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Devastation and Despair: Nature's Uncontrollable Power

*“The mountains
quake at him, and
the hills melt, and
the earth is burned
at his presence,
yea, the world, and
all that dwell
therein.”
—Nahum 1:5*

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE Prophet Nahum speaks of God's day of wrath and vengeance that would mark the closing years of this present Gospel Age. He uses symbolic language to illustrate the intensity and severity of God's judgments. These judgments were to be directed against the long-established and unrighteous rule of fallen man.

POWERFUL SYMBOLS

Many of the symbols that Nahum used pertain to nature and its effects on our everyday world and its people. We read, “God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and

he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”—Nah. 1:2-7

A STORMY EARTH

It is very evident that our earth can be a violent planet and one that is frequently subject to vicious storms, floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, and many other natural disasters. We have vivid firsthand illustrations of this vast power when it is unleashed. As this present Gospel Age draws to a close, there is increasing evidence that the level and intensity of natural disasters is rising. Many honest-hearted and sincere people are asking why a loving Heavenly Father would allow such terrible calamities of nature to destroy man and his surroundings.

UNLEASHED FURY

On March 11, 2011, the unprecedented natural power of the earth was unleashed on the island of Japan when it was hit with a destructive earthquake and accompanying tidal wave. When the

first reports of the disaster were received, it was learned that an 8.9 magnitude earthquake had occurred in the northeastern part of the country. It was later upgraded to 9.0, which is the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Japan. This becomes even more meaningful when it is realized that Japan experiences earthquakes on a regular basis. Furthermore, statistics show that it was one of the most powerful and deadly earthquakes ever recorded anywhere in the world.

Within a few minutes after the quake hit, a massive thirty-foot-high tidal wave known as a “tsunami,” triggered by the quake, smashed into Japan’s northeastern coast with tremendous force. The horrifying destructive wave swept away everything in its path and carried it for three miles on its way inland. The resulting scene of total devastation has rarely been seen before.

Mark Magnier and Carol Williams submitted a news report published by the *Los Angeles Times* (Saturday, March 12, 2011) under the title “In Disaster’s Grip” and with the subtitle “Vast Devastation Leaves Japan Mired in Anxiety and Suffering.” Quoting in part from the article, we read, “Japan’s most punishing earthquake on record and the devastating tsunami it triggered plunged the heart of the densely populated island nation into an apocalyptic scene of blazing buildings, cratered highways, waterborne rubble and frenzied efforts to avert radiation leaks at damaged nuclear power plants.

“The death toll is expected to rise sharply once disaster-response teams reach the hardest-hit areas and assess casualties, the National Police Agency and Defense Ministry said. The force of the magnitude

9.0 quake, which seismologists said released 1,000 times the energy of the January, 2010 earthquake in Haiti, broke the foundations under homes and buildings and opened up chasms in fields and pavement, swallowing cars and shearing off sidewalks and driveways.

“More than 100 aftershocks have jolted Japan since the temblor, including many of magnitude 6 or higher. The havoc unleashed on Japan has left the nation mired in fear, suffering and hardship. Millions of people are without power, utility officials said, and they warned that outages would continue indefinitely, with rolling blackouts persisting for weeks.”

JAPAN'S COASTLINE MOVED

The earthquake that struck Japan on March 11, 2011 was so powerful that analysts point out that it moved the whole earth. According to the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, Japan's main island coastline shifted as much as 13 feet, and averaged about 8 feet along a stretch measuring 300 miles on the country's main island. The pattern of shift over that large an area is consistent with the general shift in the land mass also reported by the United States Geological Survey's Earthquakes Hazards Program in Pasadena, California.

Analysis of the global positioning system data at the Geospatial Information Authority in Tsukuba, Japan reported that the massive earthquake moved Japan's Oshika Peninsula 17 feet in an east-south-easterly direction toward the quake's epicenter. Data indicates that the quake also dropped the

peninsula by 3.9 feet. This displacement was the largest ever recorded for Japan. The quake also shifted other points in the country including Tokyo, although the movements were smaller.

In addition to these remarkable statistics, it has also been confirmed that the earth's axis, around which the earth rotates, was shifted by about 10 inches as a result of the 9.0 earthquake. Geologists explain that the shift to the earth's tilt will have an effect on the length of day and the passage of the seasons. The speed of the planet's rotation will gradually adjust as the earth's mass is redistributed. They say that this will gradually take place over a long period of time.

THE RING OF FIRE

The Pacific Ocean basin is encircled with the circum-Pacific seismic belt commonly known as the "Ring of Fire." This natural arrangement consists of a nearly continuous series of volcanic belts, huge tectonic plates that continue to move, and oceanic trenches that form a horseshoe-shaped ring approximately 25,000 miles long. This is located along the entire western coastline of both North and South America, and the eastern coastline of Asia including the East Indies archipelago region. Within this area, there are 452 volcanoes which represent more than 75% of the world's active and dormant volcanoes.

The islands of Japan are situated in the northwestern part of the Pacific Ocean basin in one of the most active areas along the "Ring of Fire." This is an extremely unstable area of the earth's crust where violent forces of nature, such as earthquakes

and volcanoes, occur on an almost daily basis. Japan has the distinction of having more earthquakes than any other country on the earth. About 90% of the world's earthquakes and 80% of the world's largest earthquakes occur along the "Ring of Fire." This fact is revealed by the most sensitive seismographic equipment that can detect approximately 7,500 earthquakes in Japan in any given year. Of these about 1,500 can be felt by the people who are living in that country, and about 50 can be felt in the Tokyo area alone.

PLATE TECTONICS

Tectonic plates are massive plates of rock that make up the earth's surface and provide its continental structure. These form the earth's crust which, in turn, floats on a plastic-like part of earth's mantle that lies underneath. These plates are about 60 miles in thickness, with continental plates tending to be thicker than oceanic plates. There are ten major tectonic plates and many smaller ones.

The continual movement of these gigantic plates and their collision with one another results in a violent convergence which causes the earthquake action so prevalent in the Pacific Ocean near Japan. Japan is situated in the subduction zone at the boundaries of three major and very active tectonic plates—the Philippine Sea plate, the North American Continental, and the Eurasian plates. Geologists explain that the Philippine Sea plate is gradually being forced under the Eurasian and the North American Continental Plates in eastern Asia near Japan.

TSUNAMI

The word “tsunami” is a Japanese word that means “harbor wave” suggesting that it is not seen until it is too late. It is estimated that approximately 80% of all tsunamis occur in the Pacific Ocean, but are possible wherever large bodies of water are located. They are associated with a series of tidal waves that are created when the tectonic plates collide and by the displacement of a large volume of water that can be generated by an earthquake, volcanic action, or a landslide. The waves formed are then sustained by gravity as they make their way toward the coast. Because of the immense amount of water and the high energy level that is available in the Pacific Ocean region near Japan, tsunamis have the power to create widespread devastation which is a frequent occurrence in Japan.

The *Los Angeles Times* (Saturday, March 12, 2011) published a news report written by Amina Khan entitled “From Ripples to a Wall of Chaos,” from which we quote in part. The article describes the power of a tsunami as it arrives on shore. “The tsunami launched by the earthquake off the eastern shores of Japan was triggered at a site called a subduction zone, where one tectonic plate slowly pushes beneath another. From there, the waves travel across the sea, little higher than ripples, before piling up into powerful towers of water as they hit land.

“Earthquake-caused tsunamis occur regularly in the Pacific Ocean, where subduction zones abound. When the pressure building between the two plates finally releases, one of the plates gets

distorted and pushed very quickly into a tiny mountain, perhaps a yard in height. That upward movement disturbs the water, as a pebble does when tossed into a pond. Just as a pebble causes many ripples, the disturbance sends a series of waves away from the ruptured fault line.

“The rate at which a tsunami travels depends on the depth of the water. The deeper the water, the less resistance there is to the wave’s movement, and the faster they travel. A wave moving across the 14,000-foot deep Pacific Ocean will typically travel at a rate of about 450 miles to 500 miles per hour—‘airline speeds.’ In the open sea, the waves, though very long, may appear short in height, perhaps a few inches. But as a tsunami wave approaches a shore and the ocean becomes more shallow there is less room for the rapidly moving water, causing a buildup of all the energy moving behind the wave front. With no way to go forward, all that water mass (and the energy it carries) gets pushed higher and higher, making the wave taller and taller.”

NUCLEAR CRISIS

While Japan was dealing with its worst ever earthquake and accompanying tsunami, another crisis was adding new fear and confusion at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The escalating catastrophe seems to slide from one grave episode to an even graver one, adding further fear as to how it all might end.

In an article entitled “State of Emergency Declared at Nuclear Plants” published by the *Los Angeles Daily News* (Sunday, March 12, 2011),

Marie Yamaguchi and Jeff Donn put the nuclear crisis in Japan in perspective. We quote in part, “Japan declared states of emergency for five nuclear reactors at two power plants after the units lost cooling ability in the aftermath of the powerful earthquake. Thousands of residents were evacuated as workers struggled to get the reactors under control to prevent meltdowns.

“The government declared a state of emergency at the Fukushima Daiichi unit—the first at a nuclear plant in Japan’s history. But hours later, the Tokyo Electric Power Co., which operates the six-reactor Daiichi site in northeastern Japan, announced that it had lost cooling ability at a second reactor there and three units at its nearby Fukushima Daini site. The government quickly declared states of emergency with those units too. Thousands of people living near the power plant were ordered to evacuate.

“Japan’s nuclear safety agency said the situation was most dire at Fukushima Daiichi unit number one, where pressure had risen to twice what is considered the normal level. The International Atomic Energy Agency said in a statement the diesel generators that normally would have kept cooling systems running at Fukushima Daiichi had been disabled by tsunami flooding.

“Even once a reactor is shut down, radioactive byproducts give off heat that can ultimately produce volatile hydrogen gas, melt radioactive fuel, or even breach the containment building in a full meltdown belching radioactivity into the surroundings, according to technical and government authorities.”

At the time of this writing, dangerous levels of radiation are escaping from the quake-stricken nuclear power plant 150 miles north of Tokyo. New explosions and fires are occurring at the plant which is creating new levels of fear and anxiety among the people. Prime Minister Naoko Kan has asked his people to stay calm even as the radiation levels are increasing. He said that authorities are doing everything possible to contain the problem.

THE PERMISSION OF EVIL

The terrible events that took place in Japan are not new to the human family, nor have the Japanese people been singled out for God's wrath. This is only one tragic event among countless others. Every year people around the world are confronted by natural disasters of all kinds. Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes kill, or maim, many innocent people. Many others succumb to accident, pestilence, and famine. Those who have not suffered death in any of these ways must submit to the dying process and the ultimate penalty of death. They will die from other so-called natural means such as disease, or old age. None of us can escape the grim reaper, death.

The principles of right and wrong are also an integral part of God's fundamental laws regarding his earthly creation. Much of the suffering that comes upon the human family is due to lifestyles that ignore these standards of right and wrong. Although man was endowed with a conscience, his conscience has become polluted, and his inner being is not always willing to acknowledge what would be appropriate and righteous actions. Man

has ignored his Creator while accepting increasing levels of immorality and asocial behavior.

When the first parents of the human family—Adam and Eve—disobeyed God’s commandments, they suffered the penalty of death as a result. That sentence was passed down to all others, even to our time. From the scriptural record, we read, “The LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But 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 [dying thou shalt die, *Marginal Translation*].”—Gen. 2:15-17

Adam lived 930 years (chap. 5:5), which is less than a single thousand-year day in God’s estimation. “Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (II Pet. 3:8) The *Marginal Translation* of the above verse in Genesis points out the fact that Adam and each of his progeny experience the process of growing old that ends in the grave.

MELTING ELEMENTS

As the world approaches the present foretold great time of trouble and distress, they are largely unaware that our loving Heavenly Father is preparing for their reconciliation and blessing under Christ’s future kingdom. The Apostle Peter used symbolic language to describe our day in prophecy. “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away

with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”—II Pet. 3:10

God’s judgments are coming upon the earth—its social structure and institutions and its people. As we are witnesses to these great events, we do not fear as do others. Peter continues, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”—vss. 11-14

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

The foretold prophecies written many centuries ago describe the final overthrow and destruction of Satan’s world which is based on selfishness pride. “In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Cor. 4:4) Christ’s kingdom of truth and righteousness will be established in its place. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.”—Hag. 2:6,7

The necessity for the present desolating judgments over the world are incidental to the destruction of Satan and his power over earth's people and its proud and selfish institutions. We are assured that the wonderful promises of God for the ultimate blessing of his human creation will be accomplished, and that the desire of all nations shall surely come. Through the far-reaching agencies of Christ's future millennial kingdom, the obedient of mankind will receive life on a perfected earth.

POWER OVER THE ELEMENTS

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was on a ship with his disciples when a vicious storm arose. The terrible wind and waves were crashing over the boat and its occupants, when Jesus arose to manifest the mighty power that his Heavenly Father had given him. In this case, earth's natural elements were the roaring sea and mighty waves which he was quickly able to control.

Mark recorded the incident, from which we read, "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"—Mark 4:38-41

This recorded incident teaches that, although our faith may be tested even to the limit on certain occasions, we may put our complete trust in our

loving Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus to assume control over the earth and the destiny of its people. Under the administration of Christ's future kingdom, there will no longer be any threat of a terrifying earthquake and its accompanying tsunami waves to devastate Japan, or any other people.

PEACE BE STILL

“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”—Ps. 46:10 ■

“The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”—Nahum 1:7

They [the saints] will recognize the trouble as the preparation, according to God's plan, for blessing the whole world, and they will be cheered and comforted through it all.

Thus comforted and blessed by the divine assurance, the first duty of the saints is to let the world see that in the midst of all the prevailing trouble and discontent, and even while they share the trouble and suffer under it, they are hopeful, cheerful, and always rejoicing in view of the glorious outcome foretold in God's Word.

—Exceeding Great and Precious Promises

God's Promises Fulfilled

***Key Verse: "As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses."
—Joshua 11:15***

***Selected Scripture:
Joshua 1:1-6; 11:16-23***

the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient."—Num. 27:18-20

Under him, they would win great victories and actually enter the land promised in the covenant. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, one of their leading family groups. (chap. 1:10) His family line included Elishama, who had been the captain of a large army that was formed from his own tribe soon after the exodus out of Egyptian bondage. (chap. 2:18) God promised that he would help Joshua to lead the children of Israel "unto

AS WE BEGIN OUR STUDY, we are told that Moses had died and that Joshua, whose name signifies deliverer, or savior, became Israel's leader by a direct commission from God. (Josh. 1:1,2) We are told, "The LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that

the land which I do give to them.” (Josh. 1:2) The Heavenly Father further promised that he would guide Joshua and his people in the same manner that he had dealt with them through Moses. (Exod. 3:1-10) He would prove that the promises of the Heavenly Father were true by faithfully serving the LORD for more than 25 years.

Joshua had begun to prove his faithfulness to God through his years of service at Moses’ side. For this reason, he was the best-qualified man for the important task of leading God’s chosen people to their land of promise. The LORD would next outline the promised land, and he practically gave the very boundaries which would subsequently mark the possession of Israel at the close of David’s reign, and throughout that of Solomon. “From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all of the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.”—Josh. 1:4

In speaking these words to Joshua, God was in a way reaffirming his desire for his people to enter into the land that he would give to them. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that God had adopted the nation of Israel as his own, and had entered into a special covenant with them. For this reason, he was their real captain and leader—Moses, Joshua, and others being merely his representatives and mouth-pieces.

God had high expectations for them because they were his chosen people, through whom eventually the whole world of mankind would have the opportunity to enter into their own promised land. “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”—Gen. 28:14,15 ■

God Has Expectations

Key Verse: *“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.”*
—Joshua 1:7

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 1:7-16

thee.—Deut. 31:6

Attention should be called to the fact that the Hebrew word here rendered ‘strong’ is one that implies strength of arms and shoulders. It gives the thought of being ready for aggressive warfare. The word rendered ‘courage’ has an association with the lower limbs and implies defensive power, or steadfastness. This type of courage looks to the LORD for assistance. The importance of this can be found in the reality that God had not promised to

WE SHOULD FIRST NOTE, when contemplating these scriptures, the assurance that God is giving to Joshua that he wishes for him to have full confidence not in himself, but in the true and living God. He is encouraging Joshua to be strong, and to have a measure of courage that is not born out of self-reliance or recklessness, but that which comes from recognizing our own insufficiency. The LORD spoke very similar words of assurance to Moses, saying, “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake

give his people their possessions, but they were to fight and conquer their foes.

Joshua, as the successor of Moses, needed this type of encouragement on the occasion of the Israelites entering the land of promise. Although they had been forty years in preparation for this event, they had to realize that great difficulties stood before them. God explained to them that this gift was not because of their worthiness, but because of his favor toward them in pursuit of his own great plans which he had previously outlined to Abraham. "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father." (Gen. 26:3; Exod. 12:25) He further explained to them that the people of Canaan were not the people who he desired to have in the land. Joshua and Israel would have to take forcible possession of the land. In carrying out these events concerning the children of Israel, God promised them their own land, and would help them to possess it.

In the case of the footstep followers of Jesus, they receive this promised help as found in the words of our Lord, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5) The true ground of contentment is the realization of the Lord's care, and that his wisdom and grace are being exercised towards us, and the things that he grants to us are the things that are best for us. He is always present to comfort, bless, and make all things work together for good to those who love God, to those called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28) As in the example from the LORD'S dealings with Joshua, our strength and confidence should be in him who declared this to us. "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."—Gen. 15:1 ■

God Protects

Key Verse: *“They said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.”*
—Joshua 2:24

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 2

THIS CHAPTER BEGINS

with Joshua sending out two spies into the land. “Go view the land, even Jericho.” (Josh. 2:1) They entered into Jericho and hid in a house belonging to a woman named Rahab. The king of Jericho heard about the presence of these two spies and, fearing that they had come “to search out the country,” commanded that Rahab bring the men to him. (vs. 2) Instead of obeying the king, Rahab hid the men upon the roof of her house. After the immediate danger of being captured by the men who searched for them had passed, Rahab spoke some very surprising words to them. “I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.”—vs. 9

Why did Rahab do these things to help the spies that Joshua had sent into her land? We should call to mind that the Israelites had been miraculously led by God out of the land of Egypt. The news of this event had even reached Jericho. “We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt.” (vs. 10) She then pleaded with the two spies to promise that her family would be protected from harm

due to the kindness that she had shown to them. They would then make an agreement between them to insure the protection over the inhabitants of the household, the sign of which would be a “line of scarlet thread in the window.”—vss. 12-18

Following these events, the spies returned to Joshua to report to him what had taken place in Jericho, and how God had protected them from harm. During their absence, the people had been camped along the eastern side of the river Jordan, and their camp stretched for several miles. They surely presented themselves as a mighty host to those who watched them from the land across the river.

After hearing the report of the spies, Joshua acted quickly. “Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, . . . and lodged there before they passed over. (chap. 3:1) His directions were that the people should look out for the ark of the Lord, and that it, representing the Lord, would go before them. (Exod. 25:10; Josh. 3:3,4; 4:11) According to these directions, about three-quarters of a mile intervened between the ark and the people—it going to the north of them, and they following it within that distance. When the ark reached the proper place it stood, and its bearers the priests, walked down to the river until their feet touched the water. (chap. 3:13) The Israelites were intently watching what would happen next. To the astonishment of all, when the priests’ feet touched the water, the river began to shrink. As the priests walked further out into the river channel, the river grew smaller and smaller, until it was entirely dried up. The ark was now in the middle of what had just a short time ago been the Jordan River. Following Joshua’s directions, his people crossed the river quickly into the land of promise under God’s protection. (chaps. 3:15-17; 4:11-13) Truly, “He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”—Ps. 107:7 ■

God Is Victorious

Key Verse: *“It came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.”*
—Joshua 6:16

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 5:13-6:27

THE ISRAELITES WERE now in the land of promise and on their way to Jericho to conquer the city. “About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.” (Josh. 4:13) After the people had set up camp east of Jericho in Gilgal, Joshua spoke to the people telling them that they should always remember what God had done for them—“That

all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.”—vs. 24

Jericho was a walled city that was located about five miles from the Jordan. Frequent battles in the past over its wealth had made the wall that surrounded it a necessity. As the time approached for the siege of the city to begin, God told Joshua to “circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.” (chap. 5:2) Circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. (Gen. 17:7-14; Rom. 4:11) The time had now come for the reproach of Egypt to be “rolled away.”—Josh. 5:9

It was during the later years of the Egyptian bondage that this separating sign had been neglected (Exod. 4:24-26), and this neglect had continued during the wilderness journey. All of the men of war, which came out

of Egypt, had now died, and it was time to dedicate the people to conform to the will of God. Following this event, the people “kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.”—Josh. 5:10

We are then told in the account that Joshua “looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.” (vs. 13) He was actually an angel, and the captain of the LORD’S host. Through this heavenly messenger, Joshua was told that the LORD had given Jericho to him, and he revealed God’s plan on how this would be accomplished. It was yet another miraculous sign that God was with them. Joshua, as a faithful servant, immediately put the plan into action.

Every day, for six straight days, all the men of war were to march around the city. Next, a company of seven priests would “bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams’ horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.” (chap. 6:4) This was to be followed with a long blast of the ram’s horn, and a great shout from all of the people. After these things were done, God told Joshua that the “wall of the city shall fall down flat.” (vs. 5) So the people did all that God had told them to do. When they had made the seventh circle of the city, they stopped in front of it, still blowing their rams’ horns and, after a great shout, the walls of the city crumbled and fell immediately in front of the ark. The wall fell to such an extent that Israel’s army was able to easily enter the city and complete the work of its destruction, which the Lord had commanded.

The events that took place concerning the fall of Jericho show how important faith in the Heavenly Father is, and also how nothing can stand in the way of God’s plans and purposes being carried out.—Ps. 76:7-9; Isa. 14:26,27 ■

The Glory to Follow

“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

—II Corinthians 4:17,18

THE APOSTLE PAUL SAID

that he rejoiced in the privilege of suffering with Christ. “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”—Col. 1:23,24

While every faithful follower of the Master experiences joys far deeper and more satisfying than anything known to the unbelieving world, it is also true that the Christian life is one of suffering and

sacrifice. Jesus told his disciples that this would be their experience. He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

The Apostle Peter wrote concerning the afflictions of the Lord's people, and said that the Spirit of God moved the prophets of old to testify concerning the sufferings of Christ. "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."—I Pet. 1:11

Jesus had this basic truth of the divine plan well in mind when, after his resurrection, he preached that wonderful sermon to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. He began with Moses and from all the prophets pointed out to them that it was necessary for Christ to suffer before entering into his glory.—Luke 24:13-27

At the time Jesus was crucified, the disciples did not understand this aspect of the divine plan of salvation. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, and they expected him to shortly manifest the power and glory of that office as it had been foretold by the prophets. When he was crucified they were bewildered, but their hearts burned within them when they realized that the death of their Master was not a defeat of God's plan by their enemies. It was something which had been foreknown and foretold as an integral part of the divine plan.

One of the prophecies of the suffering and death of Jesus is recorded in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of

sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”—Isa. 53:3,4,7

In the last verse of Isaiah 53, the suffering and death of Jesus are foretold; however, Isaiah also foretold the glory to follow. We are informed that he would be given a portion with the “great,” and to this is added that he would divide the reward with the “strong.” “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.” (vs. 12) The ‘great’ referred to here is evidently the great Creator of the universe—our Heavenly Father. Jesus was given a ‘portion’ with his Heavenly Father. Those who are “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” are Jesus’ faithful followers. (Eph. 6:10) While being “sown in weakness” according to the flesh (I Cor. 15:43), they are indeed ‘strong in the Lord’ through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is this strength that helps them to endure and to struggle as they fight “the good fight of faith.” (I Tim. 6:12) In Revelation 3:21, we find the Lord saying, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

COMPLETE TRUST

Jesus knew of his Father’s arrangement for him to suffer and die as the world’s Redeemer. The

many promises of God, concerning the glory that would follow the suffering, helped to sustain him. Paul refers to the joy that was set before Jesus by these promises. It was this joy that enabled him to endure the cross and to despise the shame. Because he endured faithfully, he is now “set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—Heb. 12:2

In a prophecy setting forth Jesus’ confidence in his Heavenly Father, recorded in the 16th Psalm, we read, “I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”—Ps. 16:8-11

Jesus knew that he was to die, but he also knew that he would not be left in death. He would be restored to life. He had confidence that God would show him the path of life. In his case, that path of life led through suffering to death. He knew this when he explained to his disciples that those who lose their lives in sacrifice—in the divine cause as he expected to do—would ultimately save their lives.

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST

It is clear that the prophetic testimony concerning the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow applies also to the suffering and sacrificial death of his true followers. The Apostle Peter makes this plain. He wrote, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try

you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."—I Pet. 4:12,13

Our theme text refers to Christian suffering as 'light affliction' compared with the 'eternal weight of glory.' The sufferings, or afflictions, of Christ are light in comparison with the weight of glory to follow, although from the human standpoint these afflictions are often severe and crushing. Think of what they involved in the case of Jesus. He was harassed by his enemies, most of whom were the religious leaders of his day, and, finally, put to death upon the cross. Think of the glory into which he entered as a result of his faithfulness. He received the divine nature and was given a position with the Heavenly Father.

The followers of Jesus from then until now have also suffered. In the days of the Early Church and throughout the Dark Ages particularly, they were almost continuously persecuted. Some were crucified, others thrown to the lions, while still others were burned at the stake or subjected to other cruelties. All of the Lord's faithful people throughout this present Gospel Age have suffered trials and persecutions of one sort or another, either their own or as the "companions of them who were so used."—Heb. 10:33,34

Regardless of the severity of the afflictions, they have been light and temporary compared with the eternal weight of glory to follow. With the followers of Jesus, even as with Jesus himself, this glory that follows the suffering consists of exaltation to the

divine nature. They are also promised to share the throne with Jesus. (Rev. 3:21) Paul speaks of our “hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:2) This goes beyond the ability of the human mind to comprehend. This glory to follow will not be ‘but for a moment,’ but, instead, it will be eternal.

ILLUSTRATIONS

While we cannot comprehend the glory for which we are encouraged to hope, the Bible helps us to grasp some of its aspects, at least partially, by the various titles it ascribes to Jesus and to his body members. Jesus, for example, is a king, indeed the “KING OF KINGS.” (Rev. 19:16) A king is one who reigns over subjects, and the promise to the true church is that she “shall reign with him a thousand years.”—chap. 20:6

We might refer to this as the kingly glory to follow the afflictions. Paul set forth this thought clearly when he said that if we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with him. (II Tim. 2:11,12) This means that if we do not suffer with Christ we will not reign with him. It means that if, after entering into a covenant with the Lord to lay down our lives as Jesus did, we then hold back, sidestepping our privileges of service and sacrifice, we will not be found worthy to share the throne of his glory. These are sobering thoughts and should stimulate us to greater zeal and increasing diligence in devoting our lives to the service of the Lord by a daily laying down and giving up of our all in doing the divine will.

SERVANTS OF THE COVENANT

The Bible informs us that Jesus will be the Mediator of the New Covenant in his future kingdom.

The Apostle Paul explains that we have also been made “able ministers” of that covenant. (II Cor. 3:6; Heb. 12:24) The New Covenant is foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34. When that covenant is made with all the people, the law of God will be written in their hearts and they will be restored to perfection. This perfection is that which they lost through the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

The Prophet Isaiah refers to this glorious work of restoration, and pictures the church as helping to bring it about, in a prophecy from which Paul quoted and applied to the disciples of Christ. “In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners [of death], Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.”—Isa. 49:8,9; II Cor. 6:2

PRIESTS OF GOD

Another title which the Bible ascribes both to Jesus and his church is that of priests. This title applies to Jesus and to his church in the flesh, for it pertains first to the work of sacrifice. In the Jewish Age, the offering of typical sacrifices was one of the chief functions of the priesthood. Peter wrote to the followers of Jesus, saying, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up . . . sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”—I Pet. 2:5

In verse 9 of this chapter, Peter speaks of the church as being a “royal priesthood.” It is to become royal priests that the present sacrificial work is

leading for all those who are faithful unto death. The 'royal priesthood' is a kingly priesthood, typified by Melchisedec, who was a priest upon his throne. (Gen. 14:18) Melchisedec was a type of Jesus exalted to kingship, and ruling to bless the people during the thousand years of his kingdom.

The faithful followers of Jesus will share this priestly glory with him. Revelation 20:6 reads, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." In this promise, we do not have priests offering sacrifice, but priests who are reigning upon the throne, even as was Melchisedec. What a prospect this is, and how it enhances our hope of glory, the glory to follow, and the light afflictions of the present time.

THE GLORY OF JUDGESHIP

In his sermon on Mars' hill, the Apostle Paul said that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:31) Jesus will be the great judge of the people during the thousand-year judgment day promised in the Bible. He will have associate judges working with him. Here again, these will be his faithful followers of the present age.

We read, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (I Cor. 6:2) This is a well-known text to many students of the Word of God, but it is

by no means the only assurance the Bible gives us that the faithful saints of the Gospel Age will share the glory of judgeship with Jesus. The Master himself spoke of this time, saying, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."—Matt. 25:31,32

It will be recognized that this is Jesus' parable of the judgment day. He speaks of himself as then being seated upon the 'throne of his glory' with all his 'holy angels,' or messengers, with him. These holy messengers are his faithful followers who, having been brought forth in the first resurrection, are represented as sharing with Jesus in the glory of judging the peoples of all nations.

This is in harmony with Jesus' promise to his disciples as recorded in Matthew 19:28. In the context, Jesus said to the rich young ruler that if he would give up all he had and take up his cross and follow him he would have treasures in heaven. The disciples did not understand this, so Peter reminded Jesus that they had given up all they had and had become his followers. He asked what they would receive in return. It was to this question that Jesus replied, "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

In this passage and in the parable in Matthew 25, the saints are shown to share the judgeship with Jesus. Here Jesus speaks of sitting on the

‘throne of his glory’ and promises his disciples that they also shall sit upon ‘thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ Thus Jesus indicates that all peoples are to be judged, including the twelve tribes of Israel. Here again is a part of the glory that follows our light afflictions.

THRONES

In his teachings, Jesus drew heavily upon the prophecies of the Old Testament. In his promise to his disciples concerning their sitting upon thrones (plural), he perhaps based his lesson on the prophecy of Daniel 7:9,10,18,22. Here we have foretold the kingdom and judgment work. The *Rotherham Translation* of Daniel 7:9 reads, “I continued looking until that thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat.”

This is a picture of the setting in order of the kingdom arrangement. Verse 10, speaking of the ‘Ancient of days,’ says, “Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” This compares well with Revelation 20:11,12: “I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened.”

Verse 18 of Daniel 7 reads, “The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.” Then verse 22 adds: “And judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” Thus, in this

prophecy of Daniel we have mention of ‘thrones’ which are placed in the kingdom, and also that ‘judgment’ is given to the saints of the most High—these possess the kingdom. What a firm foundation this gives for our hope of judgeship glory with Jesus.

REVELATION

Many of the important prophecies and promises of the Old Testament are reiterated in the New Testament, oftentimes in the Book of Revelation. This seems to be the case with Daniel’s prophecy concerning thrones, and the fact that judgment is given to the saints of the Most High at the time when the saints possess the kingdom.

“I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4) The *Rotherham Translation* reads, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and ‘sentence of judgment was given unto them.’” It is clear from this translation that those John saw on thrones had been given a commission to judge. Rotherham’s statement ‘sentence of judgment’ suggests that to those who sat on the thrones were given the authority to pass sentence on others, resulting from the judgment process. Thus we find a beautiful harmony between Daniel 7:9,18,22 and Revelation 20:4, substantiating further the promise that the saints of this Gospel Age, following their suffering and death—their light

afflictions—will become co-judges with Jesus and thus share in the judgeship aspect of the glory to follow.

FAITHFULNESS REQUIRED

It is well to remind ourselves that, if we expect to share with Jesus in the glory that follows the light afflictions, we must be faithful to the terms of our covenant by sacrifice. Paul explains that while we are enduring the momentary light afflictions of the present we are looking for inspiration to “the things which are not seen.” He reminds us that “the things which are not seen are eternal.”—II Cor. 4:18

Are we able by the eye of faith to see the things which cannot be seen with the natural eye? If our vision of faith is keen, we will be able to see to some extent the glory that will follow the present time of trial. We are not able to see clearly all it will mean to be joint-rulers with Jesus in his kingdom. It is impossible to grasp the full thought of what is involved in being ‘able ministers of the new covenant,’ members of the Melchisedec priesthood, or to be seated on thrones as judges. The assurances of the Bible that a participation with Jesus in all these official positions in his Millennial Kingdom help us to realize how great that glory will be.

There is also the great glory of the divine nature. Paul speaks of this in his lesson on the resurrection, as recorded in the 15th chapter of I Corinthians. Speaking of our sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection, Paul writes, “It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is

raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”—I Cor. 15:43,44

How true it is that we are ‘sown in weakness.’ Every faithful follower of the Master should realize his own weakness and his inability to do the Lord’s will as completely as he would like. There is frequently the tendency to become discouraged. This should cause us to turn to the Lord for strength and for guidance. How often do we experience the fulfillment of God’s promises to give us strength.

In no small way, the hope of glory is itself a source of strength and courage. May this hope remain ever bright as day by day we face the light afflictions which are but for a moment, knowing that shortly, if faithful, we will enter into the promised eternal weight of glory. ■

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 Stefan Karawiec, Brooklyn, NY (formerly Lvov, Ukraine)—December 2010. Age, 80

Brother Walter Bisiaux, Sacramento, CA—March 22.

Brother Robert Mottie, Greenfield, OH—March 25. Age, 63

Sister Millie Szatko, Chicago, IL—April 14.

Sister Eve Morgan, Wilmington, OH—April 18. Age, 101

Sister Susan Sansom, Agawam, MA—May 5. Age, 54

Day of Pentecost

“When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they [Jesus’ disciples] were all with one mind in the same place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, like a violent wind rushing; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And divided tongues appeared to them, like fire, and one rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

*—Acts 2:1-4, Wilson’s
Emphatic Diaglott*

THE WORD PENTECOST

is found only three times in the Bible and, being a Greek word, appears only in the New Testament. The most familiar usage is found in the words of our theme text. The word is used later in Acts 20:16: “Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.” The final use of the word is in I Corinthians 16:8: “I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.” In the latter two references, it is intimated that Pentecost was more than just the notable event that is described in Acts 2 concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit. In fact, it was

an annual celebration—a special feast day of the Jews.

THE TYPICAL FEAST

To find out the special significance of the typical Day of Pentecost requires going to the Old Testament. Pentecost was one of the three annual feasts of Israel and was not called Pentecost at that time. It went by two other names—the “feast of harvest” and the “feast of weeks.” We read of it by its name the Feast of Harvest in Exodus 23:14-16: “Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: . . . And the feast of harvest [Pentecost], the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.”

Another reference to this feast is in Deuteronomy 16:9,10,16, where it is called the Feast of Weeks. “Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks [Pentecost] unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. . . . Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.” The Feast of Weeks is also referred to in two other places—Exodus 34:22 and Numbers 28:26-31.

Leviticus 23 explains the three feasts referenced before and exactly when Pentecost occurred, its purpose, and why in the type it goes under both names—Feast of Harvest and Feast of Weeks. Verses 5-7 read, “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S passover. . . . The fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread. . . . In the first day [i.e., the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the fifteenth day of the first month] ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.” This first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be a ‘holy convocation,’ that is, a special Sabbath Day. Sabbath days were those in which the Israelites did no servile work. In this case, it was not the seventh-day Sabbath, but a special Sabbath—a holy convocation to the Lord. The last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was also a special Sabbath Day.

Continuing with verses 10 and 11: “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” This waving of the handful, or sheaf, of the firstfruits of their harvest, was done on the day after the special ‘sabbath’ mentioned above—the sixteenth day of the first month.

Verses 15 and 16 read: “Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering [in other words, from the sixteenth day of the first

month]; seven sabbaths [49 days] shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath [the morrow after the seventh Sabbath would be the fiftieth day] shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” This fiftieth day was the Feast of Weeks—the Feast of Harvest. It is referred to as the Feast of Weeks because the date on which the feast occurred was determined by the counting of seven weeks, plus one day, from the time that the sheaf of the firstfruits was offered. Additionally, the Greek word *pentecost* means “the fiftieth day.” Based on the Leviticus 23 calculation, the corresponding date for Pentecost this year is June 9, 2011.

PURPOSE OF THE TYPE

This typical feast was to be a celebration of thanksgiving to God for the firstfruits of the Jewish harvest, hence the second name, Feast of Harvest. This was a special harvest. It was not the harvest of vegetables or fruit, but was the harvest of grain—specifically barley and wheat. The firstfruits of this harvest were dedicated to God. During this feast, as recorded in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, many offerings were given. There were burnt offerings, meat offerings, drink offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings—all given as a celebration of thanksgiving to God for their grain harvest.

The special offering of this feast was to be a ‘new meat offering.’ Verse 17 says, “Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked

with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.” They offered two loaves of bread made from the firstfruits of their grain harvest. It was then waved before the Lord as a thanksgiving and a dedication to him for the bounties of their harvest. Fifty days earlier they had also waved an offering before God, but it was only a handful of the firstfruits. Now they had begun the actual harvesting of the grain and brought two loaves, made from what they had just harvested, to offer to the Lord. Their harvest would now continue until all the barley and wheat was gathered.

CORRESPONDENCY OF TYPE AND ANTITYPE

The reason for going into detail regarding the typical Feast of Harvest/Feast of Weeks, is that it ties in beautifully to the antitype. Seen first is the correspondence of the timing of this feast. Remember that the 14th day of the first month was the Passover. In the antitype, this corresponded to the death of Jesus as the Passover lamb—“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)—which occurred exactly on this same date. On the 16th day of the first month, the sheaf, or handful, of the firstfruits was waved before the Lord. This corresponds in antitype to the resurrection of Jesus, which likewise occurred on the same date, two days after his death. The Apostle Paul said, in I Corinthians 15:20, that Jesus was “the firstfruits of them that slept.” He was the sheaf, the handful, of firstfruits—the very first one raised from the dead to eternal life by the mighty power of God. Lastly, counting seven Sabbaths plus one, or fifty days, from the resurrection of Jesus, from the

antitypical waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits, brings us to the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2.

Just as the typical feast involved the dedication of the barley and wheat harvest, in antitype, the Day of Pentecost encompassed the dedication of the antitypical firstfruits—the “wheat”—to God, the church now included as part of this firstfruits class. Jesus was the firstfruits, but the church also as stated in James 1:18 is a “kind of firstfruits.” John the Revelator speaks of the church as the “firstfruits” in Revelation 14:4, where he describes these as being “redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” The process of the dedication of the church began at Pentecost. The church was symbolically waved, or shown, before the Heavenly Father as dedicated to him.

In viewing the antitypical Pentecost, it was a culmination of three very important and vital events in God’s plan. The first was the ransom price, which Jesus provided when he died as a corresponding price for Adam on the cross. The second of these vital events was Jesus’ resurrection by the mighty power of God. The third was the Day of Pentecost—the day of dedication of the prospective church to the Heavenly Father.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

The events that encompassed Pentecost in antitype are numerous. The Day of Pentecost was not merely the day that the Holy Spirit came upon the church. This did indeed happen, and the benefits were not only to those that were present then, but

have extended throughout the entire Gospel Age to those who have made an acceptable consecration to God.

For those 120 followers of Jesus gathered in the upper room (Acts 1:15) who had dedicated their lives to him, the Day of Pentecost meant many things. It meant that God had accepted their consecration to him. It meant that they were now justified in his sight. It meant that now their covenant of sacrifice would begin, and it meant that begetting of the Holy Spirit had taken place and that, as a result, they would now be New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

Pentecost was an eventful day for those present. For the church down through the Gospel Age, it was also very significant. It signified the beginning of the Gospel Age and its work. It signified the opening of the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) Pentecost also signified the anointing, or the dedication, of the church as a class, to be God’s royal priesthood. It signified that the opportunity was now open for each individual prospective member of that priesthood to receive the things that those in the upper room were receiving—God’s acceptance of their consecration, justification, the beginning of their sacrifice, and spirit begetting. Each prospective member of the royal priesthood throughout this Gospel Age has come into that same relationship because of the events that took place then. It may be said that the Day of Pentecost began the actual process of bringing man back to at-one-ment with God, beginning with the church. The Day of Pentecost was the first outward evidence to mankind

of God's imputation of the benefits of the ransom price provided by Jesus.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Understanding the begetting of the Holy Spirit is the key to appreciating the full significance of Pentecost. What is the Holy Spirit? In general terms, the Holy Spirit is the power and influence of God. It has always existed. God is from everlasting to everlasting, and so his power and his influence—his Holy Spirit—is also from everlasting to everlasting.

There is a deeper meaning and definition of the Holy Spirit as it applies to members of the church. For these, the Holy Spirit can be defined as the holy and righteous influence and power of God that gives the spark of life to, nourishes, and governs the New Creature life in each one of God's consecrated people. The word spirit is from the Greek word *pneuma*, and means "breath." To simplify the definition of the Holy Spirit to the New Creature, it is as the breath of life is to the natural body. The body must have the breath of life. If the breath of life is taken away from the natural body, it dies within minutes. Likewise, without the Holy Spirit—God's holy and righteous influence—the New Creature cannot live.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AT PENTECOST

Acts 2 describes what happened on the Day of Pentecost relative to the giving of the Holy Spirit. Verses 2-4 read: "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of

fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Why did God give such an outward demonstration of the begetting of the Holy Spirit as a ‘sound from heaven,’ a ‘rushing mighty wind,’ ‘cloven tongues’ like fire and speaking ‘with other tongues’? There were two reasons why this was done. First, it was a witness to those present. This was a feast of Israel, although the antitype was now being fulfilled. Verse 5 states, “There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Many Jews had traveled to Jerusalem because this was one of their feast days, and when this was “noised abroad” (vs. 6), it was a witness to them. The Holy Spirit had an immediate effect upon the apostles. They began speaking (or were understood) in other languages, and some who heard accused them of being drunk. This caused Peter to stand up and refute the charges. (Acts 2:4-15) Peter quoted from the prophet Joel, and the Psalms, giving a beautiful witness of God’s plan. The result of that witness is stated in verse 41, “The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

In addition to being a great witness, this giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was a demonstration of God’s power and influence as never before seen in man. This power rested in a very special way upon the apostles in that they were given various “gifts.” The Apostle Paul identified some of these gifts in I Corinthians 12:28-30 as “gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues . . . workers of

miracles.” These were all part of the outward gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to help establish the Early Church and the authority of the apostles. These were a tremendous demonstration of God’s power and influence upon them, manifesting his authority on their behalf.

THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

As extraordinary as these demonstrations were, as exciting as the gifts were, and although they added three thousand prospective members to the body of Christ in one day, none of this was the most important significance of Pentecost. The deeper meaning of Pentecost concerned the principal work of the Holy Spirit, which was to be inward. It was not to be seen by man. It was, in fact, to be the work of developing the New Creature of each individual member of the body of Christ.

The most significant event of Pentecost was the personal begetting of the disciples by the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 12, Paul discusses this very matter. After recounting the various gifts of the spirit in previous verses, he states in verse 31, “Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” The ‘more excellent way’ was love, the subject of the very next chapter—I Corinthians 13. Love is the sum total of the fruits of the spirit, in which is described the development of the New Creature. That was the more excellent way, the more excellent work of the Holy Spirit, and the most important significance of Pentecost.

WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The inward work of the Holy Spirit which above was summed up by Paul as being love, is alluded to

in many scriptures of the New Testament. The 8th chapter of Romans contains a detailed discussion of the Holy Spirit which gives much enlightenment and guidance to the followers of Christ. The phrase “Holy Spirit” or “Spirit” is mentioned some twenty times in this chapter alone. The work of the Holy Spirit as described here can be divided into ten areas:

1. Verses 1 and 2 state that the Holy Spirit is a “law”—a law of life—and can be likened to the breath of life in natural man. We likewise must have the Holy Spirit—a law of life—or the New Creature dies. These verses read, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Not only does this passage say that the Holy Spirit is a ‘law’ of life, it also has made Jesus’ footstep followers free from that other law that they were previously under—the ‘law of sin and death.’

2. The Holy Spirit is an influence by which one walks and thinks. Verses 4 through 6 bring this out: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

3. The begetting of the Holy Spirit embodies the thought of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) Verses 9 and 10 allude to this, saying, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be

that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." This Holy Spirit of God or, as Paul refers to it, the 'Spirit of Christ,' has to be 'in' his followers. If it is in them, it fulfills the thought that says, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Christ is not literally in us. It is his spirit of begetting, his influence, that motivates us.—I John 2:27

4. The fourth work of the Holy Spirit is described in verse 11, which says, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The Holy Spirit "quicken"—it gives life. It gives one the opportunity to serve God, to understand his Truth, to be an acceptable sacrifice, and will eventually quicken those who are faithful even unto death.

5. The action of the Holy Spirit upon our minds mortifies the deeds of the body. Verse 13 says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

6. Another work of the Holy Spirit is stated in verse 14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Holy Spirit "leads." This can be thought of as God's providential care over his followers. His Holy Spirit brings about this care by being with his followers along each step of the narrow way. A hymn says, "I'd rather walk in the dark with God, than go alone in the light." God's people are able to say this because it

is the Holy Spirit—his providential influence and power—which leads and directs their lives.

7. The begetting of the Holy Spirit is an assurance of sonship. Verse 15 states, “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [sonship, *WED*], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” What an assurance the Spirit gives the followers of Christ that they are the sons of God!

8. Verse 16 says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” This is an assurance that our spirit, our heart, our motives, which have been given to the Lord in consecration, are on the same “wave length” with God—that is, they ‘beareth witness’ with the Holy Spirit. When these bear witness together, it is an assurance to us that ‘we are the children of God,’ that we have the same purpose which the Holy Spirit purposes in us.

9. The Holy Spirit does not prevent us from sharing in the trials and the “groanings” of the present life while in the flesh. It is true that God’s power can accomplish anything, and he perhaps could use his Holy Spirit to prevent us from going through the trials and the groanings of the flesh. However, this is not in our best interest. This aspect of the Holy Spirit is shown in verse 23: “Not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

10. Verses 26 and 27 say, “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because it maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The Holy Spirit, as it bears witness with our spirit, helps us in those times when we have difficulty praying to the Father as we would desire, or do not know what we should pray for. As the verse states, the spirit intercedes ‘according to the will of God.’

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Finally, we are warned by the Apostle Paul that we are not to “quench” the Spirit—completely, willfully renounce the New Creature’s life-giving power. (I Thess. 5:19) We must be on guard for even partial willfulness in this regard. “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,” Paul says in Ephesians 4:30. Rather, let us strive to obtain the fullest measure possible of God’s influence and power—“be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph. 5:18) Thus, by being faithful even “unto death” (Rev. 2:10), we may truly appreciate the significance of Pentecost and its resulting blessing to the Lord’s footstep followers of the present Gospel Age. ■

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Suffer It To Be So

“Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

—I Peter 4:19

THESE WORDS WRITTEN by the Apostle Peter emphasize the total commitment necessary when difficult experiences have been allowed by our loving Heavenly Father to test his consecrated people. Our faithful Master exemplified this high degree of commitment during the last moments of his perfect human life. “Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.’”—Luke 23:46, *New American Standard Bible*

NEWNESS OF LIFE

In our featured scripture, Peter emphasizes that when we experience severe trials we must look to our Lord for his promised help and guidance in our consecrated walk in newness of life. The apostle used the word ‘soul’ instead of spirit, or breath of life. The soul represents our entire being, and we are to consume this gradually in the service of God even as Jesus did. He committed his spirit and his will to his Heavenly Father.

Our spiritual life comes from God, who is the “author and finisher of our faith.” (Heb. 12:2)

Through the Prophet Isaiah, God said concerning our Lord Jesus, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."—Isa. 53:12

CONSECRATION

At the time of consecration, we made a commitment to God to present our lives to him in sacrifice. The Apostle Paul wrote, "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

We promised to solemnly do the will of our loving Heavenly Father. We do this moment by moment. Each day we must pay our vows by striving to know and do his will as each experience is permitted to come our way. Committing ourselves suggests putting all matters into God's hands, especially when it involves severe trials. Even when there is no suffering involved, it is our privilege and duty to commit our life unto him. The psalmist wrote, "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."—Ps. 37:5,6

When we suffer according to the will of God, we should commit our life to him. Suffering is an occasion of special trial and a time of special need of God's help. Yet, we may forget this important fact and that God is supervising our every experience. We need to apply the "exceeding great and precious promises" to ourselves. (II Pet. 1:4) Peter's advice is of particular value, and if followed will give us divine help when we need it most. In any particular time of suffering, we should look to God. Instead of murmuring and rebelling, we should say, even as Jesus did, "Not my will, but thine, be done."—Luke. 22:42

CHASTENING NECESSARY

When a particularly severe experience comes our way, we should not be discouraged, but ask God for his help as soon as possible. We should also attempt to view the matter from his standpoint and learn the necessary lesson. We are called upon to suffer with Christ, and it is a major part of our Christian experience as we walk in newness of life. Paul acknowledged, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:11) God knows our frame, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."—Ps. 103:13,14

A NEW CREATION

In our featured scripture, Peter used the word 'Creator' instead of God. Every true New Creature is in the process of being created, as Paul explained,

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (II Cor. 5:17) We are God’s workmanship and his work is accomplished in our mind and character. “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—II Cor. 4:6,7

If we continue faithful unto death, we will receive a divine body and will be fashioned like unto Christ, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”—Phil. 3:21

LEARNING OBEDIENCE

In his letter to the Hebrew brethren, Paul wrote concerning our Lord Jesus, and said, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. 5:8,9) Thus he could not become complete as a glorified New Creature in his future kingdom until he had proven loyal to his Heavenly Father under adverse conditions of severe trial and suffering. Even though he was the only begotten Son of God, he had to endure these experiences before he could be a faithful Son on the divine plane of being.

His followers, who are “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), must also suffer with him if they would be glorified together with him. Suffering is an indispensable part of the creative process.

“This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”—I John 5:3-5

The test becomes severe when doing God’s will involves suffering. At such times, we should commit ourselves to our faithful Creator. Our part is to submit our wills to God, and his part is to direct the issue. We are to remember, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (I Cor. 10:13) Asking God for his help proves that we are sympathetic with his will as it pertains to our consecrated life. We want to please him even though the flesh is weak. We accept the experience and learn obedience. With such an attitude of mind, our faithful Creator will give us the help needed. Committing ourselves to him at such times strengthens the New Creature.

SUFFERING IN JESUS

The word ‘suffer,’ as used by the Apostle Peter in our featured scripture, suggests experiencing something that is usually painful to our physical bodies. He admonished that we suffer according to the will of God. This means that the experience has come to us by God’s providence and that we are endeavoring to endure it in a way that pleases him. Suffering for wrongdoing is not counted as suffering with Christ. “What glory is it, if, when ye be

buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”—I Pet. 2:20,21

Glory comes only when we voluntarily suffer for doing right in the same way that Jesus did. This is to the glory of God. During this present Gospel Age, it means doing more than what will be required of perfect beings on the human plane under the administration of Christ’s future kingdom. Taking the buffeting for our faults patiently is helpful if we try to correct our faults. Peter again emphasizes, “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”—Heb. 12:7

Let us therefore endure these necessary corrections while actively letting our light shine and living a life of righteous action. Whatever opposition this brings will be to the glory of God. “This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”—I Pet. 2:19

Concerning Jesus, the apostle said, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” (vs. 23) He was our perfect example. (vs. 21) No one should have to suffer for well doing, but those who are being created for the divine plane during this present Gospel Age are required to endure suffering for righteousness, and they learn obedience in this manner. By doing so, they prove that they have an exceptional degree of love for God and a desire to

become like Jesus. As Jesus committed his cause to God, so also do they commit themselves unto their faithful Creator.

OLD AND NEW NATURES

We are told that Jesus' walk of faith and obedience is also an example for us to follow. When we are reviled, we are not to revile again. We are not to return evil for evil, but are to suffer such things and commit our cause to him that judges righteously. This course is contrary to the fallen human nature which continually urges that we should retaliate. This is a constant struggle between the old human nature and the New Creature in Christ Jesus.

We should oppose the old nature and strengthen the new. This will require a determined effort to follow the example of Jesus in each experience that may come upon us. We are to remember that God will avenge all unrighteousness in his own time and way. In his letter to the brethren at Rome, the Apostle Paul admonished, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."—Rom. 12:17-19

SUBMITTING TO GOD'S WILL

The word suffer is also used in the sense of permitting or letting matters be as they are. Concerning this aspect of suffering with Christ, we read, "Jesus answering said unto him [John], Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all

righteousness. Then he suffered him.” (Matt. 3:15) There were, no doubt, many times during Jesus’ earthly ministry, when he was being reviled, that he could have taken matters into his own hands and retaliated. Instead, however, he chose to ‘suffer it to be so.’ When he was taken to be crucified, he explained that he could call for twelve legions of angels to help him. He could have prevented his capture and the terrible death that he faced. Yet, he did not do this, but willingly suffered his enemies to take his life because he knew that it was the will of his loving Heavenly Father. Had he not submitted to the Father’s will the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled concerning the salvation of the sin-sick human family.

Jesus, as a perfect human being, could have done much reform work at the First Advent. Even imperfect people with strong wills have accomplished great things at various times. If Jesus had devoted himself to worldly pursuits, he could have made a great name for himself as a human being; but such a course would not permanently solve the problems of humanity. Jesus knew God’s long-range plan which required the sacrifice of his humanity. He believed in this plan, and was determined to faithfully complete his ministry on behalf of the sin-sick and dying human family. He refused to be swerved from this singleness of purpose by any halfway measures. God’s plan was more difficult, in that it required costly sacrifice.

The faithful followers of Christ must also suffer conditions to be as they are in this present evil world. They may be tempted by the natural desire to reform the world and make it a better place in

which to live. However, such noble desires must be curbed by remembering that, under the administration of Christ's future kingdom, all unrighteousness will be dealt with. With few exceptions, we must suffer present conditions to be as they are and await the will of God to be manifest. This course will be misunderstood by the great majority who do not know, or believe, God's plan for the restitution of all things during the future kingdom. The true Christian may be reviled as he gives his reasons for the hope that is in him. He may be thought foolish. Whatever the result, he will suffer it to be so, and by committing himself to his faithful Creator.

Even in the simple everyday vexing trials, the Christian is helped by suffering things to be as they are. Developing and maintaining the attitude of suffering unpleasant things to be as they are will help us to endure even more severe sufferings when they come to us. In this evil world, there are so many things which annoy us. We can do very little in the way of changing things, but we can help ourselves by remembering that God will change conditions soon. We prove our faith in his plan by suffering things to be as they are. We fight our tendencies by applying the promises, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28

SUFFER IT TO BE SO

Let us continue to be faithful in carrying out the Apostle Peter's advice in our featured scripture. By doing so we will receive the necessary strength to

do the will of our Heavenly Father until the old nature of our humanity is entirely consumed on the altar of sacrifice. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."—I Pet. 4:19 ■

Afterward

*God's ways are equal: storm or calm,
Seasons of peril and of rest,
The hurtling dart, the healing balm,
Are all apportioned as is best.
In judgments oft misunderstood,
In ways mysterious and obscure,
He brings from evil lasting good,
And makes the final gladness sure.
While Justice takes its course with strength,
Love bids our faith and hope increase:
He'll give the chastened world at length
His afterward of peace.*

*When the dread forces of the gale
His sterner purposes perform,
And human skill can naught avail,
Against the fury of the storm,
Let loving hearts trust in Him still,
Through all the dark and devious way;
For who would thwart His blessed will,
Which leads through night to joyous day?
Be still beneath His tender care
For He will make the tempest cease,
And bring out from the anguish here
An afterward of peace.*

*Look up, O Earth; no storm can last
Beyond the limits God hath set;
When its appointed work is past,
In joy thou shalt thy grief forget.
Where sorrow's plowshare hath swept through,
Thy fairest flowers of life shall spring,
For God shall grant thee life anew,
And all thy wastes shall laugh and sing,
Hope thou in Him; His plan for thee
Shall end in triumph and release;
Fear not, for thou shalt surely see
His afterward of peace.*

—Poems of Dawn

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JUNE 2—"I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—I Corinthians 2:2 (Z. '95-116 Hymn 116)

JUNE 9—"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33 (Z. '95-207 Hymn 119A)

JUNE 16—"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Hebrews 12:11 (Z. '96-44 Hymn 273)

JUNE 23—"He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."—Matthew 13:23 (Z. '96-99 Hymn 134)

JUNE 30—"In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, . . . Gather the wheat into my barn."—Matthew 13:30 (Z. '00-234 Hymn 232)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

K. Fernets		Saskatoon, SK	18
Buffalo, NY	June 4,5	Yorkton, SK	19
B. Keith		Selkirk, MB	20
Vernon, BC	June 16	Moorehead, MN	21
Red Deer, AB	17	Milwaukee, WI	22

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

E. Byrd		B. Montague	
Buffalo, NY	June 4,5	Portland, OR	June 17-19
R. Goodman		P. Mora	
Delaware Valley, PA	June 12	Portland, OR	June 17-19
R. Gorecki		J. Panucci	
England	June 1-7	Buffalo, NY	June 4,5
Germany	8-14	D. Rice	
L. Griehs		Portland, OR	June 17-19
Portland, OR	June 17-19	R. Shahan	
E. Kuenzli		Buffalo, NY	June 4,5
Delaware Valley, PA	June 12		

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CONVENTIONS

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

BUFFALO CONVENTION, June 4,5—Holiday Inn Buffalo-Intl. Airport location, 4600 Genesee Street, Buffalo, NY 14225. Contact R. Morin for reservations by May 8, 2011. Phone: (585) 322-3430

WATERBURY CONVENTION, June 4,5—Saturday in Morris, CT. Sunday at Litchfield Fire House Hall, Litchfield, CT. Contact H. Tsimonis, P. O. Box 1494, Waterbury, CT. 06721-1494. Phone: (860) 567-0109

DELAWARE VALLEY CONVENTION, June 12—Sheraton Bucks County Hotel, 400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047. Phone: (215) 547-4100. Contact R. Eldridge, 37 Falcon Road, Levittown, PA 19056. Phone: (215) 949-0652

PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 17-19—Ramada Inn Portland, 6221 NE 82nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97220. Mention Associated Bible Students of Portland for group rate. Deadline May 20. Contact S. Bicke'l Evans. Phone: (360) 750-7366

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, June 25-30—University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Johnstown, PA. Contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 1-3—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak, RR 1, Station MPP, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8. Phone: (306) 764-7692

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, July 2-4—Alliant University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego, CA 92131. For accommodations at Alliant University, or at nearby

hotels, contact B. Bach, P. O. Box 323, Alpine, CA 91903-0323. Phone: (619) 445-4879

CANADIAN CONVENTION, July 8-10—Sturgis Community Hall, Highway #9, Sturgis, Saskatchewan. Contact B. & C. Jakubowski, 108 Hudson Street, Sturgis, SK S0A 4A0. Phone (306) 548-4665

NIGERIA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 19-21—Emmanuel College Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621

SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 2-5—Seabeck Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Hwy NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Room reservations, contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 838-3822. Other information, contact D. Christiansen. Phone: (360) 440-3283

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 3,4—Fa-ho-lo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact V. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 9-11—Radisson Inn Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505

COLORADO CONVENTION, September 16-18—Red Lion Hotel-Denver Central, 4040 Quebec Street, Denver, CO 80216. Contact L. Turner, 1966 Mount Zion Drive, Golden, CO 80401. Phone: (303) 278-4091 or (303) 809-1957

*“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us,
and his love is perfected in us.”
—I John 4:12*

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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