

## Coveting Crude Oil

***“Go to now, ye rich  
men, weep and howl  
for your miseries  
that shall come  
upon you.”  
—James 5:1***

**FOR MONTHS THE MEDIA** has carried news about the inspections of the United Nations in Iraq to uncover weapons of mass destruction. Paralleling this news is that of the United States of America’s preparations for war and invasion of Iraq to destroy weapons of mass destruction, and to oust Saddam Hussein from power. As an

explanation for all of this activity there appeared in the February 2003 issue of the *World Press* a feature article entitled, “*Coveting Crude, The Unquenchable Thirst For Oil.*” This consisted of six excerpts from the news media of four countries, all commenting upon the particular thirst of the United States for oil. The most pointed of these came from Mexico.

The Mexican left-wing paper, *LaJornada*, published in Mexico City on December 8, 2002 an article entitled “*Playing into Saddam’s Hands,*” with a subheading, “*Baghdad Profits from Bush’s Threats.*” The article said:

“The threats by the United States against Iraq have set off an intense diplomatic campaign by Saddam Hussein’s government—one that, up till now, has continued to score successes.

“It is apparent, for example, that if there is an invasion, after a brief spike in the price of oil, which could be caused by the massive destruction of wells and pipelines, there would be a brutal plunge in price per barrel. The privatization of the Iraqi oil industry and the quadrupling of daily output—which Americans are studying as a means to ease the U.S. and world economic crisis by lowering consumer energy prices—will cause this drop to occur. It will be disastrous for the producer nations and, above all, for the Arab countries and Iran.

### IRAQ’S STRATEGY

“The prospect of witnessing the death of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and seeing world conditions

return to those before 1974, when oil prices were ridiculous and the major British-American companies controlled the market, tends to unite the other oil-producing nations of the region behind Iraq. They realize they would be victims of the same plan and the same war that today threatens Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. That is why there have been important high-level meetings in the last two months between Iraqis and Iranians (despite the bloody war and eight years of confrontation between the two countries), between Iraqis and Russians, between Iraqis and European diplomats and business people, and between Iraqis and the royal courts of Saudi Arabia or the Emirates.

“Now Saddam Hussein is telling Kuwait he is sorry for the invasion that ignited the Gulf War, hoping to gain the benevolence of the Kuwaitis to affirm Arab unity. This would be a part of a broader front of oil-producing nations that aims to counter George W. Bush's policies—his crusade that considers Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Libya, among other countries, to be members of what the American president considers the axis of evil.”

The article also went on to say: “And it will not be possible to return to this era in terms of colonial exploitation of oil resources without going back, at the same time, to the political identities that people possessed during those years of hatreds and hopes. At the same time, and as part of its campaign, Iraq has signed important trade agreements worth tens of billions of dollars of petroleum with oil companies from Russia, Europe, and China. These agreements permit the exploitation of its enormous oil reserves, the world's second-largest after Saudi Arabia. The contracts are aimed at countering the Americans' promises to corporations in other countries that would participate in the distribution of Iraq's oil booty once Saddam Hussein has been overthrown and the United States has installed a client regime in power in Baghdad.

“These agreements signed behind America's back have worked to create shared interests among Baghdad, Moscow, and the European capitals. These interests not only oppose Bush's policy and war but also the blockade that bars Iraq from selling more oil than the United Nations permits. The blockade is preventing the companies that now have contracts to exploit Iraqi oil from making millions in profits.

“Thus Baghdad has created a front opposing the war and the blockade that is strangling it. George W. Bush has already succeeded in ending Saddam Hussein’s isolation and in getting a rebuff from the U.N. inspectors, in addition to increasing disagreements with his former European and Russian allies. If Bush continues to move with such arrogance and clumsiness, he may even convert his despised enemy into a nationalist leader or a martyr.”

## **OPEC’S STRATEGY**

The impact that the threat of war has on OPEC was the subject of another article in the Pan Arab publication, *Al-Hayat*, published in London, England on December 11, 2002, under the caption of “*OPEC and the Chance of War.*” It said:

“The ministers of the member states of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are convening a meeting tomorrow in Vienna under the pretense of weighty international matters and looming questions pertaining to the fate of nations most related to the global oil market, especially the United States. The most important of these questions are: Will the United States initiate a war on Iraq, and when? As for Iraq, a principal nation in OPEC, it has a current daily export capacity [quota] above 2 million barrels of oil. Yet the remaining problems with the international embargo commission, and continued tension between Iraq and the United States, have contributed to fluctuations in Iraq’s level of oil exports.

“Last week, Iraq’s oil exports reached 1.4 million barrels a day. Its high point was 1.7 million barrels when the United Nations debated and voted on Resolution 1441. Considering this, an OPEC minister predicted that if war against Iraq became imminent, prices would first greatly increase, then fall to previous levels, and then decrease.

“Iraq is not the only matter that OPEC members must consider, however. The fact is that Venezuela, South America’s largest oil producer, is witnessing political uncertainty, and there is an atmosphere of a civil war between Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and the opposition, which is growing in size daily. A workers’ strike in the oil sector (the state-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela*) has contributed to a decrease in production to half the [original] level, which

was approximately 3 million barrels a day; production even came to a complete standstill yesterday.

“Nigeria is the other oil country that is witnessing continued political instability and security tensions that affect oil refineries and the oil sector. Thus, a number of questions concern Nigeria’s oil production capabilities in the future.

“Because of disturbances in these oil nations and the fact global reserves are at a depressed level, oil prices will remain inside OPEC’s framework of \$22-\$28 per barrel—that is, unless the winter in the West becomes even more severe. Keep in mind, though, that this is the price even after OPEC nations have increased their production more than 3 million barrels per day over the official production cap decided upon at their last meeting in Osaka, Japan [in September 2002].

“Because of the likelihood that the American economy might weaken further and the global impact of this, some oil-producing nations feared a large decrease in the demand for oil. They have therefore failed to abide by OPEC quotas on their production caps. They now, however, can use the pretense of political developments in Iraq, Venezuela, and elsewhere to raise the official production cap in such a manner that it will resemble actual production rates, which is recommended during tense political times.”

An article from *The Guardian*, a liberal English newspaper, published in London on November 22, 2002, described how the Iraq Petroleum Company brought into existence the present oil industry in Iraq. The legal battle that occurred when the Iraqi regime nationalized the industry is told and how a major legal battle is anticipated if a change in the Iraqi regime should occur. The article, “*The Mother of All Legal Rows*,” said:

## **WHO WILL OWN THE OIL?**

“All the players in the current quarrel can agree on one thing—Iraq has the potential to become a great oil nation again. There is a huge gap between the trickle of oil coming out of Iraq today and its capabilities.

“According to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, the entire world’s known oil reserves run to 1,000 billion barrels. Iraq claims a 10th of this, just over 100 billion barrels. However, in an interview before the current conflict, Taha Hmud Moussa, then Iraq’s

deputy oil minister, said the oil ‘will exceed 300 billion barrels when all Iraq’s regions are explored.’ If true, this means Iraq has a quarter of the world’s oil. The United Kingdom’s North Sea reserves are 5 billion barrels, and we are the European Union’s largest oil producer. Iraq’s oil is not miles offshore under a treacherous sea. This makes it cheaper than the oil Britain produces.

“John Teeling, head of one of the few Western companies to admit to working in Iraq, is exultant. His Dublin-based company, Petrel Resources, is keen to develop unexplored oil fields. This oil could cost as little as 97 cents a barrel. ‘Ninety cents a barrel for oil that sells for \$30—that’s the kind of business anyone would want to be in.’

“Last month, behind the closed doors of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, leading oilmen, exiled Iraqis and lawyers held a meeting entitled “Invading Iraq: Dangers and Opportunities for the Energy Sector.” One delegate said the entire day could be summarized as “Who gets the oil?”

“History can reveal much of how this may end. Iraq’s oil was originally developed through a consortium called the Iraq Petroleum Co. (IPC)—split roughly a quarter share to British Petroleum (BP), Shell, and the forerunner to Total, with the remainder owned mainly by Standard Oil and Mobil. But, in 1972, it was nationalized by the revolutionary Iraqi regime. Negotiations over nationalization were fierce, and Geoffrey Stockwell, who headed the IPC team, had some extraordinary clashes with both Saddam Hussein and Iraq’s vice president, Salih Mahdi Ammash. Ammash said Iraq would ‘go through any battle with the companies that was necessary’ and resort to ‘all means necessary.’ The companies would also ‘lose Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti oil, because if their Arab brethren did not stand by Iraq, they would use force to stop this oil flow.’

“After a painful battle, the IPC finally signed the nationalization agreement on February 28, 1973. Today, if ‘regime change’ happens, we could see three of the world’s largest public companies—BP, Shell, and ExxonMobil—fighting for their old IPC possessions. Back in the 1970s the IPC was compensated for its lost oil fields, and that would normally end any future rights they might have. However, they may well try to show that the compensation deal was signed under duress.

“‘If you argue there is something amounting to duress, then you could argue the compensation agreement is invalid,’ says Professor Thomas Walde, formerly principal United Nations interregional adviser on oil and gas law. ‘If I were their [the companies’] adviser, I would develop this into a bargaining chip with the new government. It would play a role in the race for getting new titles.’

“The stakes are high. Iraq could be producing 8 million barrels a day within the decade. The math is impressive—8 million times 365 at \$30 per barrel, or \$87.6 billion a year. Any share would be worth fighting for.

“The stakes are equally high for the French, Russians, and Chinese. It is striking that the three countries that delayed America’s new U.N.-Iraq resolution all have potentially massive oil pacts there. Saddam is believed to have offered the French company TotalFinaElf exclusive rights to the largest of Iraq’s oil fields, the Majnoon, which would more than double the company’s entire output at a stroke. Meanwhile, Russia and China have sought various deals on the super-giant West Qurna and Rumaila fields, respectively. The Russian company Lukoil has been assured it will not lose its stake in the 20-billion barrel West Qurna field.

“Former CIA Director James Woolsey recently told *The Washington Post*: ‘France and Russia have oil companies and interests in Iraq. They should be told that if they are of assistance in moving Iraq toward decent government, we’ll do the best we can to ensure the new government and American companies work closely with them. If they throw in their lot with Saddam, it will be difficult, to the point of impossible, to persuade the new Iraqi government to work with them.’

“Experts on international law seem not to be on Woolsey’s side, however, and a new Iraqi government may have little choice but to work with Saddam’s current friends. ‘The majority opinion is that if a government creates a [legal] title, it survives a change of government,’ says professor Walde.

“Should ‘regime change’ happen, one thing is guaranteed—shortly afterward there will be the mother of all legal battles.”

## **VENEZUELAN CRISIS**

Three other articles were included in this series, two published in Russian newspapers. One published in Moscow, the *Kommersant*, a

business-oriented journal, in an article entitled, "*The Second Oil War*," told of the general strike in Venezuela that brought Venezuelan oil industry to a halt. The controversy between the opposition and President Hugo Chávez continues as endeavors to oust him from office have not succeeded. The country is on the brink of a revolution. Venezuela is the fifth largest exporter of oil in the world and the second largest supplier to the United States. The country is on the verge of economic collapse since it is so highly dependent on the oil industry. If the political situation should be settled, they would greatly increase oil exports and that would benefit the United States. Because of the political chaos in Venezuela, oil prices have increased.

## **THE RUSSIAN PIPELINE**

Another Russian newspaper, *Izvestiyya*, published in Moscow on November 27, 2002, an article, "*A Competitive Northern Pipeline*" which tells of a 4 billion-dollar project to construct a pipeline to Murmansk. This will supply a new export route of Russian oil to the United States by 2007. By 2010 Russia expects to supply 13% of the United States needs.

A final article published by the South African *Business Day* in Johannesburg on December 10, 2002 entitled, "*U.S. Eyes West African Crude*" relates the new oil rush for African oil. As exploration continues for African oil, the United States, which currently imports 15% of its needs from Africa, is expecting to import 25% by 2015.

All industrialized countries need oil as a source of energy. Our forefathers knew very little about oil as a source of energy. It is interesting to note how Biblical prophecy, in particular Daniel 12:4 which says, "Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," was made possible by God's advance planning. As the 'time of the end' (of this old order upon the earth) began with the nineteenth century, so too the Industrial Revolution (denoted as a period in British history from 1750 to 1850) was changing from a stable agricultural and commercial society to an industrial one which relied on complex machinery rather than tools. Such changes took place in other countries at a later date, coinciding more with the nineteenth century.

The factory and complex machinery needed steel and fuel. Both iron ore and coal were found in close proximity in England to provide steel for machinery and coke for the steel industry, as well as for fuel for the highly improved James Watts steam engine. As God prepared the earth for human habitation, in those Creative epochs he laid down these materials and also the crude oil reserves. Soon the steam engine gave place to the diesel engine and the electric motor. With advancement of knowledge caused by God, mankind found the necessary fuel for the energy needed to fulfill prophecy.

## **THE ONLY SUPERPOWER**

In the ensuing years, the United States emerged as the forerunner of advancing nations, as the champion of liberty and democracy, and as the richest nation in the world. Its wealth, however, depended heavily on an ample supply of fuel. The United States first found oil in 1856 in northwest Pennsylvania. Oil has been found since then in other parts of the United States, and offshore in the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific Ocean. It has never been enough to supply the needs of its industry and life style. As the richest nation in the world, it depends heavily on crude oil to maintain its position in the world, and currently is the only superpower.

The Lord's people know that the position of any individual or nation is according to God's will. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, beautifully expressed this principle when she said, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up." (I Sam. 2:6,7) Is the threatened war against Iraq a form of imperialism to get an assured supply of oil as implied by other nations? Or is it a sincere effort to protect the American people against weapons of mass destruction? There was only one period of time that the United States went to war and took lands in an imperial fashion. That was the Spanish-American war in which the Philippine Islands, Cuba, and Puerto Rico ended as possessions of the United States. At that time the United States was accused of imperialism.

## **THE LEVELING OF SOCIETY**

There is a great disparity between the poor and rich in every nation and between nations. We have very poor and very rich countries. This disparity becomes worse with time. God's plan is to remove this



disparity. John the Baptist, in preparing the way for our Lord's ministry, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5, which is quoted in Luke 3:2-6: "...the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

This prophecy of every valley (all the poor and lowly individuals and nations) being filled (exalted) and every mountain and hill (all the rich and exalted people and nations) being brought low, was only partially fulfilled at our Lord's first advent. He made it possible for the publicans and sinners to become candidates for the High Calling and those who sat in Moses' seat and considered themselves children of the kingdom to be cast out into outer darkness. As Hannah prophesied in her prayer, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."—I Sam. 2:8-10

When the church is completed then the great leveling of earth's society will begin. The poor of this world and nations will be exalted, and the rich individuals will be brought low. All will be equal in God's kingdom. Those who were rich fraudulently will be judged as prophesied in James 5:1-6, whether individuals or nations. God's judgments are true and righteous and in that kingdom this will be recognized as they all praise God in the words of Psalm 67:1-7, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern

the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”

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# Purifying the Worshipping Community

***Key Verse: “They come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves.”***

***—Mark 11:15***

***Lesson Scripture:  
Mark 11:1-9, 15-18***

**IN TODAY’S LESSON** we find Jesus triumphantly entering Jerusalem where he would soon eject the moneychangers from the Temple. When he approached the city, near the Mount of Olives, he sent forth two of his disciples, and said to them, “Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him.” (Mark 11:2,3) The disciples found the colt tied at a doorway as Jesus had directed. As they untied it some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus they cast their garments on him

and Jesus sat on it. As they went, many “spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees,” and spread them on the road. (vs. 8) Those who went ahead, and those who followed, shouted, “Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” (vs. 9) He entered Jerusalem and immediately went into the Temple. He looked around carefully and left, returning to Bethany with the twelve disciples, for it was now late in the day.

In the exciting events of this day, the Lord fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an

ass.” Going back to Jerusalem the next day, Jesus felt hungry and seeing a fig tree he went to see if he could find anything on it; but he found nothing but leaves. Then he cursed the tree, saying to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” (Mark 11:14, *New International Version*) In the Scriptures, the fig tree pictures Israel.—Matt. 24:32

Following this, they returned to the Temple and Jesus began to overturn the tables of the moneychangers and the stalls of those selling doves. Furthermore, he wouldn’t allow anyone to use the Temple court as a thoroughfare to carry any merchandise through.

Then he taught them saying, “Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. And when even was come, he went out of the city.”—Mark 11:17-19

They passed by next morning and noticed the tree dried up from the roots. Peter exclaimed, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered! ” (vs. 21, *NIV*) Jesus said, “Have faith in God. ... What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”—vss. 22,24

# New Meaning for Old Traditions

**Key Verse:** “*He said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*”  
—*Mark 14:24*

**Lesson Scripture:**  
*Mark 14:12-25*

Passover. Finding everything furnished and ready, as Jesus had told them, they prepared the Passover meal.—vss. 13-16

In the evening, Jesus came with the twelve. When they took their places, and were eating, he revealed that “One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.” (vs. 18) No doubt his remarks were based upon the prophetic scripture of Psalm 41:9, which reads, “Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.” This disclosure instantly shocked the disciples, and “They began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.”—vss. 19-21

The most solemn moments of the Passover celebration occurred immediately after Jesus divulged what he was about to experience in suffering and death. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. He said, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”—vss. 22-24, *New International Version*

**THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED** bread, when they killed the Passover, Jesus’ disciples said unto him, “Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?” (Mark 14:12) So Jesus sent two of his disciples into the city where he told them to meet a man carrying a jar of water, and follow him as he entered a house. The Lord said to ask the owner where the room was located in which they were to eat the

Jesus could not have meant that the bread was turned into his actual body, and the wine into his actual blood. He could not have meant more than to say, This bread symbolically represents my body which is to be broken for you, and this wine represents my blood, my life, which is to be given up. This symbolism was to represent the merit of the ransom price Jesus was to pay by giving up his perfect humanity and life to redeem his church (the firstborn), and all mankind. As Jesus said, “The Son of man came ... to give his life a ransom for many.”—Matt. 20:28

Jesus spoke of the cup, the fruit of the vine, as representing the blood of the New Covenant. The Law Covenant was the old covenant which failed to bring blessings to the Jews because they could not keep it. God promised a New Covenant, however; a better one which would be introduced by a better mediator than Moses. God declares the New Covenant will accomplish for the world what the old covenant could not. The New Covenant will be inaugurated by Messiah, its Mediator at his Second Advent. His kingdom, established in power and great glory, will rule, bless, and instruct mankind—taking away the stony hearts, and giving hearts of flesh to all responding to the righteous kingdom.

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# Triumph Over Adversity

**Key Verse:** “*He saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.*”  
—Mark 16:6

**Lesson Scriptures:**  
**Mark 15:21-24,**  
**34-37; 16:8**

**AFTER EATING THE PASSOVER**, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Judas came with a multitude sent by the chief priests, scribes and elders, and they arrested Jesus. He was brought before the high priest and accused by false witnesses. He was then sent to Pilate who interrogated him and tried to have him released, but the people shouted, “Crucify him.”—Mark 15:13

After Pilate flogged Jesus, he was delivered to the soldiers to be crucified. They led him out and on the way compelled Simon a Cyrenian, who was passing by, to bear his cross. They brought Jesus to Golgotha, which means “The place of a skull” (vs. 22), because the hill closely resembles a skull. As Jesus is about to be crucified, those performing the execution offered him wine mixed with myrrh, which he refused. No doubt the wine was offered to dull Jesus’ senses so he would experience some relief from the horrible pain of crucifixion; and the myrrh, which is often reserved for royalty, alluded to the real kingship of Jesus.—Mark 15:23, (*New International Version*)

“It was the third hour, and they crucified him.” (vs. 25) The charge written above Jesus on the cross, read, “THE KING OF THE JEWS.” (vs. 26) “They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!’ ... ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself!’”—vss. 27-31, *NIV*

“One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ‘Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah

comes to take him down,’ he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, ‘Surely this man was the Son of God!’”—vss. 36-39, *NIV*

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who shared with Jesus the expectation of God’s kingdom, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. He gave it to him. (vss. 43,45) “Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.”—vss. 46,47, *NIV*

When the Sabbath was over, these two brought spices that they might anoint Jesus’ body. Early in the morning on the first day of the week they came unto the sepulchre at the “rising of the sun.” (ch. 16:2) On their way to the tomb they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” (vs. 3, *NIV*) When they looked up they saw that the stone had been rolled away and a young man clothed in a white robe was sitting on the right side. ““Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.’” (vs. 6, *NIV*) The resurrection of our Lord is the assurance of the resurrection of all mankind.



# Faith Conquers Fear

**Key Verse:** “*As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.*”

—Mark 5:36

**Lesson Scripture:**  
*Mark 5:22-36, 41-42*

**WHEREVER JESUS WENT** crowds gathered. He had been preaching and healing in the country of the Gadarenes and in today’s lesson he crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum. We read, “When Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet. And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray

thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.” Jesus went with Jairus.—Mark 5:21-23

Many people followed along and kept crowding around. In the crowd was a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had spent all her money for treatment by many doctors, but, instead of getting better, she grew worse. The woman had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. She thought, “‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’” (vss. 28-30, *New International Version*) Jesus kept looking around to see who had touched his clothes. The woman, fearing and trembling, knew what had happened to her and she fell at his feet and told him the whole story. “He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.’”—vs. 34, *NIV*

“While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. ‘Your daughter is dead,’ they said, ‘Why

bother the teacher any more?” (vs. 35, *NIV*) When our Lord heard these words he paid no attention to what was said, but told Jairus, “‘Don’t be afraid; just believe.’ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, ‘Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.’ But they laughed at him.”—vss. 36-40, *NIV*

After Jesus had sent them all out of the house, he took the girl’s father and mother and his three disciples and went into the room where she was lying. He took the twelve-year-old girl by the hand and said to her, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!” (vs. 41, *NIV*) Immediately, the girl got right up and started walking around. The moment they saw it, they were utterly amazed.

Our Lord’s miracles were merely illustrations of the great work which he will do on a worldwide, gigantic scale through the power and influence of his coming kingdom. This was the first of three incidents where he raised someone from the dead. Jesus also raised the son of a widow living in Nain. He intercepted a funeral procession bearing the body of the son for burial, and raised him from the dead. (Luke 7:11-15) The last of these was Lazarus, who had been in the tomb for four days. (John 11) Whatever the state of the dead, God’s power will be used to raise them from the dead.

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## Illustrations Used By God

***“It shall come to pass  
in the last days, that  
the mountain of the  
LORD’s house shall  
be established in the  
top of the mountains,  
and shall be exalted  
above the hills; and  
all nations shall flow  
unto it.”***

**—Isaiah 2:2**

**DURING THE TIME WHEN** the nation of Israel was a kingdom under God, its kings sitting upon the “throne of the Lord” (I Chron. 29:23), the governmental headquarters of the nation were located in a mountain—Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Zion was Israel’s Capitol Hill. From this mountain, the Lord ruled over the nation. How appropriate, then, that the Bible should refer to the kingdom of Christ as “the mountain of the house of the Lord.”—Mic. 4:1

Mountains always occupy a dominant position with relation to the surrounding terrain, and, from this standpoint, fittingly picture kingdoms, or governments, in their dominating position over the people. Thus the prophecy which speaks of ‘the mountain of the house of the Lord’ as being established ‘in the top of the mountains,’ very beautifully portrays the fact that Christ’s kingdom will take control over all the nations of the earth, that the “kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”—Rev. 11:15

### **“INTO THE MIDST OF THE SEA”**

In answer to his disciples’ questions concerning the signs of his return and of the end of the age, Jesus said that there would then be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity,” that “men’s hearts” would fail them “for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” (Luke 21:25,26) He further illustrated this by likening these distressing conditions to the roaring of the sea and the waves.

Long before Jesus uttered this prophecy, David wrote prophetically of the same time, saying to, and of, the Lord’s people, who would be

acquainted with the meaning of events, “Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”—Ps. 46:2,3

One who has ever heard the roaring noise of voices emanating from an angry mob of people will at once recognize the similarity of the sound to that of the roaring waves of the sea. And what a powerful symbol this is of world occurrences today. The masses of mankind, in an ever-increasing crescendo of demands, are clamoring for their real and fancied rights, with the result that during the past century many of the most powerful mountain-kingdoms of the earth have been ‘carried into the midst of the sea’—that is, brought down into the hands of the masses. Never before in the experience of man has there been, in so short a time, such a toppling of kingdoms, leaving the world in a condition of increasing chaos.

The Bible uses the earth itself to picture a more or less stable society, in contrast to the restless, roaring sea. Thus, as the prophet foretold, because the ‘mountains’ are carried into the midst of the sea, the symbolic earth is itself removed.

## **BEASTS—GOVERNMENTS**

In many instances the pictorial language of the Bible is similar to the manner of speech customarily employed by man. Throughout the centuries, beasts of one kind or another have been used to symbolize kingdoms, or governments. A couched lion was the symbol of the pharaoh’s right to rule over ancient Egypt. Today we have the British lion, the Russian bear, the Chinese dragon, and the American eagle.

Similarly, the Lord uses beasts to represent kingdoms, or governments. In the seventh chapter of Daniel’s prophecy, four beasts are depicted, to represent four kingdoms, which students of prophecy identify as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Of the Roman beast, the prophet said that he saw it stand upon and “devour the whole earth.” (vs. 23) What a lucid picture this is of a selfish and cruel government exploiting the people under its control and appropriating their resources for the furtherance of its own selfish ends!

It is important to observe, in connection with the symbology of the Bible, that any given symbol is not always used to convey the same idea.

We have already noticed that water in one association may be used to represent a cleansing power, and in another to convey the thought of life-giving energy.

Thus, while in Daniel 7:4 a lion is used to picture the ancient Babylonian empire, the Apostle Peter wrote, “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”—I Pet. 5:8

Again, in Isaiah 35:8,9, in describing favorable conditions which will exist during the age to come when “The way of holiness” is opened for the people, the prophet wrote, “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.” Here beasts are used to picture all the devouring, or destroying, influences from which mankind will be protected during the Kingdom Age, as they are returning to perfection of life.

## **TREES OF LIFE**

In the last chapter of the Book of Revelation the blessings of the people, through the agency of Christ’s kingdom, are pictured by a “river” which flows out of “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” On either side of this river are said to be trees of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding their fruit every month. The leaves of these trees are said to be “for the healing of the nations.” (vss. 1,2) How beautifully this represents the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless “all families [or nations] of the earth”!—Gen. 12:3

In Psalm 1:1-3 we read, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Here a tree is used to symbolize a godly person who delights in the law of the Lord.

We are not attempting to explain all the symbols used in the Bible. To do so might well require a book larger than the Bible itself. We are merely endeavoring to present some of the underlying principles involved in the understanding of Bible symbology, the application of which will help us in our study of the Word. And one of the important things to remember

in this connection is that we should not place arbitrary interpretations upon any of the picture language used in the Bible.

If the Bible itself does not explain the meaning of a particular symbol, then we need to take into careful consideration its principal characteristics, and, in harmony with the known elements of Truth with which it may be associated, seek humbly to understand the Lord's mind in the matter. It is well, also, to remember that the symbolism of the Bible is used to give us a clearer understanding of God's thoughts, not to hide his thoughts from us.

In saying this, we are not overlooking Jesus' statement to his disciples that his reason for speaking in parables to the world was to prevent the ungodly from understanding his teachings. (Matt. 13:10,11) These very parables, when explained to his disciples, enabled them—and are helping us—to understand many of the details of the Divine plan of the ages much more clearly than otherwise would have been possible.

## **THE HOLY CITY**

This brief examination of the style of language and illustrations the Lord uses, has, we trust, helped to portray to our minds the reassuring fact that he has a plan which has been progressing throughout the ages, which will reach a glorious consummation in the future blessing of all mankind with health and life. Perhaps a fitting closing would be that marvelous picture of the kingdom of Christ presented to us in Revelation 21:1-5. We quote the description: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

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## Go Quickly, and Tell

***“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.”***

***—Matthew 28:6,7***

**ON SUNDAY, APRIL 20**, this year, many people will again commemorate the greatest event of all time, even the resurrection from the dead of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Among millions there is a wide variety of ideas as to who Jesus was, and of what his death and resurrection mean to a distraught and suffering world today. Some, who join in the celebration of this greatest of all miracles, seriously doubt that it ever occurred. Others believe that Jesus was God himself, hence was not actually dead.

But these misconceptions of such a vital and glorious Truth of the Word of God need not take away from its luster in the minds and hearts of those who have been permitted to know this and other “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 13:11) To these the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the inspiration of their hope, the proof that his death-sacrifice as a vicarious atonement for their sins was acceptable, well pleasing to the Heavenly Father, and that now he liveth to make intercession for them at the antitypical mercy seat.

While the unbelieving world is unaware of what Jesus’ resurrection will yet mean to them, we know that the exercise of Divine power nearly two thousand years ago to raise him from the dead is an assurance to all men that, in the world’s judgment, or trial day, they will be given an opportunity to learn righteousness, obey, and live. (Acts 17:30,31; Isa. 26:9) Because this is true, those who now know God’s plan of salvation can rejoice in what the resurrection of Jesus means for them, and also for all mankind.

Paul wrote, “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” (I Cor. 15:14,15) How sweeping is this

statement, yet how true! The glorious Gospel of Christ which we cherish in our hearts, and are so happy to proclaim far and wide, would be but an empty tale—even worse, a delusion—if Christ was not raised from the dead.

But we do not need to dwell upon such a negative thought. With Paul we can say, “Now is Christ risen from the dead.” (I Cor. 15:20) And not only so, but he became “the firstfruits of them that slept” in death. Because he lives, we too shall live; and because he lives, all mankind will be awakened from the sleep of death and given an opportunity to live forever. Our preaching is not vain. In witnessing for Jesus and for the Word of God, we are not false witnesses, but bearers of a Truth which is vibrant with hope for both the church and the world.

Important as this Truth is, however, there is more for us to do about it than merely to rejoice. Our hearts are filled with joy, as was Mary’s. When Jesus appeared to her, and she realized that she was in the presence of her beloved Master and Lord, her first impulse was to linger there and to embrace him. (John 20:17) For the moment she thought only of what his resurrection meant to her. Perhaps, at times, we too might be prone to ‘linger,’ thinking only of the joy the Divine plan has brought to us, particularly of Jesus’ part in that plan.

No doubt Jesus was pleased with Mary’s feelings in the matter, as the Lord is also glad to see our deep appreciation of the Truth, but there was something more to be done about it. There was a message concerning him to be taken to others. The angel that met “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” at the sepulchre said to them, “Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.” As they started on this mission, Jesus met them. They “held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”—Matt. 28:1,2,7,9,10

## **MESSENGERS OF GLAD TIDINGS**

The great Creator of the universe had exercised his mighty power to raise Jesus from the dead and exalt him to the Divine nature. He was now “born of the Spirit” (John 3:8) and could move from one part of Palestine to another instantly. He could have manifested himself to his disciples, wherever they were, much more quickly than ‘Mary Magdalene and the other Mary’ could reach them and tell them he had been raised from the



dead. But he chose not to do it that way. He preferred to have human messengers convey the good news, so the commission was given, ‘Go quickly, and tell.’

This has been the Lord’s method throughout the entire age. The responsibility to go quickly, and tell, has been placed upon all to whom the Lord, through the Truth, has revealed himself. The Lord’s messengers have not all been furnished with the full outline of the Divine plan, but they have been given the responsibility of making known whatever of Truth the Lord has revealed to them. The glad tidings given to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary was simply the fact that Jesus was no longer dead, that death no longer had dominion over him. They were also to explain that he had not yet ascended to his Father. We still have the glorious message of the Truths of the Divine plan of which the death and resurrection of Jesus are the cornerstones.

### **“TOUCH ME NOT”**

Jesus said to Mary, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” (John 20:17) The Greek word here translated ‘touch’ is one that is used in the New Testament almost exclusively to describe the efforts of those who endeavored to touch Jesus, or his garments, with the hope of receiving healing from him. Seemingly Mary, realizing that her Master was alive again, thought first of obtaining a special blessing from him, but he explained that this was premature—‘for I am not yet ascended to my Father.’—John 20:17

Then Jesus asked Mary to tell his disciples that he expected to go to the Father, implying that she also would then receive rich blessings from him. It was only a few days before this that Jesus had outlined to his disciples those precious Truths contained in the sixteenth chapter of John pertaining to the blessings they would receive when he did go to the Father. Now he wanted them to know that although he had been raised from the dead they were not yet to expect the blessings he had promised.

Jesus had explained to his disciples that he was going away—returning “to him that sent me,” he said. They were saddened by this, and then Jesus said further that it was “expedient” for them that he go away, “for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” The ‘Comforter,’ that is, the Holy Spirit, Jesus continued, “shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that

the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he [the Holy Spirit] shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”—John 16:5-7,14,15

What a marvelously comprehensive promise! ‘All things that the Father hath are mine,’ said Jesus, and these ‘all things’ were to be shown to his disciples and made available to them by the Holy Spirit. But this was dependent upon his returning to the Father, bearing the blood of atonement to be sprinkled upon the antitypical mercy seat, the throne of heavenly grace. Jesus explained it, saying, “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.”—vs. 16

While Jesus appeared to his disciples in various fleshly bodies before he returned to his Father, they did not actually see him ‘as he is,’ nor did they see him in the sense of understanding the purpose of his death and their relationship to him as members of his mystical body. Not until the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost did they receive this spiritual vision of him. Not until then did they begin to receive the all things which he promised.

The disciples were perplexed over Jesus’ statement, ‘A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me.’ Jesus noted this, forewarned them of the sorrow they would experience during the time they would not see him, but added, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name: ... ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”—vss. 22-24

Previously Jesus had taught his disciples to pray to the Father, but apparently not in his name. His name would avail to the fullest extent when he had finished his sacrifice, had been raised from the dead, and had returned to the Father to appear in his presence on their behalf. The disciples were in the habit of looking to Jesus for blessings. Mary sought to touch him in order to be blessed. But as Jesus explained, “In that day [that is, after you no longer see me in the flesh] ye shall ask me nothing.” (John 16:23) After he had returned to the Father the procedure would be to make requests to the Father in Jesus’ name.

He said to Mary, ‘I am not yet ascended to my Father’—do not look to me for blessings, for I have none to give; but you may prove your devotion to me by going quickly and telling my disciples that what I

explained to them a few days ago will now soon come to pass. In a short time I will go to my Father, and will, as promised, send the Holy Spirit to enlighten and comfort them. And, Mary, if your devotion to me continues, you too will rejoice in being filled with the Spirit, and then ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you,’ even as I promised my disciples.

## **THE PROMISE FULFILLED**

While Jesus did appear to his disciples on a number of occasions before his ascension, he did not attempt to give them any detailed instructions concerning the Father’s plan. His visits were brief, and had a sense of mystery associated with them which left the disciples each time more or less at a loss to understand the strangely new and different relationship they bore toward him. The last time he manifested himself to them he said they would receive power through the Holy Spirit, and that they were to be his witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth, but he gave them no further information.

Some days elapsed after this, and while waiting and praying in the “upper room” in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit came. (Acts 1:13) Jesus had gone to the Father, and had fulfilled his promise to send the Comforter. Now the many strange things he had said to them, especially that night just before he was crucified, all became clear. Now they could see Jesus as they had never seen him before.

But again, there was no time to tarry, for they now understood clearly the full intent of the commission given to them to be witnesses of Jesus in “Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Now the enlightening and inspirational powers of the Holy Spirit impelled them to go quickly, and proclaim the glorious Gospel of the kingdom far and wide. The Book of Acts is a revealing testimony to the zeal of those first disciples upon whom the Holy Spirit was outpoured at Pentecost.

They had a larger, fuller message of Truth than was given to Mary when the angel said, “Go quickly, and tell the disciples.” They had the complete message which was then due to be proclaimed. But it was not time for the kingdom to be established. The Second Advent of Christ was far in the future. The “meat in due season,” which Jesus had promised to serve to the “household” when he returned to establish his kingdom, was

not a part of the glad tidings they were privileged to proclaim.—Luke 12:42,43

Their message was designed to initiate the work of the Gospel Age. Soon the church will live and reign with Christ in the spiritual phase of that long-promised Divine government. Therefore, all the Truths appropriate to this wonderful time in which we are now living are included in the message which we are commissioned to go quickly, and tell, primarily to the Lord's brethren, and to the whole world as we have opportunity.

How complete the Gospel has now become! Like Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, we too have the privilege of proclaiming the good news of Jesus' resurrection. But we can now explain that he has ascended to his Father and has appeared in the Father's presence for us and for all his brethren. We can add also that the Holy Spirit has been given, and that consecrated believers may be filled with the Spirit; begotten, anointed, and sealed by the Spirit. We also rejoice in the "witness" of the Spirit that we are the "children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—Rom. 8:16,17

Just before Jesus ascended to the Father, the disciples asked him if the time had come to "restore again the kingdom to Israel," and he said that the Father was keeping the "times" and "the seasons" in his own power. (Acts 1:6,7) Even when the Holy Spirit came upon those first disciples it did not reveal in detail the time features of the plan of God.

He, who returned to the Father and appeared in his presence for us, has come again. We are in the days of his Second Presence. He is here as the Chief Reaper of the harvest which is the "end of the age." (Matt. 13:39, *New International Version*) From God's standpoint, "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet" of those who, having heard this good news, go quickly, to spread the message.—Isa. 52:7

May the resurrection of Jesus continue to inspire us all with ever-increasing zeal as the Lord's messengers of present Truth! The Truth is ours to cherish and enjoy, and it will mean the most to us in proportion to our self-sacrificing efforts to impart its blessings to others. In Palestine there are two bodies of water, the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee receives the waters of Jordan and gives them forth again, so it remains sweet and fresh, and life-giving. The Dead Sea receives the

same waters, but does not give them forth. That is why it is ‘dead.’ May we be like Galilee, enjoying the waters of Truth ourselves, while we give them forth that others also may be made to rejoice.

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***Dawn Bible Students Association***

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# The Memorial Supper

**Scripture**

Exodus

Matthew

I Corinthians 11:23-28

**Readings:**

12:1-3,6-8,11,12

26:17-20,26-30,36-45

**THROUGHOUT MANY PARTS** of the world on Tuesday evening, April 15, groups of earnest followers of the Master will meet to commemorate his death. Many individuals who, for one reason or another, are not able to meet with their brethren will partake of this Memorial Supper by themselves. This is properly, we believe, an annual privilege of Christians, the date being figured as was the custom of the Jews in Old Testament times, and as it still is, from the new moon nearest to the spring equinox.

Jesus instituted the first Memorial Supper on the anniversary of the slaying of the Passover lamb, which occurred on the day before the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage. This was on the fourteenth day after the new moon, which introduced the Jewish new sacred year, the first month of which is Nisan. According to Biblical arrangements, the day begins at sundown. It was after sundown that Jesus partook of the Passover supper with his disciples and instituted the Memorial of his death. Since he was crucified before sundown of the following day, both events really occurred on the same Biblical day.

Jesus was the antitypical Passover lamb, and when we partake of the “bread” and the “cup” it is in memory of his death. (Matt. 26:26,27) The events of that memorable Passover night in Egypt have an important bearing on the significance of the Memorial Supper, and we suggest a careful reading of the passages cited in the Book of Exodus, that the main happenings of that night may be fresh in mind. This account would be merely historical but for the light thrown upon it by the New Testament. By this light, we see that the Passover has been made one of the greatest of Biblical types.

Pharaoh ceases to be Pharaoh and becomes Satan, the opposer of God, and the people of God, his children. The firstborn of Israel become “the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.” (Heb. 12:23) Israel, in antitype, becomes the world of mankind. Blessed are those whose spiritual eyes can see that Jesus is the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” and who see that we are to ‘feed’ on Christ, as the Jews fed upon the Passover lamb.—John 1:29

The unleavened bread ceases to be unleavened bread and becomes the pure Truth of God’s Word. (I Cor. 5:8) Instead of bitter herbs, which aided and whetted the Jewish appetite, we have bitter trials, which help to wean our affections from earthly things and whet our appetites for the unleavened bread of life, and for the things of God.

The girdle becomes a symbol of service to the Lord, to the Truth, and to the brethren. It becomes a very personal thing to us, for service to others is an obligation of our Christian walk.

The shoes on their feet to us become a symbol of walking in newness of life in Christ, having our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. (Eph. 6:15) And the staff upon which they depended becomes the promises of God—our source of comfort and sustaining grace, our ever-present help in time of need, as we journey toward spiritual Canaan.

## **MEMORIAL OF HIS DEATH**

Now, Christ our Passover Lamb has been slain, and we keep the Memorial of his death. It is a hallowed and blessed occasion. To us, Memorial night is different from all other nights. It is then, more than ever, that we meet in the holy bonds of Christian fellowship to commemorate our Savior’s death. We remember that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and we renew our personal consecration to God and our determination to be faithful in our devotion to him, and to the principles of Truth and righteousness.

In the type, only Israel’s firstborn were in danger that night in Egypt. Only the church of the firstborn are now in danger, for during the Gospel Age these are the only ones on trial. It was a matter of life and death to the firstborn of Israel as to whether they remained in the house, under the blood, which had been sprinkled upon the doorposts and the lintels. To us, it is a matter of eternal life or eternal death as to whether we remain

in the household of faith under the protection of the blood of our Passover Lamb.

Soon the night of sin and death will have passed. Soon the glorious morning of the world's deliverance from Satan's rulership will have come. Soon the Christ, the antitypical Moses, will be the world's Deliverer. That day of deliverance will last for one thousand years. (Rev. 20:2) During that time all who obey the will of God shall live. At the close of that day, all evil and all evildoers, pictured by the hosts of Egypt, will be destroyed in the antitypical Red Sea, the "second death." (Rev. 21:8) All the families of the earth will be delivered from sin and death and blessed in the righteous kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This also is part of the lesson taught by the Passover, and subsequent deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.

## **PROPHECIES FULFILLED**

Two prophecies combine in the testimony of this great event. On the tenth of Nisan the Passover lamb in Israel was chosen. Beyond all doubt the Lord Jesus knew that he was to be the antitypical Passover Lamb. In proof of this let us recall some events in our Lord's life. John 7:6-9 reads, "Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee." Compare this with John 13:1, which states that Jesus knew his hour had come.

Jesus knew that to be the antitypical Passover Lamb he would be chosen on the tenth of the month, and killed on the fourteenth, and this was his experience. They shouted their acceptance of him as he rode into Jerusalem, and four days later they cried, "Crucify him, crucify him." (John 19:6) They killed the Lord of glory. No wonder the disciples were stunned by these fast-moving events!

The prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 had to be fulfilled. It reads, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." It was in fulfillment of this prediction that the Master rode into Jerusalem upon an ass.—Matt. 21:1-5



The Jews knew that in days gone by their kings had ridden to their coronation on a white ass. (I Kings 1:38; Judg. 5:10) They knew also of the prophecy of Zechariah. They had waited long for its fulfillment. So it was necessary that Jesus present himself to the people on that particular day, and in that special way—for it was the tenth of Nisan, and necessary in order that it might be shown that Israel's rejection of him was without excuse. They knew the prophecy; they saw the prophecy fulfilled.

Whether or not our Lord's entry into the city of Jerusalem was a grand and triumphal thing depends upon the standpoint from which it is viewed. To the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees it was far from a triumphal procession. To them it was merely a parade of a fanatical leader and his ignorant followers. They could see no more—their eyes were blinded. They did not see the Messiah. They saw no salvation. They shouted no hosannas. They feared that his fanaticism would spread, and that it would undermine their position of authority.—John 11:47,48

From the standpoint of the disciples, and others who were filled with Messianic enthusiasm, it was a march of triumph. He who had the power to heal the sick and raise the dead would, they believed, now establish the long-promised kingdom. They trusted that it was he who was to redeem Israel. But Jesus was king only for a day, and he never actually ruled. Four days later the disciples saw their king nailed to the cross, and saw him die.

From God's standpoint, Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem was seen in still another light. He knew that Jesus was the antitypical Lamb. He knew that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. But more than that, he knew that in his own "due time," after he had given Jesus all power in heaven and in earth, he would triumphantly, and for all time, put away sin and bring all things in subjection to the Divine rule. (I Tim. 2:6) He therefore knew that Jesus would lift man up from sin, disease, and death. He knew that as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" Jesus would eventually establish the Divine will throughout all the earth.—I Tim. 6:15

Thank God this is our view as we think of Jesus' triumphal entry into the city! We can sing with the spirit and the understanding, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"! (Matt. 21:9) After entering the city, Jesus healed the lame and the blind,

foreshadowing his Millennial Age work when, as ‘King of kings,’ he will establish his kingdom in which, as is promised in Isaiah, chapter 35, “the lame man [shall] leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb [shall] sing.”—vs. 6

## **THE BREAD AND THE CUP**

As we approach the Memorial of the Master’s death, let us keep in mind that it is a simple feast—unleavened bread, and fruit of the vine. What a meaning it has for us! The events of the first Memorial are clear in our minds—there was the blessing of the ‘bread’ and the blessing of the ‘cup.’ The Lord explained to his disciples that the bread represented his broken body, and that the cup represented his shed blood.

Jesus emphasized that all his followers should participate, not only in feeding upon him, but also in being broken with him—not only in partaking of the merit of the ransom, but also in laying down their own lives in his service. And he said that those who do this will be in the kingdom and drink the cup (of joy) anew with him. These thoughts must thrill all those who are in tune with their Lord and with his Truth.

Take eat, Jesus said, this represents my body. He gave them pure, unleavened bread. How well it represented his pure and sinless flesh, which he gave for the life of the world! Previously, Jesus had said, “I am that bread of life. ... This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:48-51) To partake of the unleavened bread signifies that we appropriate to ourselves, through faith, the merit of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, realizing that our salvation is bought through our Lord’s death on Calvary.

Likewise, the fruit of the vine primarily symbolizes our Savior’s life, given for us—his soul poured out in death as a ransom on our behalf. Blood represents life—not life retained, but life yielded, given up, sacrificed, laid down. There is no way to gain eternal life except through the Lord’s shed blood. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—Acts. 4:12

The Memorial Supper is held on the anniversary of our Lord’s death. The afternoon preceding the Memorial is the anniversary of the day on

which our Lord dispatched Peter and John to make ready the Passover supper. Memorial night is the anniversary of that night in which he instituted the Memorial Supper. After the supper he went into the Garden of Gethsemane, and there gained that great victory, saying to his Heavenly Father, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt. ... thy will be done.”—Matt. 26:39,42

Later that night Jesus was betrayed by a kiss, and still later he was brought before Herod, and then Pilate. Pilate washed his hands of the matter, and said to the Jews who demanded Jesus’ death, “Ecce homo,” meaning, “Behold the man!” (John 19:5) It was as though Pilate said, You have no Jew his equal; would you crucify him? But the rabble shouted, “Crucify him, crucify him.” (Luke 23:21) Then came the flogging, the smiting, and the crown of thorns. But Jesus was not defeated.

In sorrow he loved those who hated him. He was mild, but he was not weak. His inner strength of spirit continued to the end. At nine o’clock on the following morning he was nailed to the tree of crucifixion, and at three in the afternoon this spotless Lamb of God died.

As we meditate upon the Memorial of our Savior’s death, let us remember the bread—his broken body, and the cup—his shed blood. Our eternal life depends upon our continued appreciation of these great Truths. These Truths pertaining to the Divine provision for our salvation and eternal life are not shallow, they are deep—as deep as the love of God.

## **A FURTHER THOUGHT**

The primary thought in the Memorial is of Christ—his sacrifice and our ransom: the provision of life for us and for all mankind. “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” Jesus explained, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”—John 12:24

There is, however, a secondary significance to the Memorial, which is very important. The Apostle Paul refers to it, saying, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”—I Cor. 10:16,17

‘Communion,’ what a precious thought—a common union, a common participation, a partnership, a brotherhood, based upon that which is represented by the ‘bread’ and the ‘cup.’ In a loaf of bread there are many grains, crushed to make that one loaf. We have no merit of our own. Our spiritual life exists only as we are a part of that loaf. The breaking of the bread represents the sacrificing of our justified humanity with its privileges, as we fulfill our consecration vows to be “dead with him” (Rom. 6:8) that we might live with him; suffering with him that we might reign with him.

Likewise, the cup represented Jesus’ shed blood, his life poured out. We receive of that life, but only on condition that we, like Jesus, lay it down in sacrifice. It is the merit of his sacrifice that makes our offering to the Lord acceptable. While there is joy in this sacrificial service, it is often a cup of sorrow, which we learn to accept as of the Father’s pouring—his will for those who die with Jesus.

Jesus took the steps—consecration, sacrifice, suffering for righteousness’ sake—and was rewarded for his faithfulness. He asks us, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?”—endure lives of consecration, sacrifice, suffering for righteousness’ sake? (Matt. 20:22) If we are able, the reward will be wonderful—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.—Rom. 8:17

We believe the proper time to observe the Memorial should be carefully considered, as it is important. However, we feel that the heart condition of those who partake is far more important than the time or the place. In this connection Paul wrote, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—I Cor. 5:7,8

As we meditate upon the Memorial of our Lord’s death, may we search our hearts to rid them of leaven, and let us renew our determination to triumph through faith. After we partake of the Memorial emblems, let us go forth with a song in our hearts, thankful for being called out of darkness into light, and called to partnership in the body of Christ.

May the hope of partaking anew with Christ in the kingdom lift our affections close to him, and keep them there until we hear his words,

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” (Matt. 25:21) With some this may be the first Memorial Supper. With others it may be the last this side of the veil. This matters but little so long as we remain faithful to that which the emblems represent. Our prayer is that the Lord may give all of us strength thus to be faithful.

Let us use the opportunity to renew our consecration to God. Let us thank him for his great gift, his own beloved Son. Let us thank him for the light of Truth, which we enjoy. Let us thank him for his “high calling” through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Phil. 3:14

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# The Furtherance of the Gospel

**ALL CHRISTIANS WILL** doubtless agree that since Pentecost God has been taking out of the Gentiles “a people for his name.” (Acts 15:14) These are his church, a company who are to be saved with a heavenly salvation, and, in the resurrection, to “ever be with the Lord.” (I Thess. 4:17) It will be further agreed by most Christians that none will be of this heavenly company, the “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23), who never heard of the only name “under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) The terms and conditions of this High Calling are that only those who “suffer with him” shall be “glorified together” with him. (Rom. 8:17) Hence, Paul says, “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (I Cor. 1:21) Again, he says, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”—Rom. 10:17

All this being true, it seems at first sight strange that the spread of the Gospel message through the centuries should have met with so many handicaps. The heralds of the glad tidings have had many discouragements. Even the Gospel message has been perverted and the church organization sadly corrupted. It has even been taught that all who fail to become members of the church, the body of Christ, would be eternally lost, and that the present life is the only opportunity to hear, and believe, the message of salvation.

Those who have begun to see something of the Truth as it is in Jesus, know that salvation belongeth unto our God. The successful carrying out of the plan of salvation is his responsibility and that of his well-beloved Son. The gathering of the church, to be followed by the blessing of the world under Messiah’s kingdom, will be accomplished by Divine power—“the government shall be upon his shoulder.”—Isa. 9:6

Realizing this, we are prepared to see that in this age the way to life has been, as the Master declared it would be, a “narrow” way, with a “strait” gate as an entrance to that way. (Matt. 7:14) It is a way to life difficult to walk, and difficult to find and enter; the conditions being

adapted to the preparation and testing of a special class for “glory and honour and immortality.”—Rom. 2:7

This is in full accord with the words of the apostle, “The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:12) So wrote Paul to his beloved converts at Philippi—who had kept in touch with him all through the years from the day he came to them with the Word of life. What ‘things’ were these? For many years, it would seem, Paul had much liberty to travel from place to place preaching the Lord’s message. These efforts were frequently richly blessed by companies being found ready for the message. The Lord accepted these and brought them into relationship with himself, justifying and bringing them into his family by the begetting of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle experienced much opposition to his work; much sacrifice and suffering and hardship had to be experienced. The way the Lord blessed his labors more than offset the trials of the way. To the Thessalonians he said, “What thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.”—I Thess. 3:9

How different his circumstances were at the time of his writing the Philippian letter! A prisoner in Rome, daily waiting to be called for trial before the emperor, and always chained to a soldier, he had continual restrictions of liberty. One blessing the Lord still granted him, however, was that his friends could visit him. (Acts 28:30) In addition, some of his guards, who were changed every few hours, manifested an interest and received the Gospel, so that there even came to be saints in “Caesar’s household.”—Phil. 1:13; 4:22

With the eye of faith Paul could see beyond these outwardly unfavorable circumstances, and could say, ‘The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.’ The church in Rome was encouraged by Paul’s faithfulness to greater zeal in the Lord’s service. Thus Paul’s apparently disadvantageous experience had been overruled for his good, and for the furtherance of the Lord’s work.—vss. 13,14

Another seemingly unfavorable incident made to work for the furtherance of the Gospel was the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by the Emperor Claudius. An edict forced Aquila and Priscilla to leave their

home, and, probably, a prosperous little business of tentmaking. This was doubtless a very trying and, from their standpoint, unfavorable experience, but one which worked out unto the furtherance of the Gospel. Divine providence operating on behalf of Aquila and Priscilla and, overruling an apparent calamity, led them to Corinth. Here they were contacted by the Apostle Paul (Acts 18:1-3), and ere long a consecrated brother and sister were added to the Lord's family, to whose subsequent benevolent service he gives very high praise.—Rom. 16:3

As we view the records of the apparent adversities, hindrances, and discouragements of those engaged in the Lord's service throughout the Gospel Age, can we not also see that these experiences have been made by our Lord and Head to work out unto the furtherance of the Gospel? They did not always show visible good results, but surely brought forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in the Lord's servants who have been rightly exercised by these apparently unfavorable experiences. The apostle elsewhere expresses the matter, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."—II Cor. 2:14

The Lord's Word, through the prophet, contains the same comforting assurance. The "word ... that goeth forth out of my mouth: ... 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. 55:11) Even in our own personal difficulties, or discouragements, in connection with the Lord's work, can we not look back and see how often these things have been for the furtherance of the Gospel?

Our Master, in sending forth his followers for the great work of the age, gave them a cause for confidence. He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." (Matt. 28:18,19) As we carry the glad tidings, how encouraging to realize that the One guiding and directing the work has 'all power' in heaven and in earth! No wonder all things can be made to work out unto the furtherance of the Gospel.

Let us never be discouraged, or cast down, at the enemy's apparent success. Let us, by faith, claim the apostle's inspired assurance, 'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.'



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