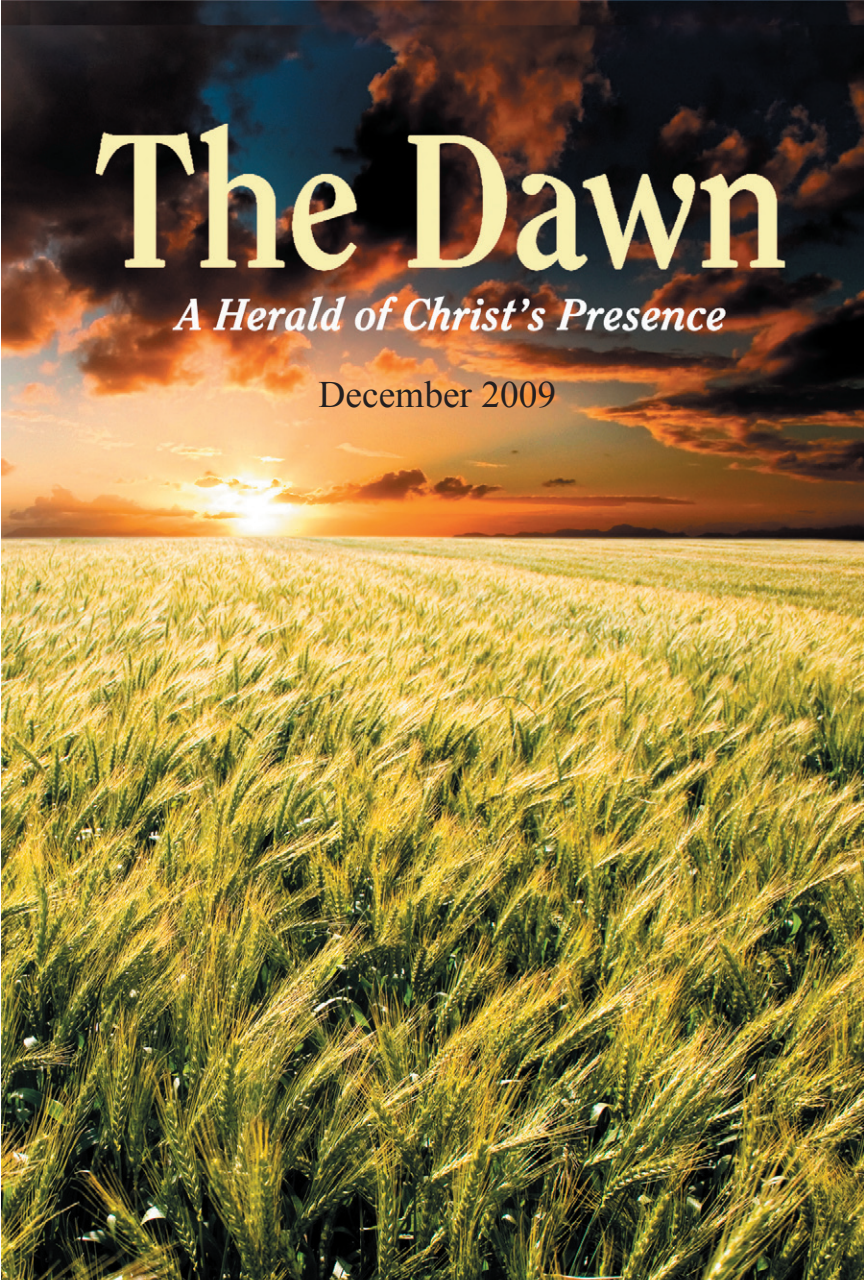


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# The Grandest of All Gifts

***“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” II Corinthians 9:15*** **THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS** that special time when the spirit of giving is more prevalent than at any other time of the year. Although we do not believe that our Lord Jesus was born on December 25th, but rather in October, we nevertheless take this opportunity to remember him, his earthly ministry and sacrificial death on behalf of the human family. He is the grandest of all gifts from our loving Heavenly Father—the gift of his only begotten Son and our dear Lord and Savior. As members of the fallen human family, this gift is so far beyond our ability to fully comprehend, that the Apostle Paul declares that it was ‘unspeakable.’

The Apostle Peter has used the same word ‘unspeakable’ in his first epistle, in connection with the promise of our sharing with Jesus in the glories of his coming kingdom. “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing

of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”—I Pet. 1:7,8

## **THE EARLY CHURCH**

In the ninth chapter of II Corinthians, Paul has reminded the church at Corinth to be mindful of their brethren who may be in need of help, especially in the famine-stricken land of Judea. This is one of the few occasions in the history of the Early Church where the apostle, or others, have brought attention to the physical needs of some of their suffering brethren. After Pentecost, there was a time when the disciples decided to put all they had into a common treasury to be used as needed by the brethren or for the work, but this arrangement did not continue very long.

When famine conditions arose in Judea, Paul did not hesitate to seek funds necessary from brethren elsewhere to help supply some of the needs of the brethren in the stricken areas. He complimented the church at Corinth for their generosity. He wrote, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And 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. 9:7,8

## **THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY**

In the Early Church, the giving of gifts was a manifestation of the true spirit of Christ in the hearts of those who had consecrated themselves to follow in his footsteps. As the brethren understood

more fully this commitment, they realized that consecration to the Lord meant giving everything to him, even life itself. They knew also that the Lord had made them stewards of that which now belonged to him, including their time, strength, and all they had to be used in his service.

The importance of this characteristic of generosity is seen in the conversation Jesus had with the rich young ruler. From the scriptural account, we read, "A certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18) In Jesus' reply, he reminded the young man about the laws of righteousness. "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up."—vss. 20,21

However, "Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." (vs. 22) Jesus was speaking of the sacrificial life necessary to obtain an inheritance in Christ's spiritual kingdom. "When he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"—vss. 23,24

The true spirit of charity that may be demonstrated in our Christian lives will cause us to be unselfish and liberal in the use of whatever resources may come under our control as the Lord's stewards. In the act of giving, both the giver and the receiver are made glad as emphasized by the

Apostle Paul, who said, “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”—Acts 20:35

## **ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD**

The joy to both the giver and the receiver is enhanced when the gift is examined and appreciated. Therefore, our joy may be increased by refreshing our memories concerning some of the wonderful characteristics of God’s ‘unspeakable gift’ to us. The Apostle John identifies Jesus in his prehuman existence as the ‘Word’ [*Logos*, Greek] of God. The literal translation states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [the] God, and the Word was [a] God. The same was in the beginning with [the] God.” (John 1:1,2) The loving relationship between the Heavenly Father and his Son—the Word—is more fully appreciated when it is realized that the Son shared in the Father’s wonderful works of Creation. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”—vss. 3-5

The Heavenly Father speaking to us through the psalmist concerning his Son declares, “I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.”—Ps. 89:27-29



## **A LOVING RELATIONSHIP**

The one whom our Heavenly Father chose to be his unspeakable gift for the redemption of the world was the highest of all his creatures. He was the very beginning of his creation, and he was privileged to participate in all of the remaining creative works of the Father. The Son was constantly a delight to his Father, and in doing those things that were pleasing to him. What a blessing to have his Heavenly Father speak to him in such an intimate and loving manner. The loving relationship between the Father and the Son was deep beyond the ability of the human mind to grasp.

It was this beloved Son whom the Heavenly Father willingly gave for the salvation of the sin-cursed and dying human creation. When writing of this wonderful gift, John emphasized the extent to which it manifests God's great love for mankind. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."—John 3:16,17

There were perhaps some obedient ones among the hosts of heaven who would have desired to serve their Heavenly Father, but he chose to give the one who was the closest to him, and the one who was dearest to his own heart. A gift reveals the love of the giver, and what it may represent. By offering his only begotten Son to die as the world's Redeemer, he was giving the greatest treasure of his heart.



## THE WIDOW'S MITE

The spirit of generosity was seen by Jesus when he witnessed a widow giving a very small gift to the Temple. He brought special attention to it as recorded by Mark, where we read, "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."—Mark 12:41-44

To the wealthy, the mite had very little value, but because it was all that the widow had, her giving it to the Lord represented her deep spirit of loving devotion and self-sacrifice. In comparison, this was far beyond that which was given by those who out of their abundance were able to give larger sums.

There is nothing that we could give to make our Heavenly Father rich, and neither could we withhold anything to make him poor. The entire universe is his creation and is owned and controlled by him. The question may be asked, how could any gift that he could offer to the world be compared to the widow giving her mite?

As the mite represented all that the widow could give, in a far greater way did God give his beloved Son [Word, Greek *Logos*] to the world. He was the Father's first and only direct creation, and his willingness to give him to be the Savior of the world

meant the giving of the greatest treasure of his heart. While the *Logos* in his prehuman existence was not on the divine plane of life as was his Father, and could not share the same level of companionship, he was yet the highest of all others among the spirit creation. Thus to offer him as a Redeemer to die for mankind, meant the giving of that which cost him the very most, and, in this sense, all that he had.

## **THE WORD MADE FLESH**

The Apostle John wrote, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) In reality, all life is a miracle and the most wonderful blessing from God, and we can little understand the manner in which the life of our Lord as the *Logos* was transferred to Mary and born as a babe in Bethlehem.

In his letter to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul speaks of this transfer of life and its purpose for man. In reference to Jesus, he wrote, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2:7,8

Having been made flesh was only the first step in the Heavenly Father's ultimate purpose concerning his beloved Son. Jesus, now made flesh, was yet to give his life as a perfect man in death for the life of the world. This reveals the great love that he had for his fallen and dying human creatures. Even as a child Jesus began to understand the reason

that he had been born into the world, and its ultimate purpose. This is indicated when he was in the Temple at the age of twelve. “He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”—Luke 2:49

## **THE VOICE OF APPROVAL**

At thirty years of age, Jesus presented himself to John at the River Jordan to be baptized. At that time, his Heavenly Father communicated directly with him, and he was assured of his true relationship with him. “Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—Matt. 3:16,17

There had always been sweet fellowship between the Father and Son, as we learn from the Master’s own words spoken at a later time. “I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”—John 11:42

## **A MAN OF SORROWS**

Centuries before Jesus’ miraculous birth as a perfect substitute for Adam, the Prophet Isaiah wrote concerning the rejection he would endure at the hands of sinful men. “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows,

and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But 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. 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. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”—Isa. 53:1-12

## LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Jesus was no longer living on a high plane of spirit life as the *Logos* who shared in the wonderful works of creation, and his ability to comprehend the Father's thoughts were then limited by his human mind. He was being offered in sacrifice, and the manner in which this must have affected the Heavenly Father is represented by the experience of Abraham when he was commanded to offer his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice to God.

It was a three-days' journey for Abraham and Isaac as they travelled together to reach the land of Moriah where Isaac was to be offered in sacrifice. From the scriptural account, we read, "He [God] said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen. 22:2) Many centuries later the fulfillment of this antitypical scene was realized when the Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus travelled together toward Calvary's cross, and where Jesus willingly submitted himself as a sacrificial offering for the sins of the world.

Jesus no doubt had a general idea that he was to die, but he did not understand all the particulars that were involved until he reached Gethsemane. However, his Heavenly Father knew and in the unselfish giving of his unspeakable gift his loving heart must have been heavy as he witnessed the many hardships through which his Son was passing. The details reveal great suffering which he knew would increase even to the point when his beloved Son would cry out to him. The account

reads, “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

In the typical picture, Isaac displayed no opposition to his father, and was willing to be placed on the altar to be sacrificed, and so it was with Jesus when he was led to the cross to be crucified. As he walked together with his Heavenly Father during the three and one-half years of his earthly ministry, his chief concern was to be faithful in carrying out the will of his Father. He was conscious of the fact that the Father was always near to him. (John 11:42) This companionship of Father and Son was displayed throughout his time on earth.

God, however, understood fully the painful and ignominious end for Jesus to which his journey toward Calvary was leading. Only he knew that at the conclusion of his ministry his beloved Son would be tested to the utmost. “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?—Matt. 27:46

## **A WILLING SACRIFICE**

In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, the Apostle Paul referred to a prophecy that spoke of Jesus and his readiness to do the Father’s will. “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) [Ps. 40:6-8] to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will,

O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”—Heb. 10:7-9

Jesus always sought the Father’s will and humbly submitted himself to it as reflected in his own words. “He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” (John 8:29) However, obedience should merit reward and blessing, not ignominy and suffering. Even the Father had to endure, seeing his Son suffer so severely and knowing that on him would be laid the iniquity of the entire human family and removing from them the penalty of death to be manifest during his future kingdom.

During his forty days in the wilderness, our Lord no doubt learned that he was to die for the sins of the world. Later, he explained to his disciples that he knew that he would give his flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51) Jesus’ understanding of the divine purpose and of his own part in that plan was progressive. He acknowledged to his disciples near the end of his earthly ministry that it was not yet time to understand the times and seasons of God’s plans. (Acts 1:7) He did not fully comprehend the extent to which he was to suffer in connection with his death until very near the end. Thus each experience that came to him served as a further test of his obedience to the divine will.

## **LEARNING OBEDIENCE**

Gethsemane was one of his most severe tests because he knew that he was about to die. He knew that this had been written of him in ‘the volume of the book,’ and that he, like Isaac, was to willingly place himself on the altar to be slain. However, he



had not foreseen that he was to be accused of blasphemy against God whom he loved dearly. He did not ask to be delivered from dying as man's Redeemer, but faithfully carried out every detail of his covenant of sacrifice. We do not know all of the details involved in his many tests during the last hours of his life, but he was subjected to ridicule and scoffing that further enhanced the true value of that unspeakable gift. From the scriptural record, we read, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."—Heb. 5:7,8

## **FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH**

Having endured the terrible suffering of being nailed to the cross, Jesus was then tormented by his onlookers. "The people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." (Luke 23:35) Little did the people who were witnesses to this scene realize that by Jesus' refusal to save himself, he was in cooperation with his Heavenly Father to provide salvation for them and for all the families of the earth.

The Redeemer's last words were of complete confidence in the Father, and full surrender to his will. "Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last."—Luke 23:46,47, *New American Standard Bible*

## LET US BE FAITHFUL

The principle of divine love represented by both the gift, and by the manner in which it was given, is held out in the Word of God as the only proper motivating power in our lives as we endeavor to be conformed to the pattern set before us, in both our loving Heavenly Father and the Son. Our appreciation of God's unspeakable Gift is thus greatly increased by the understanding that the atoning blood of our dear Lord and Savior has been made available for his faithful followers during this present Gospel Age, and for the whole world of mankind under the administration of Christ's future kingdom.

During this holiday season, may we reflect on our loving Heavenly Father's grandest gift to his human family, the gift of his dear Son. Let this enrich our hearts to a greater appreciation as we come to the end of another year, and look forward to his coming kingdom of blessing for all the families of the earth. ■



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# The Lineage of David

**Key Verse:** *“The women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.”*  
—Ruth 4:17

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Ruth 4:13-17,*  
*Matthew 1:1-17*

**THE CHIEF OBJECT OF** the Book of Ruth is to preserve an authentic record of our Lord’s human ancestry. Matthew speaks of Christ the son of David; hence his genealogy is complete. According to the flesh, our Lord Jesus was born through his mother, and therefore was the son of the man David. (Luke 3:23-38) It is of importance to note that the Saviour of the world was to be born through the kingly line of the Jews in fulfillment of prophecy. God had promised centuries before that a holy child would be born.

We further read “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head.” (Gen. 3:15) These verses had no immediate application at the time when they were delivered, but would be fulfilled in God’s due time. We would then not apply these verses to the Lord’s First Advent, but to the worldwide blessings that follow the Second Coming of our Lord, and the subsequent establishment of his glorious kingdom.

The book of Matthew is the message connecting the Old Testament with the New, and is written to prove the messiahship of Christ. He would come to fulfill the

promise made to Abraham—"In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14) Jesus is the promised 'seed' from David's house, the rightful heir of the throne, referring to the dignity, power and authority of office which David exercised. The throne of David is the emblem, or symbol, of David's reign or kingdom. It serves as a type or picture of the reign or kingdom of David's son and Lord. He is also called the "seed of Abraham" (Gal. 3:16), and the seed of "the woman."—Gen. 3:15

According to God's plan, this kingdom will be established 'upon the throne of David.' "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6,7) As David sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD, the greater than David—the Messiah—will reign because he has the right to do so. John tells us concerning Jesus, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." (Rev. 22:16) The peace that he brings will be without end, 'from henceforth even forever.'

All men should honor the Son, not as the Father, but as the Father's direct representative. "For God hath appointed [him] heir of all things." (Heb. 1:2) This is not given to the man Christ Jesus, but to the New Creature, the glorified Lord. As the 'heir of all things' he will be the representative of the Father for all eternity and the heir of all of the gracious promises of God's Word. 'The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.' This is truly a wonderful expression of the love of God; for it was love that motivated the Father to give his only begotten Son. (John 3:16) It will bring great joy to the Father to restore man to his original condition of perfection.—Gen. 1:27-31 ■

# Prophets Foreshadow Messiah's Birth

**Key Verse:**  
***"Therefore the  
Lord himself shall  
give you a sign;  
Behold, a virgin  
shall conceive, and  
bear a son, and  
shall call his name  
Immanuel."  
—Isaiah 7:14***

**Selected Scripture:**  
***Isaiah 7:13-17;  
Luke 1:26-38***

## **NO TREASURE IS MORE**

important to the world of mankind than the wonderful promise made to them concerning the process by which the blessing and release of all people from the curse of sin and death would be accomplished. This was proclaimed in our text with the selection of the name Immanuel, which means 'God with us.' The proclamation concerning the birth of Jesus to his mother Mary was especially

important because this child was begotten by divine power, though Mary was still a virgin when she brought forth her son. He would come to fulfill the promise made to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 28:14

We have a continuation of the prophesy from our theme verse: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6,7

‘The government shall be upon his shoulder,’ is figurative of authority, glory, and honor, which shall be upon the Lord. It is given to him from the Father through his great law of love. The change in dispensation will be ushered in through the Father’s “times of restitution.” (Acts 3:19-21) This will be the time for Christ to receive the honor, glory, and dominion that was exclusively promised to him.

Beginning with the birth of our Lord as the babe born in Bethlehem, he was then presented as God’s Son given on our behalf. His sacrifice began at Jordan, and culminated at Calvary. Because of his obedience unto death, “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.” (Phil. 2:9) When he assumes the control of earth’s affairs, his character of love and justice will be evident, and all power will be his to rule in righteousness. It insures to all of the faithful that his reign will be a time of blessing, of peace and joy to all who love righteousness and truth. His name and titles, representing the gracious things which make up his character, will be brought to the attention of all of mankind. He is ‘wonderful,’ he is great beyond the power of human comprehension. As the express image of the Father’s person, he will be a leader and instructor of his people, to all who want to be “taught of God.” (John 6:45) He will be the ‘Counsellor,’ whose instructions in righteousness will be satisfactory and will be respected by the world of mankind who will be seeking a return to divine favor and a full restoration of what was lost.

He shall be called ‘The mighty God,’ or mighty one, and on him shall rest all of the power and authority of God his father. He is called ‘The everlasting Father,’ a father forever because he will be the life-giver to all who will accept life under the terms of the New Covenant, which was sealed by his own precious blood, and will be established after all of the faithful members of the Body of Christ have passed beyond the veil.—Heb. 12:24 ■

# Emmanuel is Born

**Key Verse:** “*She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*”

—**Matthew 1:21**

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Matthew 1:18-25**

## IN THE VERSE PREVIOUS

to our Key Verse we read, “When he [Joseph] had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.’”—Matt. 1:20, *New American Standard Bible*

We recall from the account that the chiefest messenger remaining in the courts of the Heavenly Father—the angel Gabriel—visited her. He would come to tell her, “Blessed art thou among women.” (Luke 1:28) The fact that the LORD honored Mary above all other women, in that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus according to the flesh, would prove her nobility of character and her purity of heart.

The name Jesus, which is the Greek form for Joshua, signifies ‘savior,’ or ‘liberator’—‘For he shall save his people from their sins.’ The entire work of our Lord Jesus is summed up in the meaning of the name Jesus. Our Lord was publicly recognized as Savior as a babe; but it was only when he had fully completed his sacrifice at Calvary that he had the full right, and became owner, or Lord. This was proclaimed in the promise to Mary, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring



forth a son.” (Luke 1:31) This expression reveals to us that Jesus was begotten not by Joseph, but by the Holy Spirit, therefore the life principle by which Jesus was conceived came directly from the Heavenly Father. “Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” (Heb. 1:5)

The promise was then fulfilled in the words, “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11) He was born perfect and free from the Adamic curse of sin and death. He knew no sin, while all other men are sinners by nature. (II Cor. 5:21) Because of this, he could die on the cross as a perfect man, fulfilling God’s desire that through him, “shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3) “As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”—Rom. 5:18

These ‘families’ refer to the world of mankind under the new administration of the Millennial Kingdom. At that time, the kingdoms of this world will have passed away, and will have become the “kingdoms of our Lord.” (Rev. 11:15) They will be blessed with an opportunity to return to harmony with God, and be rewarded with everlasting life. The people shall say, “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—Isa. 2:3

All of God’s work is perfect, so we see that through the giving of his Son as the Savior of mankind from sin and death, Jesus would make it possible for all to have the opportunity to live at peace on a restored, perfect earth forever. To God be the glory!—Rev. 7:12 ■

# Magi Confirm Messiah's Birth

**Key Verse:** “*When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*”  
—**Matthew 2:10**

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Matthew 2**

(Greek, *Magi*, sages) who came from the east. “When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, . . . there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.” (Matt. 2:1) The term originally belonged to a class of priests among the Medes and Persians, who constituted the king’s council and who practiced astrology.

Ancient writers make frequent references to them, and the term was later applied to all eastern philosophers. Nations of the Far East had for a long time cherished a tradition that God would descend to earth in a visible form. The Prophet Daniel himself associated with some of these wise men. He was once a prince in Persia, and was well known to the disciples of Zoroaster. (Dan. 2:48) His prophecies were made known to them, as probably were the calculations by which he pointed to the time of the birth of the Messiah. The further belief was that this child from heaven would be born in Judea,

**LOOKING AT THE SCRIPTURE** “As the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ.” (Luke 3:15) That even the Gentile world was in expectation of a coming Messiah is demonstrated by the visit of the wise men

gain dominion over the whole world and establish a golden age. The miraculous star in the east which some of the Gentile wise men had been taught to look for, had finally made its appearance, and would guide them to the wonderful light of the world. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre [the right to rule] shall rise out of Israel."—Num. 24:17

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matt. 2:1,2) They had now come to Jerusalem; having traveled a far distance to observe first hand what they thought was to be the culmination of their beliefs. They explained, when they arrived, that they had come to see 'he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.' When they met with King Herod, they quoted the words of the prophet, "Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."—vss. 5,6

When departing for Bethlehem, they again saw the star, and rejoiced, because it would lead them to the place "where the young child was." (vss. 9,10) Upon reaching the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, "fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." (vs. 11) These gifts also have special significance, and point out to us how we should present our hearts to him.—Luke 12:34

The wise men showed their reverence to the mighty God of Israel, their faith in the divinely inspired prophecies, their zeal as truth seekers, and their humility to inquire of the God of another nation. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and praise be to God, the true source "of every good and every perfect gift."—James 1:17 ■

# Harvest of the Gospel Age

***“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”***

**—Matthew 24:14**

## **JESUS SPOKE THESE PRO-**

phetic words to his disciples as his earthly ministry was drawing to a close. Taking them aside, he said that the message of Truth and the Heavenly Father’s invitation of the heavenly calling would continue to be preached throughout this present Gospel Age to all who had an ear to hear. Furthermore, that his consecrated followers would be given the privilege to participate in dispensing this gospel message concerning his glorious future kingdom, and the part that his faithful followers would share in it.

The commission to his followers was, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”—Matt. 28:19,20, *New American Standard Bible*

The Master was thus preparing his disciples that he would soon be departing from them. He wanted them to know that he would be physically absent from them for a long time, even during the dark centuries of the intervening Gospel Age until his promised return. However, he also assured them that his spiritual presence and guidance would continue over them during that period of time. This was very evident in his reassuring words, 'I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'

### **FULFILLMENT OF TIME PROPHECY**

Recorded history, as well as the prophetic words of scripture, indicate that the mid A.D. 1870s would point to the end of this present Gospel Age, and also mark the time that Jesus would return and be invisibly present with his people. The records foreshadowed a special time of revival and renewed interest in studying the Scriptures, and there would be an extensive harvest work conducted by the Lord's people. This would be done by way of the printed page, by word of mouth, and in other ways.

Jesus spoke of this special time when his disciples came asking him to explain the meaning of his teaching concerning the wheat and tares. (Matt. 13:36) The scriptural account records his answer and his reference to the end of the age. He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels."—Matt 13:37-40, *NASB*

## SPIRITUAL FOOD

A special feature concerning the time of which Jesus spoke, clearly points to the giving of the blessed meat in due season. Truth on many subjects had been hidden from the worldly wise, and would at that time be received by the true followers of Jesus upon his return. The expression ‘meat in due season’ suggests that there was to be bountiful and rich spiritual food, and that our returned Lord himself would serve his faithful watchers at that time. He said, “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”—Luke 12:37

In connection with God’s prophetic Word, the Apostle Peter states that those who wrote the prophecies seldom understood their true meaning. “So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”—II Pet. 1:19-21, *NASB*

In his first epistle, Peter also spoke of this when he wrote, “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.” (I Pet. 1:10) The apostle further stated that even the angels did not know the wonderful plans of the Heavenly Father. “It was revealed to them that they were not

serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.”—I Pet. 1:12, *NASB*

This had been acknowledged by Daniel earlier, when he wrote, “I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.”—Dan. 12:7-9

## **HIDDEN TREASURES**

The Prophet Isaiah also proclaimed the wonderful blessing of Truth that God would give to his special people at the appointed time. “I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.”—Isa. 45:3

The wise admonition of Solomon provides further perspective for all who desire to look into the wonderful secrets of God. A proper heart attitude is necessary to receive the bountiful blessings that God has in store for his people. “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea,



if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear [reverence] of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”—Prov. 2:1-5

## **THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM**

True to the long-awaited promises of God at the prophetic end of this age, there were honest-hearted seekers for Truth who were searching the chronological records of the Scriptures in an effort to find evidence of the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus. After the dramatic and terrible events that had taken place during the recent French Revolution, a new sense of liberty was being experienced, not only in Europe, but especially in colonial America. A new-found sense of religious freedom led to a general awakening and interest in a study of the Scriptures. This liberty of thought gained momentum throughout the country during the nineteenth century.

## **THE ALLEGHENY CLASS**

In about the year 1870, a small class of Christian believers began to meet at Allegheny, Pennsylvania for the purpose of studying the Word of God. Those who gathered together at that time and place were Charles T. Russell, his father Joseph, his sister Mae, William I. Mann, A. D. Jones, W. H. Conley and perhaps a few others.

As a young man, Bro. Russell was very serious-minded, and had joined the group with the sincere desire to find scriptural answers and clarification to some of the doctrines that were then being taught by the churches. In those early days of the Truth movement and in the study of the Bible,

he came to the conclusion that our Lord Jesus had given his life in sacrifice for the entire human family that was under the sentence of death. Based on scripture, he was thus able to conclude that all who were in their graves would be granted the blessing of resurrection under the terms of the Heavenly Father's ultimate plan and purpose for the reconciliation of his human creation. Having attained a more clear understanding of the basic doctrines of ransom and resurrection, he was a few years later chosen as the ecclesia's elder and spiritual leader.

## **THE LIGHT OF MORNING**

About that same time, Nelson H. Barbour had been publishing a magazine called *The Midnight Cry* in Rochester, NY. He later changed the name of the journal to *The Herald of the Morning* to more accurately address the disappointment that had occurred in connection with certain expectations that he had made and the changing times which were at hand. Having given serious study to Biblical chronology, Barbour determined and addressed the concept that they were then living in the foretold end of the age, and that our Lord Jesus' Second Advent was soon to take place.

Bro. Russell contacted Barbour to discuss the Scriptures, especially in connection with our Lord's Second Presence. Their discussion led to Bro. Russell's being further enlightened on the object and manner of our Lord's invisible return and other time prophecies. Later, Barbour, and Russell as assistant editor, published a booklet under the title *The Three Worlds and Plan of Redemption*. This treatise brought the teachings concerning restitution,

resurrection, and the Second Presence together. John H. Paton, who lived in Almont, Michigan, had also been an associate of Barbour's, and he and Bro. Russell contributed articles for the magazine and promoted the message of Truth by travelling in the ministry.

This arrangement continued until Barbour openly denied the ransom doctrine, and at that time Bro. Russell and Paton both left Barbour to go their separate ways. Later, Paton disagreed on the Lord's invisible Second Presence, and began to promote his beliefs in his book *Day Dawn*, and later in his own publication, *The World's Hope*. Bro. Russell was unable to agree with him any longer and they, too, parted company. During this time, there were several others who shared in the initial harvest work by contributing articles or preaching activities, but within a few years Bro. Russell became the most prominent and influential figure within the Bible Student movement, both in America and abroad.

### **FOOD FOR THINKING CHRISTIANS**

In 1881, Bro. Russell wrote *Food for Thinking Christians* with the subtitle, "Why Evil was Permitted." He states that the design of the pamphlet was to supply what we believe to be 'meat in due season' to fully consecrated Christians who hunger and thirst after a fuller knowledge of our Heavenly Father and his plans. He thus directly addressed the scriptures that pointed to our Lord's return, and the added blessing of his serving his faithful watchers with the spiritual food of Truth. (Luke 12:37; Rev. 3:20) Later, this title was changed to *The Divine*

*Plan of the Ages* which became the first of six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Although the message of Truth was substantially the same, its style was changed to make it more acceptable to the watchers and the general reading public, and that it would be more easily understood and appreciated.

### **TABERNACLE SHADOWS**

To reflect his serious study of the spiritual lessons presented in the Levitical types, *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices* was also published in 1881. It served as an important awakening to the deeper meaning and significance that had never before been appreciated, but was at that special time made known to God's royal priesthood. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—I Pet. 2:9

This book revealed the fact that the Levitical types and shadows relate to our Lord Jesus' earthly ministry and sacrificial death, and also the life of sacrifice of the household of faith. Paul admonished, "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

### **A MAGAZINE OF TRUTH**

The first issue of a very special Truth magazine appeared in July, 1879 under the title: *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. It was accompanied with the appropriate and significant words of Isaiah who wrote, "Watchman, what of the night? . . . The morning cometh." (Isa. 21:11,12)

It was published in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with Bro. Russell as editor, and with five others who contributed on a regular basis. It started out as a monthly magazine with approximately 6,000 copies being printed.

The *Watch Tower* has the distinction of being the first magazine published that was devoted to the announcing of the return and Second Presence of our Lord Jesus. The author stated that the object of the publication was to proclaim that we are now living during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. Further, he said that it was designed not only to awaken the Lord's people to a realization of this important fact, but also to assist them in putting on the whole armor of God that they may be able to stand in the evil day which would especially distinguish the closing features of this age—'the great day of the Lord.' Through the *Watch Tower* magazine, Bro. Russell was able to promote the fundamental doctrines of the Truth, with special emphasis on the ransom, restitution, and resurrection in harmony with the purpose of our Lord's return, and the establishing of his future kingdom.

## **THE HARVEST WORK**

Although the harvest work had been carried out from a central point in the Allegheny, Pennsylvania area since the early days of the Truth movement, it was decided that it would be more functional to form a legally organized and centralized body for the managing, publishing, and distributing of the Truth message. In 1884, it was incorporated as Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society and brought

under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. A few years later, it was changed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. It was a nonprofit corporation whose main purpose was to send out the Truth by way of magazines, books, pamphlets, tracts, and other religious material.

The harvest message was thus spread far and wide during the closing decades of the 19th century, and it increased dramatically when the 20th century arrived. This period in the history of the Truth movement witnessed a great interest in the message concerning the heavenly call and other important doctrines of Truth that had been made known by the Second Presence of our Lord.

## **THE BIBLE HOUSE**

As the Truth activities grew, it became necessary to expand the existing facilities and, in 1889, a modern four-story building was erected in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. It served as the Watch Tower headquarters, and became affectionately known among the brethren as the 'Bible House.' It was outfitted with equipment necessary to carry on the work, living quarters for the permanent staff, and a dining room for serving regular meals to the workers. From that location, Bro. Russell oversaw all activities in connection with the harvest work.

As the classes of Bible students grew and became better organized, qualified speaking brethren were sent out from the Bible House to serve the various ecclesias with a message of Truth, and to conduct public meetings when necessary. This endeavor proved to be a wonderful way to keep in touch with brethren who were living in other areas, and it was

eventually expanded into a full-time pilgrim service with regularly scheduled speaking visits.

## **EXPANDING THE WORK**

A major expansion of the harvest work took place in 1908 when the Mission Building, formerly occupied by the Plymouth and Congregational Church in Brooklyn, New York, was purchased. The building was completely renovated and became known as 'The Brooklyn Tabernacle.' There was ample room for shipping and storage facilities in the basement and offices on the first floor. The second floor contained a large auditorium with a seating capacity for about eight hundred people.

Members of the staff were housed in a nearby and separate facility formerly occupied by Henry Ward Beecher. It was a four-story building that became the home for many brethren who came there to serve the Lord, and was known as the 'Bethel Home.' It has been said that mealtime was a special event because of the inclusion of prayer, the singing of hymns, and scriptural questions and comments.

## **SENDING FORTH THE TRUTH**

For more than forty years Bro. Russell was actively engaged in sending forth the message of Truth in every possible way. He made known the Heavenly Father's invitation during this present Gospel Age to those who would accept the heavenly call, and present their lives to God as a living sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1) Those who worked together as one family during this long period of time were richly blessed to share in this harvest work.

The truth concerning Christ's future kingdom as the only hope for the sin-sick world of mankind



was proclaimed throughout the world in many ways and in many languages. Countless numbers of people heard the comforting message, and learned about Christ's future 1,000-year kingdom that would bring promised blessings to all the families of the earth, including those who were resting in their graves.

## **THE LAST PILGRIMAGE**

During his many years of proclaiming the harvest message, the Pastor never slackened his hand nor abated his energies in his faithful service to God. In October, 1916 he put the infirmities of his flesh aside, and started out on what would be his last pilgrimage. It was a transcontinental trip by train that would take him to the most distant parts of America.

Almost from the beginning of the trip difficulties arose, including delays, lost baggage, missing telegrams, and many other incidents that taxed his physical strength. Within a few days it was realized by some of the brethren who were travelling with him that he was not well. Later, it became even more evident that his physical condition had worsened, and the suggestion was made that they should return to New York City, but Bro. Russell was determined to continue on with his pilgrimage.

After having served the brethren for the last time at Los Angeles, California, the Pastor and his traveling companions boarded their train for the return trip to Bethel. His physical condition worsened continually, until he finished his consecrated course in death in the state of Texas on October 31, 1916. Bro. Russell's earthly remains arrived at the Bethel Home in Brooklyn, New York on November 4th.

## **DIFFICULT TIMES**

Profound shock and sadness was experienced by great numbers of brethren and in Bible Student classes throughout the world when it was learned that Bro. Russell had died. They had lost their beloved pastor and were suddenly faced with confusion and major concerns for their spiritual future. Others soon took control over the Society, but no one could possibly assume the work that Bro. Russell had been responsible for during his many years of service. There was a growing lack of acceptance with the new management, and many longtime brethren began to feel uncomfortable with the new arrangements and began leaving to establish new groups or to remain isolated.

It wasn't until many years later, in 1929, that the brethren in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania arranged a reunion convention in October of that year in memory of Bro. Russell. It was well attended and from that time forward other classes began to arrange for additional conventions. A new spirit of revival intensified and brethren were blessed with new opportunities for fellowship, study, and the desire to continue in the harvest work.

## **THE DAWN**

After the success of the 1929 reunion convention, it was decided to hold one every autumn in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This also led to further interest to continue serving in the harvest work. Bro. Norman Woodworth had worked at Bethel with Bro. Russell and encouraged the brethren in the Brooklyn, New York ecclesia to sponsor a thirteen-week radio message in 1931 over station WOR

in New York. For the format, they used the “Frank & Ernest” program that he had developed for the Watchtower Society in the 1920s, which they discarded. Dialogues of the program were printed and offered as a four-page *Radio Echoes* tract to interested listeners. When the radio contract expired, the program was discontinued from lack of funds, but the tract continued to be sent to those who had been receiving it.

The following year the *Radio Echoes* tract was enlarged and renamed *The Dawn* magazine. It was published at the beginning of each month, starting with October, 1932. The original four-page radio tract was still sent out on the 15th of each month under the name *The Dawn* thus making it a bi-monthly magazine. This arrangement was continued until the end of 1933 when the mid-monthly tract was discontinued. *The Dawn* magazine has been published uninterrupted since 1932, and celebrated its 75th anniversary with the October 2007 issue. Throughout this time it has proclaimed the message of Truth, and the invitation to the heavenly call to all who have an ear to hear.

From this small beginning, the Dawn Bible Students Association was established with Bro. Woodworth assuming responsibility as managing editor. The brethren had been eager to share in the harvest work that began in the early days of Bro. Russell. His Truth writings were reprinted, including the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, *Tabernacle Shadows* and many other publications. The “Frank & Ernest” radio work was greatly expanded, and the Dawn pilgrim service brought many isolated and scattered brethren together again since the

pastor's death. In later years, TV programs were prepared, and now Internet is also being used as a means to proclaim the Truth.

Many of Jesus' faithful followers have labored in the Lord's vineyard during the course of these past 77 years. They have thus shared in publishing the heavenly call message that has gone forth during the harvest period of this present Gospel Age. We believe this work will continue until the final number of the Christ will have finished their course in death. Let us strive more faithfully to make ourselves ready for the great hope that lies before us.

The revelator has given us a glimpse of those faithful brethren who have heard the heavenly call and have prepared themselves for the heavenly inheritance. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."—Rev. 19:7-9 ■

## **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 Jenell Gaddy, Phoenix, AZ—October 17.**

# The Hope Laid Up in Heaven

*“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”*  
—Colossians 1:3-5

should exude so sweet a perfume that their fragrance may be perceived by those who have never even laid eyes on us. It was that way with the early saints at Colossae.

Our characters should be like that of the brethren addressed in our text, so as to be spoken of

## AS WE COME TO THE

close of another year in the school of Christ, it is important that we keep in proper perspective the most important aspects of our schooling. There are three graces that in particular seem to rise above all others and which should be conspicuous in us—faith, hope and love. They are each mentioned by the Apostle Paul in our opening text. These graces should be so obvious in us as to be spoken of and heard by those who have never seen us. They

without causing us to bow our heads in shame, remembering that this can never happen if we truly possess these three graces. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 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. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—II Peter 1:2-8

We should be rich in faith, which is the root of every grace, and to this end we should pray daily, "Lord, Increase our faith." (Luke 17:5) We should strive to be full, even to overflowing, with love which is of God and makes us, through Christ, like him. We should also abound in hope, which should cause us to purify ourselves in readiness for our heavenly inheritance. We must see to it that not one of these three graces of the Spirit is a stranger to our souls. We must let faith, hope, and love live in our hearts.

### **ONLY TRUE GRACES SERVE US**

Let us note the special character of each one of these graces as it exists in us. It is not every faith

and love and hope that will serve us, for we must realize that for everything precious there is a counterfeit, made so by the great Adversary, Satan.

There is a kind of faith in men, but ours is in Christ Jesus—faith in him whom the world rejects, whose cross is a stumbling block, and whose doctrine is an offense. We have faith in Jesus, the Son of God, faith and confidence in him who, having made atonement by his own blood, once for all, is now exalted to his Father's right hand. Our confidence is not in self, nor in any human instrument or in the traditions of men, nor is it in the teachings of human wisdom. Only in Christ Jesus is the faith of God's elect.

Our love, too, is special. While we are moved by sympathetic love and a desire to do good to all men, yet we have a special love unto all the saints. These the world loves not, because it loves not the Lord. We love the babes in Christ as well as the mature saints, and we love, too, those saints whose infirmities are at times more to be seen than their virtues. We love them not for their station in life nor for their natural weaknesses, but because Jesus loves them as he loves us, and because they love him. Our love sweeps wider, however, and includes the eternal future of all mankind in Christ's kingdom for which we all pray. In this way, the grace of love increases in range, as well as in number, toward whom it is shown.

Our hope, too, is special because it is a hope which is laid up for us in heaven, a hope of which the world knows very little or even cares about. The man of the world hopes that tomorrow may be as today, but more abundant for him. He hopes

for riches, or he hopes for fame. He hopes for long life and prosperity, and that the stock market thrives for his investment. He hopes for pleasure and for domestic peace. The whole range of his hope is within the compass of his eye. Our hope though has passed beyond the sphere of sight, according to the word of the apostle, "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24,25) Ours is a hope that does not long for anything of this world, but which seeks that life which is to come and to be together with our blessed Lord as part of the church, head and body.

Let us speak more about this hope that we have. The connection of our study text seems to be this: the apostle rejoiced when he saw our earlier brethren at Colossae possessing faith, love and hope and he thanked God and prayed about them. Paul saw these qualities as seals of God upon them, so to speak, tokens that they were truly a consecrated, converted people, and his heart was glad. It is true also that we rejoice today, as Paul did then, to see our brethren adorned with the jewels of faith, hope and love, that their labor has not been in vain and that these ornaments of the present are as preparation for the future of eternity.

## **ONENESS OF OUR HOPE**

We believe from the form of the language that the Apostle Paul has used in our featured scripture text (Col. 1:3-5), he intended to show that their love for the saints was produced in them by the



hope which was laid up in heaven, a vitally important connection. In verse five, the apostle begins by using the word 'for' which means 'on account of,' or 'because of.' We read, 'For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.'

There can be no doubt that the hope of heaven tends to foster love in all the saints of God. We have a common hope, so let us have a common affection one for another. We are all working with a view toward our heavenly home and to the many mansions there. Let us go forward in one loving company; since we hope to be together as one in heaven, so let us be together as one here on earth.

One is our Master, and one is our service, one is our way, and one is our end. Therefore, let us be knit together as one body. If faithful, we expect to see our beloved Lord face to face and be like him, so why should we not now love all in whom there is something of the character of Christ? We are to live together in heaven as his body members eternally so why should we quarrel with one another over petty things? We are to be forever with Jesus, our head, and partakers of the same joy, the same glory, the same love. Why now should we be less in our love for the brethren on this side of the veil? In the narrow way, we fight the same enemies, publish the same testimony, bear the same trials, and go to the same throne of grace as all of our fellow body members. We must love one another truly with no barriers or walls. Hence, it is not difficult to show that the hope which is laid up in heaven should produce fervent love among the brethren.

## **FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE ALL ENTWINED**

In our featured scripture, Paul also connects the hope that is laid up in heaven with our faith, and he rejoiced because their faith was fostered by their hope no less than their love was. He commended all three of those sweet graces of the Spirit, pointing out that they were all entwined with one another and dependent one upon another. There would be no love we could have for all the saints if there was no love for Jesus; and if there was no love for Jesus, there would be no hope laid up in heaven. If we had no hope, it would also be certain that we had no true faith, for with no hope faith would be in vain. If we have at least one of these three graces, we would receive the others, for they cannot be separated. The three are set in the same gold setting, and none can break the precious seal. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love]." (I Cor. 13:13) Blessed are they who have these wonderful graces of the Spirit abiding in their heart.

## **A WONDERFUL HOPE**

Examining further the hope which is laid up for us in heaven we see, first of all, what a wonderful hope it is. Second, it is a secure hope; and third it is a powerful, influential hope. We speak of this hope as a marvelous hope, and it is if we consider that it is a great act of grace that we should have any hope at all. When father Adam broke his Maker's law, that there should have been any hope left at all should make our hearts rejoice with gratitude. Perhaps we all remember when we were a lost sinner in this world. It was as if the Devil had written on

our door lintel, 'No Hope.' It would still be that way today, if not that a loving hand took some hyssop and, by the sprinkling of precious blood, removed that inscription. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) That was our former condition, but how wonderful that it could be changed. We now have the blessed assurance rather than despair.

It is marvelous, too, that our hope is associated with heaven. If faithful, we will taste of the joys of heaven with our blessed Lord. Our hope is full of glory, for it has to do with the glory of Jesus which we expect to behold in its fullness. We hope with all saints for the same glory and the same power associated with the change of nature as New Creatures in Christ, and we even hope to sit upon the throne of Christ. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:20,21) What a marvelous hope we have, and it is not based on a presumption or mere credulity. Our hope and confidence is warranted by nothing less than God's Holy Word.

## **THE GRACE AND OBJECT OF HOPE**

Paul's lesson concerning hope has two aspects. First, there is the grace of hope which dwells in our hearts and, second, the object of hope which is laid up in heaven. The lesson of both is intended. The

reason that which is laid up in heaven is not a hope except it be to those who hope for it. That is, no man has a hope laid up in heaven unless he has that hope within himself, and that hope governs his heart, mind, words, and actions. The grace of hope and its object are mentioned by Paul under one term and that teaches us that when hope is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit's influence it is in a sense the thing hoped for even as faith is the thing believed because it realizes and secures it. Just as faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, so is hope the substance of the thing it expects and the evidence of the thing it cannot see. Our hope is so substantial that the Apostle Paul speaks of it as though it was the thing itself, and was laid up in heaven. Many a person has a hope of wealth but that kind of hope is a different thing than being wealthy. It is like the saying, 'There is many a slip twixt cup and lip.' A person may have a hope of old age yet he may die tonight; so it is made very clear to us that the hope for long life is not in itself longevity. He who has the divine hope that grows from faith and love has a hope which shall never disappoint. Hence, Paul speaks of it as being identical with the thing hoped for, and describes it as being laid up in heaven. Truly we have a marvelous hope which long before its realization is treated as a matter of actual attainment and spoken of as a treasure reserved up in heaven for us. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."—Heb. 6:19

The hope that we have is a matter of divine revelation because no human could ever have invented

this blessed hope. It is so glorious it baffles the imagination of man. This eternal hope had to be revealed to us or we could never have known it. The apostle says, "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." (Col. 1:5) The Lord has promised this hope to us in the Scriptures. A window of heaven has been opened to us and we are bidden to look inside and hope for the time coming when we shall be with him forever.

### **HOPE CAME BY HEARING**

Another thing that is so wonderful about all this is that our hope came to us simply by hearing the wonderful Word of God. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom. 10:17,18) This hope came not by our own works or by our own merit. We ourselves have done nothing to deserve it. We received the wonderful message simply by hearing it, then hearkening to God's Word, and believing it unto a new life in Christ Jesus. We heard in scripture that Jesus Christ opened the kingdom of heaven to us. We believed the message, and saw a way opened for us in his precious blood. We also heard what our Heavenly Father had prepared for those who love him. We have received indescribable joys, and we believe and trust in Jesus. All of our confidence is in the word which we have heard, for it is written, "Incline your ear; and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."—Isa. 55:3

By continued hearing and study, our faith is strengthened and our hearts are filled with inward assurance and joyful anticipation, resulting in our loving the Word of God so much the more. The substance of our hope is extraordinary, and it is not possible for us to fully describe all the phases of delight that are connected with our hope. Ours is a hope of victory, for with the Lord's help we shall overcome every foe, and soon Satan will be trodden under foot and bound. Our life struggle will end in victory if we stay faithful. "I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."—Rev. 12:10,11

## **WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM**

We do not just hope for victory alone, but that perfection that each one of us will have at that time when we shall each be seen in the beauty of our new nature. "Now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."—I John 2:28,29

John then proclaimed, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we

shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”—I John 3:1-3

What an honor that we, as members of the fallen human family, shall be like our Lord Jesus and see him as he is. Then we will have no more propensity for sin, nor any trace of it having been in us. All we shall have then will be our perfect natures as spiritual beings, fully developed and sinless. We shall love God more, for we shall see him also and be presented to him by our head, Christ. We will certainly say in that future time, “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 forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”—Ps. 103:1-5

There is yet more of hope that will follow for those who are faithful. Such will have security from all danger, for there will be no evil in heaven, but peace, rest, and joy. Here we only see through a glass darkly, we only know in part, but there shall we see face to face, and know even as we are known. There will be no spiritual enemy to assail us. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the Devil will mar our eternal rest above. As we close out another year in the Lord, let us remember these words of the Apostle Paul, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”—Rom. 15:13, *New American Standard Bible* ■

# Give Me Thine Heart

*“My son, give me  
thine heart, and let  
thine eyes observe  
my ways.”  
—Proverbs 23:26*

## **GIVING GOD OUR HEART**

and observing his ways means a full and complete consecration of our life to the doing of his will and service. Consecration began with Jesus when he was thirty years of age, and at that time he presented himself to John the Baptist. Jesus had always been committed to faithfully serving his Heavenly Father, but his immersion into the waters of the Jordan River brought new and added meaning to his life and the Heavenly Father's ultimate purpose for the reconciliation of the sin-sick family of man. Jesus was to be the future Savior of the world, and it was at Jordan that he voluntarily offered himself in sacrifice to carry out that plan. “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”—John 18:37

## **A NEW CREATURE**

Having offered himself in sacrifice, Jesus was now considered by God as a New Creature. From



that time forward, he had a new heavenly hope that would be proven, tested, and developed for a future and grand purpose. Under the administration of his future kingdom, he would have the power and authority to bring mankind back from the bondage of sin and death.

To accomplish the sacrificial aspect of laying down his human life, as well as his development as a New Creature, our Lord was begotten by the Holy Spirit of God. The further purpose of the Heavenly Father was the development of a little flock of Jesus' followers who would share in the grand work of Christ's future kingdom. This work of calling New Creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God began at Pentecost. The invitation to give our heart to God in consecration has only been offered during this present Gospel Age.

Let us appreciate to the fullest extent the blessed privilege that we as members of the fallen race have in accepting our High Calling in Christ Jesus, "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:20-23

Our loving Heavenly Father desires that we use our newly consecrated heart, which has been made acceptable to him, to encourage and motivate us in every aspect of our lives. Our heart will be a great source of help to us when fulfilling the daily vows that we have made. Even when we stumble and fail to serve him in word or action, if our heart is properly conditioned and motivated, God will help us to

overcome our unintentional mistakes and stumblings of thought, word, and deed.

Having thus accepted God's will for us, may we with increased diligence consider wisely the instruction of his Word in connection with our new life which has been purchased by the sacrificial blood of his dear Son, our Lord and Savior. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."—Eccles. 5:4,5

## **BOUGHT WITH A PRICE**

When we give ourselves to the Father in consecration, we accept the invitation he has given to us in our featured scripture, 'My son, give me thine heart.' The heart represents the very seat of our deepest affections and motivations and, when willingly given to God, it embodies giving to him everything that we have. All who have made this commitment have given their life to God that he might accept them for his own. He does not do this by miraculously transforming us, but has accepted us as having given him our all. He has imputed the merit of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf and justified us in his sight. Thus have we been bought with a price—the precious blood of our Lord Jesus.

Paul spoke of this great price when writing to the brethren at Corinth. He told them, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is

the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."—I Cor. 7:20-24

## **BURIED IN JESUS' DEATH**

Paul addressed the deeper meaning and significance that is associated with our consecrated life in Christ Jesus. He said, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."—Rom. 6:3-8

## **STEWARDS OF GOD'S WORD**

Having thus made this deep commitment in our lives, we become guardians and stewards over the precious Truth that has been given to us. Our faithfulness must be proven, and we are to perform this obligation in the best way that we can. We are to fulfill our consecration vows by using our talents and abilities in serving the Lord's people, and in spreading the comforting message of the Gospel to others. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord."—I Cor. 4:1-4

Doing God's will should become the foremost matter in our lives. We should beware of temptations to use our talents along lines that might foster pride or self-conceit, remembering always that we are but a servant of our dear Lord and that he is our Master. Our loving Heavenly Father knows that we must use a certain amount of our time and talents in supplying our temporal needs, but we are encouraged to redeem our time. The extra minutes or hours that we may have from day to day should be used wisely in the study of God's Word, and to engage in meditation and prayer.

When we give our lives to God in full dedication and devotion, and accept the invitation of the heavenly calling, we receive the Holy Spirit of power and influence. This is a special gift that will help us to faithfully carry out our consecration. By using this Holy Spirit and submitting to its guiding influence, we will be able to accomplish all things that are necessary to make our calling and election sure. Without it the influences of the world, our fallen flesh, and the temptations of Satan will prevent our being a faithful steward. If we are continually being filled with the Holy Spirit and are properly acting upon it, we will not fail.

We are to resist the flesh's tendency to waste inordinate amounts of time on worldly pursuits and interests, even those that would be considered by

others to be good and acceptable. “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”—James 1:2-6

## **A TRANSFORMING WORK**

Our consecrated life is a new life in Christ Jesus, and involves the transforming of the heart and mind of our old nature. “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.”—Rom. 12:1,2

This transformation by the Holy Spirit of God working in our lives develops the fruits of the Spirit, which includes love, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance. At the same time this work is going on, we are also to rid ourselves of the sinful tendencies of our fallen fleshly nature. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul said, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that 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. 8:14-17

“Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”—II Cor. 8:7-9

## **SELF DENIAL**

When we give our heart to the will of our loving Heavenly Father, we come to understand that our new life in Christ Jesus will lead to sacrifice and self-denial. We should quickly realize that the inherited weaknesses of our flesh may at times be in conflict with the New Creature in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul’s consecration to God was truly one of sacrifice and self-denial. He said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”—Gal. 2:20

All who have been baptized into Jesus’ death must continually fight against all earthly ambitions, aims, hopes, and pleasures, and realize that they have given up these pursuits for a share in the spiritual inheritance. The Apostle Peter also spoke of suffering for Christ, and said, “Servants, be subject

to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”—I Pet. 2:18-21

To share in the future role of the Christ in blessing all the families of the earth, it is first necessary that we have gone through the same types of experiences, trials, sufferings, and sorrow that are common to all mankind. It is only then that we can be truly touched, as was Jesus, with a heartfelt feeling of the world’s infirmities. We must expect to have experiences which try and test our consecration vows to the Lord. We should rejoice in such experiences, because they are being permitted by the divine will and power of our loving Heavenly Father, and are designed to develop us for a special place in Christ’s future kingdom.

Self-denial and sacrifice is a reasonable service if we truly love the Lord and desire to share with him in the uplifting work of all the families of the earth. What more worthy cause could there be for our self denial and vows of sacrifice than the opportunity it will bring for assisting the human family back to the perfection in which man was first created. It is God’s plan of the ages to carry out this reconciliation, and we should rejoice at the prospect of having a part in this future work, realizing that our sacrifice is but a reasonable service.

When found faithful, we will have the privilege of sharing with our Lord in that wonderful work. In the prophetic words of Isaiah, he speaks of the time when mankind will be restored to life and will learn to walk in the way of holiness. "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."—Isa. 35:8

## **TREASURES IN HEAVEN**

The development of the New Creature will prepare the Lord's people for the work of the future. Jesus taught, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Matt. 6:19-21

"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:16-18) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 2:5

The most meaningful decision that any one of the fallen human family can make is to give their heart to the Lord in complete consecration. If we



are among those who have accepted this invitation, we are walking in the narrow way, and being tested, tried, and proven for our faithfulness. Throughout this narrow way, we are being led by the hand of God and receiving many blessings to assist us to greater faithfulness and ultimate victory.

As we continue in our consecrated walk, God expects us to grow in faith and to trust him. He knows we cannot attain perfection in our service to him, but he does require that we put forth our best efforts. He will count such efforts as acceptable in his sight, with any lack due to our fleshly weaknesses covered with the boundless supply of his grace. Our loving Father desires that we accept his will during every experience of our consecrated life. He understands that we are not perfect, and that we will not be able to bring every thought, word, and deed into full compliance with his perfect standards.

## **PUTTING OUR TRUST IN HIM**

If our heart becomes weary at times, let us be strengthened by the wise counsel of the Apostle Paul, who said, “Consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God,

and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”—I Cor. 1:26-31, *New American Standard Bible*

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. 1:6 ■

## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**DECEMBER 3**—“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”—Revelation 3:10 (Z. ’01-118 Hymn 310)

**DECEMBER 10**—“Them that honour me, I will honour.”—I Samuel 2:30 (Z. ’01-318 Hymn 210)

**DECEMBER 17**—“Beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Philippians 2:12,13 (Z. ’97-147 Hymn 114)

**DECEMBER 24**—“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”—Matthew 1:21 (Z. ’00-8 Hymn 16)

**DECEMBER 31**—“What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD, now, in the presence of all his people.”—Psalm 116:12-14 (Z. ’99-286 Hymn 336)

# “I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

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# SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

## **M. J. Balko**

Atlanta, GA      December 21

## **R. Sconyers**

Atlanta, GA      December 21

## **E. Blicharz**

St. Augustine, FL      December 6

# 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.*

**CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, January 1-3**—Ramada Inn & Suites, 780 North Avenue, Glendale Heights, IL 60139. Phone: (630) 942-9500. Contact J. Farrell, 310 S. Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137. Phone: (630) 469-9511

**PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 1-3**—Country Inn & Suites, 20221 N. 29th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Phone: (623) 879-9000 for reservations. For other information, contact J. Zardja. Phone: (602) 363-2612

**LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 31**—Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Contact R. Wojcik, 12807 Elkwood Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605. Phone: (818) 982-7253

**SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 12-14**—Capitol City Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact J. Freer. Phone: (916) 967-0635

**FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 6,7,8**—Clarion Hotel, 230 West State Road 436, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Phone: (407) 862-4455. Specify "Florida Bible Students." Deadline for special rates is February 24. For other information, contact E. Blicharz, 320 Raven Rock Lane, Longwood, FL 32750. Phone: (407) 260-8083

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 20,21**—Holiday Inn-Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48083. Phone: (248) 689-7500. Specify “Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia.” Deadline for special rate is March 13. For other information, contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

*God's Perfect Gift*

*O little Child of Bethlehem!  
O Child of Royal birth!  
More than ever we need Thee now—  
Would all men knew Thy worth!*

*Thou of a virgin-maid was born,  
As thus it was foretold;  
God's Word never in void returns  
But performs what long He told.*

*Yearly celebrate men of good will,  
Your lowly stable birth,  
The angel's message of 'great joy'  
Will yet encircle earth.*

*No longer little Babe are you,  
Thy mission, far from loss,  
And now You're Saviour of the world  
Since dying on the cross.*

*No other soul could man redeem  
To offset Adam's sin.  
God made you flesh—You're Heaven's Gift  
That all hearts you might win.*

*God's patience stands, He slowly is  
Unfolding His Great Plan,  
And ALL is centered in His Son—  
God's Perfect Gift to man.*

—Selected

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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