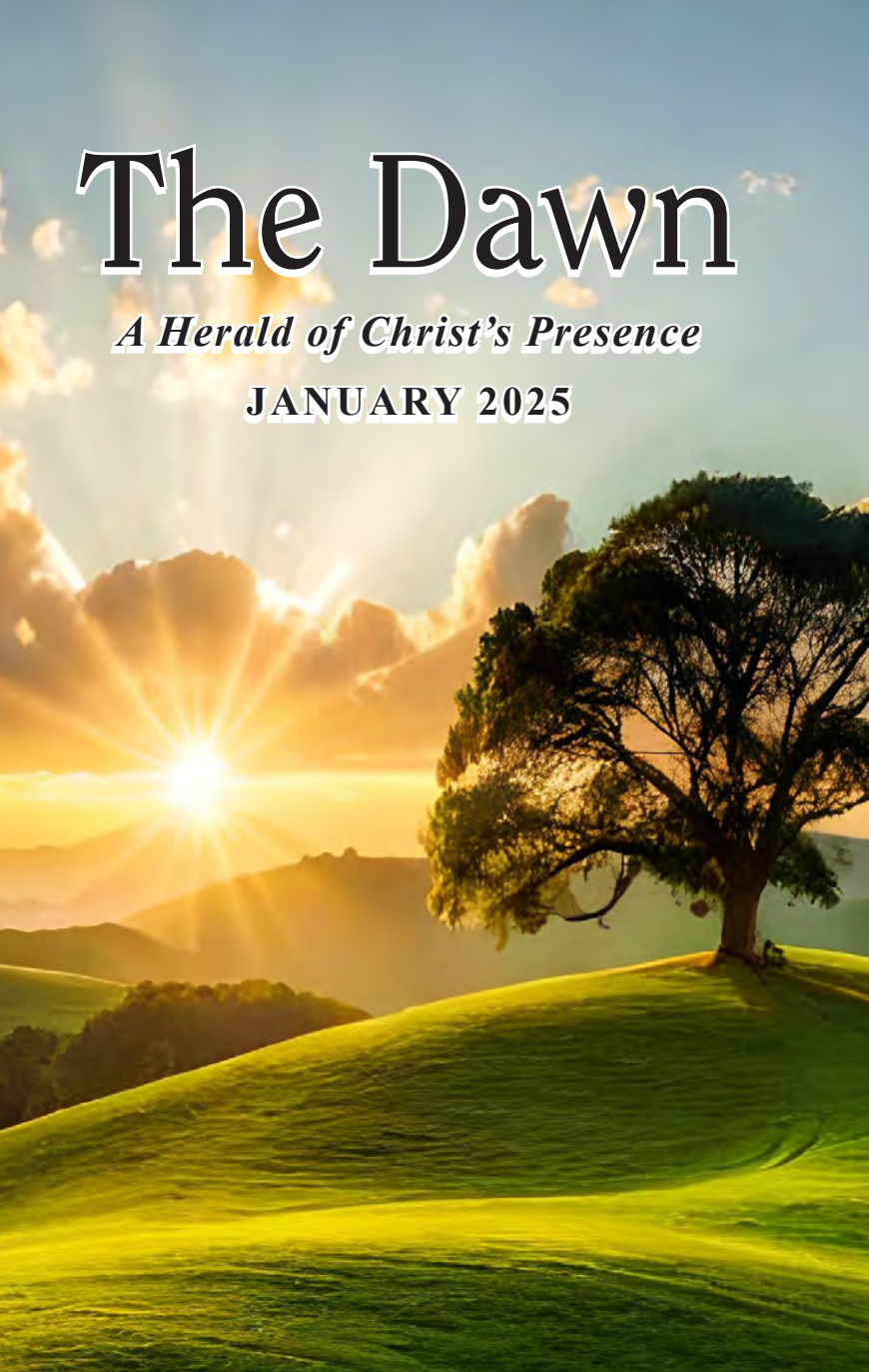


The Dawn

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God's Future Righteous Administration

*“Behold, a king
shall reign in
righteousness, and
princes shall rule
in judgment.”
—Isaiah 32:1*

ON JANUARY 20, 2025, THE inauguration of the forty-seventh President of the United States will take place on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, DC.

At that time, Donald Trump will become the elected leader of what many feel is the most powerful and influential nation on Earth. This will be his second term as President, having been elected in 2016, but then losing in 2020 to current President Joe Biden. As such, President-elect Trump becomes only the second United States president to win two non-consecutive terms of office with a loss in between. The other instance was President Grover Cleveland in the late 19th century.

AN UNUSUAL ELECTION CYCLE

The recently completed election cycle has been, to say the least, most unusual in terms of

circumstances and events. First was the question of whether former President Trump, after a bitter loss in 2020, would run again. This was answered relatively early on when he announced his candidacy for a second term in November 2022. Five months later, in April 2023, President Biden announced he would be running for a second term. This set the scene for both candidates to campaign for a second term in the White House.

As Biden and Trump began their campaigns throughout the remainder of 2023 and into 2024, they naturally engaged in the usual political rhetoric that has come to be commonplace among candidates running for office. Each promoted his respective record while in office, while harshly criticizing the other. Both also repeatedly warned the electorate against voting for the other candidate, as that would, they said, surely bring about terrible results for the country and the world.

A second unusual campaign occurrence which gradually developed related to President Biden's age and mental acuity. As the campaign drew on toward the summer of 2024, many began to believe his advancing age, 81 at the time and 82 now, was a concern, given the fact that on a number of occasions he had inadvertently gotten mixed up when speaking to the press or to the public. This was exacerbated when, on June 27, Biden and Trump had their first televised campaign debate, which turned out to be the only one they had. Afterward, it was conceded by nearly all political pundits of both parties that President Biden's debate performance was very weak.

Then, on July 21, 2024, less than one month after the debate, Biden announced that he was

ending his candidacy for a second presidential term and announced his endorsement of Vice President Kamala Harris as his replacement. Vice President Harris officially secured the Democratic Party nomination just fifteen days later on August 5 by a virtual, rather than in-person, roll call vote of delegates who were previously committed to President Biden.

A third set of unusual circumstances revolved around former President Trump when, on two separate occasions, the first time in July and the second in September, assassination attempts took place, the first of which resulted in a slight injury to his right ear. The second attempt on his life was thwarted before the suspect was able to carry out his intentions. Both of these assassination attempts seemed to solidify Trump's base of support, while at the same time Harris' candidacy also had gained firm support following the withdrawal of President Biden.

As the presidential campaign entered its final two months, most pre-election polls showed a very tight race. On September 10, Vice President Harris and former President Trump held their first and only debate during the campaign. In response to her performance in the debate, Harris' poll numbers inched up several points. However, as time went on, the polls once again got tighter and tighter, with some polls showing Trump having a slight lead heading into November.

FINALLY—THE ELECTION

On November 5, the long awaited election took place. More than 150 million people went to the

polls throughout the United States to select the next president. After polls closed, results soon began to come in from the states, starting in the east and moving to the west. As election night wore on, it became apparent that former President Trump was doing much better than many polls had predicted. This trend held up, and by the next morning, most news outlets had declared him the winner, the new President-elect.

Over the next several days, as remaining votes were tabulated, the results were that Donald Trump had carried 31 of the 50 states, garnering 312 Electoral College votes, while Kamala Harris had won 19 states and 226 electoral votes. At latest count, Trump also won the popular vote by just under 2.5 million votes, and he became the first Republican candidate ever to receive more than 76 million votes.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

We ask then: What does the next four years hold? Will the new President be able to keep his campaign promises? Will Congress, which for at least the next two years is to be controlled also by the Republican Party, be able and willing to pass legislation in keeping with President Trump's agenda? These are, of course, unanswered questions at this point in time. However, if past history is any indicator, the majority of promises made by candidates of either party, once they have become President, end up either by the wayside, or diluted by partisan politics.

For the follower of Christ, however, a view must be cast toward the Scriptures, which contain many

prophecies that point to the time in which we are living as a period of turmoil and trouble—a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was as nation.” (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21) For this reason, the Christian’s focus should not be primarily on “who” is in office, nor whether we personally agree or disagree with this or that policy they have put forth. Rather, we should consider the fact that God is overruling all the affairs of Earth to bring to fruition his long-term plan and purpose for the human race, regardless of who may be the leaders of the nations at any given time.

What is God’s plan? Simply put, it is to rescue mankind of every nation, past and present, both the dead and the living, from the condition of sin and death that has plagued the human race since our first parents fell into sin. Our loving God’s desire is for “all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge and recognition of the divine truth.” (I Tim. 2:4, *Amplified Bible*) This, the Scriptures clearly point out, will not be through any administration of men or women, but through the righteous administration of none other than his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

THE BIBLICAL NEW ADMINISTRATION

Our primary interest, as students of the Bible, should focus on the new administration promised in God’s Word. It, too, requires an “election,” or more accurately, a selection process. This selection began with Jesus, the Messiah. The Prophet Isaiah points to him saying, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth

judgment to the Gentiles.” (Isa. 42:1) God’s “elect” class also includes the faithful followers of Jesus since the Day of Pentecost. The Apostle Peter spoke of these saying, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”—II Pet. 1:10

In the New Testament we find references to this election such as: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;” and “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” (Col. 3:12; Rom. 8:33) These individuals are being selected by God to be “partakers of the heavenly calling,” and they are “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” (Heb. 3:1; I Pet. 1:2) It is God who will complete the election process when, through Jesus, he will “send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”—Mark 13:27

Thus will the work of God’s election be concluded. The work of the new administration, which is the blessing of all the families of the earth, has been described as occurring when Christ, “the Sun of righteousness” shall “arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2) It will bring joy, peace, and everlasting life to all who desire to live obediently on a restored, perfect Earth. All will be accomplished through this new administration and carried out based on God’s wonderful character attributes of love, mercy, justice, wisdom, and power on behalf of the human family.

MEANING OF ADMINISTRATION

The dictionary definition of the word administration is “the act or process of administering;

performance of executive duties; the execution of public affairs; a body of persons who administers.” The verb form, to administer, is defined as “to manage or supervise; mete out or dispense; to minister; to manage or execute.” Fully dedicated followers of Christ learn how to do this during their present Christian walk.

This new administration requires that those that strive to be part of the “elect” be properly prepared in the present life for their work in the future. These are not to be “conformed to this world,” but are described as being “transformed by the renewing” of their mind, that they “may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom 12:2

As Christians, we are to love the Heavenly Father with all of our heart and are, therefore, interested in the Biblical definition of administration and administrators. The word administration occurs twice in the New Testament *King James Version*, and is translated from the Greek word *diakonia*, which means ministry or service. (I Cor. 12:5; II Cor. 9:12) The verb form, administer, found in II Corinthians 8:19,20, is from the Greek word *diakoneo*, which means to minister or serve. The English word deacon is derived from this Greek word, having to do with one who ministers or serves. Jesus also used this word in giving a lesson on service to his disciples saying, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”—Mark 10:45

MANY ADMINISTRATIONS

In I Corinthians 12:5, the Apostle Paul says, “There are differences of administrations, but

the same Lord.” There are indeed varieties of Christian service, but God is directing them all. Paul implies here that each dedicated Christian has something to offer, a talent to give to the Lord and to be used in his service. As we give of ourselves, it is for the purpose of building up one another in the body of Christ. (Jude 1:20; I Cor. 12:12,25,27) When we do this we honor our Father in heaven. In training for their part in this administration work, the various members of Christ’s body must learn to cooperate with each other, offsetting and compensating for each other’s imperfections, shortcomings, and weaknesses. We learn to do this by becoming united with Jesus. Jesus invites us: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:29,30) In this union we learn about our privilege of fellowship in the body of Christ and how to work with the other body members.

We are indeed yokefellows together with Christ. Paul tells us this in Philippians 4:3,4, “I intreat thee also, true yokefellow.” He finishes his thought with, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” We should feel this same way, for all who are in the family of Christ are bound together in the one bond of love and fellowship. This will help us develop a common interest with our brethren and have confidence in, sympathy for, and harmony with them. This is the same training the world of mankind will receive during God’s kingdom. All will then learn to give glory, praise, and honor to the Father under his new administration.

FINANCING THE ELECTION PROCESS

In the election process in this present world, wealth is required to fund a campaign for a new administration. Advertising is required to make known the qualifications of the candidate and, more often than not, the faults and weaknesses of the opposition. As a point of interest, and as difficult as it may be to believe, it is estimated that a combined \$15.9 billion was spent on the recently concluded United States presidential election campaigns. How different is God's election process in preparation for a new righteous administration. Wealth can be a hindrance, as Jesus said: "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." —Matt. 19:23, *Revised Version*

Paul, by contrast, speaks of himself and his co-laborers in the work of spreading the Gospel, "as poor, yet making many rich." (II Cor. 6:10) These faithful servants of God made many rich in hope, faith, love, and all the various aspects of the graces of God, which he abundantly supplies. "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God." (II Cor. 9:12) The apostle continues, saying that the brethren in Jerusalem were glorifying God on account of "your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men." —vs. 13

NEED FOR SACRIFICE

Another part of our Christian training for the new, righteous, kingdom administration involves sacrifice, or laying down our lives, in service to the cause of truth and righteousness. We look upon

this as a privilege, but the world looks upon sacrificing differently. To some, sacrifice carries with it a sense of being a fanatic and, indeed, there have been many fanatic martyrs.

The true followers of Jesus render their sacrifice to God day-by-day, hour-by-hour, experience-by-experience, on a continuing basis with every opportunity that is given. We are to give our little all. Our sacrifices may be small, but they must be all-consuming and burning, until there is nothing more to be consumed, and we have reached the end of our earthly course.

The Christian's sacrifice and suffering is clearly outlined for us by the Apostle Paul when he said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (II Tim. 2:12) We also are promised, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (Rev. 3:21) What a blessed privilege it is for these called ones to be granted a share in the heavenly realm, and to be raised to glory, honor, and immortality, if faithful unto death. (Rom. 2:7; Rev. 2:10) "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."—II Cor. 9:8

This ministering and serving throughout our Christian walk, and the desire to give our all, is stated by Paul to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (I Tim. 4:15) The first lesson in giving was of our hearts to the Heavenly Father, but this was only the beginning of a walk that leads to the giving of our all. We must develop a God-like character, and in this regard Paul told Timothy, "Godliness with contentment is great

gain.” (I Tim. 6:6) It is one of the important steps on the Christian ladder, along with faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance [self-control], patience, brotherly kindness, and most importantly, love.—II Pet. 1:4-8

Such love must be developed with the assistance of the Holy Spirit and cannot be hypocritical. It must be genuine, heartfelt, as well as expressed by service and word of mouth. The psalmist speaks for us when he says, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” (Ps. 19:14) This love is toward God, his Son Christ Jesus, our fellow brethren in Christ, and is accompanied by a compassionate love towards the world, and even for our enemies.

Paul explains more about this love when he writes, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”—Eph. 3:17-19

MAKING KNOWN THE GLAD TIDINGS

Another aspect of our training for this administration of the future is in the promotion of the good news—“the gospel of the kingdom.” (Matt. 24:14) Paul, quoting in part from Isaiah 52:7, wrote, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and

how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”—Rom. 10:13-15

THE POWER OF JESUS

When the kingdom administration becomes a reality, these who have been thus trained will be used by God. It is he who has authored a plan of recovery for all mankind and guarantees its success by miracle-working power. Jesus is the ruler in that plan, not elected by the people, but chosen by God. His enemies killed him when he was on Earth, nearly twenty centuries ago, but divine power raised him from the dead. (Phil. 2:7-11) After his resurrection Jesus announced to his disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”—Matt. 28:18

By the use of “all power” given to him, Jesus will have no difficulty in establishing divine control over the peoples of Earth. Associated with him in that government will be his faithful followers who, since Pentecost, have suffered and died with him. They, too, are raised from the dead in what the Scriptures describe as the “first resurrection,” that they may share with Jesus in his divine administration.—Rev. 20:6

These will be the invisible spiritual rulers in the new social order—as Apostle Peter speaks of it, the “new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) They will have human representatives who will be the resurrected Ancient Worthies of past ages, of whom righteous Abel was

the first, and John the Baptist the last. These also, as “princes in all the earth,” will be raised from the dead just before the new kingdom is ready to function for the actual liberation of the people from their bondage to sin and death. (Ps. 45:16; Isa. 32:1; Heb. 11:1-40) The most important consideration, however, is that divine, miracle-working power guarantees the success of God’s plan for solving the present problems of the people and the nations.

GOVERNED BY DIVINE WISDOM

These Ancient Worthies in God’s kingdom, or government, will function directly under the authority of Christ. They will all be wholeheartedly in harmony with the righteous principles by which he will judge and govern the people. How wonderful are those principles!

Jesus will not need to placate various conflicting elements and divergent interests of those who will work with him in that divine government. There will be no “party politics” or “lobbying.” As Isaiah prophesied, “He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.” (Isa. 11:3) As Earth’s new king, Jesus will be able to read the hearts of men, and will know and understand their innermost thoughts. Through the “elect,” he will deal with the people according to what is really in their heart, and not upon the basis of what they profess to be. Imagine what changes this will make in governmental administration!

“With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.” (vs. 4)

Under the rulership of this righteous king, the legitimate desires of all mankind will be satisfied.

EVERYONE A BENEFICIARY

The poor and the meek will then have someone to speak for them. David wrote concerning this coming king: “He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls [Hebrew: lives] of the needy. He shall redeem their soul [life] from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.”—Ps. 72:12-14

In verse 11 of this psalm, we read: “All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.” The great and mighty, as well as the meek and humble, will recognize the virtues and qualifications of this new king. He will not pamper the rich and exploit the poor. Neither will he exalt the poor and destroy the rich. Everyone will be dealt with justly and equitably.

One of the symbolisms descriptive of the effect of Christ’s rulership portrays the valleys being exalted, and the hills made low. (Isa. 40:4; Luke 3:5) This indicates a just distribution of all the bounties of earth, and a recognition that God has “made of one blood all nations ... on the face of the earth.” (Acts 17:26) From God’s standpoint, there are no dukes or lords, and there will be no peasants or paupers.

Beyond this, and even more wonderful, is the fact that the Lord’s government will give health and life to the people—everlasting life. “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” (Isa. 33:24) This is

why God allowed Jesus' enemies to put him to death, and why Jesus voluntarily gave himself up to die. It was part of the divine arrangement that his rulership should not be over a dying race, but over one being restored to life. (Acts 3:20,21; I Cor. 15:22) It was therefore necessary that he should first die to redeem mankind from death. Paul wrote that Jesus gave himself "a ransom for all," and then added, "to be testified in due time."—I Tim. 2:5,6

Jesus gave himself as a ransom at his First Advent, and it will be during his Second Presence that the glorious truth concerning this will be testified, or made known to all. All who, when they learn of this provision, accept God's grace through Christ and obey the laws of that "government" which will then be upon "his shoulder," will not need to die. (Isa. 9:6,7) They will be restored to perfection of being, and live happily forever. How we look forward with anticipation to this future administration of righteousness, blessings, and life! ■

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 Jutta Allen, New York, NY—November 18.
Age, 89

Sister Bonnie Bradshaw, Orlando, FL—December
4. Age, 75

Sister Josephine Wesol, Chicago, IL—December 9.
Age, 86

Another Year for Thee

Another year we welcome!
Dear Master, may it be,
In thought and word and action,
Another year for Thee!
Another year of leaning
Upon Thy loving breast,
Where heartaches, pain and sorrow
Are lost in happy rest.

Another year of proving
Thy holy, blessed will,
To find my joy in doing,
And in Thy hand hold still;
Another year of service,
To prove to Thee my love;
Another year of training
For greater works above.

Another year of trials
And the blessings that they bring;
Another year's protection
'Neath the shadow of Thy wing.
Another year of gladness!
Dear Master, may it be,
In living and in dying,
Another year for Thee!

—*Poems of Dawn*

God Hears the Humble

Key Verse: “*LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear.*”
—*Psalm 10:17, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 10:12-18

IT IS A BLESSING TO BEGIN

this series of 2025 International Bible Studies by taking all of the Key Verses for January from the Psalms. They are a rich repository of wisdom, solace, comfort, encouragement, devotion, and heartfelt praise for our God and Creator, Jehovah. Today’s theme, “God Hears the Humble” derives from our Key Verse. It acknowledges the fact that the Lord hears the desires of the humble and therefore pre-

pares their hearts to receive them. We may ask, “What is the Lord going to give them?” “Justice,” verse 18 answers. God will do justice for them and for the fatherless and the oppressed. The “man of the earth,” identified in this verse, will no longer be permitted to oppress them.

Verse 13 of our lesson informs us that although these oppressors mock God, saying that he will not require an accounting of their evil deeds, he most certainly will. “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”—Gal. 6:7,8, *NKJV*

“The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity.” (Ps. 53:1, *NKJV*) Evildoers deny that they will ever have to account for their crimes, but a Day of Judgment is coming. God “now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”—Ps. 10:12-16; Acts 17:30,31, *NKJV*

The expression, “man of the earth” in verse 18 of our lesson, stands in sharp contrast to those whose hopes are anchored in heaven. Earthly-minded persons have limited vision when it comes to the things that God values. They may instead esteem the advantages of cheating, stealing, lying, and intimidating to achieve their goals. Christians, on the other hand, fight these earthly instincts and seek heavenly mindedness. Following the admonition of Jesus, they know where true treasure may be found. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”—Matt. 6:19-21, *NKJV*

James taught us: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (James 4:6-10, *NKJV*) Peter augments the end of James’ statement, “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (I Pet. 5:6,7, *NKJV*) In caring for you, God will hear your humble cries. ■

The Majesty of the Lord

Key Verse: *“The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.”*

—*Psalm 93:1, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 93:1-5

OUR LESSON PROVIDES

the setting for an excellent meditation. What are some of the defining qualities of our God? In trying to sift through varied ideas as to his nature, some insights are lofty, but others are not. Some leave us with the impression that their perception of God is that he is just like man, except that he embodies a much larger physical presence. Our Creator has been wrongly accused of having qualities evident in our fallen race. Vanity, arbitrariness, cruelty, insensitiv-

ity, and other erroneous attributes have been superimposed on him. Such accusations are misguided.

Today’s Key Verse first indicates that one evidence as to God’s nature is that he “reigns.” His dominion is over everything, though in some areas he is withholding the exercise of his mighty power, as in the present, though temporary, permission of sin and death. He reigns over the laws of physics. Out of nothing, he brought forth the vastness of the universe. Even the smallest constituents of the universe that we know of are regulated by

complex laws of forces and interactions.

The Psalmist David wrote, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.” (Ps. 19:1-3, *NKJV*) From our vantage point, looking up at night to the Milky Way, who has not been awed by the beauty of our galaxy? The heavens fascinate and inspire us. Majestic mountains, expansive seas, fruited plains and glorious woods resonate around us, inspiring an appreciation for God’s handiwork. Day after day, night after night, the beauties of the heavens and the earth speak to mankind in a language that all can understand. Their message—God is real!

“He is clothed with majesty.” This is another evidence as to the nature of God. When we see something of great beauty we call it “majestic.” Likewise, a great moral victory over evil may correctly be construed as majestic. Majesty inspires our hearts and minds to lofty thoughts and feelings. God is clothed with majesty. Meditating on that leads to a more profound appreciation of his person. “God is love.” (I John 4:8) His love evokes the appreciation of his majesty. God is grander on every front than the best people we have ever known. Luke’s record of Jesus’s words give keen insight into the majestic nature of God. “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? So Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” (Luke 18:18,19, *NKJV*) Jesus, the epitome of all that we perceive to be good, acknowledged that there is only one who is truly good—God, the Creator—because he is the author of goodness.

A third evidence as to God’s nature is that he is eternal. The passing of billions of years does not intimidate him. He is not challenged by the passing eons of time because he is time’s Creator. May we better understand the majesty of Jehovah with each passing day. ■

A God of Mercy

Key Verse: *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.”*
—*Psalm 103:8, New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 103:1-14

THERE IS A PERVERSITY in the fallen human nature that breeds dread of God. It imagines that God is fickle, vengeful, and antagonistic toward the human family; quick to judge and swift to punish. Our Key Verse dispels that error in thinking and speaks of God as merciful, full of grace, and slow to become angry.

Psalm 103 is a healing balm, banishing any dread of God that may cloud our thinking. We suggest that the Lord’s people read and consider it with regularity. Note the Psalmist David’s jubilant tone, “Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”—vss. 1-5, *NKJV*

This presents a true and spiritually healthy view of our Creator. He is forgiving. He does not hold grudges. “He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His

mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”—vss. 9-12, *NKJV*

Apostle Paul characterizes God in a similar manner: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (II Cor. 1:3,4, *NKJV*) Our Creator is acknowledged as the “Father of mercies.” Note the plurality—“mercies.” The manifestation of God’s mercy appears in many shades and forms. He is also identified as the God of all comfort. Those whose lives are devoted to him can attest of their personal experience with his multiple mercies and profound comfort.

David’s psalms have a recurring theme of God’s mercy, perhaps inspired by his great sins of adultery with Bathsheba and Uriah’s murder. Ponder the anguish of Psalm 51: “Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.”—vss. 1-4, *NKJV*

Dear Reader, may we take similar comfort in realizing that we worship a God of mercy. “As a father is kind to his children, so the LORD is kind to those who honor him. He knows what we are made of; he remembers that we are dust. ... For those who honor the LORD, his love lasts forever, and his goodness endures for all generations of those who are true to his covenant and who faithfully obey his commands.”—Ps. 103:13-18, *Good News Bible* ■

An Everlasting Kingdom

Key Verse: “*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*”
—**Psalm 145:13**,
New King James Version

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 145:10-21

OUR KEY VERSE

acknowledges God’s omnipotence. As we look at the world today, we do not see many seeking to know God. Fewer still are making a concerted effort to live godly lives in accordance with the divine will. Does human indifference negate the claims of Scripture that God’s kingdom is everlasting and his dominion endures throughout all generations? We answer, “No.” The God of our Bible is

eternal. The brevity of human life limits our ability to fully discern the true scope of eternity. God, on the other hand, is entirely comfortable with the enormity of eternity. The Prophet Isaiah refers to him as “the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity.”—Isa. 57:15, *NKJV*

The Psalms speak of God, the Eternal One, saying, “LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”—Ps. 90:1,2, *NKJV*

The point that we are making is this: God’s plan has not been a failure. He is fully in control of his creation. One may well ask, “If that is so, why is there so much

suffering and chaos in the world? Why do wars persist? Why do people get sick and die?” God has, for a limited time, permitted sin to wreak havoc among men. Solomon wrote: “I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised [Hebrew: afflicted]. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind.” (Eccles. 1:13,14, *NKJV*) The operative phrase here is, “by which they may be exercised,” or afflicted. The human family, in experiencing the effects of sin, is being afflicted in order to know good and evil. (Gen. 3:22) In due time, our Creator will bring mankind’s calamity to an end—in his glorious everlasting kingdom.

Then the promises of Scripture will be reality, not apparent exaggeration. “All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, And Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, And talk of Your power, To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, And the glorious majesty of His kingdom. ... My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, And all flesh shall bless His holy name Forever and ever.”—Ps. 145:10-12,21, *NKJV*

This shall be accomplished through the work of God’s Son, Christ Jesus. “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.”—Isa. 9:6,7, *NKJV*

“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:9,10, *NKJV*) Let us continue to pray for God’s everlasting kingdom! ■

His Hands Shall Finish It

*“The hands of
Zerubbabel have
laid the foundation
of this house; his
hands shall also
finish it; and thou
shalt know that
the LORD of hosts
hath sent me
unto you.”
—Zechariah 4:9*

OUR TEXT CONCERNS THE

building of Zerubbabel's temple which took place after the return of the Jews from captivity. This prophecy teaches a much larger lesson than to limit its application to the local events that took place during Zerubbabel's day. Instead, it has a greater significance in the building of the spiritual “temple of God,” the bride of Christ, which has been underway during the present Gospel Age since the Day of Pentecost.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:21,22

In Zerubbabel's day, there was opposition to the building of that temple, and so also there has been opposition to the present building work of the spiritual temple. This opposition is spoken of in Zechariah 4:7 as being a “great mountain” which attempted to hinder the building work. This, in prophetic language, illustrates the greater opposition which has accompanied the present work.

During this time the “great mountain” has in part represented the man-made kingdoms and religious systems of this world that have wielded their power and wealth to adversely affect the construction work of the spiritual temple and the gathering of Christ’s “little flock,” all those who are striving to follow faithfully in his footsteps. (Luke 12:32) Much has been antagonistic to the success of this work, such as error masquerading as truth and darkness appearing as light. (John 3:19; II Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:12) However, the Great Architect, our Heavenly Father, has arranged to providentially care for his children and the building of the temple.—Heb. 13:5,6; I Pet. 5:7

What has God arranged to do for his people? Will he vanquish the enemies of truth and righteousness? Will he erect a protecting fence around his people? We answer no, because he permits the enemies to pursue their course, and his people to be tested for their loyalty to him. God ultimately defeats the enemy’s purpose by giving his people spiritual vision through his Word of Truth. During Zerubbabel’s day he sent two of his prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, with a vision. The vision consisted of a candlestick that provides light. The oil that fed the lamps came through seven golden pipes from two olive trees. (Zech. 4:2,3) The message is particularly meaningful because it was “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” (vs. 6) How strengthening this was to the people in that time, and what an encouragement it is to us in our day.

The children of Israel believed that someday they would be the light of the world. God warned

them that as the secret of the candlestick's light was in the oil coming from the two olive trees, so also the secret of their success as a nation lay in their having a continual supply of his Spirit, or holy influence, upon them. However, to the natural eye, seeing on one side the military might which had gathered against them, and on the other side nothing but the Spirit of God invisibly working, it seemed their chances of success were remote. The same is true today. The Lord's people are in a minority as regards numbers and earthly influence. Some may have supposed that success would be ensured if they could count on the support of earthly powers, but God's message once again is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit."

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS

Let us consider the progress of this spiritual temple-building work and note how marvelously it has proceeded, even though it is spoken of prophetically as having taken place in the "day of small things." (Zech. 4:10) This "day" began at Pentecost when, symbolically speaking, the foundation of the spiritual house was laid. For thirty years the life of our dear Redeemer was mostly hidden from the public's understanding. Mary, and a few other close friends of our Lord, knew of his miraculous birth, and they no doubt pondered over the angel's message and the prophecies concerning him.—Luke 1:26-38; Isa. 7:14; 9:6,7

Wonderful things were prophesied concerning the child Jesus, and as the years went by with no apparent sign of the foretold predictions being fulfilled, some perhaps felt that they would never

come to pass. His eventual identification by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, his baptism and anointing with the Holy Spirit, were great things. Yet, the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus as viewed from a purely human standpoint was considered largely as an apparent failure in the eyes of the worldly-wise. He presented himself to Israel as their Messiah, but because he did not measure up to their perception of what Messiah should be, as a nation they rejected him.—Isa. 53:1-3; John 1:11,12; Acts 2:22,23

The night before he died, Jesus said to his disciples, “I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) He was an overcomer in every sense of the word, although it did not appear evident when, the next day, he hung upon the cross dying. There, amidst a fearful darkness, Jesus experienced his greatest triumph over the world. To the average man, it was only the end of a very foolish and fanatical life. The death and burial of Jesus, although it may have been a day of “small things” in the estimation of those who witnessed the events, it was actually a day of great victory. The results of these events will only be seen when every creature which is “in heaven, and on the earth,” will lift up his voice in praise to him saying, “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

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

We read that it was a day of small things when Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the house. Our opening text says that the foundation was laid by

his own hands, indicating that it was a work which he attended to personally. After our Lord's ascension to heaven, we find that his first work was to lay the foundation of the spiritual temple, and this he also attended to personally, laying the foundation with his own hands, symbolically speaking. It was then that he carried into the courts of divine justice the merit, or value, of his sacrificed, perfect humanity, and presented it to the Heavenly Father "for us." (Heb. 9:24) Thus he laid the foundation of the house of sons, upon the basis of our coming to God and dedicating our life unto him as an acceptable sacrifice.—Heb. 3:6; Rom. 12:1

Looking back to Jerusalem and seeing what was taking place, we note that the Lord's bewildered disciples were assembled there according to his instructions. Just before his ascension, he told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they would be endued with power from on high. (Acts 1:4) In that upper room, we may visualize them all gathered together. (vss. 12-14) Perhaps Thomas was wondering whether or not they had understood the instructions of the Lord correctly. Peter may have been reasoning what the meaning of it all could be, while the meditative John perhaps questioned why the abiding presence of the Master was not yet with them.

In the city, the tumult which but a few weeks earlier had raged so furiously had now been stilled. The chief priests and elders of the Jews were quiet; the cause of all their anxiety and contention was gone, or so they thought. The Nazarene was dead, his earthly ministry finished, the hopes of the majority of his followers were dashed, and victory belonged to the religious (Continued on page 36)

WITNESS OPPORTUNITY

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(Continued from page 30) leaders of the Jews. It was a day of small things on earth, but it was a day of great things in heaven. The risen and glorified Redeemer was laying the foundation of a house that will be the symbolic meeting place between God and men when ultimately completed.—II Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3

PREPARATION OF THE LIVING STONES

What was true of Jesus' ministry and at Pentecost has been true throughout the centuries since, for it has been a day of small things. We know that even before the apostles fell asleep in death, the "mystery of iniquity" had already begun to work in the infant church. (II Thess. 2:7) This developed into a "great mountain," opposing all who kept the faith and walked in the footsteps of our Lord. Over the centuries, and especially during the Dark Ages, this mountain has persecuted and opposed with sword, stake, and the scaffold, the true saints of God. They have been compelled to flee to dens and caves of the earth to escape its relentless and persecuting power.

To the human observer, it might appear that the Great Architect did not have much interest in his work to allow it to be impeded, or apparently so. However, the situation has never been out of God's control, and the work has been grandly going forward. In the midst of this day of small things, the living stones for the temple have been in course of preparation. They have been—one by one—prepared, chiseled and polished in the very presence of their foes, and often at their hands.

It has been a day of great things when viewed from the heavenly standpoint. The prophecy states

that the hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the house, and “his hands shall also finish it.” (Zech. 4:9) The laying of the foundation was a personal work in which our Lord, with his own hands, presented to God the valuable basis of our acceptance to him. Since we read that his hands shall also finish the work, we must conclude that it will also be a personal work attended to by our Lord. What a wonderful thought it is that we are now living in the days of the Second Presence of the Master. He has come to attend personally to the finishing work of this great spiritual building.—John 14:1-3

THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE SOON TO BE COMPLETED

When Christ laid the foundation of this spiritual house at Pentecost, he had placed in his Father’s hands the merit by which the house of sons was made acceptable. (Heb. 9:24) Now that he has come to finish it, we read that he comes with a “plummet” in his hands. (Zech. 4:10) The plummet is for the work of putting all things into alignment. During this ending period of the Gospel Age, the greater Zerubbabel, Christ Jesus, with the plummet of Truth in his hands, has held it up to the many long held, accepted false and unscriptural doctrines of Christendom. As the plummet has been held up, how distorted many of the teachings are that have come down to us from a darker past. The true followers of God have been gathering around the Truth, wonderfully served at the table of their Lord, that they might enjoy the increasing light of his Holy Word. (Matt. 24:45; Luke 12:37; Rev. 3:20,21) What has been the result of the use of this plummet?

Has the light of Truth shined forth, and have the Lord's people quickly sought to put off all that pertains to the "old man," and have they endeavored to "put on the new man?"—Col. 3:8-14

Let it stimulate us to face the trials of our prophetic day by remembering that the finishing work is now taking place. It is being performed by our Lord's own hands, and he is personally attending to it. The great temple is being completed as each "living stone" is fully chiseled and polished. (I Pet. 2:5, *Revised Version*) When the last of these living stones has passed beyond the veil, they will all be brought together and placed in the "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1) Thus God's spiritual temple building will be finished. Then the day of small things will be past, and from our future, heavenly home we shall hear restored mankind saying, "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."—Ps. 48:1,2 ■

2025 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Friday, April 11, 2025.

Lessons from the Jordan River

“Ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.”

—Deuteronomy 11:31,32

MORE THAN THREE THOU-sand years have passed since the Israelites fulfilled the instructions of our opening text and crossed the Jordan River, entering for the first time the land promised to their forefathers. The Jordan River has played an important role in the history of God’s chosen people, the nation of Israel, and by searching the Scriptures we are able to see significant meaning to many

events concerning it. Although Israel, as a nation today, does not yet fully understand God’s hand in their affairs, or the symbolisms contained in a consideration of the Jordan River, students of the Bible see these things through the enlightening power of God’s Holy Spirit. This is particularly true as the time approaches for the establishment on Earth of God’s kingdom through Christ.

Many of the outstanding events in ancient Israel that had pictorial meaning were associated with the Jordan River. The Bible record indicates God overruled that the Israelites would travel up the east side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River, then cross the river toward the west to enter Canaan. (Deut. 4:45-49; 11:29-31) It would have been much simpler if they had gone up the west side of the Dead Sea and not have to cross the Jordan at all. However, their travel up the east side gave the opportunity for God to provide valuable lessons to the Israelites and to us. We also remember how the Jordan River entered into many of the experiences of Elijah and Elisha, most of which are recorded in II Kings. David likewise had many experiences at the Jordan River which have significance, and it is also noteworthy that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JORDAN RIVER

These characteristics become more understandable when we first note that the Jordan River runs north and south, and nearly the entire length of Israel, as shown when, through Joshua, God divided the land between Israel's tribes. This feature nicely illustrates certain aspects of God's plan. The river has its beginning in the north on the sides of Mount Hermon, and more than two hundred miles south the river terminates in the Dead Sea, also called the Salt Sea. Between these two points, the Sea of Galilee is an outstanding landmark through which the Jordan flows.

There are also certain physical characteristics of the water itself. As the small river leaves the slopes of Mt. Hermon, it is clear and pure and continues to be so as far as the Sea of Galilee. Upon leaving Galilee, it begins to pick up sediment and salt from along the banks and the river bed, and by the time it reaches the Dead Sea it is salty to such an extent that virtually no life exists in it. In addition, we note the rapid descent of the river from an elevation of more than 9,000 feet above sea level at its source, Mount Hermon, downstream to the Dead Sea, which is over 1,400 feet below sea level. This is a drop of more than 10,400 feet along the river's roughly hundred mile length. This accounts for the name "Jordan" being given to it, which in the Hebrew means "a descender."

A PICTURE OF GOD'S PLAN

The head waters of the Jordan River, at Mt. Hermon, is a fitting representation of God's throne, of which the Psalmist David spoke, "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Ps. 133:3) At the time our first parents were created, the pure water of life descended, symbolically speaking, from the throne of God to Adam and Eve, and instructions were given to Adam that he should multiply and fill the earth with a perfect race of human creatures.—Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7-17

However, because sin entered the world through the disobedience of our first parents, these pure waters became polluted, and that which should have been a blessing for man became a curse upon

all. (Gen. 3:17-19) Since the original fall, as each generation passes, man has degenerated from the original perfection of Adam. The human family is becoming more polluted with sin and error in the depths of human depravity and hopelessness represented by the Dead Sea. The whole human family then may be represented by the Dead Sea—the condition of Adamic death.—Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:10,11,23; 5:12

The Dead Sea's waters are so polluted, and the salty marshes that surround its shoreline have such a stench, that for centuries there have been few, if any, inhabitants around its shores. This, however, has not always been the case. The scriptural evidence is that God placed a special curse upon that area at the time that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. (Gen. 19:24,25; Deut. 29:23) In due time, this special curse will be lifted when Christ's kingdom is established, signifying that once again these areas will be inhabited with a thriving population. (Rev. 22:1-3) Prior to this curse being placed upon the region, the Bible record states, "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar."—Gen. 13:10

WATER OF LIFE

Mankind has not been left hopelessly lost in the Dead Sea of Adamic death. At the due time in God's arrangement, he sent forth his Son and brought hope to a dead world. Most of Jesus' life and ministry was spent in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee,

performing many miracles and doing much preaching there. The Sea of Galilee was clean water, abundant in fish and animal life, and is a fitting picture of the hope for life held out to all men through the ministry and sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus. The Jordan River, especially from Galilee to the Dead Sea, represents the human family still on the downward course toward destruction and death. (Ps. 14:2,3; Matt. 7:13) The pure water of life has been polluted with sin and error and has been turned into a curse upon mankind, and no one is able to avoid its consequences.

John the Revelator assures us that the ultimate purpose of God to restore life to his human family will in due time surely be fulfilled. "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—Rev. 22:1,2

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

In Genesis is recorded the battle of the kings, when many of the kings of surrounding nations came together against the more prosperous kings, including the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose cities were located in the "vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea." (Gen. 14:3) When Abram heard that his brother's son, Lot, had been taken captive during one of these battles, he organized his men and set out in pursuit of his nephew. He finally overtook and defeated those kings, returning the

captives and spoil, including Lot, back to their rightful cities in the valley of Siddim. (vss. 4-17) It was on this return trip that he paid tithes to Melchisedek.—vss. 18-20

Later, as cited earlier, is recorded the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah by God. “Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.” (Gen. 19:24,25) The entire area of the Jordan valley, as well as the people, were cursed by God, and the plain of the Jordan that had been known as “the garden of the LORD,” was now a valley of salt.—Gen. 13:10

The immediate effect of God’s judgment was in the form of literal fire that rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying the people and the cities. God intended that there should be a perpetual curse against the region, and this could not be accomplished by fire only, as the cities could have been rebuilt later if fire was the only disaster to the area. God intended that there should be a perpetual desolation of the land, and this was accomplished by polluting the waters of the Jordan and the Dead Sea with great quantities of salt and deposits of minerals containing highly poisonous sulfur.

THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH

Certain Jewish historians have suggested that there may have been earthquakes accompanying the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and geologists now are finding evidences that this may have occurred. This might account for the salt

springs that apparently broke out along the lower section of the Jordan. This led to the pouring of their salt-laden, poisonous water into the river, and from there into the Dead Sea. The prophet of God spoke of this, saying, “Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation.”—Zeph. 2:9

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

The Prophet Jeremiah also says, “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.”—Jer. 17:5-7

The whole human family is represented in the curse that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Truly the earth today, being cursed, is not able to sustain or perpetuate life; but blessed are those whose trust and hope are the Lord, and in his plan. Let us rejoice in the hope through Christ that is represented by his earthly ministry near the Sea of Galilee. In due time, that curse will be lifted through the administration of Christ’s glorious kingdom. Then the waters of the Jordan, being purified, will once again represent the pure river of life that will go out and encompass the entire earth. At that time, mankind will be washed in the symbolic waters of life, through the redemptive work

of our Lord Jesus, and be made free from Adamic death and condemnation.—Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:21,22

THE CITY OF ENGEDI

There was a city on the western shore of the Dead Sea called Engedi, contemporary with Sodom and Gomorrah, yet it continued on for many generations before the curse of salt caused its desolation. It is first mentioned in Genesis 14:7 under a different name—Hazezon-tamar. Later, when David was being pursued by Saul, he took refuge in the ruins of Engedi by the Dead Sea. (I Sam. 23:28,29) Since Engedi was not destroyed by fire as was Sodom and Gomorrah, its ruins have been much better preserved. The evidence of excavations there agrees with the scriptural account that, at one time in the distant past, it was a thriving and prosperous city due to the fertility of the soil along the seacoast prior to the catastrophic invasion of salt. This is shown in the Song of Solomon, where we read, “My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers in the vineyards of Engedi.” (Song of Sol. 1:14, *Revised Version*) This was before the curse of salt began to take effect in the Jordan valley.

The judgments of the Lord upon Sodom and Gomorrah are a vivid reminder and illustration of God’s judgments against the human family as a result of the transgression in Eden. This destruction represents Adamic death. However, Jesus indicated that the Sodomites would be granted an opportunity to obtain eternal life in his future kingdom. “I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.” (Luke 10:12)

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah has also been used in the Scriptures both as a warning and as a picture of God's judgments upon certain nations and institutions before Christ's future kingdom is set up.

MOSES' WARNING

After Moses smote the rock twice in anger, the Heavenly Father told him that as punishment he would not be allowed to cross over the Jordan River into Canaan. (Num. 20:10-12) Realizing this, and that he would die in the wilderness, Moses wrote the Book of Deuteronomy, which was a mixture of admonitions and instructions concerning the Law, but also a book in which he seemed to pour out his heart and soul to his people Israel. He showed his earnest desire for their faithfulness to God's Law, and his complete selflessness, by the fact that he hardly mentioned his imminent death. His sole concern was for his brethren.

Moses gave a warning to Israel in which he reminded them of the importance of keeping God's Law. He told them of all the blessings they had received at the Lord's hand; the way in which God had smitten their enemies before them; how he provided for their food and drink in the wilderness; and even miraculously preserved their clothes and the shoes that they wore. (Deut. 29:2-6) Then he warned them, saying if they sinned against God, and against the Law, he might do to them as he had done to Sodom and Gomorrah. "That the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of

Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath.” —vs. 23

God used the desolation of Sodom and other cities to signify what would happen to Israel if they forsook the Law. This text is further scriptural evidence that the killing salt content of the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea was indeed part of the curse which God placed upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

JEREMIAH PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE JORDAN

God also used the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of how he would, in due time, destroy the great mystical city Babylon. This account is found in chapters 50 and 51 of Jeremiah. God speaks of the judgments against literal ancient Babylon, foretelling her overthrow by the Medes and Persians, but also speaks of a greater fulfillment as he foretells the overthrow of symbolic Babylon. Jeremiah's prophetic words read, “As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.” (Jer. 50:40) In the Revelation account, we read, “He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” (Rev. 18:2) This indicates that God will, in due time, destroy the great mystical Babylon with the symbolic fire and brimstone of Armageddon, and sprinkle it with the salt of perpetual desolation never to rise again.—vss. 10-21

Jeremiah continues to tell how this judgment against Babylon will be carried out. He says, “Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?” (Jer. 50:44) The Revelator identifies Jesus, the “Lamb” of God, as the one who has been chosen to carry out the Father’s will. We read, “One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”—Rev. 5:5-9

ISAIAH’S HOPEFUL TESTIMONY

Isaiah’s prophetic words concerning Christ’s coming kingdom of righteousness are encouraging. He says, “In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. ... And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.”—Isa. 11:10,11,16

The prophet wrote of the time when the offspring of David—the root of Jesse—shall stand before the

people in power and glory. At that time, he will roll back the curse represented by the waters of the Jordan, so that the people can pass over into the blessings of the kingdom. The prophet also speaks of the highway that will be prepared for the people to walk upon. We look forward to that glorious time to come when the glory of the Lord will fill the earth, as well as the hearts and minds of all people. —Isa. 11:9; 35:8

A PICTURE OF SALVATION

There were four major streams that converged together to the south of Mount Hermon to form the body of the Jordan River. This may signify the salvation of the church, the great multitude, the Ancient Worthies, and the world of mankind—all taken from the human family. (Rev. 14:1-3; 7:9; Heb. 11:1,2,39,40; Rev. 21:3-5) Each group will be glorified on their respective planes of life, because they all drank at the brook of that pure living water. They will all have been lifted up by faith from the poisonous waters of the Dead Sea and washed in the pure waters of Galilee. Those who are now striving to be of the church class should especially have before their minds how the Lord has lifted them up from the condemned world and brought them under the cleansing influence of his precious blood.—I John 1:7

May we continue to rejoice in the wonderful words of life and keep in mind the importance of giving diligence to make our calling and election sure. (II Pet. 1:10) We are living at the very threshold of the kingdom and the fulfillment of all things prophesied and promised in God's Holy Word. ■

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

STUDYING IN BRAZIL

DawnBible: It is a great pleasure to visit your website and discover all these precious things about God's Word and Kingdom. May Jehovah continue to bless your lives.

I am a Bible Student here in the South of Brazil and I attend online meetings with brothers from Argentina, Mexico, etc.—BRAZIL

FROM TIRUPUR, INDIA

DawnBible: Greetings to my dear brothers & sisters in name of our Father Almighty. I belong to Tirupur Ecclesia. I find the lessons in your DAWN books very blessed and useful for spiritual life. Thanking you—INDIA

WORDS OF LIFE

Dear Dawn: Sending you this note to thank you so very much for the booklet *Israel in History and Prophecy*. To also thank you for each month of *The Dawn*, always inspirational with beautiful words of life, having so much hope for

the coming Kingdom and its blessings.

Looking forward to when all mankind will be blessed with God's love and all will be at peace. Christian love and blessings to each of you and thank you!—FL

USEFUL IN BIBLE STUDIES

DawnBible: I truly appreciate and enjoy *The Dawn* publications, and your available website. They are all very helpful, and useful in my Bible studies at home, and in my Bible Study class each week. Thank you so much, and God bless!!—PA

SPIRITUAL HELP

DawnBible: It's an excellent place, thanks for having it, it has been of much spiritual help to me, God bless you greatly.—CUBA

DISCIPLESHIP HELP

DawnBible: The Dawn is God's special library for discipleship. Thank you for investing time in producing it. God bless you.—SOUTH AFRICA

Activity and Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2024

IT WAS ONCE again the privilege of the Dawn to engage during the past year in the blessed work of spreading the glorious Gospel of the kingdom by means of the printed page, radio, television, and the many forms of electronic media available today. By God's grace, this message has gone to individuals and groups throughout the world to use in their personal Bible study as well as in their witness efforts. The past year was another most blessed one, highlighted by many activities which will be detailed on the following pages. With God's providence evident throughout the year, we are pleased to present this annual report to our readers.

During 2024 the Dawn increased its activities in two major areas compared to the previous year. Overseas pilgrim service and Internet advertising both grew substantially, resulting in a planned expenditure increase in aggregate of more than 80% from 2023 in these two areas. Other expenses saw only modest changes from 2023 to 2024.

In fiscal year 2024, the Dawn showed a net operating deficit, excluding bequests and investment

income, of (\$456,045), compared to a 2023 deficit of (\$389,514). The table below provides details of operating revenue and expenses for the 2024 fiscal year.

The Dawn projects to maintain expenses related to printing and witness activities in 2025 at similar levels to 2024. Increases in these efforts, however, will be considered if additional opportunities arise, and for which necessary resources are available.

ACTIVITIES IN 2024

The Dawn magazine continues to be published in eight languages and is sent to recipients in more than 100 countries. In total, more than 49,000 Dawn magazines were printed and sent out during the year. In addition, the English Dawn is printed in India for the Indian brethren and their witness efforts. They also translate the English Dawn into some of the local languages.

During the year, over 13,000 “Hope” booklets, both English and Spanish, were printed and sent

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
Revenue (excluding bequests and investment income)	<u>\$61,800</u>	
Expenses		
Radio and TV (domestic)		\$ 66,704
Radio and TV (foreign)		50,343
Internet and Other Media		79,139
Pilgrim Service (domestic and overseas)		34,708
Foreign Witness Work		34,445
Shipping/Mailing (domestic and foreign)		80,853
Print Shop Operating Expense		55,618
Plant Operating Expense		116,035
Total Expenses		\$517,845
Less Income	<u>61,800</u>	
Net Operating Deficit	\$(456,045)	

upon request to funeral homes in the United States, continuing this ongoing work. Some were also ordered by brethren to use in local obituary work.

The *Frank & Ernest* radio program is currently broadcast in the United States on thirteen stations in twenty-two different time slots. *Frank & Ernest* is also aired on stations in East Africa, South Africa, West Africa, India, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Asia, Australia, United Kingdom and North America short wave. In addition, a radio station in East Africa broadcasts material obtained from the Dawn's website and translated from English to the local language for live airing in a weekly one-hour time slot.

In 2024 the Dawn again placed ads in various almanacs. Our featured ad in 2024 was on the subject, "Israel in History and Prophecy." Almanacs have long been an effective method of advertising, as they typically reach a more rural audience which seems to be especially receptive to the message of the Scriptures.

The Dawn website yields requests for literature from many countries around the world. It also contains thousands of pages of current and archived booklets, books, and Dawn magazine issues available for online reading, listening, or download. We continue to update, as needed, all book and booklet listings on the website to reflect current material available, including new offerings.

In 2024 the Dawn's Internet keyword advertising continued to provide many responses. We advertised 42 booklets in English, 12 booklets in Spanish, 9 booklets in French, and 5 booklets in

German. During the past year, the number of “clicks” to various keywords, which brings the user to the Dawn’s ad page, was over 322,000 for all languages combined. The viewing of these ads generated over 1,300 mail responses for booklets. Booklets read online as a result of the same ads totaled more than 5,600. In addition to mail responses and booklets read online, a person can also download the advertised booklets. In 2025 we will continue to implement new ad formats and tune multiple ads per booklet to improve click-through rates and enhance responses in this important area of the Dawn’s witness activities.

The Dawn’s YouTube channel, “The Dawn Magazine—Monthly Video,” continued to broadcast the message of Truth during the past year. In 2024, 14 new videos were added, bringing the total number posted on the channel to 220. Those added included a series of Dawn magazine articles taken from the year 2009 on the general topic, “The Heavenly Call.” During the year, the Dawn’s YouTube videos were viewed 3,417 times, for a total of nearly 21,000 minutes. The channel currently has 594 subscribers. In 2025, we will continue adding more archived material as opportunity permits. Added material includes audio narration of original text, with the addition of supporting video content.

During the past year, a free, electronic subscription to *The Dawn* magazine continued to be offered to any who wish to subscribe. As of November 2024, the electronic issue of *The Dawn* was sent to 243 e-subscribers. Each subscriber receives an email the first day of every month, from which

they can link directly to either the entire magazine or to individual articles which they can read online or download to their computer or other electronic device for later reading.

During 2024, the Dawn once again increased its Pilgrim Service work, sponsoring two short domestic and two extended overseas pilgrim trips taken by various brethren. We look forward to continuing this important service in 2025, according to the Lord's will and direction.

One of the great privileges of the Dawn is to cooperate and assist with the work of local ecclesias and individuals in their efforts to serve the brethren and to give witness to the Gospel message. Just a few examples to note here: 1) During the past year, and still ongoing, has been the printing of a children's magazine published by brethren in Alabama; 2) A post-card mailer advertising the booklet, "Hope for a Fear-Filled World," has been developed by brethren in New York, and is being printed at the Dawn facility and mailed in groups to 10,000 households in New Jersey; 3) As advertised on page 31 of the November issue of *The Dawn* magazine, color posters are available upon request to individuals and classes for placement in store fronts, senior centers, and other similar locations, with a link directing the reader to a Dawn booklet which gives a message of peace and hope in this troubled time.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

In 2024, the Dawn continued the project of reprinting books and booklets that have been either in short supply or temporarily out of stock.

This has included standardizing size and format as necessary, as well as selecting new color covers. Over the past three years, most of the Dawn's booklets and numerous books have been republished as described above.

In total, over the past year, the Dawn filled orders for more than 9,000 English and foreign language booklets and books. This excludes funeral home "Hope" booklet orders cited earlier.

STAFFING

The Dawn could not have accomplished any of its activities without the assistance of many willing hands who volunteer their time and talents. Currently there are approximately twenty brethren in North America involved in these efforts, working both on-site and remotely, each one playing a vital role in the work of the Dawn.

Overseas, we have the assistance of brethren in numerous foreign countries, including Australia, Germany, France, India, Italy, the United Kingdom, and several countries in Africa and South America.

Locally, we had several "Dawn Days" during 2024 for the stuffing, sorting, and mailing of the English and various foreign language Dawn magazines. Following the work on these occasions, we have supplied a light lunch for everyone. Attendance by local brethren and young people has ranged from 15 to 25 during the past year.

We thank all the brethren, both near and far, who have assisted and supported all of the Dawn's efforts. It is a privilege to labor with you in our Father's vineyard.

THE YEAR AHEAD

We are looking forward to the prospects for 2025, realizing that all of our efforts and plans are in the all-wise hands of our Heavenly Father. Most of all, we rejoice in the privilege of sharing with others God's wonderful plan which he has provided through his Holy Word. We look forward to continuing to bear witness to the Gospel message and the hope of the kingdom for as long as the Lord allows.

We ask for your prayers on behalf of the activities of the Dawn, as daily we seek to proclaim the Gospel message throughout the earth and strive to be good stewards over the opportunities which God's providence has made available to us. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 2—"Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—I Corinthians 6:19,20 (Z. '97-35 Hymn 191)

JANUARY 9—"Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"—I Corinthians 4:7 (Z. '03-430 Hymn 21)

JANUARY 16—"Instant in prayer."—Romans 12:12 (Z. '95-215 Hymn 298)

JANUARY 23—"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."—I Corinthians 7:24 (Z. '99-155 Hymn 259)

JANUARY 30—"Jesus spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18:1 (Z. '95-214 Hymn 65A)

General Convention Bulletin

July 19-24, 2025—Johnstown, Pennsylvania

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that the 2025 General Convention will be held at the beautiful facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, on the dates noted above.

Air conditioned rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC) and family-style air conditioned apartments with private bathrooms (APTS) will be available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge if other beds are occupied. We are happy to announce that there will be no price increases from last year for meals and lodging at the convention.

All room and meal costs for children 12 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. In addition, 100% of the room and meal cost of those from ages 13 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid at the door.

I Peter 1:22 (*ISV*) is this year's selected Convention Theme Text: "Now that you have obeyed the truth and have purified your souls to love your brothers sincerely, you must love one another intensely and with a pure heart." Our privileges, responsibilities, joys, and challenges in the service of the Lord and his people will be considered in the light of this Scripture.

The program includes a panel discussion on “The Doom of Babylon” which will explore Bible Student understandings of the culmination of the Gospel Age. Two special discourses are also planned: “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made,” based on Psalm 139:14; and “Orderly Worship,” based on I Corinthians 14:26 (*Phillips*), “... Whenever you meet let everyone be ready to contribute” Other special program features are planned, to be detailed in coming months.

A pricing table and registration form is provided immediately following this announcement. We encourage you to register early. Advance payment is not required. We look forward to the prospect of seeing our brethren once again and encourage each of you to begin making plans to attend this year’s General Convention.■

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$11.00	\$10.00
Lunch		13.00	12.00
Dinner		16.00	15.00
Total, three meals		\$40.00	\$37.00
Lodging (per night)			
dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$45.00	\$40.00
single occ (LLC)		\$80.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
dbl occ (LLC or APTS)		\$445*	\$410*
single occ (LLC)		\$655*	n/a

*If no breakfasts, deduct—\$40

***100% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group.

NOTE: A Convention Fee of \$15.00 per person, regardless of age, length of stay, or lodging and meal arrangements, will be added to your invoice to help offset convention expenses unrelated to lodging and meals.

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707

E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 18, 2025				
Saturday, 19th				
Sunday, 20th				
Monday, 21st				
Tuesday, 22nd				
Wednesday, 23rd				
Thursday, 24th				

Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals ☐
or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) ☐

Check: ☐ double occupancy ☐ single occupancy
☐ interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. Alexander

Phoenix, AZ January 18,19

F. Binns

Australia January 24-26

R. Charlton

Australia January 24-26

W. Dutka

Australia January 24-26

L. Griehs

Australia January 24-26

S. Jeuck

Australia January 24-26

A. Kopczyk

Australia January 24-26

B. Montague

Phoenix, AZ January 18,19

M. Nemesh

Australia January 24-26

B. Sweeney

Australia January 24-26

The Two Prayers

Last night my boy confessed to me
 some childish wrong;
And kneeling at my knee
 He prayed with tears:
“Dear God, make me a man,
Like Daddy—wise and strong;
 I know You can.”

Then while he slept
I knelt beside his bed,
 Confessed my sins
And prayed with love-bowed head,
“Oh God, make me a child
 Like my child here—
 Pure, guileless,
Trusting Thee with faith sincere.”

—selected, *The Best Loved Religious Poems*

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, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 18,19—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Fountain Hills Community Center, 13001 N. La Montana Drive, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268. Contact A. Mengos. Phone: (480) 390-3767 or Email: samengos@yahoo.com

AUSTRALIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, January 24-26—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact R. Charlton. Phone: WhatsApp +61429172606 or Email: randscharlton@bigpond.com

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 14-16—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Phone: (916)923-1100. Contact K. Freer. Phone: (916) 879-4657 or Email: winnerwear@aol.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 1-3—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Winter Park Masonic Lodge, 1495 Grand Road, Winter Park, FL 32792. Contact J. Benson. Phone: (860) 884-8168 or Email: jonathanandjewel@gmail.com

HIGHLAND PARK CONVENTION, March 15—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact by Email: highlandparkbiblechurchny@gmail.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 18-20—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 400-0416 or Email: srbt@juno.com

METROPOLITAN DETROIT CONVENTION, May 3,4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—

Milford Senior Center, 1050 Atlantic Street, Milford, MI 48381. Contact N. Hummel. Email: psa343nj@yahoo.com

HARTFORD CONVENTION, May 4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—West Hartford Senior Center, 15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT 06117. Contact J. Slivinsky. Email: djslivinsky@sbcglobal.net

Renewed Devotedness

Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will let us gladly fulfil,
And our talents improve,
By the patience of hope, and the labor of love.

Our life, as a dream, our time, as a stream
Glide swiftly away,
And the fugitive moments we would not delay.
Haste, haste ye along, dark moments be gone,
For the jubilee year
Rushes on to our view, and its dawn is now here.

O! at close of our day may each of us say,
“I have fought my way thro’;
I have finished the work thou didst give me to do!”
O! that each from his Lord may receive the glad
word,
“Well and faithfully done!
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne!”

—*Hymns of Dawn*