

The Dawn

A Herald of Christ's Presence



The DAWN

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Job's Question Answered

“If a man die, shall he live again?” **No subject is of more universal interest than that contained in this compelling question asked by Job. Under normal circumstances, no one wants to die, yet all realize that as far as mankind's foresight is concerned, death awaits every member of the human race. Thus, the question in the hearts of all and upon the lips of many is whether or not there is life after death.**

People throughout the ages, in their sorrow over the death of their loved ones, and in the certainty of their own ultimate collapse before the great enemy, death, have devised all sorts of philosophies in an effort to calm their fears and to deny the reality of what is so tragically real. They have adopted the belief that death is not what it seems to be; that it is a means by which humans enter into another and more sublime realm of life or, in some cases, to a condition of eternal torment.

Where are the dead? What actually happens when a person dies? Are the dead more alive than the living? Thousands of years ago the righteous man

Job asked the words quoted in our opening verse, “If a man die, shall he live again?” Here God’s prophet spoke for billions who have mourned the loss of their loved ones, and who themselves, in common with all mankind, have dreaded the coming of certain death.

Job had a personal and vital interest in the answer to his question, for he had just asked God to let him die. (vs. 13) Job was not tired of living but was worn out with suffering to the point where he wondered whether or not life under such conditions was worthwhile. James wrote, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job.” (James 5:11) Job needed patience, for God had allowed severe calamities to come upon him. His flocks, his herds, and his family were all destroyed. He lost his health and became afflicted with a loathsome skin disease which covered his entire body. Finally, his wife turned against him and said, “Curse God, and die.” —Job 2:9

Job, however, had no intention of cursing God. He trusted God even though he did not understand why he was allowed to suffer so greatly. Understandably he sought release from suffering if it were God’s will, so he prayed, “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!”—Job 14:13

Having thus asked God to let him die, Job pondered the question of what would be involved if God answered his prayer and permitted him to go into death. So, he asked, in the words of our opening text, “If a man die, shall he live again?” Job inquired

from the standpoint of his own experience and feelings. Yet, as a prophet of God, his words are divinely inspired, so we know that he phrased the question concerning life after death in such a manner that is in keeping with the truth of God's Word on the subject.

It is important to notice that Job did not ask, "If a man die, is he more alive than ever?" Nor did he ask, "If a man die, does it mean that he has gone to heaven, or to a place of torment?" Job knew that when a man dies, he is dead, so the question he asked was, "Will he live again?" Thus, is brought to our attention the great fundamental truth of the Bible that life after death depends upon the restoration of the dead to life. There is hope of life after death, not because there is no death, but because God has promised to use his mighty power to bring back the dead to life. Job believed that if he were allowed to die to escape further suffering, God would later restore him to life. He said, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait [in death], until my change [from death to life] come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."—Job 14:14,15

The Resurrection Hope

It is this hope of the resurrection that Job had, which is set forth so clearly and with such comforting assurance in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (I Cor. 15:21) In this text, the perfect "man" Adam transgressed the divine law and brought upon himself and his progeny the penalty of death. The perfect

“man” Jesus took the sinner’s place in death, and thus made possible the release of the Adamic race from death by means of a resurrection. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. 6:23

Why the Confusion?

The basis for much of the confusion on the subject of life after death originated in the Garden of Eden. God said to Adam, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:17) Later Satan, speaking through the serpent, asked Eve about this, saying, “Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Eve confirmed what God had said, including his statement that death would be the penalty for disobedience.—Gen. 3:1-3

Then Satan, replying to Eve, said, “Ye shall not surely die.” (vs. 4) This was a blatant denial of what the Creator had said. In effect, Satan charged God with lying when he said that death would be the penalty for disobedience. Possibly Satan believed that in some way he could thwart the divine purpose of inflicting the death penalty upon man. If so, he soon discovered that efforts to do so were futile, for the human race began to die.

However, Satan did not concede that he was wrong. Instead, he began, through human agents, to circulate the lie that death is not what it seems to be, that in reality there is no death. To the extent that he could induce people to believe this, he would be proving that he told the truth when he

said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die"; you will only seem to die, and when you seem to die you will actually be more alive than ever.

Jesus said of Satan, "He is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44) In other words, Satan fathered the first lie, and it was the most devastating and far-reaching lie that has ever been told. This falsehood, stemming from the Garden of Eden, has corrupted the Truth on the subject of death in the minds of people of all nations and religions; while the Truth, as expressed by God in the statement, "Thou shalt surely die," has been believed by only a comparatively few.

The "Separate Entity" Falsehood

It has been apparent to all that the human body dies and reverts back to the elements. Satan knew that there was no possible way he could deceive the people with respect to this. Therefore, he began to spread the notion that there is something within the human organism that is separate from the body, an entity which escapes from the body when it dies and continues to live. In professed Christian circles, this indefinable something is designated the "immortal soul."

The ancient Egyptians held to this view. It was later adopted by Greek and Roman philosophers. After the apostles fell asleep in death it was introduced into the Christian church by pagan philosophers. While described in various ways, this theory that there is something within man that cannot die, hence that there is no death, has been the common belief of most religionists, Christian and non-Christian alike.

The Bible indicates that this thought was prevalent among many even in the days of King Solomon, and we find him combating this error with the Truth. He wrote, “That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth [who can prove] the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?”—Eccles. 3:19-21

How clearly Solomon states the Truth of God, affirming that in death man and beast are alike, that they have all one breath, or “spirit,” as the same Hebrew word is translated in verse 21. After thus setting forth the Truth, he asks, “Who knoweth [can prove otherwise]?” He evidently knew that the surrounding heathen nations held to Satan’s lie that there is no death, that while the body dies, there is a “spirit” which goes “upward” and continues to live. However, this, Solomon shows, is not true. He says, rather, that in death, man and animals are alike. Man’s preeminence is in the fact that God has promised to restore dead humans to life in the resurrection, but has not promised to do this for the lower animals.

“Immortal Soul” not Scriptural

The expression, “immortal soul,” does not appear anywhere in the Bible, nor do the Scriptures even remotely teach that a separate entity dwells within the human body and escapes to live elsewhere

when the body dies. The first use of the word soul in the Bible is in Genesis 2:7. In this verse we are told that God created man from “the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Notice that the verse says that man “became” a living soul, not that he “has” a soul. A “living soul” is simply a living being, or a living creature, which, as this text reveals, results from the union of the breath of life with the organism, or body. The body is not the soul. The breath of life is not the soul. It is when, through divine power, the breath gives life to the body that the combination of the two results in a “living soul.”

Solomon said that man and beast have all one breath, and he was right. Concerning humans and lower animals destroyed in the Flood we read, “All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.”—Gen. 7:21,22

Because the animal creation lives by means of the same “breath of life” which enables man to live, animals are also “living souls.” This important truth is concealed from the casual reader of the Bible through the inconsistency of translation. For example, Genesis 1:24 reads, “God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.” In this text the phrase “living creature” is a translation of precisely the same Hebrew words as those which are translated “living soul” in Genesis 2:7, where the reference is

to Adam—the words “creature” and “soul” both being translations of the Hebrew word *nephesh*. Because the translators endeavored to establish a difference between man and animals, which the Scriptures do not warrant, they used the word “creature” when the reference was to the lower animals, and “soul” when the text referred to man. No wonder Solomon wrote, “As the one dies, so dies the other.”

The correct thought is clearly stated by Solomon, who, in describing what happens when a man dies, wrote, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” (Eccles. 12:7) The simple truth set forth in this text is confused in the minds of many by a misunderstanding of the word “spirit.” It translates the Hebrew word *ruach*, which simply means “breath,” or, as in this instance, the invisible power of life.

This text does not even remotely suggest that when a man dies there is a conscious entity which escapes from his body and is taken up to God in heaven. The word “return” used in the above text precludes the possibility of such an interpretation. The body returns to the dust because it came from the dust. If the “spirit” was a separate entity which returned to God, it would mean that it previously dwelt with God and was permitted to come to earth temporarily to inhabit a human body. How unreasonable such a conclusion would be!

How consistent, though, is Solomon’s definition of death with the facts set forth in the Bible concerning the human living soul, or being. When the body and the breath return to their original sources, the

living soul, or being, no longer exists. It has died, and death is the penalty for sin. Ezekiel 18:4 declares in simple words, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Death Referred to as “Sleep”

Because God has promised to restore dead humans to life, the Bible refers to those who have died as being asleep. This important truth of the Bible is highlighted by Jesus in his reference to the death of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. He said to his disciples, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” The disciples thought Jesus referred to natural sleep, so he said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.”—John 11:11-14

Here Jesus set forth one of the basic teachings of the Word of God. Lazarus was dead, yet he was also “asleep.” When God said to Adam that disobedience would result in death—“Ye shall surely die”—he referred to extinction of life. This extinction of life would have been permanent but for the fact that God still loved his human creatures and provided redemption for them through the gift of his beloved Son to be mankind’s Redeemer and Savior from death.—John 3:16,17; I Tim. 2:3-6

Jesus gave his “flesh,” his humanity, as a “ransom [Greek: corresponding price] for all,” “for the life of the world.” (John 6:51) The disobedience of the perfect man Adam brought sin and death upon all of his descendants. God’s justice required “life for life”—the death of the perfect man Jesus—to offset the disobedience and death penalty placed upon Adam. The death of Jesus provided the “ransom,” or corresponding price, for Adam. Consequently,

it was Jesus that “by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Exod. 21:23; Rom. 5:12-19; Heb. 2:9) Thus provision was made for paying the penalty, the sentence of death, which was entered against Adam and his race. Although all have continued to die, because of the redemption provided through Christ Jesus, there is to be an awakening of the dead. Therefore, the Bible uses the term “sleep” to describe their intervening absence of life.

Those who are asleep are unconscious of the external world, and so are those who are dead. They see nothing, hear nothing, know nothing. The Bible says, “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.” (Eccles. 9:5) Those who are asleep can be awakened; so those who are “asleep” in death can, and will, be awakened. As Jesus said of Lazarus, “I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” (John 11:11) All who are asleep in death are, by divine power, to be awakened in the morning of earth’s new day. That is why we read, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”—Ps. 30:5

Martha Comforted

Jesus and the little family at Bethany—Mary, Martha, and Lazarus—were special friends. When Lazarus became ill, Jesus and his disciples were some distance from Bethany. The sisters sent word to Jesus concerning Lazarus’ illness, but he did not go to them immediately. He waited for two days. Jesus then announced that Lazarus had died and was sleeping, and that he was going to “awake him out of sleep.”—John 11:1-15

Martha went out to meet Jesus as he approached their home. Gently chiding him, she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." (John 11:21) Martha was heartbroken, and this was an excellent opportunity for Jesus to comfort her, which he did. What reassuring words of comfort did the Master speak to Martha in her time of great need? Did Jesus say to her, as has often been said under similar circumstances, "Martha, your brother is not really dead, he has merely cast off his outside shell, his body"? Did he say that the real Lazarus was more alive than ever? Did Jesus say to Martha that quite likely the "soul" of Lazarus was hovering nearby? Did he say, "Martha, there is no death"?

Jesus said none of these things. He had previously said to his disciples, "Lazarus is dead," and he would not now contradict this truth by saying to Martha that her brother was more alive than ever. What he did say to comfort Martha was in keeping with the testimony of the entire Word of God. Knowing that Lazarus was actually dead, he said to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again."—vs. 23

Martha was not sure just what these words implied. She knew that Jesus had awakened others from the sleep of death, and she had said to Jesus, "Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee," but she was not certain that Jesus would at that time ask God to awaken her brother from the sleep of death. She replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."—vss. 22,24

Martha clearly knew that there was to be a general resurrection of all the dead, and that then Lazarus would be awakened from the sleep of death.

She was acquainted with the promises recorded in the Old Testament, and she had given reverent and believing attention to the teachings of Jesus, so she knew that there was a glorious hope of resurrection for all mankind. Martha also understood that the general resurrection would take place in “the last day.” The last day is not “doomsday,” as many have supposed. The word “day” in this instance refers to a period of time, a time in the great plan of God for the redemption and salvation of the human race from sin and death.

There are various periods of time, or ages, in God’s plan of salvation, both prior and subsequent to the First Advent of Christ. These have been preparatory ages in which God has selected and prepared those who would cooperate with Jesus in the final period of the divine arrangement, the age of God’s righteous kingdom, under the rulership of Christ. (Jer. 23:5; Matt. 6:10) It is then that God’s plan will reach its consummation in the awakening of the dead and the restoration to perfection of life to all who then believe and obey the laws of Christ’s kingdom.

Martha knew about this final age, or last day, in the plan of God, and that her brother, and all who had died, would then be awakened from the sleep of death. However, Martha did not know whether or not this is what Jesus meant when he said, “Thy brother shall rise again,” nor did Jesus explain to her directly just what his immediate intentions were. Instead, he replied, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” (John 11:25,26) By identifying himself as “the resurrection, and the

life,” Jesus showed that he was the one who would awaken all the dead in the last day. Then, during the kingdom, he will give everlasting life to all who will become obedient to God’s principles, and who will at that time have whole-heartedly believed on him.

After reassuring Martha of the awakening of mankind in the resurrection, Jesus asked her, “Believest thou this?” Martha replied, “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.” (John 11:26,27) Martha understood, and properly, that the Christ, or Messiah of promise, would be sent into the world to save mankind from death, and that this would be accomplished through an awakening of all those who sleep in death. She believed that in Jesus was “the resurrection, and the life.”

Lazarus Awakened

After Martha had confessed her faith in Jesus as the Messiah and in his ability to restore the dead to life, she returned to her home and asked Mary to go with her to meet Jesus, which she did. Jesus’ heart was touched with this scene of sorrow and great loss, and, together with the others, he also wept. Then he asked to be shown to the tomb where Lazarus was buried.—vss. 28-35

Standing by the tomb, Jesus asked that the stone in front of the entrance be rolled away. Then Martha protested. She had previously confessed faith that Jesus could restore her brother to life, but now she wondered, and said to Jesus, “Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.” (vs. 39) To Jesus this did not matter. He was about to demonstrate with Lazarus what would

ultimately be accomplished by divine power for all who have died, and where divine power operates it does not make any difference whether a person has been dead four days or for thousands of years; life can be restored. He who as God's instrument created life in the first place is abundantly able to restore life.

Standing before the opened tomb, and after an appropriate prayer, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." (vs. 43) It is interesting to note what the account does not say. It does not say concerning Lazarus that he had gone to heaven and returned. Lazarus had not gone to heaven. It does not say that he had gone to an abyss of eternal torture and was released from the torment. There is no abyss of eternal torture.

The record states that when Jesus cried, "Lazarus, come forth ... he that was dead came forth." Lazarus, "he that was dead," had been awakened from the sleep of death. Released from his grave clothes, Lazarus mingled and reunited with his family and friends as he had done before. Restored to life, he was neither a phantom nor a ghost. He was the same Lazarus as before. He was glad to be alive again, and his family was glad to have him restored to them.

"Marvel Not"

On a former occasion, when speaking of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."

(John 5:28,29, *English Standard Version*) Here we are assured that just as Lazarus was called forth from the grave, so all the dead will be called forth at the time of the general resurrection.

We note that Jesus here also speaks of two general classes in the resurrection—those who have done good, and those who have done evil or have failed to do good. Those who have done good are referred to in verse 24 as the “believers” of the present age. These will not come into future judgment, for they pass their trial successfully in the present life. Having done “good” by believing and following faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus, they have been proven worthy of being called forth from death to a resurrection of “life.” Those who have not thus proved worthy are awakened from death and come into judgment, for their awakening will take place during the world’s thousand-year judgment day.—Acts 17:31; II Pet. 3:8; Rev. 20:6

The Greek word translated “judgment” in John 5:29 is *krisis* and has the same meaning as our English word “crisis.” All who do not now prove worthy of life will face a crisis when awakened from the sleep of death. They will, of course, then be fully enlightened as to the issues involved. The opportunity will be given them, based upon full understanding, of accepting the provision of life made for them through Christ and obeying the laws of his righteous kingdom, which will then be in control of the affairs of all mankind. If they accept and obey, they will be restored to perfection of human life and live forever. This will be their full resurrection. If they do not accept and obey, they will be returned to death. Of that time Peter

said those who do not obey “will be completely cut off” from among the people.—Acts 3:23, *New International Version*

The believers of this age, who have proved worthy to live and reign with Christ, will come forth in the resurrection to “glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) Immortality is thus seen to be, not an inherent quality of man, but a glorious reward offered to those who are willing to suffer and die with Jesus that they might live with him. As joint-heirs with Jesus in his kingdom, these will also be co-judges with him during that judgment period.—I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 3:21; 5:10

What a happy consummation of God’s plan this will be! The reign of sin and death which was brought about by the transgression of Adam in Eden is not to last forever. All who have died during this long period of weeping are to be awakened and given an individual opportunity to obey the laws of God and live forever upon the earth.

This is a glorious hope for mankind, and God’s prophet David sets it forth symbolically and beautifully. We quote: “Say among the nations, The LORD reigns. The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. ... He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.” (Ps. 96:10-13, *NIV*) Indeed, there is life after death, because by divine power the dead will be restored to life. This is the great hope that is held out to us in the Word of God.■

Jonah's Misplaced Pity

Key Verses: *“Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city?”*
—Jonah 4:10,11

Selected Scriptures: *Jonah 3:1-5; 4:1-11*

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire, one of Israel's enemies. (II Kings 19:36) God had instructed the prophet Jonah to announce to the Ninevites that because of their wickedness he would destroy them in forty days. After hearing Jonah's declaration, the king made a decree, that “neither man nor beast” should “feed, nor drink water” and that they should all “cry mightily unto God.” Then “they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil ... that he would do unto them.”—Jonah 1:2; 3:1-10

However, this “displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.” Jonah said to God, “I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O LORD, take ... my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?”—Jonah 4:1-4

Perhaps Jonah had in mind the savagery with which the Assyrians had treated his own people for several generations. He might have been anxious to see judgment executed and this nation exterminated. (Isa. 36)

Greatly disappointed, the prophet left the city. He sat down on a nearby hillside, under the shade of a booth which he had made, to “see what would become of the city.”—Jonah 4:5

Then “God prepared a gourd ... that it might be a shadow” over Jonah, and the prophet “was exceeding glad.” However, the next morning a worm, which God also had prepared, destroyed the gourd. When the sun rose, it “beat upon the head of Jonah, that he ... wished in himself to die.”—vss. 6-8

God said to Jonah, “Is doing good displeasing to thee, because of the gourd?” “Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou didst not labour, neither didst thou nourish it, which a son of a night was, and a son of a night perished, and I—have not I pity on Nineveh?” (vss. 9-11, *Young’s Literal Translation*) The expression “son of a night” was used when referring to something having a “transient” nature. The Lord was pointing out the great contrast between Jonah’s concern and pity for a plant, versus for the people of Nineveh.

Jonah’s desire for vengeance upon the Assyrians, for wrongs they had committed in the past, had blinded him to the fact they now repented before God. God saw the works of the Ninevites, that “they turned from their evil way,” changing their life and conduct. It was that which caused the Lord to relent.

Jesus confirmed the truthfulness of this account in the book of Jonah and how the Ninevites truly repented. (Luke 11:29-32) Verses 31 and 32 of this passage prove that all the dead, including the Ninevites, will be resurrected during the future kingdom on earth. At that time, the judgment of those who had criticized and persecuted Jesus during his First Advent, will be less favorable than the judgment to be shown towards those who never saw or heard Jesus’ preaching and miracles. A lesson for us: there is responsibility for knowledge we have received.—Luke 12:48 ■

Warning Against Idleness

Key Verse: “*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

**Selected
Scriptures:** Acts
20:33-35;
II Thessalonians
3:6-12

20:18-21, *Weymouth New Testament*

Paul urged the elders, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock” and “act as shepherds to the Church of God.” (vs. 28, *Weymouth*) Here Paul points out how elders had a double responsibility, for both themselves and for the brethren, over whom the Lord had made them under-shepherds. “Take heed,” that is, beware and examine

The Apostle Paul had arrived at Miletus, a seaport, near the end of his third missionary trip. While waiting for the ship to depart, he sent word to the elders in the nearby city of Ephesus, inquiring if they could come and meet with him. It would be the last time Paul saw them.

After the elders arrived, Paul recounted “the kind of life I lived among you the whole time, serving the Lord in all humility, and with tears, and amid trials.” He stated, “I never shrank ... from teaching you in public and in your homes, and urging upon both Jews and Greeks the necessity of turning to God and believing in Jesus our Lord.”—Acts

not only what you do, but also examine your motives.

Then Paul reminded them, “No one’s silver or gold or clothing have I coveted. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have provided for my own necessities and for the people with me.” (vss. 33,34, *Weymouth*) Paul was a “tentmaker” by trade and testified that he worked “night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you,” in order to supply himself the necessities of life, while preaching and teaching the Gospel to others. —Acts 18:3, I Thess. 2:9; II Thess 3:8; I Cor. 4:12

Quoting our Key Verse from the *Weymouth* translation, Paul concluded, “In all things I have set you an example, showing you that, by working as I do, you ought to help the weak, and to bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” There are abundant opportunities for each of us to be generous towards others, even if we have no money to give. Expressions of sympathy, encouragement, or simply a kind look, have sometimes been worth more to someone who is discouraged than a handful of gold.

Being a “giver” means thinking more about others and their needs, and less upon self. Being “idle” is the opposite of being a giver, and is a form of selfishness, which can lead to spiritual weakness. (I Tim. 5:13) Paul spoke boldly against brethren who practice idleness, stating, “if any would not work, neither should he eat,” and admonishing “that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”—II Thess. 3:7-12

An important element of a happy Christian life is to develop the art of giving, “with his heart,” to others. “For God loveth a cheerful giver.” (Exod. 25:2; II Cor. 9:7) In so doing, we become more like God, because God is the greatest giver. “He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ... that the world through him might be saved.”—James 1:17; John 3:16,17 ■

Christian Generosity

Key Verse: “*When you are reaping in the field, and you overlook a sheaf, don’t return to get it. Let it remain for the foreigner, the orphan, or the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless everything you undertake.*”

—*Deuteronomy 24:19, International Standard Version*

Selected Scripture:
Deuteronomy 24:14-22

and in need. Instead, they were to purposely allow them to glean, for their own use, what had been left behind in the fields. The reason for this instruction was because they, too, had been helpless and in need when they were slaves in Egypt. The lesson is consideration for others. This is an aspect of Godlikeness, because God himself has applied this principle, for in his plan he has considered the poor and helpless human race.

When the perfect human Adam willingly disobeyed

The Book of Deuteronomy records the final message Moses gave to the Israelites shortly before his death. The objective of this message was to admonish them to remember and apply the instructions God had given to their nation in the past. One of these instructions is recorded in our Key Verse. An explanation for this requirement is found in the prior verse. “Remember to observe this because you were slaves in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I am commanding you to do this.”—vs. 18, *ISV*

The Israelites were not to ignore those who were helpless

God's instruction in the Garden of Eden, the penalty handed down was death, which in turn was inherited by each successive human generation thereafter. (Gen. 2:16,17) Since all humans were born in sin and imperfect, no one could "by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him."—Ps. 49:7; 51:5

Only a sinless, perfect, human life could satisfy God's justice—a perfect human life, Jesus, for the disobedience of the perfect human life of Adam. (Exod. 21:23; Rom. 5:12,19) God redeemed each member of the human race by sending his only begotten Son into the world as a perfect man, who then willingly gave his life "a ransom for all," thus satisfying God's justice.—John 3:16,17; I Tim. 2:5,6; I Pet. 3:18

Just as God freed the nation of Israel from the slavery of Egyptian bondage, so too he has freed footstep followers of Christ from the slavery of sin and death. (John 8:35,36; I Cor. 15:22) We should always remember this; we should show love and mercy toward those who have either not yet heard the Gospel or who have not yet believed in it.

There are times we come in contact with people who, although not religious at all, are having difficult life experiences such as illness or the death of a loved one. (Rom. 8:22) We should consider them like the "foreigner, orphan, or widow" in this instruction which God gave to Israel. Such individuals might not have had the opportunity to hear or believe God's Word, or their mind may be blinded to it.

We should have love and sympathy for them. If possible, we should also share with them some "seeds" of Truth. Thus, we may give them the scriptural basis for having faith in a resurrection for all and the wonderful kingdom blessings which will soon come upon the whole earth. (I Cor. 15:21,22; Rev. 21:1-5) They may either accept the good news now, or we may be planting seeds of truth and hope, which will sprout in their hearts in Christ's kingdom. ■

Proper Sabbath-Keeping

Key Verses: “*He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.*”
—*Mark 2:27,28*

Selected Scripture:
Mark 2:23-28

Through the prophet Isaiah, God provided a deeper meaning of this commandment, explaining, “If you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable; and if you honor it by not going your own ways and seeking your own pleasure or speaking merely idle words, then you will take delight in the LORD.”—*Isa. 58:13,14, International Standard Version*

The purpose of this one day of rest each week was not merely for physical repose, but more importantly it was meant, as explained through the prophet Isaiah, to be a day for thinking upon God and honoring him with delight. No commandment was given by Jesus or the Apostles to the church respecting the Sabbath day. As Paul wrote, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—*Rom. 6:14,15*

The fourth commandment which God gave to Israel was: “Remember the sabbath, to keep it holy. ... In it thou shalt not do any work.” (*Exod. 20:8-11*) God explained the meaning of the commandment, stating: “It is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.”
—*Exod. 31:13,14*

However, at the time of Jesus' First Advent many Jewish religious leaders had become formalists, placing greater stress upon the literal commandments than upon their deeper meaning. In this lesson the Pharisees had accused Jesus' disciples of violating the Sabbath, because while passing through a grain field and because they were hungry, they had rubbed some grains in their hands to eat them.—Luke 6:1,2

Jesus did not violate the Sabbath commandment nor teach other Jews to do so. He was a Jew and bound to keep the Sabbath. However, he objected to nonsensical misinterpretations of God's commandments. Consequently, Jesus explained in this lesson that "the sabbath was made for man."

The word "Sabbath" signifies rest. Elsewhere, Paul wrote, "We which have believed do enter into rest." (Heb. 4:3) It is a rest of faith and trust in the Lord, and not the literal physical rest of the Jews. The Apostle continues, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."—vss. 9-11

At first, it sounds inconsistent to "labour" that we may "enter into rest." However, there is an important truth given in this exhortation. This rest is one in which we enter by making a daily effort to develop complete faith in God and dependence upon him. It is a rest of full trust in the promises of God, based upon knowledge, confidence, and obedience. Because of our relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we will find spiritual strength in this rest.

Such a rest will be in proportion to our faith in God and in all his promises. For the Lord's followers, therefore, every day should be a Sabbath or rest day, in the additional sense of thinking upon and honoring with delight the Lord in all our thoughts, words, and actions. ■

Provoking One Another

Key Verse: “*Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.*”
—*Hebrews 10:24*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 10:22-25

Ordinarily the word “provoke” is used to describe a stirring up to anger or ill will. However, in our Key Verse the apostle uses this word to describe an incitement to good, a stimulation of Christian growth in love and good deeds. The *International Standard Version* translates this phrase: “to

motivate one another.”

Motivating one another to love and good deeds, or works, is the true object and purpose for the Lord’s followers when meeting together. We all need the help and encouragement that come from fellowship with those of like precious faith. The apostle also stresses that fellowship with the brethren becomes increasingly essential as we “see the day approaching.”—vs. 25

To properly encourage one another towards love and good works, the apostle points out we must first “consider one another.” This implies we need to develop a heart sympathy for others, considering their trials, difficulties, and weaknesses. There is a beautiful spiritual balance described in this exhortation to “motivate one another” to love and good deeds. Neither love nor zeal for good deeds are independent of each other. True Christian love cannot exist unless it is manifested in good deeds. Neither can there be deeds considered as good, in the

Lord's sight, unless they are the outgrowth or manifestation of true Christian love.

Good works are described elsewhere by the Apostle Paul as a "labour of love." (I Thess. 1:3) This shows that true love "labors," or works. Such a love is not merely a kind disposition, without any works of love, supposing it is enough to be pleasing to God. The love which should fill and control our Christian life is the love of God, the love possessed and exemplified by our Heavenly Father in his attitude toward the fallen race. God so loved our fallen human race that he gave that which cost him more than anything else he could have given, his only begotten and well-beloved Son, Jesus. (John 3:16) In Jesus, we have an example of the perfect blending of true love and good works. We cannot, of course, perform all the works which our Saviour did, but we can strive to develop the spirit which will prompt us to do all we possibly can.

The Greek word *koinonia*, translated in the New Testament as "fellowship," means "partnership." (Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; I John 1:6,7) Christian fellowship is more than just meeting together to discuss common beliefs. The desire to meet one with another should be prompted by a realization of having been called by God to be co-workers with him in his great plan for the enlightenment and salvation of the sin-cursed world of mankind.—II Cor. 5:17-21; 6:1

Paul highlights the work in which we have been invited to share, explaining, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ... and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." (II Cor. 5:19,20) This means we will, if faithful unto death, participate with Christ our Head in the great work of reconciling the lost world of mankind back to God. This is the common work in which every footstep follower of the Master is a partner. To "provoke" or "motivate" one another to faithfulness in connection with this cause should be a primary objective when we meet together. ■

Israel's Journey to the Red Sea

“Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.”

—I Corinthians 10:11, American Standard Version

Following the death of Egypt's firstborn and the passing over of the firstborn of Israel, Pharaoh determined to let the Israelites go. (Exod. 12:29-32) The morning after the eventful Passover night they gathered at Rameses to start their journey toward Canaan, the land which God had promised to Abraham.

(Gen. 15:18-21; Exod. 3:8) In our opening scripture, the Apostle Paul says that those things that happened to the Israelites were written as examples, or “types,” for our learning. As Christians, we can draw lessons from God's dealings with these ancient people that should help us avoid the mistakes they made and exercise greater faith in God's care over us than did they.

Rameses, from which the Israelites began their journey, was one of the “treasure cities” built for Pharaoh by this enslaved people. (Exod. 1:11; 12:37)

Rameses was also the title of the Pharaoh of the oppression, and it becomes a most fitting name for the city from whence the Israelites would begin their journey toward the promised land of Canaan. The Egyptians were sun worshipers. Their sun god was "Ra." It is not surprising that this particular Pharaoh took unto himself the title Rameses, which means "child of the sun." We know, however, from the standpoint of the Truth, that Rameses was not actually a giver of light either to Egypt or to the Israelites. It was he who had so enslaved the children of Israel that they cried for deliverance. Their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, heard and delivered them.—Exod. 2:23-25; 3:7-10

There is an interesting correspondence in this respect in connection with God's dealings with Christians today—that is, spiritual Israelites. (Rom. 8:14; Heb. 3:5,6; I Pet. 2:5,9,10) We, too, as it were, have a Pharaoh of our oppression. He is Satan, originally named Lucifer, which means "light-bearer." Like Pharaoh of old, he has been far from a true light. Yet he has, through his various deceptive methods, appeared as an "angel of light." (II Cor. 11:14) It has been true that under the direction of Satan, God's professed people have been led to build treasure cities—great church systems which have masqueraded as true cities of God. We note, however, that Egypt does not merely represent the great church systems any more than their treasure cities constituted all of Egypt. Egypt more particularly represents the world or kingdom of darkness and death in which, at one time or another, all of God's spiritual Israelites have been enslaved.—Rom. 8:21-23; Gal. 4:1-7

There was not anything that the enslaved of Israel could do about their own deliverance. Deliverance from Egypt was accomplished by God. It is God also, through his overruling providences and by way of the shed blood of Jesus, the greater Passover Lamb, who brings about our deliverance, our redemption. (John 1:29; I Cor. 5:7) It is well to note in this respect that although the sprinkled blood of the Passover lamb resulted in the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, it did not necessarily bring them to the promised land. Thus it is with spiritual Israelites today. God has delivered us by way of the blood of Jesus, but continued faithfulness to the conditions of our call is necessary if we are to finally enter into the heavenly Canaan.

Continued faith in the God who had delivered them by way of the Passover blood was the only surety the Israelites had of final entry into the land of promise. This exercise of faith by sprinkling the blood of the Passover lamb upon their lintels and door posts was accounted by God as a manifestation of their obedience. (Exod. 12:22,23) Failure to continue to exercise this same degree of faith was accounted by God as a manifestation of their disobedience. God remembered their frames that they were but dust and continued to bear with them for a long period of time. (Ps. 103:14; Romans chapter 11) However, their persistence to doubt and to forget God caused him finally to cease his striving with them. For this failure to continue faithful and obedient, he turned them back, not into Egypt, but into the wilderness to die. (Num. 14:22,23) Let us remember well the words of our opening text, in which Paul tells us that what happened to Israel

happened to them for examples. May their example of unbelief and disobedience be a warning to help us walk more faithfully and “worthy of the vocation” wherein we are called.—Eph. 4:1

Let us not presume upon God, nor account the things he has done for us as being ordinary and commonplace. We must not take for granted that because he once dealt with us while we were yet in our sins, giving us deliverance through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, that he will continue to deal with us without our showing any evidence of an ever-increasing appreciation and faith. It is through our faith and obedience to God that we show our appreciation of what he has already done for us. Undoubtedly this is what the apostle means when he says: “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” (Heb. 11:6) It is not reasonable to suppose that God will continue to shower his “spiritual blessings” upon us if we do not use them as a means of strengthening our faith in him and increasing our zeal for him and his cause.—Eph. 1:3

“No Continuing City”

All the Israelites were ready to start for the promised land, ready to accept the deliverance which God was offering to them. Accordingly, they met at Rameses, and from there they journeyed to Succoth. (Num. 33:5) The name Succoth means “booths” and is a good reminder of the fact that their journey toward Canaan, while giving to them liberty and freedom from servitude in Egypt, was, on the other hand, a call to them for the self-denial of many of the conveniences and necessities which their homes in Egypt undoubtedly supplied. *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) No longer were the Israelites to enjoy the protection of houses and roofs over their heads. From then on, they must live in tents until they reach the promised land. There is in this a lesson for spiritual Israelites who have started their pilgrim journey toward the heavenly Canaan of rest. There can be no “continuing city” which shall afford them protection from the hardships of the way as they presently journey. (Heb. 13:14) As spiritual sons of our Heavenly Father, travelling on towards the spiritual land of promise, we do not look to material sources for our protection. Instead, we each dwell in temporary, humble dwellings over which God watches, and we have the assurance that he neither slumbers nor sleeps. (Ps. 121:3,4) His precious promises of grace and protection for every time of need furnish a blessed canopy between us and the storms and fiery trials which otherwise would overwhelm us.—Heb. 4:16

The Israelites traveled under the canopy of a cloud provided by God. (Exod. 13:21,22) This might well remind us of the boundlessness of God’s grace with which we are surrounded and “that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to his purpose, all things are working together for good.” (Rom. 8:14-17,28, *International Standard Version*) This grace must not be hindered nor handicapped. No earthborn cloud should be permitted to come in between us and our God. We should be able to look up at all times to the covering of his grace and love and thus realize an ever-increasing sense of his mercy and care. We should remember, however, that God’s love and grace toward us are not always manifested merely in the

pleasant experiences of life. The trials and the sufferings that the Lord permits to come upon us are equally manifestations of his love. We need these experiences also in order to grow strong in him “and in the power of his might.”—Eph. 6:10

Take as an illustration two plants of the same kind. Let one be grown in the cellar, where light and fresh air are excluded; and let the other be grown in an open garden. After a few weeks note the difference between the two plants. One will be healthy and strong, the other weak and frail. The plant in the cellar is protected from the wind and the rain, but it is this very protection that prevents it from growing strong and hardy. On the other hand, the plant that is grown in the open air becomes strong in its struggles against the elements, being aided by the nourishment provided by the sun’s radiance and the rain’s vitalizing moisture. Under this great canopy of heaven, the plant thrives because of all the various elements and factors which contribute toward its development and strength.

True spiritual Israelites have experiences that encompass all of the phases of God’s grace by which they grow up into Christ. This exposure is what really makes the faithful Christian strong. It is the adverse wind blowing upon a tree which causes it to become stronger and stronger as it shoots its roots correspondingly deeper in the earth. Yet it should be kept in mind that it is the sunshine that is the vital means of its sustenance and life, thereby affording it the ability to withstand the storms. We, too, grow strong through our resistance to the storms of life, yet it is by means of the sunshine of

God's favor that we are given the encouragement and ability to be faithful, even unto death.

The zeal with which the Israelites started their wilderness journey did not continue. In this we have a very vivid illustration of what may occur in our own individual experiences if we do not carefully watch ourselves. There is the possibility, even the danger, of losing our "first love." (Rev. 2:4) According to Numbers 33:6-8, the Israelites seemed first to have moved generally eastward, then suddenly they were directed to turn southward. The most natural thing for them to have done would have been to continue going east, for then would they have come to the little streams lying north of the Red Sea, which surely would have been much easier to cross and more directly in line with Canaan, their goal.

The Israelites' course seems to have been inconsistent, because instead of it increasing the distance between themselves and the domain of Pharaoh, they were actually shortening it. Not only so, but they were increasing the barrier between themselves and the promised land. However, the explanation is that this move was God-directed. The account reads, "And the LORD went before them ... to lead them the way."—Exod. 13:21

Following God's Direction

To spiritual Israelites there are many times when God directs, not in ways of progress according to the flesh, but in the very reverse direction, so that the demonstration of God's grace and power may be the greater. We must not choose our own way, but must ever let God direct our course, even though,

at times, this course seems most hazardous. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof” is not the full and complete deliverance for which we hope.—Prov. 14:12

If left to choose our own way we would be inclined to follow our natural tendencies and preferences. The way of the flesh is usually to follow the line of least resistance. However, in this way God cannot be glorified nor can our faith be properly demonstrated. It is easy thus to have faith while we can see the farther shore, but when the fogs set in, hindering our natural vision, then it is that we need to exercise strong faith in God.

To expand upon this illustration, when traveling by boat on a clear day of sunshine one may give little thought to the skill and competency of the pilot. Yet, when a thick fog sets in and the old, familiar landmarks are no longer visible, it is then that we appreciate the pilot and his ability to bring us safely to our desired haven. Under such circumstances there is nothing that one can possibly do except to put full trust in the pilot. Our uneasiness, nervousness, misgivings, doubting, and fretting would not help in the least—we must stand by in faith, while the pilot brings us through.

How true this is of our spiritual journey! There are times when, in the providences of God, we can do nothing to extricate ourselves from a difficult situation. At such times, there is nothing that we can do except to put our trust wholly in God, realizing that he is the one who is able to bring us through. (Ps. 34:19; II Cor. 1:9,10) It is then that our extremities become God’s opportunities.

God brought the Israelites through an extremity in order that they might have an opportunity to “stand still” and see his salvation. (Exod. 14:13) He changed their course and brought them down to Pihahiroth. This was truly a place where, according to the flesh, their hearts would fail them for discouragement. Instead of finding their deliverance from Egypt complete, they found themselves in an apparently worse condition than when they first undertook the journey. Did they then remember the God who had already done so much for them? No. They murmured and cried. They saw only the Red Sea before them and the Egyptians behind them. They saw no way of escape because they neglected to put their trust in God.—Exod. 14:10-12

Perhaps we, too, as spiritual Israelites have reached our extremities and have seen before and behind us what appear to be insurmountable obstacles. The Lord may lead us, as it were, to the Red Sea, where every visible means of escape seems to be cut off. At such times do we fear and quake at the apparent impending doom? We should not, because it is here that God is afforded his great opportunity to give us deliverance. It is through these experiences that we learn the much-needed lesson that deliverance is not of ourselves but of God. It is at such times that he says to us as he did to Israel of old through his servant Moses, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.”—Exod. 14:13

It is at these times that God, if we let him, becomes our tower of refuge, our tower of strength. Literally speaking, how good it is when we have lost ourselves in the woods and no longer know our way out to suddenly see a familiar tower, marking

a spot, which, if we can but reach it, will mean safety for us. God is just such a tower of strength and deliverance, bringing salvation to us in our greatest times of need. (Ps. 61:1-3; Prov. 18:10) Without him we would be hopelessly lost in the wilderness of despair.

The account tells us that God directed the Israelites to Pihahiroth, "between Migdol and the sea." (Exod. 14:2; Num. 33:7) Migdol means "tower." How significant this is! It was here that God revealed himself to the Israelites as a tower of refuge. He instructed Moses what was to be done under the circumstances. Obedience to these instructions brought deliverance through the very sea that only a short time before had presented itself as a most impenetrable barrier to their escape. The cloud that went before them, now took its position at the rear of the camp, becoming a pillar of darkness to the Egyptians and a pillar of light to the Israelites, preventing the Egyptians from marching in upon them throughout the entire night. (Exod. 14:19-22) By morning, the Red Sea had opened up, and they passed through to safety.

Spiritual Israelites often have experiences permitted of God by which their faith is tested. These help us to learn the lesson, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8,9) It is most important for us to realize that it is not by our own strength that we gain deliverance. It is very necessary that we, at times, "stand still" and see the salvation of God. This does not mean a listless or disinterested attitude, but it does mean calm confidence in him.

It is a confidence born of faith, that greater is he who is for us than all those who are against us. (Rom. 8:31; I John 4:4) By thus putting our confidence in God and cooperating with him as he directs our paths, victory and deliverance are assured.

To have full faith in God means that we will trust him under all circumstances. We will trust him when he says to stand still and we will trust and obey when he instructs us to move forward. Failure to move when the Lord gives us marching orders would manifest a lack of faith, as much as it would not to stand still when he asks us to do so. However, whether standing still or going forward at his command, our hearts should always be in repose, for we even now rest in the realization of his completed work. It is only thus that we can enter into the rest which is provided for us by faith in Christ Jesus. (Heb. 4:9-11) All our work for the Lord and all our progress in the narrow way should be based upon and in harmony with this quiet, trustful repose in him and his promises. These give us the assurance that no matter what may happen, all things are working together for our good. (Rom. 8:28) Thus in anticipation of the final end of the way, and the Canaan of rest that will be found there, we can, even now, amidst the strife and the difficulty of the way, give thanks to God, who "giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—I Cor. 15:57 ■

*"I will teach you wisdom's ways and lead you
in straight paths."*

*"When you walk, their counsel will lead you.
When you sleep, they will protect you. When you wake
up, they will advise you."—Proverbs 4:11; 6:22*

The Victory of Faith

*“This is the victory
that overcometh
the world, even
our faith.”
—I John 5:4*

The Scriptures lay a great deal of stress upon the subject of faith. Hebrews 11:6 states, “Without faith it is impossible to please [God].” The Apostle

Peter tells us that by adding certain qualities of character to our faith we shall have an abundant entrance into the “everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” and that we “shall never fall.” (II Pet. 1:10,11) Our Master says, “According to your faith, be it unto you.” (Matt. 9:29) Here we have inspired authorities who stress faith directly.

In Hebrews 11:1 we read: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Only from the standpoint of spiritual vision is this statement understandable. In II Corinthians 4:18, the same apostle says, “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Paul here is saying that the things we see with our natural vision are only temporary, while the things we do not see with our natural eyes, but with the eyes of faith, are eternal things. Linking this up with the

Apostle Peter's statement that we are begotten to an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," we can see that the unseen things are the real, tangible, enduring things. —I Pet. 1:4

Another very appropriate definition of faith is this. Faith is the operation and the exercise of our minds with regard to God and his promises. This is a wonderful but sobering thought. Often, unless we are careful when confronted by any trial, we may do almost everything else but exercise our minds, especially in respect to God and the promises he has given us.

The world has certain apt ways of expressing things. It speaks of "flying off the handle," "going all to pieces," or "having a knee-jerk reaction," all of which indicate a measurable loss of control. With the Christian this means a failure to properly exercise the mind. We should stop to think, taking into account familiar promises such as Romans 8:28, that all things are working together for good to the called ones, according to God's purpose. If we do this, then whatever experience we might be having would take on an entirely different viewpoint.

We have still another definition which states to the effect that faith is heart reliance, based upon a mental conviction, not positively proven to our natural senses, but received upon much in the way of good authority. None of us can say positively that we know there is a God from the standpoint of having seen him with our natural eyes, or having heard him speak audibly, or having shaken his hand. However, we have a mental conviction that he "is," because of what he has done in the past, is now doing, and yet purposes to do for the human family.

This latter definition indicates that faith is composed of two parts—an intellectual assurance and a heart reliance. The foundation of our faith is an intellectual grasp of the fundamental principles of divine Truth. Among these are the existence of an intelligent, personal God, the Creator and sustainer of all things, and the fact that he has a plan and purpose of redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To have this foundation, however, is not all there is to possessing faith. In order to have the faith without which it is impossible to please God, we must have a super-structure of heart reliance in the promises of God, who is the Author of our being, and as a Father, who invites the implicit confidence of his children.

To believe merely that God exists cannot in itself be particularly pleasing to him, because even devils believe this much and tremble. (James 2:19) Therefore the faith structure which we, as Christians, are to build might be compared to a dwelling, with both its foundation and superstructure. The foundation is not the house, neither is the superstructure without a foundation very satisfactory. It requires the two to constitute a strong, long-lasting dwelling. The same is true with faith.

Our Contract

We who have made a consecration to the Lord have made a solemn contract, or covenant, to build him a house, a dwelling place. The apostle says, “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” (Rom. 8:29) Indeed, in Christ we have the plan, the specifications, or the copy, after which we are to build a

character in his image. The Lord has provided the material. In fact, he has provided everything.

In time past, we found ourselves under condemnation, sentenced to death, but by God's wondrous grace we were enabled to see our condition. He pointed us to the only way of escape, Christ Jesus. As we accepted him, we were called of God with a "heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) Responding in full consecration, we were begotten of the Holy Spirit and were given "exceeding great and precious promises." (II Pet. 1:4) "Old things" were now passed away, and we became "new creatures" in Christ. (II Cor. 5:17) We were given the Word of God and all the other tools with which to build within us the character likeness of his dear Son.

The question then is: How are we building? Are we using only what God has provided, or are we browsing around here and there for something else, perhaps finding something which appeals to us? According to the apostle's statement in I Corinthians 3:11-15, we can build with different kinds of material. He says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

This scripture shows us that we can build with material that will endure the trials, the fire, or with material that will not withstand these things. Again we inquire: How are we building? Are we building a

character structure that will endure the trials of faith? This is especially important to all who have given themselves to the Lord in consecration, and it is a question that each of us must answer individually. Will the great Architect of the universe pass favorably or unfavorably upon our faith superstructure?

In Romans 10:17 we have the statement that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This implies that a certain kind of faith is the result of knowledge. This is true, but we then ask: Does all Biblical knowledge result in a living, active faith? By no means. If it did, it would prove that those who have the largest amount of knowledge would also have the greatest degree of faith. This does not necessarily follow. Down through the centuries many have had a great deal of Bible knowledge and a wonderful ability to tell what they knew. Yet, many of these did not have other essential elements of faith.

The faith which enables one to endure all sorts of trials, persecutions, afflictions, losses, aches, and pains—cheerfully, gladly, rejoicingly—is a faith that is not developed merely by reading and study, but one that has been painstakingly developed by experience. This is shown by the Apostle Peter's statement where he says, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge." If all faith were the result of knowledge, the apostle could have said: Add to your knowledge virtue and to virtue faith. He did not put it that way, but said: Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Then he adds, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."—II Pet 1:5-7,10

Apostle Paul wrote: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus ... That Christ

may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”—Eph. 3:14-19

What kind of knowledge is it that is surpassed by the love of Christ? It is evidently what we often speak of as “head knowledge.” There is a great difference between knowing something and appreciating its value. So it is with our understanding of the Bible.

We know it is valuable because it is the Word of God. Yet do we realize its true eternal worth and how precious it is? Do we appreciate that the great God who owns everything could not give us in our present condition anything of greater value than what he has given us—an understanding of his character, his plan, and his purposes? In addition, he has invited us to share his glory, to become heirs of his and joint-heirs with his only begotten and well-beloved Son.—Rom. 8:16,17

To the words quoted earlier from Ephesians chapter 3, the apostle adds, “That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.” (Eph. 3:19,20) This “power that worketh in us” is the power of faith operating through the Holy Spirit.

It is through the exercise of faith in Jesus that we passed from death unto life at the beginning of our Christian journey, but that was only the beginning of our life of faith. Though taken from this sin-sick and dying world, and being born in sin

ourselves, we have the prospect, through the full development of faith, to be elevated to the highest plane in the universe, that of “glory and honour and immortality.” (Ps. 51:5; 40:1-3; Rom. 2:7) The only faith that can accomplish this is that faith without which it is impossible to please God.

Should we not believe God? Has he ever deceived any of us? Has he ever asked anything unreasonable of us? Can we think that God will be pleased when in confronting a certain trial or experience, we show by our conduct that we do not trust him? This evidently is what the apostle meant when he said, “Without faith”—trust, confidence, heart reliance—“it is impossible” to please God. Let us be like the apostles, who said to Jesus, “Lord, increase our faith!”—Luke 17:5

Rewards of Faith

Thus far we have considered what constitutes faith. Now let us examine the rewards of faith. In Romans 5:1 we read, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Having “peace with God” is priceless, while “the whole world lieth in wickedness,” being at “enmity with God.” (I John 5:19; James 4:4) In this same connection the apostle tells us, “By whom [the Lord Jesus Christ] also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”—Rom. 5:2

The thought that we, by nature fallen creatures, should be given an opportunity to strive to attain unto God’s eternal glory, is beyond the power of the human mind fully to grasp. If it were not stated repeatedly, we would be unable to believe it. The apostles could not tell us the details of what this glory is, not having experienced it yet themselves.

The Apostle John contented himself by saying, "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."—I John 3:2

Then we are told that we can have not only peace "with" God, but also have the peace "of" God. (Phil. 4:7) What greater blessing could anyone have than peace of heart and mind in this present time of distress, when men's hearts are "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth?" (Luke 21:26) In proportion as we are able to realize that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, it is our privilege to enjoy peace.—Rom. 8:28

It is our privilege to realize that God loves us. "The Father himself loveth you." (John 16:27) He has our interest at heart. He wishes us to learn these lessons of faith, trust, and confidence in him, and thus have his peace ruling in our hearts. When all those about us are in doubt and perplexity as to the outcome of the present distressful conditions, it is our privilege to view matters from God's standpoint. Though we see the social, religious, financial, and political institutions tottering to their fall, we know that it is only a part of the work of "the day of his preparation." (Nah. 2:3) "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh."—Luke 21:28

How wonderful and faith-strengthening it is to think that God would take us into his confidence and reveal to us his plans and purposes, making known unto us things that were hidden from ages and generations, which are now made manifest to the saints.—Col. 1:26

Trials also a Blessing

Sometimes we are inclined to wonder why it is that since we have given our hearts to the Lord, we should have so many very trying experiences. Gradually we learn that these tests are to qualify us for the work to which he has called us, according to his purpose. These trials are great blessings in disguise. Peter says, “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.”—I Pet. 1:7

Concerning the future reward of faith, Peter explains that there “are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,” the nature of God. (II Pet. 1:4) We shall be with him who was highly exalted, “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.” (Eph. 1:21) We shall see the one who is the “express image of his [the Father’s] person.” (Heb. 1:3) “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”—I John 3:3

Here again, it is well to note that there is a difference between knowing about this hope and having it fully abiding in us. As the Apostle John said, each one who has this hope “purifieth himself.” We realize that we cannot be actually pure, as God is pure, but we can be pure in thought, and in intention; the Lord takes the will for the deed. It is possible to be of such intent of heart and mind that if we had a perfect body we would do perfectly. This attitude is graciously accepted by the Lord.

As a concluding thought we quote the *Daily Heavenly Manna* comment of June 4th:

“It is your faith that is on trial now. In the calmer days, when the sun of favor shone brightly upon you, you were quietly laying the foundation of a knowledge of the Truth and rearing the superstructure of Christian character. Now you are in the furnace to be proved; summon therefore all your courage; fortify your patience; nerve yourself to endurance; hold fast to your hope, call to mind the promises, they are still yours; and cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, and faith hath gained her victory.” ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

MAY 7—“Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.”
—I Corinthians 9:16 (Z. '03-174 Hymn 261)

MAY 14—“Speaking the truth in love,...grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.”—
Ephesians 4:15 (Z. '03-200 Hymn 109)

MAY 21—“All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”—
II Timothy 3:16,17 (Z. '97-170 Hymn 22)

MAY 28—“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body [so long as we feel entirely contented with present conditions—ourselves and our surroundings], we are absent from the Lord.”—II Corinthians 5:6 (Z. '97-305 Hymn 170)

Talking Things Over

General Convention Bulletin

July 11-16, 2026—Olympia, Washington

The 2026 General Convention will begin in less than three months. If you have not yet made plans to attend, now is the time to do so. We encourage as many as are able to join in the blessings of this annual gathering of the Lord's people. The convention will be held on the campus of The Evergreen State College just outside of Olympia, Washington.

Various room options are available on campus in traditional dormitories (Dorms) as well as apartments (Apts). There will be no price increase from last year for those who take the double occupancy package price option, and a small reduction in price to those taking the single occupancy (limited availability) package price option. Please note that some rooms require sharing a bathroom with another room.

The convention program appears in this issue of *The Dawn* on the pages following the General Convention registration form. In addition to the special program services mentioned in previous announcements, there will be daily sessions for all young people, ages 3-17, divided into various age groups. There will also be a two-hour study session each afternoon for young adults ages 18-25. In keeping with past years, there will be five Testimony Meetings throughout the convention, as well as

vesper, praise, and devotional services. We believe these will all be edifying and uplifting as we strive daily to be faithful to the Lord.

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

A complete pricing table and registration form is provided immediately following this announcement for your convenience. In addition, we encourage you to visit the General Convention web site at www.biblestudentsgeneralconv.org for more detailed information. ■

	Ages	18 & up	***13-17
Breakfast		\$13.00	\$12.00
Lunch		15.00	14.00
Dinner		16.00	15.00
Total, three meals		\$44.00	\$41.00
Lodging (per night)			
dbl occ (DORMS or APTS)		\$45.00	\$40.00
single occ (DORMS)		\$60.00	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
dbl occ (DORMS or APTS)		\$445*	\$410*
single occ (DORMS)		\$535*	n/a

*If no breakfasts, deduct—\$40

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

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

General Convention Registration

330 Jasmine Road—Casselberry, FL 32707
E-mail: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com (407) 670-4189

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 10, 2026				
Saturday, 11th				
Sunday, 12th				
Monday, 13th				
Tuesday, 14th				
Wednesday, 15th				
Thursday, 16th				

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

Check: double occupancy single occupancy
 interested in APTS

Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

Saturday, July 11

Chairman: O. B. Elbert, *Los Angeles CA*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Orientation by College

10:00 **Welcome Address**

Ninan Andrews
Bellevue WA

10:45 Intermission

11:15 Discourse

Todd Alexander
Columbus OH

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: John Bivol, *Chicago IL*

2:00 Discourse

Daniel Szarkowicz
Vancouver BC

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse

Timothy Krupa
Seattle WA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

Kome Ajise
Sacramento CA

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **Symposium: Matthew 7:7-11**

“Ask, Seek and Knock”

Ask: Michael Costelli, *New Orleans LA*

Seek: George Balko, *West Newton PA*

Knock: Stephen Jeuck, *Orlando FL*

8:15 Songs in the Night

Monday, July 13

Chairman: J Slavich, *Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Discourse Robert Goodman
Orlando FL

10:30 Intermission

11:15 Discourse Peter Mora
Los Angeles CA

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Russ Marten, *Puget Sound WA*

2:00 Discourse Joshuva Jayaraj
Coimbatore India

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony Mark Davis
Los Angeles CA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse Ernie Kuenzli
Orlando FL

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 **Dialogue: I Corinthians 15:24-26**
“Then Cometh the End”
Jeff Mezera, *Yorkville IL*
Mike Ensley, *Seattle WA*

8:00 Songs in the Night

8:15 Elders' Meeting

Tuesday, July 14

Chairman: Ernie Kuenzli, *Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 **Baptismal Discourse** Tim Malinowski
Grand Rapids MI

10:30 Intermission

11:00 **Immersion Service** Gary Johnson
Milwaukee WI

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Ken Allison, *Albuquerque NM*

2:00 Praise and Testimony Brian Montague
Highland Park NY

2:45 Intermission

3:15 **Dialogue: Acts 24:15 NASB**
“The Two Resurrections”
Byron Keith, *Seattle WA*
Randy Shahan, *New York NY*

4:15 Intermission

4:30 Discourse Mark Allard
San Luis Obispo CA

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

Wednesday, July 15

Chairman: Stephen Jeuck, *Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Convention Business Meeting

11:00 Short Recess

11:15 Convention Business Continues

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Michael Costelli, *New Orleans LA*

2:00 Discourse

Austin Williams
Highland Park NY

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony

John Krasonic
West Newton PA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 **Discourse: I Thessalonians 5:6-8**

“We Are of the Day”
William Dutka
Metropolitan Detroit MI

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 Children’s Vesper Service

7:45 Songs in the Night

Thursday, July 16

Chairman: Jerry Nagy, *Saskatoon SK*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Praise and Testimony Gary Johnson
Milwaukee WI

10:30 Intermission

11:00 **Dialogue: “Grace and Works”**

Len Griehs, *Phoenix AZ*
Brent Hislop, *Portland OR*

12:00 Close of Morning Session

Chairman: Jerry Wesol, *Orlando FL*

2:00 Discourse Arbur Fernets
Vernon BC

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Discourse David Rice
San Diego CA

4:00 Intermission

4:30 **Closing Discourse** Homer Montague
Highland Park NY

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 Melodies of Praise

“God Be With You ‘Til We Meet Again”

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 Elżbieta Kubik, Wrocław, Poland—April 3.
Age, 85**

**Brother Piotr Polaczek, Chorzów, Poland—April 5.
Age, 70**

**Sister Barbara Novosad, Grand Rapids, MI—April 9.
Age, 81**

Brother Daniel Anas, Fargo, ND—April 10. Age, 96

**Sister Carmelita Fernets, Vernon, BC, Canada—
April 12. Age, 94**