostle Paul contrasted human wisdom with God's wisdom. He made it plain that his preaching to them was not with human wisdom, not with

human oratory meant to persuade, but rather with the 'foolishness of preaching' the cross of Christ. "Christ crucified" (vs. 23) was a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles. Little did the world know that "Christ crucified" was the epitome of the justice, the power, the love, and the wisdom of God.

In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul quoted Isaiah 29:14, which says: "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." During God's kingdom it will be revealed that the cross of Christ is the basis for salvation, and is therefore the true wisdom of God. Mankind has failed to solve the problems of the world—they cannot find the key to quality life, or health, or peace, or happiness—by their own wisdom, and must

learn to look to God for his wisdom.

Little wonder that Paul said, "Since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom (of their own), God decided through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe."—vs. 21,

Revised Standard Version

God has given those who are saved, the wisdom, first of all, to see their fallen condition. This is indeed wisdom. No one can take action to overcome weaknesses of the flesh unless they first recognize that they have such weaknesses. And no one can overcome their weaknesses without the ransoming merit of Christ. Hence, it is written: "Christ . . . the wisdom of God."—vs. 24

Speaking of God, Paul said, "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness [justification] and sanctification and redemption [deliverance]." (I Cor. 1:30) By recognizing our fallen condition and seeing the provision God has made in redeeming us from sin by the merit of Christ's ransom, we have ac-

cepted Christ as our Redeemer, and made a consecration to God. This, in turn, has made possible our justification and sanctification, and eventually, our deliverance. This is why Christ is called "the power of God."

But this knowledge, which is so precious to us, is foolishness in the eyes of the world. The world exalts worldly wisdom, power, wealth, fame, and status. How different are God's standards, and how thoroughly they were appreciated by Jesus, who in prayer to the Father said, "I thank thee, O Father, LORD of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."—Matt. 11:25,26

Paul wrote: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (I Cor. 1:27) Why has God chosen such men? "He has chosen them "that no flesh should glory in his presence."—vs. 29 ☐

One Body in Christ

KEY VERSE: *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."*—

Ephesians 4:4

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Ephesians 4:1-16*

THE APOSTLE PAUL recognized the need for unity in the 'body' of Christ. He used the human body as an illustration of this unity when writing to the brethren in Corinth. There he said, "The body is not one member, but many." (I Cor. 12:14) Then he called attention to the diverse functions of the various members of the human body, and their need for one another in cooperation, in order to make the body function properly. Again Paul said, "Now indeed there are many members, but one body."—vs. 20, **Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott**

The need for unity was accentuated in our Key Verse, which reads, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. 4:4) How important it is for us to know that there is only **one** great, supreme Creator

whom we are privileged to call our Father; **one** Lord Jesus, who purchased us with his blood; **one** faith once delivered unto the saints, and which we are privileged to share; **one** baptism, and that it is into Christ's death; **one** call during the Gospel Age, and **one** hope of that calling. The call is to follow Jesus, and the hope is to reign with him if we are willing to suffer with him. Those who understand these things are being guided by **one** spirit—God's Holy Spirit—and are **one** body cooperating with its members.

There is a beautiful prophecy in Psalm 68:18. Paul quotes it saying: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. 4:8) This is an illustration of the death and resurrection of Jesus—patterned after a general's tri-

umphal return home from battle with his victorious army, and with captives bearing gifts. So Jesus left heaven and was made flesh, to be our Redeemer; he conquered death and will release from captivity all that are in their graves. When he returned to heaven he granted us the Holy Spirit.

The gifts he brings to us are the helps we need to achieve unity in the body of Christ. Some of the gifts Paul mentions include: the apostles and the prophets; evangelists, pastors, and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a **perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."—Eph. 4:11-13

The Lord Jesus, as a **perfect man**, is the pattern for developing the body of Christ—not merely any human body. The Lord Jesus is our pattern. But this development does not come easily. There are many interferences, and the Adversary particularly seeks to disrupt

this growth in unity. We could be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, being deceived by the craftiness of men. But if we persevere in developing love as our motivating force as we associate with the brethren, this love will have the effect of stimulating the proper growth of the body, and consolidating the unity of the body of Christ.

Paul pleaded with the brethren at Ephesus that they lead a life worthy of the calling to which they had been invited, "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."—Eph. 4:1-3, **Revised Standard Version**

Paul was not able to go to Ephesus, but he could plead with the brethren in writing. And so he did, not only to the Ephesians, but to us also, with such phrases as: 'Bear with one another in love'; 'Speak the truth in love'; 'Promote the body's growth in building itself up in love.' With love reigning in our lives it is possible to maintain 'one body in Christ.' ☐

The Test of Time

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."

—Hebrews 10:35-38

WE HAVE COME again to the beginning of a new year. To every faithful follower of the Master the past year, 1992, has been a year of rich spiritual blessings. There have been joyous experiences, and there have been trials. There have been successes and also failures. But in every experience faith has given the victory in proportion as we have been assured that all things have worked together for our highest spiritual interests as New Creatures in Christ. The year 1992 was a blessed one, and as disciples of Christ we should be able to look back and praise the way he has led us day by day.

Nineteen ninety-two was a very unsettled year for the world. There has been no diminishing of the fear with which the people look ahead to the things coming upon the earth. Despite the fall of communism in many sectors of the world, which eases tension between the east and the west, there are revolutions in many of the countries freed from communism, where many factions desire to seize power during these unsettled times. Fear is still stalking the citizens of these countries. And there is also an overpowering fear that the world's financial structure is in process of collapse. There is another dread fear upon all—the epidemic, Aids. All these fears are due to a lack of understanding of what is actually taking place

in the world. People in general do not realize that the plan of God is moving forward into a new age. Indeed, the world does not know that God has a plan, and many of the worldly-minded even doubt that there is a God. No wonder, in the face of threatened destruction from many quarters, their hearts are filled with fear.

But how different is the position of truth-enlightened Christians! The situations and circumstances incidental to the collapse of Satan's social order, instead of filling the hearts of the LORD's people with fear, give them increased faith and confidence in the fact that the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as the supreme ruling authority in the earth is very near at hand. So, as Jesus admonished them to do, they "look up," and they "lift up their heads," knowing that their deliverance draws near.—Luke 21:28

In view of the signs of the times which are so plainly visible all around us today, there is no reason at all why we should even think of casting away our confidence, as Paul admonishes us not to do. However, this danger is always present, and largely because we so often fail to realize that a thousand years are to the LORD merely as "yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." (Ps. 90:4) We are so prone to measure time from the standpoint of our own short span of natural life that waiting another year—or a few more years—for the kingdom may become a severe test of faith and patience.

The Will of God

The Apostle Paul says that it is 'after we have done the will of God' that we have need of patience in order that we might receive the fulfillment of the promise. The will of God here mentioned, is evidently our original consecration to do God's will, which was the acceptance of Jesus' invitation to take up our cross and follow him into sacrificial death. In that dedication of ourselves to do God's will we promised to give our all to the LORD—our time, our talents, our strength, our means, everything. "Nothing, LORD, would I withhold," is the song of our hearts.

Having thus placed our all upon the altar of sacrifice, had the LORD manifested his acceptance by consuming our offering wholly and completely in a short time, and while our enthusiasm was high, we would have rejoiced. But it has not been so for many of the LORD's people. Instead, the LORD expects the faithful to demonstrate the genuineness of their dedication to him by a prolonged consuming of their sacrifice, and it is in this that they have need of patient endurance.

This test of patience from the standpoint of time has, with many of the LORD's people, been related to their expectations with respect to the outworking of the divine plan. It is this that Paul had particularly in mind when he said that we "have need of patience," "for," he continued, "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:35,36) The particular test of time here mentioned was in waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus, and the establishment of his kingdom.

The hope of Christ's return was very precious and inspiring to the Early Church. To them it meant their own exaltation to joint-heirship with Christ in his thousand-year kingdom, and it meant their part in the blessing of all the families of the earth through Christ's kingdom. It meant their own participation in the "first resurrection," and it also meant the general resurrection of all the dead. To them the plan of God would fail entirely of its purpose if Christ did not return, so it was natural that they should desire this glorious event to take place speedily, and when it did not occur as soon as they had hoped, their faith and their patience were tested.

James wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming [presence] of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming [presence] of the Lord draweth nigh." (James 5:7,8) To this James adds, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the LORD, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."—vs. 10

Paul wrote, "Yet a little while," and James wrote, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." This has been the viewpoint of all God's people in every age. The Old Testament prophets, whom James admonishes us to look upon as examples of patient endurance, hoped for the speedy fulfillment of God's promises to them. They did not have the full understanding of the divine plan as it has been given to the LORD's people in this 'harvest time' at the end of the age, but they did believe that God would send a great Deliverer—the Messiah—and that unto him would the gathering of the people be. (Gen. 49:10) But they all died in faith not having realized the fulfillment of the messianic promises God had made to and through them.

When Jesus, the Messiah, did come, his disciples had their faith tested from the standpoint of time. They believed that the messianic kingdom would be established immediately. Because of this, Jesus related a parable to them concerning a "certain nobleman" who went into a "far country" to receive a kingdom, and to return. (Luke 19:11,12) From this they learned, seemingly, that Jesus was to go away, and that his kingdom would not be established until he returned. So, a little later, on the Mount of Olives, they asked him concerning the sign of his return and second presence, and the end of the world, or age.—Matt. 24:3

It was in answer to this question that Jesus outlined the major world events now taking place. The event which Jesus related, when they occur either in sequence, or at the same time, make up the 'sign' which gives us so much confidence that now, at long last, the kingdom is, as it were, 'immediately' to appear.

But the disciples at that time did not understand that many centuries would elapse before the return of their Lord. When he was taken away from them in death they were bewildered and confused. Their hopes were somewhat revived by Jesus' resurrection, and on the occasion of his last appearance to them they took courage to ask, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—Acts 1:6

To this Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:7) This was very true in the experience of the Early Church. While, through the inspirational power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles realized that Jesus would not return in their day, even so they believed that this great event in the outworking of the divine plan was near, and they encouraged the Early Church along these lines. It was well that they did, otherwise many of them might have cast away their confidence.

Times and Seasons Revealed

Jesus' statement to his disciples that the times and seasons of the divine plan had been put in the hands of the Heavenly Father did not imply that the Father would never reveal any of them to his children. It was just that they were not to be revealed to the disciples at that time. We have now reached a period in the divine plan when a number of the time features of the divine plan have been revealed, and to the great joy of the LORD's people. (See Volumes 2 and 3 of "Studies in the Scriptures.")

Even so, the year 1914 is the latest date the prophecies of the Bible point out to us. That was the end of the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), and it is since then that we have been watching a world fall apart. But there is nothing in the prophecies of the 'times of the Gentiles' to indicate the exact date when we could expect God's new world to be fully ushered in, or when the last member of the body of Christ would pass beyond the veil to live and reign with him. Nearly seventy-nine years have passed since that memorable year when the outbreak of the First World War signaled the beginning of that series of distressing and world-shaking events which has brought the nations to their present dilemma.

It is probably safe to say that some, and probably many, of the LORD's people since 1914 have thought that each passing year would surely see the full fruition of their hopes. "Things can't go on much longer," we keep saying, yet here we are at the beginning of another year, the seventy-ninth

since the last known authentic date pointed out to us in the Word of God. Thus again, even as with the disciples of old, the Heavenly Father is keeping the times and seasons of his plan within his own power insofar as letting us know exactly when the establishment of the kingdom, in power and great glory, will become a reality.

Nevertheless, it is still true that "the time is short" (I Cor. 7:29) in which to make our calling and election sure. Paul wrote, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:37) That 'little while' proved to be nearly nineteen centuries—a long time to us, but less than two 'days' by the LORD's view of time. And now those centuries are in the past. He who was to come has come, so we can surely now say with Paul that the remaining time before the full glorification of the church is indeed just a 'little while'.

In giving the church the assurance concerning the 'little while' of waiting, Paul quoted in part from the prophecy of Habakkuk 2:2,3. It is this prophecy which speaks of a "vision" which was to be made plain "at the end," when it would "speak, and not lie." The prophecy adds, "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Actually the fulfillment of the vision only seems to tarry, and that is because of our very restricted viewpoint of time. From God's standpoint it does not tarry at all, for we know that every detail of his great plan of the ages is carried out exactly on time.

The fact that this prophecy speaks of the seeming tarrying, and then assures us that there would be no actual delay, is in itself encouraging, for thereby is revealed that the various disappointments of the LORD's people with respect to the time features of the divine plan were foreknown by the LORD, and foretold. The LORD has wisely permitted his people to have these experiences in order that their faith and patience might be the more fully tested. It is a wholesome experience also, in that it helps us to realize how truly limited we are in the understanding of God's plans and purposes, that we can know only those things which he is pleased to reveal to us. And while it has been given to us to know some

of the “mysteries of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:11), it is obvious that there are some which are not yet revealed.

In permitting his people to be tested pertaining to time, the LORD has in no way been unfair to them—whether at the beginning of the age, or at the end. For each individual saint of God the time has indeed been short—no longer, in any instance, than the natural life span. Hope’s fruition is realized at once by all who prove faithful unto death. Those who slept in death throughout the age were not conscious of the passing of time. Their awakening in the resurrection was to them like the next second after they had finished their course in death. And now, of course, we have had revealed to us that mystery mentioned by Paul, concerning the fact that in this time of the Lord’s second presence the faithful would not need to sleep in death, but would be changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”—I Cor. 15:51,52

So the time **is** short, very short—especially for those who have been waiting and praying and toiling in the LORD’s vineyard from before and since 1914. Nor should those who have embraced the truth and started to run for the prize of the high calling in more recent years conclude that they have plenty of time in which to make their calling and election sure, even though they may be young in years. No matter how we may view the signs of the times today, it becomes increasingly evident that man will soon finish the destruction of his world, and be ready to say, “Let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD.”—Micah 4:1-4

We have now reached the time in the divine plan when it is only a ‘little while’ for all the consecrated to prove faithful unto death. “A few more years, or more or less,” and all of us “shall have crossed the wilderness.” But we do have need of patience! Having done the will of God in presenting ourselves in full consecration to him, let us continue to carry out the terms of our dedication. May we never turn back, nor become weary in well-doing, for in God’s “due season” we “shall reap, if we faint not.”—Gal. 6:9

A Good Year

Looking back upon the year which just ended, we find that it has been filled with blessings for the LORD's people as a whole. Information reaching us from various parts of the country, and of the world, indicates that 1992 will go down as a year of wonderful conventions. The attendance at essentially all the annual gatherings has been very good; and the blessings received through the discourses and through fellowship with the brethren have overflowed. Every convention has crystallized in the hearts of those in attendance the determination to continue on faithfully in the narrow way until they hear the Master's, "Well done." And many dear ones were called home in 1992, to hear, we believe, those blessed words.

The year 1992 was also one of rewarding activity in the LORD's service, both in America and in more and more of the world. The radio page in The Dawn magazine, listing programs being broadcast in many countries which previously were unreachable, attests to this fact. The LORD's people should continue to be more and more on the alert to use every opportunity possible in bearing witness to the truth. And in this way the LORD will abundantly fulfill his promise that those who "water" shall "themselves also be watered." (Prov. 11:25) And how truly refreshing it is to make known to others the glorious Gospel of the kingdom! The truth never means so much to us as when we sacrifice time, strength, and means in bearing witness to it.

Your co-laborers at the Dawn have enjoyed the share they had during the year 1992 in helping to provide truth literature for the brethren to use in their witness work and in their meetings. This applies also to the brethren laboring with us in the various countries overseas. And we want to continue in this service, and once more place ourselves at the disposal of the brethren everywhere to do all we can to supply their needs. We are a very small group and we come far short of doing all that we would like to do, and realize that many times the brethren 'have need of patience' with us. But

by the LORD's grace we will keep on trying to the best of our abilities, daily seeking his guidance and strength.

We can also speak for the brethren who have served in the pilgrim work, that they have appreciated the privileges they have enjoyed of fellowshiping with you. We are confident that all who have served in this field will gladly say from their hearts, "LORD, if I may, I'll serve another day." Those who have served as pilgrims have brought many rich blessings to the LORD's people throughout the year 1992. Let us thank God for the pilgrims, and bear them up before the throne of heavenly grace, seeking the LORD's blessing upon their continued labors of love on behalf of the LORD's people, both here and overseas, and, if it is his will, that more brethren will see their privileges of serving in this capacity. As classes grow smaller, and some completely disappear, the isolated brethren so greatly appreciate and need the pilgrim service.

It was also a good year for those engaged in the followup work, and in the distribution of free literature. From the standpoint of the individuals engaged in these services, there have been discouraging experiences, but when viewed in the light of the total effort it is quite different, for some have been introduced to the truth, while others have been encouraged to study the Word more thoroughly that they might become better acquainted with the divine plan, and with our loving Heavenly Father whose glorious character is revealed through that plan.

The cooperative efforts of the LORD's people in presenting the Gospel of the kingdom over the radio and television have also brought joy to all who have in any way participated. Through your cooperation there are brethren here and abroad now rejoicing in the truth who prior to 1992 had never heard the glorious Gospel of love. This has also helped to make 1992 a blessed year.

The television work continues, with rather limited noticeable results, however many may be silently watching without contacting us. But those participating in this effort can testify to the blessings received. In this field we are endeavoring to

observe carefully the LORD's leadings, as we endeavor continually to determine which radio and television stations we should use in order to reach many who have never heard that grand old story.

This New Year

We expect that in this new year we will continue to have the privilege of laying down our lives in the LORD's service—another year of that 'little while' during which we are waiting for the establishment of the kingdom. Because the time is short it is appropriate that we determine now to make the best possible use of every moment and every day of 1993 in showing forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

There is every reason to believe that the radio work will continue through another year. During 1993 special efforts will be continued to get The Dawn magazine into the homes of those who listen to the witness over the radio, and by purchasing direct-mail lists of many communities. We believe that there is no better way to maintain and nourish interest in the truth than through the month-to-month visits of The Dawn. It is the next best thing to a personal call, in that it keeps the interested ones reminded of the truth. And in The Dawn they are brought into contact with all the other literature, including "Studies in the Scriptures." Through the convention announcements and speakers' lists the interested are made aware of these opportunities to be brought into contact with the brethren.

We do not know what 1993 holds for us with respect to the television effort. As already explained, we are endeavoring to cover areas that have not been reached before, and will go forward with it as the LORD seems clearly to indicate his will. The results may seem small for the large expenditure involved, but we suggest that this effort be made a matter of special prayer by all the brethren.

One of the very interesting parts of the Bible is the Book of Acts, or The Acts of the Apostles. This is a stimulating and inspiring book because it presents the experiences of the brethren in the days of the Early

(Continued on Page 37)

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CALIFORNIA

Claremont KTSJ 1220 9:45 a.m.
Lancaster KVOY 1340 8:15 a.m.
Los Angeles(Mon) KTYM 1460 6:30 a.m.
Los Angeles(Span) KALI 1430 5:45 a.m.
Monterey KNRY 1240 8:30 a.m.
Oakdale KPLA 770 1:45 p.m.
Sacramento KJAY 1430 10:00 a.m.
San Francisco KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.
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Yuba City KOBO 1450 3:30 p.m.

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Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.
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Excelsior Springs KEXS 1090 7:30 a.m.
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New York WOR 710 9:15 p.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WNOP 740 9:00 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Muskogee KHJM 100.3 FM 5:00 p.m.

OREGON

Portland KKEY 1150 7:00 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WCXJ 1550 3:00 p.m.
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston WOKE 1340 7:06 p.m.
Beaufort (Sat.) WVGB 1490 1:00 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 AM 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KUDY 1280 9:45 a.m.
Tacoma KAMT 1360 10:15 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee WNOV 85.6 7:00 a.m.
Jackson WYLO 540 2:15 p.m.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE of adjustments which are continually being made. Check the schedule to see changes in your area.

Worldwide Radio Broadcasts

Canada

ALBERTA

Bariff	CFHC 1340	11:45 a.m.
Brooks	CIBQ 1340	9:00 a.m.
Canmore	CFNC 1450	11:45 a.m.
Stettler	CKFQ 1400 a.m.	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan	CKAY 1500	9:00 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY 1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF 1340	9:00 a.m.
Nanaimo	CHUB 1570	9:30 p.m.
Qualicum-Parksville	CHPQ 1370	9:30 p.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

Leamington	CHYR 710	5:00 p.m.
St. Thomas	CHLO 1570	10:45 a.m.

SASKATCHEWAN

Rosetown	CJYM 1330	9:45 a.m.
Weyburn	CFSL 1190	8:45 a.m.
Estevan	CJSJ 1280	8:45 a.m.

Angola and Zambia

Radio Africa #2	(Thurs.)	9:00 a.m.
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Argentina (Spanish)

Buenos Aires (Sat)	FM Malvinas 91.5 MHz	10:00 a.m.
		10:00 p.m.

Brazil (Portuguese)

Curitiba	Radio Capital 1270 KHz	8:45 a.m.
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British West Indies

Grand Cayman	Radio Cayman	9:00 a.m.
Trinidad	Radio Trinidad 610	10:30 p.m.

Chile (Spanish)

Concepcion	Unica FM 105.5	10:15 a.m.
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Santiago (Sat)	Radio Panamericana CB 142	10:00 a.m.
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China

Hong Kong Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)		6:00 p.m.
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Kenya & Uganda

Radio East Africa		4:00 p.m.
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Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera	XECQ	8:30 a.m.
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New Zealand

Whakatane	IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

Radio Africa (Thurs.)		7:45 p.m.
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Panama (Spanish)

Panama City (Fri.)	HOQ 1250	6:15 p.m.
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Philippines

Manila (Sat)	DZAM 1026 KHz	7:15 p.m.
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Russia (Russian)

Novgorod	FM 71.3	10:00 a.m.
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South Africa

Joubert Park (Thurs.)	SWAZI Music	
	Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60	9:00 p.m.

Sri Lanka

Columbo (Sat.)	Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.
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Tonga

Nuku' Alofa (Mon.)		10:15 a.m.
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Uruguay (Spanish)

Montevideo	Radio El Espectador 810	9:15 a.m.
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WE ARE THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD!

The Bible Answers TV Programs

TV Listings

United States

New Jersey Cable TV

Programs are shown every Sunday evening.

Eastern Standard Time	6:00 p.m.
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Channel America TV-Cable and Low Power TV

Programs are shown every Sunday morning. Consult your local newspaper for the station in your area.

Eastern Standard Time	12:00 noon
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Central Standard Time	11:00 a.m.
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Mountain Standard Time	10:00 a.m.
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Pacific Standard Time	9:00 a.m.
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Canada

Cable Vision TV

Programs are shown every Sunday morning. Consult your local newspaper for the station in your area.

Atlantic Time	10:30 a.m.
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Eastern Time	9:30 a.m.
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Central Time	8:30 a.m.
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Mountain Time	7:30 a.m.
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Pacific Time	6:30 a.m.
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(Continued from Page 31)

Church. Today also it is interesting to know something of what the brethren throughout the country and the world are doing—the kind of experiences they are having, and how the LORD is blessing their efforts to make known the glad tidings of the kingdom. Letters from Finland, Romania, Moldava, Nigeria, Poland, South America, and other countries overseas, help us to understand the needs of our brethren, and to try to meet them better.

Let us enter this new year of 1993 with full assurance of faith, believing that he who has led and helped us in the past will continue to do so. May 1993 be our most enthusiastic year in carrying out the terms of our consecration. May our 'first love' enthusiasm for the LORD, the truth, and the brethren be increased. Instead of becoming weary, may we gather strength as we continue to run for the prize of the high calling. May every moment of that 'little while' still remaining be utilized to the LORD's glory! ☐



Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

JANUARY 7—"Speak evil of no man."—Titus 3:2 (Z.'03-425 Hymn 119)

JANUARY 14—"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—I Corinthians 9:26 (Z.'03-421 Hymn 208)

JANUARY 21—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."—Matthew 16:24 (Z.'00-118 Hymn 13)

JANUARY 28—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before his angels."—Revelation 3:5. (Z.'97-161 Hymn 215)

The Witness of Jesus

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot not be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

—Matthew 5:14-16

THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY teach that the followers of Jesus are commissioned by the Holy Spirit to be his representatives in the earth, his ambassadors. (II Cor. 5: 18-20) Representing Christ in the earth by proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, of which he is the central figure, is not an incidental aspect of the Christian life, but one of its main features. It is in the pursuit of this vocation that a Christian lays down his life. When the Apostle John was shown in vision those who were to live and reign with Christ, the ones he saw were those who had been "beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." —Rev. 20:4

This is a symbolic 'beheading', denoting that we have given up our plans and arrangements of life, and have accepted the will of God through Christ. We have denied ourselves, and have accepted the headship of Christ in our lives; and the divine will is that we lay down our lives bearing witness to the truth concerning him as it is revealed in the Word of God. This means that being a Christian is not merely a matter of obtaining salvation through his blood, important though this is. But in addition, those who are reconciled to God through the blood of Christ are called to lay down their lives in the divine service of being the light of the world

through the faithful proclamation of the word of reconciliation. This is one of the great truths of the divine plan which largely has been lost sight of by many Christians. The division of the church into clergy and laity has been partly responsible for this. Under this arrangement the clergy are looked upon as being the servants of God, while the laity are those who simply go to church, where they are encouraged to lead moral and upright lives and thus be good citizens of the community. There are, of course, exceptions to this, and especially in recent years. Now, indeed, quite a movement is on foot to enlist the services of 'lay workers' in the church.

Certain groups, such as the Quakers, take the view that all should let their light shine, but seem to think that light-bearing does not involve proclaiming the truths of the written Word. The idea is quite prevalent that a Christian witnesses for Christ simply by living a moral and upright life. This, apparently, is particularly true of the Quakers. A few years ago an editorial appeared in a Quaker magazine in London, England. It appears that the writer thought that something more should be done than simply to live a good life. This writer, commenting on the Quaker viewpoint contained in the expression, 'Let our lives speak', wrote: "It rests on an enormous presumption, which no other body of Christians has presumed to hold, that our lives, and our actions, are good; that they shine as candles in a naughty world; and that when they are seen other people will say of them, 'Ah, that's really good. That must be of God. I must try to find him too!'

"How could we possibly have imagined that anything we are or do, wretchedly imperfect, smeared with our inhibitions, our limitations, and our sin, should look good, and still less that it should speak of God himself? We must retrace our thoughts. We must renounce our appalling arrogance. We must return to the realization, which among the wiser of us has been with us from the beginning, that the 'Light' is not in our pocket, not our property, not of our nature at all, but belongs to God only, who alone is good and can do good things. We have been foxed all this time by the ambiguity of the concept of the 'Light Within', into thinking that because it

is within, it is something belonging to us, something that we silently take credit for, and get holy kudos in the world for. It has led us into the solecism of caring for other people, while unconsciously keeping them out from the sharing of our fellowship."—***Friend Magazine***

The Quakers are exemplary people, adhering to high standards of righteous living. There are probably none better in the world, yet the writer of the above acknowledges that this alone is not inducing people to become Quakers. His implication is that in addition the Quakers should be proclaiming their views and thereby inducing people to become interested in fellowshiping with them. The same principle would hold true with respect to any group of professed Christians.

Man was created in the image of God, and while he is now fallen, some remnants of that image remain. When these remaining elements of the divine image express themselves in habits of thought and conduct, the result is bound to be praiseworthy. Besides, the moral teachings of the Bible are in harmony with the various elements of the divine image with which man was originally endowed. These have influenced the righteously inclined of all groups of people in the professed Christian world, and indeed, to some extent among the heathen. For this reason the daily living of a Quaker will not be much different than that witnessed in other groups. We can thank God that the righteous standards of the Word of God still do exercise such a wide influence in the world. It helps to make for the degree of law and order that still remain in a chaotic and increasingly godless society.

The Light Within

The truth which the Heavenly Father has given us to witness to mankind is a 'light within' us—not our own light, but the knowledge of Jesus, our Redeemer and Savior; and it is this knowledge that glorifies our Heavenly Father. Paul wrote, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the LORD; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—II Cor. 4:5-7

From this it is apparent that when Jesus said let ‘your’ light shine before men, he referred to the light that would be given to us concerning him. This is our light in the sense that we make it our own by our wholehearted acceptance of it, and our complete yielding to its influence in our lives. In proclaiming this light we are not our own representatives, but Christ’s, his ambassadors, holding forth the ‘word of life’ received from the LORD.—Phil. 2:15,16

One of the elements of Christlikeness is self-sacrificing zeal in the proclamation of the truth concerning the divine plan. We have a beautiful example of this in the case of Peter and John, who so faithfully proclaimed the glad tidings in the face of much opposition. We read concerning them, “When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”—Acts 4:13

Righteous Living Essential

A pious and righteous life is fundamentally essential as a background for the Christian ministry, hence the emphasis which the Scriptures place on the importance of purity in thought, word, and deed. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Phil. 4:8) If our thoughts are in keeping with this admonition, our conduct will be influenced along these lines.

This, in turn, will result in a life from which the message of truth can emanate to the glory of the LORD’s ministry of the truth which he can approve. Paul again wrote, “Giving no

offense in any thing, that the ministration may not be blamed; but in everything establishing ourselves as God's servants, by much patient endurance in affliction, in necessities, in distresses; in stripes, in prisons, in tumults; in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by forbearance; by kindness, by a holy Spirit, by love undissembled, by the word of truth, by the power of God; through those arms of righteousness, on the right hand and left; through glory and disgrace; through bad fame and good fame; as deceivers, and yet true."—II Cor. 6:3-8, ***Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott***

An approved ministry of the truth calls for the presence and proper application of these details outlined by Paul, but by themselves they are not the ministry. "Love . . . is kind," Paul wrote. (I Cor. 13:4) If we are unkind in our associations with others, they will pay little or no attention to anything we might endeavor to tell them about the Word of God. On the other hand, simply being kind will not explain the divine plan to them.

Paul speaks of an approved ministry being by, or in, the power of God. Any power or ability we have will avail little in the presentation of the Gospel, for it is the truth itself, and its power, that accomplishes the purpose designed by God. No inherent goodness of our own will teach people the truth. So far as our own abilities are concerned, even after we have done the best we can, we are unprofitable servants. It is only because we are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness, and have been provided with the Gospel of Christ to proclaim, that we can be his approved ambassadors.

Faithfulness Expected

In our text, Jesus reminds us that men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel. Thus he implies the possibility that we might not make the proper use of the truth; therefore, would fail to be among those who are the light of the world. Negligence of our opportunities is undoubtedly one of the 'bushels' under which we could hide the light of

truth. Erroneous views as to the LORD's purpose in giving us the truth also serve as ready excuses for unfaithfulness.

What the truth accomplishes in the minds and hearts of others is not our responsibility. The LORD's will for us is to proclaim the message. This is our vocation, and we are to give all diligence in the ordering of our lives along the lines of righteousness that we may be fit ambassadors of the kingdom message, and then we are to lay down our lives proclaiming it.

In symbolic language, Solomon indicates the possibility of seeking excuses for not sowing the precious seeds of truth. He wrote, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."—Eccles. 11:4-6

Observing the winds and the clouds, as mentioned by Solomon, suggests looking for excuses not to sow and reap because conditions are not favorable. This is not the proper attitude, he explains; for, after all, we do not understand how the LORD accomplishes his purposes through the truth which we proclaim. This is the LORD's province, and our responsibility is to sow the 'seed' in the morning and in the evening, whenever and wherever we have the opportunity, knowing that the LORD will prosper the message according to the good purposes of his own will. It is God that gives the increase.

As we observe the LORD's people throughout the world, we are impressed with their great zeal for the truth and its proclamation. The brethren of Christ, his zealous followers and ambassadors, have always been small in number, a "little flock." (Luke 12:32) This is more applicable today than it was earlier in the harvest period, yet these few are holding forth the light to a degree that makes them as a 'city set on an hill'.

Through the combined efforts of this little flock, the truth continues to go out over the radio, by television, by films and videotapes, shown in churches; by public meetings, by books, booklets, tracts, and cards; and by the personal testimony of thousands of the LORD's faithful witnesses. Surely the LORD is pleased with this; and as we look ahead to the months of 1993, may it be with the firm resolve that we will do all we can to keep the light shining, and thus continue to be faithful ambassadors of Christ.

Faithfulness in our service as ambassadors, serving in the manner outlined in his Word for an approved ministry, is one of the ways in which we will make our calling and election sure to a place with Jesus in his kingdom, to live and reign with him a thousand years. The prospect is glorious, and we know that the LORD can and will help us to attain if we but continue faithfully to do our little part now, thus proving our love for him, for his people, and for the truth of his plan. □



WHAT SHALL I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD, now, in the presence of all his people.

—Psalm 116:12-14

THE [beginning of] the year is an excellent time for the making of new resolutions for the year to come. Let us, beloved brethren, make plenty of good resolves respecting what we shall be willing to be, to do, to suffer, in fellowship with our Lord; that we may by his grace make of it the best year thus far of our lives—the year of largest hopes, of largest endeavors, and by the LORD's grace, of largest successes in self-sacrifice, in overcoming the world and its spirit, in vanquishing self and the desires of the flesh, in resisting the Adversary, and in glorifying our LORD and blessing his people.—**December 31 comment from "The Daily Heavenly Manna."**

The Land of the Living

OUR LESSON IS taken from Psalm 27:13, which reads this way: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." We realize that the goal for which we are seeking is "glory, honor, and immortality," to "reign" with our Lord Jesus during his millennial kingdom. (Rom. 2:7; Rev. 3:21; 20:4) Yet if someone were to ask us just exactly what would be involved once we arrived in the heavenly realm, we would have very few words to describe the details of the place or condition or work promised to us in God's Word. Little specific information has been given to us in the Bible concerning it, no doubt because our finite human minds could not conceive of spiritual conditions, places, beings, or work, in any case. The way we will live and what we will do, other than what the Bible tells us concerning our influence upon the world of mankind, is veiled in mystery, and will continue to be so, requiring our absolute faith and trust in God, the remainder of our earthly lives.

In fact, we have not been instructed at all as to our way of life in heaven. But we have been given information concerning the new 'way of life' which we will teach in that select day to all mankind, and which we will use to help guide them up the highway of holiness. That way of life has to be learned by us during our lives here upon earth, in order for us to be in a position to teach it to the world. What is the way? It is the way of love expressed in the development of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit—love, kindness, mercy, gentleness, forgiveness, and goodness.

How empty our calling and election to live in heaven would be were it not for the privilege of blessing all the families of the earth. If we were to have a blessed existence in heaven while this whole earth remained dead, or were

dying in sin and sickness and despair, and we alone, by the grace of God, would have an endless, perfect, spiritual life—how empty, how hollow, and how miserable it would be, even in our minds, to realize that so few people had been saved out of so many.

If we, like David, had not this hope, “unless we had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living,” we too would have fainted—we would have no desire to continue living. When we ponder our lives we realize that we are living in a cemetery. There have been over thirty billions of people upon this earth. There are 5.5 billion people alive today, so it is possible that at least twenty-seven billion people have gone down into death, and are lying in the dust of the earth.

The word cemetery is not found in the Bible. It is derived from a Greek word which actually means ‘sleeping chamber’. This is an interesting way of stating the matter, because the Bible, throughout, calls the death of each member of the human race ‘a sleep’. Man sleeps in the dust of the earth, awaiting his time of awakening in the ‘new day—the morning’. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”—Ps. 30:5

How we long for the time of the kingdom of God to come so that we can see the dead raised to life, when all people can receive God’s promised blessings—the crippled, the maimed, the halt, the blind, the deaf, the mentally disabled, the physically deformed, the chronically ill—all of these will be released from their bondage of illness and pain to enjoy the goodness and blessing of God!

Psalms 103 promises that our God is one “who forgiveth all thine iniquities; [and one] who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (vss. 3-5) This will take place when “the LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.” (vs. 6) And we have been taught by God’s Word

that this time will be during the millennial reign of Christ and his church.

Psalm 104 also beautifully expresses the plan of God 'in a nutshell'. The chapter shows the fall of man and the effects which ensued upon the earth. It emphasizes God's position in this experience. We read: "Thou [Jehovah] givest them [all that] they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." This is what happened when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Their 'breath' was taken away, and they were placed under the penalty of death. God then told Adam, "From the dust thou was taken and unto dust shalt thou return."—Ps. 104:29; Gen. 3:19

David pictorially related that God 'hid his face' from mankind because they were sinners. "Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust." But a bright ray of hope appeared upon the scene. David said this: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the LORD shall endure forever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works." (Ps. 104:30,31) Yes, he will restore Adam and all his posterity to their heritage upon the earth. This promise is 'yea and amen' because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ paid the price for every man, and released them from the curse of sin and death.

The call of the church to honor and glory—to live and reign with Christ was for one purpose; the selection of the Ancient Worthies—from Abel to John was for one purpose; and the provision of those who do not meet the requirements for the High Calling, which we designate the Great Company, this had one purpose. These all were called and selected for one particular purpose—to bless all the families of the earth.

Understanding these clear and simple truths is sometimes called 'the milk of the Word'. But there is no more important work in this world than publishing and sending forth that 'milk of the Word' to all the hungry and thirsty souls who are longing for a small hope—and instead find a tremendously

huge hope—to have faith in and to cling to in these difficult days.

Let us turn to Psalm 102 which indicates to us how important the plan of God is. It says, starting with the 15th verse: "So the heathen [all nations] shall fear [reverence] the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." Zion typified the church—spiritual Israel—so when the church is complete, God will appear in his glory. And "then he is going to regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer."—Ps. 102:16,17

What does this mean? Think of the millions of times, perhaps billions, that the prayer has gone up before the LORD's throne over the past nearly two thousand years: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven." Despite the fact that much of the time those who offered it did not understand just what that prayer involved of blessing and joy; nevertheless, it was indeed the heartfelt longing of broken and contrite hearts for a better time. And long before the Christian age, sincere, earnest prayers were offered for help and blessing all the way back to Abel's day. This verse assures us that those prayers will be answered.

"This shall be written for the generation to come, for the people that shall be created shall praise the LORD." (Ps. 102:18) The whole world of mankind is going to be 'created'—recreated, resurrected—with their new bodies which God will provide for them. (I Cor. 15:38) How we long for the time when these things will take place, and when mankind will so appreciate God that all together they will "praise the LORD." The records of the Bible—"this" which was written "for the generation to come"—will serve as a wonderful teaching tool as mankind begins to understand the character of their God, his longsuffering, and his righteous ways.

"He [God] hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth." (Ps. 102:19) Remember when the LORD was on Mt. Sinai speaking to Moses? The Tabernacle was just about to be built and God said, "Let them make me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell

among them [the children of Israel]." (Exod. 25:8) Again, John the Revelator was taken in vision to see the church; and it was pictured as a bride being adorned for her husband. Then John said: "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."—Rev. 21:1-3

Next John tells us, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."—vss. 4,5

This is what the ancient Tabernacle in the wilderness of Israel pictured—God dwelling in a sanctuary in order to bless all the families of the earth. Jehovah looked down from the heights of his sanctuary in heaven to the time of the establishment of his new sanctuary—New Jerusalem—which will be established here upon the earth to assure the blessing of all the families of mankind.

We read (Ps. 102:19-22): "From heaven did the LORD behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death. To declare the name of the LORD in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD." They will be 'gathered together' in unity, because in that day they shall all call upon the name of the LORD to serve him with one consent.

In Jeremiah 31:11,12 there is another, quite similar and very interesting, expression which says this: "The LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD." Is not that a beautiful expression—'flowing together to the goodness of the LORD!' This indicates that the majority of people will integrate into the kingdom in a very pleasant, tranquil way.

This is what our hope is all about. This is why you and I are willing to walk day by day in the paths and footsteps of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because we have this hope. If we did not have this hope before us, we would have fainted long ago. But it is because we look forward to that land of the living wherein the goodness of God will dwell that we find fresh courage every day to keep on in the narrow way which leads to life, not only for ourselves, but for all mankind.

Exodus 33:18-22 reads: "He [Moses] said, I beseech thee show me thy glory. And he [Jehovah] said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live; And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand as I pass by."

Moses did not actually see God face to face. He was safely inside the cleft of the rock with God's hand shielding him, and saw only the 'back parts of God', or only what a natural man could see—the character and the goodness of God. This Scriptural record agrees with the thought of David when he wrote: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living," and it agrees also with our present experience.

What was the first thing that we knew about the divine plan of the ages? Was it God's promised blessing of all the families of the earth? In general this is the first facet of truth which appeals to our hearts and minds. When we learned that God had a plan which included the benefiting of every man, we instinctively knew it was the truth. It was our idea of just what a loving God would be like. God showed to us his kindness and his love toward man, and from that time on we began to see the goodness of our God in the land of the living. We realized and accepted God's promise that this

whole earth would blossom as the rose (Isa. 35:1) that men were no longer going to die, or be sick, or live in sin, but that they were going to learn to rejoice in living unto God.

And ever since, we have been beholding the beauty of the LORD. Just as Moses, we have not actually seen God face to face, to see what his great and marvelous being looks like. But we have known him by his character and plan, which makes us love and reverence him deeply.

As recorded in John 14:8-11, the Apostle Philip went to the Lord Jesus and requested that he allow him to see God. He said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Do you remember Jesus' answer? He said, "Have you been so long time with me and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

And it is so with us—we have seen the goodness and mercy of God through the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the Word of God. Therefore we dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of our life and behold the beauty of the LORD, and inquire in his temple. This is surely one of the thrilling things in the life of a Christian—to look at the Word of God day after day and to see God reflected in his Word more clearly all the time.


Hebrews 12:2 reads: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for **the joy that was set before him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus could look ahead far down the corridors of the future, and see into that land of the living. Sometimes perhaps we try to picture this in our own minds—the time when man will sing and laugh upon this earth, and be wholly in heart-harmony with the LORD, walking always in the ways of righteousness. This is the time that Jesus looked forward to; this is the reason why he was willing to endure the cross and why he despised—or ignored—the shame.

Think what shame was connected with a perfect, sinless man being brought forcibly before the bar of justice such as Jesus was. He was accused of something grossly shameful—

hypocrisy and blasphemy—and this accusation was absolutely false. Jesus knew he had the truth of God's Word to support him, as well as the power to overturn their unjust decision. He could have countermanded the death sentence at any time by calling upon more than twelve legions of angels! But because of the joy that was set before him he willingly endured it all silently and patiently, knowing that, in God's plans, it was necessary.

Returning to the 27th Psalm, let us consider its conclusion. After David pondered the fact that he would have "fainted, unless [he] had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living," he said, "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." This test has been made upon the church today, as well as throughout the Gospel Age. We are not only told to wait, but also to watch.

What are we to watch for? Our Lord Jesus told us to watch for his return. How will we prove worthy by watching? It is because in watching we must become acquainted with the Word of God, in order to know the signs, and thereby we also become familiar with his life and his ways, his principles and his character. We must learn, in watching, to do so in his prescribed way, following in his footsteps. By preparing ourselves, by walking in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we will, by his grace, be worthy of living and reigning with him in God's due time. Watching means more than just knowing the time or the fact of the second presence of our Lord.

We read: "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9) We must not only watch, but we must also wait; and besides these two concerns we must also be concerned with walking in a manner well pleasing to our Father. We have the grandest hope God has ever placed before any of his creatures, or ever will again! He has allowed us to look prophetically into the land of the living and see his plans and purposes fulfilled, and to see our part in them. 

Preparing the Way for Jesus



AS IT IS written in the prophets, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Nearly four hundred years before John the Baptist was born, these prophecies concerning his birth were written by the Prophets Malachi and Isaiah.—Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:2

God said, "I will send my messenger." Surely this is a true statement, since John's birth was a direct result of God's overruling providences in the lives of John's parents. Like Abraham and Sarah, who were very old when Isaac was born, John's parents were too old to have children. So a miracle was performed in order that Elizabeth and Zacharias could be blessed with their little

son, John. His name means, "The Blessed Gift of God."

Zacharias, John's father, was a priest in Israel, and because of the miraculous birth of his son, he was convinced that important events were beginning to happen in the out-working of the plan of God. His wife's cousin, Mary, visited Elizabeth and Zacharias to tell them of the Angel Gabriel's announcement to her that she was to be the mother of Jesus. Jesus would be the promised king who would sit on "the throne of his father, David." Later, when John was born, Zacharias spoke a beautiful prophecy about his son.

"Thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."—Luke 1:76-79

After this, the only information the Bible gives, from the time he was a baby until John became active as a prophet of God, is in Luke 1:80. It says, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." While he was growing to manhood, he prepared himself for his coming ministry by self-discipline and communion with God in prayer. Desert life itself required great courage and strength of character in order to survive.

John the Baptist was six months older than his cousin, Jesus. We believe John began his ministry, as did Jesus, at the age of thirty—six months before Jesus began to preach the Gospel of salvation.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea. . . . Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." John did not go from city to city to give his message to the people. Instead, they went to him. When they did, they found a man with "raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Matthew

3:1-6) He must have been a bold and outstanding personality to attract the hundreds of Israelites who went into that desolate desert area to listen to his message, and to be baptized in the Jordan River.

Many earnest Israelites became John's disciples. They realized that their impossibility of keeping the perfect Law of God was a displeasing condition to God. Some realized that they had not even tried to keep God's Law at all! When they made the decision to repent and to change their way of life, they were baptized to picture this reformation. Being lowered by John into the water of the river Jordan, pictured the end of their old ways and lives; being raised again, showed their desire to live in ways more pleasing to Jehovah.

John did a great work in Israel. He made the people realize their sinful condition, and their need of a Redeemer to take away their sins completely. His water baptism was a good beginning, but something more was needed. He prepared the way for Jesus. John knew that Jesus would do a greater work by being the Savior, the Messiah, the Redeemer! One day he said to some of his disciples gathered around him, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."—John 1:25-27

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John explained that God, who had entrusted him with the work of baptizing with water, had told him, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus approached John on this occasion, and asked him to baptize him. At first John refused. He knew Jesus was not a sinner and had no reason to repent or to change his life. He was always pleasing to God. But Jesus insisted, telling him to allow it to be so, even if he didn't understand. Then

John agreed to his request.—Matthew 3:11-17; John 1:26-34

John lowered his cousin, Jesus, into the murky waters of the Jordan River. As he raised him out of the water, a remarkable thing happened. The heavens opened and the Holy Spirit was given to Jesus, in the form of a dove which flew lightly down and perched on Jesus! Lo, a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was God's voice, and the dove showed that Jesus was enlightened at that time by the Holy Spirit which came from God out of heaven! And John, the prophet of God, had the privilege of introducing Jesus to his disciples, and to the Jews in general.

John was faithful in doing his part in God's plan—preparing the way for Jesus. When Jesus began his ministry, John knew that his work was coming to an end, and he was happy to be set aside in favor of Jesus. When Jesus began to invite his followers to come after him in his footsteps, he was opening the door of opportunity to a reward in heaven. He was also closing the door of opportunity to serve God in the capacity of an Ancient Worthy. And so, John the Baptist was the last of this faithful class who will have perfect human life, and serve as God's loyal representatives on earth during Christ's kingdom.—Hebrews 11:39,40

This is the reason why we read the words of Jesus, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."—Matthew 11:11,13; Luke 7:28

We find that John's faithfulness to God must wait until his resurrection to receive its deserved reward. He was thrown into prison by Herod—a son of the infamous Herod who ordered the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' early childhood. On Herod's birthday, his friends honored him by preparing a feast, with music, and dancing. Salome, his stepdaughter, especially pleased him with her dancing, so much so that he promised to reward her with

anything she desired! Her mother, Herodias, instructed her to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter!

Earlier Herodias had been publicly rebuked by John for her evil life; therefore she took this opportunity to take revenge on the Prophet John. Her husband, the king, was sorry she had asked for this. He feared those who believed John was a prophet of God. Nevertheless, since he had promised, he commanded his men to go to the prison and behead John. His head was presented to Salome on a tray. She gave it to her mother, who was delighted to be rid of her critic.

The disciples of John buried him. When the apostles told Jesus the way John had died, and that he had been buried him, Jesus realized what a strain they were under from these dreadful events. They were so sad that faithful John had been so cruelly treated. Jesus comforted them with the knowledge that John had been greatly used by God.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus? Was his coming foretold in prophecy?
2. Give the details concerning John's miraculous birth, and his father's prophecy concerning him.
3. When did John begin his active ministry? How long was this before Jesus began to preach?
4. What was John's message, and where did he preach?
5. What did John's baptism accomplish?
6. How did this work prepare the people of Israel for Jesus' ministry?
7. Tell about the baptism of Jesus. Who baptized him? What came from heaven and rested on Jesus? What did the voice from heaven say, and whose voice was it?
8. Will John's reward be life in heaven with Jesus? What will it be?
9. Describe the death of John.
10. How did John's death affect Jesus' disciples?



Encouraging Letters

From Argentina

Dear Friend, I am of Romanian nationality and citizenship. After the revolution which took place in Romania, I was able to go to Argentina as a tourist at the invitation of an older pen-pal, who is now my husband. I surrendered myself to the Lord Jesus in June, 1980, and I studied alone the Bible, reading it every day in my house, without sharing this with anybody else, because I was frightened that I would be persecuted by police. In Romania, a lot of people suffered during the years because of their faith. Just the presence of a Bible in the house could be a danger for the whole family.

Now, thank God, I am in freedom, being a happy wife and I continue to study the Bible alone. I do not speak Spanish quite well yet, so I shall join a church only later. The main purpose of writing you this letter is the following: I need tracts in English or French which could explain to me

the Bible, and also that could help my Christian maturity, my spiritual growth.

Could you tell me if there is any organization or society in your country or in the world which could send me such tracts free of charge? I need very much these tracts, because I am a new-born Christian who does not bear fruit. I did not advance much during these last ten years, and I feel that God expects more from me. I should be very content if I could study booklets or magazines in which I could find explanations of different parts of the Bible. I have never read a magazine with religious themes. This was forbidden in Romania.

Dear friend, I do not know if one day I could do something for you. I cannot promise anything to you, because I am just an emigrant who began the life from zero among foreign people. So, for this moment I am not sure in which way I shall be able to repay to

you. Forgive my daring for having written to you, please! I just trust God in all situations, and I accept his will, knowing that he works the best for me. I wish you good health, happiness, and all the best. With warm Christian greetings, I remain your sister in Christ.—*Argentina*

From Nigeria

Dear Ones in Christ: It has been a long time that I could not write to you. The causes are: 1) The closing down of my former postal agency. 2) Lack of resources to use. 3) Means of transportation for easy communication with Brother Sunday Ennaug was missing. All these contributed toward my low interest in associating with others. Now I have endeavored to have a new box in another postal agency. It is the one using above to take place of the former one. All correspondence to me should come through this new address. Furthermore, I need some literature, books, because it is not easy for me to get Brother Ajise at Badan for some books. Hope to hear

from you and extend my sincere attitude to others. In Christ.—*Nigeria*

Film Witness in Nigeria

Dear Dawn Bible Students: Greetings in Jesus' precious name! We have received the notice of a generator, projector, and film for Gospel witnessing from Ibadan, brethren, and are happy to hear of this. Being unable to give access to all classes to benefit from it, we seek your assistance to help us mobilize the witness media to the benefit of all classes or ecclesias in Nigeria. This was resolved in a meeting held at Ntak Obio Akpa, Oruk Anam L.G.A. on the 2nd December, 1991. Please direct all replies there. Sincerely yours in his service.—*Nigeria*

Program Touched Him

Frank & Ernest: I tune you in lots, but only heard part of your program. Was so touched by it. May I please have a copy of the book, "The Lord's Return." I was home all today and what a blessing you were to me. Thank you kindly.—*WI*

Gives 'Big Thanks' to God

Dear Brethren: Calvary greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ! How are you and the co-worker brethren over there? I hope you all are doing fine in the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly in his wisdom and knowledge. Amen. Thank you very much for the two books: "The Divine Plan of the Ages," and "The Creator's Grand Design," you mailed to me last year. Thank you for your concern for my spiritual life. God bless you. Amen. Anyway, I am sorry that I could not write you nor answer these questions since then. This was due to my schedule of work which required me to be going to many stations (villages) but now the work is less busy for me. Where I have read so far from "The Divine Plan of the Ages," I found them so comforting, especially these scriptures and their explanations: Jeremiah 31:30; Ezekiel 16:46-48; Matthew 11:24. Here I am glad to understand once again the immeasurable depth of love and mercy of God. This has

been one of those big questions that worries me. There are many people especially here in Africa that have no access to any good things of life. Now to assume that after these people died in their wickedness and sin, will be tormenting them forever. I doubt what God could or would gain from such a torment. To know now that God has provided a time of restitution in which mankind will be given a chance to repent or turn back to their Creator! I cannot but say big thank to our wonderful Creator. This shows that God knows the plight of his creatures and has concern for them. Thank you for making me understand this. Remain blessed in the Lord. Yours in Christ.—Nigeria

At First He Burned Our Books

My beloved in the LORD
Grace and mercy from God
our Father and Jesus Christ
our Saviour be yours!
Amen.

Brethren, God knows those who seek for truth, and one day he will surely bring it to them, as he has done to me

through your magazine. I gave my life to Jesus on July 28, 1972, and since then I have been following him daily, desiring to know more from him and to have clear understanding of his words as I read it daily.

It happened that I got your address somewhere and wrote to you last year asking for your magazine, and fortunately you replied to me but when I read your magazine the contents was strange to me and I burnt them off, and concluded that you are preaching another Gospel, as Paul put it in Galatians. And not only that, I wrote to you never to send me your magazine again, but after few months I received it again, and I refused to read them, but kept them. One day I got a small parcel from BSCFA (Bible Students Committee for Africa) containing materials and a form for study in the book, "The Divine Plan of the Ages. I burnt everything and remained calm. I even tried to mock at your preaching when discussing with others.

To cut the long story short, one day I got the Oc-

tober 1991 issue, and I was forced to read it and see what you have again to teach, but it became an eyes opener to me on the subject, "Thus Saith the Lord." It was about eternal torment. In fact, I came to believe all that you say. Now I am convinced that God cannot torment anyone for that is against his nature.

Please brethren, I want to request again the book, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," plus "Daily Heavenly Manna," and any materials that deal with the Book of Revelation. Due to regular turning to my Bible of since 1982 my Bible is about worn out, therefore brethren kindly send me Thompson Chain Study Bible of KJV.

Brethren, my heart is now empty for God to fill with his words and wisdom to impart it to others, so I ask for you and whatever you know that it will help me to grow and become useful to the Lord, send them to me. Please inform BSCFA to send me their materials, and should forgive my insult on you.

Please waiting anxiously to hear from you soon. Thanks and greet all for me. May God bless you.—*Nigeria*

Kept All Back Issues of The Dawn

Dear Sirs: Please send me the price list for subscription to The Dawn. I was a subscriber several years ago and would like very much to resume subscription. I still have every issue plus several small tracts and booklets, etc. I recently started re-reading some of them. I enjoy them so very much, I must have more! The material answers and explains so many of my questions—it satisfies me as no other religious literature

ever has. Eagerly awaiting your reply! Please include list of your other materials also. Thank you! Very sincerely,—*NM*

Wishes to Distribute Hope Booklets

Dear Brethren: Loving Christian greetings. I have just been reading the Hope booklet, as I am sending it to my sister-in-law whose husband has recently died. It is very beautifully written and covers many scriptures you want to tell others about when a loved one dies. Would you please send me 20 copies so I can give them out. May his kingdom come. Yours in Christ,—*CA* ☐



KEEP YOURSELVES in the love of god. —*Jude 21*

WE may daily and hourly keep ourselves in the LORD's love by obedience to, and a growing love for, the principles of righteousness. And we are to rejoice in every experience of life—its trials, difficulties, sorrows, disappointments, etc., no less than in its pleasures, if by any or all of these means the LORD shall instruct us and give us clearer insight into our own deficiencies, and a still clearer insight into that perfect law of liberty and love which he has established, and to which he requires our full and loyal heart-submission.—*January 17th comment from "The Daily Heavenly Manna."*

Speakers' Appointments

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn, or by classes associated with the Pilgrim Service. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

Brother W. Austin
San Luis Obispo, CA January 10

Brother M. Brann
India January 12-30

Brother D. Bruce
India January 12-30

Brother G.M. Jeuck
Phoenix, AZ Dec. 31-Jan. 31
St. Petersburg, FL January 10

Brother Jos. Panucci
Phoenix, AZ Dec. 31-Jan. 3

Brother Randy Shahan
Middletown, NY January 17

Obituaries

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends in the loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Sister Bronia Llockowska, Warsaw, Poland. Age, 69.
Sister Mary Reynolds, Pottstown, PA—August 13. Age, 103.
Sister Jennie Wynn, Birmingham, AL—August 14. Age, 88.
Brother Warren Irving, Detroit, MI—November 14. Age, 71.



If you will notify the Dawn of your new address three weeks in advance of your move, it will save us considerable expense in mailing your magazine.

Thank You!

Conventions

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. In order to ensure your convention being accurately placed in these columns, please make your request IN WRITING and mail it to this address at least two or three months before the date of the convention: The Dawn, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

PHOENIX, AZ, December 31-January 3—Holiday Inn, 1600 S. Country Club Dr., Mesa. (602) 964-7000. You may make reservations directly with the hotel. Contact Esther Bachorski for information: 13223 Palmwood Drive, Sun City West, AZ 85375
Phone: (602) 546-0430

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, January 10—Majestic Park Homes, 8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19) Seminole, FL. Contact: Stella Slavich, 3847 Tarpon Pte. Cir., Palm Harbor, FL 34684
Phone: (813) 786-3795

DETROIT, MI., January 31—Redford YMCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Township, MI

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 12,13,14—The Beverly Garland Hotel, 1780 Tribute Rd., 95815. Contact Betty Lankford, 6000 19th Ave. 95820 for information and reservations.
Phone: (916) 457-0569

ROCKLAND, NY, March 7—Green Meadow Waldorf School, Chestnut Ridge Road, Spring Valley, NY. Contact: Mrs. R. Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07060

ALBUQUERQUE PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 19-21—For information and reser-

vations please contact Sister Roberta H. Buss, Albuquerque Bible Students, P.O. Box 9172, Albuquerque, NM 87119
Phone: (505) 877-2866

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 26-28—Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Rd., Warren, MI. For information and reservations, contact: Robert Gorecki, 6731 Scotch Lake Rd., West Bloomfield, MI 48324
Phone: (313) 363-6848

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 26-28—ECC, Oakhurst, CA. For information and reservations contact Sister Virginia Wilson, 2103 N. Price St. #112, Fresno, CA 93703
Phone: (209) 255-2241

ASILOMAR CONVENTION, Spring 1993—Pacific Grove, CA. We have been asked to announce that, contrary to a rumor you may have heard, an Asilomar Convention is being planned for 1993. Please keep this in mind when your 1993 vacation plans are being made.

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL CONVENTION, Spring of 1993.—For information and reservations, contact: Dawn Shallieu, Jerusalem Convention, 1041 Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060-6414, USA



BLESSED is the people that know the joyful sound.

—Psalm 89:15