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April 2007

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Memorial Meditations: In Remembrance of Jesus

“He said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.”

—Luke 22:15,

*Wilson’s Emphatic
Diaglott*

JESUS GAVE EXPLICIT DIRECTIONS to his followers that they were to commemorate his death, and the memorial that he instituted, each year on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month Nisan. The time has come once again for

the Lord’s people in all parts of the world to gather together for this very important purpose. By partaking of the unleavened bread, we acknowledge Jesus’ perfect and sinless body that was broken for us; and by drinking of the cup, we participate in his shed blood which was poured out for us, as well as the whole human creation, to be testified in due time. This year we will memorialize his death on the evening of April 1.

WITH EARNEST DESIRE

Two of our Lord's apostles, Peter and John, were instructed to go to a specific house where they would be shown a furnished "upper room" by a man that they would recognize as one carrying a "pitcher of water." They were to follow him to the place that they were to prepare, and where Jesus would eat the final Passover supper with his disciples. (Luke 22:7-12) They promptly left to carry out their mission, "They went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him."—vss. 13,14

When Jesus said to his disciples that he earnestly desired to eat this final Passover with them, he further stated, "I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (vs. 16) Our Lord used the word 'desired' when speaking to the select people of God to emphasize his very strong feelings of love and devotion for them. The word desire means 'to set the heart upon' or to 'long after something.'

PAUL'S DESIRE

The Apostle Paul used this same word desire in the letter he wrote to the brethren at Philippi, telling them that he earnestly desired to be with our Lord Jesus, but that he also longed to be with them. He said, "I am indeed, hard pressed by the two things;—(I have an earnest desire for the returning, and being with Christ, since it is very much to be preferred;)—but to remain in the flesh is more requisite on your account." (Phil. 1:23,24, *WED*) He used this same word desire again to describe his

longing to be with the Thessalonian brethren. "We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire."—I Thess. 2:17

EATING IN THE KINGDOM

Jesus understood that his earthly ministry would be finished in a very short time because 'the hour was come.' He expressed his earnest desire to share his last Passover supper with those who were his very special followers. It was in this connection that he wanted his disciples to know that he was the substitute lamb of God, and that, as the true antitype, he would soon be slain. 'I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'

Those who were gathered together in the upper room that night with Jesus were given a brief glimpse of his future kingdom. He told them, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (vss. 28-30) These were wonderful words of encouragement in light of the great humiliation and suffering he was about to endure.

JUDGING THE WORLD

Jesus was speaking about his future kingdom, when his faithful bride class would be with him in glory and sharing in the great work of judgment. This wonderful promise had a much deeper and spiritual significance. It was not yet time, however,

for the Holy Spirit of understanding that would later be given to them to enlighten them to the true meaning and importance of his words.

The Apostle Paul gives a spiritual perspective and significance to the matter of the faithful church sharing in the work of future judgment. He explains, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (I Cor. 6:2,3) The authority to execute justice and judgment during Christ’s kingdom would be given to our glorified Lord Jesus and the faithful members of his church. “He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”—Acts 17:31

The apostle explains this further in his letter to the brethren at Corinth by saying, “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” (I Cor. 4:5) Jesus was eluding to this great work of his future kingdom during his last Passover meal and conversation with the disciples in the upper room.

The psalmist also foresaw this time, and wrote these inspiring prophetic words of inspiration, “Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let

the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”—Ps. 96:10-13

A CORRESPONDING PRICE

It was essential that Jesus leave his spiritual home and be born into the world as a perfect human being in order to be the Redeemer of the fallen human race. It was his death as a perfect man that provided the redemption price for sin. “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that [in whom, *Marginal Translation*] all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12) Paul explains the matter further, “If by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”—vs.17

The main objective of the Master’s First Advent was thus accomplished by his death, and resurrection. It is God’s will for his people to commemorate the death of Jesus and to have any hope of future life through him. Paul addresses this point, “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—I Cor. 15:21,22

THE LAMB OF GOD

As Jesus was the true antitypical sacrifice, we read about the typical lamb in connection with God’s instructions to Moses, when he said, “Speak

ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month [Nisan] they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.” (Exod. 12:3) God further directed Moses, “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month [Nisan]: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.”—vss. 5-7

We believe that these instructions concerning the selection of an unblemished lamb of the first year represents our Lord Jesus, and that the killing of the lamb pictures his death and sacrificial life poured out for the sins of the whole world. This fact is substantiated by the words of John the Baptist when he recognized Jesus. “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

RIDING INTO JERUSALEM

The last few days of Jesus’ earthly life were momentous ones. While he understood the meaning of events as they followed one another in rapid succession, his disciples were in large measure unable to comprehend their meaning. Israel as a whole was also blind to the most important event in the history of the world that was then being carried out in Judea.

It was during that time that Jesus rode through the gates of the city of Jerusalem presenting himself to Israel as their foretold king and Messiah. “When they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” (Matt. 21:1-5) Matthew was referring back to the prophecy of Zechariah (9:9) that foretold this important event.

Many of the Jewish people were in great anticipation of the imminent arrival of Jesus in the city of Jerusalem, and began to prepare the way for his coming. When they saw him approaching, they accepted him as their long-promised king and, “Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—John 12:13

THE DESPISED ONE

Because of envy, Jesus had never been accepted by Israel’s religious rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, although certain individuals among them may have been impressed with his teachings and the wonderful miracles that he performed. As a group they had been antagonistic toward him from

the beginning of his earthly ministry, and never gave up an opportunity to do what they could to prejudice the people against him. The people, however, liked the gracious words which the Master spoke. “Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?” (John 7:40,41) Much discussion followed, and a division arose among them, but “The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.”—vs. 46

MARVELOUS MIRACLES

Even more convincing to the general Jewish public were the many miracles that Jesus performed. This wonderful work is reflected by the words of the man who had been blind from birth when our Lord exercised his mighty power to heal him. The Pharisees refused to believe that he had given sight to the blind man by taking clay, mixing it with his own saliva, anointing his eyes, and then commanding him to wash at the pool of Siloam. (John 9:1-15) Instead of recognizing and appreciating the marvelous grace and exceeding power that Jesus possessed, some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day.” (vs.16) Then the religious leaders of Israel pressed their inquiry, still not believing that the man was blind from birth. “Again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” (vss. 24,25) The

blind man acknowledged that he did not understand everything involved in the great blessings he had just received, but he did answer the religious leaders that once he was blind, but now he could see.

Besides the blind, there were lepers who had been cleansed, cripples who had been made to walk, some who were possessed by devils had been freed from evil spirits, and even the dead had been raised to life again. Perhaps very few of these were able to grasp very much of what our Lord Jesus had taught, but they did know that he had blessed them and their relatives and friends knew about it too. A considerable number in Israel were favorably disposed toward Jesus, and would not be easily influenced by either the scribes or Pharisees to join in any kind of scheme to take his life. Above all, Jesus was overshadowed by the wonderful providential care of his Heavenly Father which prevented his enemies from accomplishing their evil designs against him until the due time had come for his sacrifice to be finished.

JESUS' LAST NIGHT

The minds of the disciples were no doubt unsettled as they assembled in the prepared upper room to partake of the Passover with Jesus. The very air must have been filled with a sense of foreboding and impending tragedy. "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, [Zech. 13:7] I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matt. 26:31) Jesus let it be known that one of them was already plotting to betray

him. He said, "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, [Ps. 41:9] He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." (John 13:18) According to the scriptural account, our Lord was deeply distressed, "When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."—vs. 21

Added to all of this witness of betrayal, Luke records, "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." (Luke 22:24) Jesus' answer to his disciples was that the greatest among them would be their servant whereas, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation." (vs. 28) The Master sensed the hearts of his people as revealed in his conversation with Simon Peter. "The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (vss. 31,32) The apostle's response was positive and, "Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples." Matt. 26:35

We recall the words of the prophet (Isa. 53:1-12), as well as Jesus' warning (Matt. 26:31), that all of his disciples would be offended by him that night. The Master then said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." (Luke 22:34) Later, "the cock crew" (vs. 60) as Jesus had foretold, and "Peter went out, and wept bitterly."—vs. 62

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Later, when Jesus made his way to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, his disciples followed with him. He knew that this would be the last night before his death, and that it would be the darkest in all of human history. (Luke 22:53) His heart was full of sorrow and very heavy as he asked Peter, James, and John to accompany him further. “He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”—Matt. 26:39

The Master had asked his closest followers to tarry in the garden with him, but when he returned to them from praying, he found them asleep. His grief and disappointment is displayed over and over again as he returned to find them asleep a third time, instead of watching with him. “Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” (vs. 45) Shortly thereafter Judas arrived with the armed men who arrested him. “All this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.”—vss. 46-56

TRIAL AND EXECUTION

Various aspects of Jesus’ trial are recorded in all four Gospels, and it is without doubt the most significant trial ever conducted in the history of the world. The Sanhedrin was the legal body that was composed of chief priests of the Sadducees, Pharisees and elders of Israel. They proceeded to conduct

a secret court session at night with trumped-up contradictory evidence against our Lord Jesus, the true Messiah that God had sent into their midst.

The Master was bound and hurried off for a hearing before the high priest Annas, who was also father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest that year. (John 18:12-14) He was then led to Caiaphas where the chief priests and the whole council sought false witnesses against him. (Matt. 26:57-68) From there, Jesus was taken before the assembly of chief priests and scribes who brought him into the council of Sanhedrin where they quickly demanded his death.— Luke 22:66-71

When the Jewish religious leaders had pronounced our Lord guilty, he was then taken to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, to carry out the sentence. (Luke 23:1-7) Pilate, however, could find no fault with Jesus and sent him on to Herod Antipas who was the district ruler, or tetrarch. Herod had heard of Jesus and his miracle-working powers and was anxious to see him, but sent him back to Pilate to have Jesus executed. (vss. 8-11) Pilate again consulted with the chief priests telling them that Jesus was not worthy of death. “They cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.”—vss. 18-21

They crowned this king of love with thorns, and spat upon him and mocked him. They made him carry his own cross, and finally nailed him upon it to die. Over his head, by the instruction of Pilate,

they placed the inscription, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. (vs. 38) Pilate wanted the world to know that this outstanding man was dying because the Jews hated him and had rejected him as their king. But from Jesus' standpoint he was dying as the Savior of the world.

VIOLATION OF JEWISH LAW

Jesus' hearings, trials, and appearances before the Jewish Sanhedrin and Roman rulers was hurriedly carried out during the darkness of night by the chief priests and religious leaders of Israel. (John 18:28) His death, and the removing of his body from the cross, needed to be accomplished before the special, high holy day which fell immediately thereafter.—John 19:31

The chief priests of Israel had resorted freely to bribery, conspiracy, mob action, and the perversion of judgment and justice in violation of their own law. (Exod. 23:1-3; Deut. 16:19) They bore false witness against Jesus (Exod. 20: 16), demanded his death by crucifixion, and set the murderer Barabbas free instead of our Lord. (Matt. 27:15-26) Furthermore, the Jews had rejected the true king whom God had sent unto them. "It was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he [Pilate] saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar."—John 19:14,15

Jesus knew that it had been the Father's will for him to die, and he gladly carried out that will.

Perhaps he did not fully realize until near the end that his death was to be brought about in such an ignominious manner, and that he would be charged with blasphemy and treason. For one who had done nothing but good, who had honored his Heavenly Father in every thought, word, and deed, these were humiliating charges. He was ready to die as the world's Redeemer, and it was the Father's will that he also suffer.

THE BODY MEMBERS

As members of the body of Christ, it is our privilege to suffer and die with Jesus. When we once again commemorate his death, we will also reaffirm our own determination to follow faithfully in his footsteps. The cup from which he drank is also the cup from which we drink, and the bread which he broke also represents the bread that we partake of.

The suffering of Christ continues in the daily sacrifices made by his followers. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:5) This has been the manner in which the plan of God has been carried out during this present Gospel Age. Let us rededicate our own lives to follow more faithfully in the Redeemer's footsteps, rejoicing in the privilege of suffering and dying with him in order that we may live and reign with him.—Rom. 8:17 ■

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

—Hebrews 9:28

Yielding to Christ's Lordship

Key Verse: *“Saying,
Blessed be the King
that cometh in the
name of the Lord:
peace in heaven,
and glory in the
highest.”*
—*Luke 19:38*

Selected Scripture:
*Luke 19:28-40; Rev.
1:1-8*

THESE SCRIPTURES CALL

to mind the wonderful words, “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:13,14) As the angels could

sing and rejoice at this picture of the Divine plan of salvation, so also can all who have faith in the ultimate outcome rejoice with unspeakable joy. These words declared the work that Jesus would accomplish during his life, which would ultimately bring the highest glory and honor to God, his father. After praising God, come the consequences on earth—namely, peace, peace with God. This peace comes from a restoration to the human race of the Divine good will. It was indeed a prophecy of God's purpose to bring through his son the lifting of the curse of sin and death, and the establishment of peace and joy upon the earth.

This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. The birth of the Saviour was one step toward it; the death on the cross was another; the resurrection and his ascension were other steps; the selection of the church is another; the kingdom of God will then complete the prophecy.

The scriptural account describes a triumphal entry by the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem. "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice." (Luke 19:37) They had come out to see Jesus because of the awakening of Lazarus from the sleep of death, for "many of Jews . . . had seen the things that Jesus did, [and] believed on him." (John 11:45) They "cast their garments" as a mark of honor to the King. (Luke 19:35) On previous occasions when the people sought to make Jesus a king, he withdrew himself. But now he knew his hour was come, and instead of hindering them, helped with their enthusiasm by riding into the city on their carpet of garments.

Some thought that now was the moment of Jesus' glorification, and perhaps they felt that this would lead to their own glorification. Three and a half years of public teaching and works, which testified to the truth of his claims as the Messiah, seemingly culminated in a triumph. This raised the hopes of his disciples and of many in Israel that now the glory foretold by the prophets was soon to be realized. According to God's covenant with their fathers, the Gospel of the kingdom was to be to the Jew first. (Acts 3:25,26) Yet God knew beforehand that, as a nation, they would neither appreciate nor accept it. Not long after this happy occasion, when swayed by their false teachers they would cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!"—John 12:1,12,13;19:6,7

Why then did Jesus go through this form of assuming kingly authority when he knew how it would result? According to the teachings of the Apostle Paul, this was done as part of the great system of types (pictures), which would foreshadow "things to come." (Col. 2:17) His triumphal entry into Jerusalem prefigured the coming of Christ as King in the end of this present Gospel Age. By the signs which accompany the Second Presence of our Lord, God's people should join voices to proclaim, 'Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord,' his kingdom shall soon be established! ■

Discovering Resurrection

Key Verse: *“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”*

—*Revelation 1:17,18*

Selected Scripture:
John 20:1-18,30,31;
Revelation 1:9-20

IT SEEMS FITTING THAT

John saw this vision on the first day of the week, on the day of his resurrection, our Sunday. Our Lord revealed himself and certain great instructions to the church through John, honoring this day. John was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, as a penalty for his faithfulness in believing and teaching the “word of God.” (Rev. 1:9) In times of tribulation, the Lord’s presence and comfort are most precious to his saints, and helps them to learn what it means to live “in the Spirit” above the world. (vs. 10) As a result, he was especially filled with the Holy Spirit of adoration, love, and joy in God as to be mentally lifted above his surroundings

and out of the thoughts and feelings of his old nature.

As we continue with our study, we realize that the book of Revelation is a prophecy, and not a literal epistle. John was given a command to “Write the things which thou hast seen” (vs. 19)—this vision of the things past,

present, and future, that the church may ponder its deeply significant symbolisms. He gives us comfort when he says in verse 17, 'Fear not; I am the first and the last.' Our Lord was "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), "the only begotten Son" (John 1:18), and "the firstborn of every creature." (Col. 1:15) These scriptures reveal to us that as the Alpha (beginning), and also the Omega (ending), he was both the first created, and the first in highest rank of the angels. As Archangel, he was preeminent over all, and the life-giver to all Creation. We are also here given proof that before he became flesh Jesus had an existence, and that he was sinless, perfect on the spirit plane next to the Heavenly Father. It was for this reason that he was selected as the one who would redeem humanity from death. He came down to earth and gave his life as the offset to Adam's life, perfectly balancing the scales of Divine justice.

In verse 18 of our lesson, we read, 'I am he,' the Redeemer of the race—Jesus—the "messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in" (Mal. 3:1), 'that liveth, and was dead.' Speaking of his own resurrection he tells us that he is dead no longer. (John 14:19, 20:1-9) By faith we recognize that he is 'alive for evermore,' for he was the one who descended to the tomb (Eph. 4:9,10), and was raised from the dead, and who has ascended "far above . . . every name that is named." (Eph. 1:20,21; Phil. 2:9) "Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord [controller] both of the dead and living." (Rom. 14:9) He was "the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20), and upon the death and resurrection of Jesus hang the resurrection hope of the church and the world. He has been given the power to call forth the dead—they that "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Dan. 12:2)—and in due time he will exercise this power. (John 5:25) How glad we should be to know that all things are in the hands of the one who "so loved the world."—John 3:16 ■

Worshipping God Alone

Key Verse: “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*”
—*Revelation 4:11*

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 4

he is unchangeable, the same yesterday, today, and forever.—Heb. 13:8

In the Book of Revelation, John personally symbolizes the beloved disciples—the faithful in the church, the “little flock” (Luke 12:32)—who have the spirit of Christ, and can see the Truth. They also possess the ear of faith as a special favor from God to those who are of a meek and honest heart, desiring Truth and righteousness. “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” (Matt. 13:16) It is certainly a great privilege to ‘hear’ and to ‘see,’ and to know the will of the Father. God’s work in the present time is not the conversion of the world, but the taking out of the world a

WHEN WE CONSIDER THE

majesty of our Heavenly Father, perhaps we remember the words from Psalm 8, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” Do we marvel at the wonders of his creation, and of the greatness of his plans and purposes? Our LORD is a faithful father, “even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” (Ps. 90:2) With the eye of faith we know that he is working out his plan with great deliberation, and that

people for his name, to bear the name of Christ as his bride. A blessing in life, that is now available to his faithful ones, comes to them in the form of peace and joy which they never knew before, and which the world cannot give nor take away.—John 14:27; 16:33

John's vision then, as described in our text, shows events as seen by those who have the Holy Spirit of understanding. He looks and sees that "a door was opened in heaven," and "a throne was set in heaven." (Rev. 4:1,2) This "throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1), is not a material one, but refers to his supreme authority and rulership. The throne was established first, and would become the centerpiece around which the church will gather, until all the faithful ones are made jewels for his kingdom. We also read, "He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." (Rev. 4:3) This is supposed to mean a diamond, which is described as the most precious and "clear as crystal." (Rev. 21:11) Since this is the most brilliant of all gems it fittingly symbolizes the glory of God. The 'sardine stone,' which is a red colored stone, represents God's love, an important part of God's character. (I John 4:7,16) John also hears "four beasts" (Rev. 4:6)—Cherubim, or living ones (Gen. 3:24)—"give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne." (vs. 9) These would personify the attributes of God—his power, wisdom, justice, and love.

When we can hear the power, wisdom, justice, and love of God proclaiming in perfect harmony the glory and honor of our Father, then his praises will ring out as never before. This will result in the restitution of all things, as promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:18), and under the dominion of him who "shall be a priest upon his throne." (Zech. 6:13) The whole creation will join in thanksgiving and praise to the Father. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Rev. 5:13 ■

Redeemable

Key Verse: "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."
—***Revelation 5:13***

***Selected Scripture:
Revelation 5***

"THANKS BE UNTO GOD for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15; John 3:16) That gift is our Savior, our Redeemer. In this connection, it is impossible for us to tell the riches of Divine grace toward us, including the great blessings and mercies which are ours through our Lord. He represents to us the very fullness of every provision for our eternal welfare. At the present time, only those who are "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), can now give thanks to God for his unspeakable gift. But eventually the whole world of mankind will be in a condition to recognize that gift and to render thanks.

When, at the close of the Messianic reign for the restoration of the Adamic race to their original perfection, all wilful sinners shall have been destroyed, then "every knee should bow, . . . and . . . every tongue should confess, . . . to the glory of God." (Phil. 2:10,11) His kingdom shall be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Ps. 72:8) Then every creature in heaven, on earth, and in the sea shall be heard saying, "Salvation to our God

which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.” (Rev. 7:10,12) Ultimately, when the plans of the great Architect shall be fully accomplished, every creature shall be heard singing his praises.

With all sin eliminated and all the willfully wicked destroyed, then will God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Luke 11:2) Our Lord Jesus made this beautiful expression of confidence that the kingdom will effect the full restoration of all of the earth to its Edenic condition, and of man to his perfection in the image of the Creator.

As our Lord fulfilled his mission to die to take away the sins of the world, and is now “sitting on the right hand of power” (Mark 14:62; 16:19), we can be assured that he will remain on the ‘right hand’ forever. The power and glory of his kingdom he had previously affirmed was not to be of this present evil world, but of the world to come, “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—II Pet. 3:13

Every member of Adam’s race shall, through Christ, be granted a full opportunity for a return to the relationship of the sons of God. Eventually all shall learn righteousness and hate iniquity. (Ps. 96:10) The condition of humanity will be so glorious at the close of Messiah’s kingdom that nothing ever dreamed of will compare with it. “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14) Mankind will honor the exalted Son even as they honor the Father who highly exalted him. All shall then have come to appreciate the lengths, heights, breadths, and depths, not only of God’s love, but also of his justice, wisdom, and power.—Eph. 2:18,19

The time will come when “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” —Rev. 21:4

Source of Security

Key Verse: *“I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*
—*Revelation 7:14*

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 7

THERE IS A CLASS MENTIONED in the Scriptures, which we refer to as the ‘great company.’ They, we are told in our text, will come out of a time of ‘great tribulation’ and wash their robes and make them clean in the ‘blood of the Lamb.’ Their robes need to be washed because they have been spotted by contact with the world, the flesh, and the Devil. This may be due to their unfaithfulness, or by carelessness and worldliness. It points out to us the danger of being partially filled with the spirit of the world, which leads to not being counted as overcomers of the world. It should be pointed out that they have passed the various stages of making a consecration, Divine acceptance and the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the bride class, they do not fully take hold of the promise in Revelation 3:21, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.”

These are seeking to be followers of Christ and followers of “mammon” (Matt. 6:24), seeking to please the Lord in some things, having some of the Spirit of the Lord, yet also having a love of fleshly things, and worldly ambition. They are not rendering themselves

to the admonition by the Apostle Paul, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) He goes on to further emphasize his point, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—vs. 2

In this text from Romans, we have implied an important aspect of our Christian walk, which is sacrifice. The term ‘sacrifice’ is translated from the Greek word *thusia*, and refers to a slaughter; it implies a giving of our all in service to our Heavenly Father. It shows that we must not only abstain from sin, since all were born in sin and “shapen in iniquity” (Ps. 51:5), but having made a full consecration to God, give everything that we have to give, even life itself. We are told in II Corinthians 5:17, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” or a New Creation who will attain the Divine nature—glory, honor, and immortality. (Rom. 2:7) To be a New Creature then, one has to present his justified life as a ‘living sacrifice,’ including human hopes, will, and ambitions.

Failing to live up to their covenant of complete sacrifice, those described in our lesson for today must endure great tribulation. They will have special and severe testings, which will definitely demonstrate their character, and provide lessons for them to all eternity. In their sufferings they will learn to appreciate as never before their relationship to the Lamb of God and to his atoning merit. This class, then having proven their faithfulness through obedience to God, will receive the great blessing of a heavenly reward. They will receive palm branches, having gained a victory, and will appear “before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.”—Rev. 7:15 ■

The Lamb of God

“John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”
—*John 1: 29*

DURING THIS MEMORIAL season “Treasures of the Truth” will focus on the most precious treasure the world has ever known—God’s unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ as the antitypical ‘Lamb of God.’ Because of disobedience to the Divine law, mankind remains under the penalty of death since the time that sin was introduced to the world by our first parents, Adam and Eve. Jesus’ sacrificial death provided the ransom price for sin at his First Advent, and he will accomplish the removal of all sin under the administration of his future kingdom. This is the will of our loving Heavenly Father and his plan of reconciliation to take away the sin of the world.—I Cor. 15:22

THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD

In the context of our selected scripture, the Apostle John spoke of John the Baptist, who made clear to the inquiring Jewish priests and Levites that he was neither the promised Christ nor Elijah. He also explained to them that he was not the foretold

prophet of which Moses had written, and that the Father would one day raise up in their midst.—Deut. 18:15; John 1:19-21

John the Baptist did say, however, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,” (vs. 23) and when pressed further by the Pharisees, “John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.” (vss. 26,27) Again, “John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost [Spirit—Greek, *pneuma*]. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” (vss. 32-34) What a marvelous witness and testimony that John the Baptist gave on behalf of the everlasting love and providence of Almighty God.

THE LAMB OF SACRIFICE

Our precious Lord Jesus had left his spiritual home and fellowship with the great God of the universe to take the place of the typical lamb of sacrifice according to the will of his Father. The scriptural record is presented in the second book of Moses, where it is written, “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.” (Exod. 12:2) The Jewish month Abib was changed to Nisan which gave it particular significance. Nisan, as the beginning of

months, thus established the importance and significance as the first month of the sacred Jewish New Year. Further we read, "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." (vs.3) The typical lamb of sacrifice was to be selected on the tenth day of Nisan. This foreshadowed the time when our Lord Jesus would present himself to the people of Jerusalem as the season of Passover drew near. (Matt. 21:1-11) This meaningful incident had been foretold by the Prophet Zechariah over five hundred years earlier.—Zech. 9:9

The Exodus account indicates that neighbors were privileged to share a lamb between themselves in the event that some households were too small. (Exod. 12:4) Nevertheless, God's instructions were very specific, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (vss. 5,6) Thus is foreshadowed the Lord Jesus taking the place of the typical lamb on the 14th day of Nisan. Paul said, "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Heb.7: 26) To the brethren at Corinth, he said, "Even Christ our passover is sacrificed [slain, *Marginal Translation*] for us."—I Cor. 5:7

Further instructions were, "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on

the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.” (Exod. 12:7) This confirmed the importance and significance of blood. The lamb’s blood represented the life of our Lord Jesus as a perfect man. The shedding of that blood illustrated his sacrificial death, and its sprinkling symbolized the merit of his sacrifice being presented on behalf of the household of faith during this present age of sacrifice (Heb. 9:24), and for the whole world of mankind during Christ’s future kingdom. (I Cor. 15:22) The door posts and upper posts of the houses illustrate the hearts of his individual followers, the household of faith. This detail takes on deeper spiritual significance as emphasized by the apostle. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”—Heb. 10:22

When the Passover was instituted, the commandment was given, “They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.” (Exod. 12:8-10) The Passover lamb provided for the Israelites’ deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but points also to the household of faith being delivered from Satan’s yoke of bondage to sin and death during this present Gospel Age. “The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”—Rom. 8:21

INSTITUTION OF THE MEMORIAL

When Jesus celebrated the Passover supper with his disciples the last night of his earthly ministry and life on earth, the typical lamb represented his own sacrificed life which would shortly be consummated on the cross. It was given on behalf of the sins of his people, as well as the whole world, to be testified in due time. Eating the lamb also suggested the strength of his life as given to his faithful followers during this age of sacrifice.

The symbolic Memorial of Jesus' death that he instituted in the upper room that night related to the Jewish Passover, although not directly a part of it. The instructions to his apostles were given, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." (Matt. 26:26) He was thus teaching his followers that the bread represented himself as the antitypical lamb, and his own flesh which they were to partake of in remembrance of him. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." (vs. 27) The cup represented his shed blood given on behalf of the world. Blood was necessary to seal the New Covenant, as he further explained, "This is my blood of the New Testament [Covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—vs. 28

The provisions of the New Covenant will offer life to all mankind who are obedient to the Divine law during Christ's kingdom. The Apostle Paul gives further significant information concerning the followers of Jesus who partake of these emblems (I Cor. 10:16,17), and, by so doing, we share with our Lord Jesus in communion, or participation, in his

sacrificial death. (Rom. 6:3-8) With a deep sense of reverence and appreciation, may we partake of these sacred emblems once again this year in remembrance of him.

JESUS: FIRSTBORN OF ALL CREATION

Our finite minds are little able to grasp the full meaning of the power, wisdom, and design of Almighty God, as revealed in the words of the psalmist, who wrote, "LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Ps. 90:1,2) We know from this scripture and others that our Heavenly Father never had a beginning, and will never have an end. We know, too, that he existed alone for ages of time before setting in motion the wonderful creative works of his Divine purpose.

In the message to the Laodicean brethren, the revelator said, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. 3:14) Our Lord Jesus was the beginning of God's Creation; and concerning this Paul wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."—Col. 1:14,15

From another perspective, we see that Jesus was not only the 'firstborn' of all Creation, but also the only begotten Son of God. All other creative works were shared with the Son by the Father. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and again, "The LORD God said, Behold, the man

is become as one of us, to know good and evil.” (Gen. 1:26; 3:22) The Apostle John points to the only begotten Son and explains, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”—John 1:17,18

JESUS: AS THE LOGOS

The Apostle John provides a relevant and very important account of Jesus’ creation as the first-born and only begotten Son of the most high God. He writes, “In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.” (John 1:1, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) The word ‘Logos’ is a title ascribed to Jesus during his pre-human existence that suggests his capacity and service as the ‘Word’ of God. He was the spokesman of his Heavenly Father and conveyed information and messages for him.

Logos is a New Testament word that has been left untranslated from the Greek, as are the names Jesus and Christ. An important distinction is also noted in the *Diaglott Interlineary Translation* between Almighty God which is rendered “the God” and his son as the “Logos,” or Word.

Continuing, we read, “This was in the Beginning with God [the God, *WED, Interlinear*]. Through it every thing was done; and without it not even one thing was done, which has been done. In it was life; and the life was the light of men.” (vss. 2-4, *WED*) The Apostle Paul points to this time and the work in which the Logos shared with his Father, who, “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. 1:2) Thus we see the Son sharing with the Father in the wonderful works of creation.

On another occasion, Jesus referred to this relationship with his Heavenly Father when he said, “I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”—John 12:49,50

A similar position is noted between Moses and Aaron. “Thou [Moses] shalt speak unto him [Aaron], and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.”—Exod. 4:15,16

ANCIENT ORIGINS

The Prophet Micah provides a unique and interesting reference to the Logos in the dawning days of antiquity, when he wrote, “Thou, Beth-lechem Ephratah, the least (though) thou be among the thousands of Judah, (yet) out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from olden times, from most ancient days.”—Mic. 5:1, *Leeser Translation*

‘Ephratah’ was the ancient name for Bethlehem, as referenced in the account of Rachel’s death, and her place of burial. (Gen. 35:19) The little town of Bethlehem also has the distinct honor of being

connected with Jesus' birth (John 7:40-42); and, of further significance, is the prophet's reference to Jesus' ancient origins.

JESUS: THE FATHER'S DAILY DELIGHT

In Solomon's collective writings, he includes an interesting account of the Logos even from before the earliest creative works of the Heavenly Father began. We read, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." (Prov. 8:30) This text reveals that the Logos enjoyed a very warm and loving relationship with his Father. Continuing we read, "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (vss. 22,23) Here we have a marvelous account of the beginnings of Creation as witnessed by the firstborn and only begotten Son of the most high God.—vss. 24-31

THE LOGOS MADE FLESH

We read in John's gospel, "The Logos became Flesh, and dwelt among us,—and we beheld his glory, a Glory as of an Only-begotten from a Father,—full of Favor and Truth." (John 1:14, *WED*) Paul attests to this, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8:3) In his letter to Timothy, he wrote, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."—I Tim. 3:16

After the miraculous conception, Jesus was born in Bethlehem to Mary, a Jewish woman. "The angel

said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”—Luke 2:10-12

We know nothing of Jesus’ early childhood from the time of his circumcision, eight days after his birth, until he was twelve years of age, except for the brief statement in Luke’s gospel—“The child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in [becoming full of, *Marginal Translation*] wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.” (Luke 2:40, *New American Standard Bible*) As a boy possessing human perfection and wisdom, Jesus went about filling his mind with matters of importance and he, being perfect, had the ability to retain what he learned.

THE BOY JESUS

When he was twelve years old, a series of remarkable events took place that provide an important glimpse into the young mind of Jesus, and the degree of dedication he possessed in carrying out his Father’s will and purpose for him. At that time, he accompanied his mother Mary and her husband Joseph as they traveled to Jerusalem to attend the feast. After the feast days were over his earthly parents set out to make their return journey home. As it was customary for many people to travel together in those days, they had gone a full day’s journey before realizing that the young boy Jesus had been left behind.—Luke 2:41-45

JESUS' FIRST RECORDED WORDS

Mary and Joseph turned back to find the boy Jesus. "It came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." (vss. 46-48) Jesus responded to his earthly parents inquiry. "He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (vs. 49) Jesus made it clear that his Heavenly Father's will for him was of utmost importance, as suggested by his reference to the doing of his Father's business. This answers his reason to be in the Temple, and in discussion with the doctors of the Law. We thus have the first recorded words ever spoken by our Lord Jesus at twelve years of age. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."—vs. 52

RECALL OF FORMER TIMES

During his earthly ministry, Jesus occasionally reflected on his prehuman existence. One time he said, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62) He had been giving his disciples spiritual food and it was difficult for them to accept his teachings. He explained, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."—vs. 65

He said, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (chap. 8:18,19) The Pharisees, however, were not ready to accept him, and "He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." (vs. 23) And again, "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." (vs. 42) The Jews were unable to understand Jesus teachings, and when asked whether he believed himself to be greater than their father Abraham, he answered, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham, was I am." (vss. 56-58) Another time he said, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—John 17:5

THE LAMB IS SLAUGHTERED

From the perspective of the worldly-wise and others who gave little or no attention to him, Isaiah's prophetic words speak to the fact that Jesus had no outward comeliness or form of beauty to be found in him. He was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53:1-4) "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement

of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”—vss. 5,6

John the Baptist had proclaimed “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” and the prophets of old had foretold his sufferings. (John 1:29) To fulfill the Divine purpose of his becoming a perfect man, and to pay the corresponding price for sin, it was necessary for Jesus to die. “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”—Isa. 53:7

JESUS' LAST WORDS

The scriptural account of Jesus' six hours on the cross is recorded in all four gospels. However, each author wrote from different perspectives and gave varying aspects of the execution as they saw them unfold. The Lamb of God was crucified under the inscription “JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS” which was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.—John 19:19,20

The Master was crucified at the third hour of the day. (Mark 15:25) During the three hours between 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 M., his words, in probable order, included first his conversation with one of the thieves who was on a cross beside him. The man asked Jesus to remember him when he set up his kingdom. “He said unto him—Verily I say unto thee this day: With me shalt thou be in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43, *Rotherham Translation*) Jesus thus

assured the man that he would be blessed when his future kingdom would be established.

Two more occurrences followed in close order when Jesus' mother, her sister, and Mary Magdalene stood by the cross. There was also one of his disciples standing nearby. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!" (John 19:26) A moment later he called to the disciple and said, "Behold thy mother!"—vs. 27

Between the hours of 12:00 M. and 3:00 P.M., darkness settled over the earth, as stated in the scriptural record. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour." (Matt. 27:45) "About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (vs. 46) Jesus had borne the contradiction of sinners, Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, and the abandonment of his disciples that night, but when he thought for a brief moment that he had been forsaken by his Heavenly Father he cried out in despair.

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (John 19:28) He knew that the time of his death was drawing near. "When therefore, Jesus took the vinegar, he said, It has been finished! And inclining his head, he expired."—John 19:30, *WED*

'John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'

Seeking Things Above

“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

—*Romans 8:13*

AFTER HIS LAST OBSER-

vance of the typical Passover with his disciples, Jesus took some of the remaining unleavened bread and some of the fruit of the vine and instituted a memorial of his forthcoming death as the

antitypical Passover lamb. “As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, 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. 26:26-29

A NEW TYPE

The Lord did not institute another or a higher type of the Passover. On the contrary, that type was about to be fulfilled by his death on the cross

within a very few hours that same day. It was that fulfillment which the Lord wished his disciples to remember on an annual basis, through the Memorial observance that he established the last typical Passover night. The expression 'this do in remembrance of me' implies that the new memorial should replace the former Passover. It became obsolete by reason of its fulfillment at Calvary. As it would not have been proper, or lawful, to annually observe the Passover at any other time than that which was appointed by God, it is likewise not appropriate to memorialize the fulfillment of that type at any other time than its anniversary.

As the season for the observance of the Lord's Memorial approaches, the thoughts of the consecrated increasingly turn to his experiences, especially those the Apostle Paul says were specifically necessary to bring the Lord to completion as the High Priest of God. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—Heb. 5:8,9

Paul explains that suffering and humiliation were not merely random sets of unfortunate circumstances that the Lord encountered. They were components of an exquisitely calibrated process designed to establish and demonstrate the character that was required for the priestly office to which he had been assigned by God. "The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb 7:21) Before many witnesses, his endurance of the severest tests proved that he was perfectly and uniquely fit for that

office. By this, a strong foundation was established upon which those witnesses, and those who would subsequently believe them throughout this Gospel Age, could rest their hope of residing with him in due time.

SHARED EXPERIENCE SYMBOLIZED

The apostle makes it clear that this hope will be realized only by those who willingly share the experience of suffering with the Lord for the sake of righteousness. “We are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:16,17) “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.” (II Tim. 2:12) The shared experience of suffering during the Gospel Age is evidence that the Lord and his disciples are of one Spirit. Every commemoration of his death emphasizes that oneness.

Paul, the sole apostle who was not an eyewitness to the institution of the Memorial ceremony, relates what the resurrected Lord related to him concerning it. “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”—I Cor. 11:23-26

The apostle understood that the Memorial ceremony is a representation of the bond, the communion, the partnership between Christ and his church proved through suffering. “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (I Cor. 10:16,17) In the hearts of the consecrated, each Memorial season prompts a fresh appreciation of the partnership, and the oneness through suffering, of the Lord and his disciples during the present Gospel Age.

A SPECIAL INVITATION

It is Christ himself who emphasized that those who desire a share in his kingdom must prove that desire by humbly sharing his suffering. “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.” (Matt. 20:23) All who are consecrated have previously heard and accepted the Lord’s invitation to join him in baptism.

Paul explains that the baptism of Christ is a baptism unto death. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3) The consecrated have vowed to follow him unto that end, forsaking thereby the path followed by the world. As the Lord’s disciples annually partake of the symbols that memorialize his death, they consider the privilege of joining him in his suffering. They rehearse the fact that those who first participated in the ceremony did so at his special invitation and that all who have

been subsequently invited have likewise foresworn the things of the earth.

A COMMON COMMITMENT

Those who have renounced their respective wills that they may serve the will of God share a common commitment. In the symbolism of the Lord's Memorial, their collective commitment to the Divine cause may be likened to a loaf of bread. Bread is composed of what once were many individual grains that when blended become one. The essential thought is that had the many grains retained their individuality there could be no loaf. Applying this to the consecrated during this Gospel Age, it is concluded that those who persist in maintaining their personal wills after consecration can never become part of that one loaf. In a similar manner, we partake of the cup that is made up of many grapes. The grapes have been crushed, and therefore lose their individual identities.

It is further concluded that, for the consecrated, complete submission to the process of transformation is a matter of life and death. The apostle indicates that necessity, saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every

man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”—Rom. 12:1-5

A NEW CONDITION

Whoever accepts the will of another becomes figuratively dead as an individual. Consecration is scripturally characterized as a death since the consecrated die to their individual will and become alive to the Lord’s will. Paul says to the consecrated, “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3) That which lives and is ‘hid with Christ in God’ is a ‘new creature’ begotten by the will of God. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”—II Cor. 5:17

The New Creature has no will of its own. It becomes a new component of a larger body of which the Lord Jesus is the head. Paul explains, “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (I Cor. 12:12-14,27) The Christ is composed of one body with many members, the church; and one head, the Lord Jesus.

The members of the body of Christ are to seek those things of the Spirit which lead away from the

persistence of the individual will. They are to set their affections on that which is not earthly. The Apostle Paul expresses that necessity, saying, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3:2) He who would keep his heart in the love of God must stifle earthly desires and attractions, and nourish affection for spiritual things.

DEADENING WORLDLY APPETITES

There is a natural attraction to the things of the earth for mankind even though those things have become considerably blemished during Satan's reign. Tarnished and marred, earthly things nevertheless beckon even to those who love righteousness and hate iniquity. Paul defines the course to be pursued to avoid the dangers of that allure. He says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Col. 3:5) It is noted that he does not counsel entering into a cloistered retreat from worldly temptations, but to attend to deadening those worldly appetites grounded in the flesh that foster temptation.

FLESHLY BESETMENTS

Starting with the most obvious and ending with the most subtle, the apostle itemizes various impurities and appetites that spring from the lust of the flesh and the love of the world. 'Fornication'—a prominent evil in Paul's day, as it is in the present—is brought to the attention of the saints as a most obvious evil of the flesh. More likely to be overlooked, though related to fornication, is 'uncleanness.' The Spirit begotten are to be pure of

heart. However, their members touch the earth. They are in contact with defiled human nature. They are subject to contagion from that contact. Every resulting spot or wrinkle requires washing with water through the holy Word. (Eph. 5:26) ‘Inordinate affection’ is also to be guarded against. To the degree that the Lord’s people pursue anything earthly beyond that which is necessary they are bestowing love and regard that belongs essentially to God.

‘Evil concupiscence’ is internal or hidden lust—desires for forbidden things. It is a step higher in the apostle’s hierarchy of worldly evils. The Lord’s people know and acknowledge sin as evil and strive against it. They are, in addition, to cast out of their hearts every longing, every desire, for anything not fully approved by the Lord. While avoiding gross immoralities, they are not to harbor secret sympathy for the lesser things condemned by him; desiring them if only they weren’t forbidden. ‘Covetousness’ concludes the apostle’s list of things which the New Creature must suppress unto death. He declares that covetousness is a form of idolatry. It is among the most seductive temptations the Lord’s people experience. It is the finding of satisfaction in things other than the love of God. The New Creature should not love wife, husband, children, or earthly treasure more than he loves the Lord. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”—Matt. 10:37

HATED BY THE WORLD

The Lord Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye

were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:18,19) “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) To the Lord’s words, Paul added, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (II Tim. 3:12) These words have been proven true throughout the present Gospel Age to this very day. As it steadfastly resists the allure of earthly things, the body of Christ, following its head, engenders the world’s disdain.

LOVED BY GOD

The Master walked a very difficult and narrow way. He was continually beset on every side by forces seeking his destruction. Suffering slander and ridicule, he poured out his life in daily sacrifice to the doing of his Father’s will, to rescue a world that did not appreciate or understand him. Likewise, his disciples are not to seek ease in the world but are rather to “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.” (Col. 1:24) This emphasizes the fact that his disciples are to be made conformable to his death. They are to spend their lives in sacrifice unto death even as he did. They are to suffer as members of the body of the Christ of which the prophets spoke when they foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow. He that overcomes the world, the spirit of ease, and the allure of comfort and self-will even unto death, shall be given the victor’s crown. “Be thou

faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

The apostle addresses those who are serving the Lord to the full extent of their ability from the heart, and who are free of condemnation. He says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:1) The faithful walk after the Spirit of truth and righteousness. For them to do otherwise would imply they had lost the new disposition, the new will, the new mind; that they had become dead to the hope residing in the great and precious promises that first led them to their consecration. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”—II Pet. 1:4

This would imply that the child of God had lost the heavenly perspective of the prospect and purpose set before them in the Apostle Paul’s epistle exhorting his brethren at Colossae. “You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful. Christ’s message in all its

richness must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct one another with all wisdom. Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts. Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.”—Col. 3:12-17, *Today’s English Version*

How appropriate and necessary it is that once each year those who are fully devoted to the service of God are forcefully reminded of the basis of their reconciliation with him and their subsequent privileged communion with his beloved Son. As they partake of the emblems with others who have likewise entered the narrow way, all Spirit-begotten will be mindful of the reality behind the symbols; the reality of the Lord’s death and suffering, the reality of their privilege of co-participation, and the reality of their peace. ■

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?

Alas! and did my Savior bleed?

And did my Sovereign die?

Would he devote that sacred head

For such a worm as I?

It was because we were undone

He groaned upon the tree—

Amazing pity! grace unknown!

And love beyond degree!

Jesus died for you, and Jesus died for me;

Yes, Jesus died for all mankind;

Bless God, salvation’s free.

—*Hymns of Dawn*

The Walk to Gethsemane

DURING HIS FINAL night on earth, beginning with the time Jesus had entered the upper room until he departed for Gethsemane, it must have been quite taxing for the Lord as he looked at the chosen twelve who were selected to carry the torch after his departure from the earth. Would they be fully ready to perform the great commission of preaching the kingdom and faithfully carrying out their vows of consecration?

Jesus had washed his disciples feet as an example of humility, love, and service. Since he was their Master it might have been assumed that one of them would have taken the initiative to wash his feet but, apparently, they were more consumed in thinking about their own importance and failed to utilize this opportunity to perform this service on their Lord's behalf.—John 14:4-12

Luke also describes some of the events that occurred in the upper room. "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. . . . For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that

sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.” (Luke 22:24,27) These two verses indicate there was a dispute among the disciples as well as Jesus’ rebuke that greatness in God’s sight is determined by a willingness to serve.

The Heavenly Father also had predicted betrayal by one of his own which must have been painful for the Master and shocking to the rest of the disciples, but it was needful for them to know this beforehand, thus adding to their sense of sobriety concerning their charge in being his witnesses following his death.—John 13:21-30

Finally, Peter’s sense of self-assurance was addressed when Jesus declared that he would deny the Lord three times in the very near future. All of these events surely were cause for the Master’s somber reflection as to how equipped his disciples would be in carrying out their Christian responsibilities once he was no longer present among them.—Luke 17:32-34

EXPERIENCES OF JESUS’ FOLLOWERS

Jesus knew he would be crucified, and the nature of his words on the way to Gethsemane, in John 16 and 17, focused not upon himself but rather on his disciples who physically were with him, and those who would become his followers throughout this present Gospel Age. He was so solicitous of their welfare, and he foretold what some of their experiences would be in the future so as to prepare their hearts and to give assurance of the succor and provisions that would be made to guide and keep his people. “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out

of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.”—John 16:1-4

These experiences occurred very literally to many of his followers in the early church and also throughout the Gospel Age, although in our part of the world, at least right now, the persecutions may be more symbolic. For example, the concept of killing us might not necessarily be literal, but as Christians, our reputations could be destroyed and there might be much evil speaking to endure because our lifestyle is out of harmony with the world around us.

The Apostle Peter also foretold some of the experiences that would come upon the followers of Christ. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” (I Pet. 4:12-16) In essence, this

is the same thing Jesus predicted and unless we are suffering for the wrong reason, such as being an evildoer or a busybody, we are to rejoice when we suffer as a Christian.

We might well imagine Christ's disciples previously feeling very thrilled to be associated with the Master. He drew huge crowds, performed great miracles, spake as never man spake; they were part of his inner circle. They were going to reign with him in his kingdom. They needed to be told, however, what the future would be like after his departure. The same lesson applies in our day. As Christians when we come to the point of devoting our lives to God and receive water baptism we may have a sense of euphoria because of the precious promises we claim, the hope of the high calling and a knowledge of God's plan. When we begin to be held in disesteem, undergo separation from family and friends who may consider us as being strange and reject us when we tell them about God's plan of salvation offered to all mankind, at that point we learn more clearly what following Christ implies.

A COMFORTER FOR JESUS' FOLLOWERS

Here is another prediction made by Jesus. "I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. . . . I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."—John 16:7,12,13

The Master had foretold that the Holy Spirit would come, guide, and instruct his people so they could function as his ambassadors in the world. When we consider that Jesus had been physically present with his disciples throughout his ministry, it would seem that nothing could have compared with that experience. Peter, James, John, and others had the actual experience of being with him while he was in the flesh before Pentecost. After that, however, they had the Holy Spirit; so from that point onward, their appreciation of the way of the cross grew because they could actually understand what Jesus' death meant. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (vs. 33) This predicted tribulation came upon the Lord's people and continues to do so, but it also has been accompanied by peace, and the inference is that if faithful, as Christ overcame the world, we will do likewise. As we examine our lives, none of us can say we have no problems. If we had expected to receive an earthly peace, we are bound to be disappointed. If we reflect upon some of the experiences of the early Christians as well as persecutions endured by believers throughout the Gospel Age, we know these 'more than overcomers' did not experience much peace of an earthly kind. It was necessary for them to look to Jesus in their difficulties for strength to endure, and to meditate upon his precious promises. This provided a sense of inner peace while the storms of life were raging all about them.

Have we experienced this promised peace that enables us to rejoice in the Lord and in the power

of his might no matter what? We need to understand and appreciate why being a follower of Christ does not result in smooth sailing into the kingdom on flowery beds of ease. Disappointments, unexpected trials, being misunderstood or having our motives questioned can all disrupt our peace, and if we don't keep in mind that the Lord permits adversity in our lives to prove and strengthen our faith, we will be in constant turmoil. As our Master overcame because of his faithfulness, let us bear in mind the assurance "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—I John 5:4

LEARNING TO BE CONTENT

If we lack inner peace we should examine ourselves to determine why we are not living up to our privileges. Are we focused upon developing spiritual fruitage as opposed to engaging in the works of the flesh? (Gal. 5:19-24) Are we careful not to forsake the assembling of ourselves with other brethren so as to obtain mutual strength and edification? (Heb. 10:25) Are our thoughts increasingly centered upon things which are true, pure, lovely, of good report and praiseworthy? (Phil. 4:8) Have we learned to be content in whatever state we are because we have fully acquiesced to the will of God? (vss. 11,12) If we have physical, financial, family, or other problems pressing upon us, do we believe we will never be tested beyond what we can bear but that by God's grace he will direct the issue for our highest spiritual welfare?—I Cor. 10:13

Prayer is an essential ingredient in a Christian's life to gain the strength needed to overcome adversity.

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” (John 17:6) This portion of Jesus’ prayer addresses the fact that his disciples had been instructed by the Master as to God’s character, his attributes, and he affirms that it was the Heavenly Father who had given these chosen ones to our Savior. They had been separated from the mass of mankind and set apart for the Lord. Despite their human imperfections they believed and obeyed his teachings. The fact that this prayer is recorded seems to imply that it was made in audible tones to the Father but also heard by those who were with the Master. Unlike Jesus, we don’t have the ability to prophesy in the sense of foretelling future events except to rehearse those matters that were written aforetime by the holy prophets, the apostles, and certainly the Lord. We do, however, have the capacity for prayer and it should be an integral part of our daily worship. Although Christians should pray for strength and guidance in their daily walk, there should also be a special remembrance given for other believers. We must make an effort to bear up the afflicted, isolated, or bereaved as well.

Additionally, we should not intentionally omit praying for any of our brethren because we had difficult experiences or misunderstandings with them. In fact, that is all the more reason to pray for them so that reconciliation might occur according to the Lord’s will. “Now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom

thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” (vs. 11) Here the Master’s petition fully acknowledges he is leaving his disciples behind and he desires that God’s protection and providence should be upon them and they would be kept together in unity of heart, mind, and spirit and also in the unity of the faith, and experience a sense of oneness such as existed between our Lord and his Father. We cannot imagine that Jesus ever prayed amiss, and thus this sense of oneness that is to exist among the brethren is not only a possibility but a requirement among all who are ultimately going to be part of the body of Christ. We should labor in any way possible to enhance our brethren’s spiritual welfare.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (vs. 17) The sanctification given by God is a process that is directly related to the believer’s study of, and feeding upon, scriptural principles contained in the Bible. There the standards of holy, righteous conduct are set before the Christian’s mind. Obedience to its teachings will separate the believer more and more from the spirit of the world, purify his mind, and promote increased spirituality. The Holy Spirit is used by the Heavenly Father to accomplish the work of sanctification in each believer. Not only does it enable him to comprehend God’s Word, but it strengthens his desire to focus upon heavenly things and to lead a life of righteousness and self-denial. This is essential towards overcoming the influence of the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. The power of the Holy Spirit enables the Christian both “to will and to do” of God’s “good pleasure.”—Phil. 2:13

PRAYING FOR OUR BRETHREN

How can we aid our brethren with their sanctification? We likewise must pray for our brethren to be faithful. The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Additionally, we can support them in their Christian endeavors wherever possible. We should meet together so that we can encourage one another. Sometimes testifying about one's experiences can help other brethren find possible solutions that have worked in addressing some of life's difficulties. If we can appreciate the fact that we have fellow body members who have the same goal as ourselves we can be a blessing one to the other. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."—John 17:20-23

In our imperfect state, it is not possible for us to fully comprehend the Lord's ways. We believe them in faith as revealed in God's Word and ask for more of the Holy Spirit so that our appreciation and conviction regarding these matters can deepen. Can we grasp the fact that the Heavenly Father could love us so dearly because we are willing to be transformed into the image of his dear Son? Perhaps it is a little easier to understand that God would love Christ exceedingly because he was always so obedient, and

in coming to earth to redeem mankind, he willingly and rejoicingly bore every test he experienced. But what about ourselves? Could the Father really love us as he loved his only begotten Son? When we see that we are called to be a part of Christ's body, would the Father therefore have less love for us than his Son? Human reasoning might suggest, "yes" but God's Word is true and the promise for us as overcomers is that the Father loves us as he loves Christ. We may not deserve it, but such is the depth of the Father's love which takes our righteous intentions for the deed, even when we come far short of perfection.

What about Jesus? He promised to the overcomers that he would grant that they should sit with him on his throne even as he overcame and was permitted to sit with the Father on his throne. (Rev. 3:21) What humility on the Master's part. He did not say I don't want the church to share with me in this glory for after all I am the Head. Not at all. His love is so intense for his bride that he will share with us all the glory and blessings of his exalted station if we are faithful to him.

One of the evidences that we have passed from death unto life is that we love the brethren. Additionally, as Christ laid down his life for us, we should lay down our lives for the brethren. In other words, we should do whatever we can to help them make their calling and election sure and, when the church is complete, earth's weary night will end and the kingdom of righteousness will be ushered in to bless the human family.—I John 3:14,16; Rev. 21:1-4

The Master's experiences during his last night on earth are recorded to encourage believers in their

Christian walk throughout this Gospel Age. His concerns were not for himself but for the twelve who were to be his special ambassadors in the earth, and for those who would hearken unto their teachings after he had returned to heaven victorious to be with his Father. He left us a legacy of precious promises and comfort to assist each of us, if we would follow in his footsteps. These words, if taken to heart, will result in our being faithful unto death and ultimate participants in his glory.—II Pet. 1:4,10,11 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 5—“My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.”—Psalm 63:5,6 (Z. '96-161 Hymn 274)

APRIL 12—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the participation of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread.”—I Corinthians 10:16,17 (Z. 01-76 Hymn 325)

APRIL 19—“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”—Matthew 12:34,35 (Z. '96-30 Hymn 267)

APRIL 26—“He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”—Hebrews 4:10 (Z. '02-205 Hymn 250)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

W. Austin Albuquerque, NM April 6-8	M. Grudzien Boise, ID April 27-29
W. Blicharz Boise, ID April 27-29	S. Jeuck St. Petersburg, FL April 15
C. Chandler Boise, ID April 27-29	E. Kalinski Milwaukee, WI April 15
D. Christiansen Boise, ID April 27-29	B. Keith Boise, ID April 27-29
A. Fernets Boise, ID April 27-29	F. Nemesh Boise, ID April 27-29
R. Goodman Boise, ID April 27-29	A. Oystryk Boise, ID April 27-29
R. Gorecki Boise, ID April 27-29	T. Thomassen Boise, ID April 27-29

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Patricia Clark, Phoenix, AZ—December 12. Age, 80

Sister Jenny Fuller, Portland, OR—February 7. Age, 99

Brother Victor Gaidelis, Chicago, IL—February 8.

Brother Al Dickey, Portland, OR—February 9. Age, 91

Sister Jean Luz, Paterson, NJ—February 23. Age, 91

Sister Elizabeth Kuly, Winnipeg, Canada—February 25. Age, 82

Sister Helen Borchak, Pittsburgh, PA—Age, 99

CONVENTIONS

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

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 6-8—Wyndham Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170

PITTSBURGH CONVENTION, April 22—Best Western Parkway Center Inn, Greentree. Contact C. Byrd. Phone: (412) 734-4702

BOISE CONVENTION, April 27-29—Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 2438 Bruins Circle, Boise, ID 83704. Phone: (208) 375-6873

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, April 29—Sheraton-Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA. Phone: (215) 547-4100. Contact R. Eldridge, 37 Falcon Road, Levittown, PA 19056. Phone: (215) 949-0652

METROPOLITAN DETROIT SPRING CONVENTION, May 5,6—Southfield Hotel & Convention Center, 17017 Nine Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48075. Phone: (248) 552-7790. Mention “Bible Student Convention” for special rate through April 27. For other information, phone: (586) 759-3459

JACKSONVILLE CONVENTION, May 6—Embassy Suites Hotel, 9300 Baymeadows Road, Jacksonville, FL. Phone: (904) 448-6933. Contact R. Wyatt. Phone: (904) 378-1996

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, May 6—Contact J. Krasonic. Phone: (724) 872-6215

86th ANNUAL INDIA GENERAL CONVENTION, May 12-14—K. M. T. Marriage Hall, Coimbatore. Contact

J. Udhaya Kumar. Phone: 044-26440753

AGAWAM CONVENTION, May 19,20—Captain Leonard’s House, 63 Main Street, Agawam, MA. Contact F. Sansom, 46 Mountainview Drive, Norwich, CT 06360-1444. Phone: (860) 889-7517 or (860) 861-6881

BUFFALO CONVENTION, May 19,20—Holiday Inn, 5440 Camp Road, Hamburg, NY 14075. Contact R. Morin. Phone: (585) 322-7459

LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL DAY CONVENTION, May 26-28—Holiday Inn, 150 E. Angeleno, Burbank, CA 91502. Contact R. Bieniak. Phone: (949) 457-0894

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 15-17—Ramada Inn, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97220. Phone: (503) 255-6511. Contact J. Black. Phone: (503) 659-6930

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 14-19—(See Registration Information on pages 59-61 of this issue.) University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. Contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

NIGERIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, August 15-19—Emmanuel College Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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