

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a mountain valley at dawn. The sun is rising on the right side, casting a warm glow over the scene. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the valley below is shrouded in a light mist. The mountains are covered in green vegetation, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and hopeful.

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January 2005

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An Enemy of Israel is Dead

(Another Chance at Peace?)

*“Depart from evil,
and do good; seek
peace, and
pursue it.”
—Psalm 34:14*

YASIR ARAFAT, AN ENEMY

of Israel is dead. The news media in mid-November kept telling of his illness and closeness to death. He apparently died of liver failure. His funeral in Cairo was orderly, but when the helicopters from Egypt brought him to Ramallah on the West Bank to be buried, there was a mob of followers and worshippers that gave security forces problems in control. The *New York Times* (November 13, 2004) said:

“‘An Emotional Funeral for Arafat in Ramallah.’ Yasir Arafat was buried in an extraordinary scene of grief and chaos, with thousands of Palestinians climbing the walls of his compound in Ramallah, surging around his coffin and trying to bear it aloft. His coffin was buried in a prepared spot of Jerusalem stone and black-and-green marble in the compound, under five conifers.”

Earlier, the *New York Times* spoke of the funeral in Cairo with commentaries:

“It was a state funeral service for a man without a state.

“Speaking at the mosque prayers, Muhammad Sayed Tantawi, the grand sheik of Al Azhar and Egypt’s highest religious figure, said brief prayers over the coffin as it rested on the patterned black-and-white marble floor. ‘He has served his people all his life, until he faced his God, with courage and honesty,’ the sheik said. ‘Let us pray for his soul.’

PROMINENT STATESMEN

“Most of the pantheon of Arab leaders flew in for the occasion, some landing at the last minute and choosing to overlook often bitter differences with Mr. Arafat. President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and King Abdullah II of Jordan, both of whose fathers had long sparred with Mr. Arafat, attended, as did Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. The presidents of Algeria, Tunisia, Yemen, Sudan and Lebanon were there, along with a host of princes from the royal houses of the Persian Gulf.

“From farther afield, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa came as did the presidents of Indonesia, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. There were a few prime ministers, though European Union nations sent their foreign ministers. The United States sent Assistant Secretary of State William J. Burns.

“Yossi Beilin, dovish Israeli politician and former peace negotiator, said of Mr. Arafat: ‘It’s very rare when a leader dies, that an era actually does die with him. But in this case, today, it would appear

actually to be true. And the new era depends to a great extent on us, on us and on the Palestinians, and we have a great responsibility.’

“Shlomo Avineri, a philosopher and former Israeli Foreign Ministry official, said Mr. Arafat had failed, unlike Anwar Sadat, to ‘reach out to Israelis and address their fears and hopes.’ Mr. Arafat was more like Fidel Castro, Mr. Avineri said, ‘He gave his people a symbol, but he failed them in real life.’

The *New York Times* also said:

“President Bush, at a joint news conference with Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, said there was a ‘great chance’ to establish a Palestinian state and that he would invest the authority of the United States to try to accomplish that goal during his second term. Mr. Bush also signaled his intention to mend fences with the European allies.”

On the next day, the *New York Times* reported:

“‘Assisting Palestinian Elections.’ Israel, acting under American encouragement, and in some cases pressure, had quietly taken steps aimed at facilitating Palestinian elections in the next two months, according to American and Israeli officials.

“Yasir Arafat’s death brought the Palestinian factions together in a rare display of unity, which the emerging leadership is hoping to cement. But the armed militant groups say they will not agree to any cease-fire as long as Israeli forces remain in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestinian officials vowed elections within 60 days for a president with the authority to resume peace talks with Israel.”

We note the intense desire for the Palestinians to have their own state. They had that opportunity in 1948 when the United Nations partitioned Israel.

The Israelis set up a state and were recognized by the United States and United Soviet Socialist Republic. The Palestinians were told to withdraw from their land as the Arab nations vowed to push Israel into the sea and claim all the land. Wars raged for years, culminating with the six-day war in which Israel gained possession of most of the land. The Palestinians never set up a government and Yasir Arafat became their spokesman and leader.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Although Arafat won the Nobel peace prize, along with Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, for peace in 1993 at the Oslo Accord, and was known as a negotiator for peace, yet it was known that he encouraged and sponsored the suicide bombers that wrought havoc in Israel. He distinctly became an enemy of Israel. Now that he is gone, everyone wonders if the chances for peace will be better.

The November 22, 2004 issue of *Time* magazine has an article, "After Arafat, What is Next?" They answer that question by saying that it depends upon the new leadership and whether the militant Palestinians will insist on fighting.

A question was raised in the *Time* magazine issue as to where Arafat's money is, and how much is left? It has been estimated that Arafat controlled a three billion dollar financial empire. It is thought that only one billion is left. He used these funds to terrorize Israel.

TRUE PEACE

Bible Students know that the only one who can bring true peace is our Lord Jesus. Biblical prophecies tell how Israel will receive their Messiah who

they rejected so freely at his First Advent. One of these says, "He cometh with clouds [trouble]; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."—Rev. 1:7

Before this blessing can come to Israel they have to endure some very difficult experiences. We read, "The day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." (Zech. 14:1,2) Then the prophecy tells of a change that comes. "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."—vs. 3

The details of this change are given earlier by Zechariah when he wrote, "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of

Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

“In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; and the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the

families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.” (Zech. 12:1-14) The important part of this prophecy tells how Israel will recognize Jesus as their Messiah.

ISRAEL NOT REJECTED

The Apostle Paul, in telling of Israel’s rejection in Romans, chapters 9 to 11, makes it plain that they have not been rejected forever. He quotes two beautiful prophecies in the Old Testament, Isaiah 59:20 and Psalm 14:7. As he said in Romans 11:26, “All Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” As Paul said it was written, we read in Isaiah 59:20, “The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD,” and in Psalm 14:7, “Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.”

The Deliverer is the Christ, head and body, so we know this prophecy will not be fulfilled until the church is complete. It will be then that the Prince of Peace will establish true peace for Israel, and all nations. Glory to Jesus and to our wonderful Heavenly Father for his plan of mercy and love. ■

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

—Romans 11:33,36

“By love serve one another.”—Galatians 5:13

Let us judge of our love for others, for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families, for our neighbors, for our enemies even, by our willingness to sacrifice in their interest and for their highest welfare. If we find ourselves sacrificing nothing in the interest of the Lord's cause, let us not delude ourselves by saying that we love the Lord. If we find ourselves unwilling to endure, to sacrifice in the interests of the brethren and others dear to us, let us not mistake the matter and call it love. If we find ourselves unwilling to do kindness even to our enemies when they are in need, let us make no mistake; for the Lord hath declared that a course of goodness and mercy and self-denial is the only index of a loving heart.

—January 22, *Songs in the Night*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 6—“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—Psalm 90:12 (Z. '01-333 Hymn 74)

JANUARY 13—“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”—I John 2:1 (Z. '01-233 Hymn 213)

JANUARY 20—“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”—Hebrews 12:7 (Z. '95-107 Hymn 335)

JANUARY 27—“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”—Proverbs 4:23 (Z. '99-140 Hymn 198)

Spreading the Good News

Key Verse: *“Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.”*
—Mark 1:17

Selected Scripture:
Mark 1:14-28

THE TITLE OF TODAY’S

lesson, “Spreading the Good News,” points to the heartfelt subject of glad tidings which Jesus came to preach. It was a message of peace, hope, and Truth, all of which are a part of the good news of God’s promise.

Shortly after John the Baptist had been put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God. His message was, “The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”—Mark 1:15

Jesus was not to travel alone, however, so walking along the shore of Galilee he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea. He approached them and said, ‘Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.’ (vs. 17) They immediately left their nets and became the first followers of Jesus in his new undertaking. Going a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, in their boat mending their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left their father with the hired servants in the boat and accompanied Jesus.

“They went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.” (vs. 21) A synagogue could consist of a rather small group, as few as ten Jewish families, administered by a ruler, thus providing an excellent site for presenting a new message like Jesus was preaching. “They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.” (vs. 22) All at once a man moved by an evil spirit shouted, “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.” (vss. 24-26) They were all amazed and questioned among themselves, “What new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.” (vs. 27) Soon the story of what Jesus had done, spread through all the district of Galilee.

An instance of this practice is recorded in Luke 8:1. Jesus was not merely, “preaching” the Gospel of the kingdom but he was also actively “shewing” his ability to heal physical ailments and cast out demons from those possessed.

On another occasion, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met Jesus. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. They cried out, “Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” A herd of many swine was feeding nearby, and the demons begged him, “If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.” He said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the swine: and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the water. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. (Matt. 8:28-33) Speaking the good news had a dynamic beginning. ■

Sharing God's Hospitality

Key Verse: “*When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*”
—Mark 2:17

Selected Scripture:
Mark 2:13-17

some time in the area of Capernaum, Jesus went forth again walking by the Sea of Galilee, sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias. His many followers grouped around him to listen as he continued teaching the message to the people with a hearing ear. As he passed by a tax collector's office he saw Levi, one of a class despised by the Jews because they were expected to extract as much from them as they could possibly impose. Jesus said unto him, “Follow me,” (The Book of Matthew refers to Levi as Matthew). Although Levi was hardly yet aware of the responsibility of his future side-by-side walk as a believer in the Lord, he was moved to promptly obey, and arose from the tax office and followed him.—Mark 2:14

Having discovered Jesus for himself, Levi wished his friends to share his great discovery and perhaps also at the same time, bid farewell to his friends. Levi left all to follow Jesus and he made him a great feast in his own house. There was a great company of publicans and of

AFTER PREACHING FOR

others generally classified as sinners and outcasts of society that sat down with them, a crowd that seemed to be made up of many not welcome in the synagogue. (Mark 2:15; Matt. 9:10) By his actions in attending Levi's dinner party, Jesus took a bold step, offending the most conscientious followers of the Law; and the scribes and Pharisees murmured against Jesus' disciples who were present saying, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" (Mark 2:16) Jesus answering them said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (vs. 17) One of the major themes running through the gospels is that of God's hospitality.

In a later incident, we read how all the publicans and sinners drew near to hear him. "The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. . . . Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—Luke 15:1-10

Sharing God's hospitality means that we should exercise this loving quality toward others. As Peter said, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."—I Pet. 4:9,10 ■

Preparing for the Job

Key Verse: *“He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.”*
—Mark 3:14

Selected Scripture:
Mark 3:13-19; 6:6-13

The apostles received their training by personal fellowship with Jesus and by their mission work among the villages of Galilee. This was to be their future life-work. “It came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.” (Luke 8:1) As his emissaries, Jesus gave the disciples the power to accomplish the tasks. Like Jesus, they spoke and acted with authority.

Jesus said unto them, “A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching. And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over

PEOPLE NEED TO BE equipped to do the tasks to which they are called. Today’s lesson sets forth Jesus’ equipment of his disciples for their ministry. “He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.” (Mark

unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.—Mark 6:4-13

“He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” (Mark 3:14-19, *New International Version*) The final name on the list carries a troublesome ring because Judas will betray Jesus.

“After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also [as evangelists, not apostles], and sent them two and two . . . into every city and place, whither he himself would come.” (Luke 10:1) Jesus prepared these seventy for the job at hand by warning, instruction, and encouragement, “Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.”—Luke 10:3-6, *NIV* ■

Giving Your All

Key Verse: “*When he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*”
—Mark 8:34

Selected Scripture:
Mark 8:27-38

THE PROPHETS FORETOLD

the coming of a great leader for God. When Jesus appeared, claiming to be God’s Messiah, most did not recognize him. Clearly, the crowds did not comprehend that he was the Messiah. After all, he did not conduct himself in the manner in which they were expecting God’s Messiah to act—not the conquering hero-type Messiah people were expecting. Even today, Christians tend to measure power and influence by

the methods of the world. When Jesus asked his disciples what effect his ministry was having on the people, some said they believed John the Baptist had come back to life, others thought he was Elijah, who would prepare the way for the Messiah to come.

Jesus was interested in his disciples’ understanding of who he was. Peter responded, “Thou art the Christ [Messiah].” (Matt. 16:16) *Messiah* is the Hebrew, and *Christos* is Greek, for the ‘Anointed One.’ Their understanding was far short of Jesus’ understanding that the Messiah was destined to suffer and die and rise again after three days. “He spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.” (Mark 8:32) Jesus then “rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind

me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” (vs. 33) Peter’s intent was not to show disrespect; he said what he did because he loved Jesus. He couldn’t bear the thought of Jesus suffering and dying.

Jesus did not ask anyone to do, or to face, anything that he was not prepared to do and face himself. Jesus called the people and his disciples unto him, and said, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (vss. 34-36) Just as Jesus invited the disciples to deny themselves and take up their cross, so Jesus demonstrated a life of sacrifice for others and a willingness to bear the cross for the sins of the world.

God gave us life to spend and not to keep. Those always thinking first of their own profit, ease, comfort, and security are losing life all the time. But those who spend their lives for others, forgetting health, wealth, and comfort in their desire to do something for Jesus, and the people for whom Jesus gave his life, will gain immeasurably.

The Apostle Paul said, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. . . . That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:7-14

Giving our all to God will result in the loss of earthly things, even life itself, but in so doing we will be laying up “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.”—Matt. 6:20 ■

Moving Toward Greatness

Key Verse: “*So shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.*”
—Mark 10:43-44

Selected Scripture:
Mark 10:32-45

as recorded in Mark 10:17-22, a rich young man ran to Jesus and addressed him, “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.” Jesus agreed with the man that he knew the commandments, to which the man responded, “Master, all these have I observed from my youth.” Jesus then said, first he must divest himself of his property, for a disciple cannot be a rich person but he must sell what he has, give to the poor and take up his cross and follow Jesus. Despite the rich man’s devotion to the Word of God, he could not bring himself to accept the call, for he had great possessions.

Many people naturally assume the wealthy were the recipients of God’s blessings and closer to God than other people, but Jesus said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” (vs. 23) His disciples were astonished at his words.

Peter said, “Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”—(vss. 28-31)

On the way going up to Jerusalem he again began to tell the twelve what things should happen to him. Once more he predicts his betrayal, death, and resurrection. There is no hint that the disciples understood what Jesus was sharing with them.

“James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of: and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.”—Mark 10:35-40

Upon learning of all this, the other ten apostles became upset with James and John. Jesus said their great ones exercise authority over the Gentiles, “But so shall it not be among you.” (vs. 43) He said, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (vs. 45) In Jesus and his followers, the measure of true greatness is found in their ministry to others. ■

Deliverance Promised

“The LORD God said . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
—*Genesis 3:14,15*

MAN, THE HIGHEST OF all God’s earthly creatures, endowed with faculties reflecting the image of the Creator, had failed to pass the simple test of obedience to which he was subjected. He had transgressed the law of his Creator, and now must die—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

(Gen. 3:19) In the Divine wisdom, all of Adam’s progeny have inherited the death penalty. All are born imperfect and, unable to resist the ravages of disease, ultimately die—for the “wages of sin is death.”—Rom. 6:23

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

But God still loved his human children, and even while sentencing Adam and Eve to death gave an indication that an opportunity of deliverance from the penalty would be provided. It is not plainly

stated, but clearly implied, in the statement to the serpent that the ‘seed’ of the woman would ‘bruise’ its head. But even this obscure assertion seemed to give our first parents some hope that the Creator would do something about their plight, for when Seth was born Eve said, “God . . . hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.”—Gen. 4:25

Eve did not understand that the seed mentioned by God was the great Deliverer, the Messiah of promise and prophecy, and that it would be a long time before the ‘head’ of the serpent would be bruised by this seed. As the Creator’s plan unfolds throughout his Word, it becomes clear that the work of deliverance implied by God’s statement to the serpent will be accomplished by a powerful government, or kingdom, under the control of the seed of promise.

We read in the Book of Revelation, “I saw an angel come down from heaven, . . . And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:1,2) This language recalls to our minds the serpent’s activity in Eden and, together with the remaining verses of the chapter, assures us that the bruising mentioned by the LORD implies a complete deliverance from the miasma of sin and death into which humanity was plunged when induced by Satan to disobey God’s law.

A more definite promise of deliverance was given to Abraham. To him God said, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 22:18) In Acts 3:21, there is the expression, “times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by

the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Verse twenty-five reads, “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” Thus the Apostle Peter reveals that the blessing which God promised would come to ‘all the families of the earth’ through the seed of Abraham is, in reality, their restoration, their deliverance from death in the ‘times of restitution of all things.’

JACOB’S PROPHECY

The promise that God made to Abraham was reiterated to his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons, and toward the end of his life he gathered them around him and pronounced individual blessings upon them, this parental blessing taking the form of prophecies. To his son, Judah, he said, “Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”—Gen. 49:9,10

This prophecy was uttered by Jacob while he was living in Egypt, and the reference to the ‘couched’ lion reflects this. In Egypt at that time the claimed royal right of the pharaohs to rule was symbolized by a couched lion. Thus, by employing this symbol Jacob was saying in his prophecy that the ‘sceptre,’ the right to rule, so far as the promises of God are concerned, belonged to his son, Judah,

and his descendants, the tribe of Judah. In this prophecy Jacob undoubtedly had in mind the promise to his grandfather, Abraham, concerning his seed, and this seed he explains would be 'Shiloh'; and that unto him 'shall the gathering of the people be.'

The name Shiloh means tranquil, or peaceful. It is one of the Old Testament titles assigned to the seed of Abraham, and suggests that this promised Deliverer would be a peacemaker, not only among the people who would be gathered to him, but a peacemaker also between God and men, restoring the harmony that existed before man transgressed Divine law. Another title assigned to this promised Deliverer is "The Prince of Peace."—Isa. 9:6

In this same prophecy of Isaiah we are informed concerning 'The Prince of Peace' that "the government shall be upon his shoulder." This is the government over which Shiloh holds the scepter, or the right to rule. It is the Messianic kingdom, and in Micah 4:1-4 it is presented under the symbol of a mountain, "the mountain of the LORD." We are assured that in this mountain, or kingdom, the people will learn the LORD's ways, and as a result will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," and will "learn war" no more.

THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH

In Isaiah 25:6-9, the LORD presents us with another promise descriptive of the blessings that will reach the people in his 'mountain,' the Messianic kingdom. One of these blessings will be the destruction of death. The LORD will "swallow up death in victory," the promise reads, and will "wipe

away tears from off all faces.” Another blessing to reach the people through the administration of this government is described as the destroying of the “face of the covering cast over all people.” This is a ‘covering,’ or veil, of superstition and misunderstanding pertaining to God and to his loving purpose in the creation of man, and his plan for restoring him to life.

Included in this covering, which hides God’s Truth from the people, are all the God-dishonoring theories arising out of Satan’s lie, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) The majority have been pleased to believe that “there is no death.” But we can thank God that this beclouding lie, together with all the other false notions which Satan has weaved into a covering and thrown over the eyes of the people, will be removed. And, since in this same kingdom death is to be ‘swallowed up in victory,’ it will become true for the first time since the transgression in Eden that there is no death. In Revelation 21:4, we read that “there shall be no more death.” If there is no death now, and never has been, as ‘that old serpent’ has induced nearly all mankind to believe, how could it be said that ‘then shall be no more death’?

THE SOUR GRAPE OF SIN

Another very interesting and reassuring promise of deliverance from the result of original sin is found in Jeremiah 31:29,30, and reads, “In those days [the days of Messiah’s rule] they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that

eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.” The lesson here is obvious. It was father Adam who ate the original ‘sour grape’ of sin. The result has passed on to the entire human race; all have suffered from his act of disobedience, all have died or are dying.

But this is to change, the LORD assures us. ‘In those days’ when the promised seed of Abraham is ruling as The Prince of Peace, he will also be dispensing blessings of health and life. This will be possible because Jesus took the sinner’s place in death, and during his reign will offer to every individual of the human race an opportunity to obey and live. No longer will the people die because of Adam’s sin. If they die at all, it will be because they have individually eaten the sour grape of sin. This will be during the times of restitution of all things, and Peter says that then it will be only those who disobey who will be “destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:23

A DELIVERER IS BORN

The birth of Jesus attested the truthfulness of the prophetic testimony concerning a coming Deliverer, and deliverance for the sin-cursed race. The angel, in announcing Jesus’ birth, said, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:10,11,13,14

The words, ‘unto you is born this day,’ mark the essential difference between this angelic announcement and the promises and prophecies that the Creator had previously given through his holy prophets. At that time, these promises and prophecies began to be fulfilled. One of the prophecies identified the city in which the promised ruler would be born. It was to be in “Bethlehem,” the ancient ‘city of David.’ (Micah 5:2) So, when the angel announced his birth he called special attention to this—‘unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’

All of God’s promises, beginning with his statement in Eden that the serpent’s head would be bruised by a seed, implied a coming deliverance from death. And now the angel confirmed this. The one who was born in Bethlehem was to be a savior, and this Savior was Christ, the Messiah of promise.

It was a dramatic moment for these shepherds on the Judean hills to whom the angel announced the birth of the Savior, the Messiah. ‘Suddenly,’ we are told, ‘there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ This heavenly host of angels had served God faithfully during all the many centuries when he was making his promises of a coming seed who would bless the people. They did not understand all the implications of those promises, but they would know they were expressions of God’s good will toward his fallen human creatures. Knowing this, how enthusiastically they must have proclaimed the birth of Jesus to be a manifestation

of this foretold good will, the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises.

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

Jesus entered upon his ministry at the age of thirty, a ministry that fully harmonized with the prophetic testimony concerning him. We read that "he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." (Luke 8:1) These 'glad tidings,' the angel said, were to be 'unto all people,' the good news that the Creator had sent a Savior, and had made provision for the establishment of a kingdom through which the blessings of salvation from sin, sickness, and death would reach the people.

It did not at once become apparent to the followers of Jesus that his kingdom would not be immediately established. They did not realize until later that it was first of all necessary for the Savior to die for those he had come to save, before they could be permanently released from sickness and death. True, he announced to them that he would give his "flesh . . . for the life of the world" (John 6:51), but they did not grasp the real import of what he said.

The Twelve were with him as he preached and showed the glad tidings of the kingdom. They witnessed his miracles of healing the sick, of cleansing lepers, of casting out devils, and of raising the dead. They cannot be blamed for supposing that this was the actual beginning of the foretold work of deliverance, and that his kingdom would soon be established and its blessings of health and life extended to all the families of the earth as God promised would be done through the seed.

They did not at the time realize that the marvelous miracles performed by Jesus were intended merely as illustrations—illustrations of the world-wide program of miracles which they thought was then beginning; but actually must wait for other aspects of the Divine plan of deliverance to be accomplished. It is gloriously true that in God's due time all the blind eyes will be opened; all the deaf ears unstopped; all the halt and the lame made sound of limb; when the people will not say, "I am sick." (Isa. 33:24) And in that due time those who "sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." (Dan. 12:2) The sentence, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,' having been paid by the Savior, will no longer hold the billions who have died in the great prison-house of death, for Jesus will use the "keys of hell and of death" to set the captives free.—Rev. 1:18; 20:13

WITNESSES OF JESUS

After Jesus' death and resurrection, and just before returning to his Father in heaven, he commissioned his disciples to be his "witnesses" unto the uttermost parts of the earth. (Acts 1:8) It was not the due time for his kingdom to be established and its blessings to flow out to the people, but his followers were to continue telling the world about him as the Savior and coming Deliverer. They were to continue preaching this Gospel of the kingdom. And those first disciples were faithful to this commission.

How stirring is the sermon preached by Peter, and recorded in Acts 3:12-26! This sermon is in explanation of a miracle in which Peter was

instrumental in healing a man who had been lame from his birth. It is in this sermon that he speaks of the times of restitution of all things—the restoration to health of this one man, being but an illustration of what would be accomplished for the whole world of mankind when Jesus came the second time. Not only was the restitution to be a boon to the sick, but it would mean also the resurrection of the dead.—Acts 4:1,2

THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

In the last chapter of the Bible—Revelation 22—we have the hope of deliverance through Jesus and his kingdom presented to us in meaningful symbolic language. First we see a throne—“the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (vs. 1) The throne symbolizes the kingdom. It was the glad tidings concerning the establishment of this kingdom that Jesus and his disciples so faithfully preached. It is the throne of God ‘and of the Lamb.’ The Lamb is symbolic of Jesus and his sacrifice on behalf of mankind. Combined with the throne symbolism, the full thought presented is that the promised blessings of health and life will reach the people through the agencies of a Divine government, these blessings being made available through the death of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

And these promised blessings are pictured by “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal” which flows from the ‘throne of God and of the Lamb.’ “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, . . . and the leaves of the

tree were for the healing of the nations.”(vs. 2) This language again takes our minds back to Eden, when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden to prevent them from partaking of the trees of life and living forever.

Verse three declares, “There shall be no more curse.” A terrible ‘curse’ has rested upon humanity—the curse of sin and death. It has blighted the happiness and peace of all mankind. No one has been free from it. All “in Adam” die. (I Cor. 15:22) But God loved the race of lost and dying sinners and provided a Savior, the seed of promise, who as his ‘Lamb’ gave his life in sacrifice as the price of redemption. In this last chapter of the Bible, we are assured that from the throne of God and of the Lamb ‘water of life, clear as crystal,’ will flow out to mankind, and ‘there shall be no more curse.’ The Apostle Paul assures us that then will be fulfilled the promise, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”—I Cor. 15:55 ■

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Betty DeKoyer, Tarpon Springs, FL—November 2.
Age, 96

Sister Barbara Thompson, Claymont, DE—November 10.

Brother Ben Gale, Coloma, MI—November 14. Age, 79

Brother Leo Post, New York, NY—November 29. Age, 86

Dying for a Cause

***"I beseech you
therefore, brethren,
by the mercies of
God, that ye
present your bodies
a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable
unto God, which is
your reasonable
service."***

—Romans 12:1

MUCH IS SAID IN THE

Bible concerning the offering of sacrifice. It is first mentioned in Genesis 4:3-7, where we are told of offerings brought to the LORD by Cain and Abel. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but rejected Cain's. In Hebrews 11:4, we are informed that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Noah also offered sacrifice.—Gen. 8:20,21

Later, God asked Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering. When Abraham proved his obedience to the LORD's will, a ram was provided as a substitute for Isaac. (Gen. 22:1-18) Still later, in connection with the deliverance of the Hebrew children from their Egyptian bondage, there was the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.—Exod. 12:3-10

After the children of Israel had left Egypt, God entered into a covenant with them, Moses serving as mediator. There was the offering of sacrifice in connection with the making (Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) of this covenant. Under the arrangements of the Law Covenant, there was a yearly Atonement Day on which sacrifices were offered to the LORD—a bullock and a goat for a sin offering, and two rams for a burnt offering. (Lev. 16:1-28) Paul explains, “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”—Heb. 9:22

But all the sacrificing of the past was merely typical. Paul explains this, saying, “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” (vs. 23) In a prophecy concerning Jesus, in which his attitude of complete loyalty to his Father’s will is depicted, the Prophet David wrote, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”—Ps. 40:6-8

In Hebrews 10:5-9, the Apostle Paul quotes this prophecy and explains that when Jesus said, ‘Lo, I come: . . . to do thy will, O my God,’ he took away “the first, that he may establish the second.” That is, in the sacrificial work of Jesus, the typical sacrifices of the past were set aside, so far as recognition of them by God was concerned, and there began the offering of the ‘better sacrifices.’

HUMAN SACRIFICES

The typical sacrifices consisted of bulls, goats, and lambs, but in the antitype both Jesus and his followers lay down their lives. A suggestion of this

was given when the LORD asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice, and then substituted a ram in the place of Isaac. Isaac was a type of Jesus, who actually did lay down his life, no ram being provided to take his place in death.

According to the prophecy of Psalm 40:6-8, Jesus came to do all that had been written of him 'in the volume of the book,' that is, in the Old Testament scriptures. The volume of the book had foretold that Jesus would be led "as a lamb to the slaughter," dying for the sin-cursed race. (Isa. 53:7) The twenty-second Psalm also foretold Jesus' sacrificial death. As we have seen, the typical sacrifices under the Law pointed forward to the fact that Jesus would give his life for the sins of the world.

Through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus at Jordan when he was baptized, he understood the meaning of the prophecies concerning his sacrificial death. He conducted his ministry in keeping with them. He preached the Gospel of the kingdom, and healed the sick and raised the dead. Intermingled with these activities were his references to his coming death. Jesus was a young man, his disciples thought, to be talking about dying, so they did not discern the meaning of this aspect of his ministry.

On one occasion, Jesus said that he would give his flesh, his humanity, "for the life of the world." (John 6:51) At another time, toward the close of his ministry, he announced to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem where he expected that his enemies would arrest him and put him to death.—Matt. 16:21

The disciples were impressed with Jesus' teachings concerning the glory of his kingdom, and James and John asked him if they could sit, one on his right hand and one on his left hand in the kingdom. Jesus replied to this by asking if they were able to drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism. They replied, "We are able." (Matt. 20:22) Jesus assured them that they would be given this opportunity, but they did not then realize that this meant to suffer and die with him.—Mark 10:37-40

SUFFERING, THEN GLORY

Because the disciples did not understand that Jesus must die as the world's Redeemer, they were greatly disturbed when his enemies cruelly wrested him from them and crucified him. After he was raised from the dead, he talked with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus and explained to them what the Scriptures had foretold—that it was essential first that Christ should suffer, and then "enter into his glory."—Luke 24:13-32

These two disciples grasped the meaning of Jesus' words and their hearts rejoiced. Now they knew that their Master's death was not a miscarriage of the Divine plan. But it was not until they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that they understood they were to have the privilege of suffering and dying with Jesus. Through the revealing power of the Holy Spirit, Peter grasped this point very clearly, and later explained it. In his first epistle, Peter mentions the testimony of the prophets concerning the "sufferings of Christ," and then explains that the disciples of Jesus are partakers of these sufferings.—I Pet. 1:10,11

Peter wrote, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (chap. 4:12,13) Again, "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."—chap. 2:20,21

Paul confirms Peter in his teaching that the followers of Jesus have the opportunity of participating with him in the foretold 'sufferings of Christ.' He wrote to Timothy, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."—II Tim. 2:11,12

To the brethren at Rome, Paul wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: . . . if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:16-18) It was the Holy Spirit, through the prophets, that foretold the sufferings of Christ, and if we are suffering with him, Paul writes, it means that the Holy Spirit's testimony, or 'witness,' applies to us.

In Romans 6:3, Paul raises the question in order that they might realize that baptism, or burial, into Christ, is in reality a baptism into his death.

In verse five, he speaks of our being “planted together in the likeness of his death.” If we continue faithful in this baptism, faithful even unto death, “we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”—the promised “glory that should follow.”—I Pet. 1:11

John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) The title ‘Lamb’ identifies Jesus as fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the lamb that would be led to the slaughter. In Revelation 5:6, reference is made to Jesus as a “slain” lamb. In Revelation 14:1, this same Lamb is shown standing on “mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand.” In verse four, these are identified as those who “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” They follow him, as lambs, into death.—Rom. 8:36

ANTITYPICAL PRIESTS

In the type, under the arrangements of the Mosaic Law, the work of sacrifice was done by those designated priests—Aaron, the brother of Moses, together with his four sons, comprised the original priestly family, and the priesthood continued in the Aaronic family. In Hebrews 3:1, we read, “Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession [or order], Christ Jesus.” Verse six reads, “Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

In I Peter 2:5, we read, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood,

to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” And, again in verse nine of this chapter, Peter writes, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.”

Thus not only do we see that as followers of Jesus we have the privilege of suffering and dying with him, but that this is foreshadowed in the typical sacrifices offered in connection with the services of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Just as the priests in the type offered sacrifices, so, as Peter explains, we also are a priesthood to offer sacrifices. One difference between the type and the antitype is that whereas in the type the priests offered animals in the place of themselves, in the antitype, as our text states, we present our own bodies ‘a living sacrifice.’

This, in reality, constitutes the terms of discipleship. As Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24) This is a straightforward invitation to die with Christ—symbolically speaking, to be crucified with him. But this raises a question. Since Jesus died to redeem mankind from sin, and its penalty, death, why is it that those who accept him are invited to die? Why are they not, instead, released from the penalty of death, and restored to perfection of life? The Bible’s answer to this question reveals the true meaning of the Christian life, that it is a participation in the better sacrifices of this Gospel Age.

WHY DID JESUS DIE?

Jesus died to redeem the sin-cursed race from death. This feature of the sacrificial aspect of the

Divine plan is described in the Bible by the word 'ransom,' which means 'a price to correspond.' One of the early uses of this word in the Bible reads, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul [life] is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.)"—Ps. 49:7,8

Here the psalmist says that the redemption of human life is too precious, or costly, for any member of the human race to accomplish. It means that if salvation from death depended upon fallen human efforts, the lives of all would cease forever. The reason for this is clear. It was a perfect man who sinned and brought upon himself the penalty of death. This penalty was passed on to all of Adam's progeny, resulting in all being born imperfect and under condemnation to death. None of these, therefore, could be a corresponding price, a ransom to accomplish the redemption of others.

The LORD knew this, and in his love provided One who could be a ransom. One of the Old Testament promises reads, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. 13:14) Notice here how definitely the use of the word ransom is associated with the release of man from death.

Our Heavenly Father sent his beloved Son into the world to do this ransoming work. Concerning this Jesus said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28) It was Jesus' perfect human life, voluntarily surrendered, that constituted the ransom. Without this, no member

of the fallen race could have any hope of eternal life.

The Apostle Paul also uses the word ransom in explaining what Jesus has accomplished on behalf of humanity. He wrote, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—I Tim. 2:3-6

Paul's statement, 'To be testified in due time,' is fundamentally important to our understanding of God's plan to give life to mankind—life that was provided by the ransom. John 3:16 reads, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In connection with this, Paul raised the question, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"—Rom. 10:14

Practically the entire human race has gone into death without hearing about the provision of life made for them through the ransom provided by Jesus. But Paul says that it is the will of God that these shall be saved from death, and have the knowledge of the ransom testified to them. Only then will they be in a position to benefit from the fact that Jesus died for them.

From this it is evident that if the plan of God ceased to function when Jesus died, no one would have received life through the ransom. While the ransom makes life available for the human race, it does not give life. It requires the operation of

additional features of the Divine plan in order for the life-giving merit of the ransom to reach and benefit mankind. The disciples of Christ become coworkers with the Heavenly Father and with Jesus in making available to mankind the life provided by the ransom.

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

The Apostle Paul explains the manner in which we, as the disciples of Christ, are privileged to be workers together with him. We quote: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed [put in us, *Marginal Translation*] unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then [that is, because of this] we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin[offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”—II Cor. 5:19-21

Let us examine this passage carefully. ‘God was in Christ,’ Paul says, ‘reconciling the world unto himself.’ God sent his Son into the world to die as man’s Redeemer in order that the world could be reconciled to him, and being reconciled to him, have life. But the sending of Jesus, and his redeeming work, was not the end of God’s plan for reconciling the world to himself. Beyond this was the need for the word of reconciliation, or, as Paul stated it in his letter to Timothy, the testimony concerning the ransom.

This ‘word of reconciliation,’ Paul explains, has been put in us, or committed unto us, and this constitutes us ‘ambassadors for Christ.’ It is evident,

therefore, that if God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and now we represent Christ, then God is in us also reconciling the world to himself. The total purpose of God is to reconcile the world—all mankind who in due time accept Christ and obey Divine law—but first there is the reconciling of those who become his followers and co-workers, ‘We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.’

FOR HIS BODY’S SAKE

Coming back to the scriptural fact that the disciples of Christ suffer and die with him, in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies pertaining to the sufferings of Christ, we now note a further thought that Paul presents in this connection. Of himself he wrote, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.” (Col. 1:24) Thus Paul confirms the fact that the ‘afflictions,’ or sufferings of Christ, were not finished on Calvary, and that it was his privilege and ours to participate in them. He explains that this suffering was for ‘his body’s sake,’ that is, for the benefit of the body members of Christ, his disciples, the church.

This is one of the outstanding privileges of every true Christian. The Apostle John, after reminding us that Christ laid down his life for us, wrote that “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (I John 3:16) It is clear from this that John did not believe that, in the Divine plan, the sacrificing of life on behalf of others was finished with the death of Jesus.

In the texts just quoted, Paul and John emphasize that our sacrifice of life is on behalf of fellow-members in the body of Christ, the brethren. Other texts reveal that it is also on behalf of the world. Our baptism is described by Paul as a death baptism, burial into Jesus' death—that is, in sacrificial death. In I Corinthians 15:29, in an argument to sustain the great truth of the resurrection, Paul says that our baptism for the dead would be in vain if the dead are not to be restored to life.

This could have no other meaning than the fact that our baptism into the death of Christ will accrue to the benefit of the dead world of mankind, a benefit that will reach them when they are awakened from the sleep of death. This should help us further to understand why the New Testament speaks of the disciples of Christ as an order of priests who lay down their lives in sacrifice. Just as the nation of Israel, typically, was blessed by the sacrificial work of the Aaronic priesthood, so the whole world will yet be blessed as a result of the sacrificial work of Christ and his church, the anti-typical priesthood.

ON ACCOUNT OF SIN

All sacrifices acceptable to God, which have been offered throughout the ages, beginning with the flesh and blood offering presented by Abel, have been related to the fact that man is a sinner. The offerings made specifically on account of sin are, in the Old Testament, designated sin offerings, this expression being used to describe many of the typical sacrifices presented to the LORD in connection with the services of the Tabernacle.

Prophetically it was written of Jesus that he would make his soul “an offering for sin.” (Isa. 53:10) This ‘offering for sin [sin offering]’ made by Jesus was, as we have seen, an exact corresponding price for Adam—a ransom. The sin offerings presented in the services of the Tabernacle were not a corresponding price, hence were not accepted as an offset for Adamic sin. But they did result in limited and temporary blessing for Israel, and they were acceptable to God for this purpose.

The sacrifice of Jesus was all-sufficient as a corresponding price—a ransom—to provide release from Adamic condemnation. However, the fact that we are invited to be co-sacrificers with him, would indicate that our offering is in some way related to the work of reconciling the sin-cursed world to God; an offering that is made on account of sin, hence a sin offering.

The thought of a sin offering is given to us by the Apostle Paul in Romans 6:9-11, which follows his statement that we are “planted together in the likeness of his [Jesus] death.” (vs. 5) Now he explains what that likeness is. We quote, “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The key to the full depth of meaning contained in this passage is in the word ‘likewise,’ continuing the thought expressed by Paul in his previous statement that we are planted together in the ‘likeness’ of Jesus’ death. To what does the likewise, or

likeness, apply? The true answer is inescapable. Jesus died 'unto sin, . . . likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.' Thus the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice, as our text urges, is related to the Divine purpose to destroy sin.

The question arises as to how we, who by nature are sinners, could present an acceptable sin offering to the LORD. We indeed are by nature, sinners, yet, in our text, Paul assures us that we can present an offering to the LORD that is holy and acceptable. Even if we did not understand the LORD's reasoning on this, we should be willing to accept the testimony of his inspired apostle on the matter, and rejoice that it is so.

Paul, however, gives further assistance to our weak faith in his statement, Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. Every true follower of the Master goes into death in seemingly the same manner as the remainder of mankind. Most of us die of sickness, or old age, or perhaps by accident. But Paul explains that despite this we are authorized to reckon ourselves as dying unto sin, just as Jesus died unto sin. Jesus did not die unto sin in the sense that sin died in his body. His dying unto sin was in the sense of making his soul an offering for sin.

The objection may be raised that Jesus gave himself as a ransom, but we cannot do this, which is true. But we should make a distinction between a sin offering and what may be accomplished by it. Jesus' sacrificial death unto sin is related to another aspect of the Divine plan of reconciliation.

THE TABERNACLE SERVICES

The Book of Hebrews presents further proofs that the disciples of Jesus, and their part in the Divine plan, were typified in God's dealings with Israel in connection with the services of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Only the priests, for example, had access to the Most Holy of the Tabernacle; and Paul presents Jesus, the antitypical High Priest as the "forerunner" entering into the antitypical Most Holy, even heaven itself, and explains that our hope is anchored "within the veil"—our hope of joining our 'forerunner' in that exalted position.—Heb. 6:19,20

Paul identifies those who are dying with Christ as foreshadowed in Israel's typical Atonement Day sacrifices. He writes, "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary [Most Holy] by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."—Heb. 13:11-13

In the typical Atonement Day service, two animals were sacrificed, a bullock and a goat, and the blood of each, in turn, was taken into the sanctuary and sprinkled upon the mercy seat. The bodies of both these animals were taken outside the camp to be burned. So Paul explains that just as Jesus suffered without the gate, we are to go forth unto him and share his reproach and suffering. Since the bodies of only the two animals were involved in this picture it is obvious that the bullock was a picture of Jesus, while the goat foreshadowed the church.

The particular part of this service, which revealed God's pleasure, was the offering of incense on the golden altar in the first Holy. Paul refers to the antitype of this as "the sacrifice of praise to God." (vs. 15) But how can we offer a 'sacrifice of praise to God' that will be holy and acceptable? Paul explains that it is "by him," that is, by—or through—Christ.

In verse sixteen of this chapter, Paul gives us the practical application of this revealing typical lesson of the Tabernacle and its services. He says, "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." We read, in Galatians 6:9,10, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." The greatest good we can render to any and all is to communicate to them the glorious Gospel of Christ, the "word of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:19) Laying down our lives in such a service is a sacrifice of praise that, through Christ, is well-pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

RECONCILIATION

Doing good by communicating the Truth in this present evil world means sacrifice and suffering. But Peter explains that it is better to suffer for well-doing, than for evil doing. Then he makes this revealing observation, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (I Pet. 3:18) The words 'for' and 'also' are the important ones here. 'For Christ also' hath suffered, for well-doing. But Peter

says more than this. It is better for us to suffer for well-doing, 'for Christ also hath once suffered for sins.' Suffering for well-doing in the Christian way is, as Peter explains, suffering for sins, dying unto sin, suffering 'without the camp.'

Peter explains further that Christ's suffering for sin was to bring us to God. His ransom constituted the basis of reconciliation, and this, followed by the word of reconciliation, has brought us to God. Our suffering for well doing is also to bring about the reconciliation of members of the sin-cursed race to God—not to ransom them, but to extend to them the word of reconciliation. We have been given the "ministry of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:18) and as Peter explains, in the laying down of our lives in this service, we are suffering for sin that we might bring people to God.

The testimony of the ransom, the 'word of reconciliation,' is to reach all in due time. (I Tim. 2:3-6) During the present age, it effectively reaches only those called to the heavenly reward. Thus our suffering is now for his 'body's sake.' But in laying down our lives for one another, we are being trained to minister the Truth to the whole world during the thousand years of Christ's reign, for the 'ministry of reconciliation' will not be completed until the end of the kingdom period.

Truly, it is a high and holy calling to which we are invited. Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." (Rom. 12:1) Truly, it is only by God's mercy that members of the dying race are made coworkers with him, and this mercy is extended to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How comforting is the assurance that in presenting our bodies in sacrifice, God counts them as living—alive through Christ and his redeeming blood. We are, by nature, under condemnation to death, but through Christ we live. Paul wrote, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,”—faith in his redeeming blood.—Gal. 2:20

That is why, in Hebrews 9:13,14, the blood of both the typical bullock and the typical goat, slain on Israel’s Atonement Day, is shown to represent the blood—the life—of Christ. Our bodies can be offered as a living sacrifice, only because of his blood. Paul writes, “Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus [symbolized by his blood] might be made manifest in our body. For we which live [through the merit of Christ] are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”—II Cor. 4:9-11

We are dying sacrificially—laying down our lives in the greatest cause mankind has ever known. Few, indeed, even yet know about it. It is the cause of reconciling the fallen race to God. Jesus made it possible, giving himself in death as a “ransom for all.” (I Tim. 2:6) We have the privilege of dying in the same cause by sacrificing time, strength, and means to publish the word of reconciliation. While only a few in this age are thus brought to God, we rejoice that the testimony will yet reach

all mankind; so that whosoever will, may accept, obey, and thus be reconciled.

Meanwhile, through the present sacrificial ministry of reconciliation we are being prepared for the future service when we appear with Christ in glory. We are also, through toil and sacrifice, proving our faithfulness and loyalty to the LORD, encouraged by the promise that if we are “faithful unto death” we shall receive the “crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

As the worldly minded see us, we are dying just as all die, but God views it differently. God’s inspired servant wrote, “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall [in death] like one of the princes.” (Ps. 82:6,7) Prince Jesus died as a sin offering; and we die sacrificially as he did. Let us accept God’s viewpoint—and be faithful to our privileges—while we continue to rejoice in the glorious hope that is set before us! ■

God Knows Best

*Sometimes in trepidation
I sail life’s stormy sea,
But God in love and wisdom
Points out the way for me.
And as my soul speeds onward
In its eternal quest,
I look back on my pathway
And see that God knows best.*
—Poems of Dawn

ENCOURAGING GUESTBOOK ENTRIES—www.dawnbible.com

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

I have continued to search for a place that I can find the Truth of God's Word, having given up long ago to find you—thinking that you did not publish literature any longer.

But now I find you through this website. It makes me so happy to have finally found you. Now I will start reading and studying your articles with a happy heart.—TX

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

I really enjoy your site and the abundance of spiritual nourishment provided. Keep up the good work. Your site is a blessing to me and to numerous others I am certain.—MT

CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Dawn exposed, unveiled, and explained

more on things concerning Christian life, both present and future. More grace to the Dawn.—NIGERIA

SISTER IN CHRIST

Greetings to you by the name of God Jehovah and Lord Jesus Christ.

I am proud to say that I am a Bible Student. I read your Dawn, Herald books. It is very much useful to me to develop my spiritual life in the name of Jehovah. I wish you to continue this task which is a very much appreciated one. Thanking you, your sister in Christ.—INDIA

THANKFUL

Not good with words; all I can say is: I thank God for your organization; otherwise, I'd still be wandering in the dark, and words cannot express how grateful I am. With Jesus' love.—MI

UNDERSTANDABLE

I read the Dawn publication when I get time. It is easy to understand. I am a student of Bangalore in India.—INDIA

STIRS UP CURIOSITY

I have been watching your daily program and it is full of information which stirs up your curiosity in many areas. Thanks for being so informative. God bless your work.—NJ

HOME STUDY GROUP

I am getting ready to start an at-home study group to help others learn more about the Bible, and I am looking to get all my help and answers from the books and booklets from Dawn. Thanks for being here.—TN

REAL TRUTH

My mother started me reading Dawn literature about 60 years ago with *God and Reason*. She said that at last she

had found the Truth and I totally agree.

If it wasn't for knowing the real Truth, I don't think I could sleep at night. I think my heart would fail me because of the fear of seeing the awful things that are happening in the world today.

Since I know that God has a plan for us, I know I can bear whatever we have to face and I think we are truly living in the last days now.—GA

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

I review your Sunday School Lessons [in the *The Dawn* magazine] every week. I think this is just great. Please keep up the good work.—GA

UPLIFTING

I have received a couple of your booklets and have very much enjoyed reading them. They have been very uplifting.—MO



In Memoriam
Brother
Leo B. Post

February 3, 1918–November 29, 2004

IT IS WITH deep sadness that we announce the passing of our dear Brother Leo Post, who was 86 years of age. He was well known in the Bible Student community—not only in the United States, but in many other parts of the world.

Brother Leo grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and became a member of the Junior Bible Students of Chicago at an early age. He consecrated his life to the LORD, being immersed in Lake Michigan in 1937 at the age of 19. He later became a member of the Chicago Bible Students Church, and was elected elder in 1943.

Leo and Mary Biluk were married in 1949, and this union was blessed with four children, Michael, who predeceased him in 2003, Tom of Sacramento, California, and twin daughters, Carol and Elizabeth. Sister Mary died in 1998, and in 1999 he and Sister Ann Truth Lang were married.

In 1965, he and Mary moved to New York State and began part time, and later full time, volunteer service at the Dawn Bible Students Association in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Brother Leo was soon elected elder in the New York Bible Students Church. He became a Trustee of the Dawn in 1974, and faithfully served on its Management and Editorial committees until his death.

He was a fine example of a Christlike character, and was noted for his loving zeal for the LORD. He was an excellent speaker, and had outstanding abilities in leading Bible studies. His untiring labors, and ministry, will be missed by all.

One of Brother Leo's favorite hymns was #127, "Way Worn Pilgrim":

*I saw a way worn trav'ler
In tatter'd garments clad,
Yet struggling up the mountain,
His face would make you glad.
His back was laden heavy,
His strength was almost gone.
He shouted as he journeyed,
Deliverance will come.
Then palms of victory, crowns of glory,
Palms of victory we shall wear.*

We rejoice with Brother Leo in the words of Revelation 14:13:

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." ■

General Convention Bulletin

July 15-21, 2005—Johnstown, Pennsylvania

THE 2005 GENERAL CONVENTION returns to the lovely facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living/Learning Center (LLC) and two rooms sharing one bathroom in other facilities are available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge in his own sleeping bag if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

The cost of meals for those 5 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. Once again 50% of the cost of those from 6 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid in cash at the door.

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 15. There will be one shuttle bus leaving the college in the early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 22.

The convention theme text is taken from the words of II Thessalonians 2:13, "God hath . . . chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," and a discourse will be given on this important subject. In addition, a series of three mini-talks will be presented on the

topics, “Parousia,” “Epiphania,” and “Apokalupsis.” There will be a discussion of “The Last Supper,” and a symposium of two brethren will consider Paul’s words in Philippians 2:12,13 concerning our salvation—“God’s Part” and “Our Part.” We encourage you to make your plans now to attend and participate in the blessings of this year’s General Convention.

Note: The LLC is air-conditioned and each room has its own bathroom. Non-LLC housing is not air-conditioned and two bedrooms have shared access to one bathroom.

	Ages	18 & up	**13-17	**6-12
Breakfast		\$6.00	\$5.00	\$4.00
Lunch		7.00	6.00	5.00
Dinner		9.00	8.00	6.00
Total, three meals		\$22.00	\$19.00	\$15.00
Lodging (per night)				
dbl occ (LLC)		\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
dbl occ (non-LLC)		\$20.00	\$18.00	\$10.00
single occ (LLC)		\$50.00	n/a	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$35.00	n/a	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals				
dbl occ (LLC)		\$275+	\$240+	\$190+
dbl occ (non-LLC)		\$195+	\$160+	\$100+
single occ (LLC)		\$395+	n/a	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)		\$235+	n/a	n/a
<p>If no breakfasts, deduct—+\$30 or +\$20</p> <p>**50% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group</p>				

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane — Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

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

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 15, 2005				
Saturday, 16th				
Sunday, 17th				
Monday, 18th				
Tuesday, 19th				
Wednesday, 20th				
Thursday, 21st				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals ☐
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) ☐
 (Dinner Friday, July 15 is at additional cost)

Check: ☐ private bath **or** ☐ shared bath
☐ double occupancy ☐ single occupancy

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2004

IN THE FISCAL year 2004 we continued the same level of witnessing as in 2003, and budgeted to spend approximately 25% of our reserves. Operating expenses ran 200% of budget for the year, while witnessing expenses were 98% of budget. The operating expense variance was due to payment made during the fiscal year for the Print-On-Demand machine, as indicated in the table below. Contributions, sales and other income were 127% of budget, and included a one-time contribution to cover most

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
All revenue other than bequests	\$464,283	
Expenses		
Radio (domestic and foreign)		\$253,334
TV (includes spots and recordings)		208,468
Other Media (domestic & editorial)		6,848
Pilgrim Service (domestic and foreign)		18,779
Other Foreign Support		40,289
Shop Operating Expense*		355,446
House Operating Expense		57,783
Shipping/Mailing		75,535
Outside Printing		31,992
Total Expenses		1,048,474
Less Income	464,283	
Loss	(584,191)	
Bequests	17,875	
Loss after Bequests	(566,316)	

*Shop expense includes \$202,380 for
Print-On-Demand machine

of the cost of the Print-On-Demand machine. Bequests, however, were only 18% of budget and 95% less than 2003. The above resulted in our having to dip into the reserves at a rate of 40% during 2004.

Due to the significant decline in reserves, we have implemented several significant expense curtailments for 2005, primarily in the Radio and Television categories. As the financial condition warrants, full or partial resumption of these activities will take place. As a result of these measures, we are budgeting to limit the reduction in our current reserves to no more than 15% during the 2005 fiscal year.

The Heidelberg machine purchased in late 2003 has been producing the monthly Dawn magazine for over one year, and its use is now being expanded to include printing of booklets and other materials. Use of the machine has significantly reduced the time and effort previously needed to perform these jobs, and we look forward to further expansion of its use.

Although staffing at the Dawn has stabilized somewhat during the past year, manpower in certain areas continues to be a challenge. We greatly appreciate the offsite help we receive from many sources throughout the country, as well as the part-time help we receive at the Dawn plant on a regular basis. Additionally, numerous brethren have spent time during the past year working full time at the Dawn, for which we are very thankful.

We rejoice that the message of Truth continues to be spread throughout the world through various means that God provides. We ask for your prayers that, by the Lord's grace, we may continue to have a share in proclaiming the wonderful plan of salvation as taught in God's Holy Word. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below, in cooperation with the Dawn, are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

W. Blicharz

Phoenix, AZ

Dec. 31-Jan. 3

R. Gorecki

Phoenix, AZ

Dec. 31-Jan. 3

CONVENTIONS

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

CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2—Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL. Contact Roberta Tabac. Phone: (630) 231-1874

PHOENIX NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2,3—LaQuinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road. Phone: (602) 993-0800. Contact hotel directly for reservations. For other information, contact Janell Porcolab. Phone: (623) 362-2056

LOS ANGELES QUARTERLY CONVENTION, January 30—406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA. Contact Peter Knapp. Phone: (562) 215-4810

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 18,19, 20—The Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd. Contact Donna Burke, 10771 Wood Reed Court, Nevada City, CA 95959. Phone: (503) 265-8252

ROCKLAND ANNUAL CONVENTION, February 27—Comfort Inn, Nanuet, NY. Contact Mrs. Russell Shalieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07069. Phone: (908) 756-4954

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 5,6,7—Clarion Hotel, 3835 McCoy Road, Orlando, FL 32812. Contact Bob Goodman, 426 Sundown Trail, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 695-6815

NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION, March 12,13—Beachfront Holiday Inn, Gulfport, MS. Contact Michael Costelli, 1505 18th Avenue, Gulfport, MS 39501. Phone: (228) 868-2464

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 25,26,27—Wyndham Hotel (at Albuquerque International Airport), 2910 Yale SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact Sandra Thomassen, 402 Bryn Mawr SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Phone: (505) 268-8170

FRESNO CONVENTION, April 1,2,3—Best Western Garden Court Inn, 2141 N. Parkway Drive, Fresno, CA 93705. Contact Bob Wilson, 2103 N. Price Avenue, #112, Fresno, CA 93703. Phone: (559) 255-2241

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, April 3—Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. Contact Ann Truth Post, 24 Lexington Road, New City, NY 10956. Phone: (845) 634-5876

COLUMBUS CONVENTION, April 9,10—Radisson Hotel, 7007 North High Street. Contact Todd Alexander, 5463 Eaglesnest, Westerville, OH 43081. Phone: (614) 891-1181

GREATER NEW LONDON AREA PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 10—Contact Rebecca Armstrong, 99 Cliff Street, Norwich, CT 06360. Phone: (860) 204-9702

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 15,16,17—Macomb Community College, 14500 12-Mile Road, Warren, MI. Contact Norm Zendler, 20 Devonshire, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069. Phone: (248) 399-8843

BOISE CONVENTION, April 29,30, May 1—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street. Contact D. Allers. Phone: (208) 375-6873

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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