

The Dawn

A Herald of Christ's Presence



The DAWN

VOLUME No. XCIV, Number 10
(USPS 149-380), October 2026

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Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167. \$12.00 a year.

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A View of the Semiquin- centennial

***“Write the vision,
and make it plain
upon tables, that
he may run that
readeth it. For the
vision is yet for an
appointed time,
but at the end it
shall speak, and
not lie: though it
tarry, wait for it;
because it will
surely come, it
will not tarry.”***
—**Habakkuk 2:2,3**

In July of this year, the 250th birthday of the United States, specifically known as the Semiquincentennial, captured the attention and sober thinking of many people. In terms of years, this nation is still quite young when compared with such European countries as England, France, and Spain. Yet the term of this nation's life has been during a period of some of the greatest increases in

knowledge and inventions since the beginning of recorded time. The United States was peculiarly adapted to provide the fertile ground that gave birth to these increases. More than this, the nation's business minds had the ability to develop

mass-produced products that resulted in an ever-expanding industrial base and marketplace.

The net result of all this is that the United States has enjoyed one of the highest standards of living of any nation and has often been the envy of people throughout the world. In spite of this country's accomplishments, however, it has not attained and will not attain, under its own power, to the position once envisioned by those of its founding fathers who had a sense of religious mission that came from the original Puritan settlers.

The extraordinary beginnings out of which our government and life as a nation emerged reach back even farther than the 250 years of our official age. They go back 175 years before that. The roots of the creative factors influencing our beginnings as a nation were not those that related to industry or business. Rather, they came from the great revolution of religious thought that began to dominate many people's beliefs beginning in the 17th century.

Historical Background

At that time, two lines of thought began to come to the forefront. The first was renewed belief in, and the teaching of, a coming millennium. The other theme was the belief in a revival of learning that was sparked by the invention of movable type. This meant that the printing press could dramatically increase the production of books, including the Bible and other religious writings. To the minds of the theologians at that time, prophetic texts of the Bible indicated that the advancement of learning would be important elements in the millennial arrangement.

Daniel, the 12th chapter, verse 4, speaks of the “time of the end,” and that then “knowledge shall be increased.” This became a major bulwark of the Puritan millennial concepts. This text was often reiterated and given new shades of meaning. It became central to the writings of the philosophers and theologians of the day, from whom the Puritans drew their inspiration.

One of these scholars was Sir Walter Raleigh. He penned the widely read, “History of the World,” which recounted the world’s history beginning with creation. Another was Sir Francis Bacon, who wrote in his “*Valerius Terminus: Of the Interpretation of Nature*,” as follows: “This is a thing which I cannot tell whether I may so plainly speak as truly conceive, that as all knowledge appeareth to be a plant of God’s own planting, so it may seem the spreading and flourishing or at least the bearing and fructifying of this plant, by a providence of God, may not only a general providence but by a special prophecy, was appointed to this autumn of the world.” In support of his treatise, Bacon went on to quote a portion of Daniel 12:4, associating his “autumn of the world” statement with “the time of the end” spoken by the prophet, thus integrating it into his philosophical program.

It has been estimated that 70% of the ministers publishing new works between 1640 and 1653 subscribed to some form of millennial conception. The following is a quotation from “*The Great Instauration*” [renewal or restoration], published by Charles Webster in 1975. Referring back to the 17th century Puritan acceptance of the Bible and its prophecies, he wrote:

“To the author [John Milton] of *Paradise Lost*, the Garden of Eden represented an ideal state of affairs which had an indisputable historical basis. Raleigh conducted his investigation into the location, size, and physical description of the Garden of Eden with scientific precision. To the commentators on the *Apocalypse* [the Book of Revelation], the New Jerusalem was a concrete and attainable goal for the reformed church. Utopian town planners drew up their schemes with reference to the physical features of the city of Jerusalem. ... This was not merely an academic exercise; the reconstructions were presented in such terms as to provide an inducement to action; rewards were described in terms which were congenial to the mentality of the seventeenth century. ... Milton’s paradise was fertile and temperate, not unlike the landscape of the south of England. There were no thorns or weeds, but Adam was not permitted to lead a passive and indulgent life. Rather he was an active tenant farmer, charged by God to dress and keep his garden, and was granted dominion over all other creatures.”

One of the most detailed impressions of the New Jerusalem based on biblical sources was produced by John Stoughton, the influential 17th century minister of St. Mary Aldermanbury. Of him it is said: “He comforted his readers with the assurance that the catastrophic disruptions of the Thirty Years’ War would end with the fall of Babylon and the establishment of a millennial state. Diverse Bible texts were assimilated to give a vivid impression of the new age. This would be a period of perfect harmony, both in the celestial and terrestrial worlds.

The harmony of the heavenly spheres would be matched by aesthetic harmonies on the earth. There would be neither night, nor day; the sun and moon would shine simultaneously, both with a more radiant light. ... The earth would be more fruitful. The whole earth would bring forth exotic fruits of a kind which had hitherto been confined to limited regions; all crops would yield more heavily. The mountains would generate gems and precious metals in abundance. Imperfections in environment would vanish and there would be no limitations on human longevity. The wolf and the lamb would live together in peace, and no creature would prey upon another. This peaceful coexistence would extend to human society, which would evolve towards a Utopian state under the guidance of the saints. The divisions between the Protestant churches would be healed and they would unite in the blood of Christ. Besides this general state of grace, the general revival of learning, which was already underway, would be pressed to its conclusion. Philosophy and poetry would be purified; voyages of exploration would reveal new rich lands; technological labours would be rewarded; children would learn efficiently by new and effortless methods. ... Philosophers would be guided by a plan for the Great Instauration, which would direct both the course of systematic observation and search for new secrets of nature by means of fructiferous experiments."

In summary, the unprecedented upheavals of the period were seen as a prelude to the final judgment and rule of the saints. Puritan leaders were thus able to draw comfort from the conditions, lawmakers projected their policies as having divine

sanction, and their armies claimed to be Christ's armies in a holy war. The sciences were employed to add exactness to the millennial outline drawn up by theologians, and millennial ideas furnished the intellectuals with new premises and goals. It seemed that the fall of man that began with Adam might at last be on the verge of being reversed. It was claimed that some indications of restitution had already occurred. The Puritan revolution was therefore seen as a period of promise when God would allow science to become the means of bringing about a new paradise on earth. Science therefore assumed a position of considerable importance in the Puritan approach, and their leaders became dedicated to the concept of recovering man's dominion over nature.

Coming to the "New World"

After many years of prosperity and growth, the Puritans began to experience persecution from the Church of England. As the pressure increased, the Puritans began to look for a more favorable atmosphere in which to live and prepare for the establishment of the millennial kingdom. The new world offered an ideal place to preserve the spirit of the reformation. John White, one of the leaders in the Massachusetts colony, wrote in *The Planters Plea*, "God especially directs this work of creating colonies unto the planting and propagating of religion. Furthermore, God had ordained that this work would be undertaken in the Western parts of the World during the last age of history."

John Winthrop shared White's feelings, and it was in this spirit that he accepted the governorship of Massachusetts, believing that God had chosen

this country in which to plant his people. In 1643 the pamphlet, *New England's First Fruits*, was published. It gives the earliest report of the founding of the nation's first institution of higher learning, Harvard College. The original seal of the college bore these Latin words: In Christi Gloriam—"For the Glory of Christ."

Peter Bulkeley was a 17th century minister and one of the founders of Concord, Massachusetts. Around the year 1640, he preached a sermon to fellow Puritans in Boston entitled "*The Gospel Covenant*," in which he said concerning the people of New England, "We are as a city set upon an hill, in the open view of all the earth; the eyes of the world are upon us, because we profess ourselves to be a people in covenant with God."

This sense of mission permeated the thinking and attitudes of the early Pilgrims, and the theme of a holy mission was the basis of thousands of sermons and lectures. These have been referred to by some modern scholars as the "textbook of politics," for they prepared the people spiritually and intellectually for the political events that were to take place at a later time. They also prepared the people to foster and adopt the great scientific and technological advancements that were even then beginning to break upon them.

Premature Hopes

As we review in our minds these remarkable events that had such a profound influence in the forming of the undergirding of our country, we realize that the Pilgrims' hope for the millennial kingdom was premature and was based on many erroneous

concepts. However, their zeal helped to shape the character of our nation and indirectly the lives of the American people. They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.—Rom. 10:2

When Adam was created and put in the Garden of Eden, he was perfect. God required absolute obedience from him. He had communion with God and, as long as this relationship lasted, Adam possessed everlasting life. He was disobedient, however, and because of this he and his progeny were condemned to death.—Gen. 2:7-17; 3:17-19; Rom. 5:12

The purpose of God in developing the plan of the ages is to restore man to his original condition. The matter of having dominion and control over the earth is secondary, or an outgrowth of man's recovery. It is necessary to realize that it is only through the power of God operating through his various agencies that this great work of reconciliation is to be accomplished. One of these agencies is the kingdom, the establishment of which is the final grand step of the Lord in accomplishing the reconciliation of the human race to himself.—Matt. 6:10; Rev. 21:3-5; Col. 1:20

The first step in the development of the Lord's plan was a period of time we refer to as the Patriarchal Age, which lasted from the flood in Noah's day to the death of Jacob. It was during this time that God dealt only with certain individuals, such as the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The principal fruitage of this age was God's promise to faithful Abraham, recorded in Genesis 22:16-18. The Apostle Paul, in Galatians 3:8, referred to this promise as the Gospel: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through

faith, preached before [in advance] the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." This is the promise that is the basis for mankind's hope for salvation.

The patriarch Jacob had twelve sons, who later became identified as the heads of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. For a time, the Lord dealt with this nation exclusively. (Amos 3:2) This period we may properly call the Jewish Age, which lasted from the death of Jacob to the crucifixion of Christ. The principal fruition of this step in God's plan of salvation was to bring forth the promised seed of Abraham.

The Apostle Paul again, in Galatians 3:16, states, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." In verse 19 we read, "Wherefore then serveth the law [the law covenant that God made with Israel]? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed [Christ, vs. 16] should come to whom the promise was made." In the true sense of the word Christ did not become the long-promised seed of the covenant until he had died on the cross and was resurrected to the divine nature.—Acts 13:32,33

The visitation of the Holy Spirit upon the waiting apostles at Pentecost, fifty days following the resurrection of Christ, marked the beginning of the third step in the development of God's plan of salvation—appropriately denoted the Gospel Age.

The word Christ is the English translation of the Greek word *Christos*, which means "anointed." The equivalent Hebrew word is *Messiah*. The Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 12:12, identifies Christ, or

Messiah, as being one body, but that this body—like a human body—is composed of many members, “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” See also Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:22,23 and 5:30.

In Galatians 3:27-29 the Apostle Paul identifies the footstep followers of Jesus as being “one in Christ Jesus,” members of his symbolic body and therefore part of the seed of Abraham. These will share with Christ in the privilege of blessing all the families of the earth. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

The principal fruitage of the Gospel Age is the calling, character development, and proving faithful of each member of Christ’s body. The Apostle James, in summarizing the discussion of the elders who had gathered in Jerusalem regarding the Gentiles who were coming into Christ, stated, “Simeon hath declared how God at the first [or for the first time] did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.”—Acts 15:14-16; Amos 9:11,12

The Apostle James reminded the elders in Jerusalem that God had foretold the great work of taking from the Gentiles the remainder of the body of Christ. (Hos. 2:23; I Pet. 2:10) After this work is

done, however, God is going to fulfill his promises with respect to the “sure mercies of David”—that is, to establish upon the throne of Christ, the greater David, the long-promised millennial kingdom. “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. 55:3; 9:7

The Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 15:53,54, gives us a prophecy that describes how, in God’s due time, the long-expected and greatly desired kingdom will finally be established. He states, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Here the apostle is saying that when all the members of the body of Christ have been selected, have faithfully followed in the footsteps of Jesus even unto death, and then have been exalted to the divine nature, the prophecy then will be fulfilled concerning the destruction of death. This does not indicate that the completion of the church will bring the fulfillment of the prophecy, but rather that the means of bringing about the destruction of death will have been provided; for it is through the Christ—Christ and the members of his body, the seed of promise—that the world is to be blessed. This will be during what is styled the Millennial, or Messianic, Age.

The expression, “Death is swallowed up in victory,” is a quotation from Isaiah 25:6-8. It is a beautiful and vivid prophecy concerning the yet future millennial kingdom—a time when the great restoration will come to pass. Then the hopes and desires of the early Puritans, many of the founding fathers of the United States, and others who looked for a better day, will be fulfilled. As our opening text says, this blessed vision of the future for all mankind will surely come to pass—“at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”—Hab. 2:3 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

OCTOBER 1—“I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.”—Psalm 39:1 (Z. ’97-156 Hymn 65)

OCTOBER 8—“Be not deceived, ... he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”—Galatians 6:7,8 (Z.’04-57 Hymn 4)

OCTOBER 15—“Have faith in God”—Mark 11:22 (Z.’04-59 Hymn 174)

OCTOBER 22—“Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?”—Matthew 20:22 (Z. ’04-138,139 Hymn 106)

OCTOBER 29—“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.”—II Corinthians 4:8-10 (Z ’01-55 Hymn 348)

Joshua's Final Message

Key Verse: *"The people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."*
—Joshua 24:24

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 24:19-28

Joshua had been with Moses for forty years. First, he served as leader of a group of Israelites who fought against Amalek and his army. Later, when God gave the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai, Joshua went with him up to the mount. (Exod. 17:9-14; 24:12,13) Joshua was also one of the twelve men whom

Moses had selected to spy out the promised land for forty days and then give a report. (Num. 13:1-20) He, along with Caleb, were the only spies to bring back a good report. This resulted in their being the only two adult males, who had been part of the nation of Israel's exodus from Egyptian bondage, that were permitted to enter the promised land; in addition to the tribe of Levi.—Num. 26:64,65

Prior to Israel entering the land that God had promised to them, the Lord instructed Moses prior to his death that Joshua was to become Israel's leader. (Num. 27:18-23) Later the Lord told Joshua, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."—Josh. 1:1-9

When Moses died, Joshua was 83 years old, and he became Israel's leader for the next 27 years. He led the

nation across the Jordan River into the land of promise, oversaw the dividing of the land amongst the tribes of Israel, and governed the people. Throughout this time Joshua faithfully obeyed God's laws, providing a helpful example and influence for the people.

When Joshua approached the end of his life, he gathered all the leaders of the tribes of Israel at Shechem. There he recounted, starting from the time of Abraham down to their day, all that the God of Israel had done for them.—Josh. 24:1-13

Joshua next admonished them, "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: ... choose you this day whom ye will serve." He then added this noteworthy statement, "but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (vss. 14,15) Here Joshua asked the people of Israel to decide whether they would be faithful to Jehovah. Even today, all who are sincerely seeking after the Lord should make a full, positive, and personal decision respecting what their course in life should be, whether they will continue to serve themselves, or whether they will give their all to serve the Heavenly Father.

The Israelites promised that they would serve the Lord and obey him. Joshua "made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem." He wrote the words that they promised to follow in the "book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak." The oak tree is known for its incredibly long lifespan. Therefore, placing the great stone under the oak meant it would be a lasting reminder of their promise to serve and obey God. Joshua explained that this stone would be a witness to them, lest they deny God.—vss. 24-27; Deut. 31:26

Like the Israelites, we too should daily have at the forefront of our heart and mind our covenant with God and the promise we made to give him our all. Thus, may we strive daily to faithfully serve him with all our heart, soul, and mind.—Matt. 22:37-40 ■

An Angel Warns Israel

Key Verse: *“Ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?”*
—Judges 2:2

Selected Scripture:
Judges 2:1-15

in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.” (Exod. 23:20-33; 34:12-16) However, the children of Israel disobeyed God and did not “drive out” the enemies from the land.—Judg. 1:21-36

The Lord asked the Israelites why they did not obey him in this matter. He then said that because of their disobedience, the enemies entrenched in the promised land would be “thorns” in the sides of Israel and “their gods shall be a snare” unto them.—Judg. 2:1-3

The Apostle Paul explains that all these things that happened to natural Israel illustrate important lessons to the Christian. He writes, “Their experiences serve as examples for us so that we won’t set our hearts on evil as they did.” He also warns us, “Stop being idolaters, as

After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked the Lord, “Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?” He answered that the tribe of Judah should be the first of the tribes to go.—Judg. 1:1-4,19

Repeatedly the Lord had told the Israelites concerning those who inhabited the land of Canaan, “Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell

some of them were. ... Let's stop putting the Lord to the test, as some of them were doing. ... You must stop complaining, as some of them were doing." Then Paul adds that these things "were written down as a warning for us. ... Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing securely should watch out so he doesn't fall."—I Cor. 10:1-12, *International Standard Version*

The experiences of natural Israel correspond to the experiences of those who make a personal decision to dedicate and consecrate their all to serve our loving Heavenly Father, even unto death. (Rom. 12:1,2) Israel's crossing the Jordan River and entering the promised land correspond to when a Christian makes a consecration to the Lord and enters upon a new life.—II Cor. 5:17

As the Israelites were instructed to completely drive out the idolatrous peoples who were residing in Canaan, so too it is our duty to daily strive in driving out our selfish hopes, ambitions, weaknesses, and oppositions to the Lord and his righteousness. The more thoroughly we carry out this work of sanctification, the greater will be our development of character that will be pleasing to the Lord—full of faith, obedience, joy, and peace.

The children of Israel were also instructed not to worship the false gods of the idolatrous people. (Exod. 20:3,5) The Lord's followers during the present Gospel Age are likewise admonished, "keep yourselves from idols." (I John 5:21) Idolatry is the inordinate or undue respect, homage, reverence, or devotion paid to any person, system, or thing—aside from the Lord. An idol might include things such as our family, occupation, accomplishments, possessions, or self.

Let us keep ourselves from all idols and apply to our heart and mind the words of Moses, "The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."—Deut. 13:3



God Calls Gideon

Key Verse: *“The angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.”*
—Judges 6:12

Selected Scripture:
Judges 6:1-24

The Israelites were delivered into the hand of the Midianites for seven years, since they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. The nation was greatly impoverished because each year the Midianites destroyed their crops and took their animals. The Israelites hid themselves in dens and caves and eventually cried unto the Lord for help.—Judg. 6:1-7

Gideon, an Israelite from the tribe of Manasseh, was threshing wheat in a winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites, when an angel appeared and said, “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” Gideon replied, “If the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? ... The LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” (vss. 11-13) Actually, it was not God that had forsaken them, but it was the Israelites who had been unfaithful to the Lord’s instructions.

The Lord, through the angel, looked upon Gideon and replied, “Go with this determination of yours and deliver Israel from Midian’s domination.” Gideon humbly replied, “How will I deliver Israel? Look—my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I’m the youngest in my father’s household.” The Lord replied, “I’ll be with you, and you’ll defeat Midian—every single one of them!”

—vss. 14-16, *International Standard Version*

Gideon then asked for a sign to indicate if it was indeed the Lord who had told him these things. He prepared a young goat, along with unleavened bread and broth, and brought it to the angel. The angel instructed Gideon to lay the meat and unleavened bread upon a rock and to pour out the broth. The angel took the end of his staff and touched the meat and unleavened cakes. Fire came out of the rock, consuming the meat and unleavened cakes, and the angel departed. Gideon exclaimed, “Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.”—vss. 17-22

Gideon was called and chosen by God because of his humility and heart devotion in wanting to please the Lord. Truly, as the Lord later told the Prophet Samuel, “The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”—I Sam. 16:7

What an encouraging divine principle to continually keep in mind! It will help rid us of having any doubt as to whether God has called us to the heavenly calling and accepted our consecration. It will also subsequently encourage us if we ever feel astonished at the thought that the Lord will accept our limited, imperfect, abilities and efforts; and that if we are faithful to him unto death, he will resurrect us as a divine, spirit being.—Rev. 2:10

The Apostle Paul admonishes, “Consider, brethren, God’s call to you. Not many who are wise with merely human wisdom, not many of position and influence, not many of noble birth have been called. But God has chosen the things which the world regards as foolish, ...[and] the things which the world regards as destitute of influence, ... and the things which the world regards as base, ... to prevent any mortal man from boasting in the presence of God.”—I Cor. 1:26-29, *Weymouth New Testament* ■

Relying on God's Power

Key Verse: *“Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.”*
—Judges 7:15

Selected Scripture:
Judges 7:1-22

An invading host of about 135,000 Midianites were camped in the valley of Jezreel. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, who then sent messengers to four different tribes of Israel, asking them to meet him.—Judg. 6:33-35

After 32,000 men had gathered to Gideon, the Lord said to him, “The people that are with thee are too many, ... lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.” (Judg. 7:1,2) God directed Gideon to announce to the group of men that those who were fearful of the impending conflict were free to return to their homes. This was a test of faith. Out of the men gathered, 22,000 were fearful and went home, and 10,000 remained.—vss. 2,3

Then God said to Gideon, “The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.” Gideon brought the remaining 10,000 men down to the water. Then the Lord said, “Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.” Those who bowed down upon their knees to drink would be oblivious to any potential dangers surrounding them and would

be deemed unfit for service. Only 300 men did not do this and instead reached down into the water, “putting their hands to their mouth” to drink, demonstrating their alertness and attention necessary to carry out the task that lay ahead. God told Gideon he would deliver the Midianites into their hand with just these 300. (vss. 4-7) Thus was manifested the Lord’s wisdom and power in such a way that no one would doubt it was God who had delivered Israel.

The manner in which the Israelite army was reduced to 300 contains important lessons for the Lord’s followers. Gideon’s call to service can be likened to the heavenly calling that has been offered to the Lord’s followers since Pentecost. (Rom. 12:1,2) The 22,000 men who, through fear, left to return home, could represent those who, during the present Gospel Age, count the cost of sacrifice and are unwilling to give their lives in complete consecration to God.

The second test was the way in which the remaining 10,000 men drank the water. Water is a symbol of God’s Word found in the Bible. (John 4:14; 7:37,38; Eph. 5:26) There are two classes of the Lord’s people that could be illustrated in this second test. Many have been anxious to drink of the water of Truth. Most, however, are not alert and “bow down,” drinking only for themselves. Others, few in number, are alert to the life-long work of transforming their desires and conduct toward holy things and are looking around for opportunities to serve the Lord. These are the ones who not only respond to the heavenly calling and drink of the water of Truth, but also are proven to be “more than conquerors,” and are “they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”—Heb. 3:1; Rom: 8:35-39; Rev. 14:1-4

Letting our light shine forth will inevitably cost us something. However, we should go forward “in full assurance of faith,” remembering that it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”—Heb. 10:19-22; Zech. 4:6 ■

2026 European Trip Report

In May and June of 2026, the Dawn was pleased to have Brother Robert Goodman visit many of our brethren in Europe, as well as attend and serve at the German General Convention in Korbach. While in Europe, in addition to the convention in Korbach, he had the privilege of meeting with brethren scattered in many parts of France, Germany, and Austria. We believe his report on the ensuing pages will be a blessing to our readers, as we consider the unity and fellowship of the brotherhood throughout the world. Included also are numerous photos taken by Brother Robert of brethren with whom he met in Europe. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”—Psalm 133:1

Northern France

We were greeted by brethren from northern France at the Paris airport. On the trip to their home, we drove through beautiful countryside and quaint French villages. We discussed Bible prophecy from

the perspective of current events. Just a few weeks earlier, the United States and Israel had attacked Iran, and there were concerns about fuel shortages affecting Europe. We arrived at their home in the village of Martin Rieux. Their home is a renovated Middle Ages stone barn, including stone walls and hand-hewn beams, but with modern furnishings.

The class in Martin Rieux is quite small. They normally meet on Zoom or in a building in the village. The brethren study the Bible and also have topical studies. During our evening discussion, we exchanged ideas on how to witness in today's world. One class member started a project to build video summaries of the chapters in the French *Studies in the Scriptures*. Within a week, he had created video summaries of all sixteen chapters of the French Volume 1. We plan to post these videos on the French home page of the Dawn website.

The next day we traveled from Martin Rieux to Lens near the Belgian border in northeastern France. This is an area with many coal mines. In the 20th century, Polish laborers were brought in to work the mines. For this reason, the majority of the brethren in this area are Polish. The number of brethren here, like many areas in Europe, is growing smaller due to aging. We were entertained by brethren with fellowship and a meal. Their class was studying I Corinthians. One of the brethren told a story of trying to witness about the resurrection at a funeral. They were laughed at and were told the Bible was full of fairy tales.

We continued from Lens to Chérenge, France. Some of the brethren there assist with the French Dawn magazine efforts. These brethren stressed

the importance of having both Bible and topical studies to provide a balanced spiritual diet. We had discussions about how politics is reshaping Europe and the rest of the world. France, like many European countries, is seeing a rise in both antisemitism and anti-Muslim sentiments. Today Europe is witnessing an exodus of professional Muslims leaving France to go to other countries where they are treated more favorably. Political instability and increasing polarization are occurring in France as the 2027 French elections loom on the horizon.

The following day we served the Chéreng class. They were studying Matthew chapter 24 and Volume 1 of *Studies in the Scriptures*. A discourse entitled “Spiritual Resilience” was given. This is an important topic to encourage spiritual strength in these uncertain times. The brethren there were interested in the work of the Dawn, so we gave them a virtual tour. There was also a discussion on the effects of climate change. Now, a few months later, we understand that many of Europe’s major rivers, including the Rhine and Danube, are at some of the lowest levels ever recorded. After the meeting in Chéreng, we enjoyed refreshments and a season of fellowship.

We then traveled a short distance to Leforest, France, where we had lunch and enjoyed fellowship and a discussion about Bible prophecy being fulfilled in our day. These brethren were very interested in the work of the Dawn and asked many questions. Because of age, they normally meet on Zoom.

Central France

We proceeded to Pontoise, France. There we were hosted by brethren who assist in putting together

the French *Dawn* magazine. We had discussions on the need of balancing Bible and topical studies. We discussed ways to streamline their publishing efforts. Later the focus shifted to the topic of Israel in prophecy and how Paul's last journey may illustrate the times in which we live. In many parts of Europe, Israel is being blamed for the war with Iran. The economy, crime, the Ukrainian war, and the oil crisis dominate the news in France.

We traveled from Pontoise to Lamorlaye to visit the class there. A young people's seminar was just ending, so we were treated to songs and skits from the children illustrating some of the lessons they learned. We answered questions about the *Dawn* and the American brethren. A talk entitled, "A Clear and Present Danger" was given. The class has many young people who are facing the dangers posed by social media. After the meeting, we were joined by a brother from Paris who drove us for the remainder of our trip. This brother had worked at the New Jersey *Dawn* facility years ago.

Eastern France

Our travels continued to Flaxlanden, France. There we had special fellowship with additional brethren involved with publishing the French *Dawn*. We shared insights about the printing and distribution process. Our collaboration resulted in sharing ideas for streamlining the publishing process. We stayed with these brethren for several days and had lively discussions each evening focusing on the church at the end of the age.

We next visited with the brethren in Hesingue, France, near the tri-country borders of France,

Germany, and Switzerland. The brethren served us a delightful lunch, and we had fellowship with them in their backyard garden. A mile from their home was the building where Theodor Herzl started the Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century. We discussed the many challenges of raising children in the Truth at the present time.

In the evening, we served the Soultz Class. The class is a mix of French and Polish brethren. Many of the Polish brethren came to the area to work in mines, which closed in the early 2000s. There were questions about the Dawn and the American brethren. A talk was given on “How Do You Know You Have the Truth?” The discussion afterwards focused on the wonderful assurances the Bible gives confirming our beliefs.

Central Germany

On our way to the German General Convention, we visited brethren in Bruchhausen, Germany. The village overlooks the railroad crossing over the Rhine River where the Allies crossed into central Germany during World War II. The Bruchhausen class has both Bible and topical studies. We appreciated their warm hospitality and had discussions on witnessing in today’s world. The brethren are known in their village as the “Bible people.” They are actively involved with the publication of the German *Dawn* magazine. Their dedication is evident in every issue.

The German General Convention in Korbach, Germany was held on May 23rd and 24th. It was scheduled on the weekend of the European Union Pentecost holiday. It draws brethren from all parts of

Germany for this annual event. Korbach is located in the middle of a forested resort area, and the hotel is a modern, comfortable venue. Brethren from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Romania all gathered at the convention for a season of study and fellowship. We were able to meet and fellowship with the brethren during meals and breaks. The program provided much spiritual food for everyone in attendance.

German General Convention Program Summary

Saturday, May 23rd

Discourse: “The End of All Things Is Near”

—focus on the urgency in these end times

Discourse: “The Final Step”

Study on Psalm 139:23

—the importance of self-examination

Sunday, May 24th

Panel on II Peter 3:11 and Hosea 6:1-3

—a sense of urgency necessary

Discourse: “We Are Ambassadors for Christ”

—what it means to be an ambassador

Public Witness on Zoom:

—“Why Does God Permit Evil?”

P - God’s Perspective

L - Love Needs Freedom

A - Answers through Jesus

N - New Ending

Testimony Meeting based on Psalm 139:23

—“Search me, O God”

Discourse: “The Unworthy Vineyard Workers”

Discourse: “The Seven Churches in Asia Minor”

—a personal perspective from a recent trip to
Turkey

Northern Germany

From the convention, as we traveled from Korbach to Hamburg, a witness opportunity unfolded. There was a man with Bible in hand at a rest stop. The ensuing conversation between him and the brethren was in German, so we could only read their body language. It was interesting to watch the interaction between the brethren and the gentleman. It was amazing how the German brother skillfully listened, posed questions, and offered scriptures. Throughout the discussion, both men's Bibles remained open. The man listened attentively and remained fully engaged as the brother explained the plan of God. At the end, the gentleman accepted some Truth literature and thanked the brother for their discussion. We proceeded on to Hamburg where we were hosted by the brethren.

While in Hamburg we traveled to have a meeting and share a meal. We were treated to a delicious Sri Lankan dinner in a restaurant owned by brethren. They were interested in the workings of the Dawn, so we gave them a virtual Dawn plant tour and answered their questions. The discussion focused on things to watch in Israel, such as border expansion, losing their allies, antisemitism, and enemies in the final conflict.

The next day, on the way from Hamburg to Ober-Ramstadt, we stopped to visit a family of brethren in Dortmund, Germany. The family is made up of German, Greek, and Polish brethren. The class was currently studying Matthew chapter 13. A Greek sister told us the story of "John the Thief" from her father's experiences in Greece and America. It was a wonderful story of how forgiveness

(Continued on page 37)



Visiting Flaxlanden, France Brethren



Martin Rieux, France Brethren



Serving Chereng, France Class



Lamorlaye, France Class Meeting



Lamorlaye Children's Play



Serving Soultz, France Class



Witnessing at the Rest Stop



Vienna, Austria Class



Visiting Bruchhausen, Germany
Brethren



Visiting Hansestadt, Germany
Brethren



Ludwigshafen, Germany Brethren



Freinsheim, Germany Brethren



Visiting Brethren in Lens,
France



Visiting Bollwiller, France Brethren



Visiting Lens, France Brethren



Visiting Brethren in Feldkirch, Austria



German General Convention Choir



Brethren at a Vineyard Restaurant



German General Convention Lobby



German General Convention



Brethren in Pontoise, France



Staying with the Hamburg, Germany Brethren



Visiting the brethren in Hamburg, Germany



Meal at the Home of Brethren in Vienna, Austria



Meal with the Chereng, France Brethren



Lamorlaye, France Class Children



Visiting Hansestadt, Germany
Brethren



Holocaust Museum



Lunch at a Cafe in Korbach, Germany



Brethren at a Castle in Vienna, Austria

(Continued from page 28) and reconciliation led to a family with thirteen consecrated brethren.

Southern Germany

For several days we were hosted by brethren in Ober-Ramstadt. These brethren are involved in publishing the German *Dawn* magazine. We were able to share ideas on ways to streamline the production and translation processes. The brethren provided electronic versions of several books that were added to the Dawn website, and they were introduced to the idea of building German videos summarizing chapters of *Studies in the Scriptures*. During the week there were discussions about Israel's incursions into Lebanon, watching Israel's borders, the covenants, and the growing antisemitism and anti-Muslim sentiments in Germany. On the weekend, the brethren took us to the Jewish Holocaust Museum in Frankfurt, which is down the street from the home of Anne Frank.

We then visited brethren in Ludwigshafen and were greeted with a table of refreshments and a season of fellowship. The discussion quickly turned to Bible prophecies being fulfilled in our day. They are a part of the Ober-Ramstadt class and attend by Zoom.

Our last stop in Germany was Freinsheim. There we visited an isolated brother who is in his mid-nineties and still lives on his own. He has been in the Truth for many years and was well versed in the Scriptures and Bible chronology. We discussed many of the time prophecies being revealed in our day. He appreciated our visit and waved from his balcony as we drove away.

Vienna, Austria

Finally, we traveled from Germany to visit with the brethren in Vienna. There we had a wonderful season of fellowship and met with the local brethren and their families. There were several occasions for fellowship and getting to know our brethren from this area. A Saturday class meeting was called so that the German and American elders could serve the Vienna class. The first talk was entitled “How Do You Know You Have the Truth?” and it was translated into Polish. It turns out that the majority of brethren in Vienna speak Polish. The second talk was entitled, “When Fear Dresses Up Like Wisdom.” Afterwards, there was a wonderful meal followed by a season of sweet fellowship. On Sunday we departed Vienna to return to America.

Insights from Our Travels

We received numerous insights from our European travels. The trip reminded us of the obstacle that language poses. In America almost everyone speaks English. However, when you sit at a table with brethren speaking five different languages, as often happens in Europe, you realize the barrier the different languages pose. (Gen. 11:7,8) We look forward to the “pure language” promised in the kingdom.—Zeph. 3:9

Cultural diversity is embraced and celebrated in Europe. There is a rich heritage of customs and cultures. We were able to be immersed in cultural diversity we rarely experience in America. In our travels we were impressed by the oneness of the body of Christ. Brethren are rich and poor, educated, and uneducated, of different races, languages, and

cultures, but we are all called in the “one hope” of our calling and with one purpose. We are all “one in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 4:4; Gal. 3:28) It is inspirational to see brethren from many different countries and cultures working toward one common goal.

Traveling in Europe one feels a constant connection with history. From the battlefields to the medieval villages, history surrounds you. We saw sites from the period of the Roman Empire to modern times. We drove by the church in Worms, where Martin Luther defended his teachings against charges of heresy before Emperor Charles V. This was a pivotal event of the Protestant Reformation. History strengthens our faith as we witness prophecy fulfilled and being fulfilled. We are admonished to learn from the lessons of history and to patiently watch and wait.—Mark 13:33

There was much discussion during the trip on current events from a European perspective. The messaging and concerns in Europe and America are at times similar but frequently different. We can glean insights from each other’s perspectives and reason together on them.—Isa. 1:18

As classes get smaller and the number of brethren continue to dwindle, it is important to use every avenue available to witness to the world. This was especially evident in the diligence of the brethren composing the French and German Dawn magazines. We are able to use technology and pool resources to collaborate and witness to the Truth. Using the web, social media, and printed publications, the brethren continue to reach out to all corners of the earth and proclaim the “gospel of the kingdom.” (Matt. 24:14) We thank the Heavenly

Father for their inspirational example in putting forth the Gospel message as they have opportunity.

Our sincere thanks go to all the European brethren whose warm hospitality not only made this trip possible but also made it a joy and a blessing. Special thanks also to the brethren who drove us more than 5,000 kilometers on this trip. Above all, we thank our Heavenly Father for his watch care and overruling in all our travels. We trust we were a blessing to all those we visited, as they were a blessing to us. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Piotr Tubacki, Warsaw, Poland—August 4.
Age, 65

Sister Genowefa Szarkowicz, Pleśna, Poland—August
6. Age, 99

Sister Anna Zińska, Białogard, Poland—August 17.
Age, 95

Sister Ola Mach, Przychojec, Poland—August 21. Age,
88

Sister Henryka Włodarska, Miechów, Poland—August
24. Age, 94

Sister Bernice D'Alessio, Boaz, AL—August 28. Age,
81

Sister Mary Rubio, Commerce, GA—September 4.
Age, 95

Humility Before Honor

“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.”
—Proverbs 15:33

The grace of humility is an important mark of the consecrated child of God. Jesus taught his disciples, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom

of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”—Matt. 18:3,4

Wisdom From Above

This wise counsel is echoed by the Apostle Peter. He wrote, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed

with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”—I Pet. 5:2-6

The Apostle Paul also said, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:3-5) Thus our Lord Jesus, and the Apostles Peter and Paul, have all expressed the admonition in our featured scripture, that “before honour is humility.”

This lesson was also set forth by Jesus in a parable. “When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”—Luke 14:8-11

Satan’s Pride

This attitude of humility is in direct contrast with the aspiration of Lucifer. In this connection, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine

heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”—Isa. 14:12-14

In keeping with the divine principles, the time will come when Lucifer, who sought to exalt himself, shall be forever abased in the minds of all God’s intelligent creatures, and will ultimately be destroyed. “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell [Hebrew: sheol, grave, death], to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?”—vss. 15-18

Contrasting Attitudes

Jesus taught a powerful lesson in humility by contrasting the attitudes of the Pharisee and the publican. “He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the

other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”—Luke 18:9-14

The Pharisees were the religious leaders in Israel while the publicans were looked upon as being outside of God’s favor. Many of them collected taxes for the Roman government, and to the Israelites this made them appear as traitors to God’s people.

The parable states that the Pharisee “stood and prayed thus with himself.” Rather than humbly approaching God, he was assuring himself of his own righteousness and his own superiority over the publican, who had also gone up to the Temple to pray. There has always been much of this type of praying, but we can be sure that our loving Heavenly Father pays little heed or attention to such prayers.

The publican had the right attitude, that of humility before God. He stood “afar off” and “would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” This man knew that he was a sinner and, therefore, believed he was unworthy of receiving God’s blessing. He realized that the only basis upon which he could be blessed by God was that mercy would be shown to him. This publican had the type of character to whom the ministry of John the Baptist, a preacher of repentance, had appealed. (Matt. 3:1,2) When the way was pointed out to him, he repented. In the parable, Jesus said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

The word “justified” as it has been used in this scripture, and with respect to the publican, does not

have the same connotation that describes the life-justification of the consecrated followers of our Lord Jesus during this present Gospel Age. This type of justification is possible only through the merit of the shed blood of Christ. However, the lesson for us, as taught in this parable, is that the publican's attitude of humility and repentance was pleasing to God.

The God of the Universe

The great God of the universe is spoken of as being humble. The psalmist wrote, "The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people."—Ps. 113:4-8

Our loving Heavenly Father, symbolically speaking, looked down upon the earth, saw our need, and was willing to help his human creation. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed the divine law and were sentenced to death, God could have turned away from them and their children forever. However, he humbled himself from the standpoint of making provision for them to be given another opportunity, under more favorable circumstances and with much greater experience, to have life. It was God's abundant love and mercy that provided us a Savior, our Lord Jesus. Paul wrote, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Rom. 5:8

The Apostle John also testified of God's great love in providing his Son as man's Redeemer. "God

is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation [Greek: atonement] for our sins.” “He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—I John 4:8-10; 2:2

Our Attitude of Heart

The Christian's attitude toward God should be one of humility. We must humbly accept the experiences that our Heavenly Father's wisdom sees best to give us, so that we may be qualified to share in Christ's heavenly kingdom. (II Cor. 3:5,6, *International Standard Version*) This consideration should awaken us to realize that we need to develop a proper attitude of heart as the Lord's people. Our Lord wants us to be humble toward each other, and to learn the needed lessons that he provides for our growth as footstep followers of the Master.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” (I Cor. 12:18) This is true with respect to “The Christ,” and it is also true of each one of the Lord's consecrated people. We should accept with rejoicing the Lord's appointments for the church. Certainly, we all rejoice in Jesus as our Head and Master, and recognize and honor the twelve apostles that were chosen to assist us in our walk in newness of life. We acknowledge with thanksgiving and praise the many rich blessings that we have received through all the appointments of our Heavenly Father and his Son.

What the Lord Requires

The Prophet Micah wrote, “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic. 6:8) To walk humbly before God is to hearken diligently to his Word and, with a ready mind and heart, obey his every precept to the best of our ability. In Jesus, we have the perfect example of what it means to walk humbly before God. He was willing and ready to die as the world’s Redeemer. However, he purposely avoided those who were seeking to take his life until he knew that his Heavenly Father’s time had come for his sacrifice to be consummated in death. —John 7:30; 16:32

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was humble in acknowledging that there were certain things he did not know. One of these concerned the time of his Second Advent. He gladly acknowledged this was information that, at the time, was possessed only by his Heavenly Father. We read, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”—Matt. 24:34-36

Jesus’ humility was also displayed in his willingness to render small services. He was just as zealous in proclaiming the message to the Samaritan woman at the well as he was in preaching to the multitude at the Sea of Galilee. How very appropriate it is that we accept Jesus’ invitation: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of

me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. 11:28-30

We should thus learn of Jesus with the view of being like him. Jesus freely acknowledged that of himself he could do nothing; and that it was only because the Father worked in and through him that he was able to do the works that he had been sent into the world to do. (John 5:19,30) We should realize that the same thing is true of us. Although we do not have the same outstanding works to do, we realize that even the little things assigned to us would be impossible of accomplishment except as the Heavenly Father blesses us with his wisdom and strength.

When testifying of his own experiences, the aged Apostle Paul provided us these wise words: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:11-13) Such should be the same attitude of each humble Christian. Sometimes we are abased. Sometimes we abound. At all times and in all experiences, however, it is only by the strength found in Christ that we can accomplish the “good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12:2

He Reviled Not

Jesus was also an example of humility in dealing with his enemies. Peter wrote, “Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his

steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”
—I Pet. 2:21-24

The natural tendency of the fallen human nature is to strike back when attacked, if in no other way than an attempt to vindicate oneself. Jesus, however, did not do this, and we are to be like him, humbly submitting to whatever misrepresentation may be heaped upon us.

We recall these words of the Master, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. ... Be ye therefore perfect [Greek: complete], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:44-48) This is a severe test of humility; but, by the Lord’s grace, his people can be victorious.

Let us remember that our exaltation is not to be made manifest on this side of the veil, but on the other side and in the spiritual condition. The Apostle Paul proclaimed, “To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.” (Rom. 2:7, *English Standard Version*) Only those who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God may expect to be exalted by him in due time. ■

Lessons from Israel's Journey Toward Canaan

***“Because he loved
thy fathers,
therefore he chose
their seed after
them, and brought
thee out in his
sight with his
mighty power out
of Egypt; To drive
out nations from
before thee greater
and mightier than
thou art, to bring
thee in, to give thee
their land for an
inheritance, as it
is this day.”***

**—Deuteronomy
4:37,38**

In the May 2026 issue of *The Dawn* magazine, an article was published entitled “Israel’s Journey to the Red Sea.” It considered various lessons from the Israelites’ experiences from the time they were released from Egyptian bondage to the crossing of the Red Sea. In this article, we will consider further lessons from the Israelites’ subsequent journey of forty years toward Canaan, the land of promise.

Israel, as a chosen people of God, and various aspects of their culture, traditions, and religious observances, served as pictures and

provided lessons regarding future aspects of God's plan for the salvation and ultimate reconciliation of the sin-sick and dying world of mankind. This was especially true in connection with their Tabernacle arrangements, the Levitical priesthood, their sacrificial offerings, and many other details concerning their experiences as they journeyed to Canaan. These were designed by God to provide important instruction and guidance for the dedicated followers of our Lord Jesus during this present Gospel Age.—I Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4

The Christian's Journey

Our featured scripture points to another important aspect of the Israelites' experiences pertaining to their journey in the wilderness and their hope to reach the promised land of Canaan. Their travels served to illustrate the difficult and arduous journey upon which our Lord's consecrated people have entered, as they seek the promised spiritual haven of rest.—Heb. 4:11

Our minds are thus drawn to the footstep followers of Jesus who have accepted the heavenly calling and are striving for an inheritance in Christ's coming kingdom. The Apostle Paul explains that these consecrated believers "walk in newness of life" and aspire to new, higher spiritual goals and attainments.—Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1-4

Obstacles and Besetments

The faithful child of God will encounter obstacles and besetments in their journey to the spiritual Canaan. These will challenge, oppose, and attempt to discourage them in their new spiritual life and growth in Christ Jesus. There are three main

obstacles that every child of God will need to overcome. Among these are the weaknesses and failings of the fallen flesh. We need to heed Jesus' instruction, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41) The faithful Christian is also required to overcome the temptations and allurements of this "present evil world." (Gal. 1:4; John 16:33; I John 2:15-17) Finally, followers of Christ must fight against the wiles of Satan, the great Adversary of the Lord's people, "the accuser of our brethren, ... which accused them before our God day and night."—Eph. 6:11; I Pet. 5:8,9; Rev. 12:10

A New Commitment

There are basic principles that the called in Christ must follow, as shown in the Apostle Paul's words: "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

The apostle has also given special instructions to the followers of Christ Jesus to fight their individual Christian warfare. "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)."—II Cor. 10:3,4

We are provided with our Heavenly Father's precious Word of Truth that contains the wonderful teachings of the Master. Therefore, we are strengthened to fight this battle, to know his will for us in

this narrow way of sacrifice, and to faithfully carry out our lifetime commitment of total consecration. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

Specific Instructions

As God’s covenanted people, the Israelites were instructed to build the Tabernacle for their religious observances. God gave them very explicit directions: “According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.” (Exod. 25:9) Violations of God’s arrangements and instructions were punishable, in some cases by death. See Leviticus 10:1,2.

Like the ancient nation of Israel, as consecrated children of God, we are also required to follow the instructions of the Lord as we continue to the end of our life’s journey in Christ Jesus. Having made a commitment to our Heavenly Father to be faithful to our covenant of sacrifice, there can be no looking back, else we will not be prepared for a place in the promised land of Canaan—the heavenly phase of Christ’s kingdom. The seriousness of this commitment was addressed by the Master during his earthly ministry when a person who expressed his desire to follow him asked for time to attend to certain earthly affairs first. “Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”—Luke 9:62

Powerful Enemies

It was commanded of the Israelites that they drive out the various powerful nations that were occupying the land of Canaan. They were to dispossess them

so that they could enter the land and claim it in accordance with the will of God. The Canaanites had no rights to the land they occupied. The land did not belong to them because God had promised Abraham that the land of Canaan would be given to his seed. From the scriptural record, this is made clear. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."—Gen. 15:18-21

The Canaanite people were engaged in some of the most corrupt forms of behavior, and this is brought to our attention by J. B. Rotherham in his *Emphasized Bible*. Immediately following his translation of the Book of Joshua, he includes a special note on the "Destruction of the Canaanite Nations." In his note Rotherham describes the level of sin, degradation, and depravity to which the people of Canaan had fallen. He points to their worship as being obscene, sensual, and of the utmost cruelty. Their sacred places had been turned into brothels, and, in honor of their unholy false deities, women surrendered their virtue. Further to this, in some cases, the sons and daughters that were born from these unholy rites were consumed by fire as sacrificial offerings to their false gods.—Deut. 12:29-31

Concerning the Israelites' possession of the land of Canaan, we note the following text of scripture: "On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying, The LORD our

God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.”—Deut. 1:5-8

Lessons for Spiritual Israel

We may consider the experiences of natural Israel, as they also pertain to the consecrated lives of spiritual Israel, lessons by which we are edified and built up in Christ Jesus. We have all inherited sin in its many ugly forms, and as consecrated followers of the Master, we must be engaged in fighting the Christian warfare to rid ourselves of them. We should strive diligently to make progress in overcoming the weaknesses of our flesh, and to walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:22-24) As part of the spiritual seed of Abraham, we must learn the necessary lessons that pertain to our life of faith. Each of us will be examined by our loving Heavenly Father to determine the degree of progress that we have made.

As spiritual Israelites, we are counted as a “new creation” in Christ Jesus. (II Cor. 5:17, *New King James Version*) The Apostle John taught, “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

In fighting the fight of faith, it is essential that we subdue our mortal bodies and bring them into conformity to the pure mind of Christ. (I Tim. 6:12; Rom. 6:12; I Cor. 9:27) This means that we must bring every thought into subjection. The Apostle Paul explained, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” (II Cor. 10:5; I Thess. 4:3) Sanctification is the process of being set apart in total consecration to God with the intention of rendering our best possible service to him. (I Thess. 4:3,4) Jesus prayed on behalf of his followers, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”—John 17:17,19

Enemies of Righteousness

There are enemies of righteousness and truth harbored within our mortal fleshly bodies, and we are to remember that natural Israel serves as a pattern to the little flock of spiritual Israelites. In the conquest of Canaan, there were powerful nations that Israel was to dispossess, destroy, and with whom to make no covenant.

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites,

and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them.”—Deut. 7:1,2

There are seven nations in this reference, the number seven suggesting completeness. These nations, and the land which they occupied, may well correspond to the enemies of the New Creation, spiritual Israel. All who are of this little flock of God’s people must battle these formidable enemies of righteousness. (Luke 12:32) Our Christian warfare and our battles as Christians will involve driving them out so that we may go in and possess the spiritual land of promise—Christ’s glorious kingdom.

Further instructions were also given Israel concerning their enemies. “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people.”—Deut. 7:3-7

Fallen Flesh Tendencies

It is suggested that the various Canaanite nations who needed to be dispossessed may represent different tendencies of our fallen flesh that have to be overcome and rooted out. For example, the name “Amorite” has the significance of publicity and prominence. Therefore, the Amorites, who dwelt in the mountains and high places, may represent the qualities of self-assurance, or being lifted up with pride. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” (Prov. 16:18,19) Spiritual pride is one of the greatest of all enemies to be subdued by the consecrated child of God.

Those in Canaan who dwelt in the lower parts of the land may represent a jealous disposition, or one that is easily aroused to envy. “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.”—Song of Sol. 8:6

Dwellers of the best and most level landscape could represent those who believe they can achieve spiritual success with little regard to the fallen tendencies of the flesh. There is much danger in this attitude, as there are many weaknesses of the fallen fleshly nature that need to be striven against. Some of these include bitterness, wrath, anger, evil speaking, and malice. (Eph. 4:31) Discouragement is another weakness that needs to be continuously brought under control. Let us not be driven away from the Lord and our life of sacrifice by being easily discouraged. Peter said, “Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.”—I Pet. 5:7

Spying Out the Land

From Israel's encampment at Paran, Moses sent spies to search out the land of Canaan. This was permitted by God at the request of the Israelites. (Deut. 1:22,23) The spies travelled throughout the land. On returning, they all agreed that it was indeed flowing with milk and honey. (Num. 13:21-27) However, ten of the spies gave a faithless report that put fear into the hearts of the Israelites. Only Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to go into the land, overcome their enemies, and possess it.

“Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”—Num. 13:30-33

Joshua and Caleb brought back an encouraging report, but the spies who had travelled with them lacked faith in the wonderful providence of God and were overcome with the spirit of fear. Caleb said, “Let us go up at once, and possess it.” We also as spiritual Israelites, with the Lord's help, may overcome the giants of fear and discouragement in our lives, and share with our blessed Master in his kingdom when we reach the heavenly Canaan.

Paul wrote: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—Phil. 4:13

God Provided

Throughout their journey to the land of promise, God provided for his people Israel in a most remarkable way. "The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." (Exod. 13:21,22) Only when they finally crossed the Jordan River into Canaan was this phenomenon discontinued.

From the scriptural record, we learn that God's providence was with Israel when they met Amalek for battle. Moses stood on a hill overlooking the site of battle with the "rod of God" in his hand. "It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed."—Exod. 17:8-11

God then showed his powerful hand, as we read, "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." (vss. 12,13) The support of Moses' hands by Aaron and Hur suggests the privileges that each of the Lord's followers have in comforting, edifying, and encouraging one another as they journey in the narrow way.—I Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24

Examples For Us

The Apostle Paul enumerates some additional examples of God's overruling care over the people of Israel. "I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all to Moses were baptized in the cloud, and in the sea; and all the same spiritual food did eat, and all the same spiritual drink did drink, for they were drinking of a spiritual rock following them, ... but in the most of them God was not well pleased, for they were strewn in the wilderness, and those things became types of us, for our not passionately desiring evil things, as also these did desire."—I Cor. 10:1-6, *Young's Literal Translation*

As spiritual Israelites, we must fight against "evil things" until we reach the end of our course. However, it is only through our Lord's strength that we can cast out the enemies that seek to destroy us. Our enemies are mightier than we are, and we must rely upon the powerful hand of God to help us. Paul wrote, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."—Eph 6:10

Throughout our battles with the flesh, the world, and the Adversary, we are to trust in the Lord, who has promised to be with us. We must manifest his strength and glory in all our Christian warfare. Therefore, in any victory that may be gained, we must honor the Heavenly Father and recognize that it is through his strength, his Word, and his Holy Spirit that we may conquer and possess the long-promised spiritual Canaan. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—I Cor. 15:57 ■

Three Gates of Gold

*Let every thought thy lips would utter
pass three gates of gold,—
But, if through these it fails to pass,
then let it not be told;
And o'er each gate in silver letters
written thou wilt find,
Above the first one, "Is it true?"
the second, "Is it kind?"
And "Is it necessary?"
o'er the third one and the last.
Then guard thy thoughts, let none escape,
save those gates have passed!
—Poems of the Way*