

The Dawn

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The Resurrection —The Only Hope for a Better Life

"If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

—I Corinthians 15:13,14

TO ONE WHO has complete confidence in the promises of God, the hope of the resurrection should mean more this year than ever before. Only those who are thus blessed by the vision of faith are able to pierce the dark clouds of the present and see beyond the destruction of today, the life-giving blessings of God's tomorrow. Faith in God's promises that he will raise the dead is strengthened by the fact that in the past he **has** raised the dead; hence we can say with the apostle, "Now **is** Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."—I Cor. 15: 20

There was high hope among the disciples of Jesus when he was with them in the flesh, teaching and performing miracles, that at long last God's promises respecting the Messiah were about to be fulfilled. They were Jews, and he was their Messiah, of whom great things had been promised. Daily he demonstrated that divine authority and power were operating through him for the ultimate accomplishment of all God's good purposes concerning the children of men. Yes, he who healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out demons, and raised the dead, could surely deliver their nation from the Roman yoke, and, through them, establish the long-promised kingdom of God on earth!

But suddenly and unexpectedly, the Messiah was taken from his disciples and crucified. How their fond hopes and

inspiring dreams must have been dashed to the ground. Their Master, their King, their Lord, their All in All, was dead. What mixed emotions of bewilderment, disappointment and sorrow must have racked the souls of those ardent followers of the Master during the days of awful darkness between the time the Prince of Life hung upon the cross and the morning that the angel standing guard at his tomb announced, "He is not here; for he is risen."—Matt. 28:6

. . . He is risen! . . .

Quickly that soul-cheering and heart-gladdening news spread from one to another of the disciples. There was great joy and revival of hope on the part of most of them, but Thomas doubted. Finally he, too, was convinced that the power of God had intervened to restore their Master to them. Later St. Paul lists the evidences by which the fact of Jesus' resurrection had been established, saying: "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."—I Cor. 15:58

As the apostle indicates, there were still many living in his day who had been personally acquainted with Jesus while in the flesh, and who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead. The testimony of these faithful witnesses was allsufficient to convince new believers of the great miracle that God had wrought in raising the Master from the dead, but apparently there were some in the Early Church who doubted that anyone else could be resurrected, for the apostle inquires, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"—I Cor. 15:12

The Jewish sect of the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, and possibly some from this group had come among the Early Christians, partially accepting Jesus as the Messiah but not willing to believe all that he taught nor all

that the prophets had foretold concerning him. In combating this false viewpoint, Paul went on to show how it would take away the whole foundation upon which Christian faith and hope are based. It would mean, he reasons, that even Jesus himself, their leader and Messiah, was dead, not alive. This, in turn, would mean that all who had borne testimony of his resurrection were false witnesses.

If Christ be not risen, Paul further reminds us, it means that we are serving a lost cause; that our persecutions as his followers are meaningless. The members of the Early Church risked their lives in being Christians, but why thus 'stand in jeopardy' if Jesus is still dead, and there is no resurrection hope for any of the dead? Why are we then "baptized for the dead" if those for whom we are now laying down our lives are not to be benefited thereby? Christians are baptized into the likeness of Jesus' death in the hope of sharing in the likeness of his resurrection, but there could be no likeness to a resurrection that has never occurred.

Those who are fallen asleep in Christ are "perished," if there be no resurrection of the dead, Paul insists. This would mean that God's purpose in giving his Son to be man's Redeemer had signally failed; for do we not read that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life"? How clearly St. Paul discerned, and how clearly every true Christian should discern, that the hope of both the church and the world depends upon the exercise of divine power in raising the dead; and that our assurance of God's ability to do this is in the fact that Jesus became, "the firstfruits of them that slept"!

Similarity of Our Time

When Jesus was taken from his disciples and crucified, they were bewildered and discouraged because they did not understand the divine program that was being worked out through him. Today, the professed Christian world is bewildered by the development of events which threaten to destroy what has been looked upon as Christian institutions.

The difficulty now, as then, is the failure to understand what constitutes the present purpose of God in the earth.

Jesus was the Messiah, and the disciples believed this. Furthermore, they believed that he would establish a worldwide kingdom, and that they would share with him in the glory of that kingdom. They did not understand that he must first suffer and die as man's Redeemer. This they later learned, and then they rejoiced in the cross of Christ, and what his shed blood meant to them, and what it would later mean to all mankind.

Shortly after the apostles fell asleep in death, the church gradually developed the idea that the Messianic kingdom should be established here and now, without waiting for the return of Christ Jesus the king. This erroneous theory failed to take into account a very important phase of the divine plan, namely, the suffering and death of the body members of the Christ—a work that had to be completed before the glorious kingdom reign of Christ could begin.

Thus practically the whole professed Christian church stumbled over the same truth concerning the followers of the Master, as the early disciples stumbled over, with respect to the Master himself. To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus Jesus explained that it was necessary first of all that the Christ should suffer, and then enter into his glory. (Luke 24:1332) They grasped the thought and rejoiced in its implications. They learned later that the sufferings of the Christ were not completed at Calvary, hence that the glory of the kingdom must still wait. But still later this vital truth was lost sight of, and there followed, as a result, the abortive efforts of ambitious, selfwilled members of the church nominal to bring in the glory of the kingdom ahead of time.

Now these efforts are failing. The church systems of the world, called "Christendom"—Christ's kingdom—are falling to pieces, and the civilization built up by them is crumbling. Because of this, many are now wondering if Christianity has failed. Certainly faith in the ability of churchianity to save the world out of its present predicament is failing. But just as it was the wrong expectations of the disciples concerning Jesus

that failed when He was crucified, so it is the false expectations of the professed church of Christ today that are failing. The expectations of the disciples were wrong because they did not take into consideration the necessity of the suffering and death of Jesus. The expectations of the church are false because they fail to discern the necessity of the suffering and death of the body members of the Christ.

. . . Where are the promised blessings of peace?

A Sad Record of Failure

Kingdom efforts of nominal churchianity have not brought the promised blessings of universal and lasting peace to the nations of the earth. (Isa. 26:18) Now the full extent of this failure is being revealed. Meanwhile God's power has not been manifested anywhere among the nations. He has kept silent, and restrained himself from interfering with the selfish course of humanity. (Isa. 42:14; Ps. 50: 21) Hence, with the failure of what men thought was Christianity, and failing to observe the hand of God otherwise in the affairs of the nations, the outlook is, indeed, dark for those who do not know the real plan of God.

Nevertheless, the professed Christian world will in 1992, as usual, again commemorate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. All who participate in this commemoration tacitly acknowledge their belief in miracles, yea, in what was the greatest miracle of all time. Why should we not then, permit our faith in a miracleworking God to reveal to us the silver lining to the present dark clouds of trouble?

There was no evidence to the world of divine protection for Christ nor for the Christian cause during those dark days of his suffering and crucifixion. There has been no evidence to the world of divine protection for the true followers of Jesus since. (Isa. 57:1.) God's power in the case of Jesus was manifested, not in preventing his death, but in raising him from the dead. His power, in the case of the true fol-

lowers of the Master, will likewise be manifested in their resurrection from the dead, and in their exaltation to reign with Christ.

Today the world is filled with darkness and foreboding, but God is still able to perform miracles. The resurrection of Jesus was but the beginning of a program of miracles which, when complete, will have brought peace, health, happiness and everlasting life to all mankind, including those who are now dead. This is the heartcheering assurance which the commemoration of Jesus' resurrection should induce in every Christian heart this year despite the work of destruction that is increasing everywhere throughout the world. Yes, Jesus was raised from the dead, and became "the firstfruits of them that slept." I Cor. 15: 20; John 5: 28; Acts 17: 31

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

Jesus died as the Redeemer of Adam and his race. That is why the apostle explains that as "in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) The weak in faith may say, Yes, that's a very fine theory; but it hasn't worked out that way. If God could use his power to raise Jesus from the dead nineteen centuries ago, why has there been no demonstration of that power on behalf of those for whom Christ died? If all in Christ are to be made alive, why does death continue unabated in the earth?

These are reasonable questions, and Paul answers them. After telling us that life for the Adamic race is provided through Christ, then he adds: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." (I Cor. 15:23) When Paul tells us that Jesus, in his resurrection, became the "firstfruits" of them that slept, he evidently refers to Jesus alone. But when he explains the order of the resurrection and uses the expression "Christ the firstfruits," he is evidently referring, not only to Jesus, but to his body members, the church, as well.

A careful study of I Corinthians, chapter 12, and of Galatians 3:27-29, reveals that, Scripturally, **the** Christ of promise is not one member, but many, and that Jesus is the Head over these "many members," constituting his "body." All of these participate in the "first resurrection." (Rev. 20:6) In James 1:18 they are referred to as a kind of "firstfruits unto God of his creatures." In Romans 6: 5 they are promised that if they are planted together in the likeness of his death, they shall also be in the "likeness of his resurrection." It seems clear, therefore, that the resurrection of "Christ the firstfruits" is not complete until all the 'body' members of Christ are raised from the dead and united with him.

The "firstfruits" terminology is based upon God's dealing with Israel during Old Testament times. It was a requirement of his Law that the "firstfruits" of the harvest should be used as an offering to the LORD. In this arrangement there were not only the firstfruits in general, but also what was called the 'first' of the firstfruits. In harmony with this we might think of Jesus as the 'first' of the firstfruits, and of the entire church of Christ as the remaining firstfruits in God's great resurrection harvest.

Firstfruits, An Offering to God

As the firstfruits in Israel's harvest were offered to the LORD in sacrifice, so Jesus the firstfruit of the resurrection, as well as his church, who are also of the firstfruits, offer themselves in sacrifice to God. Jesus offered himself to God and was accepted as the Redeemer of the world. His followers are invited to suffer and die with him sacrificially, with the promise that if faithful they will live and reign with him.

Paul refers to this program of sacrifice and suffering on the part of the church, asking, "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour," and why are we being "baptized for the dead," if there is to be no resurrection of the dead? The offering to God in sacrifice of the body members of **the** Christ has continued throughout all the centuries from the First Advent until now; and until that work is complete, and all the

firstfruits are raised from the dead and united with Jesus in the kingdom, the resurrection of the remainder of mankind cannot begin.—I Cor. 15:29,30

The 'After Resurrection'

"Afterward, they that are Christ's at his coming"—that is, after "Christ the firstfruits" are resurrected, then follows the resurrection of mankind in general. The clarity of this thought is somewhat obscured by the use of the word "coming" to translate the Greek word *parousia*. This word should always be translated "presence," and here the reference is not to the moment of Christ's arrival at his Second Advent, but to the entire period of his second visit to earth. This period will include the thousand years of his kingdom reign.

That this is the proper thought is clearly shown in the second verse, which reads, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) Those who "are" Christ's at, or during, his presence are not the same as those already mentioned as the firstfruits, but those who will then, after the firstfruits are complete, upon the basis of accepting him as their Redeemer, and becoming obedient to the Messianic kingdom laws, receive life through him.

The distinction between the body members of Christ, the "firstfruits," and those who are given life by him during his thousandyear reign, is further emphasized by the apostle's explanation of the manner in which the dead are raised. "But some man will say," continues Paul, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" (I Cor. 15:35) It is in answer to this question that we are given definitely to understand that in the resurrection the 'firstfruits', the church, will receive spiritual or celestial bodies, and that the remainder of mankind will receive human or earthly bodies.

As "one star differeth from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead," Paul explains. (I Cor.

15:41,42.) Then he proceeds to tell us something about this variety of glory, saying that there is a "glory of the celestial" (heavenly) and also a glory of the "terrestrial" (earthly). The "glory" of the terrestrial (earthly) is referred to by David in the 8th Psalm, where he tells about the original creation of man and explains that he was "crowned with *glory* and honor."

. . . Moses' face shone, picturing Christ's future glory . . .

The glory of the celestial, which is the hope of the church, is referred to in Romans 5: 2 as the "glory of God," and is referred to in Colossians 1:27 as "Christ in you, the hope of glory." In II Corinthians. chapter 3, the apostle tells us that it is a glory that was foreshadowed by the brightness of Moses' countenance as he came down from the mountain to administer the Law of the covenant given at Mt. Sinai. In the last verse of this chapter he explains that we are being prepared for and transformed into this glory by the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, mirrored or reflected to us through the Word of God.

First Adam, Earthly

The matter of the two glories is further clarified by Paul's reference to the two Adams, namely, the "first man," and the "Lord from heaven." The first Adam was earthly, the apostle explains, but the last Adam is a spiritual being, exalted to the celestial glory at the time he became the first of the firstfruits from the dead. And the remainder of the firstfruits are to be made like him. Paul explains that as we have borne the image of the earthly—that is, by nature those who will constitute the church of Christ were human beings—we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."—I Cor. 15:49

As human beings we cannot comprehend the glory of the celestial. The Apostle John says that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2) Paul caught a glimpse of the glorified Jesus at the time he was converted on the Damascus road, seeing him as "one born out of due time." The whole church, when born to the celestial glory will see Jesus as he is, and will be made like him, but as far as the Scriptures are concerned, Paul was the only one to see him in his heavenly glory before being born of the Spirit—as "one born out of due time."—1 Cor. 15:8

The apostle sums up the lesson of the church's exaltation to heavenly glory in the resurrection, describing it as "this corruptible" putting on "incorruption," and this "mortal" putting on "immortality." And it is not until this resurrection and glorification of the 'firstfruits' class is complete at the end of the age of sacrifice, that mankind in general will have fulfilled to them the wondrous promises of restitution to the lost earthly glory. Assuring us of this the apostle says, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—1 Cor. 15:54,55

These promises are not alone fulfilled by the resurrection of those who are exalted to immortality because they are promises, also, of earthly life to mankind. The apostle's time identifications, 'when' and 'then', are merely reminding us of the order of the resurrection as set forth earlier in the chapter where he says, "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his presence." "Christ the firstfruits"—Jesus, the Head, and the church, his body—are exalted to immortality, and when this is accomplished 'then', will come the fulfillment of those other promises which apply to the 'afterward' class.

The promise, "Death is swallowed up in victory," is recorded in Isaiah 25:8. Verses 69 of this chapter are wonderfully descriptive of the Messianic kingdom blessings coming to the world. Christ's kingdom is here symbolized as a

"mountain" in which the LORD makes unto "all people" a "feast of fat things." It is the same kingdom mentioned by Paul in which he says that Christ "must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet."

The prophet tells us about the destruction of these enemies, saying that the LORD will "wipe away tears from off all faces," "swallow up death in victory," and take away the "rebuke of his people . . . from off all the earth." (Isa. 25:8) This latter statement definitely locates the fulfillment of the promise as taking place upon the earth, and indicates beyond question that the promised swallowing up of death in victory is a reference to the destruction of death that takes place during the reign of Christ, as pointed out by Paul in I Corinthians 15:25,26

Paul's further quotation, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" is from Hosea 13:14. This, too, is a divine promise of life to mankind in general, made available through the redemptive work of Christ. It has not been fulfilled yet. Like the hundreds of other kingdom promises of the Old and New Testaments, its fulfillment must wait for the completion of the firstfruits class. Then, when all the church of the firstborn ones are changed from earthly to heavenly glory, from mortality to immortality, there will follow the thousandyear work of destroying death and the grave.

The Divine Victory

No wonder the apostle closes this chapter on the triumphant note, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the LORD." (I Cor. 15:57,58) Since Jesus returned to heaven, and the apostles fell asleep in death, it has often looked as though there would be no genuine victory in the earth for the Christian cause. It has often seemed as though the Christian's labor in the LORD was in vain. But not so.

There is to be a glorious victory. The Christian's baptism for the dead is worthwhile, for the longpromised kingdom of peace and righteousness and life is to be established. It waits only for the completion of the firstfruits class, and then will come the promised blessings, the firstborns sharing in the work of dispensing them to all mankind.—Rom. 8:19; Rev. 20:4

*. . . There is to be a glorious
victory for righteousness! . . .*

And what a glorious victory for the Christian cause that will be! First, it will be the victory of Christians themselves over death—the greatest victory of all, because they will be exalted to immortality with Christ. But this will not be the end of the victory, for “afterward,” during the thousand years of the kingdom, death will be entirely destroyed, because “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.”—John 5:28,29

That there is to be this universal awakening of the dead is clearly indicated by many of the promises and prophecies. The Sodomites were destroyed because of their wickedness, but the prophet assures us that they will be restored to their “former estate.” And Jesus tells us that it will be “more tolerable” for Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for the Jews who rejected him at the time of his First Advent. But it will be ‘tolerable’ for the Jews also, for after the work of this age is complete, then “all Israel shall be saved” and this salvation is promised even to those unbelieving Jews who were cast off from divine favor because of their rejection of Christ.—Rom. 11:26,31

Not Universal Salvation

But there is nothing in these promises to indicate that every person will be everlastingly saved from death. What they mean is simply that all are to have a full opportunity for

salvation—an opportunity given but to few in this life. Jesus said that the Sodomites would not have been destroyed had they had the same opportunity that was given to the Jews. This means that the Sodomites did not have a full opportunity. He also said that the people of Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago had he performed similar works there to those which he did in Chorazin and Bethsaida. St. Stephen informs us that it was in ignorance that the Jews rejected Jesus, which shows that while they had a better opportunity than the Sodomites, yet even they did not have a **full** opportunity.—Matt. 11:23,24; Acts 3:17; 1 Cor. 2: 8

In 1 Timothy 2:4 we are told that it is God's will that all shall be saved and come to an accurate knowledge (**Diaglott**) of the truth. This is a salvation that precedes knowledge, and evidently is a reference to an awakening from the sleep of death in order that they might be enlightened. The eternal salvation of all those thus saved from Adamic death will depend upon their acceptance of Jesus as their Redeemer, and obedience to the laws of his kingdom. Concerning this St. Peter declares "that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:19-23

It is to this that Jesus refers when, in John 5:29, he tells us that those who have done evil, such as the Sodomites, Jews, and, in fact, practically all mankind, shall come forth to a resurrection by judgment. (See **Revised Version**.) The Greek word here used by Jesus, and mistranslated "damnation" in our **Common Version**, is *krisis*, which has the same meaning as our English word crisis, namely, a test or trial. When a patient afflicted by some disease passes the crisis it means that he has passed the crucial period of the illness, and will get well. If, when the crisis is reached, there is a turn for the worse, the patient usually dies.

So the dead will be awakened from the sleep of death in order to be tested, and upon the basis of how they react in that crisis it will be determined whether or not they will live forever or be cut off in the "second death." It is for this

reason that the thousandyear period of Christ's reign is also spoken of as the Judgment Day. It will be during that time that all mankind will be on trial, and the basis of the trial will be the knowledge of the truth which will then be made so plain that no one will need to err.—Isa. 35:8

There is no such clear knowledge available for the people today. The fact that a Christian may attempt to explain the truth to another does not mean that such an one has been given a fair opportunity for salvation. God alone knows what may stand in the way of one's acceptance of the truth. Probably the greatest obstacle has always been the bungling way in which it is told. Counter-influences of deceptive errors also hinder. Heredity and environment often stand in the way also.

All these hindrances and many others exist even in lands where the name of Christ is preached. Besides, the great majority of the human family have never heard about Christ, even in a distorted manner. It is God's will that all these shall be awakened from death and come to a clear knowledge of the truth. This full, perfect knowledge will be given to the people at a time when Satan, the great Deceiver, will be bound—when no counter influences of any kind will be permitted to stand in the way of acceptance.

Finally, under such favorable kingdom influences, the knowledge of the LORD will be so universal in the earth that it will not be necessary for anyone to say to his neighbor, "Know the LORD, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD."—Jer. 31:34 □



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Thank you!

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 2

A Model for Prayer

KEY VERSE: *"Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name."—I Chronicles 29:1*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 6:7-15*

OUR LORD AND Master Jesus Christ, as he began to mature, felt a greater desire to commune with his Heavenly Father. He must have often looked into the starry heavens at night, or into the cloudless sky of Israel by day, with a longing to communicate with the great Creator of the universe.

After Jesus' baptism by his cousin John at the River Jordan, Jesus began to teach men and women—whoever would listen. He spent long, tiring days speaking to the people. As the sun sank into the shadows of the night, the Lord would slip away from his followers to a place of rest. There, in earnest thought, he would go to the throne of Heavenly Grace to commune with his Father.

This always comforted and refreshed him and prepared him to be ready for the throngs that would search him out in the morning.

Soon the Master's closest disciples noticed how effective and helpful those periods of quiet and prayer were to the Lord. So they went to Jesus and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." In teaching the disciples, Jesus wanted them to realize that it was not proper for them to stand in the synagogues or on the street-corners to pray. They were to understand that the Heavenly Father knew all things and that if they prayed in their 'closet', God would hear and bless them openly.

Jesus instructed his disciples additionally by giving them a model prayer that

has been used by Christians for centuries. The Master had great reverence for his Heavenly Father and desired to pass along to his disciples that same feeling. Jesus said to them, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matt. 6:9) As we individually go to God in prayer we may confidently address him as Our Father. When we commune with him we should do so with a worshipful adoration, appreciating the glorious character and attributes of our God: "Hallowed be thy name!"

Jesus continued his lesson through his model prayer by revealing a magnificent part of the divine plan. He wanted his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) The disciples of the Lord's day were to some degree acquainted with the promises spoken by the prophets concerning a future time of blessing, joy, and gladness. They expected that Jesus would set up a kingdom that would bless all the families of

the earth. At that time blind eyes and deaf ears would be opened, the lame would be able to walk. In the wilderness waters would break out, and streams would flow in the desert. Everlasting joy and gladness would fill the hearts of the people, and "sorrow and sighing" would flee away."—Isa. 35

Jesus also encouraged his disciples to pray for their daily needs, and to have confidence that the Heavenly Father would supply them out of his abundant fullness.—Matt. 6:11

Another important part of the Lord's model prayer is verse 12. We are to seek forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings, and to recognize also the obligation thus incurred, to render forgiveness to those who trespass against us.

The foregoing gives us just a glimpse of Jesus' model prayer. Our prayers, to be acceptable to God must express confident faith, loving esteem, and reverence—full appreciation of the divine plan, and submission to the divine will throughout eternity. □

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 9

Jesus' Prayer for Believers

KEY VERSE: *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one."*—John 17:20,21

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: John 17:1-11, 20,21

THE WORDS OF this lesson were spoken by our Lord during the night of his betrayal. He was soon to depart for the Garden of Gethsemane and he knew well that he and his disciples would then be separated. Jesus lifted up his eyes toward heaven in prayer to God, asking for the Father's special blessing. It was the Master's desire to glorify his Father again as he had often done.

During the Lord's ministry he had received "words" that the Father had given him. These he passed on to the disciples, which they received gladly. This knowledge helped them to have faith that Jesus had been sent to earth by God. Now in the closing hours of the Lord's life, in the words of this superlative prayer, he asked God for his favor to be upon his special followers. "I

pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."—John 17:9

It is interesting to note that on this occasion the Lord seemed to have favored his followers more than he did the rest of the world. This is because it was not yet time in the plan of God for the world in general to be blessed. Jesus was about to die on the cross in order to redeem the whole world. However, most of the world was not ready to listen to the message of salvation in their day, nor is it ready in our day. In due time, because Christ died for every man, all will be given a fair opportunity to receive great blessings from God. "The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."—Isa. 40:5

In the interim since Jesus began his ministry until our day, another necessary step in the plan of God has been taking place. Jesus, because of his faithfulness to God, has been greatly rewarded. "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:911

Jesus will be the king during the millennial kingdom, and he will have a bride to share his throne. It is this bride that has been in the process of selection and development throughout the Gospel Age. Only after the full number of the 'bride class' has been selected and proved faithful unto death, will the blessings begin to flow to the world.

The Lord's prayer during that difficult time before his death was not offered just on behalf of those who were with him that night. Speak-

ing of his disciples, he said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."—John 17:20, 21

It was Jesus' desire that the disciples whom he was about to leave, as well as all the disciples of the years still future, would be one—that they would have one mind, one purpose, and one will—not that they would be the same being.

All who will be members of that glorious heavenly company and who will live and reign with Christ (Rev. 20:6) must develop the same character as their Lord. These are striving to be pleasing to the Lord, and to walk closely in his footsteps. As the prospective bride of Christ they hunger and thirst after righteousness, desiring always to know and to do the Lord's will that they may finish their earthly course and see their Master face to face in heaven. □

Being Servant of All

KEY VERSE: *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."*—*Philippians 2:5*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Philippians 2:1-11*

THE LETTER TO the Philippians is a wonderfully affectionate letter. Paul wrote lovingly to this congregation which he established. This was Paul's first European church, and it was the place where the apostle and his companions found a group of women worshipping by a riverside. Among them was "a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple . . . which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the the LORD opened."—Acts 16 14

After Lydia and her household were baptized, she encouraged Paul and his companions to abide in her home. And so they did. Here we find a good example of Lydia "being a servant of all," as the title of this lesson invites us to do.

The very best example that we have of being a ser-

vant of all, is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."—Phil. 2:7

The Master's disciples raised the question as to which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. The Lord's answer was that it would be he that was servant of all. (Matt. 20:27) At the time of the Lord's Last Supper, just one day before he would give up his life, the Master girded himself with a towel, took a basin with water, and washed the feet of the disciples. They were all bewildered. But the Lord had a lesson for them on humility and love for each other. He said, as recorded in John 13:12-17, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: ye

say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

As we read the letter written to the Philippian church, we note how the Apostle Paul reveals a great deal of the general character of the brethren there. It is a letter that is beautiful and loving, and shows a very close and sympathetic bond between the apostle and this particular church.

On at least four different occasions, that we know of, the brethren at Philippi sent Paul gifts. While the apostle was in Thessalonica he received two presents from them. Again, while in Corinth the brethren ministered to him, in a special way. Additionally, when he was a prisoner in Rome they did not forget him. The love

of the Philippian brethren for Paul indicated that they, as a group, were mindful of the apostle's admonition, recorded in our key verse, Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Truly, the brethren at Philippi were servants, even as was the Lord during his earthly ministry.

It was Epaphroditus who served as the messenger for the Philippian brethren. During his stay in Rome he became "sick unto death." Upon his recovery the Apostle Paul sent back with him this beautiful letter, known to us as the epistle to the Philippians.

Our Heavenly Father is always pleased when those who serve him, also serve others. Jesus set the example; Epaphroditus and the brethren at Philippi followed that example; and as a result "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" rose up as incense to glorify and praise the Heavenly Father.—Phil. 4:18



LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 23

Song of God's Victory

KEY VERSE: *"The LORD God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him."*—**Revelation 19:6,7**

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Revelation 15:2-4*

THIS LESSON COMES from the last book in the Bible, which "is a Revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him as that he might show his servants what must very soon take place."—Rev. 1:1, **Phillips Modern English**

The Apostle John wrote this book at a time when Christianity was still in its infancy and subject to growing persecution and hostility. It foretold that future centuries would produce divisions, corruption of doctrines, and severe difficulties. Revelation was designed to recount the events that were occurring then, and would occur throughout the Gospel Age and to assure the true church that while the experiences of the Christian would be very severe, ultimately the Gospel would prevail.

It was Jehovah God's plan since before the foundation of the earth, to rescue not only our first parents, Adam and Eve, from the fall, but also to redeem their future, yet unborn, billions of children that would fill the earth. The Book of Revelation shows that Jesus Christ is the one through whom God accomplishes his purpose to sanctify his name, destroy wickedness, and bless mankind. Carefully concealed in him, "Christ," are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."—Col. 2:3

Jesus is the Seed of promise, the one in whom the sacred secret was hidden. This 'secret' includes the privilege of his faithful followers becoming part of the promised seed that will bless all the families of the earth. (Gal. 3:29) The first chapter of Revelation introduces us to Jesus Christ,

showing him as having died sacrificially, but now being alive in great power in heaven.—Rev. 1:5,6

Our Heavenly Father is very concerned with his servants on earth who have been chosen by him to share in the heavenly kingdom. The full number of those who will be 'faithful until death' has been revealed to be 144,000. (Rev. 7:4) In Revelation 14:1 we see the Lamb of God standing upon Mount Zion with the 144,000 who have been victorious overcomers.

A great many symbolisms are found in this last book of the Bible. In chapters 15 through 18, God's final judgments are shown in symbol. One of the chief foes of God, and of Jesus, and of the 'bride' of Christ, has been Babylon the Great—a powerful ecclesiastical system. God's other enemies will also be dealt with and destroyed. This will be accomplished by the Christ, the 'bridegroom', and his 'bride'. The destruction will be complete, ridding the earth of its foes, political and ecclesiastical. Satan, the arch-enemy of righteous-

ness, will be bound at the beginning of the Millennial Age. He will be loosed at the end of that age only for a "little season," as a final test for humanity—and then he will be destroyed forever.

When the symbolisms of Revelation are fulfilled and every enemy of God and man has been destroyed, then the kingdom will be turned over to Jehovah, God. (I Cor. 15:24) Then will also be fulfilled those many great promises which God had made concerning the blessing of all the families of the earth. God said, "So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it."—Isa. 55:11

Our Heavenly Father will rejoice and sing with gladness! Because his only begotten Son, Jesus, and his bride, and all of redeemed mankind will faithfully serve him throughout eternity!—Zeph. 3:17



The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke 11:13

THE HOLY SPIRIT is the holy power of God. It is not a 'third person' in a trinity of gods. In the Old Testament the word spirit is a translation of a Hebrew word which literally means 'breath', or 'wind', and was thus used by the ancients. The same is true in the New Testament with respect to the Greek word translated spirit. However, this does not mean that the Holy Spirit is a holy wind. While originally the words translated wind meant only this one thing, through use the meaning was expanded to describe any invisible power or influence. Since the Spirit of God is an invisible power or influence, these Greek and Hebrew words were properly used to designate it.

In the Genesis account of creation we are informed that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen. 1:2, 3) Here the Spirit of God, his invisible power, is shown in a creative role, accomplishing the mighty acts of creation. In connection with the building of Israel's Tabernacle and its furnishings, the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver; and in brass."—Exod. 31:24

Another interesting use of the word spirit is in Ecclesiastes 11:5, which reads, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her

that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." This is particularly true with respect to the workings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of God's people.

Through the Word

The Holy Spirit of God as it works in the lives of his people during the present time is largely the power of his thoughts, his mind; and God's holy thoughts are transmitted to us through his written Word. It was the Holy Spirit of God that enabled the ancient prophets to communicate their messages to us, and these now constitute much of the Old Testament. Jesus was directed by the Holy Spirit in the things which he said and did. The record of his life and teaching is, therefore, a further revealment of the thoughts of God as they pertain to his will for his people throughout the Gospel Age. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the waiting apostles, inspiring them to communicate further the holy thoughts of God. Thus we see that the entire Bible is very much a product of the Holy Spirit.

This means that when we study the Bible we are studying the thoughts of God, not the thoughts of man. "My thoughts are not your thoughts," the LORD said, ". . . for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. 55:8-11

We can be assured from this passage of Scripture that the Holy Spirit, working through the Word of truth, accomplishes all his good purposes in our lives. The Scriptures themselves, however, reveal that in cooperation with the written Word, the power of the LORD overshadows his

people through his providences. Many of his providences are in the hands of God's holy angels, and we read that "the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Ps. 34:7

Indeed, the providences of Jehovah helped to shape our affairs in connection with our being drawn to our Lord Jesus, and to the point in our experiences of making a full consecration to do God's will. (John 6:44) Probably all of us can look back and note how wonderfully the LORD did thus lead us—how he brought us into contact with his Word of truth, and prepared our hearts to be receptive to its message.

We cannot comprehend the ways of the LORD in connection with his dealings, for "we know not the way of the Spirit." What we do know, and can appreciate, is that we were drawn to him, and through the power of the truth were impelled to make a full consecration to do his will.

These providences of the LORD continue with us as a comfort and guide. We are incapable of judging what shipwreck we might make of our Christian lives were it not for the LORD's protecting care as it is ministered to us by the holy angels and otherwise. And this is an important part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Begetting of the Spirit

We are able to understand only in part just how the Holy Spirit accomplishes God's work in our hearts and lives. However, in order that we might grasp a little more clearly than otherwise what it accomplishes, the Bible uses a number of illustrations. One of these illustrations is contained in the word, "begat." It is a translation of the Greek word *gennao*, and, except for the genealogy in Matthew 1, in the New Testament, it is translated "begat" but five times. All the other times it is used in the New Testament it is translated, "born."

Begetting is the conception of a new life, and one of the things accomplished in us by the Holy Spirit is the beginning of a new life. The Apostle James wrote, "Of his own will

begat he us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18) It is the will of God that we should be thus begotten, and he accomplishes his will in us through the Word of truth.

It was by the miraculous power of God, his Holy Spirit, that the Bible was provided. It was also by his invisible power, operating by ways and means known and controlled by him, that we were brought into contact with the written Word. In the Word we found the plan of God revealed, that plan in which we see and appreciate the wisdom, justice, love, and power of God. We learned that this plan provided for the restoration of the human race to life on the earth during the thousand years of Christ's kingdom. We also learned that the footstep followers of Christ during the Gospel Age were called to give up their human lives, and to receive a heavenly life to be with Jesus. We learned that this called for a full dedication of all that we have and are, to the LORD, and to the doing of his will; and we learned that his will was that we lay down our lives following in the footsteps of Jesus.

These simple but glorious truths made a strong appeal to us, so strong that we reached the point, eventually, of full surrender to the LORD. It is only in the fully surrendered heart that the Word of God can have its full and intended effect. As long as there is the slightest opposition to the thoughts of God having full control of our lives, the power of the Word is weakened so far as we are concerned.

We had already learned about the "exceeding great and precious promises" whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature, but we knew that these promises did not belong to us as long as we were holding back from the doing of God's will. But when we did surrender, and presented our all to the LORD in sacrifice, to do with us as he desired, then we knew from the Word of truth that all its exceeding great and precious promises did belong to us, and the power of these promises went to work in our surrendered hearts.

The result of this was that we had hope of a new life. We knew that while our outward man would perish, our inward man, the new mind of the Spirit, would be renewed day by day, and in the resurrection would reach its birth, when we would be made like Jesus, exalted to "glory and honor and immortality."—Rom. 2:7

Involved in thus becoming a New Creature in Christ Jesus there are two miracles. The first was the provision of the Word of truth through the Law, the prophets, our Lord Jesus, and the apostles. Then there was the miracle which took place in our own hearts which prepared us to receive the begetting power of the Word of truth. Thus it is proper to say that we were begotten by the Holy Spirit. Following natural begetting there is the growth of the embryo and so it is, symbolically, with us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

However, there is a difference in that in the case of the natural embryo it is a new body that is developed first, whereas with us it is a *new mind*. This new mind is quickened, energized by the Spirit, and nourished by the Word of truth. That is why it is essential for us to feed upon the Word, and to take into good and honest hearts all its lifegiving nourishment that we may grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. The birth of this new mind into a full fledged New Creature in Christ is brought about by a further ministry of the power of God, a use of divine power that is beyond the power of the Word.

The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

Another ministry of the Holy Spirit is its anointing power in our lives. In Isaiah 61:1, 2 we read, "The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." Jesus quoted this passage, with the exception of proclaiming the

day of vengeance, and applied it to himself as the Head of his body; and we know that it also applies to us as his body members, for we have received this anointing from him.

The anointing illustration is based upon the ancient custom of the Israelites, under God's instructions, to anoint their kings and priests to office. It was their official designation of appointment to office. This is the main thought in connection with our being anointed by the Holy Spirit. Whereas the **begetting** of the Holy Spirit is related to our new **life**, the spirit's **anointing** pertains to our **service** as New Creatures. Through this illustration, and otherwise, we learn that the LORD has something for us to do, that he has authorized us to serve in connection with the outworking of the divine plan.

We come under this 'anointing' because we are members of the body of Christ. John wrote, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you." (1 John 2:27) We also receive this anointing, or authorization, of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of truth. Jesus said of himself, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) To his disciples he said, "Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14) This is Jesus' authority for our proclaiming the glad tidings of the divine plan. It is, shall we say, one of the 'anointing texts' of the Bible.

Paul wrote to the brethren at Philippi, saying, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless [*Margin*, 'sincere'], the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world holding forth the Word of life." (Phil. 2:14-16) This is another anointing text of Scripture, one which authorizes the followers of the Master to faithfulness in bearing glad tidings to the meek.

Another statement by the Apostle Paul authorizing us to be representatives of Christ in the outworking of the divine plan, reads, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto

them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”—II Cor. 5:18, 19

Knowledge Important

In writing to the Hebrew brethren, Paul said, “For the time [you have been in the truth] ye ought to be teachers.” (Heb. 5:12) The fact that these brethren had not yet qualified to be teachers did not mean that this was not the LORD’s purpose in calling them. Paul points out that they needed themselves to be taught again “the first principles of the oracles of God.” Those who are anointed should indeed know these first principles of the truth. It is for this reason that we study, for only thus can we show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.— II Tim. 2:15

The Witness of the Spirit

The Apostle Paul wrote, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:16, 17) The witness of the Spirit is the testimony of God’s Word that we have been begotten to sonship, and are his children. Paul declares that we have this witness, this testimony, “if so be that we suffer with him.”

The Apostle Peter wrote concerning the testimony of the Holy Spirit as given through the prophets of the Old Testament, and said that one of the points of truth it testified was “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” (I Pet. 1:10) The Apostle Paul wrote that he filled up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. (Col. 1:24) There is abundant testimony in the Scriptures that the followers of the Master share with him in the sufferings foretold by the prophets. This means that if we are sharing in those sufferings because of our faithfulness to him, the testimony of the Holy Spirit on this point applies to us, and therefore is saying to us that we are the children of God.

And there are many other testimonies of the Word of God which serve as a "witness of the Spirit" to the faithful followers of Jesus. The Apostle John wrote, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (I John 3:14) We should pay careful attention to the 'ifs' stated and implied in these wonderful testimonies of the Word. If we do not love the brethren, then we do not have this witness of the Spirit that we are God's children. It is just that simple. If, through lack of zeal for the Master's service, we are not placing ourselves in a position where we feel the opposition of the world, hence are not in any way suffering with Christ, but enjoying the friendship of the world, then we do not have this witness of the Spirit.

Paul again wrote, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14) Are we allowing the Spirit of God, through the Word, to lead us day by day in the paths of righteousness? The LORD, by his Spirit, and through his providences, leads his people sometimes beside the still waters and sometimes through the "valley of the shadow of death." (Ps. 23) At times we may be able to trace his providences and understand their meaning; and at other times we will simply have to trust him where we cannot trace him. Like Job, we may look for the LORD on the right hand and on the left hand, ahead of us and behind us, but will be unable to find him. But if our faith is strong, we will be able to say from the heart, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—Job. 23:8-10

If we are being led by the Holy Spirit, we will be quick to respond to any indications from the Word as to what the LORD would have us be and do. The general testimony of the Word concerning the disciples of Christ is that they are to follow him in sacrifice, even unto death. (Rev. 2:10; 14:4,5) We cannot expect that the Spirit will lead us along paths that are pleasant to the flesh, but otherwise. There will be trials and disappointments; but as New Creatures in Christ Jesus we will rejoice in the LORD, knowing

(Continued on Page 37)

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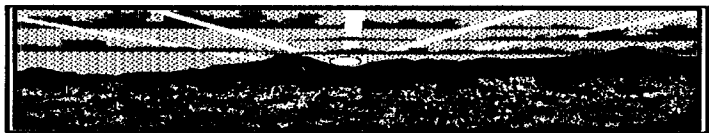
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Claremont	KTSJ 1220	9:45 a.m.
Lancaster	KVOY 1340	8:15 a.m.
Los Angeles(Mon)	KTYM 1460	6:30 a.m.
Los Angeles(Span)	KALI 1430	5:45 a.m.
Monterey	KNRY 1240	8:30 a.m.
Sacramento	KJAY 1430	10:00 a.m.
San Francisco	KEST 1450	3:30 p.m.
Tehachapi	KTPI-FM 103.1	8:15 a.m.
Yuba City	KOBO 1450	3:30 p.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville	WXTL 1010	7:45 p.m.
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Tampa	WTMP 1150	8:30 a.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle	WLFO 1220	9:45 a.m.
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Hammond	WJOB 1230	8:30 a.m.
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KANSAS

Goodland	KLOE 730	7:15 a.m.
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KENTUCKY

Bowling Green	WBGN 107.1 FM	8:15 a.m.
Winchester	WHRS	10:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Detroit	CKLW 800	7:45 a.m.
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NEW JERSEY

Salem	WNNN-FM 101.7	9:45 a.m.
Salem	WJIC 1510	9:45 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos	KRSN 1490	6:45 a.m.
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NEW YORK

Buffalo	WHLD 1270	12:00 noon
New York	WOR 710	9:15 p.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati	WNOP 740	9:00 a.m.
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OREGON

Portland	KKEY 1150	7:00 a.m.
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PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown	WHOL 1600	10:45 a.m.
Jenkintown(Wed)	WIBF-FM 103.9	12:30 p.m.
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SOUTH CAROLINA

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

TENNESSEE

Nashville	WLAC 1510	7:45 p.m.
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VIRGINIA

Richmond	WGGM 820	7:45 a.m.
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WASHINGTON

Spokane	KUDY 1280	9:45 a.m.
Tacoma	KAMT 1360	7:30 a.m.

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

PLEASE TAKE NOTE . . .

. . . of adjustments which are continually being made in the "Frank and Ernest" program schedule. New stations will be added, and some old ones will no longer carry our program. You may wish to check this schedule regularly, to see what is happening in your area.

.... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

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

QUEBEC

Montreal	CFMB 1410	5:15 p.m.
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SASKATCHEWAN

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

Argentina (Spanish)

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

Brazil (Portuguese)

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

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

Chile (Spanish)

Santiago (Sat)	Radio Panamericana CB 142	
		10:00 a.m.

China

Hong Kong	Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)	6:00 p.m.
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East Africa

Radio East Africa	4:00 p.m.
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Ecuador

Quito Radio Acorananza (Sat.)	99.7-FM 8:45 a.m.
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Israel & Middle East

Voice of Hope (Wed.)	945 AM 10:30 p.m.
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Italy (Italian)

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

Kenya & Uganda

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

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

Whakatane	IXX 7:00 a.m.
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Nigeria

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

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

Manila (Sat.)	DZAM 1026 KHz 7:15 p.m.
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South Africa

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

Sri Lanka

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

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

Montevideo Radio El Espectador	810 9:15 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS – TV Programs

ALABAMA	Channel	MAINE	Channel	OKLAHOMA	Channel
Montgomery	56	Portland	57	Broken Bow	28
CALIFORNIA		MARYLAND		Muskogee	19
Arroyo Grande	66	Leonardtown	52	Oklahoma City	7
Lancaster	38	MICHIGAN		Tulsa	33
CONNECTICUT		Detroit	16 & 26	PENNSYLVANIA	
Litchfield	5	Muskegon	40	Berwick	47
FLORIDA		MINNESOTA		Harrisburg	40
Daytona	42	Minneapolis	13	Hazleton	35
Ft. Myers	7	MISSISSIPPI		Johnstown	9
Jupiter	9	Bolivar	8	Pittsburgh	63
Naples	9	Philadelphia	20	SOUTH DAKOTA	
Orlando	21	Starkville	5	Mitchell	16
St. Augustine	22	Tallahatchie	11	TENNESSEE	
St. Petersburg	35	MISSOURI		Harrogate	18
Tallahassee	9	Cameron	35	Heiskell	12
Tampa	57	Columbia	2	Murfreesboro	27
GEORGIA		St. Louis	7	TEXAS	
Athens	34	NEBRASKA		Austin	13
Cordele	55	Lincoln	67	Corpus Christi	50 & 7
Dublin	36	NEVADA		Mt. Pleasant	54
Savannah	55	Las Vegas	39	San Antonio	67
ILLINOIS		NEW JERSEY		Sulphur Springs	18
DeKalb	7	Hammonton	8	UTAH	
Plano	30	NEW YORK		St. George	55
Rockford	45	Glens Falls	8	VIRGINIA	
Urbana	1	Jamestown	8	Gloucester	51
INDIANA		Oneonta	15	Norfolk	68
Evansville	52	Rochester	40	WASHINGTON	
Indianapolis	11	Syracuse	14	Wenatchee	27
IOWA		NORTH CAROLINA		Yakima	60
* Cedar Rapids	13	Burlington	16	WEST VIRGINIA	
Marshalltown	39	Charlotte	15	Huntington	55
KANSAS		Henderson	34	* Logan (Mon)	12
Junction City	6	Lenoir	53	WISCONSIN	
Waterville	26	Raleigh	63	Waukesha	43
KENTUCKY		Wilmington	10	PUERTO RICO	
Morehead	10 & 7	OHIO		Mayaguez	42
Mt. Sterling	6 and 2	Akron	29		
LOUISIANA		Ashland	59		
Jennings	13	Cincinnati	25		
New Orleans	61	Delaware	56		
		Youngstown	20		

"The Bible Answers" television programs are aired each Sunday afternoon from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on the stations listed above. The times, days, and channels of those listings marked with an asterisk (*) can be found in your local newspaper.

that as long as we follow the directions of his Word we cannot go astray. Knowing this, we will have the assurance, the witness, that we are the sons of God.

The Seal of the Spirit

Ephesians 1:13 reads, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." In some instances the thought of a seal is used with respect to the impression of the divine likeness in the Christian life. But in this text the thought seems to be based on the custom of sealing letters and important documents as a means of guaranteeing their contents. So the thought seems to be that by, or through, the Holy Spirit, God has guaranteed to his faithful people that they shall receive all that he has promised. In verse 14 this "seal" is referred to as "the earnest of our inheritance"; that is, a sort of down payment on what we are eventually to receive if we are faithful even unto death.

Paul says that we are sealed "with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost by promise. However, its manifestation to us is through the written Word of truth, and the many promises which it contains. And how wonderful are the promises which the Holy Spirit, through the Law, the prophets, our Lord Jesus, and the apostles, has recorded for our encouragement! These promises do indeed guarantee us victory in Christ. They assure us that not only is the one who called us faithful, but that he will accomplish on our behalf all his good will.—Heb. 10:23

And how all-comprehensive are the promises of God! We know that we are weak and imperfect, unworthy of his grace and love, but he has assured us that our iniquities are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness. We may look ahead with fear to the many trials which we know we must endure, and wonder if we will have the strength to endure them in a way pleasing to our Father, but we have the assur-

ance that he will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear; and that when the trials become too severe he will provide a way of escape.—I Cor. 10:13

We know that arrayed against us are the formidable enemies the world, the flesh, and the Devil. As we consider their combined strength and strategy invoked to separate us from the love of God, and to destroy us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, we might well become fearful. But the Holy Spirit, through the Word, reminds us that greater is He who is for us than all that be against us, and that nothing will be permitted to separate us from the Father's love.—Rom. 8:31-39

How blessed and reassuring are these sealing texts of the Word of God, recorded for our encouragement by the Holy Spirit! According to these promises, nothing can prevent us from attaining that for which we have been called by God—nothing, that is, but our own unfaithfulness. They assure us that as long as we keep ourselves in the love of God, and do the best we can in following the leadings of the Holy Spirit, we will ultimately have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Truly the assurance by Jesus that the Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him is abundantly verified in our experiences as the children of God. Through the Holy Spirit he has begotten us to a new life; he has anointed us to be co-workers with him; he has given us his testimony that we are his children; and he has assured us of final victory in the race course, as we run for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. May we then continue humbly to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit, knowing that, while at present it is leading us through a narrow way of sacrifice, eventually it will lead us to "glory and honor and immortality," to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:6



Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

THE KING JAMES Version of II Timothy 2:15 reads, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." According to Prof. Strong, the Greek word here translated study means 'to make effort, be prompt or earnest'. The thought of study is implied in the text in that our earnest effort to show ourselves approved unto God is indicated to be through "rightly dividing the Word of truth." Paul recognized the need for diligence in Bible study.

In this text Paul indicates the proper motive for Bible study—which is that we might know the will of God, show ourselves approved unto him, and be fervent in our spirit of serving him. Bible study is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, and that end is to know and to do God's will. And, as Paul points out, we show ourselves approved unto God in proportion to our rightly dividing the Word of truth, and working in harmony with the instructions thus revealed to us.

What is meant by "rightly dividing the Word of truth"? Paul's initial use of this expression is found in a very interesting and revealing context. The preceding verse reads, "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." The three verses following the admonition to rightly divide the Word of truth read, "Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

From these verses we learn that striving about words, and vain babblings do not constitute profitable Bible study. Nor were those who at that time were teaching that the resurrection of the dead had already taken place, "rightly dividing the Word of truth." It might well have been the teaching of this error in the Early Church that prompted Paul to use the particular expression, "rightly dividing the Word of truth." The Bible does teach the resurrection of the dead, but the error at that time was in claiming that it was a feature of the divine plan which was in the past, rather than in the future.

The lesson here emphasized is the importance of a proper recognition of the time element in God's plan. Failure to recognize this has led many to conclude that the Bible is contradictory and unreliable. There are, for example, three main time divisions in the plan of God. In a very general way we might speak of these as 'the world of yesterday', 'the world of today', and 'the world of tomorrow'. The Bible uses the expressions, "The world that then was," "this present evil world," and "the world to come."—II Pet. 3:6; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:5

The first two of these worlds are predominantly evil. The third is described by Peter as a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (II Pet. 3:13) Concerning the "present evil world" we read, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Mal. 3:15) Failure to recognize that God is now permitting evil to flourish, and that his time for the establishment of righteousness in the earth is in the world to come, has led to various erroneous concepts of the divine plan, and of God's will for his people at the present time.

Four Ages

Within these larger divisions of time there are shorter periods, which we usually refer to as ages. There was the Patriarchal Age, which began at the Flood, and ended with the death of Jacob. During that age God was dealing with the

patriarchs Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His promises were to them, particularly beginning with Abraham. He did not try to convert the world at that time.

Then, beginning with the death of Jacob, came the Jewish Age, so titled because during that period God's dealings were exclusively with the Jewish nation. Through the Prophet Amos God said to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2) He gave this nation his Law, and sent his prophets to them. He promised to send the Messiah to this nation, the great Deliverer who would be of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal house of David. By means of the Law and other measures he held the nation together until the Messiah did come. Because they rejected the Messiah, they lost the great privilege of any longer being God's exclusive people, and a new age began; an age during which the divine purpose in the earth has been carried out through the preaching of the Gospel, hence we call it the Gospel Age.

The Gospel Age has not been a time for the conversion of the world, but for reaching a particular group of people, and calling them out from the world to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, that in the age to come they might live and reign with him in his kingdom. To understand this has a tremendously important bearing on our understanding of what constitutes the will of God for his people during this present age.

The first thousand years in the world to come we refer to as the Millennial Age. This is the age of Christ's kingdom. This is the age during which the world will be converted, and all the then willing and obedient will be restored to perfection of human life, and have an opportunity of living forever on a perfected earth. Many are the promises of God relating to this glorious climax of the plan of God; but if we are to know the will of God for us at the present time, it is essential to recognize when these promises apply and to whom.

Different Rewards

While Paul's initial use of the expression, "rightly dividing the Word of truth," related more particularly to time, the principle thus set forth can properly be applied to other important facts in connection with the divine plan. For example, there are both earthly and heavenly promises in the Bible. There are promises of earthly blessings in the Old Testament which speak of building houses and planting vineyards. (Isa. 65:21, 22) Some, not understanding the plan of God, and therefore not able to "rightly divide the Word of truth," have endeavored to spiritualize promises like this, and imagine some sort of houses being built in heaven, and of spiritual vines and fig trees growing there.

On the other hand, Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2, 3) This is a most precious promise for all true followers of the Master, but many have supposed that it applies to all who will be saved in every age. Failing to rightly divide the Word of truth along this line takes away the vital meaning of such admonitions as, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," hence the true incentive for this effort is more or less nullified.—Col. 3:13

Symbolic Language

To be able to distinguish the difference between the symbolic and the literal language of the Bible is also important in rightly dividing the Word of truth. Failure in this has led many students into supposing that God intends to destroy the earth with literal fire, and to torment forever all those who do not accept Christ before they die. This robs them of a true vision of the wisdom, justice, love, and power of God, and their chief motive for serving him is fear rather than love. It is true that many try to love God in spite of their gross misconceptions concerning him.

But how beautiful is the symbolic language of the Bible as it is used in his promises to his people, and also in connection with the outworking of his plan of the ages! "I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler," wrote the psalmist.—Ps. 91:24

To Whom Addressed

In rightly dividing the Word of truth it is also important to note to whom any particular text of Scripture is addressed. We have an outstanding example of this in the epistles of the New Testament. Well-meaning people of the world often quote from these epistles when referring to matters of the world, such as politics, etc. However, these epistles are addressed exclusively to the earnest footstep followers of Jesus, and are designed to guide, strengthen, and comfort these. For example, the Epistle to the Romans is addressed to "all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."—Rom. 1:7

What is true of the New Testament epistles is also true of many other parts of the Bible. Indeed, the Bible was not written to guide the political activities of the nations, but as a light for the guidance of those who have dedicated themselves wholly to the doing of God's will. To recognize this makes the entire Word of God more precious, giving the feeling that in it is a personal message to us from our loving Heavenly Father.

However, this particular principle in Bible study is of even greater value to us when properly and fully applied. For example, the Prophet Isaiah spoke of the bread and water of the LORD's people being sure. (Isa. 33:15, 16) Many followers of the Master have taken this to mean that the LORD will never permit them to go hungry, when as a matter of fact, many have experienced hunger. The Apostle Paul him-

self, writing to the brethren at Philippi, said, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."—Phil. 4:12

There can be no question concerning Paul's faithfulness to the LORD. He was not permitted to go "hungry" as a punishment for unfaithfulness. It was simply that the LORD saw that it would be good for Paul as a New Creature in Christ Jesus for his flesh to suffer the pangs of hunger. What, then, did the Prophet Isaiah mean by the promise that bread and water would be sure to the righteous?

This particular promise pertained to God's faithful people of a different age, a people who were being dealt with by God under the terms of the Law Covenant. Under that covenant, God had promised to bless his faithful people in basket and in store. (Deut. 28:5) It was not a covenant of sacrifice, but a covenant which promised earthly blessings of health and life for those who were faithful. Had the people of Israel been able to live completely up to the terms of the Law Covenant, they would not have died at all.

But how different is the situation with the LORD's people of the Gospel Age! We have covenanted to lay down our lives. (Ps. 50:5) Jesus, our Head and Exemplar, laid down his life. There was no other way for him to be faithful to his Heavenly Father but to sacrifice his all, as a man, which he did. We have been invited to suffer and to die with him, and the providences of God in our lives, as we lay them down in his service, must be interpreted from this standpoint, else there is a possibility that we might become discouraged in our failure to receive the blessings which we supposed the LORD had promised.

Jesus said to, and concerning, his true followers, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father[']s knowledge]. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matt. 10:29, 30) Surely this denotes a very careful and loving watchcare by the Heavenly Father over the affairs of his children. But

note that Jesus did not say sparrows never fall, and that nothing ever happens to the hairs of our head. It is simply that even these unimportant things in our experiences are known to the Heavenly Father, and are taken into consideration in his dealings with us.

"My God shall supply all your need," wrote Paul, "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19) We can depend upon this promise, but we must be willing to allow the LORD to decide what our needs may be. These are the needs of the New Creature, not necessarily the needs of the flesh, although the flesh is closely related to the New Creature. Indeed, while still this side of the veil, the flesh is the body of the New Creature, the only body the New Creature possesses.

The LORD has certain purposes to accomplish in and through his people. For this reason he might preserve the health of our 'earthen vessel' for a while, and see to it that we have necessary food and raiment, not to interfere with the carrying out of our covenant of sacrifice, but to keep us 'fit' while we are laying down our lives in his service. These are matters which are in the LORD's hands. The point we are to remember is that his promises to us are spiritual, not earthly. The blessings which we can be sure of receiving unstintingly from him are those which pertain to our spiritual, and not to our human existence.

If we rightly divide the Word of truth we will recognize this difference, and will be prepared to accept with gratitude and praise whatever experiences the LORD, in his wisdom and love, sees best for us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. He may permit us to have bread and water in abundance, yet our stomachs may not be in a sufficiently healthy state to digest food, and our bodies would starve for the need of nourishment. On the other hand, he might permit us to have healthy stomachs, but not give us all the food we may think we need. The end result would be much the same in both cases. The LORD knows best. We are laying down our lives, and if the LORD wishes to accept our final offering on an

altar of hunger, we should rejoice. But this will not, we can be sure, occur until the LORD sees that it is the due time, both from the standpoint of his plan and our own readiness for the kingdom.

We have stressed the point of food as an illustration. This principle applies to all of the LORD's dealings with us. As fleshly beings we would like to think that the LORD is so overruling in our affairs that nothing can happen to us of an unpleasant nature; that every detail of life will work out smoothly and happily. But this is not the will of the LORD for us. He may permit us to be sorely tried along some lines: through illness, or hardships of other kinds. If so, it is because he sees that such experiences are best to prepare us for the place he has for us in the kingdom. Let us recognize this, thankfully accept the LORD's providences, and thus show ourselves approved by him through rightly dividing the Word of truth with regard to this aspect of our Christian lives.

The Houses of Israel

Noting to whom the promises and the prophecies of the Bible apply is also a great help in our understanding of the plan, of God as a whole. During the Gospel Age the followers of Jesus are looked upon as a 'house of sons', over whom he is the Head. The promises of God to these are wonderful and precious. But this 'house', while still in the flesh, is made up of both 'Israelites indeed' and nominal believers, and both these groups are addressed in the Scriptures.

A good example of this is to be found in the messages to the seven churches as recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation. While complimenting the church at Pergamos, the LORD added, "But I have a few things against thee, because 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 unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the

doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."—Rev. 2:1416

The promises of a crown of life, of sitting on the throne with Jesus, of being given a white stone, and being made a pillar in the temple of God, as contained in these messages to the churches, were not made to those who followed the example of Balaam. No, these were warned of punishments of the LORD, and yet they are all classed as being in 'the church'. It reveals that the LORD has permitted the 'indeed' Christians, and the 'nominal' Christians to exist together throughout the age. The world has seen little or no difference. Only the LORD who knows the heart has discerned this difference, and he rewards and punishes in keeping with his justice and love. It is important to us also to recognize that there are these two classes, and on this point to rightly divide the Word of truth.

The same thing is true with respect to natural Israel. We read of Moses that he "was faithful in all his house." (Heb. 3:2) Just as in the house of sons during its course of development some have been faithful and some have not, even so was it with the house of servants over which Moses was the head. Here, also, the promises of God to the faithful are quite different from those to the unfaithful, which in many instances are more in the nature of warnings than of promises.

Moses wrote, "The LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18:17-19) The Apostle Peter quoted this promise, and indicated, in other words, that it would be fulfilled following the second coming of Christ in the kingdom.—Acts 3:19-23

This warning was made, not to the faithful of Israel, but to the faithless and unbelieving. The Israelites had entered into the Law Covenant, but many were already displaying a lack of faith concerning it, and were rebellious against the providences of the LORD. So throughout that entire age there was this group within Israel. God loved them. He was merciful to them, and in eventually showing his mercy to them through sending them 'that Prophet' who will richly bless them with restitution to human perfection—that is, as many of them as then hear and obey the great Prophet raised up to them. Those who do not 'hear' and obey will be destroyed from among the people.—Acts 3:23

But during that same period of time—indeed, going all the way back to righteous Abel—there was another class, a faithful class. Perhaps at times it could hardly be called a class, but just individuals who displayed their faith in God and in his promises, in spite of the trials and difficulties this fidelity entailed. Paul speaks of these in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. He explained that they endured their afflictions in order to obtain "a better resurrection." (vs. 35) They evidently understood that if faithful to the LORD, faithful even unto death, the LORD would have something better for them in the resurrection.

This is indicated in Paul's speech to the Roman governor, Felix, in which he said, "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:14, 15) The whole Ancient Worthy class evidently knew about the resurrection of the just. It was this that they looked upon as the 'better resurrection', and their desire was to be faithful to the LORD in order to be found worthy of being brought forth in that 'better resurrection'.

Doubtless all of that class following the giving of the Law were greatly inspired by the promise in Exodus 19:5,6, in

which God assured the faithful that they would be "a kingdom of priests" and "an holy nation." While the nation as such did not qualify under the terms of this promise, it served as an incentive to those who sought earnestly to know and to do God's will, but was largely ignored by the nominal Israelites.

The fact that these two classes existed prior to the first advent of Jesus means that some portions of the Scriptures refer to one class and some to the other. To discern the correct lessons which the Lord is teaching us through these scriptures, we need to take note of which class it is that is being discussed, or to which class the promises or warnings are being given. Thus we will have no difficulty in discerning the position of the Ancient Worthies, and of Israel as a whole in the plan of God.

The word kingdom is one of the prominent words in the Bible. There was, of course, the kingdom of Israel, and there are the kingdoms of this world. But we have in mind particularly, at the moment, the kingdom of the LORD. In many of the prophecies of the Old Testament the LORD's kingdom is referred to, but the word itself is not used. In Isaiah 25:69 the kingdom is symbolized by a 'mountain' in which the LORD makes unto all people a feast of fat things, and in which he swallows up death in victory. In Isaiah 9:6, 7 the kingdom is described as a "government."

While in a general way all these, and the many other references in the Bible, apply to the same kingdom, they do not always refer to the same aspect of the kingdom. For example, when Jesus admonished his disciples to seek first the kingdom of heaven, his reference was to a position of rulership in the LORD's kingdom. When, in Luke 12:32, we read Jesus' words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," the same thing is true.

In contrast to this, most of the kingdom promises of the Old Testament describe blessings which will be received by the subjects of the LORD's kingdom. It is important, in rightly

dividing the Word of truth concerning the kingdom, to note this distinction if we are to get the full force of what is meant. It is also important to note that some of the passages of the Bible in which the word kingdom is used, refer to the future rulers in that kingdom while they are being prepared for that high position. Only by noting these distinctions will we be able to see and to appreciate the full harmony of the Word of God with respect to its teachings on the subject of the kingdom of the LORD.

Ourselves Approved

Let us ever remember, however, that the main purpose of Bible study is that we might know the will of God for ourselves, and receive inspiration to faithfulness in the doing of his will. One important aspect of the divine will for his people during the present age is that we may be co-workers with the LORD, bearing testimony to the Gospel of Christ, the great and precious truths of the divine plan. Our text refers to these as being workmen who need not to be ashamed because they have rightly divided the Word of truth.

To bear witness to the truths of the divine plan we should know those truths, and how they are set forth in the Word of God. Thus every truth in the Bible is related to our knowing and doing God's will. How important it is, then, that we rightly divide the Word of truth from the standpoint of time, noting its earthly and heavenly promises, and its use of literal and symbolic language.

Let us note also to whom the various promises of God are directed, and what those promises mean which apply directly to his saints of the Gospel Age. Let us remember that we are seeking a place as kings and priests with Jesus in his kingdom, and rejoice that it is the Father's good pleasure for us to attain such a position. And let us also rejoice in the blessings which are coming to mankind in general as subjects of the kingdom. May we be faithful in proclaiming these glorious truths far and wide, to all who will hear! □

Once a Slave—Now a Brother

OUR TITLE REFERS to Onesimus, who is the subject of Paul's letter to Philemon. In this short epistle of one chapter there is revealed a situation which called for the exercise of true Christian understanding and love. And we have no doubt that when put to this severe test, love did not fail. The circumstances leading up to the writing of this letter need to be kept in mind in order to derive the real value of the lessons which it teaches.

Philemon was a well-to-do Christian, whose home was evidently in the general vicinity of Colosse. How he came into contact with the Gospel, and the circumstances under which he embraced it, are not revealed in the Scriptures. There seems to be a general agreement among Bible historians that Philemon was liberal with his wealth, especially toward the brethren, a group of whom held meetings in his home.—vs. 2

Paul's letter to Philemon indicates that the two were well acquainted. It could be that Paul had been entertained in his home. Certain it is that the two had labored together closely in the ministry of the Gospel, so much so that Paul refers to Philemon as a 'partner'. Paul's every reference to this ardent coworker in the Gospel reveals that he was indeed a noble Christian, and a stalwart in the faith.

At that time, ownership of slaves was quite common, and Philemon, being a man of some means, was apparently a slave owner. This seems strange to us today. We might well wonder how a Christian could be a slave owner. Our **Common Version Translation** refers to these as servants. To these Paul wrote, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers but in singleness of heart fearing God."—Col 3:22, 23

One of the servants, or slaves, owned by Philemon was Onesimus. Whether or not Paul had become acquainted with him during any of his visits to Philemon's home, we cannot be sure. All we know with certainty is that Onesimus, for reasons not revealed in the Scriptures, elected to run away from his master. He fled to Rome. He probably thought that in a large city like Rome he would be less likely to be found.

Arriving in Rome, Onesimus sought out Paul, who was in prison. The fact that he went to Paul would seem to indicate that he was acquainted with the apostle, and knew that he was held in a Roman prison. As we know, Paul used every possible opportunity to present the Gospel, and did not overlook the privilege of witnessing to Onesimus, who accepted the message, and consecrated himself to God and the service of the heavenly Master, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Onesimus also became a very valuable servant to Paul, not as a slave, but as a voluntary helper. However, under the circumstances, Paul realized that he could not properly continue to use the services of Onesimus inasmuch as he actually belonged to Philemon. The fact that Onesimus had accepted Christ did not cancel his obligation to his earthly master from whom he had run away. This being true, Paul arranged for Onesimus to return to Philemon to seek forgiveness, and to accept whatever, if any, penalties might be imposed upon him.

However, Paul did all he could to make Onesimus' return as easy and pleasant as possible, principally by giving Onesimus a letter to his master which he was to deliver to him personally. In this letter Paul builds upon his own close relationship with Philemon as a friend and brother in Christ to help him realize the great opportunity he now had of exercising forgiveness and brotherly love. He presented Onesimus, not as a runaway slave, but as a spiritual son, "whom I have begotten in my bonds."—vs. 10

Paul also entrusted a letter to the brethren at Colosse to Tychicus and Onesimus, referring to these in his letter as 'faithful and beloved brethren', and adding concerning

Onesimus that he was one of them. (Col. 4:79) Probably the brethren at Colosse knew that Onesimus had run away from his master, Philemon, so Paul introduced him to them now as a beloved brother in Christ, and entrusted messages of greeting to him for them. Naturally the brethren in the ecclesia at Colosse would not have the same difficulty in accepting Onesimus as a brother as Philemon might have experienced. At the same time, if the brethren generally did accept him, it would make it more difficult for Philemon to withhold his blessing, perchance he had any inclination to do so. Surely Paul used great wisdom in handling this delicate situation!

In his letter to Philemon, Paul does not minimize the wrong course Onesimus had taken in running away. He admits that Onesimus had been unprofitable to his owner, "but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly."—vss. 11-14

Here Paul is gently reminding Philemon that there had been an opportunity to serve him while in prison, and that he would be glad to accept the services of Onesimus in the place of Philemon. However, as Paul explained, since Onesimus really still belonged to Philemon he could not assume to continue accepting his services without the consent of his master.

In his letter Paul eases the situation as much as possible by reminding Philemon that it might well have been permitted for a good purpose. "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season," Paul wrote, "that thou shouldest receive him forever; not now as a servant [or slave], but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the LORD? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself."—vss. 15-17

Paul realized that Onesimus' desertion had doubtless put Philemon to some expense. Perhaps Philemon had felt the

need to purchase another servant to take the place of Onesimus. Some scholars think there is a possibility that Onesimus had stolen from Philemon prior to his escape, although there is no evidence to substantiate this. However, Paul covers these possible situations in his statement, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account."—vs. 18

It is difficult to determine definitely the background of this statement. It would seem to indicate that Philemon was handling Paul's financial affairs while he was a prisoner in Rome. Seemingly Paul had some resources at the time, for he lived for two years in his own hired house, having had this special privilege granted to him by the Roman authorities. Perhaps Philemon was the one who took care of this situation for Paul, holding his means in trust, and paying the rent when it became due.

And now Paul was giving Philemon authority to use some of his account for another purpose; namely, to repay him for any loss he had sustained as a result of Onesimus' having left him. What a noble attitude this was on Paul's part! However he does not miss the opportunity to remind Philemon indirectly that he owed a great debt to him, which is probably a reference to the self-sacrificing manner in which Paul had ministered to Philemon in spiritual things. We quote, "I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides."—vs. 19

Having disposed of this possible financial objection that Philemon might raise in connection with receiving Onesimus, Paul then appeals to him as a brother, saying, "Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the LORD: refresh my bowels in the LORD. Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say." (vss. 20, 21) The record does not indicate whether or not Paul's confidence in Philemon was justified. However, Paul himself seemed quite sure that it would be, and having presented his unusual request, asked his 'partner' to prepare lodging for

him, "for I trust," he wrote, "that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."—vs. 22

In this unusual situation there is brought into focus for us the opportunity for Philemon to exercise the virtue of forgiveness. Jesus' teachings on this point actually left Philemon no choice as to what he should do, for in his sermon on the mount Jesus said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14, 15) The proper application of this principle of divine love and mercy was considered so important by Jesus that he incorporated it in the prayer which he taught to his disciples.—Matt. 6:9-13

According to the standards of the time, the trespass of Onesimus against his master, Philemon, was a very real and serious one. It was not that he had been misunderstood by Philemon. Nor did Paul, in his letter to Philemon, try to discount the seriousness of the trespass. All Paul asked was that Philemon exercise forgiveness and mercy toward Onesimus, especially that now he was a brother in Christ.

Today, a similar situation could not develop. However, it is still true that brethren in Christ are trespassed against, both by those in the world and, at times, unwittingly, no doubt, by their brethren in Christ. And whatever the nature of these trespasses, if we truly desire to be like our Father in heaven, we will extend mercy and forgiveness toward those who do us wrong, especially if they manifest a spirit of repentance and seek our forgiveness, as did Onesimus.

And even when we are not directly asked to extend forgiveness, the spirit of mercy and of kindness should be in our hearts toward all who transgress God's law. God loved us while we were yet sinners, and provided a Redeemer, his own beloved Son, to make possible our reconciliation. And while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. This is the manner in which divine love operates, and if we would be like our Heavenly Father, and like his beloved Son, we, too,

will need to maintain this desire to bring about the reconciliation of those who have trespassed against us.

Jesus said that if we do not forgive those who trespass against us, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us. This makes the spirit of forgiveness very vital to all who desire to maintain their relationship with the Father. Because of our inherited imperfections we frequently, by thought, word, or deed, trespass against our loving Heavenly Father, thinking, saying, and doing things which reflect against the glory and beauty of his character. We are not willful in this, but at the same time, we need his forgiveness; and if we are to obtain it we will need to continue in a merciful and forgiving attitude toward any and all, even though at times some may say or do things which reflect against us. Failing in this exercise of divine love, all else that we say and do will be of little or no account. □

1992 Memorial Supper Date

THE PROPER TIME for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Thursday, April 16th.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette service can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available on loan free of charge from:

Dawn Recorded Lecture Service

199 Railroad Avenue

East Rutherford, NJ 07073

The video cassette service can be purchased for \$6.00, and is also available free on loan. Send your request to:

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TALKING THINGS OVER

Financial Report Year Ending 9/30/91

	Receipts	Expenditures
General Fund	\$210,348.59	
Advertising	500.00	\$137,358.15
Publications	51,727.28	445,536.86
Radio & Television	26,717.47	197,408.00
Speakers (USAS & Overseas)	1,533.95	42,589.40
Audio-Film-VCR Services	3,594.06	117,675.74
Overseas	3,913.00	51,645.86
Investment and Interest Income	<u>357,507.23</u>	
Total before Bequests	\$655,841.85	\$992,214.01
Bequests Received	<u>353,704.82</u>	
TOTALS	\$1,009,546.37	\$992,214.01

General Convention Bulletin

IT IS TIME to start planning your trip to Missouri Western State College, in St. Joseph, MO. July 18-23 is not far away. For you who will be flying, the college is located about 35 miles north of the Kansas City, MO Airport. Van transportation will be provided from airport to college.

This year the meal and room costs will be very low:

Ages 0-4	Ages 5 to 11		12 and over
Free	\$8.00	Br/Lun/Din per day	\$12.50
	\$7.00	Daily DOUBLE lodging in dorm	\$7.00
	\$7.00	Daily SINGLE lodging	\$11.00
	\$97.00	Package: DOUBLE lodging (7 nights, 6 days of meals)	\$114.00
		Package: SINGLE lodging	\$144.00

More information, with reservation forms and convention programs will come to you in subsequent Dawns. ☐

YOUNG PEOPLE'S BIBLE STUDIES

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES, Part 24



Saul's Foolishness

JUST BEFORE KING Saul's death, he had a very queer and frightening experience. It was as a result, once again, of his disregard for God's laws and his disobedience of them. Although he had begun his reign well (I Sam. 28:3,9), before long Saul became defiant of God's will. He continued his course of defiance right to the end of his career. His sin at the time this story takes place was to seek out the counsel of a witch.

This story is set during the last battle that Saul fought with his old enemies, the Philistines. Saul no longer relied on the limitless might and power of God, but on his own power and strength. He raised as large an army as he could, but still he

was fearful of the outcome of the war. Even a small army could have driven the Philistines out of Israel if they had trusted God. Did not one man alone cause them to flee at the time David slew Goliath? And only 300 of Gideon's men overcame the 135,000 Midianites! But since they now did not put their trust in him, God did not at this time fight for Israel against their enemy.

In overpowering fear, Saul made a very bad decision. (I Samuel 28:5-20) He said to his servants, "Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit [a witch], that I may go to her, and inquire of her." This action not only showed obstinate rebellion against God's commandments, but it also showed that he had no understanding concerning what happens to people when they die. He decided to visit the witch who lived at Endor, to see if she could communicate with the dead prophet, Samuel, for advice from him as to how he could defeat the Philistines. He had no thought of having Samuel tell him what God's will was in the matter. His only interest in Samuel was to get information necessary to overcome his enemy.

His first, and worst, mistake was lack of faith in Jehovah. His second blunder was disobedience to God's command—"Thou shalt not allow a witch to live." (Exodus 22:18) His third failure was belief in Satan's lie, "Thou shalt not surely die." (Genesis 3:4) He obviously believed he could talk to Samuel although the prophet was already dead.

Was it such a terrible error for Saul to attempt communication with the Prophet Samuel? Yes, it certainly was, for several reasons! In the first place, since Saul never took Samuel's advice or warnings seriously when he was alive, why should he seek his guidance now that the prophet was dead! Furthermore, Saul should have known that it is impossible to speak with the dead. "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." (Ecclesiastes 9:3,10) Those who have died, lie silently asleep in the grave until the day of the resurrection of the dead.—John 5:28,29

Beside ignoring these two important realities, Saul forgot that to deal with witches was to deal with evil spirits—the fallen angels—since witches used the powers of the devils. (Jude, verse 6) This is why God's command was a sentence of death to all witches in the land. By using the powers of the fallen angels, witches deceived people into thinking that they could talk with their loved ones who had died. In fact, they themselves were deluded into misrepresenting themselves as mediums through which the dead can be reached and communication established.

Saul was desperate. One of his immobilizing fits of terror had come over him. He was afraid and his heart greatly trembled! And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. (1 Samuel 28:5,6) In desperation, Saul disguised himself by dressing in clothes which would never be worn by a king, and, in the dark of the night, he took two men with him and went to see the witch. His disguise did fool her. But the first thing she did was to remind him that King Saul had sent all the witches out of the land at God's command, with the warning that if they returned, they would die. Saul assured her, "There shall no punishment come upon thee." This decision was made with the clear knowledge that he was once again disobeying God's law.—1 Samuel 28:8-10.

After determining that she was safe, the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee?" And he answered, "Bring me Samuel." Saul, in his fear, superstition, and willingness to believe error, was easily fooled. When the witch of Endor said she saw an old man covered with a mantle, Saul believed she was actually seeing Samuel. He himself never saw anything, but he did hear a voice which he supposed to be Samuel's, and which claimed to be Samuel. But we know that Samuel, the faithful prophet of the LORD, even if it had been possible for him to speak from the dead (which it was not!), would never have spoken through a witch, or through evil spirits, to give a message from God! This voice was the work of the fallen angels. They acted out the part of Samuel,

and tricked both the witch and Saul into thinking they had reached the dead Samuel. This was simply another attempt on Satan's part to keep his lie alive: "Thou shalt not surely die!"

Actually, the voice Saul heard gave him no information which he did not already possess. The voice repeated the fact that God had rejected Saul, and then told him that both he and his two sons would die on the following day. This prediction was inaccurate, since they were not killed the very next day, but several days later! (I Samuel 28:11-19) Saul knew before this time that he had been rejected by Jehovah. He also realized that, with the mighty armies of the Philistines closing in around him, he was sure to lose his life! That is the very reason his fears had driven him to seek more positive information from the witch. He had hoped against hope to hear something that he knew was impossible—that he would defeat the enemy.

But he was sorely disappointed. (I Samuel 28:20) Neither the witch nor the evil spirits she worked with had the power to change events to come. They could do nothing to calm his worst fears. Oh, foolish king! You who had enjoyed the Spirit of the LORD and his favor with you when you began your reign! Why did you turn from his ways to seek your own pleasure? You have come to a disgraceful end!—I Chronicles 10:1-7

QUESTIONS

1. What very bad decision did King Saul make to try to overcome his long-time enemies, the Philistines?
2. Why was this such a bad error in judgment?
3. Why did God command all witches to be killed?
4. Who was the first to express the lie, "Thou shalt not surely die"? This was a direct contradiction to God's words. What had God told Adam?
5. Would it seem likely that the faithful Prophet Samuel would go against God's commandment and speak to

Saul through the witch, if he could? Why do we surely know it was **not** Samuel speaking?

6. What message did the voice of the evil spirit give to Saul? Was it an accurate message?
7. Did Saul receive comfort from his last terrible disobedience to God's laws?



**"FRANK
&
ERNEST"**

*Listen to these
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2:15 p.m.**

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- 2-The Earth Abideth
- 9-Beginning of God's Creation
- 16-Opening the Books
- 23-Thy Will Be Done

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JANUARY SPECIAL

On Sunday, February 16th, **"Frank and Ernest"** will discuss a topic of interest, **"The Opening of the Books."** Free circulars are available which announce this program. You are invited to send for as many as you can use. Write to:

**The Dawn
East Rutherford, NJ 07073**

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

S. Mengos		M. Balko	
San Gabriel Valley, CA	Feb. 2	Seattle, WA	Month of February
Fresno, CA	9		

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Lavina Lewis, October 16—Seattle, WA. Age, 95.

Sister Nellie Kornatoski, November 21—Vista, CA. Age, 87.

Sister Merzy Armstead, November 26—Cincinnati, OH. Age, 94.

Sister Tressa R. Haugh, November 26—Windsor, PA. Age, 64.

Brother Carl Interisano, November 27—Chicago, IL. Age, 78.

Brother William G. Schneider, December—Los Angeles, CA.

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

FEBRUARY 6—"Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."—Psalm 75:6,7 (Z. '95-11 Hymn 105)

FEBRUARY 13—"Love thinketh no evil."—1 Corinthians 13:5 (Z. '98-84 Hymn 45)

FEBRUARY 20—"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, . . . this man's religion is in vain."—James 1:26 (Z. '99-215 Hymn 4)

FEBRUARY 27—"Let your moderation be known unto all men."—Philippians 4:5 (Z. '03-7 Hymn 206)

CONVENTIONS

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 14-16—Beverly Garland Hotel, 1780 Tribute Rd. 95815. For reservations, **contact hotel by January 31**: 1-800-BEVERLY. For special rates, mention Bible Students Convention. Or, contact Mrs. E.F. Lankford, 6000 19th Ave. 95820. Phone: (916) 457-0569

FLORIDA BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, March 7,8,9—Plaza Inn, 603 Lee Road, Orlando. Contact Convention Secretary **by February 14** for reservations: Robert Goodman, 426 Sundown Trail, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 695-6815

ROCKLAND BIBLE STUDENTS, CORRECTION: March 8—*New Location*: Green Meadow Waldorf School, Chestnut Ridge Road, Spring Valley, NY. Contact: Mrs. R. Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07060

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 27-30—ECCO, Oakhurst, CA. Please contact Sister Virginia Wilson, 2103 N. Price St. #112, Fresno, CA 93703 for information and reservations. Phone: (209) 255-2241

ALBUQUERQUE PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 10,11,12—Amfac Hotel, Alberquerque

International Airport, 2910 Yale Blvd, SE. Contact Mrs. Roberta Buss, P.O. Box 9172, Albuquerque, NM 87119 for information and **reservations before March 25th**. Phone: (505) 877-2866

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 10,11,12—Macomb Community College, Bldg. K, 14500 12 Mile Road, Warren, MI. Reservations should be made by **March 20th**. Contact: Mr. Frank Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Dr., Troy, MI 48084.

Phone: (313) 649-6588

BOISE, ID, April 24-26—Owyhee Plaza hotel, 1109 Main St., Boise. For reservations, please contact Mrs. Vi Cooper, 1422 Denver Ave., Boise 83706. Phone: (208) 344-2173

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 18-23—Missouri State College, St. Joseph, MO. Additional convention information will be given in future issues of *The Dawn* magazine.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF BIBLE STUDENTS, August 8-14—Poitiers, France. Contact: Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

