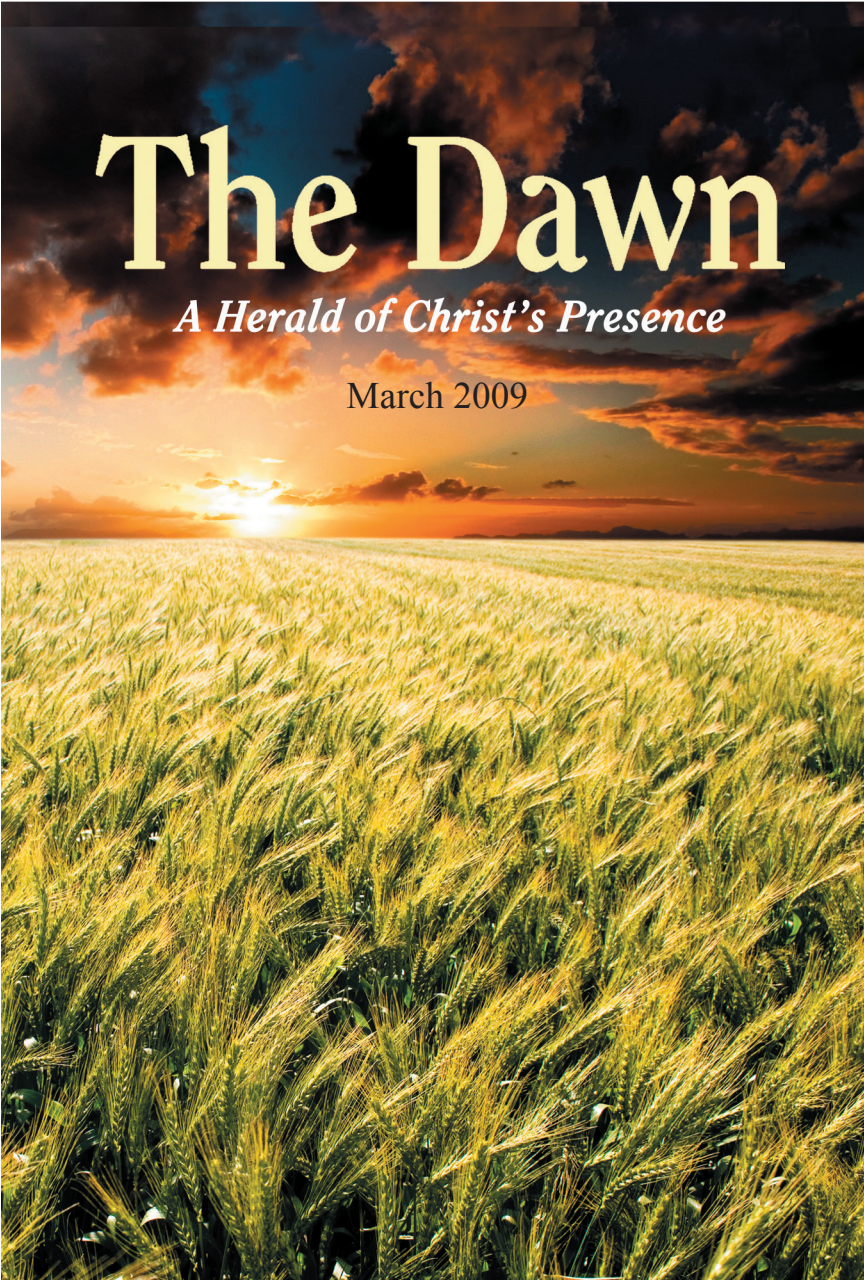


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One Manner of Speech

*“So it came to pass
that all the earth
was of one manner
of speech, and of
one stock of
words.”*

—*Genesis 11:1,
Rotherham
Translation*

THE GIFT OF TRUE SPEECH

has set the human family apart from all other classes of earth's animal kingdom. A loving Heavenly Father endowed earth's first parents with the ability to communicate intelligently with one another, and they were also given the skill to write and to record their words. Adam and Eve received an adequate vocabulary for everyday use, but it could be expanded upon with new words as they were found necessary and appropriate.

A FORM OF COMMUNICATION

It is known that the animal kingdom also possesses the ability to communicate with other beings of the same species, sometimes with a very high level of sophistication. Language usage among the human family represents a higher level of organization and form, and is a systematic means by which ideas and feelings may be expressed with one another.

Speech usage characterizes and identifies various communities of people according to its size, type, or race. Various dialects identify certain forms or varieties that exist within a particular language group, some of which may branch off into other languages over time.

A GIFT FROM GOD

Language did not originate with man, but is a special gift that came from our all-wise Heavenly Father. This fact is established by God's Word, as recorded when Moses declined his instructions to be a spokesman for him. "Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." (Exod. 4:10-12) God then provided Aaron—Moses' brother—to speak for him.—vs. 14

ADAM TO ABRAM

The Book of Genesis includes Moses' original genealogical records which provide an important account of man's early history, but more importantly it traces the lineage of the promised seed of Abraham. The language Adam used is believed to be Hebrew, a tongue derived from the name Eber, which means 'to cross over' and is a term associated with the flood era. Eber was a descendant of Shem from whom the chosen children of Israel establish their ancestry. (Gen. 10:21) Shem, who

was born before the flood lived to within four hundred years of the birth of Abraham, who was a Hebrew (Gen. 14:13) and the progenitor of Isaac, the typical seed of promise.—Gen. 21:1-5

The ‘one manner of speech’ and ‘one stock of words’ that is identified in our featured scripture and spoken by Adam, was the common language of all who lived during earth’s early history. The life spans of Adam and his descendants—Methuselah, Shem, and others that lead to Abraham’s day—spanned many centuries of time and often overlapped each other by several years. It is reasonable to conclude that the Hebrew language was the common tongue throughout this long period of time.

CONFUSION OF TONGUES

With mankind’s progressive fall into sin and death, the selfish purposes of men were seen by God to have no limits. “GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Gen. 6:5) When men later conspired to build a city with a tower that would reach to heaven, God prevented them from doing it, and said, “Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel [confusion, *Marginal Translation*]; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”—Gen. 11:7-9

The Heavenly Father's intervention wisely prevented even more rapid decline and degradation of the human family. A dramatic scattering of peoples took place with the dispersion of Noah's three sons. From Shem were derived the Jewish and other Semitic races; Ham was the ancestor of the black races; and Japheth's descendants are largely traced to the European nations. Those who were able to understand each other stayed together and formed the various families of languages, some of which are yet spoken and clearly distinguishable.

LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS

Although statistics vary, those who study languages, their changing patterns, and rapid decline generally agree that there are about 7,000 different languages and dialects spoken in the world today. All languages, including Hebrew, have changed over time, and some dialects are in the process of diverging. It is not always clear to determine exactly when they may have reached the stage where they become separate languages. When two people find each other's speech unintelligible, they are usually thought to be speaking different languages rather than dialects. There are at present about 200 languages that have a million or more native speakers.

Mandarin Chinese is by far the largest group in the world today, and is presently being spoken as a native language by approximately 875 million people. English is spoken by about 340 million people, but has a far more worldwide distribution than all other spoken languages. It is an official language in 52 countries as well as many smaller colonies and territories. In addition, nearly one third of all the

people in the world are able to understand and speak English to some degree. It has become the most useful language to learn for international travel and commerce, and is now the accepted language of international diplomacy.

ENGLISH PREDOMINANCE

The British Empire extended its power across the globe centuries ago, and its native language became widespread. English was thus taught as a second language in many faraway places including India, South Africa, Australia, Hong Kong, and elsewhere. As America grew in power and status, it too spread the English language, and is now being learned as a second language by many students in Europe and other places.

The spread of English across the globe is a major event in modern history. Speech is fundamental not just to communication, but to the very process of learning. No single language has ever approached such widespread use as English, and for the first time in history it has been possible to denote one language as being predominant.

Nearly every other serious contender for that status is no longer a factor. Spanish alone is extending its influence and status especially within the United States. French has lost its international dominance, while Portuguese Africa is abandoning Portuguese.

Outside of either Germany or Russia these languages are seldom heard. The Japanese are also learning English, while the Mandarin and Cantonese languages are not advancing beyond their native speakers within China. In Ethiopia, the street signs

and business billboards are now in English, beneath the native Amharic, and many of the world's new Muslims are also learning English rather than Arabic. English is now used as a means of communication and commerce in many areas of life in India.

The United Nations conducted a survey a few years ago among its 189 member states and asked what language they wanted to use for communication with embassies from other countries. More than 120 chose English, 40 selected French, and 20 wanted to use Spanish. Those who chose English to be the common language included all of the former Soviet republics, most of the Arab world, and Vietnam.

English is also the dominant language used in electronic communication. About 75% of the world's mail, telexes, and cables are in English. Approximately 60% of the world's radio programs are in English, and about 90% of all internet traffic. The percentage of internet users who are not native English speakers is increasing rapidly, especially in Asian countries.

UNWRITTEN TONGUES

The study of language distribution and how it has evolved around the world involves many complex issues. There have been numerous migrations of people that have resulted in most large nations now having many different language groups within their respective borders. It is estimated that in the United States there are at least 165 languages spoken today, with many of them unwritten. Therefore, it is not exactly true to describe this country as being an English-speaking nation. The same situation applies to other multicultural nations as well.

Certain parts of the world have unusually high concentrations of different language groups. For example, researchers point out that there are around 900 native languages spoken by the few million people who inhabit New Guinea and its neighboring islands. This represents a very high number of languages being spoken by a very small percentage of earth's people. Many of these and other languages are unwritten, and many more of them are disappearing.

DEFINING CULTURES

Language defines a culture through the people who speak it. Words that describe a particular cultural practice or idea may not translate precisely into some other language. Many endangered languages have oral customs including their stories, songs, and histories that are passed on to the younger generations. Some of these groups have interacted closely with their natural world for centuries, and they often have profound insights into the land, plants, animals, and ecosystems in which they live. Much of what people know about their natural surroundings is encoded only in oral languages, with no written form. With the extinction of a language an entire culture is thus lost.

VANISHING LANGUAGES

Linguistic specialists report that approximately 2,000 languages now have less than 1,000 speakers within its community. They further estimate that about half of the world's present languages are no longer being spoken by the younger generation. These threatening indications point to the first major steps in the extinction of these particular voices.

An interesting article that addresses this subject was published by the *Los Angeles Times* (September 19, 2007) under the title “Researchers Say A Language Disappears Every Two Weeks.” It was submitted by staff writer Thomas H. Maugh, who we quote in part. “One of the world’s 7,000 distinct languages disappears every 14 days, an extinction rate exceeding that of birds, mammals, or plants, researchers say. At least 20% of the world’s languages are in imminent danger of becoming extinct as their last speakers die off, compared with about 18% of mammals, 8% of plants, and 5% of birds.”

In his article, Maugh also quoted recent and relative comments from David Harrison, who is presently the Associate Director of the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, and a Linguist at Swarthmore College, who said, “‘The extinction of a language translates into a loss of knowledge. When we lose a language, we lose centuries of thinking about time, seasons, sea creatures, reindeer, edible flowers, mathematics, landscapes, myths, music, the unknown, and the everyday. Half of the world’s languages have disappeared in the last 500 years, and half of the remainder are likely to vanish during this century.’”

HOT SPOTS

“Harrison and Living Tongues Director Gregory Anderson have identified five language ‘hot spots’ where the extinction rate is particularly high, they said at a news conference sponsored by the National Geographic Society, which supports their research. One such area encompasses Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, where 40 languages spoken by Native

Americans are at risk. Only five elderly members of the Yuchi tribe, for example, are fluent in the Yuchi language, which may be unrelated to any other language in the world.”

Another area of particular concern in North America is located in the Pacific Northwest, a region that includes the states of Oregon and Washington in the United States as well as British Columbia in Canada. There are presently 54 languages spoken in this area, and every one of them is endangered. It is reported that the youngest speaker in some places may now be over 60 years of age, with none of the younger generation able to carry on the culture. There were once 27 native languages spoken in the state of Oregon alone.

Spanish and Portuguese are the dominant and indigenous languages found in South America. They continue to threaten the 113 languages that yet survive in aboriginal communities, especially in Ecuador, Columbia, Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia. These areas have very high density of speakers but little documentation.

Other hot spots are found in the area of Northern Australia where many native groups splintered from each other during conflict with white settlers. At the present time, there are 153 Aboriginal languages spoken in small documented communities. Researchers point out that there are threatened locations found in Eastern Siberia, Russia, China and Japan where there are now 23 language groups. Government policies have forced most of these minority communities to use the national and regional languages, and there are few elderly speakers who can speak their native language fluently.

THE EFFECT OF WORDS

The words that proceed out of our mouths reflect the disposition and ability to control our emotions. They serve as an index of the heart, display our inward thoughts, and mark the degree of spiritual growth and understanding. Words are also a vehicle by which we learn things, and are especially valuable when we are taught by the wonderful words of God. “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity.” (Prov. 1:2,3) Some will listen, while others will not heed the instructions from God’s Word. Solomon then said, “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.” (vs. 5) He then focuses on the basis of our understanding. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”—vs. 7

One who has thus learned wisdom and understanding from our Heavenly Father’s words, and is cognizant of his own words and actions, will proceed in the ways of Truth and righteousness. “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”—Prov. 16:32

TAMING THE TONGUE

Learning to tame the tongue should be a high priority in the Christian’s walk in the narrow way, and the utmost intent in the consecrated heart and spiritual life of God’s children. James wrote, “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many

things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” (James 3:1,2) None of us is perfect, and we commit unintentional violations in connection with our walk in newness of life. The one who has control of his words thus controls his own body. The New Creature in Christ Jesus must strive for greater discipline.

James makes a powerful comparison by pointing out, “Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.” (vs. 3) The small bit in the horse’s mouth controls the actions of the very powerful animal. Using another and even greater contrasting illustration, James says, “Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.” (vs. 4) The small bit in the horse’s mouth, and the rudder of a great ship have the means to direct a great power.

The tongue also has great power to influence large numbers of people for either good or bad purposes. “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”—vss. 5-8

Although the tongue is not very large, it is possible for it to do more damage than all other members of the human body. It may be used to speak kind words and express loving thoughts, or it can scatter seeds of evil intent that may continue to embitter the lives of others for generations to come.

THE HEART'S TREASURE

Jesus taught, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:45) Our Lord’s reference to the heart points to the fact that our words serve as an index to our Christian growth and development of character. As consecrated Christian believers, we seek to grow in the knowledge and spirit of the Truth. It means to stand for righteousness and “sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” (Titus 2:8) “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”—Col. 4:6

In his letter to the church at Rome, Paul wrote, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10:10) When he wrote to the Hebrew brethren, he said, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”—Heb. 13:15

A PURE LANGUAGE

The Prophet Zephaniah was looking down the long stream of time when he wrote about a “pure

language” that would one day be instituted for the blessing of all earth’s people. (Zeph. 3:9) A new ‘pure language’ of Truth will become the basic foundation upon which our Lord Jesus will set up his righteous kingdom. The prophet first spoke about the Heavenly Father’s indignation and fierce anger that would be directed against the nations during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. (vs. 8) He then makes clear the fact that after the present earthly powers and institutions are devoured by the fire of his jealousy, that he will then bless the people with a common voice in which they may all know and speak the Truth. “Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”—vs. 9

The Psalmist David used the same word “pure,” when he wrote, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”—Ps. 24:3-5

THE LANGUAGE OF PRAISE

Under the administration of Christ’s future kingdom, the emphasis will be directed toward those who have a single-hearted purpose to be loyal to the Divine rule, and a determined opposition against sin in its many forms. The pure language of Truth will include the right to life under a restored society and on a perfected earth. Under the administration of Christ’s glorious kingdom, the nations will learn

the true knowledge of God's ways and will worship him as their blessed Savior. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 11:9

"They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:34) It is not unreasonable to consider the possibility that Hebrew may once again be the common language that will be heard over all the earth, the 'one manner of speech and one stock of words' as spoken by father Adam. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MARCH 5—"If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—Philippians 4:8 (Z.'03-9 Hymn 208)

MARCH 12—"The end of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an undissembled faith."—I Timothy 1:5 (Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott) (Z. '00-360 Hymn 256)

MARCH 19—"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."—I Peter 1:14,15 (Z. '03-55 Hymn 344)

MARCH 26—"We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others."—I Thessalonians 5:5,6 (Z. '03-70 Hymn 20)

A New Spirit

Key Verse: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh."

—Ezekiel 11:19

***Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 11:14-21***

shown in the words, "Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." (chap. 7:13) The same thought is emphasized by the Apostle Paul, when he writes, "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." (vs. 18) The reason why this is so is that the fallen flesh is weak, and no one is able to lead a perfect life at this time. Each one is hampered more or less by his own imperfections and by the imperfections of others who are under the dominion of Satan. But when the will is fully yielded to God, he gives us more of the spirit of a sound mind, and we will become more conformed to his likeness.

What is involved in this spirit? The word 'spirit' in this text represents the mind, and all of the many

THE STATEMENT BEING

made that a change to a 'new spirit' and a new 'heart' implies that something is wrong with their present condition. The scripture comes to mind, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) Adam was created perfect, but the fallen nature of mankind and the growing intensity of the world's problems have caused the people to have poor characters. This condition can be

attributes that make up one's character. It is the Spirit of God, the special influence coming from him that will make it possible for all of mankind to know him and call him Father. During this present Gospel Age, a special class—the spirit-begotten since Pentecost—has been privileged to enjoy this spirit. This power, or influence is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of Truth, the spirit of a sound mind, and the spirit of sonship. The footstep followers of the Lord Jesus have been called to sonship and the opportunity now to change the condition of their heart and mind. This change in heart condition is found in the words, “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Matt. 22:37-39

The law of God demands not only justice, but also love. It points first to a supreme love for God, and then to a love for our fellow man. It demands mercy and kindness. “If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, . . . thou shalt surely help with him.” “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: . . . And the Lord shall reward thee.” (Exod. 23:4,5; Prov. 25:21,22) These scriptures teach us that this type of love is so broad and so comprehensive that God's law will always demand it. This change of character will take a thousand years to remove the stoniness from the hearts of mankind and to make them stand on their own without a mediator. Those who receive everlasting life must attain this condition: for all who would live forever must keep his law perfectly. They will be able to do this because they will have the opportunity to be restored to complete perfection of body and mind, to the original image of God. ■

New Leadership

Key Verse: “*Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.*”
—*Ezekiel 34:31*

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 34

THIS STUDY FOCUSES FIRST of all on the shepherds, or leaders, of the Lord’s flock. It alludes to the neglecting of the sheep of the flock in favor of themselves. The parable pictures the members of the flock being scattered. This failure to provide them with spiritual food and to assist them is a direct

result of being too busy with the goats. The goats represent worldly elements that may take away their time and attention from what their true focus should be. The Lord is telling the shepherds that they were not appointed to look after themselves or the goats, but to look after the sheep class.

The Lord says, “Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth.” (Ezek. 34:10) Some may believe that this scripture is in the process of fulfillment due to the fact that we are living during the Second Presence of Christ. He is present in the world and is searching out the truly consecrated of his people and gathering them out of the world to himself.

The Great Shepherd is with his flock, and is causing his voice to be heard; and the sheep will be gathered to him out of every nation. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my

voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27) The voice of the Lord amongst his sheep is to be heard now because it is the time of his Second Presence. He is now about to complete his flock of this present Gospel Age and to glorify them in the first resurrection.

Verses 11-13, of Ezekiel chapter 34, describe how the Lord will seek his sheep—“and will bring them to their own land.” The homeland of the Lord’s sheep of this age is heaven itself, and his bringing them to it will mean their resurrection change. Then they will be in the kingdom with Jesus, and will still be his sheep, his flock, and his bride. But the Lord declares also, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”—John 10:16

The ‘other sheep’ will include all of mankind who, during the Millennial kingdom, will be glad to avail themselves of the great provision the Lord has made for them. They have been purchased by Jesus, and redeemed from the curse of sin and death. All will have the invitation to become the Lord’s sheep, and by developing his character-likeness will prove their loyalty to him, and be granted everlasting life. “I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David.”—Ezek. 34:23

‘David’ refers to Christ, and this new leadership is highlighted in the scripture, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:6,7 ■

God's People Restored Again

***Key Verse: "I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes."
—Ezekiel 36:23***

***Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 36:22-32***

not having properly sought the new heart and right spirit of the Lord, was unprepared to receive the Messiah. Instead, they rejected him, and crucified him. The Apostle shows us that, as a result, only a remnant was gathered out of Israel to be of the 'bride class,' and that the nation as a whole stumbled into blindness. However, their blindness shall be removed, "For this is my covenant unto

AN IMPORTANT PART OF

the restoration of a people is found in the fact that it is necessary for them to undergo certain changed conditions. To make a full recovery, it is necessary for them to not only abandon idolatry, but they must obtain a change in heart condition. "A new heart also will I give you." (Ezek. 36:26) This will eventually lead to a new mind and a new disposition favorable to God and righteousness.

The prophecy of this lesson belongs to a future time. In corroboration of this, we refer to Romans 11:32. Here the Apostle Paul shows that fleshly Israel,

them, when I shall take away their sins.”—Rom. 11:27

It is this covenant of the Lord to Israel to ‘take away their sins’ and to give them a new heart that is being referred to in our lesson. Their recovery from blindness will mean nothing less than life from the dead. This nation, after rejecting our Lord and being blind to the fulfillment of the prophecies made to their fathers, shall soon come to know him.

If God can show his mercy to those who turned away from him and crucified his son, it will mean also the extending of Divine blessings to all according to his promises. So all of Israel shall be saved—recovered from blindness. “Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”—Ezek. 36:28,29

The removal of the stony heart and the giving of a new heart will not be an instantaneous work. The method by which it will be accomplished is explained in the words, “So all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them.” (Rom. 11:26,27) God has appointed a day for blessing Israel and ultimately blessing all the families of the earth. It will be accomplished by instructions in righteousness; for the glorified church with Christ its head will be the great prophet or teacher of mankind. Israel’s past experiences will serve as a preparation for their blessing in the kingdom. All mankind shall then come into harmony with the kingdom, and will be counted as children of Abraham, and of the true Israel of God. They shall be as the “sand which is upon the sea shore.” (Gen. 22:17) The day is coming when the words will be fulfilled, “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD.”—Jer. 31:34 ■

Prophesying New Life

Key Verse: *“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.”*
—Ezekiel 37:1

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 37

THIS SCRIPTURE WAS AD-ressed by the Lord, through the prophet Ezekiel, to fleshly Israel then in captivity in Babylon. The dry bones represented the Israelites themselves. As a people, they had lost heart and hope, and said, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.”—Ezek. 37:11

They had been ‘cut off’ from all tribal and national union. When they looked at their present condition, they were strangers in a strange land. They lived as foreigners without an opportunity for patriotic feelings. If they looked backward, and remembered Divine intervention on their behalf, they would have to focus on the good things. They would recall their deliverance from Egypt and their favor as a nation under the great kings, David and Solomon. If they looked ahead, they could see no possible hope of ever becoming a nation again. As far as they were concerned, all of the precious promises made to Abraham, that they would rule and bless all of the people of the earth, were dead. The condition of Israel, scattered throughout Babylon, is illustrated by the dry bones of the vision.

The hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel, causing him to see this vision. In the vision, he was made to pass

among the dry bones, so that he might get a full view of the situation. He saw bones lying strewn all over the valley. These dry bones are being used to represent the whole house of Israel. In the Divine providence, they are being viewed as a united nation. Their reunion is shown in Ezekiel 37:15-22, by the miraculous uniting of two sticks into one in the hand of the prophet. "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

The Lord directed Ezekiel to prophesy, to declare the Divine message of foretelling the things that would come to pass under Divine providence. The message to be declared was that God had the power and would use it to give life again to these people who were as dead, dried bones. Their national hopes would gradually be revived, and would lead them to become a people or nation in their own land. The people's hopes, that were once dead and were represented by the Lord as buried, receive hope with the words, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves."—vss. 12,13

As a further part of this symbolic picture the prophet shows the process by which the dry bones would be gathered. He says that there would be "a noise" and "a shaking." (vs. 7) This refers to the fall of Babylon and the transfer of the empire to the Medes and Persians. Following this demonstration the bones came together.

Not only would the bones come together and have flesh and skin, but they would also receive the breath of life. God would allow them to once again have a homeland and live and prosper into a great nation. ■

Envisioning New Life

Key Verse: *"It shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."*
—Ezekiel 47:9

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 47:1-12

shown in Ezekiel 44:1. When the church class is complete the glory of the Lord shall have entered into his heavenly Temple, and the water of life will issue from the throne of God. (chap. 47:1) After the kingdom of God is established, the waters of truth—blessings of refreshment and restitution—will flow to mankind.

THE LORD JESUS USED

the words, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19), when he called his disciples, Peter and Andrew, into service. They would go out from the literal sea upon which they made their living, to work in the restless sea of humanity. This descriptive wording is being used to depict the great call of truth seekers from beneath the waves of ignorance, superstition, and degradation. These special ones who are called by the Lord, have the opportunity if faithful to go on to "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."—Rom. 2:7

Our theme scripture describes events that will take place after the closing of the door to the High Calling, as

These blessings should not be confused with the good news, or Gospel message, but should be looked at as representing the Millennial blessings. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." (Ps. 46:4) This important part of God's plan is further shown in the words, "It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem."—Zech. 14:8

Looking at the Prophet Ezekiel's vision, we note that the waters flowed from the house of the Lord, from the Temple. This stream of the water of life will flow on to cover all of the earth, whose fallen condition is represented by the wilderness eastward of Jerusalem. Wherever the waters went they brought vitality, refreshment, healing, and life, even to the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea represents the vast amount of people who have died. We are being given an assurance that the water of life shall reach even these, and bring blessings to them after they are awakened during the great resurrection. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:21-26

Turning to the description of this same symbolic river, furnished to us in Revelation, chapter 22, we find evidence once again that it applies to a future time. It is symbolically pictured as having trees of life on "either side of the river," whose "leaves" are for the "healing of the nations." (vs. 2) This clearly pictures restitution, and the complete healing of all of mankind's problems. It includes a complete removal of its sins, sickness, and imperfection.

We can further see the hand of the Almighty God, when we read the Revelator's words, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (vs. 1) The importance of these blessings being extended to all of mankind is a further evidence of God's perfect love. ■

The Conversion of Saul

*“As he journeyed,
he came near
Damascus: and
suddenly there
shined round
about him a light
from heaven: And
he fell to the earth,
and heard a voice
saying unto him,
Saul, Saul, why
persecutest thou
me?”*
—Acts 9:3,4

IN PART TWO OF THIS SE-
ries entitled the “The Heavenly Call,” we reflected upon our Heavenly Father’s invitation to Gentile believers who were living during the period of the Early Church. In Part 3, we will address the special call to the great Apostle Paul who was a Jew, “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.”—Phil. 3:5

REPLACEMENT FOR JUDAS

By his miraculous conversion to become a faithful follower of our Lord Jesus, Paul proved to be one of the most powerful and important voices in connection with the heavenly calling that has ever been proclaimed throughout this present Gospel Age. He had been personally and directly chosen by our

resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus to assume a major role in connection with that calling. (Acts 9:15) He also became the twelfth apostle, taking the place of Judas Iscariot who had betrayed Jesus during the closing scenes of his earthly ministry.

The apostle recounts for us some of the circumstances that surrounded this most remarkable event. He said, "It came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."—Acts 22:6-8

APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

The Apostle Paul had been called by the Lord to address a specific group of his followers. He explained this in his letter to the Church at Rome, where he wrote, "I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." (Rom. 11:13) This proclamation was remarkable evidence of the Heavenly Father's ultimate will concerning Paul's calling. It also shows that it was God's will that the call was to be extended to those who were not Jews, and Paul was thus enabled by his ministry to carry that invitation forward to the Gentile believers.

Further to this, we learn, too, that during his ministry he was given supernatural visions, as we read, "How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (II Cor. 12:4) To help him carry

forward the heavenly calling to the Gentiles, he received the Holy Spirit of God that gave him the ability to speak in foreign tongues.—I Cor. 14:18

Paul's extensive and prolific writings make up a major portion of the Greek New Testament. His frequent references to the Hebrew Old Testament scriptures and types also provide us with the most spiritual and meaningful commentary on those scriptures that has ever been written. In Acts 13: 9, Luke recorded that the apostle had two names, "Saul, (who also is called Paul,)" and it has been suggested that as the apostle to the Gentiles he chose to be known by his Greek name Paul, rather than by his Hebrew name Saul.

EVENTS RECORDED BY LUKE

Divine providence has provided us with an important and accurate account of Jesus' earthly ministry through the detailed writings of Luke, who was also a physician. (Col. 4:14) He was a travelling companion to Paul (Acts 20:4-6; Philem. vs. 24), and by his authorship we learn most of what is now available about the life and ministry of the great apostle.

The Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:3,4) and The Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1) were both written by Luke. Both were addressed to Theophilus, who was evidently a Christian believer of high standing. Further to this, Luke takes up his account of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:2), where he had left off in his Gospel (Luke 24:50-53), where he provides additional and important details.

THE MAN PAUL

We first learn of Saul at the time when Brother Stephen was stoned to death. The account was

recorded by Luke, who wrote, “The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.” (Acts 7:58) This overly zealous Pharisee had willingly participated in young Stephen’s death by guarding the garments of those who were hurling the stones that took his life.

Luke further writes, “Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.”—Acts 8:1-3

Saul had a special reason for wanting to travel to Damascus. He was not satisfied to limit his activity against members of the Early Church at Jerusalem, and he sought to pursue some of those who may have escaped. “Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”—chap. 9:1,2

A BLINDING LIGHT

While en route to Damascus with his travelling companions, he was stopped and suddenly struck blind by a brilliant light from heaven. When he realized that the one confronting him was the Lord Jesus whom he was opposing, he was greatly

frightened and confused. "The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."—vss. 7-9

SAUL MEETS ANANIAS

As a result of this very powerful and moving experience, Saul had a complete change of heart. He had lost his misdirected zeal, self-confidence, and self-assurance. At the time this incident took place, there was a disciple to whom the Lord had already appeared in a vision, and instructed him to go to Saul. "There was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."—vss. 10-12

The prayers of Saul did not go unheeded. We learn, "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."—vss. 13-16

ISRAEL'S FAVOR ENDING

This episode in the life of Paul occurred about one year before the last week of Israel's exclusive favor was to end. In these words to Ananias, our Lord gave one of the first direct indications that Gentiles would be invited to share in the spiritual body of Christ. Ananias did as he had been instructed—"Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."—vs. 17

It is of particular note that Ananias greeted the blind man Saul with the words, 'Brother Saul.' His eyesight was immediately restored, and he was immersed into Christ. (vs. 18) Having been without food for three days and nights, he ate and was strengthened, and stayed with the disciples at Damascus for several more days. (vs. 19) Luke then informs us, "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."—vs. 20

TAUGHT BY GOD

At the time the historian wrote this account, he did not give details as to how Saul obtained his very deep understanding of the Scriptures. However, we do learn some of this information from the apostle's own writings. In his letter to the Galatians, he confirms his appointment as an apostle by Jesus and the Heavenly Father. He wrote, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."—Gal. 1:1 *(Continued on page 35)*

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(Continued from page 31)

The apostle then proceeded to write about his complete conversion from that of obeying and pleasing men and his fervent zeal for Judaism, to that of obeying and pleasing God. He proclaimed, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."—Gal. 1:9-14

He then recalled, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."—vss. 15-17

The apostle speaks of God having sent him into Arabia to receive very special knowledge through direct revelations. This was a great honor and privilege, but it did not make him either proud or high-minded, as he later revealed in his letter to the brethren at Corinth. "I am the least of the apostles,

that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (I Cor. 15:9) It is likely that one of the reasons why God did not instruct him to go to Jerusalem after leaving Arabia, was because of the very strong feelings that had been generated against him, and that continued to prevail there. Some still did not trust him, and might believe that he was secretly trying to entrap them in some way.

A HUMBLE SERVANT

The special calling of Paul and the direct revelations that were given to him by our Lord Jesus and the Heavenly Father are confirmed again in his letter to the Corinthians. He acknowledged that anyone who had undergone experiences such as he had might have a tendency to boast about them. He answered that possible question by saying, “Is it necessary to boast? It is not profitable indeed, but I will come even to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man, in Christ, who above fourteen years since—(whether with a body, I know not; or without a body, I know not; God knows;)—such a one suddenly conveyed away to the Third Heaven. And I know this very man, (whether with a body, or without the body, I know not: God knows;) That he was suddenly conveyed away into paradise, and heard indescribable things spoken, which it is not possible for a man to relate. Respecting such a person I will boast; but respecting myself I will not boast, unless in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to boast, I shall not be unwise; for I will speak the truth; but I forbear, lest anyone should impute to me more than what he sees me to be, or

what he hears from me. And in order that I might not be unduly elated by the transcendancy of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me—an Angel adversary—that it might afflict me; so that I should not be much exalted.”—II Cor. 12:1-7, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

SPECIAL REVELATIONS

The scriptural account does not tell us how long Paul was in Arabia receiving these special revelations, but it was perhaps several months. After this remarkable experience, we learn that he returned to Damascus, and ‘straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.’ The reaction of the unbelieving Jews in Damascus was one of amazement, knowing that Saul had come there before to take the believers in Christ as his prisoners. No one, however, could refute his powerful logic when preaching of the resurrected Lord Jesus.

Not all who heard him preach appreciated his message, and a plot was underway to silence him. “After that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.” (Acts 9:23) When the brethren learned of their plot, they helped the apostle to escape and make his way back to Jerusalem. However, the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem were still afraid of Paul, thinking that he had entered in among them to spy.

PAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM

Most of the brethren at Jerusalem found it difficult to accept Paul as a true brother in our Lord Jesus. However, there was one particular disciple whose name was Barnabas who realized that Paul had been truly converted to Christ, and saw the

great apostle for what he truly was. He had been convinced that his remarkable experiences had come from no other source but the Lord himself. Barnabas knew that the matter with the other brethren at Jerusalem had to be resolved, and he took the opportunity to speak with him.

He then took Paul to the apostles and insisted that they learn the truth of the matter firsthand and of the complete change that had occurred in his life.

In the scriptural account, we read of this most interesting experience in the life of the Apostle Paul. "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." (Acts 9:27) Afterward, the apostles and disciples did accept Paul, and welcomed him to become one of them by entering into their activities and speaking in the name of the Lord Jesus.

HELLENISTS SOUGHT HIS LIFE

As Paul began his ministry, his preaching brought him in contact with the Hellenists who also began plotting against him. "He spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."—vss. 29-31

The word ‘Grecians’ in this scripture means Hellenists, and refers to those Jews who spoke Greek. Paul’s logical and persuasive preaching of the Scriptures caused a disturbance among some of them. This was not unusual, because problems among them had occurred before. Luke records, “In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” (Acts 6:1) As was the case at Damascus, they too plotted against Paul and sought ways to take his life.

PAUL RETURNS HOME

The disciples in Jerusalem learned of the Hellenist’s plot to kill Paul, and for his own safety they persuaded him to return to his home in Tarsus, which was a city in Asia Minor in the province of Cilicia. They provided for his safe escort by way of Caesarea, a port city from which he was able to sail to Tarsus. He remained there for a period of time, perhaps two years. Luke wrote, “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.”—Acts 9:31

GLADLY WAS THE WORD RECEIVED

After that time, the Lord caused a respite from the severe persecution that had been directed against his special people which had existed especially since the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. This was no doubt very beneficial to the members of the Early Church, and it helped them in many ways. They then became more acceptable in Israel’s society,

and employment was more readily obtainable to them. As a result, the communal arrangement that had been tried for a time became less important and soon ended. It is noteworthy that there is no further mention in the Scriptures concerning this type of shared close-living social structure, either continuing or being revived among those of the brethren living at that time.

The main interest of Luke, the historian, in writing an account of the Acts of the Apostles was in connection with the spiritual growth and development of the followers of our Lord. He recorded for us information that large numbers of believers were added to the church at that time. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41) The increase in the numbers of brethren in the church came from all the ranks of Israel, and showed how God's blessed High Calling was yet exclusively upon that nation, even as the last prophetic week of their favor was rapidly coming to an end.

ISRAEL'S FAVOR ENDS

The nation of Israel's special time of favor ended even as it had been foretold centuries earlier by their prophets. Among God's prophets was Amos who wrote, "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."—Amos 3:1,2

When Jesus' ministry was drawing to a close, he taught an important lesson concerning the fig tree that soon withered away. Matthew records, "When he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!"—Matt. 21:19,20

ISRAEL'S HOUSE LEFT DESOLATE

Our Lord Jesus proclaimed that Israel's house would be left desolate soon after his crucifixion and earthly ministry had been completed. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—chap. 23:37-39

PAUL'S LABOR NOT IN VAIN

The great apostle became very prominent among Jesus' followers, and especially those who had heard the heavenly call and had responded by being baptized into Christ. As a replacement for Judas, it is evident that he rose above some even of the original twelve apostles, some of which are rarely named outside of the apostolic lists. He wrote, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."—I Cor. 15:10 ■

God's Great Oath-bound Covenant

“The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

—*Galatians 3:8*

THE APOSTLE PAUL IN THE

above verse links together a profound statement of God to Abraham, recorded in the 22nd chapter of Genesis, with the gospel of Christ and the ultimate work of the gospel—to bless all the families of the earth.

Turning to Genesis 22:15-18, we read, “The angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the

nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

This covenant promise is so significant in God’s dealings with man that he repeated it several times to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and also sealed it with his oath. Reference is made, directly or indirectly, to this covenant in nearly all of the sixty-six books of the Bible; and the Apostle Paul, in particular, elaborates in the books of Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews concerning its fulfillment through the work of Christ.

THREE MAJOR COVENANTS

The Bible refers to other covenants that would follow the giving of this promise to Abraham. The Mosaic Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant 430 years later, according to Paul in Galatians 3:17, and was to serve the arrangements of God with the typical nation of Israel during the Jewish Age, which ended at the time of our Lord’s First Advent. Next, there is the covenant of sacrifice during this Gospel Age, in which the spiritual seed of promise, the ‘stars of heaven’ class, are being developed—our Lord and his church. This is referred to in Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” The psalmist refers to “those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” (Ps. 50:5) We speak of this also as the Grace Covenant (Rom. 6:14), because it is through the grace of God in Christ that we are accounted worthy to become sons of God, through faith.

Third in this order is the covenant of the Messianic Age, referred to by Jesus as the kingdom of God. This age and its covenant is still future, though prophecies indicate we are very near to its establishment. With this age will come the grand fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, that through his seed—the spiritual seed, our Lord and his church—all the families of the earth will be blessed. Adam and his race will gain back all that was lost in Eden when, through the work of the New Covenant, all the willing and obedient of mankind will ultimately attain full perfection and be restored to favor with God, and live everlastingly on the perfected earth.

The Apostle Paul, quoting from the Prophet Jeremiah, says this about that future arrangement, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:8-12) As Paul states, the 'new covenant'

will be made first with Israel. They are symbolic of all nations and peoples, and as mankind sees the benefits of coming into harmony with its arrangements, all people, both Jew and Gentile, will receive the blessings of the New Covenant, fulfilling the promise that indeed 'all' families of the earth will be blessed.

WHY GOD USES COVENANTS

Before looking into these covenants more deeply, we first ask the question, 'Why are these covenants necessary?' Adam's failure to keep God's law had cut himself and his race off from Divine favor and placed them under Divine sentence, and nothing that man could do could restore that favor. The initiative toward reconciliation must come from God, if at all. God's covenants, then, are statements of his propositions for reconciliation, and indicate how, with whom, and by whom it shall be accomplished.

The word 'covenant,' or 'testament,' means, in legal terms, a contract. It may be unilateral (one-sided) or bilateral (two-sided). That is, it may be unconditional or conditional. Where a covenant is conditional each contracting party must fulfill certain conditions before the purpose of the covenant can be met. Where unconditional, a covenant and its fulfillment are dependent on only one party. Going back to the covenant, or promise, given to Abraham in Genesis 22, we notice that it is merely a statement of what God would do, with no conditions attached so far as Abraham is concerned. Thus, it is a unilateral, or one-sided covenant. Since it has no condition, or arrangements, for its own fulfillment other than the veiled language in its giving

by God, it depends on the other great covenants that would be added to it later to provide the detailed arrangements of God for the carrying out of his promise to Abraham and all the families of the earth. These other great covenants, as previously mentioned, are the Law Covenant of the Jewish Age; the covenant by sacrifice, or Grace Covenant, of the Gospel Age; and the New Covenant of the Messianic Age.

Any and all blessing ever coming to the members of the human family is the fruitage of that original promise to Abraham. The Abrahamic Covenant is like a great canopy, or umbrella, over all of God's arrangements and subsequent covenants. Everything that God has done and will yet do for the human race is included in that covenant.

THE LAW COVENANT

The first covenant to be added to the Abrahamic Covenant, and thus the first to have a role in fulfilling God's great promise, was the Mosaic Law Covenant. When God brought the descendants of Abraham—the nation of Israel—out of Egypt and on their way to the promised land, Canaan, he led them to Mt. Sinai. There he entered into a national covenant with them known as the Law Covenant. As a basis for this covenant, or contract, Ten Commandments were miraculously written upon two tables of stone, as recorded in Exodus 20:3-17. Then, in the following chapters of Exodus, God elaborates upon all the details and laws concerning how those ten commandments should be applied in their lives.

God appointed Moses as the mediator to ratify the covenant on behalf of the people. God's proposal to

them is stated in Deuteronomy 5:32,33, "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live." Israel's response to this is best stated in Exodus 24:7, "He [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient." This was a bilateral, or two-sided, covenant. Both God and Israel agreed to the terms of the contract.

In order for God to deal with Israel through the Law Covenant, it was necessary for the sins of the people to be at least typically atoned for through animal sacrifices. This was done through the establishment of a priesthood, with Aaron as the high priest, who offered up sacrifices each year on behalf of the nation so that they could maintain their covenant standing before God.

It perhaps seemed that through the arrangement of the Law Covenant, the Abrahamic promise would be fulfilled through the fleshly seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel. Yet this did not prove to be the case. Not a single Jew was able to keep that law perfectly, nor was their priesthood perfect, thus they were unable to gain the promised blessing of that covenant, nor be recipients of the promise made to Abraham centuries earlier. In fact, they brought further punishment upon themselves when they rejected Jesus, when he came at his First Advent, and crucified him.

Was God's dealing with Israel during that long period of time a mistake, since the stated benefits

of the law were never achieved, and the promises to Abraham never received, even by one Jew? No, God in his foreknowledge knew what the outcome would be. What was, then, the purpose of the law, or, as Apostle Paul asks, “Wherefore then serveth the law?”—Gal. 3:19

JESUS KEPT AND FULFILLED THE LAW

First, our Lord Jesus had a standard of righteousness to live up to for three and one half years. He was also “under the law.” (Gal. 4:4) By keeping that law perfectly, every “jot” and “tittle” (Matt. 5:18), he proved his perfection, and thus his value as a ransom, or corresponding price, for Adam. In order for Adam and his race to be redeemed, it required a perfect human life, equivalent to Adam’s perfect life before he sinned. Jesus took Adam’s place under the condemnation of death. He proved himself to be a perfect sacrifice in this respect by perfectly keeping God’s law which he had given to Israel when he established his covenant with them centuries earlier.

Jesus, however, did more than merely keep the law perfectly. He also ‘fulfilled the law’. The fulfilling of the law began with Jesus and includes the church, his faithful followers, as they fulfill the types and pictures of the law arrangement. Briefly stated, the Law Covenant was to illustrate through a variety of types, pictures, and prophetic lessons, the manner in which sin would need to be dealt with before the Abrahamic promise could be fulfilled. Every feature of the law—the Ten Commandments, the Books of the Law, the Tabernacle in the wilderness—all addressed themselves to the matter

of sin. It is true, of course, that those animal sacrifices could not actually take away sin, yet they illustrated in remarkably detailed ways how sin would be dealt with through the “better sacrifices” of the Gospel Age. (Heb. 9:23) The Apostle Paul states that the law served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.” “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.” “But this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”—Heb. 8:5; 9:24; 10:4,12,14

THE GOSPEL AGE COVENANT

As previously noted, the church of this present Gospel Age—the followers of Christ—are not under the Law, but under the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 6:14 states it this way, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Also, in Romans 3:24, we read, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The law only served to illustrate and point forward to the real seed of promise—our Lord and his church—who, after completing their sacrifice, will experience a change of nature, and will be with our Lord in the heavenlies as Divine spirit beings.

Going back to the Abrahamic promise in Genesis 22:17, we notice that there is a ‘multiplying’ of seed specified—first, as the ‘stars of the heaven,’

and then as the ‘sand which is upon the seashore.’ Paul, in Hebrews 11:12, refers to this increase or multiplication of seed, using the same symbols of “stars” and “sand.” These are two distinct lines of salvation that will come through the antitypical Isaac, Abraham’s natural seed of promise, representing Christ. The ‘stars of the heaven’ refers to the church, who will have a heavenly inheritance. The ‘sand which is upon the sea shore’ refers to all the families of the earth who are to be blessed and uplifted by the spiritual seed during Christ’s coming kingdom. They will have an earthly inheritance.

PAUL’S TESTIMONY IN GALATIANS

The Apostle Paul elaborates on these matters in the 3rd and 4th chapters of Galatians. He says, “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” (Gal. 3:7) We are the ‘faith seed’ of Abraham, and this is true even if we are Gentiles. “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (vs. 14) Cornelius was the first Gentile convert, opening up the Gospel call to the Gentiles beginning in A.D. 36. (see Acts 10) Paul continues, “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:26-29) In the type, Isaac was the natural seed of promise and Sarah was his mother.

In Galatians 4, Paul refers to this as an allegory and explains that Sarah represents the covenant that will bring forth the spiritual seed of promise, represented in Isaac. “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.”—Gal. 4:28

During this present time, God is selecting out from among earth’s millions a few whose hearts are right before him, those who are willing to take up their cross and follow him. These faithful ones are having their minds, hearts, and characters prepared for a future work, as stated in the promise repeated later to Jacob, “in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 28:14) Revelation 14:1 reads, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” We believe that this is the literal number of those who will make up the bride of Christ. Jesus said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”—Luke 12:32

These are not developed under the old Law Covenant, because Jesus kept it, “and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Col. 2:14) Neither are they developed under the New Covenant, which encompasses only earthly hopes, reserved for Israel and the world of mankind in Christ’s coming kingdom. Rather, these have the wonderful privilege of responding to the call to discipleship with their Lord, by the grace of God, to lay down their life in sacrifice with their master, and to be counted as part of the promised seed—the antitypical Isaac class. Thus we see how the prospective members of this heavenly ‘little flock’ are spoken of as developed

under a covenant of grace, a covenant by sacrifice—in short, the Sarah feature of the Abrahamic Covenant. There is no greater aspiration that one could have in this life than to serve the living God, our loving heavenly Father, under these arrangements.

THE NEW COVENANT

Soon the Gospel Age will end and God will initiate the “restitution of all things” mentioned by Peter in Acts 3:21, concerning which he said, “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” This will be for all people, the ‘blessing of all the families of the earth.’ This will not be a doomsday for the world, but a time of great rejoicing. The curse will be lifted, the night time of sin and ignorance will be ended, and a great age of enlightenment will begin, when the prophet tells us that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, and the people will learn righteousness. (Isa. 26:9) Man’s great enemies will not be there—the present evil world, the fallen flesh, and the devil, who will be bound. At that time, God will add to the Abrahamic Covenant still another covenant—the New Covenant. This will be the grand climax of God’s plan of salvation. It will be the kingdom for which our Lord taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10

The Apostle John prophetically referred to that day, writing down what he heard in this way, “I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 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. And 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. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”—Rev. 21:3-7

The New Covenant, unlike the old Law Covenant, will bring life everlasting to all those who seek righteousness and learn to walk in the ways of the Lord, and we believe the vast majority of mankind will be successful in attaining life under the perfect conditions of the kingdom. Jesus and his church will be the mediator between God and mankind under this covenant during the time of their reconciliation, a period of a thousand years.

THE EARTH TO ABIDE FOREVER

Many Christians believe the teaching that has been handed down from the Dark Ages that the earth is going to be burned up in what is sometimes described as a great doomsday for mankind. God’s original purpose of creating the earth, however, will be fulfilled. The Bible, throughout its pages, speaks of the everlasting, righteous conditions that are to be established on the earth as man’s inheritance forever. Two such statements are very simply and clearly made—“The earth abideth forever.”

“God himself that formed the earth . . . he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.”—Eccles. 1:4; Isa. 45:18

There are many prophecies, though, which symbolize by fire the manner in which this present evil order upon the earth will be destroyed. This present order of things will have to be destroyed before Christ can set up his kingdom of righteousness upon the earth. This in no way, however, means the destruction of the earth itself. Notice the testimonies of both the Old and New Testament which speak symbolically of the destruction of this present evil world, but then immediately make reference to blessings upon the earth and its inhabitants which will follow. “My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. (Zeph. 3:8,9) “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. . . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—II Pet. 3:10,13

How meaningful now are the words of our theme text—Galatians 3:8—when understood in the light of God’s plan of salvation—“The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Through his seed—our Lord and his church—all the families

of the earth will be blessed in that wonderful age which is just before us. One writer, when he saw these great truths in God's Word, was so thrilled that he wrote these beautiful and long-enduring words:

A Preview of the Kingdom

"Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation, and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete."

Do these words of God's plan sound too good to be true? Surely not, because they are clearly taught in the Bible, and his plan is just what we would expect of a just, loving, and covenant-keeping God. ■



ENCOURAGING LETTERS

FIRST MEETING

DawnBible: We had our first meeting in Northwest MS! Only a handful of people attended, but it was very exciting to praise God's name and study from *The Dawn* about being thankful!

God bless everyone all over the world! Let's all stand strong in the truth!—MS

THRILLED BY BOOKLETS

DawnBible: Hello. It has been years since I have heard or received literature from the Dawn. I found a couple of your books the other day and was thrilled.

I would like so very much to receive *The Dawn* magazine, Bible guides, as well as different booklets. Thank you—TX

HOUSE OF FAITH

DawnBible: I am so glad I found your website. It was a joy when I found it. Seeing those who are in the house of faith are carrying

out what our dear Lord and Savior told us to do, go in all the world and preach and teach the "good news!"

Thank you so much for this teaching, such deep stuff, and such a strong foundation to build on daily, and yet understandable in the mind of Christ Jesus. I love to teach and I love learning as well.—PA

FRESH THOUGHTS

DawnBible: Greetings from a fellow, if somewhat green, Bible student. I found answers to both some of my old and many of my recent prayers today on this site, as well as a fresh thought concerning Bible students views on 1874, 1914, and beyond.—CROATIA

DIFFICULT TIMES

DawnBible: I've enjoyed what I've read on your site and look forward to receiving my free booklet.

My family and I are going through some really difficult times and need all the prayer and encouragement we can get.

Thanks for this site and the meaningful articles. God bless this ministry.—VA

PREACHING TRUTH

Dear Friends: Congratulations about preaching of the truth. I have relatives—7th Day Adventist and Witnesses of Jehovah. Now a friend spoke to me about Bible students. I would like to know more.

He gave me a exemplar of *Divine Plan*. What a wonderful book. So, I wish a Bible study for mail, and, if possible, the book, *Thy Word is Truth*.

Thank you, friends. I wish to contact other Bible students, too. Thank God and I thank you.—BRAZIL

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

DawnBible: I had to do a paper on the Holy Spirit. I found that reading this section [the booklet, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*], it was very enlightening. Using the Bible references, I had a better understanding on the subject. Thank you very much.—USA

INFORMATIVE FOR THE PRESENT TIME

DawnBible: Thanks for your publications. They are very informative and help me to understand many things happening in the present time. I especially like *The Dawn*.—TX

ENJOYED WEBSITE

DawnBible: I've enjoyed what I have read on your site so much. I am excited about reading more. God bless.—LA

BOOKLETS NEEDED

DawnBible: Thank you, I like so much your site. Please send me booklets about *Armageddon* and about *Paradise without Pollution*. I need to witness about the Gospel.—BRAZIL

RAISED IN TRUTH

DawnBible: Thank you for helping to raise me in this wonderful truth. One day the whole world will know and be blessed.—CANADA

BOOKLET REQUEST

DawnBible: I am interested in reading the booklet, *Life after Death*.—FL

2009 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 7, 2009.

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

The audio cassette or CD can be purchased for \$2.00, or is available free on loan, from:

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

The DVD can be purchased for \$4.00. It is available free on loan, or can be purchased, from:

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

Cut-off date for ordering all tapes is March 24.



OBITUARIES

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

Brother Richard Tennant, Detroit area, MI—January 18.

General Convention Bulletin

July 18-23, 2009

THE 2009 GENERAL CONVENTION is only a few months away. Now is the time to make your plans to attend and participate in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. Once again the convention returns to the lovely facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style apartments (also air conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air conditioned) in other facilities will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge in his own sleeping bag if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

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

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 17. There will be one shuttle bus leaving the college in the

early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 24.

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

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

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

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane — Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

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

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 17, 2009				
Saturday, 18th				
Sunday, 19th				
Monday, 20th				
Tuesday, 21st				
Wednesday, 22nd				
Thursday, 23rd				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals <input type="checkbox"/> or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) <input type="checkbox"/>				
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath <input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> interested in APTS				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

M. Balko

Orlando, FL March 7-9

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

A. Allers

Orlando, FL March 7-9

D. Christiansen

Orlando, FL March 7-9

New London, CT March 29

B. Eckholt

Orlando, FL March 7-9

R. Goodman

Columbus, OH March 28,29

R. Gorecki

Fresno, CA March 27-29

L. Griehs

Columbus, OH March 28,29

S. Jeuck

Delaware Valley, PA March 22

B. Keith

Orlando, FL March 7-9

B. Montague

Orlando, FL March 7-9

H. Montague

Phoenix, AZ March 1

Gulfport, MS March 14,15

M. Nekora

Orlando, FL March 7-9

J. Parkinson

Phoenix, AZ March 1

Orlando, FL March 7-9

G. Tabac

Orlando, FL March 7-9

“Dawn Devotional Radio” Internet Radio Station

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

—Web Address—

www.live365.com/stations/dawn_radio

CONVENTIONS

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

SOUTHWEST WINTER CONVENTION, February 28-March 1—Sunnyslope High School, 35 W. Dunlap Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85021. Contact S. Humphreys. Phone: (623) 322-9082

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 7,8,9—Clarion Hotel-Altamonte Springs, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify "Florida Bible Students" for special rate until February 20. Other information, contact J. Wesol. Phone: (407) 699-1829

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 14,15—Hilton Garden Inn Gulfport Airport, Gulfport, MS. Phone: (228) 863-4996. Contact M. Costelli, PO Box 6235, Gulfport, MS 39506. Phone: (228) 861-2822

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, March 22—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. Phone: (215) 547-4100. Contact R. Eldridge, 37 Falcon Road, Levittown, PA 19056. Phone: (215) 949-0652

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 27,28,29—Vagabond Inn Executive, 2141 N. Parkway Drive, Fresno, CA 93705. Contact B. Wilson, 2103 N. Price, #112, Fresno, CA 93703. Phone: (559) 255-2241

COLUMBUS PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 28,29—Der Dutchman Restaurant, 445 S. Jefferson Avenue, Plain City, OH 43064. Contact T. Alexander. Phone: (614) 519-8282

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 29—Bayview Lodge, Society Road, Niantic, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 887-0706

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 4,5—Macomb Community College, Building “K”, 14500 Twelve Mile Road, Warren, MI 48088. Contact P. Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Drive, Troy, MI 48084. Phone: (248) 649-6588

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 10,11,12—Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, April 19—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact D. Szybinski. Phone: (212) 998-2095

BOISE CONVENTION, April 24,25,26—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers by April 3, 2009 at 7558 W. Hathaway Lane, Boise, ID 83714. Phone: (208) 375-6873

BUFFALO CONVENTION, May 2,3—Holiday Inn, 5440 Camp Road, Hamburg, NY 14075. Contact R. Morin for reservations by April 18, 2009. Phone: (585) 322-7459

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 18-23—(See page 59 of this issue) University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, PA. Contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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