

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

GOD AND CREATION SERIES, Part 2

The Days of Creation

“God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

—Genesis 1:31

IN THE BOOK of Isaiah, chapter 55, verse 9, the great God and Creator of the universe says, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” A moment’s reflection emphasizes the truthfulness of this statement. Indeed, when we consider the wisdom manifested in the works of God with which we are surrounded, and as demonstrated in all the far-flung reaches of the universe, we realize that his thoughts must be higher than ours. But in his infinite wisdom, and by his great ability, he is able to convey to our puny minds at least some of his high thoughts relating to his human creation.

God speaks to us in our own language, for how else could we understand what he says? Speaking of the writers of the Old Testament books, the Apostle Peter explains that they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; that is, the power of God. (II Pet. 1:21) Just how the power of the Almighty conveyed to the prophets what he wished recorded is beyond the comprehension of our finite minds. This is one evidence of God’s wisdom and ability that is as far above the capacity of our minds to understand as the heavens are higher than the earth.

We open this lesson with these thoughts because it will deal with a chapter in the Bible which, in its thirty-one short verses, reveals a sequence of steps in which the Creator prepared the earth for plant and animal life, carrying forward the work of establishing the earth until it became a fit habitation for man. Geologists and astronomers have written

countless pages on the same subject, and basically have told us nothing that is not contained in these thirty-one verses.

Instead, they have done much to confuse and distort the facts as they are now becoming more and more recognized. Our contention is, then, that only God, who understood all the facts of Creation because he was the Master Workman, could have caused them to be written in

so few, yet meaningful, words. Even so great a geologist as the late Prof. J. D. Dana, of Yale University, asserted with great emphasis that the wisdom displayed in this chapter cannot be accounted for in any other way than to have been inspired by God, the great Architect of Creation whose work it describes.



The Beginning

The opening verse of the chapter is a simple statement of fact—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Few will deny that the heaven and the earth did have a beginning, and here we are told that the Creator was responsible for it. It does not attempt to tell us how. The Creative forces put into motion by God that brought into being the countless millions of worlds and set them spinning through space under orderly control would be quite beyond our comprehension in any case. Nor has man, even man of this so-called brain age, discovered any further information concerning Creation than the few simple words set forth in this verse. There are many theories of Creation, but they are only theories. Astronomers now think that the universe is continually expanding, but they are not sure. What seems to

be an expanding universe, may be merely the astronomers' expanding ability to see more of it.

Oh yes, modern man has acquired a great deal of information. He even knows how to split and fuse an atom, but since he does not know how to make an atom, or how atoms were made, he has nothing whereof to boast. Atoms, we are told, are the building-blocks of nature. This is doubtless true, but to know this does not take us beyond the simple statement of Genesis 1:1—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

God could have had that text read, "In the beginning, by the use of atoms, the heaven and the earth were created." But then, how much more would we have known? We would have to ask, "What is an atom?" and the real answer to this question would have been beyond our ability to understand, so the LORD knew it was better not to tantalize us with details which we could never comprehend.

From this simple statement of Genesis 1:1, we learn that the "heaven and the earth" were already in existence when the work of the six Creative days, described in the remainder of the chapter, began. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," verse 2 informs us. The earth "was," because already created, but "without form, and void," or empty. Its fixed contour, as designed by God, had not been reached. There were neither mountains nor valleys, trees nor shrubs, rivers nor oceans. It was "void," or empty of all forms of life.

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (vs. 2) The word "Spirit" used here translates a Hebrew word, the basic meaning of which is 'wind'. Its broader meaning is invisible power, and the ancients used it to describe the unseen and inexplicable power of God. The LORD tells us, then, that the shapeless, empty earth was prepared for human habitation through the exercise of his power. More than this we could not understand.

By reasoning from the known to the unknown we reach the conclusion that there are invisible forces beyond the reach of human understanding and control. While in our

modern world we believe we know more about power than did the ancients, it would perhaps be more correct to say that man has now learned just a little in the way of harnessing power. Beginning with the steam engine, and then on to the electric dynamo and motor; gasoline engines; electronics; and more recently the fission and fusion of atoms, we have witnessed the exercise of power millions of times greater than is contained in our own brawn and muscle.

Yes, we see railroad trains a mile long hauled along the tracks at sixty to two-hundred miles an hour, through the controlled use of evaporating water or burning oil; we see a giant flying machine rise from the ground carrying scores of passengers and tons of freight, and force itself through the air at from 300 to 600 miles an hour. Seeing these, and the many other modern uses of power, we say to ourselves (perhaps), How wonderful is man, and how marvelous are his creative works!

But hold! Just what has man created? Basically, nothing. He has simply learned how to use—in many instances, misuse—some of the materials which God had already created. He has learned how, in a very limited way, to use these materials without really understanding what they are, or how they were created. The molecules of iron, they say, are held together by magnetism; but what is magnetism? Oh, magnetism is an electrical energy. But what is electricity? No answer!

So on down the line from coal to hydrogen, which, when used to power bombs, might well destroy the world. Should we ask our most brilliant scientists just why, basically, these substances behave as they do, if they replied at all it would be to say they do not know, or else admit the truth, which is that they are creations of God and contain in various forms the invisible and unexplainable power of God. And, after all, how limited is man's control of divine energy which has been bottled up in the things which God has created! How helpless is man, with his gadgets, in the face of a tornado, a flood, or an electrical storm!

The 'Spirit', the power of God moved upon the face of the waters; that is, the Creative work continued, as it had begun, by the use of divine power. When we consider the amount of power that is stored up in a single atom, and realize that the Creator produced all the power of all the atoms in the countless millions of worlds which he had created, our faith can readily lay hold upon the fact that such a God could easily accomplish his design in preparing this planet for the habitation of man.

"God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (vs. 3) This is in sequence to the statement that darkness was upon the face of the waters. God's power was exercised. At his command light emerged from darkness. Where did it come from and where did the darkness go when the light took its place? Job was asked this question but could not answer, nor can our Einsteins of today. (Job 38:18-21) Beyond the fact that light thus appeared at this very early stage in the earth's preparation for man, we know little.

"God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." (vss. 4,5) Since nothing in this account has yet been said about the sun, which provides the measuring line of our twenty-four hour days, it is apparent that the LORD is here using the word 'day' in its broader scriptural application, to denote, that is, a period of time, or era, during which certain things came about. We speak, for example, of Washington's day, and Lincoln's day. The first 'day' of Creation was the period of time during which the developments described in verses 2-5 took place.

Some have mistakenly concluded that because the beginning and closing of the Creative 'days' are described as the 'evening and the morning' the reference must be to twenty-four hour sun days, but the Scriptures do not restrict us to such an interpretation. The Prophet David speaks of the entire period when sin and death reign in the earth as a 'night', saying, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."—Ps. 30:5

The 'eve' of an event looks toward its beginning, so appropriately, the beginning of each Creative day is referred to as the 'evening'. To us the evening introduces the night, which is a time of darkness, and each of the Creative days did begin in a measure of obscurity and darkness. Not until the developments designed for each period were nearing completion did the light of the 'morning' reveal the purpose of the mysterious workings of divine power during that 'day'.

The first Creative period is properly described as azoic, meaning 'lifeless'. The main development of this 'day' was the appearance of light, how and from whence, our minds cannot comprehend. The simple statement that it was accomplished by the power of God is all that we can grasp. A dog can be taught certain things, but it cannot understand all that its master does. But the fact that the dog is so limited in understanding does not prove that the things which are beyond its mental grasp are not real, or do not exist.

The Second 'Day'

"God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day." (vss. 6-8) Here is described the creation of the atmosphere surrounding the earth.

Life on earth cannot exist without air. Logically, therefore, the Creative work of this 'day' must precede the creation of life. And this marvelous arrangement of the water under the 'firmament' and the waters above the 'firmament' contributes to life through direct use of hydrogen and oxygen, in the form of water, by plants and animals. We see God's wisdom and economy again displayed in the Creative work of this day in the arrangement for the cycles of life-giving waters from the oceans to the clouds, back to earth into the oceans, and again to the clouds, that the land might be kept properly

moistened to produce the needed food for man and beast. See Job 38:25-28.

The Third 'Day'

"God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. . . . And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."—vss. 9-13

The Bible account of the work of preparing the earth for human habitation as it progressed during the third Creative epoch is corroborated by geologists. The waters under the heaven were 'gathered together' into oceans, seemingly by the buckling of the earth's surface, forming deep depressions and hills. In a sense this is easily understood, but not actually so. The earth is a spheroid. We speak of countries on the other side of the globe as being 'down under'. But really, which side of the earth is 'down' and which side is 'up'? Actually we accommodate these terms to a situation which we cannot otherwise describe.

The fact that gravity draws objects to the earth from 'down under' as well as 'up above', so 'down' is toward the center of the earth from wherever one's location on the planet may be. But what is gravity? Newton discovered the laws of gravity, but did not find out how these laws are made to function. Again we must revert to the information which God has given us; namely, that his Spirit, his power, accomplished all the Creative works. We can call it gravity if we wish, but actually it was the power of God that caused the surface of the earth to buckle, thus bringing about a separation of the sea and the land. See Job 38:8-11.

On the land left dry by the water draining off into the sea, the power of God was further exercised, and vegetation sprang forth. Findings of geologists indicate that in this early

period vegetation was extremely rank compared with later times. It is reasonable to conclude, as geologists claim, that during this period the coal beds of earth were formed, the rank, carbon-laden vegetation being buried as the earth's surface continued to buckle and tumble.

The 'herb yielding seed', and the 'fruit tree yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself', are both said to have been created 'after his kind'. This is a statement of fact. It has never been proved wrong. Both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms there are almost endless varieties of every species of plant and animal, with new varieties continually being developed; but no new species have appeared since God limited them with his Word, 'after his kind'. That this fact is stated in the first chapter of the Bible helps to establish the entire Book as being what it claims to be; that is, the inspired Word of God.

The Fourth 'Day'

"God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."—vss. 14-19

The chief development during the fourth epoch was the appearance of the sun, moon, and stars. The light prior to this was sufficient for the growth of the vegetation of the third day, such as grass, herbs, and fruit-bearing trees. The earth was then so densely surrounded with rings of vapor and gasses that sunlight could not penetrate sufficiently to make a clear distinction between day and night. It was on the fourth 'day' that the power of God operated to clear the atmosphere to make this possible.

As we have observed, Genesis 1:1 declares that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," indicating that the 'heaven', which would include the sun, moon and stars, had been created and were in existence previous to the developments which took place in the fourth 'day', or era. Verse 16 declares that God "made" two great lights, "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." While the Hebrew word here translated "made" (*asah*) is often used in the Bible to describe a work of creation, it has a much wider use which justifies the thought that what occurred on the fourth day was that the sun and moon, which had already been created, were 'caused' to rule the day and the night.

Here are a few examples of the broader scriptural use of this word: Referring to "strangers," or non-Hebrews in the Land, we are told that Solomon "set [*asah*] threescore and ten thousand of of them to be bearers of burdens." (II Chron. 2:18) Solomon did not create these men, he merely appointed or 'set' them to their tasks.

Again, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set [*asah*]." (Prov. 22:28) The reference here is not to the creating of a landmark, but to its appointment, or establishment.

The same Hebrew word is translated "appointed" in Job 14:5. The text reads, "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed [*asah*] his bounds that he cannot pass." Here the reference is to God's appointment of the maximum time man, in his fallen, sin-cursed condition, is permitted to live.

II Chronicles 24:7 is another example. The text reads, "The sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow [*asah*] upon Baalim." They did not create these "dedicated things of the house of the LORD," but "bestowed" them.

These wider uses of the Hebrew word *asah* justify us in understanding Genesis 1:16 to mean that God caused, set, or appointed "two great lights"—two great lights, that is,

which had previously been created—one to rule the day, and the other to rule the night. Not until this fourth epoch, or era, therefore, did time begin to be divided in units the length of which are determined by the sun. This is irrefutable proof that the Creative days are not twenty-four hour days, but long eras, or epochs of time.

The Fifth 'Day'

"God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day."—vss. 20-23

The power of God continued to operate. In the fifth day, or epoch, his power, or Spirit, caused the waters to "bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth." "Great whales" appeared during this era; and doubtless also it was during this time that the giant prehistoric animals were brought forth. Both fish and animals of all kinds were created 'after [their] kind'.

Again let us remind ourselves of the great importance of this expression, 'after his kind'. It is God's way of saying that in the animal kingdom, even as he stipulated concerning the vegetable kingdom, species are fixed, and that no amount of tampering by man can change them. In all the annals of history there is no recorded instance of one species, either of plant or animal life, evolving into another species. The Apostle Paul knew this, and wrote, "All flesh is not the same flesh: there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." (I Cor. 15:39) None of these can be changed.

The record of the fifth 'day' says concerning sea life that the "waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind: and every winged fowl after his kind." The spawning and hatching of fish, especially the larger varieties, requires a great deal more time than twenty-four hours. The same is true in the reproduction of birds. Yet these are shown as taking place within the fifth 'day'. We mention this because we believe it shows clearly that these Creative periods were much longer than twenty-four hours.

"God blessed them," the record states, "saying, Be fruitful and and multiply." In the great economy of God, all his sentient creatures receive his blessing. The capacity of the shellfish to appreciate life may be very limited; nevertheless to have life at all is a blessing. Thus from the very beginning of God's revelation of his designs we note that he is benevolent, kindly, and that all his works reflect, not only his wisdom and power, but also his love.

The Sixth 'Day'

"God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."—vss. 24-26

The sixth Creative 'day', or epoch, witnessed a further development of animal life. In this day the domestic animals were created, as well also as the beast of the field, and the creeping thing. In verse 24 we read, "God said, Let the earth bring forth," which might suggest something less than an individual creation of the many species of animals and creeping things. The next verse, describing the same work, says that "God made the beast of the earth after his kind." The important consideration is that life in any form does not

spring forth spontaneously. From the shellfish, to man, every form of life was created by God, regardless of the methods which he may have employed.

The crowning work of the sixth day was the creation of man. Special emphasis is given to this, and more details. Indeed, it was in preparation for man that the work of all the other days of creation, including the beginning of the sixth day, was carried forward. Man was the highest order of God's earthly creation—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion."

Man was created to be king of earth, and when the great design of the Creator concerning him is complete, the earth will be filled with perfect human beings, exercising their original God-given dominion. ■

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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR APRIL 4

Raised from the Dead

KEY VERSE: *"Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord."*—John 20:18

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: John 20:1-9, 11-16, 18

THIS EXCITED ANNOUNCEMENT of Mary's must have seemed too good to be true to Jesus' disciples. Perhaps they may have thought, in her great sorrow and desire to have the Master back with them, she had become a little confused and only supposed the gardener she spoke with at the tomb was Jesus. Peter and John were able to confirm that the tomb was empty, but they themselves had not seen the angels, nor talked with the gardener. Luke, in recording this incident, says, "These words [of Mary's] seemed to them an idle tale."

But Mary did not have long to wait for her credibility to be restored. That very evening when all but one of the disciples were gathered together in a closed room for fear of the Jews, suddenly Jesus was mira-

culously in their midst in his old familiar form, and speaking with them. Many years later, the Apostle Peter, reflecting back on their elation at this confirmation of Jesus' resurrection, wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been begotten again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

When the Master was put to death their hopes had died with him, and fearing for their own lives, they were hiding in despair, not knowing what to do. Did they remember the words of Jesus who, not many days before, had told them this very situation would occur and was prophesied in the Scriptures? He had used the words of Zechariah, "Awake O sword against my shepherd, . . . smite the shep-

herd and the sheep will be scattered." (Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31) But he also hastened to assure them that the scattering would not be for long. "After I am risen, again I will go before you into Galilee." — Matt. 26:32

These thoughts must have flooded their minds, and their hearts leaped for joy as Jesus stood there, alive, in their midst. Even though he looked the same as always, they began to realize a great change had taken place. Through the unusual powers which he displayed, they could ascertain that he was no longer a man, but a mighty spirit being. How this fact must have altered their thinking. Now it would no longer seem necessary for the Lord to struggle with flesh and blood to achieve his purposes. The opposition of men and the hatred of his enemies would cease to stand in the way of the establishment of his kingdom on earth. Even the great power of Rome which had seen to his death, was no longer an obstacle. Had not Jesus said that all power in heaven and in earth would be given to him? Considering these

things their sagging spirits began to give way to renewed hope, a hope that still lived because Jesus was alive.

Today, after nearly two thousand years, this hope remains alive, passed on by those early apostles for the benefit of Jesus' followers throughout the entire Gospel Age. It is a hope rooted in the belief that his kingdom will be set up in power and great glory, and its assurance grounded in the fact that Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

While Mary and the apostles and others saw the risen Lord in a materialized human form, Paul, who was later called to apostleship, was privileged to glimpse his person in a glorified appearance, thus confirming to us through this important teacher that not only was Jesus' resurrection an established fact, but that he was endowed with heavenly glory as well.— Acts 9:3-9

Through veritable witnesses, we have assurance that Christ was raised from the dead, and we too can live in hope through him. ■

Do as I Have Done

KEY VERSE: *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."*—John 13:15

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: John 13:1-16

WE WILL BE helped in our understanding of this scripture if we consider the circumstances under which it was said. From Luke's account we find that there was contention among the disciples when our Lord gave this lesson in true humility. Just a few days before, the mother of James and John had said to him, "Grant that these, my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on the left" in thy kingdom." (Matt. 20:21) This desire to be important seemingly had affected more than James and John, for Luke 22:24 reads: "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest."

Because of the dusty roads of Palestine, and because of the open sandals which were worn then, it was customary upon the arrival of guests, for the householder to have a ser-

vant wash their feet as an act of respect and hospitality, and also to refresh the traveler.—Gen. 18:4

On the occasion of the Master's washing the disciples' feet, the group was assembled in the 'upper room'; no host was there to welcome them, no provision had been made to make them comfortable. Apparently this question of who should be accounted the greatest had developed: none of them was willing to humble himself and perform the task of washing the feet of the others, which was usually considered a menial service. So they ate the supper, contrary to usual custom, without their feet having been washed. When the Master saw that none of the disciples was willing to wash the feet of the others, he did it.

Thus Jesus condemned the spirit of pride which had corrupted their fellowship,

and taught them that if he, the Master, was willing to serve the lesser members of the LORD's family, and to minister to their comfort in even the most menial way, they, as his followers, should be willing and glad to serve one another, also. The Master was not teaching the necessity to actually wash one another's feet. Some believe that by this act our Lord instituted a ceremony to be performed by his followers, and so they ritually wash one another's feet, but we do not share this view.

Our Master's action not only rebuked their pride, but set an example for them and for us that should apply to every affair of life: namely, that as humble disciples we should always be ready to serve not only in great matters, but also in the little affairs of life. This washing of one another's feet applies to every service, every kindness that we can render our brethren, especially along lines that will be of spiritual comfort and encouragement for, "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."—Matt. 23:11

In these words the Master was instructing his disciples that they should not be ambitious to rule—that he desired as his followers those who had more of his spirit of humility and service. If any man were to exalt himself, they were to have correspondingly a lower esteem for him; for "he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The LORD will send the experiences which will exalt or abase, and it is for us to show our appreciation where we see the right principles in operation. Whoever manifests more of the spirit of Christ is to be highest in our esteem. Whoever has less of the spirit of Christ is to be lower in our esteem. These characteristics are to be quietly observed by us.

Today there is no need for the custom of the washing of feet. But the lesson of the spirit of humility which our Master taught by washing his disciples' feet at a time when this service meant so much, should still be heeded by every follower of the Lord Jesus. ■

To Love Is to Serve

KEY VERSE: *“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep.”—John 21:17*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *John 21:12-22*

IN ONE OF his appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, Jesus interviewed Peter. The account is given in our key verse. Peter was grieved by having his love questioned three times. Even though Peter had endeavored to prevent Jesus' crucifixion, no animosity was rankling in his heart because he had not been permitted to have his own way.

And now that he was assured that his Master had been raised from the dead, his love and devotion was more deep-rooted than ever. However, although given the commission to feed the Master's sheep, with what should he feed them? What message should he give them? At this time Peter did not know where he stood himself in the divine plan,

nor did he know what course the messianic cause would take.

Continuing the conversation, Jesus did give Peter some valuable information, saying, “When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”—John 21:18

John observes, “This spake he [Jesus], signifying by what death he [Peter] should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.” (vs. 19) The cross is used as symbol of the sacrificial death of the Christian, during the whole period of his consecrated service, even unto death. Jesus took up

the literal cross only a few hours before his death, but he carried the symbolic cross during the entire course of his earthly ministry.

Peter had learned by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead that the crucifixion was not the tragedy he had felt it would be. He had not yet grasped the full import of the crucifixion, but his heart was being prepared for the final lesson that would give him this understanding, which was the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. A great miracle occurred at Pentecost which was the opening of the minds and hearts of Peter and the other apostles to the real meaning of Jesus' death, and the part they would now be privileged to share in the out-working of the divine plan of redemption.

Before his crucifixion Jesus had said: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26) And how wonderfully this was fulfilled! Take the case of Peter

who had so determinedly resisted the crucifixion of Jesus simply because he did not understand its necessity. After receiving the Holy Spirit we find him declaring the great fact of the resurrection to his audience, and besides, quoting prophecies from the Old Testament which foretold both his death and his resurrection.—Acts 2:22-33

Had Peter, prior to the crucifixion, understood this, he would have known that the redemption of mankind from death depended upon the death of Jesus, and also upon his resurrection. But this understanding came through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. While the Master was teaching Peter valuable heart lessons previous to this, it was not until he received the revealing power of the Holy Spirit that the whole matter opened up to him. His heart responded to this glorious unfolding of the truth, and he was fully 'converted'—converted, that is, to a knowledge and heart appreciation of the vital necessity of sacrifice in the out-working of the divine plan for human salvation. ■

The Bread of Life

KEY VERSE: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*—John 6:51

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: John 6:35-51

JESUS DID NOT always draw a lesson from the miracles which he performed, but following the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, he did. Many feigned interest in serving God and asked what they might do. Jesus' reply was direct and well in keeping with the circumstances. "This is the work of God," he said, "that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." They had partaken of material food which Jesus had provided, but had given little or no consideration as to who he might be, or the import of his presence in Israel. The blessings they had received at his hands were of a temporary nature, and they could expect nothing better except upon the basis of genuine belief in him as the Messiah.

John explains that Jesus came to his own, but they re-

ceived him not—except the few. These few he gave the power or authority to become the sons of God. (John 1:11,12) Faith in God and in those whom he uses in the carrying out of his plan is always essential in order to be pleasing to him. This was especially true in the case of Jesus at the First Advent. The position of the entire nation of Israel depended upon their acceptance of the Messiah. The entire history of this people had been largely one of unbelief and disobedience, yet they were still God's chosen people to whom the Messiah first presented himself.

But this was to be the final test. No matter what claims they made of holiness, or how loyal to Moses and the prophets they pretended to be, nothing they could do now would merit God's favor except this one thing, which

was to believe that Jesus was their Messiah and obediently follow his leadership.

They had already seen sufficient of Jesus' miracles to convince any reasonable mind that he was what he claimed to be. But these seekers after loaves and fishes asked him what sign he could give that would warrant their believing on him. They said that their fathers had been given manna to eat in the wilderness; and that this had been considered bread from heaven. These unbelieving Jews sought to minimize the miracle of feeding the five thousand and thus excuse their unbelief.

Patiently, however, Jesus continued to explain that those who ate manna in the wilderness were all dead, which proved that it was not the real bread from heaven which gives everlasting life. Jesus explained that he himself was that real bread from heaven, the one whom his Heavenly Father had provided to give life to all mankind. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him," Jesus further ex-

plained. And again, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Jesus' own disciples found this "a hard saying." When he saw that they were in danger of being stumbled by it he explained the matter further.

"The flesh profiteth nothing," he said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," or giveth life. And then, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) We are not to get the thought that the literal eating of his flesh would be of profit, for there were no magic powers in the tissues of his body.

No one can have everlasting life in a state of alienation from God. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) Jesus lived 'by the Father' because he obeyed his will, and was therefore at one with him; and likewise those who eat his flesh by believing and obeying the same divine will as expressed through the Word of truth will live together with Jesus; by faith now, and actually on the divine plane with him in the kingdom. ■

“If Christ Be Not Risen”

*“Now is Christ risen from the dead,
and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”*

—1 Corinthians 15:20

IN OUR TEXT, the Apostle Paul informs us that in his resurrection Jesus became the ‘firstfruits’ of them that ‘slept’ in death. Thus we are reminded of the fact that the Christian hope of life beyond the grave is based upon the promises of God to restore the dead to life. We are also reminded that the Christian religion is the only one which does teach the resurrection. Necessarily this is the case, and for the very obvious reason that no other religion admits the reality of death. All other religions claim that there is no death. Certainly, if there is no death there can be no resurrection of the dead. The vast majority of those who profess faith in the Christian religions, however, do not believe in the reality of death. Like the heathen, they insist that death is merely the gateway into another form or cycle of life.

But this heathen philosophy is not in agreement with the writings of the Apostle Paul. He wrote, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” (I Cor. 15:17,18) The word ‘perish’ is a very strong one. The Greek word from which it is translated means to ‘destroy fully’. That which is destroyed fully is no longer in existence. Such is the state of the dead, and such would continue to be the state of the dead unless there were a resurrection. No wonder the Apostle Paul wrote, “If Christ be not risen. then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God.”—I Cor. 15:14,15

"Your faith is vain," wrote Paul, "if there be no resurrection of the dead." Have we ever analyzed the desolating implications of this statement? A vain faith would be an empty, useless faith—a faith that would have no foundation, nothing to justify it. It would be like having faith that we could be cast into the depth of the sea without being drowned, or be pierced through the heart with a knife without being injured. "The just shall live by faith," the Bible tells us, but who could live by a 'vain' faith? (Heb. 10:38) There would be no life-giving virtues in a vain faith.

The Christian's faith is based upon the promises of God, but of what value are those promises if there is to be no resurrection of the dead? Jesus told the Sadducees that the resurrection of the dead was implied when God identified himself to Moses at the burning bush as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," for, Jesus explained, "he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." (Exod. 3:6; Luke 20:37,38) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, yea, the LORD's people in every age, 'live unto him', even in death—not because there is no death, but because there is to be a resurrection of the dead.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets believed that there would be a resurrection of the dead. They worshiped and served Jehovah because they had confidence in his promises that in his own due time he would bless all the families of the earth, by restoring them to life, and giving them an opportunity to live forever on a perfected earth. It was their faith in God and in these promises that gave them the courage and strength to endure "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and



goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11: 36-40

These suffering, but faithful servants of God did not receive the fulfillment of the promises God made to them. They did not expect to receive them in this life. They endured, not for present advantage, but for a future reward. They suffered and died, refusing to accept deliverance at the hands of their enemies, "that they might obtain a better resurrection." (vs. 35) But how vain all this suffering would have been 'if there be no resurrection of the dead!' What a mockery God would thus have made of their faith! How utterly useless their faith would have been!

Think of David's position—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." (Ps. 23:4) David could say this because he had faith that no matter what happened then, eventually he would "dwell in the house of the LORD forever"—that wonderful 'house' in which Jesus said there were "many mansions." (Ps. 23:6; John 14:2) David expected to be resurrected from the dead and dwell in God's earthly 'mansion'. But David's faith and faithfulness were 'vain' if there were no resurrection of the dead.

Take the case of the three young Hebrews whom Nebuchadnezzar threatened to cast into a burning fiery furnace if they refused to bow down and worship the image which he had set up. Their defiant reply to the king was, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."—Dan. 3:17,18

God 'will deliver us out of thine hand, O king'. The three Hebrews were not sure just how their God, Jehovah, would

do this. But they had faith to believe that he was abundantly able to fulfill all his good promises, and would do so. Knowing this, they were willing to leave themselves in his hands regardless of the immediate outcome of their defiance to the king, because they believed that if it was the will of their God for them to perish in the flames of the burning fiery furnace, they would be brought forth from death in that 'better' resurrection promised. (Heb. 11:35) But what if there be no resurrection of the dead? Then their faith also was vain.

The "Joy" Set Before Him

In Jesus, who in the resurrection became the firstfruits of them that slept, we have the most wonderful of all examples of a genuine, strength-providing, living faith in the resurrection of the dead. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [in death]," was the expression of his faith—that the Heavenly Father would raise him from the dead. "Thou wilt show me the path of life," continues the prophecy concerning Jesus, "in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Ps. 16:10,11

In Hebrews 12:2 the Apostle Paul wrote concerning Jesus that for the "joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Thus Paul confirms the fulfillment of Psalm 16:11, that Jesus was shown the "path of life," and that in the resurrection he was highly exalted to the right hand of the throne of God where, in the presence of his loving Heavenly Father, there would be 'joy', or 'pleasures', forevermore. For Jesus, even as for all of his footstep followers, the 'path of life' is the "narrow way" that "leadeth unto life." (Matt. 7:14) Jesus was not only shown this 'way' but was given strength to walk therein, with no small part of that strength stemming from his faith in the promises of his God, which were not to leave his soul in hell, but to restore him to life in the resurrection.

Jesus hung upon the cross suffering agonies, but with a strong faith he looked up to his Father, saying, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," my life. (Matt. 27:46; Luke

23:46) Jesus committed his entire life to God in the unshakable faith that it would be restored to him in the resurrection. And we know that Jesus' faith was not in vain, for we have the blessed assurance that now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. But think of what a great tragedy it would have been for Jesus to have exercised a faith like that, had it been a vain faith!

Precious Promises

In the upper room the night before Jesus was crucified, his disciples were saddened by the remarks he made, which they properly understood to mean that he expected to leave them. Then Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:13

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me," said Jesus. How misplaced their faith in Jesus would have been, and in the Father also, 'if so be that the dead rise not'. 'I go to prepare a place for you'. Yes, I am going away, but it is for your sake that I go. After I have prepared a 'place' for you, I will return. Then I will take you to myself, and you can be with me. But how 'vain' would have been this promise if Jesus had not been raised from the dead. How could a dead Savior go away to prepare a place for his disciples? And how could he return and receive them unto himself, if his soul, his life, had been left in hell, in death?

"These things I have spoken unto you," Jesus said to his disciples, "that in me ye might have peace." (John 16:33) But how shallow would have been this peace had the promises Jesus made to his disciples all been voided by his remaining in the tomb! Jesus knew that his followers, his disciples, would have tribulation in the world. Jesus himself had tribulation in the world. The religious world was even then about to crucify him. "But be of good cheer," he said, "I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

Jesus had turned his back upon the world and all that the world had to offer, because he believed the promises of his Heavenly Father to raise him from the dead and to exalt him to his own right hand. Because of these promises he had sacrificed all things earthly, and had laid up for himself treasures in heaven. But these treasures would be of no more value than empty bubbles should he not be raised from the dead. Jesus asked the question as to what it would profit a man to gain the whole world, yet lose his own soul or life. (Matt. 16:26) But it would be even a greater tragedy to give up the world, sacrificing everything in the service of God, and then lose life besides, because of not being raised from the dead. Paul reached the proper conclusion when he said, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die"—that is, let us get out of life what we can, "if the dead rise not." —I Cor. 15:32

Why should we suffer persecution and tribulation in the world by being faithful to the LORD and to the truth, if there is to be no resurrection of the dead? Instead of being of good cheer in the world despite its opposition, we would be, as Paul expressed it, "false witnesses of God," and "of all men most miserable." (I Cor. 15:15) "But now *is* Christ risen from the dead." (vs. 20) This is the great fact that transforms what otherwise would be a 'vain' faith, into a blessed and comforting assurance that gives us real hope, not in this life of vanity, but in that which is to come—a faith that enables us to 'see' the invisible things of God, the things which are truly important, weighty and enduring.

Trials Worthwhile

When we consider the great truth that Christ *is* risen from the dead, our faith, too, is strengthened greatly. Indeed, how could we ever forget this great truth, which is a mystery to the majority of the world? We pledge that we will never forget, but keep it before our hearts and minds as a precious incentive to faithfulness! Every precious promise of God is made sure by the fact that Jesus became the firstfruits of them that slept. "Else," or, if this is not true, "what shall they

do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" (I Cor. 15:29) "Know ye not," Paul wrote, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:3-5

We are invited to suffer and die with Jesus that we might live and reign with him. What an inconceivable privilege! But, in faith, we accept this invitation. We are 'buried' with him, in faith, believing that we will be resurrected to live with him. But how could this be if Jesus himself was not raised from the dead?

Not only so, but being co-sacrificers with Jesus prepares us to share with him in the great future work of blessing the entire dead world of mankind. Thus our death baptism is a baptism which will accrue to the benefit of all the dead world of mankind. As Paul explained, we are being 'baptized for the dead'. But why should we be thus baptized with Jesus, suffering and dying as he did, and on behalf of the dead world, 'if the dead rise not at all?' Obviously, we would be wasting our time, and worse.

"Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" Paul asked, "if the dead rise not at all." (I Cor. 15:29,30) To Paul, practically every hour was one of danger and threat so far as his flesh was concerned. All of this could have been avoided—in fact, would have been avoided—but for the glorious vision of truth given to Paul on the Damascus Road, assuring him that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead. "He was seen of me also, as one born out of due time," Paul testified. (I Cor. 15:8) He knew then, and more clearly as the truth continued to unfold to him, that because Jesus was raised from the dead, all those who suffered and died with him would also be raised from the dead. This being true, it was worthwhile—yes, a thousand times worthwhile—to 'stand in jeopardy every hour'.

The death of the flesh meant little or nothing to Paul, since he was assured that in the resurrection he would receive divine life. Being warned by the Holy Spirit that bonds and imprisonment awaited him in Jerusalem, the brethren, with tears, endeavored to dissuade Paul from going into this dangerous spot. In reply he said, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."—Acts 21:13

Paul was willing and ready to suffer and to die at Jerusalem because he had absolute confidence in the promises of God to resurrect the dead—to raise up the faithful followers of Jesus in the first resurrection—to live and to reign with Christ, and to restore the world to life in the general resurrection which, as Martha testified, would take place in the "last day."—John 11:24

Paul was particularly energized by the promises pertaining to the 'first resurrection' to the divine nature. To have a part in this would be to share in Christ's resurrection—a glorious hope indeed. Nothing in the present life could compare with the fulfillment of this hope. He was willing to suffer, and did suffer the "loss of all things," he said, "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto *the* resurrection of *the* dead."—Phil. 3:8,10,11

Paul knew that the promises of the resurrection were sure because Jesus had been raised from the dead, and had become the 'firstfruits of them that slept'. The assurance of a resurrection was not only for the followers of Jesus, but for the entire world of mankind as well. As Paul said to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, God has given assurance unto all in that he has raised Jesus from the dead. (Acts 17:31) Few of the Athenians believed what Paul said concerning the resurrection of the dead. "Some mocked," we read, "and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." (Acts 17:32) But it was not so with Paul. It is not so with the true disciples of Christ today. Christ *is* risen from the dead, and both the

church and the world are to be raised from the dead. This brings every trying experience of life into proper perspective, and gives us a true sense of values when estimating the worth of the trivial earthly things which we have the privilege of sacrificing in the LORD's service. It helps us to realize that even the severest trials of life are but light afflictions, and of momentary duration, compared with the 'eternal weight of glory' which will be ours in the first resurrection if we continue faithfully to lay down our lives in the service of our God.—II Cor. 4:17

From the prison in Rome, and in the shadow of the executioner's axe, Paul wrote to Timothy, "It is a faithful saying; For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." (II Tim. 2:11,12) Yes, it was a 'faithful saying' that those who died with Jesus would live with him. It is a 'faithful saying' because it is the promise of God, and as Jeremiah wrote, addressing Jehovah, "Great is thy faithfulness." (Lam. 3:23) We can depend upon the LORD. He never changes. He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever," even as it is written of Jesus.—Heb. 13:8

Jesus trusted the Heavenly Father—"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," he said. His faith was not in vain. Jesus was raised from the dead. And if we needed more than the promises of God to give us assurance, we have this miracle of miracles as a further testimony of his faithfulness. Thus every 'faithful saying' of our Heavenly Father, assuring us of divine life with Jesus, is made doubly sure by the fact that the Creator's mighty power was exercised "when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavens; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."—Eph. 1:20,23

"How say some among you," Paul asked the brethren at Corinth, "that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (I Cor.

15:12) How could anyone hold a view like this since Christ was raised from the dead? Yes, Christ *is* raised from the dead. Therefore, our faith is not vain; nor is our preaching vain. In testifying that God raised Jesus from the dead we are not 'false witnesses'. Since Christ was raised from the dead, we are not in our sins, for he was raised for our justification. Throughout the age, those who fell asleep in Christ did not perish. Those who die in Christ now do not perish, but, their resurrection takes place instantly—they are changed into the divine nature, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."—I Cor. 15:51,52

Because Jesus was raised from the dead, as soon as all his body members have proved faithful unto death and have been exalted to glory and immortality, "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (vss. 54,55) The 'saying' of the prophets, and of Jesus, and of the apostles, that there will be, as Peter stated it, "times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21) in which mankind will be resurrected from the dead, is also 'faithful' because God hath spoken it. It is his promise, his saying, and was guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus.

Since our faith and our preaching would be 'vain' were it not that Jesus had been raised from the dead, think of what the fact that he has been raised should mean in our Christian lives! Do we give this the serious thought that we should? Has this great truth actually revolutionized our lives? Or, having learned about it, and having professed to believe it, do we go along in life as does the world in general, believing the most revolutionizing fact of all history without having our own way of life changed? Are we walking in newness of life, while being baptized into his death? Have old things passed away, and have all things become new?

These are questions which we all might well ask ourselves every day, and take time to contemplate the glorious fact that "now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept," and how the knowledge of this truth should change our lives. ■

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 Pittsburgh WCXJ 1550 3:00 p.m.
 Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

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

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 AM 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KUDY 1280 9:45 a.m.
 Tacoma KAMT 1360 10:15 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWA 1170 6:30 p.m.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee WNOV 85.6 7:00 a.m.
 Jackson WYLO 540 5:15 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES WHICH ARE MADE FREQUENTLY.

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

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

SASKATCHEWAN

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

Angola and Zambia

Radio Africa #2 (Thurs.)	9:00 a.m.
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Argentina (Spanish)

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

Brazil (Portuguese)

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

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

Chile (Spanish)

Concepcion	Unica FM 105.5	10:15 a.m.
Santiago (Sat) Radio Panamericana	CB 142	10:00 a.m.

China

Hong Kong Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)	6:00 p.m.
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Kenya & Uganda

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

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

Whakatane	IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

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

Panama City	HOQ 1250	6:15 p.m.
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Peru (Spanish)

Trujillo	FM 105.7	9:30 a.m.
		10:00 p.m.

Philippines

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

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

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

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

Montevideo Radio El Espectador	810	9:15 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS PROGRAMS

United States:

New Jersey Cable TV—Programs are shown every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. EST.

Canada:

Programs are shown every Sunday morning. Consult your local newspaper for the station in your area.

Atlantic Time—10:30 a.m.

Eastern Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—8:30 a.m.

Mountain Time—7:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.

Keystone Inspirational Network Every Sunday Morning

11:30 a.m. EST—10:30 a.m. CST—9:30 a.m. MST—8:30 a.m. PST

CALIFORNIA

Palm Springs	TV20
29 Palms	TV 25
Hemet	TV 53
Sacramento	TV62

DELAWARE

Wilmington	TV 14
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FLORIDA

Pensacola	TV12
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GEORGIA

Tifton	TV5
Rome	TV56

IDAHO

Cottonwood	TV39
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LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge	TV52
Lake Charles	TV63
Crawley	TV65

MARYLAND

Leonardtown	TV52
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OHIO

Findlay	TV6
Marietta	TV26
Bucyrus	TV54

PENNSYLVANIA

Coudersport	Cable 66
Williamsport	TV5
Lancaster	TV49
York	TV49

SOUTH CAROLINA

Monks Corner	Cable 6
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SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls	TV48
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TENNESSEE

Union City	TV9
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TEXAS

Falfurrias	TV7
Corpus Christi	TV55

NEWFOUNDLAND

Harbour Grace	TV25
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The Joy Set Before Us

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

—Hebrews 12:2

THE EPISTLE TO the Hebrews was written to a group of disciples who needed special encouragement. In reality this is true of all the followers of the Master. It is a narrow, difficult way in which we walk. There are trials and besetments on every hand—passionate struggles within and fightings without. Satan as a ‘roaring lion’ goes about seeking whom he may devour. His ‘roars’ are indeed frightening unless, by the ear of faith, we can hear above them the reassuring promises of God to protect and keep his ‘little ones’ under the shadow of his wings.

Satan is ever seeking to discourage us, but the Heavenly Father in his love has provided various means of encouragement, and one of these is referred to in our text. Its first application in this age of the ‘high calling’ was to Jesus. “For the joy that was set before him,” Paul wrote, Jesus endured the cross and despised the shame.

In laying down his life Jesus was almost constantly confronted with circumstances which would have discouraged him but for his Father’s help. Many were the promises which lifted him above the trials incident to his work of sacrifice. Among these trials were the shame and the ignominy which were heaped upon him, especially in connection with his trial and crucifixion.

But through it all Jesus experienced a compensating joy. It was the joy of anticipation, described in the text as the joy

that was set before him'. Jesus did not serve his Heavenly Father in order to obtain a reward, nor should we. Yet the promises of God assuring Jesus of a reward were a great source of strength to him which, as Paul declares, enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame. This also is true of the followers of Jesus.

And what was the 'joy' that was set before Jesus? It was, we think, a two-fold joy, one aspect of which is referred to in our text, in which Paul says that Jesus is now 'set down at the right hand of the throne of God'. This evidently refers to the fulfillment of the promise recorded in the 16th Psalm. In this psalm the death and resurrection of Jesus are prophesied, with the personification of Jesus by David speaking in the prophecy. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," Jesus is represented as saying, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—vss. 10,11

Yes, as Jesus here testifies, fullness of joy was set before him—the joy of being in the actual presence of his Heavenly Father—where at his 'right hand' he knew there would be 'pleasures for evermore'. It was the anticipation of this joy that enabled Jesus to endure the cross. He knew that the cross would lead to glory, to the 'right hand of the throne of God', where there would be 'fulness of joy' and 'pleasures for evermore'.

And that same joy is set before us. Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:21) Like Jesus, we do not serve for reward, yet to realize the joy that awaits us when we have finished our course is a great encouragement when the road is rough, and the trials severe.

There was another great joy set before Jesus. This is referred to in Isaiah 53. In this chapter Jesus' suffering and death are prophesied. He is referred to as a "lamb" that is led "to the slaughter." His suffering and death are described as the "travail" of his "soul." The prophecy states that he

would be "satisfied" with the results of this travail, satisfied because he would see his "seed."

This is highly symbolic language which stated in plain phrase means that as a result of Jesus' sacrificial death he will have the privilege of giving life to the whole dead world of mankind, which thus will become his "seed." No wonder he will be satisfied with the travail of his soul!

This prophecy also states that the "pleasure of the LORD" would "prosper" in the hands of Jesus. This is simply stating Jehovah's viewpoint of that with which Jesus is 'satisfied'. The pleasure of the LORD in sending Jesus into the world to be the Redeemer and Savior of mankind is in the fact that thereby fallen man is given an opportunity to live forever during what Peter describes as "times of restitution of all things." This "pleasure of the LORD," Peter declared, had been spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:19-21

We see, then, that in addition to the joy of anticipating the privilege of spending eternity with his Heavenly Father, the great joy of restoring the dead world of mankind to life was another powerful incentive to faithfulness which enabled Jesus to endure the cross and despise the shame and ignominy heaped upon him as he was laying down his life for the sins of the world. This joy is also set before us. We are promised that together with Jesus, as the 'seed' of Abraham, we will have the privilege of blessing all the families of the earth.—Gal. 3:8,16,27-29

Details of Joy

In the chapter from which our text is taken, Paul outlines a number of details of the great joy that awaits every faithful follower of the Master who continues to look to him as the author and finisher of his faith. He mentions the miraculous things which occurred at the inauguration of the typical Law Covenant, explaining, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched." (Heb. 12:18) The translators have added the word "might" in this text. Actually, as we learn from

Exodus 19:12,13, the people were not permitted to touch the mountain at all. They merely "approached unto" it.

So, in like manner, as Paul indicates, we are now "come unto [*Greek*, "approached"] Mount Sion." We have not actually entered into Mount Sion, even as the people did not enter into the mountain in Moses' day. But by faith we have approached thereunto, and can contemplate some of the joys which will be ours when exalted with our Lord to be with him in the antitypical Sion. Thus we are encouraged to press on and not become weary in well-doing.

"Sion," or "Zion," is one of the Bible's symbols of the spiritual phase of the kingdom in which we are promised a share. Our association with Jesus in Mount Sion is shown in Revelation 14:1-4. Here we read of a "Lamb" standing on "Mount Sion," and "with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Verse 4 declares that "these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb." To 'stand' by faith before Mount Sion means an expectancy of being with the Lamb and sharing his exalted position in the kingdom. During the thousand years of the kingdom the entire dead world of mankind, awakened from the sleep of death, will "come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10) These "come to Zion," not to share in the rulership of the kingdom, but to receive the blessings of life which the kingdom will provide. If faithful, we will be the 'firstfruits unto God', but 'afterward', and during the kingdom reign, all will be awakened, the "ransomed of the LORD shall return" and "come to Zion"—of which we will be a part—"with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." What a joy is thus set "before us"!—I Cor. 15:22-26

The "Heavenly Jerusalem"

Paul adds that we have approached unto the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. 12:22) This is

another symbol of the kingdom (Rev. 21:2,9,10) In the Sion symbolism the Lamb is particularly mentioned, with the 'hundred forty and four thousand' 'with' him, whereas the heavenly city symbol seems specially to emphasize the glory of the 'bride', the Lamb's wife.

Literal Mount Zion was actually Capital Hill in ancient Jerusalem, so both symbolisms blend into one and assure us that if we are faithful we will participate with Jesus in that glorious kingdom in the light of which all mankind will walk and be blessed. What an incentive this should be to continue following the Lamb! What courage and strength it should give us to 'endure the cross', as daily we are crucified with Christ!

The Angels

Paul continues, "And to an innumerable company of angels." (vs. 22) This is a reference to those marvelous spirit beings who serve the followers of Jesus as guardian angels. Paul mentions them in the opening chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. Concerning God's use of the angels, Paul wrote, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." And again, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"—Heb. 1:7,14

The angels ministered to Jesus. In Gethsemane he said to Peter that, if he wished, he could ask the Father, and the Father would send twelve legions of angels to protect him. (Matt. 26:53) Speaking of the angels at another time, Jesus said that they "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) In this instance Jesus used the expression, 'their angels', the angels who minister to God's 'little ones'.

From what the Bible reveals with respect to God's use of the holy angels in dealing with his servants on earth, it is evident that one or more of these holy, invisible 'ministers' are constantly at attention shaping divine providences for the best spiritual interests of all those who 'follow the Lamb'. How marvelous it will be when exalted to the divine nature to be able to see and fellowship with those who have had so

much to do in guiding and helping us as we walked in the narrow way of sacrifice!

There are outstanding experiences in the life of every Christian—times of great trial and moments of unspeakable joy. At times the trials threaten to overwhelm the soul. The Heavenly Father seems to hide his face. Through tears we look up to him in prayer, and in his due time, when he sees we have learned the needed lesson, the darkness scatters, and once more we are on the mountain top of joy. This change did not just happen. No, the angels, who always behold the face of our Heavenly Father, and who know exactly what his will is for us at all times, are present to change our sorrow to joy, our darkness to light. Now we are looking ahead, unto this great joy, the joy of meeting and being with an innumerable company of angels.

The "General Assembly"

By faith we also see the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." (vs. 23) According to *Professor Strong*, the Greek words here translated "general assembly" literally mean a 'mass meeting'. Paul is thus emphasizing that the church of the firstborn is a large group, a more comprehensive company than 'the church which is his body'. And indeed it is.

The 'church of the firstborn' is the entire spiritual class called out from the world during the Gospel Age. The expression firstborn takes our minds back to God's dealings with typical Israel when the tribe of Levi was substituted for the firstborn of the nation. Antotypically, the firstborn would be those foreshadowed by the tribe of Levi. The whole tribe of Levi served the other tribes in the things pertaining to God and their worship of God. When Canaan was divided among the other tribes, the tribe of Levi received no inheritance. The priests of Israel were of the tribe of Levi, being special servants in the Tabernacle, in the offering of sacrifices. Thus, in the tribe of Levi, which took the place of Israel's firstborn, we have a general type of the spiritual class in the kingdom.

If we continue faithfully to lay down our lives in sacrifice, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, we can look forward to participating in that general assembly—that glorious ‘mass meeting’ beyond the veil. There we will meet all who have suffered and died upholding the banner of truth and witnessing for Jesus and for the Word of God.

Jesus will then, even as now, be the Head of the church. What a joy it will be to participate in a mass meeting over which he will preside! In that gathering there will also be the apostles. How grand it will be to meet those whose experiences have so often thrilled us when reading about them in the sacred Word! We think of Peter at Pentecost and in the home of Cornelius: how he was delivered from prison by an angel and the iron gate opened “of his own accord.”—Acts 12:10

We think of Paul in the various trying and joyous experiences through which he passed—his imprisonment with Silas in Philippi; his testimony before kings and rulers; the times he was mobbed and almost killed; his shipwreck on the way to Rome; the two years he spent as a prisoner in his own hired house in Rome. How wonderful it will be to learn more of the details of these experiences and have Paul tell us his own personal reactions to them, his assurance that they were all working together for his highest spiritual good.

And there are many at this end of the age whom we have known personally, who were loved by all who have been blessed through their ministry. Each one of us has known one or more who have been especially near and dear to us. They will all be there in that general assembly. Surely the anticipated joy of such a meeting should do much to help us endure the cross, for, “How light our trials then will seem, how short the pilgrim way,” as the words of the familiar hymn remind us.

“God the Judge of All”

“God, the Judge of all.” (vs. 23) We can now appreciate only in part the joy it will mean to see our Heavenly Father face to face. We know that in his presence there will be

fullness of joy, because the joy he is giving us now through his precious Word of truth is so deep and genuine.

Our finite minds are incapable of realizing fully what it will mean to be ushered into the actual presence of our loving Heavenly Father. We know that he loves us. His eyes are ever watching over us, and his ear is ever attuned to our cries for help in time of need. He holds us in his hands and will not suffer our feet to be moved from the paths of righteousness if we continue to give ear to his words, the words behind us, which, when we turn to the right or the left, say, "This is the way, walk ye in it."—Isa. 30:21

We know that God loves us because we have been called according to his purpose. We know that he is causing all things to work together for our good. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "It is God that justifieth." "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—Rom. 8:28-34

But when we have completed our earthly pilgrimage and have been ushered into the actual presence of God, we will no longer need to have intercession made for us. With rapture we shall then behold him whose love has lifted us out of the miry pit of sin and death, cared for us, through Christ forgiven us, and by his power exalted us to his own glorious nature so that we can know him even as we have been known by him.

"Just Men Made Perfect"

We also envision "the spirits of just men made perfect." (vs. 23) This seems to be a reference to the Ancient Worthies, those who will constitute the ruling class of the earthly phase of the kingdom of Christ, the earthly Jerusalem of Micah 4:1-4. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, Paul tells of the faith and obedience of these, of how they endured trial and persecution that they might obtain a "better resurrection." He explains that they "without us" could not be "made perfect."—vss. 35,40

Following the completion of the 'first resurrection', and probably also after the resurrection of the 'great multitude' to complete the 'mass meeting' in glory—the general assembly of the church of the firstborn—the Ancient Worthies will be resurrected to perfection of human nature on the earth. And what a marvelous group it will be! Their true virtues of character and of human perfection will be fully appreciated at first only by those in the spiritual phase of the kingdom.

Think of that wonderful company of sacrificing servants of God which Paul presents in chapter 11 of this epistle. Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice; Enoch walked with God; Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house; Abraham obeyed, and he went out, not knowing where he went; through faith Sarah herself received strength to conceive.

Elijah challenged the priests of Baal. The three young Hebrews defied King Nebuchadnezzar and were cast into the fiery furnace. Daniel ignored the edict of Darius, and was thrown into a den of lions. The spirit of all these faithful servants was expressed in principle by the three Hebrews who told the king that their God whom they served was able to deliver them, but that even if he did not deliver them, they would not bow down to the king's image.

In the kingdom, all of these will be restored and will be the representatives of the Christ in glory. What a joy it will be to see them! In the spirit of their minds they were always loyal to the LORD, but then when they have been made actually perfect, they will be able to render the sort of service they always longed to accomplish, but were hindered by their imperfections. Another of the joys set before us is to contemplate "the spirits of just men made perfect."

Jesus the Mediator

Paul continues, "And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant." Just as we have not yet actually come to the general assembly, nor the innumerable company of angels, nor entered into the presence of God the Judge of all, and the Ancient Worthies have not been resurrected, so we have not yet come to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant.

But we have this great joy of anticipation and we are looking forward to the time when, together with him as glorified ministers of the New Covenant, we will share in the work of writing its laws in the hearts of all mankind, Jews and Gentiles.

And it is well to think of the superlative joy of being personally and intimately associated with Jesus as he mediates the New Covenant. He has been our Advocate, and in his name we have prayed to our Heavenly Father. He has been the Captain of our salvation, our Leader, our forerunner. He has been our Head, and his will has been our will. He has been our Friend. What a Friend, indeed, we have in Jesus! He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely, and we have the glorious hope of seeing him face to face. Surely we can say, "Fade, fade, each earthly joy," as we realize that soon we will be in the actual presence of him who is even now so precious to us!

"The Blood of Sprinkling"

Paul adds, we have also approached unto "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (vs. 24) This statement is meaningful only from the standpoint of the divine plan of redemption and salvation. In itemizing these various joys set before the followers of Jesus, it is evident that Paul is envisioning the realities into which the church will enter beyond the veil, when receiving an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This being true, we might well inquire, "What need will there then be for the blood of sprinkling?"

There will be no further need for the blood so far as the church is concerned. The blood of sprinkling is the blood of Christ which will then be used to seal the New Covenant through which the world of mankind will be blessed. The church will share with Jesus in that future work of blessing. This is one of the great joys to which we look forward.

Paul says that the "blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel." The LORD said to Cain, who murdered his brother Abel, "The voice of thy brother's blood

crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."—Gen. 4:10-12

We might say that Abel's blood cried out for vengeance upon his murderer, Cain. As a result Cain was severely punished. The earth would no longer yield its increase for him. This, symbolically, was taking away his sustenance, his life, for Cain was a tiller of the ground. Now he could no longer live by this means. Severe, indeed, was the penalty which resulted from the 'voice' of Abel's blood.

But Paul says that the 'blood of sprinkling speaketh better things' than the blood of Abel; and oh, how much better! The blood of Christ, which will be that future 'blood of sprinkling', will not cry for vengeance, but for the lifting of the condemnation which rests against all mankind because of sin. The 'voice' of Jesus' blood will ask that life be given to the people, that the 'curse' upon mankind and upon the earth be lifted.

Imagine what this will mean for the sin-cursed and dying race! The imperfect world of mankind will be restored to perfection. Those incarcerated in the great prisonhouse of death will be released. Health, joy, and life will spring forth everywhere because the 'blood of sprinkling' will have spoken with a 'voice' which will proclaim the glorious provisions of divine love for the dying race, and announce that the time has come for the fulfillment of God's promises to bless "all the families of the earth."—Gal. 3:8,16,27-29

What joy could we contemplate that would be more marvelous than this? And it is for this that we have been called, and chosen. It is to this that we will attain if we make our calling and our choosing—or election—sure by continuing to yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and in every test prove our absolute obedience to our God. Peter wrote, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."—I Pet. 1:2

Here Peter mentions two important objectives of the Christian life: (1) to learn obedience and (2) upon the basis of thus being trustworthy to be exalted to the divine nature, to share with Jesus in applying the 'blood of sprinkling'. Think of the joys that that implies! How important it is, then, that we learn obedience. This is one of the lessons which Paul emphasizes in connection with his mention of the various joys to which we are approaching. He says. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."—vs. 25

Paul identifies the one that 'speaketh' when, in the opening of his epistle he writes, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also, he made the worlds." (Heb. 1:1,2) Truly there is great weight of authority behind the promises of the glory that shall follow our service and trials here below!

Let us then "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1) Important among the 'things' are the promises which are designed to encourage and help us, as they did Jesus, to 'endure the cross and despise the shame.' It is these promises which reveal the joys which await us. It is these promises which assure us that if we do our part we will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom—that kingdom which we are even now receiving by faith, that kingdom which cannot and will not be moved.—Heb. 12:28 ■

"Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."—John 6:53

GLADLY, dear Lord, we eat (appropriate to our necessities) the merit of thy pure nature sacrificed for us—for our justification. Gladly, too, will we partake of the cup of suffering with thee, realizing it to be a blessed privilege to suffer with thee, that in due time we may also reign with thee;—to be dead with thee, that in the everlasting future we may live with thee, and be like thee and share thy love and thy glory as thy bride! Oh that we may be faithful! ■

Let Us Remember

WE RECALL THE circumstances of the first Memorial: the blessing of the bread, and of the cup, the fruit of the vine by our Lord Jesus; we remember our Lord's exhortation that these represented his broken body and shed blood; and that those who are his followers should participate—not only feeding upon him, but being broken with him—not only partaking of the merit of his blood, his sacrifice, but also in laying down their lives in his service, in cooperating with him in every and any manner. How precious these thoughts are to those who are rightly in tune with the LORD.

As we gather together this year to partake of those emblems on April 4th after 6:00 p.m, let our minds, then, follow the Redeemer to Gethsemane's Garden, and behold him with strong crying and tears, praying to him who was able to save him out of death. This was not expressive of the Master's fear of death, but rather if in some particular he might have failed to follow out the Father's plan, and therefore be thought unworthy of a resurrection. We notice how our Lord was comforted by the Father through the angelic messenger with the assurance that he had faithfully kept his consecration vow, and that he would surely have a resurrection as foretold.

We behold how calm he was thereafter, when before the High Priest, and Pilate, and before Herod, and Pilate again —“as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth” in self-defense. (Isa. 53:7) We see him faithful, courageous, to the very last, and we have his assurance that he could have asked of the Father and had more than twelve legions of angels for his protection. But instead of petitioning for aid to escape his sacrifice, his petition was for aid to

endure it faithfully. What a lesson for all his footstep followers.

On the occasion of the institution of the Memorial of his death, the Master, in his conversation with the apostles, said: "I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26:29) Our Lord was here contrasting two great days—the day of suffering, and the day of glory. This Gospel Age has been the day of suffering. The Millennial Age will be the day of glory, and is especially spoken of as "the day of Christ."—II Thess. 2:12

All the sufferings of Christ will be complete when the body of Christ shall have finished its course. The new cup of joy



was given our Lord when he was received up into glory. Then all the angels of God worshiped him. Soon our cup of joy will be given to us. Surely there was a joyous time when the sleeping saints were awakened and entered into their reward and received the cup of blessing. (See Studies in the Scriptures, Volume III, pp. 23-32,40; Volume IV, p. 622.)

And one by one those who were alive and remained at the coming of the Master are being gathered home. Undoubtedly we shall all partake of this joy with them soon, if we are faithful. We believe the fullness of joy will not be reached until all the members of Christ are with him beyond the veil. Then we shall share his throne and partake of his glory. Then with our beloved Lord we shall drink of the new wine in the kingdom; for the promise is to all his faithful saints.

With that glorious morning of the new dispensation will begin the great work of the world's release from the bonds of sin and death—the great work of uplifting. The Apostle Peter calls that great epoch, "The times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21) The thought before the minds of those who participate in this Memorial should be that expressed in the apostle's words, "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." "If we be dead with him we shall also live with him." "The sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."—Rom. 8:17; Rom. 6:8; II Tim. 2:11,12

With these thoughts in mind, may we be encouraged to keep the Memorial Supper with joy, notwithstanding the trials and difficulties we meet along the way. So doing, and continuing faithful as the followers of Jesus, very soon we shall have the great privilege and joy of sharing the work of restoration with our Lord in his kingdom.

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast."—1 Cor. 5:7

—Excerpts from Reprints, March 1, 1915 ■

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES— PART 37



The Lamb of God

JUST OUTSIDE
JERUSALEM
stood a bald,
wind-swept,
skull-shaped hill
called Golgotha.
The day was as

dark as night. Three crosses could be seen standing on top of the hill. Drawing closer, we see that on the central cross hung Jesus of Nazareth, suffering great pain and agony. Over his head a sign read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

A little distance away, some of the women who loved Jesus were gathered—his mother, and the mothers of a few of his disciples. They sat, griefstricken, weeping and confused. Soldiers who guarded the area to make sure their prisoners did not escape their sentences of death, lounged carelessly about. Some were engaged in betting games. Two thieves hung on crosses, one on either side of Jesus, also suffering the slow, painful death of Roman crucifixion.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which is to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" A few minutes later he called out once again, saying, "It is finished." These were his last words, and then he was dead.

Immediately, adding to the eerie feeling of the thick darkness of the day, there was a tremendous earthquake which shook the ground. Rocks split and cracked with a loud noise. Now when the soldiers who were watching Jesus, saw and felt and heard the earthquake, they became terrified and one of them said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"—Matthew 27:33-54

Only six days before his death, Jesus was with his friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. This was the same Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. In their restful home they served him supper, and afterwards Mary came to Jesus with some very costly and sweet smelling ointment. She knelt down by the Master and began to pour this soothing lotion on his feet, and then wiped them dry with her long hair. The house was filled with the lovely fragrance of the spikenard ointment.

One of Jesus' twelve apostles, Judas Iscariot (whom Jesus knew was the traitor who would soon betray him), spoke sharply to Mary. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence [about fifty dollars] and given to the poor?" Judas was the treasurer of the little group, and kept the bag with the money for all their expenses. "This he said, not that he cared for the poor," we are told in John 12:6, "but because he was a thief!" Jesus told Judas, "Leave her alone. She has anointed my feet for the day of my burial. The poor you have always with you, but me you have not always." He knew his time to die would be very soon.

On the following day, many people heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem for the feast, and they formed a welcoming crowd. Jesus rode on a young donkey, and as he went into the city, the people took their clothes and palm branches, and spread them on the ground in front of him for him to walk on, and they cried out, "Hosanna, save us, save us! Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the LORD!" (See Matthew 21:1-11 and John 12:12-19.) There were so many people who had come for the feast, thronging about Jesus. They had heard of him and the wonderful miracles of healing he had performed—and especially

the greatest miracle of all: his raising of Lazarus from the dead—and they came in great numbers to see this famous prophet of God! Indeed, it was this very miracle that made his enemies' bitterness deep enough to cause them to take murderous action against him. Jesus realized this would happen, but he did not let this knowledge change the course of action that would lead to his death. It was for this cause that he had come into the world! He was the Lamb of God, and only if he gave up his life would he redeem all mankind from the penalty of death. By giving up his perfect, uncondemned life, he could pay Adam's penalty for disobedience. He took the place of Adam! The Apostle Paul called this the ransom.— I Tim. 2:5,6

His enemies were the scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the people. They watched his popularity grow with envious eyes. They had failed in their attempts to slander him in the minds of the people. In all the towns of Israel the people had seen his miracles and heard his gracious and kind words. They knew he was a prophet sent of God! "Behold, the whole world is following Jesus!" the Pharisees said to one another, apprehensively. Now this huge crowd was publicly hailing him as the king of Israel who came in the name of the LORD! Something had to be done, and quickly! So they passed the word that if any man knew where Jesus was, he should come and tell them so they could seize him, arrest him, and put him to death. This was no surprise to Jesus. He had told his disciples over and over in many different ways, that his "hour had come," the hour of his death. He said, "I will not pray to God that I shall not die, for it is for this cause that I came into the world." See John 12:27.

When John the Baptist had introduced Jesus to his disciples at the time of his baptism, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Ever since Adam's son, Abel, offered the first lamb as a sacrifice to God, a lamb pictured an offering that was very acceptable to Jehovah. For thousands of years, this picture continued to show that sometime, far down in the future, Jesus, the true lamb, would come. We remember the ram, or lamb, caught

in the underbrush that Abraham offered as an acceptable sacrifice to God instead of his son, Isaac. We also recall the Passover lamb, whose blood on the doorposts of the Israelite's homes saved the firstborn from death, while all the firstborn of Egypt died! Thousands of lambs were offered on Tabernacle altars and God was well pleased with them. They all pictured Jesus. He is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8) In God's long-term plan, even as he was creating the world, he knew Adam and Eve would sin, and that there would be a need for a ransom, a lamb to be offered for sin—his precious, only begotten Son!

All the events of Jesus' last days on earth were foretold in the Old Testament prophecies. Jesus was comforted by noticing each fulfillment as it happened. One prophecy said, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has [turned] against me." (Psalm 41:9) From this scripture, and others, he knew that one of his twelve apostles would betray him. See also Zechariah 11: 12, 13, and Matthew 26:15. When Judas asked him, "Master, is it I who will betray you?" Jesus answered, "Thou hast said." Judas had already gone to the chief priests and asked them, "What will you give me if I will deliver him unto you?" and their reply was, "Thirty pieces of silver." Now Judas was certain Jesus knew he was the traitor, but nevertheless he went right ahead with his treacherous deed.

This conversation between Jesus and Judas took place during the eating of the Passover Supper. This was the feast they had all come to Jerusalem to celebrate. Jesus had asked his apostles to prepare for the feast, knowing it would be his last evening with them. They rented a room, and all twelve gathered together to eat the traditional lamb. Judas left soon after Jesus accused him of betrayal, and had told him, "What thou doest, do quickly."

After the supper was over, Jesus told his dear friends once again that he was going away. He had many wonderful things to tell them before he left. For a record of the beautiful farewell words of Jesus, see John chapters 14-17. Then he

took some of the bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and they all ate some of it. He took a cup with "fruit of the vine," blessed it, and passed it to the eleven who all drank of it. He said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26:29) They sang a hymn and went out into a garden where Jesus often prayed. At this time, he again spoke to God in prayer, while his disciples lay down and slept in the Garden of Gethsemane.

After communing with his Heavenly Father in prayer, Jesus was strengthened and refreshed. He said to his disciples, "Let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me!" And while he yet spoke, behold! Judas, one of the twelve apostles, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss that same is he: hold him fast." And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, "Hail, master," and kissed him. And Jesus said to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come!" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him away.—Matthew 26:47-50

The soldiers had surrounded the little group so quickly! They had taken hold of Jesus so roughly that one of the apostles, Peter, became very angry! He drew out his sword, and with one swift thrust he cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant, who was among the crowd. Peter was ready to fight for his Master! Jesus called out to him, "Peter, put up thy sword into its place. My Father would send me over twelve thousand angels to defend me, if I asked him! But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that this must come to pass?" See Matthew 26:50-54; John 18:11.

Then Jesus turned to the chief priests, and soldiers, and inquired of them, "Are you come out after me with your swords and staves as if I were a thief? I sat daily with you, teaching in the Temple, and you did not arrest me then!" He knew they did not dare to arrest him publicly because they feared the common people who loved Jesus and looked to him as a great prophet of God. But this scene was not ob-

served by his many followers. It took place in the middle of the night in this quiet garden where Jesus and the eleven were alone against this mob of many soldiers, priests, servants, elders, and—Judas! (verses 55,56) And then, suddenly, Jesus was all alone with his enemies because they fled, forsaking their Master.

Caiaphas, the High Priest, was waiting at his palace, although the hour was late. The chief priests and all the elders were there also, when Jesus was brusquely pushed into the room where they were gathered in expectation of his arrest. They had been certain of success in capturing Jesus that night, since Judas had promised to point him out to the soldiers. Not only did they use a traitor to trap Jesus, but they had scouted everywhere to find men willing to be about Jesus as witnesses against him at his trial. Finally they found two. Now they had to wait until morning to take Jesus to the governor, Pontias Pilate, who had the authority to pronounce the death sentence.

Early the next morning, Pilate privately questioned Jesus quite thoroughly. He found Jesus to be completely innocent of the charges made against him. Pilate pointed to the harmless, great man, Jesus, and he said to the chief priests, "Behold the man!" And then he said, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" The crowd all shouted, "Let him be crucified!" And the governor answered the mob in amazement, "Why, what evil hath he done?" But they continued to cry out the more, "Let him be crucified!" See Matthew 27:22,23.

It was plain to Pilate that he would have a dangerous disturbance to handle unless he agreed with this violent crowd. He called for a basin of water, washed his hands in the sight of everyone, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it." Then the whole gathering responded, "His blood be upon us, and on our children!" And so, reluctantly, to prevent a riot, Pilate released him to them for crucifixion.—verses 24,25

An entire band of soldiers led the kind and gentle Jesus away, like a harmless lamb to its slaughter. They whipped

him, stripped him of his clothes, and dressed him in a scarlet robe. A crown made of thorns was cruelly put upon his head, and they placed a reed for a scepter in his right hand. Then they bowed before him mocking, and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." They hit him about the head, and spit on him. All through this mistreatment he said nothing. After they tired of their harassment, they dressed him again in his own clothes, and led him away to crucify him on Golgotha's Hill.—verses 27-31

As he hung, nailed to the cross, the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, and elders of Israel looked at him and jeered at him, wagging their heads—gloating over their easy success. They used exactly the same words as Satan did when he was trying to tempt Jesus, "*If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross.*" And they mocked him, saying, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him: for he said, I am the Son of God." But Jesus ignored them. He knew he was the Son of God, and that his Father would never desert him.—Matthew 27:42,43

He repeated to himself the twenty-second psalm, which was a prophecy of his death on the cross. Everything in the psalm was being fulfilled at that very moment! Compare Psalm 22:7 with Matthew 27:39; and Matthew 27:35 with Psalm 22:18, for examples.

Jesus received great comfort—even joy—thinking about the verses in this psalm while he was going through the agony on the cross. Although the psalm begins with the words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," Jesus knew God had not "hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him, he heard." (verse 24) The words, "My praise shall be of Jehovah in the great congregation of heaven," rang in his heart! He was reminded of the purpose of his coming down to earth, to suffer and die: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD's and he is the governor among the

nations!" (verses 28,29) This prophecy looks forward to the time when God's kingdom will be established on earth, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because Jesus had faithfully laid down his life on the cross.

Knowing he had accomplished all that his Father had sent him to do, he said, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit," and then, "It is finished." The Lamb of God bowed his head and died.—Psalm 22:25,27,28; Luke 23:46; John 19:30

QUESTIONS

1. Did Jesus know when he was going to die?
2. What did his friend, Mary, do, that Jesus said was in preparation for his burial?
3. What did Judas say when Mary performed this loving service for Jesus? What were his real motives?
4. When Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on the young donkey, what happened? Why did the people welcome Jesus so warmly?
5. What miracle had Jesus performed which caused many to hail him as the King of Israel?
6. How did Jesus' enemies react to this greeting of the crowd, and why did they hate him so much?
7. What picture runs throughout the entire Bible which showed that Jesus would be offered as an acceptable sacrifice to God?
8. What do we call one person's taking the penalty for another person, as when Jesus took Adam's penalty of death?
9. What comfort did Jesus receive from the Scriptures during his painful death on the cross?



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10. After the Passover supper, where did Jesus go, and what did he do?
 12. How did Judas identify Jesus for the soldiers?
 13. Did Pilate, the governor, believe that Jesus deserved to die? What did he do to show that he was not in favor of Jesus' crucifixion?
 14. Tell about the scene after Pilate turned Jesus over to be crucified.
 15. Why did Jesus speak the words he did while on the cross?
 16. Why was Jesus willing to undergo such suffering and pain without any protest? For what purpose did Jesus die? ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 1—"Watch ye and pray, lest you enter into temptation."—Mark 14:38 (Z. '03-119 Hymn 323)

APRIL 8—"If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."—Hebrews 10:38 (Z. '95-93 Hymn 82)

APRIL 15—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."—Luke 23:46 (Z. '99-128 Hymn 110)

APRIL 22—"I say unto you, That every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."—Matthew 12:36 (Z. '96-32 Hymn 177)

APRIL 29—"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him."—Psalm 91:15 (Z. '96-31 Hymn 89)

General Convention Registration Form
George Fox College June 26 to July 1, 1993

	Break.	Lunch	Dinner	Dorm -or- Apt
				(check 1 box per night)
Friday, June 25th				
Saturday, 26th				
Sunday, 27th				
Monday, 28th				
Tuesday, 29th				
Wednesday, 30th				
Thursday, July 1st				

OR check here for package: 7 nights, 18 meals

First and last name (and Ecclesia)

Age (if under 18)

Address:

Telephone number (evenings): area code ()

Are you able to walk up one flight of steps?

Two flights?

Will you have the use of an automobile at the convention?

If you're alone, would you like to share a room with someone?

Do you want to rent linens?

Give us your flight arrival information if you want to be picked up:

Send to: General Convention Registration
1425 Lachman Lane Pac. Palisades, CA 90272

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

"Hope" Filled with Compassion

Dear Friend: I am writing you regarding a folder you sent a sister of mine. This sister recently lost her husband of 26 years of happy marriage. It was such a sudden thing, although the husband had a history of heart trouble. I took it upon myself to go stay with this sister during this difficult time. I tried reading from the Bible passages which comforts us at a time like this, and the promises for the hereafter. I lost my husband nine years ago, and I told sis I could feel for her; it was a shock and only time could help soften the loss.

One morning she came to me and handed me a little folder, "Hope." I read it and we both agreed it was just one of the sweetest little folders with so much compassion and encouragement. I asked who sent it and she said she did not know. Please send me a catalog of your booklets. We shared comfort from

your Hope booklet. Thanking you sincerely.—GA

Yearns for Real Truth

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: Please send me the literature you offered on the television broadcast entitled, "Jesus." It spoke about the families being reunited after they are raised from the dead and they shall all be taught about our glorious Lord Jesus. This answered a question for me that I have been pondering for several years. When I saw your program today that question was answered by Bible verses.

I truly do love God, and our Lord Jesus, so deeply, and so deeply respect and revere the Holy Spirit as the awesome power of God, and I want to know all of God's truth that I can acquire. Thank you sincerely for this literature which I will share with my Christian brothers and sisters who are also hungry for God's real truth.—LA ■

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Ann Schwartz, Columbus, OH—February 20. Age, 99.

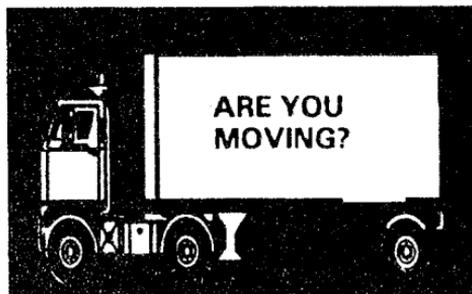
Brother Eugene Michalycha, Melfort, Sask.—February 22.

Frank Reynolds, Cohecton, NY—February 26. Age, 68.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

J. B. Brown Jerusalem, Israel	April 18-30	N. Kasperowicz Claymont, DE	April 18
W. Blicharz Jerusalem, Israel	April 18-30		
R. Gorecki Jerusalem, Israel	April 18-30	G. Passios Middletown, NY	April 18
W. Harp Boise, ID	April 23-25	L. Post Chicago, IL	April 25

Jos. Panucci—From April 7-30, Brother and Sister Joseph Panucci will be travelling in Central America and Mexico calling on radio stations and newspaper offices, promoting the Spanish-language "Frank and Ernest" radio programs in: San Jose, Costa Rica, Cristobal, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Torreon, Chihuahua, and Hermosillo, Mexico.



If you will notify the Dawn of your new address three weeks in advance of your move, it will save us considerable expense in mailing your magazine.

Thank You!

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. In order to ensure your convention being accurately placed in these columns, please make your request IN WRITING and mail it to this address at least two or three months before the date of the convention: The Dawn, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

KIRKLIN, IN, April 10—YWCA, Muncie, IN. Contact: Mr. & Mrs. Virgil J. Harcourt, P.O. Box 131, Kirklín, IN 46050-0131
Phone: (317) 279-8137

BOISE, ID CONVENTION, April 23-26—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main St. For reservations, contact: Mrs. Vi Cooper, 1422 Denver Ave., 83706.
Phone: (208) 344-2173

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 25—Parkway Center Inn, 875 Greentree Road. Contact Charles Martig, 730 Dunster St., 15226.
Phone: (412) 563-6110

HARTFORD, CT, May 2—Mt. Carmel Hall, 30 Olde Roberts St., East Hartford. Contact: Mrs. Daniel Slivinsky, 42 Andrew Dr., East Hartford 06108

BUFFALO, NY CONVENTION, May 15,16—Holiday Inn, Hamburg, NY. Contact: Bruce Clark, 905 Willardshire, East Aurora 14052

AGAWAM, MA, May 16—Ramada Inn, 161 Bridge St., East Windsor, CT. Contact: Mrs. Sophie Zielinski, 21 Silver St., Agawam 01001
Phone: (413) 786-1216

GARY AREA CONVENTION, May 16—The Spa Banquet Center, 333 North Mineral Springs Road,

Porter, IN. For information, contact: John Ulicni, 6703 Tyler St., Merrillville, IN 46410
Phone: (219) 769-5647

WEST NEWTON, PA, May 23—Sewickley Grange, Rte. 136, West Newton. Contact: John Krasonic, Sr, RD #4, Belle Vernon, PA for information.

ASILOMAR CONVENTION, May 28,29,30,31, 1993—Pacific Grove, CA. For reservations contact *before April 26:* Tom Marshall, 1089 Bluebell Dr., #1108, Livermore, CA 94550
Phone: (510) 443-0567

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL CONVENTION, Spring of 1993.—For information and reservations, contact: Dawn Shallieu, Jerusalem Convention, 1041 Johnston Dr., Watchung, NJ 07060-6414, USA

ALLENTOWN, PA, June 11-13—Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA. Contact: Allentown Bible Students, c/o Margaret Young, P.O. Box 1672, Allentown 18105
Phone: (215) 867-5418

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, June 26-July 1—George Fox College, Newberg, OR. See this issue of The Dawn, Page 62 for a Convention Bulletin. —

FOR, LO, THE WINTER IS PAST, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

—*Song of Solomon, 1:11,12*