

# The DAWN

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# The Reeling World of Today

*“The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.”*

—Isaiah 24:20

## THE WORLD OF TODAY

was aptly foretold in the Bible by the prophetic expression that it would “reel to and fro like a drunkard.” Man now lives in an environment that is hugely different from that of a mere generation ago, and completely unlike any preceding period of his existence.

Without doubt, one of the largest contributing factors to this is the ability of people—individuals and groups alike—to instantly communicate with each other and have access to every conceivable type of information. For most, this ability is literally “in the palm of our hand.”

Consider these current statistics from the GSMA, a trade association which monitors world-wide mobile communication usage. The GSMA states that the number of mobile communication devices in the world now exceeds 7.5 billion. This is nearly 3%

greater than the total world population, estimated presently at 7.3 billion. It also calculates that the number of mobile devices in use is increasing by more than ten per second, thus multiplying at a rate five times faster than the earth's population. When the number of mobile phones first exceeded the world's population, approximately one year ago, a prominent executive in the financial industry noted: "No other technology has impacted us like the mobile phone. It's the fastest growing manmade phenomenon ever—from zero to 7.2 billion in three decades."

One might think that such an explosion of communication in a period of just one generation, and the related ability to obtain seemingly unlimited information and knowledge, should result in greater progress toward resolution of the world's many problems. Yet, it is clear that these circumstances have had an opposite effect. God, through the Prophet Daniel, foretold this, saying that at the "time of the end . . . knowledge shall be increased." However, rather than this yielding solutions to man's troubles, it would be accompanied by "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation."—Dan. 12:1,4

The "smallness" of our world today dictates that solutions to problems be global in nature, because nations and people in every corner of the earth are impacted by events and troubles in all other parts of the planet. Some statesmen and historians go so far as to claim that now our difficulties are so complex that the only real solution is a one-world government. However, the existing fragmentation of the political, economic, religious, and social aspects

of our world, and generally selfish motivations, have rendered this solution virtually impossible.

Our world is being pulled in so many directions that it lacks stability and a firm objective. Most feel that the future is very uncertain, and thus they “reel to and fro” with fear, not knowing where man is heading. We believe that the Scriptures are very clear in their predictions of conditions in the earth today. However, it is a reasonable question to ask: If God has known of present conditions ages in advance, does he also have solutions?

### **EARTH DESTROYED—NOT LITERALLY**

Our opening text is a graphic description of a world order tottering and stumbling toward inevitable destruction. In this same chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy, almost all of which is similarly prophetic, we are told that the earth is made “empty, and . . . waste,” and turned “upside down.” The prophet also declares that the earth “mourneth and fadeth away.” The same earth, according to this prophecy, is seen to be “utterly broken down,” “dissolved,” and “removed like a cottage.”—Isa. 24:1,4,19,20

The “earth” here mentioned is clearly not this literal planet upon which we live. The literal earth cannot mourn, nor has it sinned and become deserving of punishment for transgressions. This term is used to denote what we call the “world,” or world order. In the fourth verse of this chapter, the words “earth” and “world” are used interchangeably. The term earth here is symbolic, as are all the various expressions which are employed to describe how the symbolic earth is destroyed. The use of so many descriptive pictures by the prophet conveys

the unmistakable thought that the world being described is to be completely torn down.

The world spoken of by Isaiah is the same as referred to in the New Testament by Paul with the words, “this present evil world.” (Gal. 1:4) Its ruler is Satan, who the apostle said is “the god of this world,” and who Jesus spoke of as “the prince of this world.” (II Cor. 4:4; John 16:11) Satan’s evil world must indeed be destroyed before God’s new world can be established. That new world, or “new earth,” is described by the Apostle Peter as one “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—II Pet. 3:13

### **THE DAY OF THE LORD**

Both the Old and New Testaments give us numerous pictures and prophetic insight concerning events now taking place in the world. These prophecies identify the present period of human experience as “the day of the LORD” and “the day of God.” (Isa. 13:6; Joel 2:1,11; II Pet. 3:10,12) It is the “time of the end” of the present Gospel Age. Man’s rulership, based upon selfishness and guided largely by Satan’s deceptive influence, is crumbling to its fall.—Dan. 12:4,9

Not knowing that the time has come for divine intervention in the affairs of men, human wisdom still clings to the hope of erecting a new and better world upon the ruins of the old one. Temporarily, and to a very limited degree, this may be accomplished on occasion. However, the prophecies of the Bible show clearly that before the events of this “day of the LORD” are completed, God’s long-promised kingdom will have taken the place formerly occupied by the fallen institutions of men.

This present period is also called the “day of vengeance of our God,” and the “day of his wrath.” (Isa. 61:2; 63:1-4; Ps. 110:5) Yet, we are not to get the idea of divine hatred toward man. God has established certain laws in harmony with which he operates, and those who come into conflict with these will reap the penalty of their course. Thus, today mankind is reaping the result of unrepented selfishness and sin, but not personal malice from their Creator.

What Isaiah described as the “day of vengeance,” and Daniel spoke of as “a time of trouble,” others of God’s prophets have similarly expressed. The Prophet Malachi says concerning the same period, “Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.” (Mal. 4:1) Joel, foretelling the same time of distress upon the world, speaks of it as a “day of clouds and of thick darkness.” (Joel 2:2) Jesus, God’s “great prophet,” refers to this time as one of “great tribulation,” so ruinous in its character that if it were not cut short, “no flesh” would survive its ravages.—Matt. 24:21,22

## **SYMBOLIC “LIGHTNING”**

The psalmist describes prophetic “lightnings” associated with our day, stating that God’s “lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw, and trembled.” (Ps. 97:4) Here is a symbolism illustrating what the Prophet Daniel described, as previously quoted, concerning the time when “knowledge shall be increased.” Many today recognize the relationship between the availability of information—including ease of communication—and present world

disarray and turmoil. While they recognize that it is the “enlightening” influences of our day that have brought this about, they do not see that this has come in fulfillment of Bible prophecies, and because God’s time has come to make ready for the establishment of his kingdom.

For centuries the belief was held that knowledge in the hands of the common people, and the ability to communicate it on a large scale, was unsafe. For centuries, indeed, this was dangerous for the hereditary ruling classes. Every possible effort was made to keep the people, for the most part, in ignorance. That was especially true during the period styled the Dark Ages. However, the time came when God wanted the people to obtain knowledge. His symbolic “lightnings” began to enlighten the world, and the initial effect of this is the trouble and “trembling” we see happening in the earth today.

The lightning symbolism is especially meaningful in connection with the prophecy of Joel, which describes this same period as one of “clouds and thick darkness.” How apt indeed is the picture. The flashes of lightning in the midst of the gloom and perplexity of this cloudy day are God’s great principles of truth and justice. Lightnings from his obscured throne disclose here one error, and there another, concerning the social, political, religious, and economic views and practices of the past. These flashes of light incite the people to press for better things to which they feel they are justly entitled. Never before have these conditions prevailed on such a worldwide scale.

How clearly the prophetic lightning flashes from God’s throne are helping to reveal corruption in

the world, dishonesty in high places, emphasizing more and more the need for radical changes to be made in the world. How to correct these wrongs, however, the world is not able to see. The result is that man hears conflicting ideas, voices, theories, and threats, continuously. This all simply adds to the confusion and increases the reeling “to and fro” of the earth, and the weakening of man’s ability to keep the world under control. Today, indeed, the earth is trembling as much from the noise of conflicting words, as it has in the past from the explosive sounds of global war.

### **LORD’S PEOPLE TO BE “WATCHMEN”**

In the midst of all this trouble and tumult, what should be the attitude of the Lord’s truly consecrated people? Are they, too, in fear and doubt and confusion? Such is not the case if they are living up to their privileges as watchmen in Zion. (Isa. 52:8) While it is true that the Lord’s people suffer from the same distresses as do the rest of mankind, yet knowing the outcome, they “lift up [their] heads,” knowing that their deliverance “draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28) In confidence they know that not only is their deliverance in the first resurrection near, but that the deliverance of the earth from the thralldom of sin and death is also close at hand.

Through the Scriptures, the Lord’s consecrated people are given a knowledge of God’s plan, along with its times and seasons. This understanding enables them to see the necessity for God’s present method of dealing with the world, and also the “peaceable fruit of righteousness” which shall soon result. (Heb. 12:11) In the midst of the storm and

babble of this great “day of the LORD,” they hear the all-wise voice of God, and their hearts rejoice. They have full confidence in his ability to bring order out of confusion and chaos. They realize that in the judgments of this day, it is God who speaks from heaven—the place of highest authority and control. They give thanks that his due time has come for engaging in the work of setting aside the order of things which sin and selfishness have produced, that his own long-promised kingdom may be established in its place.

The lightning flashes portrayed in the prophecies are symbolic of knowledge along all lines as it affects the course of human behavior. Spiritual truth, as it applies to God’s will for his own people, is also revealed through the Scriptures, and disseminated by the consecrated followers of the Master. To understand the prophetic meaning of the times in which we are living is, therefore, to be regarded as a special blessing from the Lord. Hence our attitude should be one of great gratitude toward God for the beautiful truth he has granted us the privilege of seeing, and with which we have the blessed privilege of being identified. Our gratitude should be manifested by an increasing zeal in helping to bring that truth to the knowledge of others.

As we align the events of our day with the Bible’s prophetic testimony, we believe that the “day of the LORD” is clearly in progress. It is a “day” that has its stages of gradual development. Its general character is that of a struggle of light against darkness, of liberty against oppression, and of truth against error. It is so widespread in its application, and so universal in all its ramifications, that no one

symbolism could fully describe it. Most importantly to the Lord's people, however, is the understanding, by faith in God's Word, that enables us to see the glorious outcome—Messiah's kingdom! Let us also heed the warning of the Apostle Peter, and not be of those he spoke as "scoffers" among the Lord's people—saying that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—II Pet. 3:3,4

## **OTHER PROPHETIC PICTURES**

In addition to the prophecies already mentioned concerning the present "time of trouble" and the "day of the LORD," the Scriptures further describe it as the time when "the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my [God's] jealousy." (Zeph. 3:8) Another of the Lord's prophets informs us that God's mode of action during this period is "in the whirlwind and in the storm." (Nah. 1:3) It is also prophetically depicted as a "flood of mighty waters" and a climactic "great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth." (Isa. 28:2; Rev. 16:18) It is clear from such diverse descriptions that none of these are to be taken literally. Rather, they are prophetic pictures and symbols which portray the various features of the world's present trouble and God's response.

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, the Lord indicated that, to a greater or lesser extent, militarism and its accompanying proliferation of weapons of every kind form a prominent part of this great day of trouble. "I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts." (Jer. 25:29) A similar thought is suggested in

Isaiah 34:3, where the kingdoms of the earth are symbolically spoken of as “mountains” that “shall be melted with . . . blood.”

Still another symbolism of the prophecies, is that of treading the “winepress.” Prophesying of Christ during the early part of his Second Presence, the prophet said, “I have trodden the winepress alone; . . . and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments.” (Isa. 63:1-6) We believe that this work began in earnest as a result of the events surrounding 1914 and the beginning of World War I. This symbolic treading of the “great winepress of the wrath of God” has grown in severity year by year during the century since and still continues today.—Rev. 14:19

## **GREAT IMAGE TO BE SMITTEN**

An additional scriptural prediction describing the overthrow of constituted authority, particularly that of the hereditary ruling houses which governed most of Europe prior to World War I, is contained in a prophecy recorded in chapter 2 of Daniel. This prophecy is with regard to the accomplishment of the divine purpose as illustrated by the smiting of the human-like image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. (vss. 31-45) This image, according to the prophecy, was to be smitten by a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands,” the mountain representing God’s supreme rulership over the earth.

The former powerful church-state ruling houses of Europe, which for centuries claimed for themselves “the divine right of kings,” were largely destroyed as the result of World War I. The historical events

of that time offer evidence, we believe, of the beginning of the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy—that the "image" of Gentile authority was "smitten" and began to crumble. Indeed, the remaining fragments thereof are even now being further "broken to pieces together" and ground to powder preparatory to being blown away as "the chaff of the summer threshingfloors." (Dan. 2:34,35,44) In harmony with this suggested interpretation, we see Europe today no longer ruled by the great "image" of Gentile power, but mostly by fragmented governments which have arisen out of the masses of the people.

The Apostle Paul also speaks of the symbolic blows of destruction being dealt Satan's empire in preparation for the establishment of God's kingdom. He likens the trouble to birth pangs—"travail upon a woman with child." (I Thess. 5:1-3) In Daniel's prophecy, there is the suggestion that there were to be three of these major "pangs," or spasms, of trouble. They are shown as, first, the smiting of the image; second, its pieces being ground to powder; and third, the wind blowing away the "chaff," or dust. The events of the past century would seem to suggest that we are in the second of these major spasms—perhaps nearing the third.

## **GOD IN FULL CONTROL**

Noting one more prophecy of this present day of trouble, we quote: "Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness. . . . A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a

flame burneth. . . . The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.”—Joel 2:1-3,10

As we have seen, many symbolisms are used by the prophets of old to describe one or more of the events transpiring in the momentous “day of the LORD.” However, behind all of this is the fact that God takes responsibility for the overthrow of this “present evil world.” In his Word, the Lord explains to us that he accomplishes this end through the prophetic increase of knowledge—the flashing of his lightnings—and their effects on all aspects of society.

The reeling to and fro of the earth as a result of God’s lightnings is a very comprehensive depiction. The earth may reel and tremble as in a storm, in the wind, from fire, earthquake, floods, or in other ways, but it continues to be “shaken” until it finally falls. Then the kingdom of Messiah, “which cannot be moved,” will be established in its place.—Heb. 12:26-28

## **A NEW AND BETTER WORLD**

World distress incidental to the transitional changes now occurring has caused men and women of all nations to long for a new and better world. We can also well understand the desire of those sincere leaders of the world to do all in their power to bring about a new order, full of freedom and happiness. We are not speaking disparagingly of such sincere human efforts when we say that there can be no ideal world order until the kingdom of Christ is established.

There is nothing which should engender such hope and courage in the hearts of humanity today more than to know that out of all the chaos and trouble experienced at the present time, there is soon to emerge an era of genuine and lasting peace and joy. This is just what we can and should expect, not because man will finally triumph over his selfishness, but because God has intervened in the affairs of men, and will soon establish divine control over the nations through the kingdom of his Son, Christ Jesus. In the last verse of the chapter from which our opening text is taken, we are given assurance that “the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”—Isa. 24:23

### **MOUNT ZION—CENTERPIECE OF GOD’S KINGDOM**

Jerusalem was the capital city of Judea, and the hill of Zion in Jerusalem was where the government of Israel centered. The promise of God to “reign in mount Zion” would, therefore, denote his control in human affairs. This symbolism of the divine kingdom is mentioned many times in the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments. In the second Psalm, God declares, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.” (vs. 6) The psalmist then explains that God’s king, who is Christ Jesus, will “dash” the nations of this present evil order “in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”—vs. 9

In the book of Revelation, Jesus and his entire church are shown to be together on mount Zion. (Rev. 14:1) The prophecy of Obadiah gives us the same portrait of the kingdom, declaring that “saviours shall come up on mount Zion; . . . and the

kingdom shall be the LORD'S." (Obad. 21) It seems clear from these references that the term Zion is used in the Scriptures to denote the exalted status of Christ and his church as they will reign together to uplift and bless the sin-sick and dying world.

Micah 4:2 declares that "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." This is another of God's promises in which Zion is spoken of symbolically to represent the Christ—head and body. There is good reason to believe, also, that the term Jerusalem is used here to describe the earthly, or visible, operations of the new kingdom. Indeed, the laws of that kingdom will emanate from heavenly Zion—Christ and his church. There will be no need for earthly legislators, because there will be no occasion to change or amend the laws—nor will new laws be needed to resolve unforeseen problems.

However, these laws "of Zion" will need to be made known, and the people will need instruction in their proper application. This will be done through the earthly representatives of the kingdom—spoken by Micah as "the word of the LORD" going forth "from Jerusalem." Those who will represent the Christ—heavenly Zion—in the earthly, or "Jerusalem," phase of the kingdom have already been selected by God and prepared by him for this high position of trust as teachers of mankind under Christ. In Luke 13:28,29, they are identified by Jesus as being Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets. In Psalm 45:16, they are referred to as the "fathers" of Israel, and the promise is given that they shall be made "princes in all the earth." Paul also identified this group as Israel's "elders" who "obtained a good report through faith."—Heb. 11:1,2,39

## THE ONLY PLAN THAT WILL SUCCEED

If we were to view this scriptural portrait of God's new world from the human standpoint, it would probably seem quite impractical, and we would have good reason to ask, Will it work? We must remember, however, that this is not a humanly devised utopian arrangement. If it were only that, we would have grounds to doubt any hope of its success. Thanks be to God, though, that it is his new arrangement for a sin-sick and dying world. The Creator of the universe, the great First Cause of all life, has planned it, and certainly he would not make promises to the human race which he is not able to fulfill.

How reassuring are the Heavenly Father's words: "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: . . . yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."—Isa. 46:9-11 ■

## 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 Lissie Frees, Seattle, WA—October 7. Age, 91

Sister Ruth Rupp, Clearwater, FL—October 10. Age, 95

Brother Mike Chalecki, Prince Albert, SK—October 16. Age, 86

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**NOVEMBER 5**—“Having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”—Hebrews 10:21,22 (Z, '00-170 Hymn 321)

**NOVEMBER 12**—“Be not faithless, but believing.”—John 20:27 (Z. '04-89 Hymn 263)

**NOVEMBER 19**—“Let us watch and be sober.”—I Thesalonians 5:6 (Z. '02-239 Hymn 272)

**NOVEMBER 26**—“And the LORD said unto Moses, What is that in thine hand?”—Exodus 4:2 (Z. '94-143, '01-348 Hymn 191)

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*My Lord, Thy will not mine be done:  
Whatever path Thy love shall choose for me,  
Through desert sands, or if beside the sea,  
Thy will be done!*

*Oh, may Thy will in me be done:  
Should “harvest” labor be for me Thy will,  
Or if I may but suffer and be still,  
Thy will be done!*

*My Father, let Thy will be done:  
If sweet the cup Thou pourest for me to drink,  
I'll praise Thee, but if bitter, I'll not shrink,  
Thy will be done!*

*Forever may Thy will be done:  
I would not choose, I leave it all with Thee,  
The pilgrimage, if short or long it be,  
Thy will be done!*

—*Poems of Dawn*

# God Rescues Peter

**Key Verse:** “*Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*”  
—Acts 12:5

**Selected Scripture:**  
Acts 12:1-17

brother John lived to a ripe old age, probably until near the end of the first century.—Acts 12:1,2

As another of Christ’s closest disciples, Peter’s experience was still different. Because Herod had pleased the Jews by killing James, “he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter [Passover] to bring him forth to the people.”—vss. 3,4

Our Key Verse reveals the earnest prayers on behalf of Peter by the brethren in Jerusalem. Their minds were probably reflecting upon the fact that one of their leaders, James, had been slain and were concerned lest Peter also should fall to the sword.

That night when Herod had planned to bring him forth from prison, Peter was peacefully sleeping. He was chained to two soldiers while two other guards were on

## INTENSE PERSECUTION

was the portion of the Early Church, and yet divine providence permitted contrasting experiences in the lives of the saints. In today’s lesson we learn that Herod, king of Judea, had James put to death by the sword. Thus he became one of the earliest martyrs for the cause of Christ, whereas his

duty, thus seemingly to insure that he could not escape from his captors. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared, aroused Peter from his sleep, and miraculously, the handcuffs that bound him fell off. Then, also by a miracle, Peter was led by the heavenly messenger from his confinement in the prison to his freedom in the city. “They came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city: which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.”—vss. 6-10

Seemingly, the foregoing events related to Peter’s release from captivity were so remarkable that for a time he perceived he might have been dreaming or in a trance. Once Peter realized he had actually been set free, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where brethren were gathered together in prayer. Peter knocked at the door of the gate and a servant girl named Rhoda recognized his voice, but in her excitement, neglected to open the door. She ran back and told the brethren who had been praying that Peter had arrived, but they did not believe her. Ultimately, as a result of Peter’s continued knocking, they opened the door and saw him. He then gave them an account of his providential deliverance. Peter told them to inform one of the disciples named James, as well as others of the brotherhood, and then departed to an undisclosed location.—vss. 11-17

The “effectual fervent” prayers of the righteous can avail much. (James 5:16) We will never be tried beyond what we can bear, but a way of escape will be provided. Sometimes this may occur through death as was the case with James, whereas in Peter’s case, divine intervention effected his release. May we persevere daily in striving to do God’s will, assured that if we are faithful, we can rejoice, because surely we shall be delivered at a time and in a manner that the Heavenly Father deems best. ■

# God Makes No Distinction

**Key Verses:** *“God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”*  
—Acts 15:8,9

**Selected Scripture:**  
Acts 15:1-19

the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” These also received the Holy Spirit.—Acts 2:38

Since it was God’s will for all nations to understand and appreciate the offer of salvation provided through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, eventually this Gospel message was extended to heathen lands. After returning from a missionary tour, Paul and Barnabas shared the results of their efforts with the brethren at Antioch. While there, “Certain men which came . . . from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

**ALTHOUGH THE OPPORTUNITY** of becoming part of the body of Christ was offered to Israel first, as a nation they failed to accept our Lord as their king and he was crucified. Nevertheless, there was a remnant of Jews who believed he was their promised Messiah. Thus, commencing with the day of Pentecost, after Christ had ascended to his Father, the Holy Spirit descended upon his footstep followers. Subsequently, other Jews believed, repented, and received water baptism “in

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”—Acts 15:1,2

The Antioch brethren desired resolution of this matter and determined that Paul, Barnabas, and others of their number should meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to clarify whether believers who formerly were Gentiles were required to observe the rite of circumcision, as well as various features of the Mosaic Law. Paul willingly went to Jerusalem along with others, believing if the brethren there would renounce the teaching that former Gentiles needed to be circumcised, it would silence the Judaizers.—vss. 3-6

Following a vigorous discussion of the matter, Peter addressed the attendees at this Jerusalem conference. He affirmed, as recorded in our Key Verses, that God did not differentiate among believers who were fully devoted to him and had received the Holy Spirit, regardless of their background or origin.

After discussing the matter thoroughly, the Apostles and elders determined that Gentile converts did not need to be circumcised, and only recommended and agreed that they abstain from blood, from sexual immorality, from eating things that had been strangled, and from partaking of meats that had been offered to idols. Additionally, a letter of greeting along with the result of the deliberations in Jerusalem was sent to the brethren in Antioch.—vss. 22-29

There is no Jerusalem conference today for brethren to have differences discussed and resolved in an open hearing which includes apostles. Nevertheless, an appreciation that all who have been baptized into Christ’s death, regardless of background, language, ethnicity, or gender, are part of Abraham’s seed should greatly assist in the resolution of differences among brethren if a spirit of seeking God’s will prevails.—Gal. 3:27-29 ■

# From Derbe to Philippi

**Key Verse:** “*After he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*”  
—Acts 16:10

**Selected Scripture:**  
Acts 16:1-15

**FOLLOWING THE JERUSALEM** conference, Paul embarked upon a second missionary journey—this time without Barnabas—Silas accompanying him instead. “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth

with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.”—Acts 16:1-3

Paul, Silas, and Timothy enjoyed much success in strengthening the faith of the brethren in the various churches, as well as helping their numbers increase. After visiting the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, they considered traveling to Asia Minor to spread the Gospel, but in some manner the Holy Spirit prevented them from doing so. Afterward, a vision came to Paul at night, as a man pleaded for him to visit Macedonia and minister to those residing there.—vss. 4-9

Our Key Verse illustrates the effect of divine providence upon the hearts and minds of believers who seek to know and do God's will. In response to the vision, Paul and his companions immediately departed for Macedonia, just north of Greece, thereby introducing the Gospel into Europe. It is believed that Luke the physician began to accompany Paul and his other companions around this time.

Arriving in Macedonia, the brethren traveled to Philippi, one of the chief cities in the area. On the Sabbath, they traveled to the riverside where they found a group of women, including one named Lydia, gathered in prayer. Paul spoke to them concerning the hopes of Israel which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This message fell upon receptive hearts as Lydia and her household received water baptism as an evidence of their conversion. Additionally, Lydia invited Paul and his companions to share the hospitality of her home. It does not appear it was immediately accepted, but at her "constraining" they utilized her residence for a period of time as a base of operations as they attended to the Lord's work.—vss. 12-15

An important lesson to be drawn from today's lesson is the fact that God will direct the supervision of the Gospel ministry as it pleases him. Through divine intervention by means of a vision, Paul was directed to travel to Europe, and at Philippi the first church on that continent was established. Subsequent events in the city, including Paul and Silas being arrested, beaten, put in prison, and then becoming instrumental in the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household, demonstrate that whatever our experiences, if we are faithful to our calling, they will be to God's glory.—vss. 19-34

Let us strive always to have a proper attitude during our trials, as was so well expressed by Job. His testimony toward God was, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."—Job 13:15

■

# Thessalonica, Berea and Athens

**Key Verse:** “As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.**”  
—Acts 17:23

**Selected Scripture:**  
Acts 17:1-34

an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.” (vs. 5) Accusations were made against Jason, who was a Christian, concerning the disturbance that occurred. He had to post a bond to guarantee there would be no further riots, after which he and the others were released. As a result, Paul and Silas departed quickly for Berea.—vss. 6-9

As usual, the missionaries went first to the synagogues, where there were honest-hearted students of the

**FOLLOWING THEIR TIME IN** Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy journeyed to Thessalonica. There they found a Jewish synagogue, and for three Sabbath days, discussed the Scriptures with those in attendance. Paul emphasized that Jesus was the Christ who was raised from the dead. Some of the Jews as well as a number of devout Greeks accepted the message and became followers of Christ.—Acts 17:1-4

“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on

Scriptures. As a result, many of them became believers. When word of this successful ministry in Berea reached Thessalonica, the unbelieving Jews there made a trip to Berea, once again stirring up the people against these missionaries. Paul then sailed for Athens, while Silas and Timothy remained in Berea to strengthen the new Christians.—vss. 10-15

Upon his arrival in Athens, Paul observed that the city was given over to idolatry, and he began to declare God's Word in the synagogue and marketplace. Some of the Greek philosophers invited him to address the Areopagus, a judicial body that met on Mars' hill. These were Gentiles, and being aware of all the idols in Athens, Paul commenced his message by noting he had observed they were very religious.—vss. 16-22

In our Key Verse, Paul mentioned seeing an altar to "THE UNKNOWN GOD." He then transitioned his discourse toward enlightening them concerning the one true God, and set forth various features of the divine plan, including the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul affirmed that the true God does not dwell in temples made by human hands, but that he is the Creator of all things, and will reveal himself to those who seek after him. He told them that God had overlooked the ignorance of those who never knew him in the past, but now the time had come for repentance because of a coming period of judgment, which would be executed by Jesus Christ. Although some listeners considered his message, especially with regard to the resurrection of the dead, to be incredulous, others wanted to hear more about it later, and a few even became believers.—vss. 24-34

The zeal of the Early Church in spreading the Gospel is inspiring. May their example serve as an encouragement for each of us to share the good news of God's kingdom under Christ Jesus that will bless the entire human family, thus ending all of the evil that presently exists in the world. ■

# Teaching God's Word

**Key Verses:** *“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”*  
—Acts 18:9,10

**Selected Scripture:**  
Acts 18:1-11,18-21

and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.”—Acts 18:1-5

Although Paul had followed his customary practice of witnessing in the synagogue, the unbelieving Jews strongly opposed his efforts. Paul then dramatically “shook his raiment,” and told them that thenceforth he would focus upon bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, as well as many others in Corinth, believed what he taught and were baptized.—vss. 6-8

As recorded in our Key Verses, the Lord appeared to Paul in a night vision and gave him assurance that he would be successful in Corinth. God promised that he

**FOLLOWING A BRIEF STAY** in Athens, the Lord’s providential leadings directed Paul to Corinth, a city noted for its immorality. There he became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla, who, like himself, were tent makers. Paul abode with them as he ministered in Corinth. “He reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit,

would not be harmed, and that he should continue to preach Jesus Christ because there were many in the city who would become believers.

Despite the fact that Corinth was characterized by frivolity and licentious behavior, it yielded significant spiritual results. Unlike other cities Paul had visited, many of the inhabitants of Corinth appreciated Paul's ministry. As a result, he spent eighteen months there "teaching the word of God" and strengthening the brethren.—vs. 11

Probably towards the end of Paul's stay in Corinth, Gallio became proconsul of the region of Achaia. Believing he would favor them, the Jews brought Paul before the judgment seat there and accused him of promoting the worship of God contrary to the Jewish law. Gallio, however, indicated this situation did not come under his jurisdiction as it pertained to their religion, so he dismissed the case. When Paul finally departed from Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila decided to travel with him as far as Ephesus. Leaving them there, he journeyed back to Jerusalem and then to Antioch.—vss. 12-22

Observing present conditions among mankind, as it was in Paul's day, it continues to be but a "little flock" that will be attracted to the message concerning God's kingdom. As consecrated believers, we are invited to follow in Christ's footsteps by witnessing to the Truth to all who may have a hearing ear. We should not become discouraged if the results of our efforts are meager. The Heavenly Father is supervising the entire process, which will end when the bride of the Lamb "hath made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7) Let us persevere in doing the Lord's work, confident that God's arrangements are proceeding according to his will. "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"—I Cor. 9:16 ■

# Jesus Observes the Pharisees

Three Parables from Luke 14 and 18

*“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”*  
—*Luke 14:11; 18:14*

**THROUGHOUT JESUS’** earthly ministry, he was observed by the Pharisees and other religious leaders of the Jews. Their motivation for watching the Lord was most often to catch him in violation of some feature of the Mosaic Law, or with the hope of stumbling him in some way—either of which might result in his being condemned as a sinner. As these attempts failed to produce their desired results, and as Jesus’ ministry became more popular among the people, Israel’s leaders increasingly viewed him as a threat to their position. They then sought to show that he was a blasphemer of God—a sin punishable by death under the Law. They finally succeeded in gaining enough false witnesses to carry out this devious plot, and killed “The King of the Jews.”

Just as they had observed him, Jesus took the opportunity during his encounters with the Jewish religious leaders to also observe them. He noted their hypocrisy, pride, and disdain for the common people of the nation. On a number of these occasions, he took the added opportunity to speak parables to those gathered together. These were given typically to a mixed audience—those Pharisees and other leaders who opposed him, as well as his disciples and the multitudes who followed him from place to place, desiring to hear more of his message. This being the case, the parables associated with Jesus' observations of most Pharisees were designed to contrast their character, which had been corrupted by sin, with those righteous qualities God would be pleased to see developed in his chosen people.

Our opening text provides one of the key elements in this contrast, stating that anyone who seeks, by pride, to exalt himself, cannot be used of God until he is humbled—"abased." By distinction, the Master states, one who is of a humble character can be used by God, and upon proper testing and obedience, may be found worthy of being "exalted." This particular contrast—pride versus humility—is one of the central lessons in the three parables we will consider.

## **JESUS ATTENDS A FEAST**

In the opening verses of Luke 14, we are given an account of Jesus' entering the house of one of the chief Pharisees to "eat bread," evidently having been invited to do so. As he entered the abode of the Pharisee, he noted a man who was ill with the "dropsy"—bloating caused by water retention. It

was the Sabbath, and realizing that many were watching to note what he would say and do under the circumstances, Jesus asked whether or not it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day. No one responded, and Jesus performed a miracle which healed the man ill of the dropsy. The Lord then asked, “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?”—Luke 14:1-5

Neither the chief Pharisee, nor anyone in the house, could give Jesus a reasonable answer as to why he should not have healed the sick man on the Sabbath. (vs. 6) All of them were in the home of the Pharisee to eat, thus caring for their physical needs, so why should not Jesus do something for this man which he could not do for himself? The fact that Jesus had been invited to the house might indicate that this Pharisee, unlike most others, was somewhat favorable to the Master. This may be why the account does not record any special controversy over the question of healing the sick on the Sabbath day.

### **PARABLE OF THOSE BIDDEN**

As Jesus lingered in the home of the Pharisee, he observed that the guests were seeking the best or “chief rooms” in the house, without any regard for the host’s planned arrangements for seating. (vs. 7) This circumstance he used as the basis for a parable, recorded in verses 8-11. Using the example of a wedding feast, the parable suggested that if they were invited to such a special event, they should not sit down in the most prominent and honored seats, but wait until they were seated by

the host. This, Jesus explained, could save them and their host much embarrassment.

Jesus reminded those at the Pharisee's house that the host in the parable might well have planned for some important guest to have the more honorable seat which they had taken. If so, he would be obliged to ask them to accept a lower place. How much better it would be, Jesus explained, to take the lower place at the outset. Then, possibly, they might be invited to occupy a more honorable position. In this event, the host would rejoice that he could extend such a favor. The guest would be pleased also, and no one would be embarrassed.

Jesus drew a very practical lesson from this parable, and one that is emphasized throughout the Word of God. Quoting again the words of our opening text, he said, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (vs. 11) It is important to humble ourselves before men, and before our brethren, as shown in the circumstances of this parable. However, it is even more essential that we maintain the proper spirit of humility before God. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—I Pet. 5:6

## **WHOM TO INVITE**

As the dinner at the Pharisee's home progressed, Jesus made a further observation. Looking around him he probably saw that the guests were essentially from the same stratum of society as the host. They were not poor people, nor the sick. Jesus had been included because at the time he was getting much prominence in *(Continued on page 36)*

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*(Continued from page 31)* Israel as a teacher. Perhaps, depending on the purity of his motives, the chief Pharisee who arranged the feast wanted his friends to learn more about this man.

Regardless of the reasons for the selection of the particular guests at this dinner—including Jesus—he took advantage of the situation, using it as a basis for a timely lesson, which he addressed directly to his host. “When thou makest a dinner or a supper,” Jesus said, “call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”—Luke 14:12-14

A beautiful lesson is herein provided. It suggests that our benefactions should be on behalf of those who are not in a position to repay us. Such is a display of the divine quality of love. It was this quality that motivated our Heavenly Father to give his Son to die for the sins of the world. (John 1:29; 3:16) This was a costly gift to bestow, and it was presented on behalf of those—the fallen human race—who are in no position to repay.—Ps. 49:7

Jesus displayed this same quality of unselfish love. Additionally, the only ones who will have the opportunity of being with him in the spiritual phase of the kingdom will be those who are motivated to give their lives for others by the same spirit of unselfish love. Jesus said that these would receive their reward at the “resurrection of the just.” (Luke 14:14) These are the same ones who are

spoken of by Jesus as those who have “done good,” and who will come forth to a “resurrection of life.”—John 5:28,29

The record states that one of the guests in the chief Pharisee’s home who heard this statement by Jesus observed, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” (Luke 14:15) Evidently this man was one of the devout of Israel, and who looked for the kingdom of God. He sensed that what Jesus said about being rewarded in the “resurrection of the just” would have its fulfillment in conjunction with that kingdom, and he evidently understood that this would be a blessed experience for all those who would qualify. He perhaps even entertained the hope of attaining to such a reward himself, through the grace he found to be centered in Christ Jesus.

### **PARABLE OF A GREAT SUPPER**

While still at the home of the Pharisee where he had been invited to take bread, Jesus related another parable pertaining to a feast, recorded in Luke 14:16-24. He told that “a certain man made a great supper, and bade many.” When the supper was ready and the invited guests were summoned to assemble and partake, they began to make excuses to the host’s servant as to why they could not be present. One had bought a piece of ground which he had to inspect. Another had purchased five yoke of oxen that he had to examine. Still another had married a wife and could not attend the feast.—vss. 16-20

The servant reported this situation to his master who, in turn, instructed him to go out into the streets of the city and invite others to come and

partake of the supper which had been prepared. The “poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind” were thus invited. The servant carried out these instructions, and then reported to his master that there was still room at the feast.—Luke 14:21,22

Finally, the servant was instructed to go “out into the highways and hedges, and compel”—that is, constrain or entreat—people to come to the feast, that it might be filled with guests. The master of the house had determined that none of the originally invited guests, who had made excuses for not attending the feast, would later have any opportunity to change their minds. “None of those men . . . shall taste of my supper.”—vss. 23,24

This parable, in a general way, illustrates the outworking of God’s plan for his people during the Gospel Age. The “certain man” of the parable aptly represents the Heavenly Father, who has made a great feast for his people of the present age. This supper pertains to all the good things relative to the spiritual phase of the Messianic kingdom in which the consecrated followers of the Master are invited to share. This feast is symbolically referred to in Revelation as “the marriage supper of the Lamb.”—Rev. 19:7-9

Originally, the whole Jewish nation was the Lord’s chosen people—invited guests who were given the opportunity to partake of this “great supper.” As we know from the Scriptures, however, very few of these responded to the call announcing that the “kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17) For one reason or another, the professed Israelites of Jesus’ day made “excuse,” and were not ready for the opportunity which was then offered to them.

Beginning at Pentecost, another call went out specially to the Jewish people. Quite a number were humble and readily accepted. (Acts 2:41; 4:4) However, still there were not sufficient guests to fill the house as planned by the Lord. Then the call went to the Gentiles, and has continued to do so throughout the entire Gospel Age. In due time the Lord's predetermined number of guests for this feast will be found and made "ready," and the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place.

Following this will be another great feast, during the earthly phase of Messiah's kingdom. The Scriptures describe it as a "feast of fat things" which God has prepared for "all people, . . . fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." It will be then that the Lord will "swallow up death in victory," and "wipe away tears from off all faces."—Isa. 25:6-9

### **PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN**

The third parable of our present consideration is found in Luke 18:9-14. In this account, Luke explains that Jesus spoke this to certain ones who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." (vs. 9) The parable, as related by Jesus, concerned two men who went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other a publican. In his prayer, the Pharisee thanked the Lord that he was not like other men, such as "extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." He then presented his own claims of righteousness to the Lord as a reason for expecting to be heard and have his prayer blessed. The publican, on the other hand, stood "afar off," and would not even lift his eyes toward heaven.

Rather, beating himself upon his breast, he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner."—Luke 18:10-13

Jesus surely chose appropriate examples to illustrate the point of the parable. The Pharisees were indeed a mostly self-righteous group of people. However, this self-righteousness was not pleasing to the Heavenly Father, and it was clearly recognized by Jesus. Near the end of his earthly ministry, we find a series of woes pronounced upon this class by the Lord, and the reasons set forth as to why they were not approved by God. These reasons were, for the most part, their pretensions of righteousness and outward displays of goodness, which were designed to impress the rank and file of the people.—Matt. 23:13-33

The Master was not deceived by these. He knew their real heart condition, and recognized that they were not the sort of people whom the Heavenly Father could use in connection with the work of the new Gospel Age which was about to open. They were to be cast off from the high position of representing the Lord, and Jesus' own humble and true followers were to take their place.—chap. 21:43

Just before presenting this excoriating description of the Pharisees, Jesus gave some wholesome instruction to his disciples. For the time being they were to observe and do what was bidden them by the scribes and Pharisees, for at that time these were still sitting in "Moses' seat." They were to be obedient to the Pharisees, even though they knew that "all their works they do for to be seen of men."—chap. 23:1-7

The disciples, however, were not to copy the example of the scribes and Pharisees. "Be not ye

called Rabbi,” Jesus said to his disciples, “for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” To this Jesus added, “Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”—vss. 8-12

### **THE PUBLICANS**

The publicans of Jesus’ day were in quite a different category, and were looked down upon by the scribes and Pharisees, and even by the Jewish people as a whole. They were mostly tax and toll collectors, working as agents of the Roman government. The Jews resented paying tribute to anyone. The fact that some of their own people were participating in making collections, operating under a system that offered many opportunities to engage in fraud and exploitation, caused the Israelites to look especially upon the publicans as sinners, and even traitors.

However, there were individuals among the publicans who were not happy with their lot. In any group, there are usually individuals who are not in sympathy with the principles for which the majority stand. Nicodemus was a worthy example of this among the Pharisees. (John 3:1) Matthew, chosen by Jesus to be one of his twelve apostles, was a good example with respect to the publicans. The message of John the Baptist appealed to many of the publicans, and they repented of their wrongdoings.—Luke 3:2,3,12,13

Thus, in the parable under discussion Jesus chose a repentant publican to illustrate the true attitude of those who recognize that they are indeed sinners, and who manifest the proper attitude of mind and heart in their desire to seek the Heavenly Father and be assured of his blessing. The publican was a sinner, but the positive fact in his case was that he was sufficiently honest of heart to admit it. His repentance was to such an extent that he cast himself upon the Lord, asking for mercy. It was very much like a criminal who pleads guilty to the charge against him, and looks to the court for mercy and compassion. As far as God was concerned, the Pharisee in the parable was just as guilty as the publican. However, he remained proud of heart, and sought the Lord's blessing upon the basis of his professed righteousness.

Jesus leaves no doubt as to which one of these men in the parable represents those with whom God is pleased. He said, "I tell you, this man [the publican] went down to his house justified rather than the other," and reiterating once again the words of our opening text, that anyone who "exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Luke 18:14

The important lesson here is that in order to be exalted by God and have his blessings bestowed upon us, it is essential to humble ourselves before him. The specific point of humility stressed in the parable is the acknowledgment of sins and recognition of our need of the Lord's mercy. This attitude is essential when we devote ourselves to the Heavenly Father in consecration, and it must be

maintained throughout our walk in the narrow way if we desire to be assured of his continued blessing.

This true spirit of humility is, first of all, before God. If we are sincere in our humility before him we will, in the natural course of events, be humble before the brethren, and all with whom we come in contact. We will not be seeking the chief seats at the feasts, as it were. We will not be endeavoring to promote ourselves among the brethren, nor by displays of professed wisdom seek to draw away disciples after ourselves. We will also steer clear of criticism of others who our sinful flesh might perceive as merely “publicans.” We will remember Jesus’ words that “one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren”—not by our own merit but by his, not by our own righteousness but because of the tender mercy of our Heavenly Father.—Matt. 23:8

## **JUSTIFIED**

Jesus said that the publican in the parable “went down to his house justified.” This is an interesting use of the word “justified.” The Scriptures speak of our being justified by faith, and through the blood of Christ, but neither of these is mentioned in the parable.—Rom. 5:1,2,8,9,18

However, since the parable is based upon situations which existed in Israel at the time of Jesus’ ministry, and prior to his death, we might think of this publican as being in a similar position as those reached by the ministry of John the Baptist. John’s message to the Jewish people was one of repentance and a return to the principles enunciated

in the Mosaic Law. Doing so placed them in a position of having a heart prepared to exercise faith in the blood of Christ when the due time came. Prior to Jesus' death and resurrection they did not receive what Paul described as justification to life, but they did receive the assurance of God's blessing and of his willingness to accept them into the arrangements of the new age once it would begin.

In the lesson pictured by the parable we might think of those represented by the Pharisee as those who, when John the Baptist—and then Jesus—appeared to them, proved unworthy, and were cast off from the special favors of the Gospel age. Similarly, we might regard the publican as denoting those who recognized their sins, and repented. There were many such under the preaching of John the Baptist, and others later as Jesus taught. These were the ones among Israel who were brought into the Gospel Age fold. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, they were given the opportunity of entering into the narrow way and running for the mark of the prize of the High Calling of God, “justified” through the blood of Christ Jesus.

As we strive to fulfill our vows of consecration, let us daily apply the important lessons of these parables to ourselves as followers of the Master. As we have noted, one of these essential principles is that those who seek to exalt themselves shall be abased, and those who humble themselves shall be exalted. Let us, therefore, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he might exalt us in due time! ■

# Sacrifices of Thanksgiving

*“What shall I  
render unto the  
LORD for all his  
benefits toward  
me? . . . I will offer  
to thee the sacrifice  
of thanksgiving,  
and will call upon  
the name of  
the LORD.”*

—*Psalms 116:12,17*

**THE BEST WAY TO LIVE A** life of thanksgiving to God is to lay down our lives in showing forth his praises. When we consider that all we have, and all we hope for, are ours by God’s grace, then we will know that our debt of gratitude calls for nothing less than the devoting of our all to him, no longer living unto ourselves, but unto him. It is this thought that is expressed by David in the words of our opening text. The context of these words conveys a similar sentiment: “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. . . . O LORD, truly I am thy servant, . . . and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds [of Adamic condemnation].”—Ps. 116:13-16

“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the

children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” (Ps. 107:21,22) How clearly does David here associate thanksgiving with the declaring the works of God. This is a very practical arrangement. Had we received special favors from an earthly friend and wanted to show our appreciation by letting others know of his goodness, there would be no better way to do it than to tell of his works—of what he did for us.

The Lord has favored us wonderfully, and bestowed rich blessings upon us. Grand are the promises he has yet to carry out for us, and not only for us, but also for the whole world. To tell of all his works it is necessary to publish the truth of his plan. It is in appreciation of what God has done for us, and because his love calls forth our love in return, that we are to become the “light of the world,” and a “city that is set on a hill [and] cannot be hid.”—Matt. 5:14

## **TRIALS ARE BLESSINGS**

As we count our blessings we should not overlook trials which the Heavenly Father has permitted to come to us. If we had the choice of our own experiences, we might avoid the things which annoy and try us. God in his wisdom, however, sees that we need trials, and in his love permits them. If our wills are resigned to him, then we will be thankful that he is providing for all our needs, even trials that are necessary for the rounding out of our Christian characters.

Some trials may be permitted by God to test our faith and confidence in him. Others are to develop

patience and longsuffering. At times these may be in the form of chastening from the Lord. In all cases, they are permitted by our Heavenly Father who is too wise to err, and too loving to be unkind. Even though he may correct us, it is in love, and our hearts should respond in grateful appreciation for this evidence that he is not withholding necessary experiences.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us, “In every thing give thanks.” (I Thess. 5:18) None but fully consecrated Christians can do this wholeheartedly. These know that nothing can come into their lives except that which is for their good. (Rom. 8:28) They know that they are the children of a loving Heavenly Father who is watching over their every interest. They have the assurance that even the most minute affairs of their lives—illustrated by the hairs of their head—are known by him, and directed according to his wisdom and love.—Matt. 10:30

## **THE LORD GUIDES OUR STEPS**

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD.” (Ps. 37:23) This is a promise which every Christian should apply to himself, and should believe with all his heart. If we are truly thankful for the manner in which the Lord is guiding our lives, we will not try to resist or to go contrary to his will. Instead, with a prayer in our hearts and a song on our lips, we will continue to pay our vows unto him, keeping our sacrifice on the altar until it is wholly consumed.

“He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10) God is trying us as gold is tried. This means that he

puts us through the fires of affliction so that the gold of our character might be refined. How precious is the thought, however, that the Great Refiner tempers the heat. He will not permit us to be tested above what we are able to bear. If he sees that the heat is becoming so intense that we are apt to be injured, he provides a way of escape. (I Cor. 10:13) May this blessed assurance become so thoroughly fixed in our minds and hearts that nothing will be able to disturb our inner peace and rest in him and in his promises.

We have been blessed with the light of the knowledge of God. His wondrous works and the glorious doctrines of his plan have enlightened us. We have a hope for the world and for ourselves. We have the assurance of God's divine care, forgiveness, help, and discipline. All of these evidences convince us of the Heavenly Father's love. We know that he cares, and that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Ps. 84:11

We enjoy this knowledge because "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light." Shall we not then respond with rejoicing, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord and sounding forth his praises throughout the land? Let us thus offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving continually, and "bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."—Ps. 118:27 ■

*"I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart;  
I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.  
I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise  
to thy name, O thou most High."  
—Psalm 9:1,2*

# European Pilgrim Trip Report

**IT WAS THE** privilege of Brother Jonathon and Sister Kathryn Freer to travel to Europe in May and June of this year. They attended the German Pentecost Convention, and visited many brethren in several countries. We are pleased to have them provide this report of their trip to readers of *The Dawn*.

It was a rich blessing for Sister Kathryn and myself to travel together this year to Europe, and to have the privilege of meeting with many brethren. Our travels began in Germany, and over the next thirty-three days we journeyed through seven countries and visited over two hundred brethren. In addition to Germany, we traveled to France, then through Belgium on our way to the Netherlands, back to Germany, then by train to Croatia, and finally to England. In the thirty-three days of our trip we spent thirty-one days in direct contact with brethren. There were many long days, and it was not uncommon to stay up well after midnight discussing the Truth. During the course of our trip, we rode over 2,500 miles by car with Brother Alain

Boulier, our driver and brother in Christ. This enabled us to meet with more brethren and spend more time with them than would have otherwise been possible.

## **CONVENTION IN GERMANY**

Our first stop in Germany was in Bruchhausen, where we stayed with Brother Samuel and Sister Annick Stalder. The following day we traveled together to Korbach for the German Pentecost Convention. I had the privilege of attending the same convention two years ago, and at that time there were about eighty brethren in attendance. This year over one hundred were there. This increase was due to 15-20 more Polish brethren



Korbach, Germany Convention

than were there two years ago, as well as a number of brethren from India, who are now living and working in Germany. It was a wonderful convention with many wonderful blessings, fellowship, and spiritual food.

While at the Korbach convention I had the privilege of attending a German Dawn Committee meeting. The German brethren are very busy in witness activities. They have recently completed a

reprinting of Volume I of *Studies in the Scriptures* in German, and are now working on other volumes to be printed in the near future. They continue the printing of Dawn booklets for their witness activities, and are very busy in their local communities.

## THE BRETHREN IN FRANCE



Soultz and Staffelden, France Class

Following the three day convention at Korbach we departed with Brother Alain Boulier for the southern part of France. After a six hour drive we arrived at Brother Regis and Sister Christine Liberda's home. We spent two days with the brethren in this area. There were many discussions, including topics such as: how we know we have the Truth; the New Creature; present conditions in the world; and the coming kingdom. While there we had the privilege of meeting with and serving brethren at two ecclesias—the Soultz and Staffelfelden classes. A total of thirty-two brethren attended these meetings.

We then traveled to northern France and stayed in the home of Brother Jean and Sister Francoise Siwak. While there we served the Arenberg class, at which twenty-five brethren were in attendance. After the service, we engaged in much spiritual conversation with the brethren, including a discussion concerning Brother Russell and his writings.



Arenberg, France Class

At the Arenberg meeting, there were a number of brethren “tuning in” by computer. Two of these were from the Netherlands—Brother Egbert and Sister Evelyn Van Tuyl. Brother Egbert is relatively new to the Truth. He had questions about the brethren throughout the world, and also inquired as to what aspects of the Truth are important for us to study. During our conversation we learned that we would be driving near the area in which he and his wife live, and it might be possible to stop and see them. They were both excited as we told him we would work that into our plans and come for a visit in a few days.

After our visit with the Arenberg class we drove to Brother Bernard and Sister Michele Boulier’s home in Osny, France. We were with them for three days and had the opportunity to meet with a number of brethren in that area. While there we met with Brother Alain’s son, Jean Luc, and also visited Brother Natanel and Sister Amandine Tudryn in Nucourt. We also had the privilege of meeting with Sister Helene Boulier. We visited Brother Paul and

Sister Jadwiga Brychcy in Ognon, and had the privilege of serving the Lamorlaye, France class, with fifteen brethren in attendance.



Lamorlaye, France Class

As is common around the world when visiting brethren, those in France had many questions regarding the Truth. We talked about the minor prophets and their devotion to God, and how their experiences picture many of our own. We discussed the development of the New Creature, and raised the question: What is the reason for the hope within you? We had plenty of sweet fellowship, and sharing the experiences of our dear brethren around the world.

Other brethren we had opportunity to have fellowship with while in France were: Sister Virginie, Brother Victor, and Sister Julia Boulier, Brother David Sutryk, Brother Dominique and Sister Debbie Desmettre, and Brother Slavic Iachim. We greatly appreciated and enjoyed the hospitality of all our French brethren, and the abundance of delicious

French food. With a measure of sadness, but also great joy for so many blessings received, we departed our brethren in France.

### **OUR NETHERLANDS VISIT**

Leaving France, we then headed to the Netherlands. There we met with Sister Evelyn and Brother Egbert Van Tuyl, and had a wonderful visit with them. Sister Evelyn has been in the Truth for many years, and Brother Egbert has recently shown a great interest. He has been having phone studies with the Liberdas in Mulhouse, France, and with the Siwaks in Arenberg, France. He is very enthusiastic about the Truth and has been reading and studying everything he can get his hands on. His wife, Sister Evelyn, is a great resource, and has most of Brother Russell's writings and other Truth material.

Brother Egbert is also very interested in witnessing in the Netherlands and expressed an interest in translating Dawn literature for use in that work. We assured him that we would look into this matter and determine what can be done to support his efforts in the Lord's vineyard. After a nice dinner prepared by Brother Egbert, we departed to Hamburg, Germany.

### **MORE TIME IN GERMANY**

Over the next eight days we made three stops in Germany. In Hamburg, we stayed with Brother Hubert and Sister Ruth Lipka. We were in their home for three days and had continuous studies and fellowship each day. While in Hamburg we also met with Hubert and Ruth's daughter and son-in-law, Sister Esther and Brother Krzystof Magiera,

Sister Eva Hensel, Brother Gunter Haase, Sister Erika Langer, and Sister Heidrun Allera. Each day we met for many hours, and discussed numerous topics. Some of those considered were: the thousand-year kingdom; the role of the church; the New Creature; minor prophets; covenants; the Tabernacle; the church's share in the sin offering; and the importance of character development.

The brethren in Hamburg, and throughout Europe, are very interested in what the brethren are doing in the United States. Over the years, many of them have traveled to the United States and have friends they want to know about. Everywhere Sister Kathryn and I visited, there was a deep interest in our brethren of "like precious faith." It is not possible to list all the blessings we had during our three-day visit in Hamburg, but the discussions and fellowship seemed to be endless, and we considered it a great privilege to participate in them.



Hamburg, Germany Class



The Kotoulas Family

Our next stop was Dortmund, Germany, where we stayed in the home of Brother Johannes and Sister Uschi Kotoulas. While in Dortmund we met at the home of Brother Lutz and Sister Ellena Ruthman, their daughter Monika, and son-in-law Arndt. We discussed the “end times” and events leading up to the kingdom, including the nation of Israel and their role in the outworking of God’s arrangements. In addition, we talked about character development and the importance of putting on the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. In Dortmund, we also met with Sister Dorchen Kotoulas, Brother Charles Thomson, and Brother Sven and Sister Christine Kruse, and had an opportunity to spend additional time with the Stalders, with whom we had stayed upon our initial arrival in Europe.

After two days, we departed Dortmund for Ober-Ramstadt, where we stayed with Brother Stefan and Sister Wiebka Thieme. We spent a day with them and their two children, David and Aliya, and visited Heidelberg. Later in the week we served

the Ludwigshafen class, with twenty-three brethren in attendance. The class served us lunch, and we had lots of fellowship and continued discussions on Truth subjects, including: God's plan for mankind, character development, Israel, and the minor prophets. We greatly appreciated all our time in Germany, the privilege of meeting with so many of the brethren there, and of seeing their zeal for the Truth.



Ludwigshafen, Germany Class

## **WONDERFUL TIME IN CROATIA**

We left Germany by train and traveled to Sisak, Croatia, where we met with Brother Miroslav Djurak and the small class he attends. While there, I worked with Brother Miro in an attempt to help him get a visa for travel to the United States. He spends most of his time doing witness work in Croatia, and has had good results. The other two members of his small class are a result of his witness activities. Brother Miro would like to come to the United States and spend some time at the Dawn, reviewing various witness activities which he may be able to then utilize back in Croatia. Unfortunately, the United States is not willing to give him a visa at this time. This has not lessened his desire to serve the Lord, however, and he continues to spread the message of Truth in the country of Croatia.

Prior to our leaving the United States, Brother Miro had informed us that the two brethren he meets with expressed the desire to symbolize their consecration. What a wonderful blessing and privilege it was to take part in the planning of this joyous event. Sister Kathryn made baptismal robes, which we sent to Brother Miro. When we arrived, we made arrangements at a hotel with an indoor pool where we could conduct the immersions. We spent four days with Brother Miro, Brother Danijel and Sister Ines Odrčić, and had many studies relating to consecration. As is often the case, both Brother Danijel and Sister Ines expressed feelings of unworthiness. We assured them that this is a typical response, and stressed the importance of trusting in the Lord for his guidance and direction in their lives.

Brother Miro planned the baptismal service. He picked out appropriate hymns, and the service included a baptismal discourse, fellowship, the immersion service, and a testimony meeting. This was all followed by a traditional Croatian meal and more fellowship. What a wonderful day this was



Croatian Brethren



Croatian Immersion Service

with our brethren! Sister Kathryn and I were truly blessed by this special privilege. After four wonderful and busy days in Croatia, Sister Kathryn and I left our dear brethren there to fly to London.

### **ENGLAND—OUR FINAL STOP**

We were met at Heathrow airport by Brother Martin Powell and Brother Fred Binns, and then traveled to the Binns' home in Chesham, England. Over the next eight days we traveled by car to visit many brethren. In our journeys we met with Brothers Redvers Green, Martin Sarfas, Nicholas Charcharos, and Sisters Rosemarie Ansel, Margaret Willey, Joan



Fred and Ivy Binns with Martin Powell



West Wickham, England Class

Charcharos, Irene Webb, Maureen Keeble, Mary Lightfoot, and Gwendoline Evans. We also met with Brother Donald and Sister Edna Holliday, and had the privilege of serving the West Wickham class, with eleven in attendance.

There were many topics discussed in our visits with the brethren in England. Some of these included studies in the Old Testament books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. We talked about the nation of Israel and their experiences in the wilderness, culminating with their crossing over the



Donald and Edna Holliday

River Jordan into the land of promise. As in our previous stops, there were discussions concerning character development and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. We also considered lessons from Paul's writings in the books of Romans and Hebrews.

After spending these final eight days with our brethren in Europe, Sister Kathryn and I, with mixed joy and sadness, boarded our plane for the



English Brethren

trip home. We both can testify that it was truly a wonderful blessing to spend time with our brethren in other lands. How precious they are to us! It is impossible to describe with words the love and affection of all these brethren which was showered upon us, and the lovingkindness and hospitality shown us at every place. Our trip was a tremendous blessing, and how sweet it was to dwell together in unity with our spiritual family in the Lord. We pray that the Heavenly Father will continue to bless all these brethren, and that he will continue to keep them, and us, in the palm of his hand. ■

## SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

### **O. B. Elbert**

Toronto, ON November 28,29

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

### **E. Blicharz**

Atlanta, GA November 8

### **B. Montague**

New Haven, CT November 1

### **L. Griehs**

New Haven, CT November 1

### **P. Mora**

Delaware Valley, PA  
November 15

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*I will sing the wondrous story  
of the Christ who died for me,  
How he left his home in glory  
for the cross of Calvary.*

*I was lost, but Jesus found me,  
found the sheep that went astray,  
Threw his loving arms around me,  
drew me back into his way.*

*He will keep me till the river  
rolls its waters at my feet;  
Then he'll bear me safely over,  
where the loved ones I shall meet.*

*Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story  
of the Christ who died for me,  
Sing it with the saints in glory  
gathered by the crystal sea.  
—Hymns of Dawn*

# 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.*

**NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 1**—Westwoods Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793 or E-mail: annasuraci@comcast.net

**PHOENIX CONVENTION, November 15**—Boys and Girls Club of Scottsdale, 10515 E. Lakeview Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85258. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone: (480) 226-9076 or E-mail: christyscastles@gmail.com

**CHICAGO CONVENTION, January 1-3, 2016**—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact A. Schneider. Phone: (847) 533-1874 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

**PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 16-18, 2016**—Drury Inn - Happy Valley, 2335 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone: (480) 226-9076 or Email: christyscastles@gmail.com

**LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 31, 2016**—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

**SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 12-14, 2016**—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact K. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 967-0635 or Email: winnerwear@aol.com

**FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 5-7, 2016**—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32822. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify

“Florida Bible Students” to receive special rate through February 25. Other information, contact R. Sconyers. Phone: (407) 923-8067 or Email: rsguitarman59@gmail.com

**ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 25-27, 2016**—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 16,17, 2016**—Quality Inn of Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48003. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

**METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, April 30-May 1, 2016**—Brighton Community Center, 555 Brighton Street, Brighton, MI 48114. Contact J. Kienast. Phone: (248) 496-5611 or Email: jenkienast@gmail.com

*How sweet to leave the world awhile,  
And seek the presence of our Lord!  
Dear Savior, on thy people smile;  
Draw near according to thy Word.  
From busy scenes we now retreat,  
That we may here converse with thee.  
O Lord, behold us at thy feet;  
Let this the gate of heaven be.  
Chief of ten thousand, now appear,  
That we by faith may see thy face.  
O speak, that we thy voice may hear,  
And let thy presence fill this place.  
—Hymns of Dawn*