

# The DAWN

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# God's Plan for Peace and Good Will

***“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 2:13,14***

**IN VIEW OF THE TWENTY** centuries of failure to establish peace on earth, as spoken of in our theme text, we might conclude that the angels' message has no vital meaning for us today. We believe such is not the case, but that many have not understood the manner in which God planned for the promise of the angels to be fulfilled. The world in general has assumed that peace was to be established through the instrumentality of various governmental, economic, social, and religious systems established by fallen man. God's plan, however, calls for the establishment of a new world order to accomplish this, with a government in the hands—on the “shoulder”—of “The Prince of Peace.”—Isa. 9:6

This prophecy relating to the birth of Jesus foretold that “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (vs. 7) However, Jesus did not expect that “peace on earth” would be the immediate result of his ministry, nor of the ministry of his disciples. Jesus said to his disciples, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”—Matt. 10:34

This does not mean that Jesus considered himself to be a promoter of strife and war, for he was not. The context reveals that the strife Jesus mentioned would be within one’s own family, and among friends and associates. He said, “I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”—Matt. 10:35-39

From this it is clear that the strife engendered by Jesus would be due to the unacceptableness of his teachings and way of life to those not specially drawn to him by his Heavenly Father. His own disciples, loyal to his teachings, standing for them and proclaiming them, would arouse the enmity of the world around them. They would be opposed and misrepresented by many—perhaps those formerly their friends, close associates, or even various

members of their own families. Thus the disciples of Christ were to find that often their greatest foes would be those of their “own household,” even as he plainly stated would be the case.

In this respect, we notice the experience of Jesus himself, “for neither did his brethren believe in him.” (John 7:5) The whole nation of Israel were the brethren of Jesus. He presented himself and came to “his own, and his own received him not.” (chap. 1:11) Not only did Jesus’ own people reject him, but under the leadership of their religious leaders they persecuted and finally killed him. Jesus explained to his disciples that they could not expect to receive any different treatment. He said, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”—Matt. 10:24,25

In view of Jesus’ own experience in being put to death, and the fact that his followers should not expect to receive more favorable treatment than he, it is evident that he did not expect the immediate establishment of his kingdom authority and power throughout the earth. Instead, the way of the disciples was to be the way of the cross—the way of persecution and finally of death. This does not mean the abandonment of kingdom hopes by Jesus, nor by his footstep followers. It is simply that the kingdom of Messiah, and the consequent “peace on earth” which it would bring, was to come later. The promise is that if we “suffer [with Christ], we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:12

## NOT OF THIS WORLD

The enemies of Jesus, powerless themselves to impose the death sentence, hailed Jesus before Pilate and accused him of claiming to be a king. If this were true, Pilate, under Roman law, would be obliged to order the Master's crucifixion. However, Pilate was not satisfied that Jesus' enemies were telling the truth, so he asked Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" To this Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."—John 18:33,36

In this statement by Jesus, it is the Greek word *kosmos* that is translated "world." The word *kosmos* means order or arrangement. Jesus was explaining that his kingdom, or government, was not to stem from the efforts of men, as were the kingdoms of this present order—*kosmos*. The "world" referred to by Jesus began with the drying up of the Flood, and in the more than two thousand years from then until his First Advent, the sword had been depended upon to establish and maintain governmental authority. This had been true to a large extent even in the case of Israel, for the possession and control of Canaan had been accomplished by Israel's army.

No doubt Pilate was well acquainted with the history of the great empires which had preceded Rome, such as Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. He would know that each of these rose to their positions of power through their military might. He knew that this was also true of Rome. So when Jesus stated that his kingdom was not of this

world, and explained that if it were, then would his soldiers fight, Pilate knew that here was a case quite outside of his jurisdiction.

Jesus, indeed, was a king. Being further questioned on this matter, he said to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (John 18:37) Pilate did not know what Jesus meant by "the truth," but he had been convinced that this man, so hated by the Jews who wanted him put to death, had no intention of using military power to overthrow the Roman government. He said to Jesus' accusers, "I find in him no fault at all."—vs. 38

### **"WILT THOU AT THIS TIME?"**

Jesus' own disciples did not then understand why they were not permitted to defend him and prevent his crucifixion. Even after their Master was raised from the dead, and they had enjoyed a number of precious visits with him, they were still wondering about his kingdom, and the position they hoped to have in that kingdom. On the last of his appearances, they asked Jesus, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—Acts 1:6

We cannot be sure what the disciples had in mind when they asked this question. Shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus had related a parable in which he represented himself as a certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, and to return. (Luke 19:11,12) The disciples knew that Jesus had left them for a time. They may have thought that death was that "far country" to which

he had gone, and that now he had returned. Thus, they asked the question, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

It was natural that the disciples should associate the kingdom hope with the restoration of Israel’s independence as a nation. They were familiar with the promise which God made to David concerning his throne that it was to be an everlasting kingdom. (II Sam. 7:16) This kingdom was “overturned” in the days of their last king, Zedekiah. (Ezek. 21:25-27) However, Isaiah’s prophecy of Jesus’ birth gave assurance that he, as “The Prince of Peace,” would reestablish it. The prophecy reads, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”—Isa. 9:7

In the announcement to Mary, the angel said, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”—Luke 1:28-33

The disciples of Jesus also knew of this declaration to Mary by the angel. In accepting and following

Jesus as the Messiah, they would naturally expect him to reestablish a government in Jerusalem and, as they mentioned to Jesus, “restore again the kingdom to Israel.” Jesus did not explain to his disciples that the restored kingdom of David would be vastly superior to the original and typical kingdom. He simply said at the time that it was not for them to know “the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”—Acts 1:7

The Messianic cause, however, was far from dead. There was a great work to be done in connection with it. Jesus explained to his disciples that they were to wait in Jerusalem until they received the power of the Holy Spirit. They were to become his witnesses “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (vs. 8) Having given them this commission, Jesus left his disciples, and returned to the heavenly courts, the “far country” to which his earlier parable referred. Not until the due time for his return was he to exercise governmental authority in the earth.

## **THE WORK OF THIS AGE**

Jesus’ commission to his disciples just before leaving them was in reality a brief outline of the work during this Gospel Age. This was to be a preparatory work for the kingdom. The proclamation of the Gospel by the disciples of Jesus would serve to gather from all nations a “little flock” consisting of those who would be willing to suffer and to die with him, that they might live and reign with him in his kingdom.

Neither Jesus nor his apostles ever gave any indication that dedicated believers were to participate



in the fallen human governments of this world. Nevertheless, soon after the apostles fell asleep in death, much of Christianity began to lose perspective as to the present work to be done by the followers of Christ. They came to believe that it was their task to convert the world by their preaching, including the use of the powers of civil government to do so. By this means, they thought to establish the foretold “peace on earth.” Since this effort was not authorized by the Lord, and therefore not blessed by him, it failed, as clearly testified by the events of the past twenty centuries.

Even today, sincere men and women still look to the governments of their respective countries to establish peace. For this reason, they do what they can to influence lawmakers to establish what they consider to be just laws. They condemn governmental actions with which they do not agree, and praise those which they believe will contribute to righteousness and peace. As fresh leaders appear on the scene, many profess the cherished hope of “peace on earth,” even though the close of each decade, and each century, finds the nations of earth at greater odds with one another than ever before. Thus the “falling away” from “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), continues to blight and darken the viewpoints of most Christians.

This is true also from year to year, which is why the situation at the close of 2013 is, for the most part, disheartening to all except those who understand the plan of God and are being guided by the promises and prophecies of his Holy Word. These know that the promised “peace on earth” was not to be established through human efforts. They

believe what Jesus said to Pilate, that his kingdom was not of this world—this order of things. Thankfully, fallen human systems have nothing to do with its establishment, nor can they delay its coming even for a day.

## **THROUGH THE RESURRECTION**

Jesus' enemies, stirred to action against him by the great Adversary, Satan, doubtless thought that they had made a complete end of him when they succeeded in bringing about his crucifixion. If so, they did not take God's power into consideration, the power which on the "third day" raised earth's eventual and rightful King from the dead. (Acts 10:40) Certainly nothing can interfere with plans which are implemented by such miracle-working power.

To Israelites in a synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul said concerning Jesus' resurrection, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."—chap. 13:32-34

When God made his promise to David, assuring him that his kingdom would be a throne which would be established forever, he said, through Nathan the prophet, "My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee." (II Sam. 7:15) Many of the royal

descendants of David were far from worthy of continuing the Davidic throne, but God extended his mercy to them. Even when Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, was taken prisoner to Babylon, the “throne” was not destroyed, but merely “overturned” until he came whose right it was, and it would be given to him.—Ezek. 21:25-27

The prophecy of Isaiah 9:6,7, and the declaration of the angel to Mary (Luke 1:32), prove that Jesus is the one “whose right it is” to inherit the fulfillment of the promise God made to David. However, Jesus was put to death. He was “cut off out of the land of the living,” and there was none to “declare his generation.” (Isa. 53:8) He had no descendants to inherit the throne which belonged to him. Ordinarily, this would have meant that the promise to David had failed, that Satan had interfered with the outworking of God’s plan, but the angel had said to Mary, “With God nothing shall be impossible.” (Luke 1:37) This was true in connection with Jesus’ birth, and now it was true again in connection with his death, for the power of God raised him from the dead, thus making sure the fulfillment of the promise to David.

This promise, or covenant, is referred to in the Scriptures as “the sure mercies of David.” (Isa. 55:3; Acts 13:34) Jesus, personally, did not need to have mercy extended toward him, for he was sinless, and kept perfectly the righteous laws of God. However, by his own voluntary act he was slain for the sins of others. Strict justice alone did not demand that Jesus be raised from the dead, but divine mercy and love provided his being raised up to “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7)

From this standpoint, Jesus' resurrection was a further manifestation of the exercise of "the sure mercies of David," that there might be a King to sit upon his throne forever.

While God's promises, and the prophecies, emphasize that the Messiah was to be an individual, and point to Jesus as that great future King whom the God of Israel sent, it is also made clear in both the Old and New Testaments that he would have associates. One of these prophecies is Isaiah 55:3: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." This covenant had already been made with David, and here the Lord is saying that those of Israel who came unto him in obedience would be included in this covenant.

The next verses of this prophecy read, "Behold, I have given him [Jesus] for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." (vss. 4,5) In the New Testament Jesus, the "leader and commander" mentioned in this prophecy, clarifies its meaning for us. Speaking to Israel shortly before he was crucified, Jesus said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."—Matt. 21:43

Peter identifies this new nation, the nation Isaiah said the people of his day knew not. After referring to those who were disobedient and who rejected Jesus, Peter said, "Ye are a chosen generation,

a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises [*Marginal Translation: virtues*] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”—I Pet. 2:9,10

It is important to realize that many promises to the Israelites will yet be fulfilled on their behalf. Those, however, which pertained to them, as a nation, being associate rulers with the Messiah in the heavenly phase of his kingdom, were forfeited because of their unfaithfulness and rejection of Jesus. This is why Jesus said that the kingdom—that is, the right to joint-heirship with him as heavenly rulers in the kingdom—would be taken from them and given to another nation. As Peter explains, this new holy nation is made up of a people who in times past were not “a people,” but who are now “the people of God.”

## **INDIVIDUAL FAITHFULNESS**

The expression, “a people,” implies an aggregation of people who are looked upon as belonging together as a unit, such as a nation, or nationality. Peter explains that God’s new Messianic nation was not previously such a group, such a body of people. It could not previously be identified as a nation, but is made up of those who are called of God as individuals and brought together under their “leader and commander,” Jesus, and bound together by the Holy Spirit.

The creating of this new nation to which the kingdom is given is brought about, so far as our

part in the work of the Lord is concerned, by the preaching of the Gospel, in obedience to the commission Jesus gave to his disciples. It is the work of the Lord's people to be witnesses for Jesus by proclaiming the good news of the kingdom that is centered in him. It is God, however, who directs the message into the hearts of those whom he draws to Christ and himself. Those exercised to the point of fully consecrating their lives to do God's will, he invites to follow in the Master's footsteps—to prove their worthiness to be a part of the new nation which will be the instrument of blessing to all mankind.

With the followers of Jesus, even as with him, their worthiness of being rulers in the Messianic kingdom is proved by faithfully laying down their lives in the divine service. Paul was one of these faithful ones, and shortly before his execution in Rome, he wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Tim. 4:7,8) Paul makes it clear that he did not expect to receive his "crown" until the end of the age when the Lord would return to establish his kingdom. He knew also that all who, like himself, followed in the footsteps of Jesus, fighting "the good fight of faith" even unto death, would also at that time be exalted to live and reign with Christ.—I Tim. 6:12; Rev. 2:10; 20:6

Meanwhile, and throughout the entire Gospel Age, these dedicated followers of Jesus, on finishing their sacrificial course, have gone into death. They

could not be reigning kings in the Messianic kingdom unless awakened from the sleep of death. Here again we are reminded that nothing is impossible with God. He is abundantly able to fulfill that wonderful prophecy of Revelation 20:6, that the followers of Jesus will live and reign with him a thousand years.

These, in association with Jesus on the divine plane of life, will then constitute God's ruling family of sons, the "mountain [kingdom] of the LORD'S house" which "shall be established in the top of the mountains," ruling and judging righteously over the peoples of the whole earth. "And all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Isa. 2:2-4

The establishment of Messiah's kingdom as portrayed by Isaiah will be accomplished in God's due time. There will be no delay, no tarrying of God's plan. The fact that at the close of 2013 the nations are not beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks, does not mean that God's assurance of ultimate peace on earth, as promised to the shepherds over two thousand years ago, has failed. Indeed, the only failure has been man's general lack of understanding

God's great kingdom plan for peace. We rejoice that this lack of understanding does not interfere with the plan itself. Those to whom at this time the "mysteries of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:11), have been revealed have great cause for rejoicing, for they recognize in the world around them clear indications that Messiah's kingdom is at the door. These, instead of being filled with fear, as so many are, lift up their heads with confidence and rejoicing, knowing that their deliverance, and the deliverance of the whole world from sin and death, is near.—Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 21:26-31

These know that soon there will be peace on earth. They know that God's good will toward men, as expressed in the gift of his Son as their Redeemer, will continue to be manifest in the blessings of health and life which will reach all mankind through the agencies of the kingdom. They know also that through the merit of the shed blood of the Redeemer, all who believe and obey the laws of the new kingdom will be restored to harmony with the Creator and be his earthly sons. Thus there will be peace between God and men, which will mean genuine and lasting "peace" and "good will" among men. ■

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## ***Coming By and By***

*A better day is coming, a morning promised long,  
When truth and right, with holy might, shall over-  
throw the wrong;  
When Christ the Lord will listen to every plaintive  
sigh,  
And stretch His hand o'er sea and land, with justice  
by and by.*

*The boast of haughty tyrants no more shall fill the air,  
But age and youth shall love the truth and speed it  
everywhere.  
No more from want and sorrow shall come the  
hopeless cry,  
But war shall cease, and perfect peace will flourish  
by and by.*

*The tidal wave is coming, the Year of Jubilee;  
With shout and song it sweeps along, like billows of  
the sea,  
The jubilee of nations shall ring through earth and  
sky;  
The dawn of grace draws on apace—'tis coming by  
and by.*

*O! for that glorious dawning we watch and wait and  
pray,  
Till o'er the height the morning light shall drive the  
gloom away;  
And when the heavenly glory shall flood the earth  
and sky,  
We'll bless the Lord for all His works and praise  
Him by and by.*

*—Poems of Dawn*

# Jesus' Birth Foretold

***Key Verse: “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.”***

***—Luke 1:31***

***Selected Scripture:***

***Luke 1:26-40***

her part in the birth of the promised Messiah, but in the moment of this declaration the many prophecies related to this long-awaited birth were no doubt obscured to her vision. Luke declares that the people at this time “were in expectation” of the appearance of “the Christ” (Luke 3:15), who would return Israel back to prominence in the world. The Prophet Daniel had described the timing of this expectation (Dan. 9:24), and thus the stage was set for his birth. Based on this expectation, all new Jewish mothers might have wondered in their hearts whether their child might be the promised one.

Mary's humility and loving character no doubt weighed heavily on her choice as the chosen one to bear this miraculous child, but she also fulfilled a special prophecy. The Prophet Isaiah describes what many might consider a strange requirement for the mother of the promised Messiah: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isa. 7:14) This prophecy, along with Luke's testimony that

## **THE RECORD OF THE**

angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary as recorded in our Selected Scripture is a remarkable one. It is little wonder that her response was one of humility and disbelief. Why would God bless her among all the women of Israel?

Mary would eventually better understand the magnitude of

Mary was still “a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph” would be yet another proof that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.—Luke 1:27

Isaiah also spoke of the future effect this birth would have on the world of mankind. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:6,7

The future government of God’s kingdom will be upon the shoulders of this offspring of Mary, the Son of God—the glorified Jesus. He shall sit upon the throne of David to bring blessings to the world according to the promise given to Abraham and repeated many times by Israel’s prophets. His kingdom will be a righteous one and will last forever. The Prophet Micah describes the world’s eagerness to embrace this kingdom once it is established: “In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Mic. 4:1,2

In this beautiful picture of God’s promised kingdom on earth, we see the full impact of the importance of the prophetically foretold birth of Jesus. The world has yet to understand these enthusiastic words of many Hebrew prophets. In due time, however, the appreciation of all the details surrounding the birth of Jesus will be known by all mankind. ■

# Mary's Song of Praise

**Key Verse:** *“Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”*  
—*Luke 1:46,47*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Luke 1:46-56*

God to be the mother of Jesus according to the flesh would also testify to her nobility of character and purity of heart. To go further, however, and assert, as some have, that Mary herself was miraculously conceived and born free from sin, is not scripturally supported and a mistaken thought entirely.

Our Key Verse shows a loving heart in full harmony with God, and it is noteworthy to see how Mary came to such a faithful state. In response to Mary's troubled mind at the message that she was highly favored and blessed among women, the angel Gabriel reassured her in three ways. First, Gabriel reminded her of the many prophecies relating to the promised birth of Jesus. Being well versed in the Scriptures, Mary likely recalled the words of Isaiah 7:14: “The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Second, Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit—God's power—would accomplish this miracle. He said, “The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” (Luke

**MARY'S EXAMPLE OF** faithfulness and obedience to God's instruction speaks loudly to her character. The Scriptures indicate to us that both Mary and Joseph were pious people, as demonstrated in their annual trips to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. (Luke 2:41) The fact that Mary was chosen by

1:35) Perhaps this brought to her mind Exodus 40:34-38, in which God promised to overshadow the Tabernacle in the wilderness with the pillars of a cloud and of fire. To an Israelite such as Mary, it was comforting to believe that God would hover above her like an eagle over its nest with wings outspread, protecting, providing, and helping. Considering the many miracles God had performed on behalf of his people no doubt soothed Mary's troubled mind in this time of need.

Third, Gabriel told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth was also about to bear a son. Elizabeth had been barren, but had now conceived "in her old age." (Luke 1:36) This additional miracle was enough to convince Mary that God was indeed able to perform whatever he wanted, as Gabriel declared, "With God nothing shall be impossible." (vs. 37) Mary might have also recalled Isaiah's words corroborating the words of Gabriel: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isa. 55:11

After hearing these reassurances and proofs from the angel Gabriel, Mary put the entire matter into the Lord's hands with these beautiful words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." (Luke 1:38) This loving and complete acceptance of God's will is reminiscent of that which Hannah expressed concerning the miraculous birth of her son, Samuel: "Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."—I Sam. 2:1,2

Let us be as faithful as Mary, knowing the prophecies concerning the call of the church, and remembering the begetting of God's called ones as sons of God. Let us remember that God will accomplish in us what he desires—the development of a bride for his Son, Christ Jesus. ■

# Zacharias Prophecies about his Son, John

**Key Verse:** *“Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.”*  
—**Luke 1:76,77**

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Luke 1:57,58,67-79**

well stricken in years.” (vs. 7) Nevertheless, this righteous couple was specially chosen by God to have a son who would be used in the Lord’s service. Zacharias, however, questioned the news delivered by the angel Gabriel. (vs. 18) As a result of this doubt, Zacharias had his speech taken away. (vss. 19,20) It was not until their son was born and Zacharias asked for a writing table to agree with his wife that their son’s name would be John that he had his speech restored.—vss. 59-64

**JESUS STATED, AS RE-**corded in Luke 7:28, “Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.” Thirty years earlier, John’s father, Zacharias, had prophesied about his son with the words of our Selected Scripture.

Zacharias was a priest of Israel, and the Scriptures say he and his wife, Elisabeth, “were both righteous before God.” (Luke 1:6) We also read about them that “they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.” (vs. 7) Nevertheless, this righteous couple was specially chosen by God to have a son who would be used in the Lord’s service. Zacharias, however, questioned the news delivered by the angel Gabriel. (vs. 18) As a result of this doubt, Zacharias had his speech taken away. (vss. 19,20) It was not until their son was born and Zacharias asked for a writing table to agree with his wife that their son’s name would be John that he had his speech restored.—vss. 59-64

Zacharias immediately used his newly regained voice

to prophesy how his son would be used by God to return favor to Israel and eventually the entire human family. The prophecy begins with words of praise to God: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." (Luke 1:68) These words are similar to the opening words in the model prayer Jesus gave to his disciples when they asked how they should pray as John had taught his disciples: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (chap. 11:1,2) The similarity of these two accounts should impress upon our minds that prayers should always begin by giving praise and reverence to our Heavenly Father. His ways are higher than our ways, and his love greater than our love. This should be remembered each time we approach God in prayer.

Peter tells us that prophets of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (II Pet. 1:21) Since prophets often spoke as if their messages were already accomplished, so Zacharias declared that God "hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." (Luke 1:69) John was born six months before Jesus, so it follows that the begetting of Jesus as a human had already taken place at the time of these words. Thus the prophecy had already begun, but had not yet been completed. Zacharias reminded his Israelite audience that God had made a covenant with them to protect them from their enemies as well as to provide mercy in their times of need. That mercy had now brought to them the soon arrival of the "horn of salvation," or Messiah, for which they had been waiting, and John would be used to announce the arrival. "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."—vss. 76-79 ■

# Jesus is Born

***Key Verse: “She brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”  
—Luke 2:7***

***Selected Scripture:  
Luke 2:1-17***

## **THE STORY OF THE BIRTH**

of Jesus is undoubtedly the most recognizable one of the Bible. During this time each year, the world acknowledges the birth of its Redeemer with nativity scenes, greeting cards, and gift giving. Yet, the impact of that birth is not fully understood by mankind. The time of the birth is incorrect, and it has been commercialized for merchandising profits. In spite of this, many people are a little more polite, a

little more patient, a little more joyous and giving at this time. We are all reminded to remember the “reason for the season.” For us, Christmas should also be a special season to rejoice in the gift of God’s Son as the ransom price for Adam and the human race (John 3:16,17), and a time to be a witness of God’s direction of this great event.

Prophets had foretold this birth would produce a great leader to rule forever under a righteous government, and that this chosen one would be born in Bethlehem, the City of David. (Isa. 9:6,7; Mic. 5:2) At the time, the Roman government decreed that each person must return to their city of origin to be taxed. This meant that Joseph and Mary were required to return to Bethlehem, as both were of the lineage of David. (Luke 2:1-3) How reassuring to see that God could use even the Roman Empire to direct Joseph and Mary to the exact place the Scriptures



had declared that Messiah would be born. Bethlehem means “house of bread.” How fitting that this name is attached to our Savior. During his ministry, Jesus would tell his followers, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven”—the bread that would bring life to all in the coming kingdom.—John 6:51

At the time Jesus was born, we are told shepherds were abiding in the surrounding fields tending their sheep. (Luke 2:8) It was to these lowly, humble men that the angel of the Lord announced the birth of Christ, saying, “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.” (vss. 10,11) So it is during this age that the Lord has been quietly calling the lowly and base things of the world, instead of the noble, to be his children. (I Cor. 1:26-29) This is an indication of the character God requires of those who will make up the Bride of Christ.

We note especially the message of hope delivered by the angel of the Lord, “I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” The Gospel of Christ which we proclaim literally means “good news or tidings.” All the prophecies and messages of the Bible attest to this “good news” from our Creator. There is nothing negative or sad about God’s plan, for it shall bring “great joy . . . to all people” by means of a restitution of all things lost by Adam—perfect life, dominion over the earth, and communion with God. The inclusion of the word “all” reaffirms the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, for no one could be blessed and restored unless they are “made alive.”—I Cor. 15:21,22

After this declaration of good news had been delivered, “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 2:13,14) What a scene this must have been! Jesus, the world’s savior, had been born. ■

# Jesus is Presented in the Temple

**Key Verses:** *“Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.”*  
—**Luke 2:30,31**

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Luke 2:25-38**

Of this man, Luke says, “Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.”—Luke 2:25-31

We might properly ask how this man could perceive the arrival of the “Lord’s Christ” when presented as a baby, while so many others could not perceive him as

## **MARY AND JOSEPH WERE**

both pious servants of God, so in accordance with the instructions of the Law, they brought their new son, Jesus, to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice forty days after his birth. (Lev. 12:1-4) It was here that they met a man named Simeon, whose words are at the center of today’s lesson.

the Christ when, as a full-grown man, he preached the Gospel and performed miracles. We answer in the words of Peter: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1:21) Through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit of God, Simeon was privileged to discern the "light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel," and declare that light to be Jesus, though now only a babe. (Luke 2:32) Jesus' position as the "Lord's Christ" was reaffirmed later the same day when a prophetess named Anna, who served in the Temple, spoke similar words "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."—vs. 38

The account of Simeon and Anna provide an important lesson for us to consider. While Jesus has been presented to the world, yet only those whose eyes of understanding have been opened by the Holy Spirit can perceive who he truly is. Paul tells us, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (I Cor. 2:9,10) Jesus himself declared that now is not the time for the world in general to understand these mysteries, because their hearts are not yet in a proper condition to receive this knowledge.—Matt. 13:10-15

Through the enlightenment of God's Holy Spirit, we know the world is not to be excluded from the eventual blessing God has promised to all, but that now is not the time for the general blessing to be given them. Rather, now is the special time God has set aside in his plan to gather a family from amongst the peoples of the world to be Christ's bride in the next age. For those striving to be of this class, now is the time to specially think upon the words of Simeon and Anna, and to consider how we should likewise be presented to God—holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service.—Rom. 12:1 ■

# Christ's Most Difficult Command

***“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”***

***—Matthew 5:43,44***

## **THIS PASSAGE IN THE**

Gospel of Matthew deserves our greatest attention. There is perhaps no other passage in the New Testament that sums up the heart and attitude of the Christian as well as this one. These verses talk about the most powerful testimony one can have in his life, when Jesus says, “Love your enemies.” A noted historian, Will Durant, was once asked how he would sum up the Christian ethic, and he

said, “Basically, it’s love your enemies.” Without a doubt, our Lord set the highest standards possible in all aspects of life, but this command is the most

difficult to achieve for those striving to develop the “mind of Christ.”

## **THE LORD’S STANDARDS**

In the Sermon on the Mount, there are two statements that sum up the standards of those who claim to be followers of Christ. One is found in Matthew 5:47: “What do ye more than others?” Even those who do not profess Christianity love those who treat them well. Jesus was saying that if one professes to be a Christian, something should make him different than others. The second statement is in Matthew 6:8: “Be not ye therefore like unto them.” The simple lesson of this statement is that the followers of Christ are not to conform themselves to the thoughts and actions of the world in general. In these two statements, Jesus was pointing out that his standards were much higher than those of anyone else in the world around him.

The Pharisees were generally thought to have the highest religious standards during the time of Jesus’ First Advent, but they were not high enough. The Master said, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:20) By this statement, Jesus showed that his standard was higher than any human standard, even that of the scribes and Pharisees. Those religious leaders had many laws, ceremonies, and rituals. They were considered the most religious people of their time, yet they came well short of the righteous standards of God.

The highest human standards have always fallen far short of God’s perfection. This was the case not

only during New Testament times, but also is borne out in the Old Testament narrative. In both cases, God called his chosen people to a higher standard. As an example, after rescuing his people Israel from Egyptian bondage, he made a covenant with them saying, "I am the LORD your God, . . . after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances [customs or manners]. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God." (Lev. 18:2-4) God was telling his people that his standards, which they were to follow, were higher than those of the people in the land to which they would be brought.

Since God had made a covenant with Israel, they were his chosen people. As antitypical "Israelites indeed," the Lord's people today are, as Peter says, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (I Pet. 2:9) Thus, we are to be totally different from all others. We are to follow God's commandments and live by the highest standard known—God's standard. This is most difficult, as we all know. To live separate from the world's ideas and standards means we must be continually looking toward higher goals in the conduct of our lives. However, this must be done to the best of our ability if we are to inherit the kingdom promised to the overcomers.

We read from I John 2:15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is

not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” We note in these verses the three standards of the world in general—love of the flesh, love of what the eyes see, and the pride of life. These are the fallen standards with which all spiritual Israelites must continually battle.

As recorded in Leviticus 18, the Israelites kept forgetting their uniqueness and continually fell into sin. The Prophet Balaam said of them, “The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” (Num. 23:9) Although it was God’s desire that Israel dwell alone and not mingle with other nations, they emulated most of the heathen practices around them. Psalm 106:35 says that the Israelites did not destroy the idolatrous nations in their midst, “but were mingled [mixed] among the heathen, and learned their works.” This was a sad commentary as to their lack of obedience to God’s will.

## **LOWERING GOD’S STANDARDS**

It is possible that the same snares into which natural Israel fell may also befall us, as we endeavor to follow in the footsteps of Christ. Instead of following the high standards of God, we may attempt to change them. Hence, we must examine ourselves carefully along this line. We can dilute God’s standards in various ways. We may overlook what the Bible says, thinking that it is not of critical importance in a given situation. We may use the mantle

of love to go against the clear teachings of God. This is, of course, not to say that we should not love. However, we must be careful not to use love to obscure what God says in his Word.

If we find any indication of such tendencies in our lives, we must remember that we have a wily Adversary who makes darkness appear as light, and light as darkness. Paul said, concerning Satan, "We are not ignorant of his devices." (II Cor. 2:11) One of these devices is the attempt to gloss over sins with the mantle of love. This is a very subtle temptation. The Apostle Paul sharply rebuked the Corinthian brethren for not properly addressing a situation within their fellowship involving immorality which they thought could be overlooked by simply exercising love. (I Cor. 5:2,6) To believe that God overlooks all of our failings under the mantle of love is a subtle device of the Adversary.

In I Samuel 8:19,20, we read that the Israelites wanted a king in order to be like other nations. "We will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations." They even went so far as to say, "We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone." (Ezek. 20:32) This was displeasing to God, and he sent prophets to remind Israel that they were to be different. "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen." "Defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt." (Jer. 10:2; Ezek. 20:7) In these statements, the prophets pleaded continuously with Israel to maintain the high standards given to them by God. This same plea was made to the Israelites during Jesus' First Advent, and it still applies today. God expects his people to be different from those in the world around them.



The standard Jesus presents in Matthew 5:44, “Love your enemies,” is not popular today. This is because it is not an earthly standard, but one that is unique to God and his Son. It is a far greater ethic than any of us can keep without help from our Heavenly Father. However, it is the standard to which we must adhere. We read in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” To be “perfect,” as used in this verse, means to be complete and mature. This means we must set our standards after the pattern of Christ Jesus our Lord, who followed the example and pattern of his Heavenly Father.

Throughout his sermon on the mount, Jesus showed the Pharisees that their system was sub-standard, and warned that unless they would come and learn of him, they would never be able to live by his standards. As religious as they claimed to be, and as legalistic as was their thinking, yet they could not qualify to be part of the Heavenly Kingdom. They thought it was enough to perform the acts of the Law, such as not to commit adultery, but Christ told them that one who even thought about it “in his heart” was guilty of the same sin. (Matt. 5:27-30) Similarly, the Pharisees thought it was acceptable to get a divorce if all the legal paperwork was complete, but the Lord said divorce was not proper except in the case of fornication.—vss. 31,32

The Pharisees said it was proper to keep sworn vows, but Jesus told them not to swear at all—rather, to simply obey God. (vss. 33-37) They thought it was right to take “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” but our Lord said not to retaliate at all.

(Matt. 5:38-42) In Matthew chapter 6, the Master said that their prayers were inadequate, and then told them how to pray. (vss. 5-15) He said their giving was wrong, and told them how to give properly. (vss. 1-4) In verses 19-34, Jesus told them they were concerned with material things when they should be seeking first the kingdom of God. In our theme text, he contrasts the limited love that the Pharisees had with the unselfish love that should characterize God's true children. In all of these examples, we see that the Pharisees and others of our Lord's day pulled down the high standards of God to a much lower, fallen human level.

God has called us to be a separated people, with convictions and standards that are not of this world. Jesus confronted the Jewish leaders of his day, because they were walking after the flesh, while claiming to be very religious and God-fearing. Their humanistic religious practices and traditions fell woefully short of God's standards.

We must listen carefully to Jesus' words on the subject of love recorded in the context of our opening Scripture: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:43-48, *New International*

*Version*) In these verses, Jesus tells us that the greatest way we can show love is to show it to our enemies. This is the supreme test of the Christian, and is one in which many will fall short of God's standard.

## **KEY TO OBEYING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS**

In Matthew 22, we read of a lawyer who came to Jesus and asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (vs. 36) The Lord answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (vss. 37-40) Jesus here is saying that to love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, is equivalent to keeping all of God's commandments. The Apostle Paul corroborates this, saying, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. 13:8-10

The phrase in our opening scripture—"Ye have heard that it hath been said"—indicates that what follows was a Jewish tradition that had been passed down from generation to generation. Indeed, to

“hate your enemy” was not taught in the Law, as given in the Old Testament. It had been added as a tradition, and was taught by the Rabbis, but not by God’s Word. Accordingly, the Jewish leaders believed and taught that once a determination was made as to who constituted their neighbors, they were authorized to hate everyone else. Their low standard of love, therefore, was based solely upon their definition of a neighbor, rather than on God’s commandments. They had ignored teachings of the Old Testament such as found in these words: “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.”—Prov. 25:21

Another phrase that the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day had “heard that it hath been said” was, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour.” This was partially correct, being a quote from Leviticus 19:18. However, the entire quote from Leviticus says, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The “as thyself” portion of God’s commandment had been left out by the Rabbinical teachers—a very convenient omission on their part. The Jewish leaders had developed such a spirit of pride that rather than be required to treat any others equal to themselves, they dropped the phrase, “as thyself.” They, in fact, did not desire to love anyone like they loved themselves. Their pride of self did not allow them to love anyone else equally.

## **HOW MUCH DO WE LOVE OTHERS?**

As footstep followers of Christ, we must examine ourselves as to what is meant to love someone as we love ourselves. If we were to love someone, but

not as we love ourselves, we could do it at a distance. We would not have to treat them as well as we treat ourselves. We could perhaps easily demonstrate one-half, one-third, one-tenth, or some other small portion of the love that we would show ourselves. It could be very tempting to our fallen flesh to do as the Jewish leaders did—drop the little phrase “as thyself.” Jesus, however, wanted to drive his point directly to the heart of his disciples, including us, and so he told the lawyer, as previously cited, “Love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Matt. 22:39

There may be times when we feel that we do not truly love ourselves. Certainly, we do not love the mistakes that we make, or the fact that we seem to struggle to do God’s will at times in our lives. Yet, the fact remains that we do have a love for ourselves, evidence of which is manifest each and every day in our activities. We get out of bed each morning. We prepare ourselves for the day’s activities. We manage our personal finances. When we are sick, we call the doctor. In these and many other ways, we daily show love for ourselves in the sense that we are concerned about our needs. For the follower of Christ, this applies to both spiritual and temporal needs. In order to meet our needs, we must have an unfeigned love for ourselves. It is not an exhibition of pride to do this, as long as the needs we are striving to meet are wholesome and in accord with our consecration vows. Such properly motivated love for ourselves is genuine, habitual, and permanent. Thus, when we have an interest, we attempt to fulfill it. When we have a need, we strive to meet it. When we desire something that is proper, we endeavor to obtain it. The desire to meet our various needs should be

understood to always include this underlying heart sentiment: “Thy will be done.”

Based on these principles, we are to be concerned about our physical, spiritual, temporal, and eternal needs, all of which gives evidence that we love ourselves. Just as important as the way we love ourselves, however, is the way we are to love everyone else, including our enemies. Jesus showed that we are to have a genuine, habitual, and permanent love for others that considers their interests, needs, wants, hopes, ambitions, welfare, safety and comfort. To truly be our Lord’s disciples, and to fulfill his higher commandment, we must desire to help fulfill others’ needs and wants just as much as we desire to fulfill our own.

## **EXAMINING OURSELVES**

All of us must gauge our progress in fulfilling the Lord’s commandment concerning love. We must ask ourselves such questions as: The last time we had a choice between doing what we wanted, or sacrificing our wishes for those of someone else, which path did we take? The temptation, in many cases, would be for us to pamper our own flesh, loving only ourselves. God’s standards are very high, and from the fallen human standpoint, to love our neighbor as ourselves is nearly impossible. This is because we tend to become so absorbed with our own needs that we fail to take the time to look at those of others. We must see to it, therefore, that we are developing the spirit of love which will cause us to lay down life itself for our neighbors, and even our enemies. Only in this way will we become “more than conquerors.”—Rom. 8:37

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us of various ways in which we, as his footstep followers, are to set ourselves apart from others. Although doctrinal views are certainly part of what sets us apart from the world in general, it is clear from Jesus' teachings that our character must have an equally important part in being separate from the world. The Adversary may tempt us to believe that our doctrinal views alone distinguish us from the world. Yet, as the Prophet Isaiah said concerning Israel, these do not make us "holier than thou." (Isa. 65:5) We must all take time to consider in what way our life is a testimony before the world and our brethren. The Apostle Paul said, "You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men." (II Cor. 3:2, *New American Standard Bible*) At the present time, it is primarily our character which is "known and read" by those around us. We must endeavor, to the greatest extent possible, to develop an all-inclusive love, the crowning feature of the "mind of Christ." By so doing, we will let our light shine forth brighter and brighter, illuminating all our deeds and actions.

## **THE GOAL BEFORE US**

We are to love others as much as we love ourselves. We must also learn to love our enemies. This is not an easy task. We have to battle the Adversary and our flesh—the "old man"—constantly. (Col. 3:9) Daily we must make a conscious effort to think about the interests, needs, welfare, safety and comfort of others. We must remember that the true test of our discipleship is our willingness to love those who do not love us.

A practical way of progressing toward the goal of loving even our enemies is to think of specific people with whom we are having problems, and find ways to show love toward them and to do them good. We should also pray diligently that we might grow in love and develop its fullness in our thoughts, words, and actions. Let us not be like the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders of Jesus' day who did not even live up to the love presented to them in the Law. Let us never be guilty, as they were, of lowering God's standards to our own fallen human level.

Our Lord gave an important lesson in Matthew 5:43-48 that we might benefit from and use to assist us in making our calling and election sure. To summarize his lesson, Jesus said that the purpose of this development is, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."—vs. 45 ■

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**DECEMBER 5**—"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Joshua 24:15 (Z. '01-284 Hymn 164)

**DECEMBER 12**—"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."—Proverbs 23:7 (Z. '01-325 Hymn 256)

**DECEMBER 19**—"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."—I Kings 20:11 (Z. '94-155 Hymn 266)

**DECEMBER 26**—"Be thou strong and very courageous."—Joshua 1:7 (Z. '02-285 Hymn 197)



# European Trip Report

**IN MAY AND JUNE** of this year, Brother Jonathon and Sister Kathryn Freer had the blessing and privilege of traveling to Europe. Brother Jonathon visited brethren in Germany and France, and Sister Kathryn joined him later in England to visit the brethren there. We are pleased to have them provide this report to readers of *The Dawn*.

## **TIME IN GERMANY**

Arriving at Frankfurt was exciting with anticipation of meeting many European brethren. I was to have been met by Brother Stefan Thieme, but because of a scheduling conflict, I was instead met by his father, Andreas Thieme. We left Frankfurt and drove to Ober Ramstadt and the home of Stefan and Wiebke Thieme. I spent several hours with them and was met by Andreas again, who took me to Brother Samuel and Sister Annick Stalder's home, located on the Rhine River.

I spent the next three days with Samuel and Annick. We had many lengthy studies, including Moses and his experiences with the nation of Israel,

the Tabernacle and its lessons concerning the Court, Holy, Most Holy, Ark of the Covenant and the Propitiatory—or Mercy Seat. We talked about the prophecies of Christ's coming kingdom as outlined in Isaiah 35 and Jeremiah 31. Both Samuel and Annick were interested in Bible Student activities



Sam and Annick Stalder

in the United States and at the Dawn. They shared the activities the German brethren are involved in with regard to witnessing, including those they are considering for future witness work.

We left on the morning of May 17 to drive to Korbach where the German convention has been held for the past fifteen years. The drive allowed Samuel and Annick the opportunity to point out many of the sights as we traveled, especially along the Rhine River. The beautiful scenery brought to mind how things may be in God's kingdom and how wonderful it will be when earth's curse is removed. The four-hour trip to Korbach was filled with sweet fellowship and many discussions regarding our Heavenly Father.

We arrived at Korbach shortly after noon, checked into our rooms, and then joined many of the brethren for lunch. This was a wonderful beginning to a weekend of spiritual fellowship and blessings from the Lord. The convention started at 3:00 that afternoon. I was introduced to Dorchon Kotoulas, a young sister from the Dortmund ecclesia. She was to be one of my

translators, and I looked forward to hearing the talks in English.

When the convention began, Dorchen translated everything for me, including all the comments made by the chairman, the opening services, prayers, reading of the Manna and Songs in the Night, and all the prayers. She also began translating for me as we sang hymns, but since I had an English hymn book with me I told her that was not necessary. I did my best to sing along in English as the rest of the brethren sang in German. It was interesting to note that many of the hymns we sing in the United States often have a different tune, and are sung at a different pace, in other countries. It was a blessing to hear the German versions of many of the hymns I like. During the course of the convention I had three other translators: Samuel and Annick Stalder, and Regina Albrecht. I was amazed at their ability to translate almost word for word.



Korbach, Germany Convention

Saturday morning began with opening services, hymns and prayers. The German convention is conducted in much the same way as we do them in the United States. There was adequate time for fellowship, and all the brethren welcomed me with open arms. It was a wonderful day of convention with many good talks and discussions. I felt truly blessed to be there.

Saturday evening, the brethren held their German Dawn Committee meeting. During the first part of the meeting the committee elected new officers. Samuel Stalder was elected President, Stefan Thieme was elected Secretary, and Martin



Martin and Sabine Schlueter

Schlueter was elected Treasurer. The majority of the meeting was devoted to witness activities, and I was delighted to find that the German Dawn Committee is committed to continuing extensive witness work in Germany. Many of the materials they are using

have not been updated, so they discussed the possibility of modernizing the covers on many of the booklets. I had brought a number of the booklets that Brothers Mark Nemesh and Lutz Ruthmann had recently updated: *Why God Permits Evil*, and *Jesus, the World's Savior*. The brethren were very excited about these. I left all my copies with them and promised to send more. The committee discussed the need to update as many other booklets as possible. They also discussed reprinting the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. I told the Committee that the Dawn had recently reprinted the English volumes, and I would send them a set so they can see the results. The committee was very desirous of improving all German witness materials, and requested I report this back to the Dawn in order to determine in what ways assistance could be provided. The enthusiasm of the German Dawn Committee was exciting to see. It was a privilege to

not only attend their meeting, but to offer possible assistance as they move forward. I could see that the Heavenly Father is truly blessing the efforts of these brethren.

Sunday was another wonderful day of blessing at the Korbach Convention. I was able to sit at many different tables for meals, and I was accepted with a loving-kindness known only by the brethren. When I had arrived at the convention I only knew a few brethren. However, when I departed later this day, I had made many new friends in the Truth. It was truly a joyful experience to be among so many loving, kind, and dedicated brethren.

Prior to my service to the convention, I was asked how I would like to present my discourse. I had sent it to Stefan Thieme in advance and it had been translated into German. I was given the option of having it read in German, or I could give my discourse in English and have it translated as I gave it. I preferred this method, and it was described to me as something like the game of ping pong. I was to read, pause, and then what I had read would



Stefan Thieme

be translated. This added some additional time to my service, but I preferred that to sitting on the stage while someone read my talk in German. For my topic, I had chosen a word study on Romans 6, titled “Know, Reckon, Yield and Obey.” I presented

my discourse, giving the *Strong's Concordance* definitions as I went. Afterward, I learned an important lesson. The German brethren do not use the *King James Version* of the Bible, and there are also no translations of *Strong's Concordance* in German. Upon inquiring as to why, I was given a short history lesson that I should have been able to figure out, if I had only given the matter more thought. Quite simply and understandably, Germans do not use an "English" translation of the Bible, which the *King James Version* is—therefore, they do not have any use for a *Strong's Concordance* based on that translation.

At the end of convention, the last hymn we sang was "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." We all rose and everyone waved goodbye to each other during the entire hymn. It is just as difficult for the brethren to part and say goodbye in Germany as it is in the United States. Farewells were long and tearful. The three days I spent there were truly a blessing, and a wonderful spiritual experience from the Heavenly Father.

I departed Korbach with the Lipka family—Brother Hubert Lipka, his wife Sister Ruth Lipka, and her father Gunther Haase. We also had with us Sister Hildegard and Sister Eva Hensel. The Lipka family took both of these sisters home after the convention. We spent several hours driving them to their separate homes. Although both of these sisters are isolated, the German brethren look after them with great love, and keep in constant contact with them. After taking the two sisters to their homes, we continued on to the Lipka home in Hamburg, another three hours drive.



Lipka Family, Hamburg, Germany

I had the privilege of staying with the Lipka family for three days. We had wonderful fellowship and studies. Both Brother Hubert and Sister Ruth asked many questions. Although Hubert speaks limited English, he and I were able to have many spiritual conversations. We discussed many aspects of God's plans and purposes for the world of mankind. These brethren are rejoicing in the Lord and never miss an opportunity to witness. Hubert drives a Hamburg city bus, and he is faithful in placing booklets and the German *Dawn* in the seats of his bus. He asked if I would send him a large supply of booklets and old *Dawns* to him when I returned to the United States.

I had the opportunity to spend a day with Brother Hubert on his bus route. He was able to show me many of the beautiful sites around Hamburg, and I had a great day riding with him on his routes. He has the responsibility of picking up a number of children as they get out of school, and they all wanted to know who I was. He informed them

that I was his brother in the Truth from the United States.

While visiting the Lipka's, I found out that Sister Ruth's father, Gunther Haase, is also the father of Brother Reinhold Haase, and the grandfather of Stephanie Kuenzli and Ben Haase, all of whom are from the Milwaukee, Wisconsin ecclesia. It was truly a blessing to travel to these foreign countries and make connections to brethren in the United States. I often found myself thinking about the fact that the brethren are all family—in some cases natural family members, but in all cases spiritual family members. It is a reminder of the hymn, "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds." As I departed Hamburg, the Lipka family dropped me off at the train station. As usual, parting was difficult, and I can still see them waving goodbye to me.

My next journey took me to Dortmund. It was a three-hour train ride, during which I spent time placing German *Dawns* and booklets throughout the train. It was interesting to watch the reactions as people saw the *Dawns*. Some passed them by—some picked them up and looked at them—still others took the literature with them. It was a good reminder that once we have placed *Dawns*, booklets, or other literature in a public place, it is up to the Heavenly Father to yield any increase. I found myself often thinking about that as I traveled and left material along the way. To have the privilege and responsibility to do this is truly a blessing, regardless of the response.

When I arrived at Dortmund, I was met by Sister Dorchen Kotoulas and Sister Allena Ruthmann. We went to Brother Lutz and Sister Allena Ruthmann's





Hercules Gonos

home for a Bible study and dinner. Brother Hercules Gonos, from Greece, was there waiting for us. Before we began our Bible study, Lutz and Allena's daughter Barbara also joined us. We had a study on the Tabernacle and the significance of the Ark of the Covenant. We also spent time in Romans 3 in which Paul talks about "propitiation through faith." We discussed Paul's thoughts on the Most Holy, which he refers to in Hebrews chapters 5 and 10, and also considered his thoughts in Hebrews 9 relating to the "more perfect tabernacle," and how our Lord appeared in heaven on our behalf.

After the study, we had a nice dinner with continuous fellowship. The brethren had many questions about their fellow-brethren in the United States. They asked questions about the Dawn and the witnessing efforts with which they are involved. They also shared with me some of their current activities in Germany. Brother Lutz Ruthmann has been working with Brother Mark Nemesh of the United States to translate Dawn booklets into German. Efforts such as these are proving to be a great blessing to the German brethren. After a nice evening, we left to go to Brother Johannes and Sister Ushi Kotoulas' home, where I would stay for the next two days.



Ushi, Johannes and Dorchen Kotoulas

Johannes and Ushi speak limited English, but I was fortunate that their daughter Dorchen was able to be with us and translate. Here again, the days were filled with constant fellowship and studies. We spent time looking at the nation of Israel and some of the related experiences outlined by the minor prophets. We considered the Tabernacle arrangements and Brother Russell's teachings on that subject. We discussed activities related to the Dawn, and I was happy to learn that Johannes speaks and writes fluently in Greek. He has agreed to assist with the translation of the English *Dawn* magazine into Greek, so that we can have consistent content in both the English and foreign *Dawns*. The Kotoulas' nephew Sven came over one evening, and we had an extensive study on consecration, justification, and sanctification. Everywhere I traveled, the time I spent with the brethren proved to be a wonderful blessing, as we talked about God's plans and purposes. It was plain to see that our Heavenly Father is working with his chosen throughout the world, and although we may be separated by borders,



Ludwigshafen Class

oceans, and languages, we all share the same Truth and rejoice together in the many aspects of God's plan that he has unfolded to us.

After two wonderful days, I left Dortmund and headed south to Ober Ramstadt, and then to Ludwigshafen, where I met with the brethren there. There were fifteen brethren in attendance at the meeting. I asked the brethren what they would like to do, and they requested that I give a discourse. I spoke on the subject, "Visions from God," which covers many of the wonderful visions of God's kingdom found in the Scriptures, such as Isaiah 35, Jeremiah 31, and others. As in all the meetings in Germany, there was a vigorous discussion afterward on the topic we had considered. The Ludwigshafen brethren were extremely hospitable, loving, and kind. My discourse had to be translated, and that was done by Jacob Kaleta, the oldest son of Brother Daniel and Sister Barbara Kaleta. He was extremely capable in translating my talk, and



Barbara and Daniel Kaleta

also enabled me to have a number of conversations afterward with the brethren gathered there. After a long lunch with continuous fellowship, I was taken to the train station by Brother Stefan Thieme where I began my journey to France.

## **VISIT TO FRANCE AND ENGLAND**

After a three-hour train ride I arrived in Mulhouse, France, where I was met by Brother Regis

Liberda and his wife Sister Christina. We renewed our friendship from having met at the United States General Convention the previous year. I traveled to their home where we had a nice dinner followed by questions about United States brethren and time for fellowship. We spent



Regis and Christina Liberda

time considering what aspects of God's plan we believe are more profitable to study, in order to give us the insight and knowledge needed to make our calling and election sure. Here again, I was blessed by the opportunity for edifying ourselves in love and reasoning together upon the Truth. Most importantly, in every place I visited, the spirit of the Truth prevailed in all of our fellowship and conversations with the brethren.

The following day, Regis and Christina gave me a tour of the Alsace, France, area. It was a blessed day, taking in many of the wonderful sights in central eastern France, including the town of Kaysersberg, founded in the year 1227, making it nearly 800 years old. At the end of the day, we arrived at the town of Bollwiller. I had the privilege of serving the class there, which had also been joined by the class of Staffelfelden. In all, there were about 20 brethren in attendance from both classes. As previously I had the experience of listening to the German brethren sing in German, now I was blessed by hearing these brethren sing in Polish and French. The following day, after breakfast, I was taken to

the Mulhouse train station where I boarded the train to Paris. There I was to catch the English Channel train to travel to London.

The train ride to London was quite fast—150 miles per hour and arriving in just two and a half hours. I took this opportunity to place the last of my French *Dawns* throughout the train. I was thankful to have the privilege of “sowing,” and was glad to leave any possible “increase” up to our Heavenly Father. In both Germany and France, I had placed more than 100 *Dawn* magazines, tracts, and booklets.

On arriving in London, I had to take trains, subways, and buses to get to Heathrow Airport, where I was to pick up my rental car. I was going to be staying with Brother Fred and Sister Ivy Binns. I had their phone number, and planned on calling them when I got to Chesham, the town they live in. After I picked up my car and was given some directions, I headed out. I started out on a major freeway, looking for another major road that I was to turn on. In just a matter of minutes I was completely lost. I spent about half an hour getting on and off highways, trying to find a gas station. Eventually I found one, went in and tried to call Fred and Ivy, but I could not get through. I bought a map, and found Chesham on it, but I had no idea where it was in reference to my present location. I asked a young man there how to get to Chesham. He pointed to the road outside



Ivy and Fred Binns

the window and said to take it to the left for five miles, and you will be in Chesham. I had been driving around for nearly an hour—changing roads, and totally lost—when this young man told me that I was only five miles from my destination. I took the directions and soon arrived in Chesham. I parked and went into a store to try and call Fred and Ivy again. The owner of the store was kind enough to dial the number. This time Fred answered the phone. He gave directions to the store owner, and we found out that I was only two blocks from their home. I drove the two blocks, and standing on the roadside waving at me was Brother Fred. There was no doubt that the Heavenly Father had overruled my entire day to help me get to the Binns' home. I was very thankful for God's providence in this experience.

I had the privilege of staying with Fred and Ivy for three days, at which time Sister Kathryn arrived from the United States. While with the Binns we had numerous studies. We studied Joshua and the crossing of the Israelites into the land of promise. We considered portions of Isaiah, and Israel's wandering in the wilderness. We spent time discussing the similarities between Israel's wanderings in the wilderness and our experiences along the narrow way. We looked into the Scriptures related to our having the Heavenly Father's law written in our hearts. Later in the week, I was privileged to serve the Evesham class. We talked about God's kingdom, and afterward had a lengthy question meeting. The discussion covered many of the same topics which we regularly consider in the United States, including the Lord's Second Presence, the coming





Evesham Class

kingdom, the opportunity to consecrate and strive to be part of the glorified Church, the nation of Israel and their place in the kingdom, and our responsibilities today as they relate to spreading the Gospel message and witnessing.

During our visit with the Binns, Brother Martin Powell from Whitechurch, England, came and we had additional study and fellowship. We traveled to central England where Kathryn and I met



Kathryn, Redvers Green and Rosemary Ansell

with Sister Rosemary Ansell in Lydney and with Brother Redvers Green in Kempsey. While there, we had sweet fellowship and considered the history of the brethren in England.



West Wickham Class

We then returned to the London area, where we met with the West Wickham class. We had a study on Moses and his experiences wandering in the desert with the nation of Israel. The brethren in West Wickham are currently studying the Book of Romans, as well as the Book of Luke. While there, we had a lengthy and stimulating study in Romans



Edna and Donald Holliday

and fellowship afterward. Later, we were able to see Brother Donald and Sister Edna Holliday. They are not able to attend meetings with the West Wickham class at their regular meeting location, so many in the class come to the

Holliday's home on Thursdays for a study in Isaiah.

The following day Kathryn and I left for Paris. We made contact with Brother Alain Boulier and were able to spend the day with him. He showed us around Paris, then took us to the home of Brother Bernard and Sister Michelle Boulier, his brother



and sister-in-law. We had a nice dinner with them and spent time in fellowship and discussing witness activities and opportunities in France. We talked about using the *Hope* booklet in France, but discovered that it is not currently available in the French language. Brother Alain has agreed to translate it. The Dawn will then print the *Hope* booklet in French and make it available for their use.



Alain Boulier and Kathryn

The next day we left France and returned to Germany for our flight back to the United States. Our trip to visit so many brethren in Germany, France, and England was a wonderful opportunity



Bernard and Michelle Boulier

for both Sister Kathryn and myself. We were continuously blessed everywhere we went. The spirit of the Truth is very strong in these countries, and the brethren are filled with loving-kindness and are “given to hospitality.” While with them we were constantly uplifted by the fellowship and studies of God’s Word in which we had the

privilege to share. We are certain that the Heavenly Father overruled and directed all aspects of our trip, providing opportunities to witness, to grow in grace and knowledge, and to see the fruits of the Spirit among our brethren. Each one with whom we visited was an example of love for the Truth, the brethren, and for diligence in the opportunities given to them to glorify our Heavenly Father. ■

*"I thank my God every time I remember you.  
In all my prayers for all of you,  
I always pray with joy because of your partnership  
in the gospel from the first day until now,  
being confident of this,  
that he who began a good work in you  
will carry it on to completion until the day of  
Christ Jesus.  
—Philippians 1:3-6, New International Version*

## 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.*

Brother Charles Redeker, October 26—Temple City, CA. Age, 83

Brother Jed Dunn, San Luis Obispo, CA—October 31. Age, 98

Sister Rosalinda A. Canete, Taguig City, Philippines—November 10. Age, 62

Brother Cleo M. Berdahl, New Leipzig, ND—November 12. Age, 96

# ENCOURAGING LETTERS

## BRINGING LIGHT

Dear Dawn: Your word is like a sword to all those who listen to it. I was that kind of person who totally believe in ancestral worship, but when I caught your message over the programme *Radio Africa Two* I was totally converted. Praise God I'm now a Christian.

Thank you very much for what you are doing, bringing light to those who are still in darkness. God bless you all.—Zimbabwe

## HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

DawnBible: Since I was born again, I never regret. My life has changed. I am having undiminished hope of eternal life.—Lesotho

## TOOLS FOR TEACHING

DawnBible: Your pages [at DawnBible.com] are insightful and wonderful tools for fundamental Christian teachings and spiritual discipleship makings. More grace to you all.—Nigeria

## THE GOOD NEWS

DawnBible: I tell you that, based on what I read on-line, the Dawn Bible Students' teachings are good and I will make sure that I do my best to enable the good news to reach as many people as I can.—Cameroon

## ENCOURAGED

DawnBible: Good morning! I would like to receive more of your booklets (by mail) please. They keep me so encouraged in this mad world. Thank you! God bless you.—FL

## SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKER

DawnBible: As a Sunday school worker in my church, I was very happy when I try to make research for our lesson. The lesson was "Wisdom of Self-Control." In fact, I was able to get more points here to explain to my study mates, so therefore your group is doing a good job and may God bless you.

I will like you to reach me on my email address so we can share and learn more about the Bible. Thanks a lot.—Ghana

### **AURORA MAGAZINE**

DawnBible: [*Translated from Portuguese*] I like books about eternal life. Moreover, the magazine *Aurora* [*The Dawn* magazine in Portuguese] is excellent. Would like the brochure *Why God Permits Evil* and *Hope for a Fear-filled World*. Thank you.—Brazil

### **MAN A LIVING SOUL**

DawnBible: I really enjoyed an article in your 2004 magazine titled “Man, A Living Soul.” I’m presently doing a research paper on man becoming a living soul. This article was fantastic.—DC

### **LITERATURE TO PORTUGAL**

DawnBible: [*Translated from Portuguese*] Dear brothers, we want to thank all from the heart for sending literature to Portugal. It is an honor and a pleasure to distribute the

*AURORA* magazines [*The Dawn* magazine in Portuguese] and other literature on present truth; to know that the Lord chose us for this small work of His for the country.

Much thanks for everything and the Lord God bless you.—Portugal

### **DAILY MANNA**

DawnBible: I like reading your articles, most especially *Daily Heavenly Manna*, because of huge daily spiritual benefits in it. Thanks.—Nigeria

### **GOOD NEWS TO EVERYONE**

DawnBible: I am already a Bible Student at Coonoor ecclesia.

I am immensely happy to witness the wonderful work being carried out by your hard efforts.

The one thing that impresses is that the Dawn has reached the highest standards by bringing the good news to everyone using the modern high-tech. May the Lord work wonders in the days to come.—India

# “I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

**HOW OFTEN WE** hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest one thing that practically all can do is to send one or more *Dawn* gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that *The Dawn* magazine enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of Truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only \$12.00, and you can have three names entered for just \$30.00! It is simple to do when you use the coupon(s) below, and on the next page.

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# SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

## **D. Christiansen**

San Diego, CA

November 29-December 1

## **J. Parkinson**

San Diego, CA

November 29-December 1  
Chicago, IL 28,29

# 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.*

**SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 29-December 1**—Alliant University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego, CA 92131. For accommodations at Alliant University, contact B. Bach, PO Box 323, Alpine, CA 91903-0323. Phone: (619) 445-4879 or E-mail: [bbach1@cox.net](mailto:bbach1@cox.net). Other information, contact R. Rice, 13084 Treecrest Street, Poway, CA 92064. Phone: (858) 486-0381 or E-mail: [rice@gmx.com](mailto:rice@gmx.com)

**IBADAN END OF YEAR THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, December 7**—Place of fellowship. Contact C. O. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621 or E-mail: [egbucaje@gmail.com](mailto:egbucaje@gmail.com) or [egbucajetan1@yahoo.com](mailto:egbucajetan1@yahoo.com)

**CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 28,29**—Alta Villa, 430 N. Addison Road, Addison, IL 60101. Contact L. Manzuk. Phone: (630) 660-1874

**PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 18-20**—La-Quinta Inn Phoenix North, 2510 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85023. For room reservations, contact the hotel. Phone: (866) 527-1498. Specify "Phoenix Bible Students" for special rate. Other information, contact J. Zardja. Phone: (602) 363-2612

**LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 26**—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

**SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 14-16**—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact J. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 879-4655

**FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 1-3**—Howard Johnson Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. For room reservations, contact the hotel. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify “Florida Bible Students” for special rates, which expire on February 17, 2014. Other information, contact S. Jeuck. Phone: (407) 834-7592 or E-mail: sjeuck@aol.com

**NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, March 23**—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or E-mail: austin@osnetinc.com

**GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 30**—East Lyme Community Center, 37 Society Road, East Lyme, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 823-7099 or E-mail: millennialview@sbcglobal.net

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 5,6**—Quality Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Hotel Reservation, phone (248) 689-7500. Specify “Detroit Bible Students” for special rate. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or E-mail: nemeshfp@aol.com

**ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 18-20**—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Group subsidized rate is \$69.00/room per night, up to four people in a room. This rate will apply if reservation is made by the Convention Secretary, S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or E-mail: srbt@juno.com