

The Dawn

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Highlights of Dawn

For four decades the spotlight of world events has largely focused on the state of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem.

How strange that a place so small and of seemingly little consequence should make such a great impact on the world scene today.

Or is it strange?

What does the Bible say?

A City from Heaven

THERE are scores of cities mentioned in the Bible, and some of them are used symbolically in the sacred Word. One of these is Jerusalem. In the time of Abraham, Jerusalem was known by the name, Salem. Melchizedek was then king of Salem, and in welcoming Abraham he "brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God."—Gen. 14:18

Centuries later, when the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jebusites, and was known as Jebus, or the city of the Jebus. When the country was portioned out to the tribes of Israel the territory of Jerusalem was promised to two tribes—the northern part to Benjamin and the southern part to Judah.

King David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital. He called it the city of David. David's son, Solomon, built the Temple, and thus converted the city into the religious and spiritual center of the tribes of Israel. After the country was divided into two kingdoms, Jerusalem remained the capital of Judah—the two-tribe kingdom—where its successive kings reigned.

In the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who destroyed it. This was about 600 years before Christ. After seventy years' captivity in Babylon, the Jews returned to their land and Jerusalem was restored under the leadership of Nehemiah. Jerusalem continued to be the heart of the Hebrew revival after the captivity, until the Greeks captured it about 320 B.C. However, in 165 B.C. the Maccabean insurgents recovered the city and converted it into the capital of the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted until 37 B.C., when it was usurped by Herod the Great. With his advent to power, Herod embellished the city, adding many magnificent buildings, and fortified it.

Thus, at the time of Jesus' first advent, Jerusalem was under the rulership of the Roman Empire, although the Jews were allowed a great deal of religious liberty. The Roman authorities did not interfere with their worship as long as they did not attempt to interfere with the authority of their civil rulers. Because the Jewish religious rulers of Jerusalem and Israel at that time desired



A Street in Jerusalem

to get Jesus out of the way they were glad to appeal to the Roman civil rulers to help them. To procure this help they charged that Jesus claimed to be a king, which, if true, would have been treason against Rome.

Because of the opposition of the religious rulers of the day, the people in general, although they liked what Jesus said and did, were hindered from coming out boldly and accepting him. The crowds followed Jesus, probably largely because of his miracles, and once proclaimed him their king, but in the end many of them clamored for him to be put to death. Just a few days prior to his death Jesus said to that generation, "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."—Matt. 23:37-39

In this prophecy Jesus uses the city of Jerusalem as representing the entire Jewish polity. "Your house is left unto you desolate," he said. The typical house was coming to an end. This entailed also the desolation of the literal city of Jerusalem, which was brought about by the Roman army in 70-73 A.D.

After this desolation Jerusalem became a Roman town, and was called Aelia Capitolina. In 636 A.D. the Arabs possessed the city, and because they acknowledged its sanctity called it Makdas—the Venerable Sanctuary. Under Arab rule, many mosques were erected in the city, and by this means it acquired an additional measure of religious importance. The Crusaders captured the city in 1099, making it the capital of their domain in Palestine, sometimes known as the kingdom of Jerusalem.

The Crusaders held Jerusalem for about one hundred years. Then the Saracens wrested it from them, occupying it for over three hundred years. Next the Turks captured the city, and forti-

fied it by building a wall around it which still exists. It was in 1860 that the first Jewish suburb was built outside the wall of the old city, and thus that part of Jerusalem which is now known as the new city was born. The new town expanded rapidly, and soon its population exceeded that of the old city.

The Turks continued to hold control of Jerusalem until the British occupied it during the First World War—in 1917, to be exact. It then became the military headquarters of the British operation in Palestine. In 1920 the British civil administration was set up in Jerusalem, and this lasted until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

However, at this time the city was divided, the Israeli Government controlling only the new part of the city located outside the walls, while the Arabs controlled the more ancient portion of the city within the walls. These two parts of the city remained separate for nearly twenty years, but were finally joined under Israel's domination at the conclusion of the Six Days' War in June, 1967.

Today Jerusalem has a population of over 300,000, of which 230,000, mostly Jews, live outside the walls, and about 70,000 in what is now known as Eastern Jerusalem, including the old city. The majority of these are Moslems, with a minority of Christians of various denominations.

Much of the city of Jerusalem which existed in Jesus' day is buried under the rebuilt city of today. However, there are some remains of the old city still to be seen. The Wailing Wall is believed to be part of the wall of the Temple—that is, Herod's Temple—which was visited by Jesus and where he drove out the money changers. This Wailing Wall is very sacred to the Jewish people, and they gained free access to it when the walled city was captured by the Israeli Army in 1967.

We can well understand the high regard the Jews have for the ancient city of Jerusalem, and because of the unique circumstances associated with this particular city in the Holy Land, the

Lord uses it as a symbol of what the Bible describes as 'New Jerusalem'. We read, "I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And 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."—Rev. 21:2-4

Think of the war after war by which ancient Jerusalem has been ravished, with the consequent sorrow, pain, and death. Besides, these same evils have, through the centuries, afflicted the people of all nations and races. But these 'former things' are to pass away with the coming down out of heaven of the New Jerusalem of promise. God's rulership over Israel, beginning with David, was exercised from ancient Jerusalem; and divine rulership over all mankind will issue from the New Jerusalem—come down from God out of heaven.

God promised father Abraham that his seed would bless all the families of the earth. (Gen. 12:3; 22:15-18) Actually, this was a promise of rulership on the part of Abraham's seed. Later the governing part of this promise was narrowed to the descendants of Judah, a great-grandson of Abraham. We find this in a prophecy given by Jacob when he was pronouncing blessings upon

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each of his twelve sons. The prophecy reads, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.—Gen. 49:8-10

This prophecy was uttered in Egypt at a time when a couched lion was the symbol of the right to rule. So the implication is that from the tribe of Judah would come the great ruler, the Messiah of promise, described by the Prophet Ezekiel as the one "whose right it is," to rule over Israel and the whole world.—Ezek. 21:25-27

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of God's promised Messiah, he explained that this great one would sit upon the throne of his father, David. As the Scriptures reveal, David sat upon the throne of the Lord. (I Chron. 29:23) The promise of God was that David's ruling house would be established forever: "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." (II Sam. 7:16) This prophecy is fulfilled through Jesus.

The nation of Israel shared in the rulership of the kingdom of David, and could have gone on to share in the rulership of the antitypical David had the nation accepted him when he presented himself to them at his first advent. A few did, of course, and these were given power, or authority, to become the children of God in the new age then dawning, and thus were made joint-heirs with Christ.—John 1:11,12; Rom. 8:17

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of Israel, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43) These are the fruits of humility and obedience which the nominal Israelites of

Jesus' day failed to display; therefore the nation, as a nation, lost its messianic kingdom privileges of spiritual rulership as joint-heirs with Christ, and this was given to another nation.

Peter identifies this new nation to which the kingdom privileges, first offered to Israel, were transferred. Addressing followers of the Master, Peter wrote, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that he should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; which in time past were not a people: but are now the people of God."—I Pet. 2:9,10

In other words, the faithful followers of Jesus comprise the nation to which now belong the kingdom privileges once possessed exclusively by the natural descendants of Abraham. Believing and faithful Jews can still share these privileges, but no longer exclusively so. Probably the larger proportion of this group will turn out to be Gentiles. James said that God visited the Gentiles to "take out of them a people for his name"; that is, to be his people and members of that group which are depicted in the Scriptures as "the bride, the Lamb's wife."—Rev. 21:9

The expression, "the bride, the Lamb's wife," is used by the Apostle John in identifying the holy city which comes down from heaven. After explaining that as a result of the coming down of this city there shall be no more pain and death, and that former things are passed away, he relates, "There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."—Rev. 21:9,10

Some have supposed that this city which will come down from heaven is a literal city, but even a brief look at its description dispels the possibility of this being true. For example, the measurement of the city is given as follows: "The city lieth four-

square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”—Rev. 21:16

In Bible times a furlong was one-eighth of a mile. This would mean that the size of the New Jerusalem, if taken literally, would be fifteen hundred miles in all directions, including its height! Obviously, the entire description of the New Jerusalem is intended to be symbolic. But it does contain important identifications; for example, in its twelve foundations are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:12) And the whole city is “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

In Revelation 19:7,8 we read, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” Thus it becomes evident that the bride, the Lamb’s wife, is made up of his faithful followers who suffer and die with him inspired by the hope of being united with him in glory and sharing in his thousand-year reign which is designed for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

The work of God in the earth, then, since the first advent of Jesus, has been largely the gathering out from the world of this people who would share the messianic throne with Jesus. They are called by means of the Gospel, and the terms of the calling are a full dedication of themselves to know and to do God’s will. It is God’s will for these that they walk in Jesus’ steps of sacrifice even unto death.—Rev. 2:10; 3:21

This “bride class” further makes herself ready by being emptied of self and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Under the influence of the Spirit they grow in grace, put on the whole armor of God, and produce the various fruits of the Spirit. This making ready is the work of a lifetime for each member of the bride class, and when the last one has finished this work, the bride will have made herself ready for the marriage.

Not until then will the marriage of the Lamb take place, and therefore not until then can the holy city come down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This holy city, the New Jerusalem, is another of the Bible's symbols of the messianic kingdom; and it will be when that kingdom of blessing commences to function that pain and death will begin to vanish from the earth. And when the work of that kingdom is complete there will be no more pain and death at all, for the former things shall have passed away.

Isaiah 2:2-4 reads, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

The explanation that the law shall go forth from 'Zion', and the Word of the LORD from 'Jerusalem' suggests that there will be two phases to the kingdom of Christ symbolized by 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem'. Zion was the capital hill in the typical Jerusalem, and would well picture the spiritual phase of the messianic kingdom. Revelation 14:1 shows the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who follow him wherever he goes. (vs. 4) These are the ones—both Jews and Gentiles—who will share in the invisible rulership of the Messiah.

The faithful servants of God of past ages, whom we often speak of as the Ancient Worthies, will be the perfect human representatives of the divine Christ. These seem well represented by the 'Jerusalem' of the prophecy. These intermediaries, while not

the kingdom in the proper sense, will be so fully the representatives of it among men that they will be recognized as the kingdom by men. (Luke 13:28; Matt. 8:11) In the resurrection these will be restored to human perfection, which will enable them to communicate with those in the spiritual phase of the kingdom even as Adam, in his perfection, could communicate directly with the heavenly powers.

These Ancient Worthies will be made "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) Isaiah 32:1 reads, "Behold, a king [Jesus] shall reign in righteousness, and princes [the Ancient Worthies] shall rule in judgment." Another prophecy referring to the position of the Ancient Worthies in the kingdom reads, "I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city."—Isa. 1:26

While the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21 pictures more particularly the heavenly phase of the messianic kingdom, the earthly representatives of that 'city' are appropriately also here referred to as a city of righteousness—not another government or city, but the human rulership phase of the one glorious messianic kingdom.

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Isaiah's prophecy refers to these human representatives of the kingdom as judges and as counselors. Since they will be perfect, and able to commune directly with the divine Christ, their judgment will be just and their counseling wise. The people of all nations will quickly recognize the superior qualities of these princes, and will be glad to fall in line with their instructions, for it will be discerned that they are speaking and acting for the LORD. It will indeed be an administration of righteousness with the laws originating in Zion and the Word of the LORD going forth from Jerusalem.—Mic. 4:2

John observed that the holy city which he saw in vision come down from heaven had no temple in it. The Temple and its services were an important part of ancient Jerusalem, beginning with the reign of Solomon. But that was merely a symbol, as it were, of a much better arrangement, in the form of the city which comes down from heaven. John explains that God and the Lamb are the 'temple' in this city. Another picture of this government is a throne—"the throne of God and of the Lamb."

It is important to realize that this New Jerusalem is not a city made up of literal buildings and walls. We remember Jesus' reply to the woman of Samaria concerning the proper place to worship. He said, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—John 4:21,23,24

The New Jerusalem is a beautiful picture of the messianic kingdom arrangement and how all the personnel associated with it, spiritual and human, will direct the people of all nations to the worship—not of a city—but of God, and his beloved Son. The Lamb will be the light of that city which will guide the nations

into the true worship of God, “that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”—Zeph. 3:9

The coming down of the city out of heaven is God’s way of telling us that the messianic kingdom is not of human origin, and is not established by human wisdom and strength. It is God’s arrangement for the blessing of the sin-cursed and dying race. This arrangement calls for the exercise of divine power in the resurrection of the dead—first, Jesus, two thousand years ago; and at this end of the age those who are brought forth in the “first resurrection” to “live and reign with him a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:6

Then there will be the “better resurrection” of the Ancient Worthies to perfection of human nature to be the representatives of the divine Christ. (Heb. 11:35,40) Finally there will be the resurrection of all the dead, Jews and Gentiles. Those Jews at various times who saw their sacred city of Jerusalem pillaged and destroyed will be awakened and learn that there is now a New Jerusalem to give them light and guidance, health and life—the invisible city or government of Jehovah and his Son, the Lamb who was slain for their redemption.

We can well understand the great love the Israelites now have for literal Jerusalem—although there is very little of the ancient city still to be seen. The Wailing Wall is meaningful and sacred to them now, but with the joys of the messianic kingdom available to them it will lose its significance, except as a reminder of some of their harsh experiences of the past. With the earth filled with health, joy, and life, all mankind will rejoice, and will learn the advantages of worshipping their God in spirit and in truth.

With the establishment of the messianic kingdom will come the fulfillment of Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” It is interesting to note that all who hear and respond to this invitation to partake of the water of life will have the oppor-

tunity of relaying the invitation to others. We believe that to begin with the majority of those who hear and respond will be the Jews who are restored to their land of promise. But it will not stop with them, for these blessings of life have been provided for all families of the earth!

The Jewish people who respond will have the privilege of joining in the happy proclamation, offering the water of life to others, as will responding Gentiles. The 'whosoever' of this text includes all nationalities and races, all of whom, in turn, have the opportunity of saying, "Come." Thus the glorious work of the kingdom will continue through the city or government provided in the divine plan for the recovery of the human race from sin and death.

Meanwhile the events taking place in Israel today are among the strong indications that Messiah's kingdom is near, for the prophecies reveal that the LORD would restore his people to the Promised Land just prior to the manifestation of that kingdom. And how enthusiastic the Israelites will be when they realize that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets are in their midst to govern and guide them on the highway that will lead to their restoration to health and everlasting life! And, thank God, this joy they too may quickly spread to the people of all nations. Let us even now rejoice as we look forward to this glorious time of blessing for all! □

• • •

Obituaries

Brother H. Pateman, Dorset, England

Sister Helen Chandler, South Bend, IN—June 4. Age, 89

Sister Alice Adams Hansen, Marshfield, WI—July 25. Age, 51

Sister Mollie Nichols, Washougal, WA—August. Age, 67

Sister Gladys Cumming, Brooklyn, NY—August 12. Age, 88

Sister Phyllis Hermans, Calgary, B.C.—August 30. Age, 80

Sister Argie G. Meharry, Spokane, WA—September 8. Age, 84

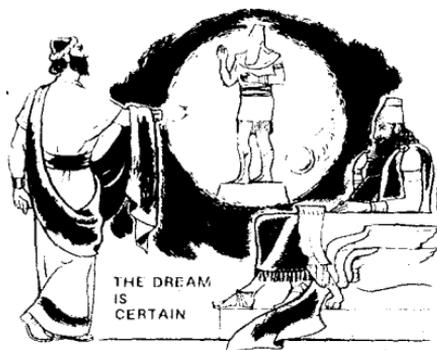
Sister Stamatia Tsimonis, Waterbury, CT—September 28. Age, 91

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International Bible Study Lessons

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 6

Responding to God's Call

KEY VERSE: *"The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."*—Jeremiah 1:4,5

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19

JEREMIAH was the last of Israel's prophets before their years of captivity in the land of the Chaldeans. It was a difficult time and required a prophet with great confidence in God, willing to undergo much hardship and persecution. His message would be unpopular—it spoke of the destruction of Israel. Such a prophet was Jeremiah who was chosen from birth and prepared throughout his early years for this difficult task.

By nature Jeremiah was not a courageous man. He hesitated to accept the commission of the LORD to serve as a prophet, explaining that he was but a child. However, God reassured Jeremiah by the promise that he would be with him, and that he would be able to prophesy whatever he was commanded.

In exercising his commission to prophesy destruction, Jeremiah not only foretold the invasion of Israel and the taking of the people into captive slavery, but he lived to see it come to pass, experiencing the very things he had suffered so much for telling.

But that was not all—he spoke of many things that were still centuries in the future. He foretold that Babylon and other nations would be destroyed. However, his prophecies concerning the overthrow of Babylon have a larger fulfillment in the destruction of a symbolic, or mystic Babylon.

Chapters 50 and 51 of Jeremiah's prophecy seem to refer particularly to the destruction of this symbolic Babylon, from which the LORD's people are urged

to flee. Symbolic Babylon is depicted as dwelling, or sitting, upon many waters, and the prophecies show that Jehovah's judgments against her will mean her end.

Just as Jeremiah foretold, literal Babylon became a desolation, and we are confident that in God's due time, true to his prophecies, symbolic Babylon will also become equally desolated. Thereafter, God will turn to the people a pure language that they may all know and unitedly serve him.

As we have seen, Jeremiah foretold the going into captivity of this Israel, the destruction of literal and symbolic Babylon, and also the destruction of other ancient nations. However, he was also used of the LORD not only to forecast the return of Israel to their land following the seventy years of captivity, but also to forecast a much more far-reaching return of captives down here at the end of the present age, a return from their scattering among all nations.

The LORD told Jeremiah that he had set him over nations and kingdoms "to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." Actually Jeremiah did none of these things. The evident reference is to the fact that the LORD would use him to prophesy concerning destruction, and

planting, and building. From the way the LORD states the matter it would seem that he considers those whom he uses to forecast events, to that extent to have participated in them.

This is a very interesting and important viewpoint. It means that the LORD considers the declaration of truths concerning his plans as having a very important part in their accomplishment. This helps us to understand more clearly, for example, how we today can proclaim the "opening of the prison"—that is, the prison of death—"to them that are bound." We cannot, while this side the veil, actually raise the dead, but we can and should announce the divine purpose to raise the dead; and by so doing, we are even now having a part in that glorious purpose.

We are not to pronounce vengeance upon the nations, nor to assist in the destruction of this present evil world, but it is our privilege to proclaim to the people the meaning of what is occurring in the earth, that it is a manifestation of God's vengeance against systems of unrighteousness which must be set aside to make way for the kingdom of Christ. How wonderfully the LORD honors those who are faithful to the commission he gives them to speak for him! □

Hiding behind Religion

KEY VERSE: *"This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished and is cut off from their mouth."*—*Jeremiah 7:28*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 7:1-15*

THIS scripture is an excerpt from a stirring sermon delivered by Jeremiah at the gate of the Temple in Jerusalem in about the year 609 B.C. Gathered there were people believing they had refuge in the protective arms of God, but the prophet rebuked this mistaken notion, telling them that God would not protect them from the fruits of their sin and injustice. "Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal . . . and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name . . . and say we are delivered?" (Jer. 7:9,10) Then he invites them to visit Shiloh where the Tabernacle no longer existed, and prophesies that, in like manner, the Temple would also cease to be.

One of the sins of God's typical people was their inclination to place confidence in the messages of false prophets, or diviners rather than in the words of the

LORD that were sent to them through his true and holy prophets. They refused to heed the messages of Jeremiah, preferring to believe those who told them that the nation was in no danger, those who prophesied, "Peace, peace." (Jer. 6:14; 8:11) Now calamity was about to come upon the nation, and the LORD, through Jeremiah, took occasion to warn them again of the evil results of allowing themselves to be influenced by false prophets.

The tone of this whole message is that of God's solicitude for the peace and prosperity of his people. They had sinned but he still loved them, and he wanted them to return to him and serve him with their whole heart. God is not vindictive, but merciful and kind, and ever ready to forgive and bless his people when they come to him in the spirit of true repentance and ask for his mercy. "Amend your ways and your doings and I will

cause you to dwell in this place.”

—Jer. 7:3

This scripturally reassured fact is quite generally recognized by Christians, and to some extent at least, all the professed followers of Jesus endeavor to emulate that divine principle of mercy enunciated by Jesus when he told Peter that he should forgive those who sinned against him, not seven times only, but seventy times seven. Yes, Jesus believed in giving a person many chances, not merely a “second chance”!

But a strange and unscriptural philosophy has developed throughout the centuries to the effect that while God can keep forgiving a person over and over again while he remains alive, the moment of death automatically puts an end to any further exercise of divine mercy. This is a human limitation which has been placed upon God's love and mercy, a limitation suggested by the poet when he wrote:

*“Men make God's love too narrow
By false limits of their own;
And they magnify his vengeance
With a zeal He will not own.”*

There is no scriptural authority for supposing that death is the dividing line between divine mercy and divine wrath. This is purely a

human measuring line. The scriptural fact is that God has promised to awaken the dead and extend his mercy toward them under conditions favorable to their acceptance of the Redeemer and their obedience to divine law. The matter that determines whether or not God will continue to extend his mercy toward an individual is the degree of knowledge against which he sins.

An important lesson of this prophecy is that God's justice and wisdom establishes a limit to the exercise of his love and mercy, for the good of his people. This was exemplified in his dealings with Israel. He caused their Temple to be torn down and the people to be taken captive into Babylon. But he further wrote through the prophet of his desire that during the period of their captivity they prepare themselves for their return to their own land. This captivity had come to the nation as a punishment for its sins, yet through the prophet, God explained to them that he had caused it for their good, and not because he was spiteful toward them.—Jer. 29:10,11

In Jeremiah 31:3 we have a beautiful statement of God's abiding love for his people, Israel. It is described as an everlasting, or age-lasting love.

Suffering for Truth

KEY VERSE: *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake."*—Matthew 5:10

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 37:1-38; 38:4-13*

THERE can be many reasons for enduring persecution, but the only ones that will result in blessings from the LORD are those which have a righteous cause. Because of his faithfulness in speaking out for God, the Prophet Jeremiah was severely persecuted. A record of this is written in the 38th chapter of his prophecy.

God had said that the kingdom of Israel would fall to the threatening Chaldean armies. This message Jeremiah relayed to the king who was very unhappy with the report. Zedekiah apparently had somewhat of a liking for the prophet, but not his prophecy, and as a result shut him up many days in a dungeon to coerce him into agreeing with his other advisers who were saying God would protect Jerusalem. But Jeremiah remained steadfast in his faithfulness to what God had said.

Certain of the court princes, realizing that his counsel to surrender to the Babylonian king could well "weaken the hands

[morale]" of the people, urged the king to have Jeremiah put to death. Influenced by their wicked advice, the weak king turned the prophet over to them and gave permission to do whatever they thought necessary. Whereupon they cast him into a cistern expecting to let him die there. The LORD, however, provided a way of escape through an officer of the palace.

The Apostle Paul, in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, reminds us that persecution and hardship was common during that age among those who were, like Jeremiah, willing to endure terrible physical pain and even death, because they shared the cause of a "better hope" spoken by God. They all died not having received the promise, but looking for blessings to come in a future age.

The transition of God's dealings from that long-ago age into the present Gospel Age did not alter the validity of our text. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have

tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) As appraised by human wisdom, it would seem that the world had overcome Jesus. Certainly he was cruelly put to death by selfish human elements of the religious world of his day. But in this experience Jesus was the real overcomer. Because he knew it was his Father's will that he should die as the Redeemer of the fallen and dying race, he surrendered to his enemies and continued to love them even though they put him to death.

As throughout the age many of the faithful followers of the Master were persecuted, so too during the present harvest period at the end of the age those who have espoused the cause of truth and faithfully let their light shine have often found themselves the targets of those who, under the influence of the "god of this world," oppose the lightbearers.—II Cor. 4:4

To a considerable extent, however, the position of religion and the world has changed during the last sixty or seventy years. While the fundamentalists are still quite outspoken in their opposition to present truth, the modernistic viewpoint is one of indifference to all doctrinal viewpoints. Besides, the theory of religious liberty and

tolerance is stressed so much these days that it has led to a large degree of freedom for those who are active in proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom. Just as the LORD held back the opposition in Corinth because he had "much people" in that city to be reached and served by the brethren, so too now the church, for the most part, would seem to be living under similar circumstances.

On the whole, at the present time the LORD's people are remarkably free from persecution. But there is no need to conclude that this is due to lack of faithfulness in proclaiming the truth. Neither is it necessary to wonder whether or not the LORD's people have been sufficiently outspoken, or condemnatory, in their manner of witnessing. The real reason is, it seems to us, that the LORD had a work to be accomplished through a widespread witness of the truth which could not be done if he permitted the forces of opposition against the truth to have their way.

Let us, then, utilize our present favorable opportunities and use every privilege we have of proclaiming "good tidings of good." If we do this, like Jeremiah we will find that even now, in this quiet and favorable time, the truth is not popular.

A New Covenant

KEY VERSE: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."—*Jeremiah 31:33*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 31:27-34*

WHEN THE principles of the Law were formerly given to Israel they were written in stone. The Apostle Paul, referring to this fact, says that those stone tables well expressed the "letter" of the law, which did little to change men's hearts. As a result mankind continued to die even though the Law seemed to offer life. He referred to it as "the ministration of death written and engraven in stone."—II Cor. 3:6,7

In this same context, Paul, by way of contrast, looked forward to a 'more glorious' "administration of righteousness." He calls it a ministration of the Spirit which "giveth life." (vss. 6,8,9) And he infers that the instruments being prepared now to teach men how to acquire life in the future will be more effective than those of the past, because, rather than being inscribed on stone, they are written on the "tables of the heart," and the engraving is being accom-

plished by the Holy Spirit of God.

The apostle declares that these are people—people who are taught to understand and apply the righteous principles of God's Holy Law, even under the very adverse circumstances of the present life, and in this way they are prepared to be "able ministers of the New Testament [Covenant]."—vs. 6

Another important difference that will make life a possibility under this new administration of God's law is mentioned in Jeremiah 31:29 of our scripture lesson: "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." This prophetic statement has a wide application in the experiences of the human race, father Adam being the first to sin and by heredity inflicting the result of his transgression upon his children.

The Apostle Paul explains that by one man's disobedience sin en-

tered into the world and death by sin, so death has passed upon all men because all have sinned. (Rom. 5:12,19) This is Paul's way of describing in literal language what Jeremiah illustrates by the proverb of the sour grape as it has applied in times past, and still applies today.

But Jeremiah assures us that this will not always be true, that a time is coming when each individual who transgresses the divine law will himself be the one to suffer, and that the result of his own sin will not be passed on to his offspring. This complete reversal of human experience is to be brought about during the Millennial Age through the administration of the laws of Christ's kingdom, the result of Adamic sin having been set aside by the redemptive work of Christ.

And that will be the time also, when the LORD, in fulfillment of this promise, will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. The making of the New Covenant with Israel and the world will be a work requiring the thousand years of Christ's reign, for it involves the writing of God's law in the hearts of the people.

Adam was in covenant relationship with the LORD before he

sinned. There was no written law at that time, but being in the image of God, the divine law was a very part of Adam's being. So it will be with restored Israel and the world at the close of the thousand years of Christ's reign, and thus they will have entered into full covenant relationship with God. How better can this be expressed than by the words of our Key Verse: "I . . . will be their God, and they shall be my people." What a blessed hope!

The church of Christ will serve together with Jesus as mediators, or as the apostle states it, "able ministers of the New Testament [or Covenant]." (II Cor. 3:6) The preparatory work looking toward the inauguration of the New Covenant began with the first advent of Jesus. It will be his blood that will seal that covenant, and each one of his followers is being trained for the high position of joint-heirship with him in administering the terms of that covenant.

When the work of making the New Covenant is complete, the knowledge of God's righteousness and glory will fill the whole earth, and no one will need to say to his neighbor, "Know the LORD," for all shall know him. His law will then come to reside in the hearts and inward parts of everyone.

Christian Life and Doctrine

THE SEED—Part 8, Conclusion

Israelites Indeed

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”—John 1:47

JESUS' reference to Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed” implies that at the time of our Lord's first advent there were those who were Israelites in name only. Jesus identified some of these when he said to the Pharisees and others of the Jews: “Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” (John 8:44) The Apostle Paul supported this viewpoint when, in writing to the brethren at Rome, he said, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel.”—Rom. 9:6

A number of instances are recorded in the Bible in which God changed the names of his servants in order to teach certain lessons pertaining to the outworking of his plan of the ages. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, Sarai's to Sarah. (Gen. 17:5,15) Strictly speaking, the name Israel is not the family name of the descendants of Abraham, but a new name given to Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, indicating certain important characteristics he had demonstrated.

According to Professor Strong, the name Israel in the Hebrew language means, ‘He will rule as God’. Other scholars suggest the definition, ‘to prevail with God’, or, as the margin reads, ‘a prince of God’. The name Israel was given to Jacob after he had wrestled with an angel, who explained, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”—Gen. 32:28

The overall thought seems to be that the name Israel symbolically describes one who, through faithfulness, secures God's favor and is given the honor of being associated with him in the accomplishment of his purposes. To be a true Israelite one must "prevail" with God, and all who do prevail will, in one category or another, rule with him.

Seemingly, the LORD gave this name to Jacob to further emphasize the complete and ultimate meaning of the promise to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. Actually that promise does mean that all who ultimately come within its gracious provisions will have prevailed with God by their faithfulness, and will be as princes, or kings, ruling with God.

First of all we see Jesus as the messianic seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:16) At what great cost did he prevail with God to prove his worthiness to be King of kings and Lord of lords! (Rev. 19:16) Then there are those who, beginning with Jesus and Pentecost, likewise have proved worthy of God's favor. In the divine arrangement, these are made "priests of God and of Christ," and reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:6; II Tim. 2:12,13

And then, throughout the ages preceding our Lord's first advent, earthly princes, or rulers, as well as the common people were being tested and trained to be the human representatives of the divine Christ. These also prevailed with God by their faithfulness, in many instances even unto death. Paul mentions many of these, and informs us that they received the testimony that they pleased God. Because of their faithfulness, they were found worthy of a "better resurrection" than mankind in general, in the sense that they will be awakened to instant human perfection, and thus qualified to cope with the problems of humanity which they will immediately face.—Heb. 11:13,35,39,40

We should not suppose that this group of ancient faithful and worthy servants of God consisted merely, or even chiefly, of those named by Paul as cited above. He explains that time did not

permit him to identify them all, and how right he was! (Heb. 11:32) Paul mentions many of the outstanding personalities of the Old Testament, but in Romans 11:2-4, quoting from the Old Testament, he indicates that in the generation of Elijah's day there were more than seven thousand whom the LORD had reserved unto himself, obviously because they had prevailed with him.

Historians do not attempt to mention individually all who are involved in the events which they narrate. We have a good example of this in Acts. Comparatively speaking, only a few names are mentioned in this book, yet we know that in the Early Church there were many thousands of earnest followers of the Master.

So far as we are aware, the Scriptures do not positively indicate the exact number of those who will be "princes in all the earth." (Ps. 45:16) We know, however, that there will be a sufficient number to properly function as the earthly ruling phase of the messianic kingdom. And, on a lower plane than the divine Christ, they will be as though ruling with God, because they will be authorized and empowered by him.

All the families of the earth are to be blessed through the seed of Abraham. God said to Abraham, "Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee." (Gen. 17:4,5) Paul quotes this promise, and indicates that it has a partial fulfillment in the fact that the spiritual Israelites of the Gospel Age are selected from among all nations. (Rom. 4:8-25) But we believe it has a larger fulfillment in that all the families of the earth who are blessed by the seed of Abraham also become his children, his seed.

The Scriptures reveal clearly that the blessing provided for all the families of the earth is restoration to life, and to the dominion forfeited through the sin of our first parents. Man was created in the image of God, and given dominion over the earth. He was

made king of earth, and therefore, a part of the royal, or ruling, family of God.—Gen. 1:27,28

But when our first parents transgressed God's law, they lost both dominion and life. In the parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus assures us that the people of all nations are to come into judgment during the time of his reign, and that they will be divided as a shepherd "divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:31-46) This is not an arbitrary division, but is based on qualification. Those who prevail by their faithfulness to the divine principles of righteousness then in force throughout the earth become the sheep of the parable.

To these sheep, or worthy ones, the glorious pronouncement is made, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (vs. 34) These also re-inherit the life which was lost by sin, and purchased for them by the blood of Christ. As restored humans, enjoying perfection of life, they will be kings of earth, and on the human plane will be ruling with God, as members of his royal family, even as Adam did before he sinned.

Thus we see that the name Israel, as given to Jacob, comprehensively suggests the complete outworking of the divine purpose as set forth in the promise made to Abraham. It reminds us also that the blessing mentioned in the Abrahamic Covenant is obtained only by those who prevail with God by proving their faithfulness to him. This is true both of the earthly and spiritual ruling seeds, as well as the larger seed—the many nations who will, as subjects of the messianic kingdom, be restored to human perfection and ultimately inherit the lost dominion of earth.

In Genesis 4:26 we read: "Then began men to call themselves by the name of the LORD." (Marginal translation) Man was endowed with the desire to worship his Creator and, despite the fact that he was now alienated from God because of sin, he wanted to be associated with him. This was true of at least some in those early days of the antediluvian world.

This desire to worship a higher power has manifested itself throughout all the ages since. Satan has taken advantage of human weakness and lack of judgment, and has led men and women into worshipping all sorts of false gods. In most instances these false gods have been pictured as vindictive and cruel, hence fear and dread have been powerful motivating influences in the religious concepts of the people.

But nevertheless God has inclined toward many who have earnestly sought him and desired to please him. This was true of some in the antediluvian world. Enoch, for example, "walked with God," and he was used by God to prophesy concerning the coming of the LORD with "ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment."—Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; Jude 14,15

And, of course, there were Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses—in fact all the Ancient Worthies. Beginning with the death of Jacob, God began to deal with his twelve sons and their families as a nation. These were his people—his nation. At Mt. Sinai God entered into a covenant with this nation, Moses serving as mediator. Thus Israel became God's covenant people, or nation.

The Law, as epitomized in the Ten Commandments, was the basis of this covenant. En masse the people agreed to abide by the terms of the covenant, and God promised to bless them as a people in proportion to their faithfulness. The ultimate blessing promised for obedience to the Law was life. But to obtain life under the Law required perfect obedience, and no member of the fallen race was capable of rendering full obedience to God's perfect Law, so none gained life.

Concerning the Law, Paul wrote, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Gal. 3:19) As we have seen, the seed envisioned in the promise to Abraham was Christ, and associated with him his body members. (Gal. 3:16, 26-29) It was God's design that Jesus, the head of the Christ company, should be of the natural seed of

Abraham, that he should come from the nation of Israel.

But sin and selfishness, unbridled, would have disrupted the Israelites as a nation long before it was due time for the Messiah to come, so, as Paul explains, one of the purposes of the Law was to serve as a deterrent to sin. While the record of the nation from the giving of the Law to the birth of Jesus is not by any means an enviable one, it certainly would have been much worse had it not been for the restraining influences of God's Law, which as a nation the people had agreed to keep.

Paul also referred to the Law as a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." (Gal. 3:24) The thought here seems to be that the inability of fallen man to keep God's perfect Law taught the necessity of a Redeemer from sin. The Jewish nation was the first to have the opportunity of learning this lesson, but it will not be until they are raised from the dead that they will really benefit from their failure. Then they will learn that only through the redemptive work of Jesus is everlasting life available. Through the failure of the nation of Israel to gain life under the Law, Gentile nations also will have the necessity of the shed blood of Jesus Christ emphasized to them.

However, as we have seen, beginning with righteous Abel and continuing to John the Baptist, there were those who enjoyed the smile of God's favor upon the basis of their faith and heart loyalty to him. This was true during the time when the Law Covenant was operative with the nation of Israel. Except during a few short periods, the majority of the nation paid little attention to the Law, and from time to time were enticed into idolatry and other gross sins.

But there were always the few who, like David, were at heart loyal to God. These were hindered from perfect obedience to the Law only by their inherited imperfections. These did not gain life under the Law, but they did receive the testimony that because of their faith and obedience they were pleasing to God. These were "Israelites indeed."

Through Moses, God said to the people of Israel, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Exod. 19:5,6) While, as we shall see, there is to be a spiritual "holy nation," yet this promise of God had vital meaning to fleshly Israel, for there is also to be an earthly phase of the kingdom, a visible "holy nation."

The LORD knew that no single generation of the Israelites would qualify to be his holy nation on earth. But he also knew that there would be a remnant of the Israelites in each generation who, through faith and heart obedience, would obtain a good report, and that in due time he would raise these up in the better resurrection to be the visible holy nation of promise.

At the close of the Jewish Age, when the Israelites as a nation proved unworthy of the kingdom blessings offered by the LORD, Jesus said to them, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21:43) The head of this new nation to whom the kingdom was given is Jesus, and Peter identified the other members. He wrote, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, . . . which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."—I Pet. 2:9,10

Not all the members of this new, spiritual nation were living in Peter's day. It requires the entire Gospel Age to select these from the world. Even as with the Ancient Worthy class, who will be the visible part of this holy nation, it will be made up of a few from many generations who proved their worthiness of this exalted position in the plan of God by being faithful unto death.

How important it is to take into consideration the resurrection feature of the divine plan if we are to comprehend the full meaning of the promises of God! God makes his promises and carries forward his plan for the recovery of the human race from

sin and death, knowing that the death of his people in no way interferes. It is as though they merely fall asleep at night and awaken in the morning to enter into the rewards which our loving Heavenly Father promised to the faithful.

The Scriptures clearly establish the fact that many of the natural descendants of Abraham, who later were given the name Israelites, held this status only by reason of birth, that they were not "Israelites indeed" in whom there was no guile. There are also many wonderful promises made to these, promises which give assurance that they, too, are to be awakened from the sleep of death and given an opportunity to participate in the joys of the messianic kingdom, not as its rulers and princes, but as its subjects.

Moses said to the Israelites of his day, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18:15) Peter quoted this prophecy and explained that it would have its fulfillment following the second coming of Christ and during the "times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-23) Peter proffered this as a hope to the unbelieving Jews of his day, a hope that would be translated into reality upon the basis of their repentance and the blotting out of their sins.

Here, then, is a promise to those of Israel who did not obtain a good report through faith, and therefore did not qualify for the better resurrection. This promise also depends for fulfillment upon the resurrection feature of the divine plan. How meaningless would be many of God's promises if we attempted to limit their application to the generation living at the time they were made!

In the Apostle Paul's speech before Felix, he indicated that the Law and the prophets gave assurance of a resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:14,15) The resurrection of the just of those ages preceding the first advent of Christ will be the better resurrection mentioned by Paul. (Heb. 11:35)

(Continued on Page 37)

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Whitehorse CKRW-610 9:30 a.m.

OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

BRITISH ISLES
Dublin Christian Broadcasting 9:00 p.m.
Radio Caroline-Tues. KHZ 962 8:45 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES
Grand Cayman Radio Cayman 9:30 a.m.

CEYLON
Columbo-Sat. Radio Sri Lanka 7:15 p.m.

HONG KONG
Radio Villa Verde-Fri. 6:00 p.m.

ITALY (Italian)
Europa Radio Milano 83.3-FM 11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri.
MHZ 102 5:30 p.m.
Radio Corleone Centrale
FM-88-500 FM-92 11:00 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)
Culiacán Ranchera XECO 8:30 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND
Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.
Whakatane IXX 6:45 a.m.

NIGERIA
Radio Africa-Wed. 8:00 p.m.

PANAMA
Panama City HOQ 1250 10:30 a.m.

PERU
Lima-Sat. Radio Unión 880 AM 2:00 p.m.

PHILIPPINES
Manila-Sat. DZAM 1026 KHz 7:15 p.m.

SOUTH AFRICA
Joubert Park-Thurs. SWAZI Music
Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

SPAIN (Spanish)
Radio Gerona-Mon. 9:45 p.m.

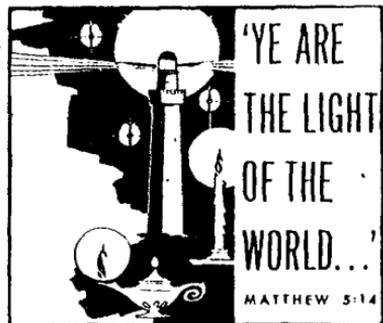
TONGA
Nuku' Alofa-Mon. 10:15 a.m.

URUGUAY (Spanish)
Montevideo Radio El Espectador 810 9:15 a.m.

VIRGIN ISLANDS
St. Croix WSTX 970 9:00 a.m.

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Eastern U.S. (Sat.) WRNO 15.20 12:45 p.m.



The Bible Answers

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CONNECTICUT Waterbury WCAT Channel 13- (Tues.) 6:00 p.m.			MISSISSIPPI Jackson WAPT
FLORIDA Miami WKID Jacksonville Channel 17			MISSOURI Springfield KOLR
GEORGIA Atlanta WATL			NEW MEXICO Roswell KSWs
ILLINOIS Champaign-Springfield WBHW			NORTH CAROLINA Hickory WHKY
IOWA Cedar Rapids KTS-13 Mt. Vernon-WMVL Cable 7:00 a.m. Lisbon (every weekday)			OHIO Dayton WHIO
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The resurrection of the unjust is also clearly pointed out in the Scriptures. In Daniel 12:1,2, where Daniel is assured of the deliverance of his people, we read: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The just come forth to life, the unjust to "contempt."

The resurrection of the unjust is also foretold in Ezekiel 16:55-63. Here the assurance of the resurrection is extended to the Gentiles also—even such wicked Gentiles as the Sodomites. The Israelites referred to in this promise are those who "despised the oath in breaking the covenant." (vs. 59) In other words, here is another of God's promises to **nominal** Israelites, those who did not receive the testimony that they pleased God. There were many of these in each generation of Israel.

As already noted, God dealt with the descendants of Jacob as a nation. This meant that both the just and the unjust shared in whatever experiences God permitted to come upon the nation. At times, when the leaders of the people were God-fearing, and did all in their power to direct them in paths of righteousness, the nation was blessed, and the just as well as the unjust enjoyed these blessings.

The reverse was also true. Note the time when the nation was taken into captivity in Babylon because of her sins. Not all in the nation at that time were of the unjust class. There were, for example, Daniel and his three young friends who demonstrated their loyalty to the true God of Israel even at the risk of their lives. Nevertheless, they were among the captives. There were many others among the captives who likewise were loyal to Jehovah.

Probably one of the divine purposes in this dealing with Israel as a nation was to demonstrate that no people could be expected en masse to be faithful and loyal to God. The test could have been made with any other nation, or people, and the result would have been the same. From this demonstration we learn that

qualification for a position, either in the earthly or the spiritual ruling phase of the kingdom, must be on an individual basis. A nation was called—the nation of Israel; but, as a nation, Israel failed to make her calling and election sure.

This principle will carry over into the Millennial Age, and will apply to those who become loyal subjects of the kingdom and thereby qualify for everlasting life on the earth. Each, individually, will need to hear and obey “that prophet,” or else be destroyed from among the people. No one will obtain everlasting life simply on the basis of being a natural descendant of Abraham, or of any other ancient servant of God.

The Scriptures clearly establish the fact that throughout the Gospel Age there have been many people of God in name only. And, as in past ages, these have been identified with the “Israelites indeed.” The wheat and the tares have grown together. (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43) A separation takes place at the end of the age, when the true people of God are called to “come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—Rev. 18:4

Just as in the Old Testament concerning fleshly Israel there are warnings of impending punishments upon nominal Israelites, and also precious promises of rewards for the faithful, so the Scriptures contain both warnings and promises for the two classes of spiritual Israelites. A good example of this is found in the messages to the seven churches, recorded in Revelation, chapters two and three. Concerning the church at Pergamos we read, “Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.”—Rev. 2:14

We read again, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.” (Rev. 3:4) The implication here is that there were many in this stage of the church who were not faithful. To the faithful, in all seven churches, wonder-

ful promises are made; and to the unfaithful, warnings of dire punishments and the withdrawal of divine favor unless there would come a genuine repentance.

But just as God's mercy will, in the resurrection, be extended to the unjust of Israel, so also **nominal** spiritual Israelites will have the blessings of everlasting human life offered to them. In Acts 15:17 coming kingdom blessings are assured to both of these classes who failed to qualify either as 'princes' or as 'kings' in the messianic kingdom. Here we are assured that through the ruling agencies of the kingdom, the residue of men and all Gentiles who call upon God's name will be given an opportunity to seek after the LORD. The Gentiles upon whom the LORD's name has been called are undoubtedly those who have composed the nominal Christian church.

The expression, 'residue of men', is a paraphrased quotation from Amos 9:12, where the prophet spoke of "the remnant of Edom." The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, who sold his birthright for inheriting the Abrahamic promise. Paul explains in Romans that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Rom. 9:6) He used the case of Jacob and Esau to illustrate his point. In this instance he is discussing the case of the unbelieving Israelites who stumbled at the first presence of Jesus, indicating, apparently, that they would be fittingly represented by Esau.

It is true that there were unbelieving Israelites of every generation who failed to prove worthy of the chief blessing envisioned in the Abrahamic promise. The 'kingdom' was taken away from this class by Jesus, thus forfeiting this aspect of their inheritance, selling their birthright to be a part of the ruling seed, either in the spiritual phase of the messianic kingdom, or the earthly.

But thank God, these have not forfeited the blessings of life which will be made available to them through God's mercy for, with the kingdom established, they will be the first to be given an opportunity to seek after the LORD. Amos states that these, the remnant of Edom, will be "possessed," or ruled over, by the re-

stored "tabernacle of David" over which Christ will be the spiritual ruling head. (Isa. 9:6,7) Upon their belief and obedience, they will become honored subjects of the new kingdom. Because of their past association with God, his laws, and his people, these will have much to contribute to the general work of blessing all the families of the earth which will then be in progress.

By way of summing up, it seems evident from the Scriptures that in every preparatory age of the divine plan there have been the true and faithful people of God, the "Israelites indeed," and also those who have been associated with these but actually the LORD's people in name only. While the promises and callings of God have gone out to all who have professed to be his people, only those who have been truly faithful and loyal to the conditions attached to them have made their calling and election sure.

The faithful ones alone will comprise the heavenly and earthly ruling phases of Messiah's kingdom. With the close of the Gospel Age, when the door to the high calling is closed and the last of the spiritual Israelites indeed have passed beyond the veil, the preparatory features of the divine plan will end. No more rulers for the kingdom, either 'princes' or 'kings', will then be developed.

But, thank God, this does not mean the end of divine grace! In reality, it will mark the beginning of the outpouring of divine blessings of happiness and life upon all mankind, beginning with the remnant of Edom. These will be the first to be gathered as happy and blessed subjects of the kingdom. But of the increase of that government and peace, there shall be no end, for it will continue to reach out and control throughout all the earth, to the joy of all mankind. □

• • • Humility

HUMILITY is the mental quality which enables us to look up with appreciation, not only to God but *also* to earthly beings, recognizing their good qualities.—*Reprints, p. 5842*

Talking Things Over

The 1988 General Convention Report consists of the following two articles. One is a condensation of the opening address on Saturday morning, and the other was the closing discourse on Thursday evening. During the intervening six days, many fine lessons were heard from the platform, some of which will appear in article form in The Dawn in the months ahead.

Welcome to the Mountain!

Conventions of the LORD's people are holy convocations. We can use the simile that we have been summoned to assemble by the Heavenly Father, much as Israel was invited on a yearly basis to attend their feasts. As Moses wrote, "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty."—Deut. 16:16

The Heavenly Father had important goals in view when bidding the Israelites to assemble for these feasts. These particular observances were designed to focus their attention on the blessings and privileges he had provided through his covenant arrangement, as well as their responsibilities under that covenant. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were memorials of how the LORD had delivered them from the land of Egypt, after the salvation of their firstborn from the hand of the angel of death. (Exod. 12:14-17) The purpose behind the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles was to remind the Israelites how God had blessed the work of their hands when they followed in his paths—and how carefully he had guided and provided for all

their needs during their wilderness journey, even when they did not try very hard to please him.—Lev. 23:43

When Israel responded to these feasts properly, their relationship with God was strengthened. Their hearts and minds became more clearly focused on the LORD, his ways and laws, and how they could be more acceptable to him. By focusing their attention on his faithfulness to them in the past, they gained a better appreciation of Jehovah, the majesty of his character shown through his mighty works on their behalf, and assurance that they could continue to repose their full trust in him. And, too, through observance of these feasts they were given plainer understanding of their responsibilities under the Law to serve God, arousing them to an increased, energized desire to live up to those obligations.

Conventions serve a similar purpose in our Christian lives. We are reminded that we were in bondage—not in Egypt, as natural Israel was—but in sin and death. They prompt us to recall the time we responded to God's invitation to come forth out of the land of the enemy—the land of Egypt—through Christ, our Passover Lamb, who was slain for us.—I Cor. 5:7

We have come to this convention to learn more concerning the glory and majesty of our Heavenly Father, and to have a clearer vision of how we should fulfill our vows of sacrifice, paying them now in the presence of all God's people. (Ps. 116:14) We realize it is a great privilege to attend. We have been invited into the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20) Our Lord will indeed be in our midst during these six days. Even more than this, we have been invited into the presence of our Heavenly Father—God himself—the great Creator of the universe!

This invitation to come into his presence is brought to our attention in many places in the Scriptures. Perhaps one of the most beautiful of these is Psalm 95. There the psalmist wrote, "O

come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."—vss. 1-7

To receive an invitation to come into the presence of God is a privilege only a few of God's creation enjoy at this present time. Only the church, probationary members of his spiritual family, have been offered the blessing of coming apart from the

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world to sit at the feet of the Heavenly Father, coming into his presence to learn more of him.

As we contemplate being in the presence of God, our minds again go back to the Scriptures, to times when other individuals found themselves in his presence: Moses at the burning bush; Joshua outside the city of Jericho. On both these occasions Moses and Joshua were instructed to take off their sandals because they were standing on holy ground. Here the LORD provided for them and for us lessons concerning our need to cultivate reverence and humility toward himself. In ancient times to take off one's sandals was a token of reverence or respect. By, at the first, commanding them to remove their shoes, the LORD showed that the attitude of reverence to him was a prime essential for those who would come into his presence to learn of him. "The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."—Ps. 111:10

The primary purpose of the Law was centered upon teaching Israel to revere the LORD. God, through Moses, instructed the nation of Israel that every seven years, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the entire nation should appear before him. "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear [reverence] the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this Law."—Deut. 31:10-13

We have been called to, essentially, learn the same lesson—to reverence our Heavenly Father—to bow before his holy presence. Or, as the Apostle Paul tells us, to "serve God acceptably with reverence and with piety." (Heb. 12:28) Reverence for God is the very foundation of our relationship to God; without reverence and humility we are placing our own purposes first. Our attention will be on things other than the will of God. We will not be prepared to receive the true wisdom that comes from above, that comes only from God.—James 3:17

Brother Russell defined reverence as 'the feeling of profound respect, mingled with awe and affection'. The dictionary

adds a further thought: 'Reverence is the feeling of worshipful regard, directed toward the Divine'. Truly, reverence is the only proper attitude of a creature toward his Creator, the author of his very being, the LORD of the whole universe.

And so, we wish to learn well this lesson. To do so we must 'take off our shoes'; we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God as Moses did. We must lay aside our wills and our ideas, accepting his in place of our own. We must lay aside what was represented in the shoes that Moses and Joshua wore—their ordinary conduct of life according to the flesh.

At the time of our consecration, we agreed to take off our shoes. We have come to this convention for help in learning how to carry out that vow in our Christian life. We have come to this place to leave our shoes behind. We have left the cares and the problems of the flesh behind, and we have reverently come, focused upon learning more of God.

Often we hear conventions described as 'mountain-top' experiences. To appreciate the many beautiful comparisons between conventions and mountain-tops, we must contemplate the beauty of the high places. Mountains frequently are used in the Scriptures in connection with the presence of the LORD. We recall how God spoke to Moses on top of Mount Sinai. There he not only gave him the Ten Commandments, all the features of the Law Covenant, and the Tabernacle arrangement, but there the LORD showed Moses his glory, causing all his goodness to pass before Moses as he proclaimed his holy name!—Exod.33:18,19:34:2,5,6

Another mountain mentioned in the Scriptures connected with the presence of the LORD is Mount Hermon. The Holy Spirit which descends from God upon his church is likened to the dew that descends from Mount Hermon upon the mountains of Zion.—Ps. 133

Our Lord Jesus also used mountains in a very practical way: to withdraw from the multitudes; to get away from the world of his day; taking aside his disciples, teaching them special

lessons; to commune with his Heavenly Father. We are reminded that the Sermon on the Mount was indeed given on the mountain to his disciples, explaining to them the terms of discipleship. (Matt. 5) When our Lord was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, again he was on the mountain.—Mark 9

In all these ways, conventions are like being on the top of a mountain! We have been summoned by our Heavenly Father to the top of this mountain to be in his holy presence. The Heavenly Father will, from the platform, and through the fellowship of our brethren, through the testimonies we will hear, through hymns and spiritual songs, cause all his goodness to pass before our minds. He will proclaim to us his Holy Name, and he will tell us concerning himself—the LORD God, that he is merciful and gracious, that he is long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty.—Exod. 34:5-7

The Heavenly Father will open the windows of heaven and pour out the blessing of his Holy Spirit to us—more than we will be able to receive! (Mal. 3:10) He will draw us away from the problems, cares, and distractions of this present life. Here we will be able to commune with him in peace and safety, considering what great things he hath done for us! (I Sam. 2:24) We will sit at the feet of our LORD and learn of him.

Considering mountains a little further, we notice something very interesting. Mountains can be majestic, they can be beautiful, they can be awe-inspiring; or they can be desolate, barren, hostile. The difference is due to the presence or absence of water. When water is present, the mountain is full of life. There are tall, green trees; lush meadows; a myriad of animals—birds, small animals, large animals. We remember, of course, that in the Bible water is used as a symbol of the truth—especially concerning God and his character, his plans and purposes, and the gift of his only begotten Son. When our Lord spoke to the woman of

Samaria, he called the truth “living water,” stating that all who would drink of that well would never thirst again. Instead this water would become to them a well of water springing up, leading to everlasting life.—John 4:10,14

We have come to this spiritual mountain because we know that here we will find the pure water of truth, the living water, will be here. We have come to drink deeply of the water which will become a wellspring within our hearts and minds, gushing up as a fountain, supplying to us everlasting life for ourselves and others.

Our choice could have been to climb some other mountain. We could have attended social gatherings, financial gatherings, political conventions. But there is no living water present on those mountains—they are barren, desolate—when it comes to the Word of the LORD, his character and his truth! We have made the correct choice, because at this mountain-top we will receive an overflowing supply of truth from the messages of the speakers, fellowship and testimonies of our brethren. Here we will receive the cool, pure, refreshing, life-giving Word of truth!

In order to receive the fullest blessings, we must empty our hearts and minds of all earthly cares and the problems of everyday life. We must empty ourselves of our own ideas and interests to be ready to fully absorb the water of life the LORD has prepared for us, and which he knows we need.

Mountains can be very impressive—imposing, overwhelming physical structures! They are made of rock; they are very strong, and hard; and have endured for millions of years. Often they are immense, stretching for miles in both width, length, and height. They can be as high as thirty thousand feet, and weigh millions of tons. Formed deep underground under intense pressure and heat, the physical processes gave to the rock its strength, its beauty, its longevity. These same forces lifted mountains up, transforming them into the imposing heights we admire.

The spiritual mountain to which we have approached is also founded upon a rock—a very special rock of great beauty—the only begotten Son of God. The Apostle Paul told us that that rock went with the nation of Israel. (I Cor. 10:4) Likewise Christ is our spiritual rock even today upon which we take our stand. God “has brought me up also out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.”—Ps. 40:2

Christ, his ransom sacrifice on our behalf, is the rock upon which we stand. His sacrifice provides for our justification in the sight of God, enabling us to be separated from the world and to become part of his family. It is through him alone that we are “accepted in the beloved.” (Eph. 1:6) Christ is made unto us righteousness, or justification.—I Cor. 1:30

This firm foundation, this rock which supports us and keeps our feet from sliding and falling, is the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as a corresponding price or ransom for father Adam. (I Tim. 2:5,6) This sacrifice made it possible for the Heavenly Father to lift us up out of the miry clay of Adamic condemnation, to beget us as new creatures, to make us part of his family, and to raise us up together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.—Eph. 2:6

We gather in convention on this spiritual mountain-top because our faith in that rock of our salvation is still strong. We still trust in him as the rock which is “higher than I.” (Ps. 61:2) While our Lord Jesus was to the nation of Israel a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, to us he is the foundation upon which our relationship to the Heavenly Father exists. He is the foundation upon which we build our Christian character with “gold,” “silver,” and “precious gems. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.”—I Cor. 3:11,12

Just as rock which makes up a literal mountain was developed under great pressure and heat, so also our spiritual rock was developed through trials, suffering and death, as he laid down his life in sacrifice during his first advent. “He was despised and re-

jected of men. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . The LORD laid upon him the iniquity of us all.”—Isa. 53:4,5

To become the rock of our salvation, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (I Pet. 3:18) “Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”—Heb. 12:2,3

On this mountain we partake of the water that flows from this rock, smitten for us. Just as Moses smote the rock at Mount Horeb and water flowed out to satisfy the thirst of the nation of Israel (Exod. 17:5,6), so the Heavenly Father allowed his Son to be smitten, taking Adam’s place, in order that living waters can flow to us, and ultimately to all mankind, from him, as from that rock.

We climb higher up the mountain and as we go we study the formation of this rock first-hand. We wish to become more intimately acquainted with his mind, his disposition, his character, and his way of life. This is our Christian responsibility, the goal of our walk, to be conformed to his image, to grow in his likeness. (Rom. 8:29) “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD.”—II Cor. 3:18

This mountain is forested with many different trees. These we can liken to our brethren, standing as trees beside the waters of life. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat

of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1:1-3) We will see the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit within the hearts and minds of our fellow-travelers along this narrow pathway, and they will serve as an example to us. We will notice how they are clothed with the graces of love and peace, how the Word of Christ is dwelling in them richly, and how to the best of their ability, they are endeavoring to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Col. 3:12-17) Looking carefully we will see the beauty of the rock upon which we all stand reflected in their characters.

As our view is expanded and extended by our position on this mountain-top, we see another grander, more beautiful mountain in the distance, beckoning us to come on closer to it. This is Mount Zion. "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."—Heb. 12:22

This is our goal, and our reason for coming to this convention. The path the LORD has laid out for us to reach Mount Zion leads through this place! Here we receive valuable instruction, food and supplies we will need to continue in our journey onward to Mount Zion.

When we leave this convention we will have the material necessary to bring our minds, our dispositions, our characters, our ways of life, more in tune with our Lord's example than when we first arrived. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on

charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." We have asked, "Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight!" —Ps. 119:33

Welcome to the mountain of the LORD! Look around you—the scenery is beautiful! But most important, it is life-giving to all those who will receive it!

(Closing discourse of convention is on page 52.)

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“Lord, Increase Our Faith.”

—Luke 17:5,6

FOR THE past six days we have been gathered in convention together, at the feet of our Master, to learn of him. For this period of time we have heard, talked, and lived nothing but spiritual things; and so we have not been subject to many of the ordinary day-to-day trials of our faith. We left behind the experiences which normally try our faith—our jobs, the world, our environment, our neighbors—problems we encounter in daily life.

This does not minimize our continued need to lay hold on our faith, to increase our faith, putting it to work in our lives. The lessons learned here at Chattanooga must be taken home with us and used in the days, weeks, and months ahead, to improve the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit.

Our faith structure can be said to be developed along two primary, interrelated lines. But we would like to separate them for the purpose of this lesson. First, we have the kinds of situations which we could term ‘learning experiences’, and this convention falls into that category. Secondly, there are ‘application experiences’, which develop, strengthen, and test our faith, and these come during our normal daily routine of life. These are more difficult, and will indeed prove whether or not what we have learned is truly written in our hearts.—II Cor. 3:1,2

The words of our text, “Lord, increase our faith,” is one of the few recorded uses of the word in the Gospels. Although ‘faith’ appears 245 times in the Bible, it is only used twice in the Old Testament! Within the four Gospels, the word is used 29 times; and in the remainder of the New Testament, written subsequent to the Day of Pentecost, we find it used 214 times. This enforces our belief of the fact that faith is a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel Age, and one which would require the begetting of the

Holy Spirit to truly understand and apply in our lives. Although we only find the word twice in the Old Testament, we know that the faithful ones of old certainly proved their trust and reliance upon Jehovah. The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 11, outlines their wonderful works of faith which are such an encouragement and example to us.

When the disciples made the request of Jesus for more faith, they did not have a complete understanding of how this quality would be developed in their characters. They had watched Jesus perform hundreds of miracles—healing the sick, the blind, and the lame. Perhaps they reasoned that Jesus would increase their faith in a miraculous way.

Jesus gave a strange answer to their appeal! He said, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.” (Luke 17:6) This must have been puzzling to them, since they did not understand that their faith would grow, not through a miracle, but through learning and application experiences. They did realize more and more, after they had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, that faith was not something tangible that can be increased or decreased at will.

Faith is a way of life centered in learning to trust our Heavenly Father completely, applying our knowledge of his faithfulness to us and provision for our every need each day of our lives. It is a constant building process. As we study God’s providences in the past with his people of old, we become more and more certain that he will provide the same grace, blessing, and strength for us as he did for them. As we apply this trust to each day’s experiences we learn a little bit here, and a little bit there, because we see the same provisions made in our lives, and our faith structure becomes stronger and stronger.

What have we learned this week to help increase our faith? Here are a few bare statistics: During the past six days we have heard twenty hours of messages from the platform. We enjoyed

two hours of vespers and melodies of praise. We have had four hours of testimony meetings with about seventy-five taking part. More than twenty-seven hours of planned fellowship took place during mealtimes and intermissions. If we add up these figures we find that we have been blessed with over fifty-three hours of spiritual learning, profitable for increasing our faith!

In other words we have had a great abundance of spiritual food provided for us! What will we do with it? How pleased the Heavenly Father would be if, a few weeks from now, when we get into a difficult predicament we are able to recall to mind very quickly some encouragement we received from this convention. It could be a scripture or a thought from the platform—maybe a testimony of one who had a similar experience—perhaps a thought shared at the lunch table, or in our walk between the dormitory and the auditorium. If we react by saying, “Oh yes, I learned something about that at Chattanooga. I will try to apply that lesson right now!” how pleasing it would be to the LORD!

**1988 General Convention
Audio Tapes**

AUDIO tapes of the 1988 General Convention at Chattanooga, TN are available now. If you wish to order the entire set for this year, the price is \$30.00; or you can order individual tapes at \$2.00 each. Send for a free listing of available subjects. These may be obtained on loan, also.

THE VESPERS tapes are especially nice to have, and include the choral groups which we enjoy listening to so much.

**WRITE TO: Recorded Lecture Service
199 Railroad Avenue
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Faith can be very powerful! A companion text to Luke 17:6 is found in Matthew 17:20: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." We understand, of course, that this is simply an illustration of how tremendous the power of faith can be. Remember when a portion of Mount St. Helens was literally removed—the entire top of that mountain was completely blown away! That was evidence of one of the greatest natural forces ever witnessed on this earth, equivalent to many nuclear bombs. Imagine what force would have been represented if the entire mountain had been blown away! The LORD says that our faith can be just that powerful! but only if we both learn and apply the lessons Jehovah is sending to us to develop this powerful characteristic.

As we look out over this gathered group of the LORD's people, we note that on this side of the veil our conventions are gradually getting a little smaller each year. The gathering on the other side of the veil is getting larger. As we see our numbers decreasing from year to year, let us not be discouraged, but rather let this fact spur us on to also finish our course with joy. By being faithful we will add to the number on the other side—and eventually all the 144,000 will be gathered together with the LORD! Then the work may commence for which our faith is preparing us—the blessing of all the families of the earth!

When this convention began we were exhorted by our convention theme text: "Those things which you have learned and received and heard and seen," **do**. Let's get to work and apply these lessons as we go forth from this place of learning. The time is short for the making of our calling and election sure. Not a moment should be wasted! We should arise from this place and leave with a renewed determination and zeal to finish our course with joy.

We were welcomed to the mountain of the LORD. We have dwelt on this mountain for six days, and as we leave the conven-

tion do we have to go down from the mountaintop, back into the valley? No, we are never in the valley—we are always on the mountain of the LORD! “He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!” (Eph. 2:6) The world lives in the valley; as new creatures we dwell in the heavenly places, on the mountaintop.

As we go to our homes, let us perform a miracle—let us move this mountain of convention blessings and memories and lessons with us! In essence we will then remain on the top of the mountain wherever we go, and whatever we are doing.

“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” Amen.



Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

November 3—“Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”—Matthew 26:41 (Z. '01-80 Hymn 65A)

November 10—“Love . . . rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”—I Corinthians 13:6 (Z. '03-57 Hymn 198)

November 17—“He shall give his angels [messengers] charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.”—Psalm 91:11 (Leiser) (Z. '04-75 Hymn 252)

November 24—“Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward man.”—Acts

Christian Life and Doctrine

Teaching by Parables

***“Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.”***

—James 1:22

TO THE multitudes, the general public, Jesus presented the Gospel in parables. Later, in some instances, he would explain the significance of these parables to his disciples, to whom he said, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”—Mark 4:11,12

This statement by Jesus clearly indicates the divine plan for this age is not the conversion of the whole world, for he says that he spoke in parables for the *express purpose* of preventing them that are without from understanding and being converted. Other scriptures show this applies only to the present age, that eventually the way will be made plain for all.—Isa. 11:9; 35:8

If all the unconverted were to be tormented in a hell of fire forever, this statement by Jesus would surely seem strange, for it would imply that the Lord had purposely designed the prevention of the conversion of those without, in order that they would be sure to spend eternity in torture. But, thank God, this is not what Jesus meant! In the first place, the punishment for sinners is not eternal torture. “The wages of sin is death.” (Rom. 6:23) Besides, Jesus did not say that those who do not understand now would forever be kept from knowing the truth and being converted.

Beginning with Jesus, and throughout the Gospel Age, God has been conducting a program of selection—not the predestination of a few to be saved, and the remainder of mankind to be lost—but the calling and training of a class so determined to know and to do God’s will as to be willing to suffer and die with Jesus—willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, regardless of the cost. These are referred to in the Bible as “the called, and chosen, and faithful.”—Rev. 17:14

It is in the calling of these that a certain degree of selectivity is exercised by the LORD. Jesus said no one could come unto him unless drawn by the Father. (John 6:44) The truth is the principal means used by the Heavenly Father to draw individuals to Christ, and if the truth were now made so plain everyone could understand it, and there would be no differences of opinion throughout the world concerning it, practically all would respond.

But the Heavenly Father knows the vast majority of mankind would not be willing to pay the cost of discipleship. If they were enlightened and converted from their sinful ways to serve the living God, and then turned aside because the narrow way of sacrifice was *too* narrow for them, their position would be a regrettable one.

So our Heavenly Father, who knows the end from the beginning, designed the proclamation of the Gospel should be carried out in such a way that only those of the right heart condition, and of the necessary fortitude of character to stand the trials that would come upon Jesus’ footstep followers, would be able to understand it.

Jesus gave the parable of the sower as an illustration of how this principle operates. The seed—which Jesus explained to be the Word—when sown falls on four kinds of ground: by the wayside, on stony ground, among thorns, and on good ground. The birds carried away what fell by the wayside. The sun destroyed the growth which sprang up on the stony ground. The thorns choked out the young plants that tried to grow among

them. Only the seed which fell upon good ground matured and brought forth fruit.

In Mark 4:14-20, Jesus explains this parable to his disciples. In the explanation they are shown the workings of the Devil; the persecution that comes upon those who accept the truth; the complete separation the truth makes between believers and the things of this world, in that it leads one to run counter to the desires of the flesh and the spirit of the world. They could see from the explanation that only a small portion of the seed fell on good ground, and matured to the glory of God.

From this they would surely realize that to go on to know and serve the LORD after hearing the Gospel would be a costly thing. Only those who are truly enthusiastic and willing to sacrifice would take this step. Thus, by the truth, and the varying circumstances under which it is heard, the 'you' class is separated from the others. But, thank God, in the age of blessing to follow, all will be enlightened and given an opportunity for salvation. □

••• Encouraging Letters

Timely Work

Dear Friends: Please find my small contribution for the wonderful and timely work you are doing on behalf of Christ's Gospel. I wonder if you realize how much joy and comfort you bring to countless numbers of people through your monthly magazine and various booklets. I know that you have given me more hope and purpose in my life than I have

ever known. I truly believe the LORD has taken part in bringing The Dawn into my life each month, because through your endeavors you have explained and made so clear truths of the Bible I might not have understood if it were not for your publications. Thank you so much and may the LORD continue to bless you in all you do. Your friend in Christ.—NY

Most Comforting Message

Dear Sir: Please send me three copies of your pamphlet, "Hope." It has the most comforting message I have seen. I recently lost a daughter and I would like to give the other children a copy of "Hope." Yours truly.—*MD*

Agnostic Wants Answers

Bible Answers: I would like to request a copy of your booklet entitled, "Why God Permits Evil." That is a question I have asked myself all my life, and if you have the answer, I would very much like to hear it. In fact, the lack of answers to questions such as that, and the contradictions they imply: If God permits evil, how can he be called a loving God?, are what have made me the agnostic I am today. Thank you.—*WA*

Reader Poses Question

To whom this may concern: Would you please send me a copy of "Why God Permits

Evil." I've often wondered why God in this life is apt to repay services to Him with pain, while those who do evil ride over roads in Cadillac cars. Thank you very much.—*TN*

33 Years of The Dawn

Dear Friends of the Dawn: I have enjoyed your magazine for 33 years. I wouldn't like to be without it. I have learned so much. It is amazing you have printed it so many years and kept up with the times, which are now becoming short for Christ's kingdom on earth. My husband passed away 1-1/2 years ago. Now I am anxious for the resurrection so we can be together forever. May the LORD watch between me and thee, while we are absent one from another. May the Lord bless and keep you for your devotion.—*NY*

Makes Most Sense

Dear Friends: I sent for some literature from you, and have read and studied a lot of it. I have studied other points of view on resurrection, Christ's

kingdom, etc., but yours makes the most sense to me. Thank you so much for the literature. God bless you in the work you are doing.—CO

Chuckles at Our Prices!

Dear Sir: I have read your booklet, "The Truth about Hell" with great interest. It is very well researched and logically written. I can well appreciate the effort your group has gone to to produce such a work. As I was looking at the list of the other literature you offer, I had to chuckle to myself as I looked at the price list. I know what it costs to print literature! If you are interested I could sure get you a lot of business at those prices (just kidding!) Enclosed is \$10.00. Please send me the amount of literature it will pay for, or send me everything you have and bill me, and I will send a check by return mail, whichever is convenient for you. Thanks again for your effort.—CA

Listener in Caribbean

Dear "Frank and Ernest":

Many thanks for The Dawn magazine which you have been faithfully sending to me each month. I do enjoy reading them, and also listen to your fifteen-minute question and answer talk on Radio Cayman every Sunday morning. Enclosed is a small token of my appreciation with the wish that God will continue to bless your efforts in enlightening the hearts and minds of interested persons throughout the world. God bless you both. Sincerely.—*Grand Cayman*

See You Next Sunday!

The Bible Answers: On your TV program through Tempo TV on February 7, you offered the book "Jesus the World's Savior" which I would like to receive. I would like to compliment you on your program. I don't miss one, but listen every Sunday, here in Puerto Rico. I will see you back on Sunday! Sincerely yours.—*Puerto Rico*

Interested Driver

Dear "Frank and Ernest": Quite by accident, I managed

to hear you Sunday morning at around 6:30 a.m. I'm not completely sure, but I think it was on CKLW from Ontario. I was driving along on my way to get a newspaper, when I decided to see what was on the car radio. The station was somewhat weak, but your topic really caught my interest. I got home a little before your program ended, and managed to get your address, and the name of the booklet: "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Would you please send me a copy of this booklet? Thank you.—*IN*

Sharing True Gospel

I am ordering two copies of "The Book of Books," so I can give one to my neighbor. I really do enjoy your literature—you stay so close to the Bible and in this day of deception that is sweeping the nations we need to know the Bible so as to share with others the true Gospel. Sincerely.—*OR*

Waiting for Order

I just finished reading "Armageddon, Then World Peace." It

is so clearly written and answered several of my questions. I am very thankful for your ministry and I look forward to receiving the enclosed order [in which she ordered a great many books and booklets] to further my studies and to share with others. Thank you.—*CA*

Looking for Ways to Thank the Lord

Dear Brethren: Christian love! After a long time I am once again sending in my small contribution and I pray that the Lord will bless it to his glory. I love The Dawn and I am so thankful for your work of love on behalf of the LORD's people and what a pleasure it must be to you to send it out. I am going through the "Book of Books" again and I realize anew what a wonderful little book it is. I hope that when I finish that I can find someone to lend it to. In my recovery from cancer this year the Lord has once again performed a miracle in my life and I must find ways to thank him. Your brother by his grace.—*TX*

Thanksgiving Day Thoughts

—MCM

Now Jesus once ten lepers healed—
But only one returned
And offered thanks and praise, and kneeled—
He gratitude had learned.

We too were lepers touched by sin;
But he hath justified
And cleansed us from what we had been,
And hath us sanctified.

May we his praises ever tell
To all His plan make known.
For gratitude doth us impel,
Our debt to Him to own.



What cause for gratitude is ours
Throughout the days and hours
As passing months and years go by
Our debt to multiply.

Thanksgiving Day comes once a year,
God's blessings every day.
How much of truth and joy to cheer
Us on our Christian way.
Here God's goodness manifold
We cannot rightly count,
Much less if faithful, his untold
Illimitable amount.

Speakers' Appointments

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of the Kingdom

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn or by classes associated with the pilgrim service. Write to Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073

S. ALLEN
Allentown, PA November 6

W. AUSTIN
San Luis Obispo, CA November 13

W. BLICHARZ
Western Mich., MI November 6

W. HARP
Greenfield, OH October 31

West Newton, PA November 1

Buffalo, NY 2

Hartford, CT 4

New London, CT 5,6

New Haven, CT 7

Waterbury, CT 8

Agawam, MA 9

North Brookfield, MA 10

E. LAMEL
Dallas, TX November 6

San Antonio, TX 7

Houston, TX 9

Mobile, AL 11

New Orleans, LA 13

St. Petersburg, FL 15

Warm Mineral Springs, FL 16

Orlando, FL 20

S. MENGOS
San Gabriel Val., CA November 6

G. PASSIOS

Detroit, MI November 20

E.K. PENROSE

Columbus, GA November 1

Macon, GA 2

Morehead City, NC 4

Bath, NC 5,6

Conventions

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who are sponsoring them.

JERSEY CITY, NJ Pre-Thanksgiving Convention, November 19, 20—Masonic Temple, 1912 Morris Ave., Union, NJ. Contact: Mrs. Charlotte Teklinski, 84 Arthur Street, Ridgefield Park 07660. Phone: (201) 440-0925

SAN DIEGO, CA Thanksgiving Convention, November 24-27, LaJolla Village Inn, 3299 Holiday Ct.,

LaJolla. Phone: (619) 453-5500
Contact Gilbert Rice, 4005 Olympic St, San Diego 92115
Phone: (619) 583-2431

PHOENIX, AZ, December 30, 31, January 1, 2—Quality Inn, 2420 W. Thomas Rd. Contact: Mrs. Mildred Enteman, 542 W. Southern 85041. for information and reservations. Phone: 276-3267 or 254-7766