

The Dawn

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In the Day Appointed

"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

LATE INTO THE night a schoolboy struggled over a mathematical problem given to him by his teacher. He checked and rechecked his figures. He could find nothing wrong, yet the proper answer to the problem was not forthcoming. At last, his brain weary with the effort, he decided to retire for the night. The next morning, rested, and ready to try again, the schoolboy took another look at his figures, and to his surprise discovered that he had completely overlooked a very vital factor, not taking it into consideration at all. When this factor was restored to its proper place in the solving of the problem the correct answer at once appeared. Naturally the boy wondered why he had been so dull as not to make this discovery the night before.

This is a simple story, but it illustrates why the Athenians of old had their "unknown God," and why in all ages there has been so much religious confusion and controversy, the reason being that an important feature in the plan of God has been overlooked; and without this all the efforts of man to discover the true God and know his designs toward his human creatures have failed.

The problems which have arisen and begged for a solution have been myriad. This is reflected in the hundreds of different interpretations of the Christian religion alone, to say nothing of the equally confusing theories held by

believers in the many non-Christian gods. There have been many sincere efforts to discover the 'unknown God', and to understand the meaning of life in the light of his plans and purposes, but without satisfying success; without success, that is, to those who have examined their findings in the light of unbiased reason, and are not willing to say that black is white, and white is black.

Some of the Problems

For the moment let us confine our investigation to the professed Christian religion as its teachings have come down to us from the Dark Ages. The general idea is that those who accept Christ in this life, and obey his teachings, are 'saved', and at death will be taken to heaven. This seems good until we examine it.

Let us think of a child born into a Christian family, his father, perhaps, a clergyman. This boy gets a good start. As he matures in age and experience in his godly home, it is quite likely that he follows in the steps of his father and decides to live a Christian life. According to this view it would seem likely that he would qualify for salvation and for heaven.

Naturally, we should be, and are glad that this boy had such a favorable opportunity in life. But this is not wholly satisfactory. We think of another boy born in the slums of one of our great cities. His parents are intoxicated at the time of his begetting, and the mother perhaps even drunk when the baby is born. The child matures in surroundings of filth, debauchery, godlessness and crime. He never hears the name of God or of Jesus except as profanity.

In due course this human also dies, but according to the generally accepted theory he cannot go to heaven. Instead, he must go to hell, which, according to the teachings of the Dark Ages, is a place of eternal torture. Reason tells us that this is not right, that this is not the correct answer to the problem of those who, through no

fault of their own, are not born into an environment conducive to Christian living.

And then we think if only something had been done about this situation long ago, so that today there would be no slums, no seedbeds of debauchery and crime into which an innocent child could be born, how wonderful it would have been. But, as we think of this, we realize that it would not have changed the situation too much, even if it had been possible to reform the whole world by human efforts. We would still be concerned about the countless millions who had died before man got around to this laudable enterprise. Indeed, we have our doubts if such sweeping reforms can be accomplished by man. We know that efforts along these lines are, and have been almost constantly made, but without success.

As we examine this problem further, we discover that it is larger than at first it appeared, for it includes the non-Christian world, and the fact that here other billions have been born and have died without as much as having heard the name of Jesus—the only name, according to the Bible, given under heaven or among men whereby salvation is obtainable. (Acts 4:12) There is no use saying that these poor creatures will be saved in their ignorance, for immediately we sense that if this be so, it is a disservice to preach Christ anywhere in the world, for it would be better to leave everyone in ignorance of him, and thus all would be saved.

And then there is the problem of human suffering in this life. Why does God permit infants to suffer and die? Why is it that frequently the unrighteous seem to prosper more than the righteous? There is the person who tried hard to live a godly life, but contracts some malignant disease, and after a spell of intense suffering, dies at an early age; while a sinful person enjoys good health, and passes away quietly in death, and without suffering, at a ripe old age. If God is in his heaven, why does he permit these inequalities? And so we have another problem.

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Next we mention two cases—one where the parents in a mixed-religion marriage had failed to have their child baptized before it was killed; and another case where the mother prayed for the safety of her boy on the battlefield, yet he was killed. It does not matter where we look, we find problems for which human wisdom is unable to find the answer. Man has tried to figure it all out, but when reason is allowed to prevail, failure is quite generally acknowledged.

One 'answer' to it all is simply the fact that there is no such thing as suffering and death, either here or hereafter; that all this is 'mortal error', thus closing one's eyes to reality. But reason tells us that when we have a toothache there is something wrong. We just cannot solve problems by burying them with unreason.

Ignorance

In Paul's sermon on Mars' hill he spoke of the 'ignorance' reflected in the worship of idols, and tells us that God had 'winked' at this, denoting that he had not taken it seriously into account in connection with his own great plan of salvation for his human creatures. (Acts 17:30) To this Paul adds, "But now commands all men everywhere to repent."

This does not mean that all men in Paul's day heard and understood this command to repent. It is simply Paul's way of explaining that with the coming of Jesus a new phase of the divine plan was initiated. Jesus came to be the Light of the world, the one who was destined by the Creator to enlighten all mankind—"every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:9; 8:12) Ignorance was no longer to be 'winked' at in the sense that nothing would be done about it. A turning point had come.

Jesus was put to death at an early age, and few of the millions of humanity were enlightened by his personal ministry during the time of his presence. Jesus commissioned his disciples to be the light of the world, but

likened them to candles. (Matt. 5:14, 15) Although Jesus warned against putting these candles under a bushel and hiding them, we realize that the enlightenment produced by candles is not great, not far-reaching; and it has turned out this way.

Despite the earnest efforts of the faithful followers of the Master throughout the centuries, millions upon millions have continued to go down into death without hearing the call to repentance in an understandable manner even though God placed no restrictions upon its proclamation. The command to repentance in this age was not designed to convert the world. God has not as yet been trying to convert the world. God's work in the earth thus far has been the finding and selection of a people to be associated with Jesus in his kingdom.

Repentance has been the first step necessary for these to take. These repentant ones, trusting in the name of Jesus, and consecrated to do God's will, have been invited to suffer and to die with Jesus, and are promised that if faithful they will live and reign with him.—II Tim. 2:11, 12; Rev. 2:10; 20:6

The Missing Factor

Paul explained that God had 'winked' at the ignorance of the past, and obviously has continued largely to do so since, "because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts 17:31) Here is the factor in the divine plan which so many searchers after truth have overlooked. It is the future Day of Judgment. Peter and our Lord indicate that this Day of Judgment will be a thousand years in length. (II Pet. 3:8-10; Rev. 20:4, 6) So an entire thousand years have been left out of God's great plan of salvation. No wonder students of the Bible have been confronted with so many unsolved problems!

True, in the creeds which have come down to us from the Dark Ages, mention is made of a future Judgment

Day, but the concept of this is quite different from the teachings of the Bible pertaining to the Day of Judgment. According to these creeds of a darker past, the eternal destiny of each individual, saint and sinner, is fixed at death. The saints are immediately taken to heaven, and the sinners to a hell of torment.

The Roman Catholic Church, of course, has an intermediate place called Purgatory. It is the expectation that those who go to Purgatory will eventually become purified and fit for heaven. But whether we consider the Protestant or the Roman Catholic view, there seems no logical need for a future Day of Judgment. However, the general idea is that at some far-distant time a twenty-four hour day will be set aside in which the good and the bad will all be brought out of Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory—according to where they have been consigned when they died—and caused to pass before the judgment seat of God where they will be re-judged and sent back to their respective places of abode. Obviously nothing at all is accomplished by this. The view is unreasonable, and confusing. Only another problem.

But the Day of Judgment portrayed in the Bible is quite different. Actually, it is a thousand-year period of probation for the sin-cursed, dying, and dead world of mankind. In order to appreciate fully the extent to which the restoration of this great truth to its proper position in the divine plan helps to solve the many problems with which we are confronted, it is essential first to note briefly the true teachings of the Bible with respect to death.

The generally accepted theory that there is no death is not supported by the Word of God. Death is not a gateway into another life, either happier or more miserable than the present life. Death is "the wages of sin," the penalty for disobedience to divine law. (Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:17) Death is a reality. "The dead know not anything." (Eccles. 9:5) However, this otherwise cold and forbidding reality is made brighter by the Bible's many references to

death as being a "sleep." (Ps. 13:3; John 11: 14) In the ordinary course of events, those who sleep will awaken. So it is with those who are asleep in death. They will be awakened by divine power, even as Jesus awakened Lazarus nearly two thousand years ago.—John 11:43, 44

Since God looks upon the dead as merely being asleep, and since it is his plan to awaken all from the sleep of death, it is important for us to take his viewpoint in his dealings with his human creatures. If a friend of ours was in distress and asked for help we would do something about it. However, our assistance might not become effective until the day after the request was made. Meanwhile our friend would spend a night in sleep. The remedy for the situation might be spread out over a number of days, and our friend would become unconscious in sleep several nights. But the friend would not charge us with neglect or lack of interest simply because he slept one or more nights before our help remedied the situation which was troubling him. So with God's plan to help his human creatures. The fact that he is allowing one generation after another to fall asleep in death does not mean that he lacks interest. Neither does it imply that he lacks the necessary power to deal with the malady of sin and death. It is simply that his time for doing away with all evil is his future thousand-year Day of Judgment.

One of the evils to be overcome at that time will be the ignorance of the people concerning God and his loving provisions of life which he has made for them through Christ. In his sermon on Mars' hill, the Apostle Paul contrasted the ignorance of the past with the future Judgment Day God has appointed, and in which Jesus will be the great and loving Judge.

Paul knew that this was God's plan. One of the prophecies of the Judgment Day calls attention to this: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood

rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth.”—Ps.96:11-13

The Prophet Isaiah wrote that when the LORD’s “judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9) Isaiah also foretold that then “the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. 11:9) Contrary to the teachings of the Dark Ages, the LORD’s work of judgment will be more than simply pronouncing sentence upon the wicked and rewarding the righteous. It will be a judging of them based upon enlightenment by the truth, and giving them an opportunity to turn to him in obedience and thus receive his gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. 6:23

Belief Based on Knowledge

John 3:16 reads, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is a wonderfully revealing text of Scripture. But the puny mind of man has endeavored, by vain and misleading philosophies, to limit the opportunity of believing in Christ to the present short span of life. This limitation resulted from overlooking the promised future thousand years of probation and judgment. But the Bible places no such limitation upon this promise.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. 10:14, 15) No one will be saved because of ignorance; but, thank God, the time for the enlightenment of the people concerning salvation through Christ is not limited to the present life, nor to the present age. There is another “day” in the divine plan, and those who are now sleeping in death will be

awakened and enlightened in that glorious new day, the Day of Judgment.

The Bible, of course, speaks of people and situations which pertained to the period in which it was written. But what the Bible says concerning these should be taken as a guide in our understanding of the basic principles of the divine plan. In connection with the future Judgment Day, Jesus said concerning the people of Jewish cities who rejected his teachings that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for them.—Matt. 11:20-24; Mark 6:11

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were notoriously wicked. In fact God destroyed them because of their sin, and no attempt was made at that time to enlighten and convert these wicked people. Yet Jesus tells us that it will be 'tolerable', or favorable, for them in the Judgment Day—more 'favorable' than for those who rejected his teachings at the time of his First Advent.

This means that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and those of Jesus' day, are to be awakened from the sleep of death in the Judgment Day. Jesus had good authority for saying that it would then be more favorable for the Sodomites than for the Israelites; for thus had the Prophet Ezekiel foretold.

In Ezekiel's prophecy he describes the awakening of the dead as a release from captivity, and a returning to their 'former estate'. He wrote: "As I live, saith the LORD God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. . . . Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righ-

teous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters. When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them: that thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.”—Ezek.16:48-54

There can be no doubt about the unrighteousness of those described in this passage of Scripture. The Samaritans, noting the sin of the Israelites who professed to serve God, felt justified in their own corrupt course, and thus were comforted in their sins. But they are all to be brought back from their captivity in death, for Ezekiel continues: “When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.”—vs. 55

But the purpose of restoring these sinful ones to life is not to tell them that they are unworthy of God’s blessings and then destroy them, or worse still, consign them to a place of eternal torture. No, as we continue on in this wonderful prophecy, we find that the Israelites and the Sodomites and Samaritans are brought into harmony with God; into covenant relationship with him. (vss. 60-63) Continuing in this state of reconciliation to God, they will live forever—their experience with sin and its results having proved of value to them by way of contrast with righteousness and the favor of God.

Jesus’ observation that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than it would be for unrighteous Israelites who had been favored with more light, clearly places their awakening from the sleep of death as being accomplished during the world’s coming Judgment Day.

We can see, then, that the purpose of the Judgment Day is to enlighten and reform sinners—giving them an opportunity to obey the light which will then be world-wide, and upon the basis of their obedience, restoring them to the full favor of God to live forever.

Problems Solved

Now we can see why the thousand-year Judgment Day is such an important factor in solving the many problems which confront us in connection with the character of God and his designs for his human creatures. Take the child in the mixed-religion marriage dilemma who died before being baptized. That child is merely asleep in death and will be awakened in the morning of God's tomorrow.

Then, growing to maturity, that person can make his own decision with respect to serving God. The decision will not be based on the confusing and conflicting dogmas of men, but upon the true knowledge of God which will then fill the earth. The parents also will have the same opportunity; and what joy there will be for all concerned! Concerning God's loving provision for children who are snatched away from their parents in death, and as a comfort to parents, the Prophet Jeremiah wrote:

"Thus saith the LORD: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the LORD: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD: and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border."—Jer. 31:15-17

Then there are the many cases of those born in debauchery, and reared in ignorance and without benefit of wholesome, godly surroundings. Thank God the destiny of these is not fixed at death! If God can, in his great love, mercy, and power, raise the Sodomites from death,

enlighten and bless them, he will surely do the same for all who similarly have been more the victims of unrighteous circumstances than willful opposers of his just and righteous laws.

Perhaps some of those born and reared under more advantageous circumstances, but who have not fully lived up to their responsibilities, will find it more difficult in the Judgment Day than those who have lived and died in ignorance, and in the squalor of sin. But judging from the lesson taught by Jesus with respect to the Sodomites and the Israelites, every individual will, in the Judgment Day, be dealt with from the standpoint of the light enjoyed in the present life, and the degree to which the light influenced his life.

On this point Jesus said: "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."—Luke 12:47, 48

The lesson here is that God's dealings with all his human creatures will be just and merciful. We could not ask for more! In keeping with this, we need have no fears as to the future status of the heathen, for these also will be enlightened and blessed. The same divine principles of mercy and justice will apply to them as to all who have lived and died without a knowledge of the true and living God of the Bible.

This means that all of Adam's children in the antediluvian world will be given their opportunity in the future Judgment Day, including Adam and Eve. It means that all since that time, right down to the present, including the countless millions of atheists in the world today, will be awakened from the sleep of death, enlightened, and given an opportunity to believe, obey, and live.

It even includes those who have been taught such grotesque conceptions of God that they have believed him to be a tyrant who planned from the beginning to eternally torture countless of his human creatures. How thankful we are that this hideous teaching is to be dispelled by the light of the new day, the Judgment Day, so that the unknown God of love and mercy will be seen and appreciated for what he is, not dreaded for what the creeds of the Dark Ages pictured him to be.

Prayers Answered

Then the sincere and earnest prayers of millions for blessings they were not properly prepared to receive and use will be answered. The mother who prayed for the safety of her boy on the battlefield will find that the LORD's way of protecting him was better than hers. He was allowed to go to sleep in death, to be awakened in the Judgment Day, when all wars will be ended, having escaped the further horrors of the battlefield, and perhaps years in a veteran's hospital suffering physically or mentally, or both.

Every mother wants the best for her children. Every normal man and woman in the world, in every generation, has deplored the inequalities with which they have been surrounded. All have been touched with the sufferings of the world, and have wished they could do something about it. But the great and loving God of all creation, the "unknown God" of the Athenians, has been just as mindful of these evils, and more so, than any of his creatures could possibly be. The difference is that he is able to do something about it.

Two thousand years ago God sent his beloved Son to die for the sin-cursed and dying race, thus opening the way for a reconciliation of all mankind to himself. The fact that people have continued to suffer and die, even as they did before Jesus came, does not defeat God's loving plan for their ultimate blessing. When his due time comes,

which is the Day of Judgment, they will be awakened and given an opportunity of accepting the blessings he has provided for them.

How short this little while of suffering for each individual, and for each generation, will then seem to be by comparison with the endless ages of blessing and joy which will stretch out before all who, upon the basis of enlightenment, respond to divine love and turn in obedience to serve the true and living God.

The House of God

Meanwhile a few among earth's millions, beginning with Pentecost, have been enlightened, and have had pointed out to them the privilege of walking in the footsteps of Jesus and of proving worthy of being associated with him in the great future kingdom work of judging and blessing all mankind. This means that the centuries since Pentecost have actually been a 'Judgment Day' for the disciples of Christ, who are referred to by the Apostle Peter as 'the house of God'. Peter wrote: "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—I Pet. 4:17, 18

Just previous to this, the Apostle Peter explained that the disciples of Christ must expect to suffer, even as Jesus suffered. He wrote, "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

The fact that the Christian is thus called upon to suffer makes the 'narrow way' a difficult one for him in which to walk, and some become discouraged. It is to this that Peter refers in his question, "If the righteous scarcely be

saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The creeds answer that these will appear in the fires of eternal torture, where they will curse God throughout eternity. Peter also asked, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" The answer to this last question is that those who do not *ultimately* obey the Gospel "shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23) But Peter does not so much as hint that the opportunity to obey is limited to the present short span of life.

So the answer to his question, "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" is, that they will be awakened from the sleep of death and appear among the millions who will be enlightened and blessed during the world's future Judgment Day of one thousand years.

In fact, none but sinners will appear for judgment at that time, the righteous of all previous ages having already been judged and found worthy of life. Jesus said, "Indeed, I truly say to you, He who hears my Word, and believes him who sent me, has [*Greek: alonlan*, meaning 'everlasting'] life, and comes not into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."—John 5:24, *Wilson's Diaglott Translation*

This, of course, is upon the basis of faith. The actual receiving of life will be in the resurrection, as shown in verses 28 and 29, where Jesus explains, "Wonder not at this; because an hour comes in which all those in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come forth; those having done good things, to a resurrection of life; and those having done evil things, to a resurrection of judgment."—*Wilson's Diaglott Translation*

The Greek word here translated 'judgment' is *krisis*. It corresponds in meaning to our English word crisis. When the unrighteous and the partially unrighteous dead are awakened from the sleep of death and enlightened with a true knowledge of God, they will indeed be faced with a crisis in their experience.

While God 'winked' at the ignorance of their past, their ignorance and their distorted conceptions of him will now be swept away. Isaiah wrote of that time that the LORD will remove the 'veil' that is spread over the minds of all people. (Isa. 25:7) All the 'spiritually blind' eyes will be opened. There will be no excuse for not knowing the divine requirements. The result will be that those who do not believe and obey will be destroyed.—Isa. 35:5; Acts 3:23

On the other hand, those who face this crisis successfully—which undoubtably will be the vast majority—will be restored to perfection of human life such as Adam enjoyed before he transgressed the divine law. This return to perfection and to life eternal is described by Jesus as a resurrection of judgment, or a full re-standing of life based upon obedience in their time of testing. The Prophet Isaiah described it as a returning to life over a "way of holiness," a 'way', he explains, over which the unclean cannot continue to travel, but which has been provided for them as a way to holiness, or perfection.—Isa. 35:8

Isaiah explains that there will be no 'ravenous beast' on this way of holiness, nor will there be any 'lion'. These are symbols of the many evils which now stand in the way of the righteous. (vs. 9) Satan himself is described in the Bible as a "roaring lion," but of that future time of judgment and blessing, the Scriptures assure us that Satan will be bound.—I Pet. 5:8; Rev. 20:1, 2

The Prophet Isaiah also wrote, "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10) The 'ransomed of the LORD' are *all* mankind, who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Paul wrote that Jesus gave himself a "ransom for all." (I Tim. 2:3-6) Their return is from the sleep of death, and what a happy time it will be, for they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This glorious future day of probation and of the giving of life—the world's Judgment Day—has been assured, said Paul on Mars' hill, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Because he was raised to life, all for whom he died—which is the entire world of mankind—will likewise be brought back to life. This is the great truth concerning the Athenians' 'unknown God' which Paul presented to those skeptical philosophers on Mars' hill. How did they receive it? The record states: "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. . . . Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed." (Acts 17:32-34) The attitude of the unbelieving world has not changed much during the more than nineteen centuries since that time. The world by its own wisdom still does not know the true and living God of the Bible, the great Creator of heaven and earth. He is still an 'unknown God' to the vast majority.

But, as we have seen, it will not always be so. When, through the agencies of Christ's kingdom—that "mountain," or kingdom foretold in the prophecies of Daniel (2:44,45; 7:27), and other prophets—tears are wiped away, and death is swallowed up in victory, the people will respond with delight. They will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:6-9

The people have indeed 'waited' for the blessing of joy and life which will be showered upon them by the true and living God. They have had their hideous gods, and their unknown gods, in which they have hoped and trusted. But how they will rejoice when, the eyes of their understanding being opened, they see and decide to obey the only true God. By then all the enemies of God and of righteousness will be destroyed, even death itself. (I Cor. 15:25,26) Let us thank God for the blessings he has provided for the suffering and dying world of mankind.

The **New English Translation** of Revelation 15:3,4, sums the conclusion of the Judgment Day up very nicely with these words: "Great and marvelous are thy deeds, O LORD God, sovereign over all; just and true are thy ways, thou king of the ages. Who shall not revere thee, LORD, and do homage to thy name? for thou alone art holy. All nations shall come and worship in thy presence, for thy just dealings stand revealed." □



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LESSON FOR JULY 7

Challenged to Act

KEY VERSE: *"Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach."*

—Nehemiah 2:17

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Nehemiah 1:5,6; 2:2-5, 15-18*

NEHEMIAH WAS A cup-bearer in the court of King Artaxerxes. He was residing in the winter palace of the kings of Persia in Shushan when the Bible narrative begins.

Hanani, one of his brethren, together with other men of Judah, returned from Jerusalem and visited Nehemiah. From them he learned of the deplorable state of his people in Judah, the great affliction through which they were passing, and that the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down, not having been rebuilt since their destruction when the nation had been taken into captivity to Babylon. When Ne-hemiah

learned this he "wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." (Neh. 1:1-4) Nehemiah's prayer was one in which he confessed the sins of Israel, and pleaded for the prosperity of his people, based not upon merit, but upon divine mercy.—vss. 4-11

Nehemiah decided that he would, if possible, secure the king's cooperation in a proposed visit to Judah on behalf of God's people. But he had to wait several weeks before his prayers were answered and an opportunity was provided by the LORD for him to speak to the king. He had no way of predetermining how the

great Persian emperor would react to such a request, and even considered that his life might be imperiled by taking on this new interest. Since he had risen to a position of high responsibility in the courts of the Persian government, Artaxerxes might interpret his request as disloyal, and perhaps, at the very least, not in the best interest of Persia, which was at that time in the position of overlord of Jerusalem.

But the great Jehovah is able to prepare the way against all odds and through seemingly natural circumstances, for those who desire to act in harmony with his will. In this case, Nehemiah's sadness of countenance was noticed by the king, who inquired as to his well-being. This was the opening he had waited for, and he, no doubt, with a feeling of trepidation, spoke of what troubled him. By what followed it is apparent that regardless of how Artaxerxes felt about the plight of the Jews at Jerusalem, he had great regard for Nehe-

miah, and offered immediate assistance to his cause.

In making preparations to visit Jerusalem, Nehemiah said to the king, "Let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into." Nehemiah testifies that "the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me."—Neh. 2:1-8

When he arrived at Jerusalem, Nehemiah made his own inspection of the wall to assess the situation. And then he called others to join him in the task of getting the wall rebuilt.

It is obvious that his interests went beyond that of merely safeguarding his people. He desired that through his efforts, God might be glorified. □

Strength from God

KEY VERSE: *"In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us."* — Nehemiah 4:20

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Nehemiah 4:6-12, 15-20

IN NEHEMIAH'S APPROACH to the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, important factors may be noted. First, he saw the need: "Ye see the distress that we are in." (Neh. 2:17) As a rule, it is difficult to engender interest in a project for which there is no need. Nehemiah's confidence in the success of the undertaking was based on the fact that he was able to see the LORD's providence in his being able to obtain the needed authority from King Artaxerxes.

This not only gave him confidence, but when he related the circumstances to those in Jerusalem who would share the responsibility of the undertaking with him, they said, "Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work."—vs. 18

As always during this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), when there is something to be done for the LORD, Satan has his emissaries ready to oppose the work. The opposition may be violent and open, or it may be concealed and subtle. In any event, the LORD's servants need always to take this into consideration, and to prepare themselves accordingly with whatever safeguards may be necessary at the time, and in keeping with the LORD's will.

Nehemiah, and the faithful Jews in Jerusalem, had their enemies who were determined that the walls of the city would not be rebuilt. These were Sanballat, the Horonite, and his servant, Tobiah, an Ammonite, and Geshem, the Arabian, who were leaders of the movement to stop

the work. Nehemiah took every precaution to protect his work against any aggressive move that might be made against him by these clever adversaries. When his enemies learned that the work of building was actually in progress, they "conspired all of them together, . . . to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."—Neh. 4:8

It became necessary for Nehemiah to make suitable arrangements for the defense of the workers. Nevertheless, it was a strenuous and dangerous operation. Recounting it, Nehemiah wrote, "So we labored in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let everyone with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labor on the day."—vss. 21-22

These enemies endeavored to frighten Nehemiah with a story that the king had been informed that the

Israelites were planning a rebellion, and would make Nehemiah king. Nehemiah knew that this also was merely a trick, and told them so. But the impact of their efforts was discouraging. Nehemiah said, "They all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands." (Neh. 6:9) The success of this great man was his utter dependence upon God.

The builders, under the direction of Nehemiah, would not be deterred by their enemies' threat of possible violence. The record states, "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work." (Neh. 4:6) Here is another formula for success in the service of the LORD; namely, "a mind to work." Acceptable service to the LORD must be motivated with a sincere desire to serve, and not merely by a sense of duty. □

Stopping Exploitation

KEY VERSE: *"I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother."—Nehemiah 5:7*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Nehemiah 5:1-12*

NEHEMIAH WAS NOT only a great builder, but, being appointed by the king to be governor of Judea, he ruled wisely and with equity. This is shown particularly in chapter five. It seems that the Israelites themselves were oppressing one another as opportunity afforded. Nehemiah was angry over this. He consulted with himself, the narrative states, and then rebuked the nobles and the rulers in the words of our Key Verse.

He instituted a reform which did away with this evil, calling attention to his own example, in that as governor he had not accepted the remuneration that ordinarily went with that office. He realized that he would be taking money raised by taxation in Judea from his brethren. Furthermore, at his own table he

fed "an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers," besides those who came to Judea "from among the heathen." (vs. 17) These sidelights reveal the true character of Nehemiah.

Another problem Nehemiah had to deal with was the propensity of the Jews to return to their old sins of ignoring the Law, particularly in this instance, in not properly observing the Sabbath. The Jews themselves, as well as "men of Tyre," brought their wares and sold them to the people in Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day. (Neh. 13:16) Nehemiah "contended with the nobles of Judah and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath Day?" Forthwith he commanded that the gates of the city be closed when it "began to be

dark before the Sabbath."
—vss. 17-19

But this did not stop the evil, for the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged without Jerusalem. (vs. 20) Apparently the people of the city were willing to travel out to these merchants and purchase what they thought they needed. Perhaps the merchants, as well as those who bought their wares, thought this would be an acceptable compromise with the requirements of the Law.

But compromise with the LORD is never acceptable. Nehemiah knew this, and took a strong stand against it. He said to them, "Why lodge ye about [*Margin*, "before"] the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you." (vs. 21) We read that from "that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath." Courageous faithfulness had won.

Later, and, evidently also under direction of Nehemiah, a group of the leaders in Israel drew up a special covenant outlining various obligations to the

LORD. The points mentioned in this covenant were not new, being included in the Law Covenant mediated by Moses. Perhaps the makers of this covenant concluded that these points called for special emphasis. Nehemiah was the first signer of this auxiliary covenant; and tradition has it that the signers as a group formed the basis for what later developed into the Jewish Sanhedrin.—Neh. 9,10

Nehemiah's last work of reformation was a cleansing of the Temple from occupation by non-Jews, and by priests who had married heathen wives, and by seeing to it that the services of the Temple were properly conducted. Through all his faithful service, Nehemiah sought nothing for himself except the favor and blessing of the LORD. In connection with several of his courageous acts, he uttered a simple prayer to his God. It appears in the last verse of his book—"Remember me, O my God, for good." □

Courage to Endure

KEY VERSE: *"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."*—Nehemiah 6:3

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Nehemiah 6:1-9, 15, 16*

THE WORK OF the LORD today is not to build city walls, but to work out our own salvation. (Phil. 2:12) This is accomplished by learning and doing the will of God. We learn the will of God through the study of his Word—and as we apply its instructions in our lives we are working out our salvation.

These instructions are not difficult to understand. We are to be faithful witnesses of the truth; and we are to give all diligence to root out from our hearts all selfishness, and to be filled with and controlled by the love of God which manifests itself in joy, peace, longsuffering, and brotherly kindness.

And today, even as in the case of Nehemiah, we have our enemies, the chief one of which is Satan, who

seek to intimidate and to discourage. But we also have the LORD on our side, and he is more powerful than all our enemies, and has provided us with an armor of righteousness for our protection.—Eph. 6:10-18; Phil. 2:13

In Paul's second epistle to Timothy, written when Paul was an old man nearing the end of his earthly course, he specially emphasized this quality of endurance: "Take thy part in suffering hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (II Tim. 2:3, *RSV, Margin*) This expression appropriately represents the tests which come to all who embrace such an unpopular message as the true Gospel, and who faithfully let their light shine. In connection with these experiences, we would spe-

cially keep in mind that the great Adversary, Satan, the prince of darkness, is the one who instigates all the opposition and persecution resulting from the proclamation of the true Gospel message. Again, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."—vs. 10

How very fitting that Paul, who had endured so much in his Master's service for so many years, should be used to exhort us, his fellow-travelers in the narrow way, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Paul said, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. . . . For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him."—II Tim. 2:10,11

Associating this illustration of a good soldier with the subject of enduring hardness is most appropriate. One of the peculiar faculties a soldier must acquire after entering the

army is to learn to endure. And in time of war this often means strenuous discipline, and unnatural and arduous deprivation, if one would be classed as a good soldier.

We should remember also that it is not natural courage and strength that enables God's people to endure; neither is it great knowledge of the truth and opportunities of serving it. But, as the Apostle Paul said, "Love . . . covers all things, believes all things; hopes for all things; endures all things." (I Cor. 13:7, *Diaglott Translation*) This means love for God and his truth, and love for his people.

This is the great principle that so impelled Nehemiah that he would not allow himself to be distracted from his service. All his time and ability was devoted to the peculiar service God had assigned to him, until it was accomplished. Let us also say to our distractors: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."—Neh. 6:3 □

Take Earnest Heed

"We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

—Hebrews 2:1

MANY ADMONITIONS ARE given in the Bible to encourage continued zeal and patient endurance on the part of the LORD's dedicated people. Our 'first love' enthusiasm needs to be maintained, not for a few months or years, but to the end of the way of sacrifice. It is only those who endure unto the end, and are faithful even unto death, who receive the crown of life and live and reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 2:10; 20:6

Our text indicates that 'holding fast' consists in not letting slip "the things which we have heard." It is the truth that is thus referred to, and the purpose of the truth is to guide us in the knowing and doing of God's will. Only through the Word of truth do we know what our Heavenly Father wants us to do and to be. To let the truth 'slip', therefore, would be like a builder neglecting his blueprints. He might continue to build, but he could not be sure that a building thus erected would be in harmony with the architect's plans.

Our text opens with that meaningful word, "therefore." This indicates that the preceding context has an important bearing on what follows. When we turn back to the preceding chapter it at once becomes apparent why the word 'therefore' is used. The things which we have 'heard' are of vital importance because of the source from which they have reached us. That source is mentioned in the very first word of the epistle—"God." Paul reminds us that

God had previously spoken to his people through his holy prophets, and that now he had spoken through his Son.—Heb. 1:1, 2

And what a high position of authority the Heavenly Father had given to his Son! He had appointed him “heir of all things,” exalted him to the “express image” of his own person, and seated him “at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Jesus had been made “better than the angels,” and had “by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Because he had “loved righteousness and hated iniquity,” God had anointed him “with the oil of gladness above his fellows.”—Heb. 1:3-9

It is through this divinely authorized channel that our Heavenly Father spoke to his called-out ones at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and has continued thus to speak throughout the age. In a very special sense this is true at the present time, when the Son is again present, serving his followers with “meat in due season,” for this is what he promised to do when he returned.—Luke 12: 37; Rev. 3:20

“Therefore,” as Paul said, it is important that we take earnest heed to “the things which we have heard,” for they have not reached us through any ordinary channel, but from the glorified Jesus, who has been exalted to the right hand of God! This means that every aspect of the divine plan is of vital concern to each dedicated follower of the Master. To let any part of the truth slip through lack of interest or zeal, would be as though we “refused” him who has spoken to us.—Heb. 12:25

Laxness

The Epistle to the Hebrews indicates that it was written to a group of Jewish believers in Christ who were not fully living up to their privileges as followers of the Master. They had not applied the principles of the truth in their lives as they should have done. For this reason they

needed to be taught again the basic doctrines of the divine plan.—Heb. 5:12-14

The lack of a clear understanding of the truth would subject the Hebrew brethren to discouragement, and thus to a lack of patience in meeting the experiences which inevitably would be theirs as Christ's disciples. In Hebrews 2:9-12, we are told of Jesus' death as the world's Redeemer, and of the fact that his brethren had the privilege of suffering and dying with him, that just as the Captain of their salvation had been made perfect through suffering, they also should expect to suffer; and in this and other respects they "are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Suffering is not pleasant, and ordinarily it tends to discourage. In the early days of their Christian walk, the Hebrews did not become disheartened. Paul explains that they had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and had "endured a great fight of affliction," partly while they themselves were made a "gazing-stock," and partly while they were the companions of those who were so used.—Heb. 10:32-34

Apparently, however, this had been their attitude only in the beginning, in the "former days," and now they were admonished to call this time to remembrance, with the implication that they were to return to their former position of zeal and joy in the face of Christian persecution.

But it could be that their laxity in holding fast to the truth had resulted in their overlooking the real purpose of Christian suffering. Perhaps they were now looking upon their persecutions as evidences that the LORD's blessing was no longer with them. If they were failing to rightly divide the Word of truth, they may have wondered why the LORD did not take away the "rebuke" that was upon his people, as he had promised to do.—Isa. 25:8

Whatever the reason, they were not facing up to their privileges of suffering with Christ as courageously as they

did in the beginning. To remind the brethren afresh of their privilege of suffering with Jesus, Paul admonished them to look unto Jesus as their example, explaining that they had not yet resisted "unto blood, striving against sin."—Heb. 12:24

To resist unto blood means actually to die for righteousness' sake. They had suffered much in the beginning. Their 'goods' had been 'spoiled', and they had endured 'a great fight of afflictions', but they had not as yet 'resisted unto blood' as Jesus had done. They had not as yet been faithful even unto death. They had done the will of God in consecrating themselves to him and to the divine cause, but they had need of patience—patience that would enable them to endure unto the end.—Heb. 10:35, 36

In order to be patient in tribulation it is essential to know that trials are an important facet of the divine will for us. The reason for Christian suffering is clearly revealed in the Book of Hebrews, as well as elsewhere in the Scriptures, and if through neglect, worldliness, or lack of faith we let this understanding 'slip', we will become discouraged by our experiences, hence will fail to endure unto the end of the way, which is necessary if we are to receive the crown of life.

Incentive to Faithfulness

Hebrews 3:1, 2 reads, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house." Here we are reminded that the consecrated followers of the Master in the present age are 'partakers of the heavenly calling'.

Much is implied by this. Paul referred to the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14) A prize is something for which a person is willing to strive, and to make sacrifices to attain. This is especially true of the 'prize of the high', or 'heavenly,' (Cont'd on Page 37)

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Los Angeles(Mon)	KTYM 1160	6:30 a.m.
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Buffalo	WHLD 1270	12:00 noon
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Pottstown	WPAZ 1370	12:45 p.m.

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE . . .

... of adjustments which are continually being made in the "Frank and Ernest" program schedule. New stations will be added, and some old ones will no longer carry our program. You may wish to check this schedule regularly, to see what is happening in your area.

... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

Banff	CFHC 1340	11:45 a.m.
Brooks	CIBQ 1340	9:00 a.m.
Canmore	CFNC 1450	11:45 a.m.
Stettler	CKFQ 1400 a.m.	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan	CKAY 1500	9:00 a.m.
Duncan	CKAY 1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF 1340	9:00 a.m.
Nanaimo	CHUB 1570	9:30 p.m.
Qualicum-	CHPQ 1370	9:30 p.m.
Parksville		

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

Leamington	CHYR 710	5:00 p.m.
St. Thomas	CHLO 1570	10:45 a.m.

QUEBEC

Montreal	CFMB 1410	5:15 p.m.
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SASKATCHEWAN

Rosetown	CJYM 1330	10:00 a.m.
Weyburn	CPSL 1190	8:45 a.m.
Estevan	CJSL 1280	8:45 a.m.

Argentina (Spanish)

Buenos Aires (Sat.)	FM Malvinas	91.5 MHz
		10:00 p.m.

British West Indies

Grand Cayman	Radio Cayman	9:30 a.m.
Trinidad	Radio Trinidad 610	10:30 p.m.

Chile (Spanish)

Santiago (Sat.)	Radio Panamericana	CB 142
		10:00 a.m.

China

Hong Kong	Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)	6:00 p.m.
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Ecuador

Quito	Radio Anoranza (Sat.)	99.7-FM 8:45 a.m.
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Israel & Middle East

Voice of Hope (Wed.)	945 AM	10:30 p.m.
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Italy (Italian)

Europa Radio Milano	83.3-FM	11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria (Fri.)		
	MHz 102	5:30 p.m.
Radio Corleone Centrale		
	FM-88-500 FM-92	11:00 a.m.

Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera	XEQC	8:30 a.m.
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New Zealand

Whakatane	IXX	7:00 a.m.
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Nigeria

Radio Africa (Thurs.)		7:45 p.m.
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Panama (Spanish)

Panama City	HOQ 1250	10:30 a.m.
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Philippines

Manila (Sat.)	DZAM 1026 KHz	7:15 p.m.
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South Africa

Joubert Park (Thurs.)	SWAZI Music	
Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60		9:00 p.m.

Sri Lanka

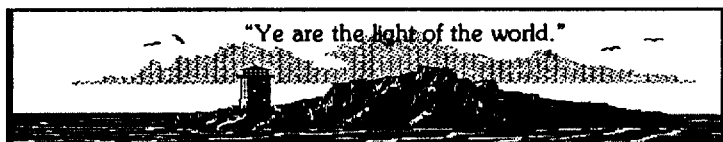
Columbo (Sat.)	Radio Sri Lanka	7:15 p.m.
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Tonga

Nuku' Alofa (Mon.)		10:15 a.m.
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Uruguay (Spanish)

Montevideo	Radio El Espectador 810	8:30 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS – TV Programs

ALABAMA	Channel	MAINE	Channel	OKLAHOMA	Channel
Montgomery	56	Portland	57	Broken Bow	28
CALIFORNIA		MARYLAND		Muskogee	19
Arroyo Grande	66	Leonardtown	52	Oklahoma City	7
Lancaster	38	MICHIGAN		Tulsa	33
CONNECTICUT		Detroit	16 & 26	PENNSYLVANIA	
Litchfield	5	Muskegon	40	Berwick	47
FLORIDA		MINNESOTA		Harrisburg	40
Daytona	42	Minneapolis	13	Hazleton	35
Ft. Myers	7	MISSISSIPPI		Johnstown	9
Jupiter	9	Bolivar	8	Pittsburgh	63
Naples	9	Philadelphia	20	SOUTH DAKOTA	
Orlando	21	Starkville	5	Mitchell	16
St. Augustine	22	Tallahatchie	11	TENNESSEE	
St. Petersburg	35	MISSOURI		Harrogate	18
Tallahassee	9	Cameron	35	Heiskell	12
Tampa	57	Columbia	2	Murfreesboro	27
GEORGIA		St. Louis	7	TEXAS	
Athens	34	NEBRASKA		Austin	13
Cordele	55	Lincoln	67	Corpus Christi	50 & 7
Dublin	36	NEVADA		Mt. Pleasant	54
Savannah	55	Las Vegas	39	San Antonio	67
ILLINOIS		NEW JERSEY		Sulphur Springs	18
DeKalb	7	Hammononton	8	UTAH	
Plano	30	NEW YORK		St. George	55
Rockford	45	Glens Falls	8	VIRGINIA	
Urbana	1	Jamestown	8	Gloucester	51
INDIANA		Oneonta	15	Norfolk	68
Evansville	52	Rochester	40	WASHINGTON	
Indianapolis	11	Syracuse	14	Wenatchee	27
IOWA		NORTH CAROLINA		Yakima	60
*Cedar Rapids	13	Burlington	16	WEST VIRGINIA	
Marshalltown	39	Charlotte	15	Huntington	55
KANSAS		Henderson	34	*Logan (Mon)	12
Junction City	6	Lenoir	53	WISCONSIN	
Waterville	26	Raleigh	63	Wausau	43
KENTUCKY		Wilmington	10	PUERTO RICO	
Morehead	10 & 7	OHIO		Mayaguez	42
Mt. Sterling	6 and 2	Akron	29		
LOUISIANA		Ashland	59		
Jennings	13	Cincinnati	25		
New Orleans	61	Delaware	56		
		Youngstown	20		

"The Bible Answers" television programs are aired each Sunday afternoon from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on the stations listed above. The times, days, and channels of those listings marked with an asterisk (*) can be found in your local newspaper.

calling'. If for any reason we lose sight of this glorious prize, one of the great incentives for Christian faithfulness is lost.

It is appropriate that Paul should associate the heavenly calling with the fact that the called ones of this age are a priestly class over which Jesus is the Head—our High Priest. Peter wrote of this priesthood, and pointed out that its object is to offer sacrifices, "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 2:5) Members of this antitypical priesthood do not offer animals in sacrifice. Instead they offer their own bodies, or themselves.—Rom. 12:1

This entails suffering and death. Paul explains that Jesus was faithful to his Heavenly Father, who appointed him to this high office; faithful, that is, in offering himself in sacrifice for the sins of the world. We, too, must be faithful in the offering of sacrifice if we are to remain a part of this antitypical priesthood. This means that we are to be planted together in the likeness of Jesus' death, to suffer and to die with him. Jesus needed an incentive to endure the shame, ignominy, and suffering which came to him as he was laying down his life. We read of the "joy" that was set before Jesus, which enabled him to "endure the cross" and to despise the shame. Because Jesus was faithful, he is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb. 12:2

In prophecy Jesus is represented as saying, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11) Clearly the great joy which was set before Jesus of returning to the presence of his Heavenly Father was one of his great incentives to faithfulness. And, as Paul asserts, Jesus received the fulfillment of this hope, for he is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In addition to this great joy of returning to his Heavenly Father's personal presence, Jesus was also inspired by the hope of accomplishing the divine purpose of restoring

mankind to life. This is referred to by Isaiah as "the pleasure of the LORD." We quote: "It pleased the LORD to bruise him [Jesus]; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."—Isa. 53:10, 11

His Brethren Also

The brethren of Christ, his dedicated followers, have these same joys set before them as an encouragement to faithfulness. In Hebrews 12:22-24 some of the details of these joys are beautifully set forth in symbolic language. By faith we have come to "Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God." Thus the hope of rulership with Christ in his kingdom is set before us.—Rev. 14:1, 4, 5; 21:9,10,14

By faith we also approach unto "an innumerable company of angels." These are the angels referred to in the first chapter of Hebrews, and described as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (vs. 14) These are our guardian angels, who do always behold the face of our Father in heaven. (Matt. 18:10) In Psalm 34:7 we read concerning these, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

While these angels are invisible to us now, we know of their interest in us, and of how, as the servants of our Heavenly Father, they watch over all our affairs. And, Paul reminds us that one of the joys set before us will be the great blessing of meeting and knowing these honored servants of our Heavenly Father. How very sweet and wonderful that will be!

By faith we are also looking forward to "the general assembly of the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." It is a joy to assemble with the brethren in our local gatherings and in conventions, but how much

greater will be the joy of assembling with the entire 'church of the firstborn' beyond the veil! This blessed future 'convention' will never end; and in that gathering will be Jesus, Peter, Paul, John, and all the apostles, as well as those with whom we have been personally acquainted and have loved, but lost awhile.

As with Paul, so with us, we are looking forward to meeting and being with "God the Judge of all." It is impossible even to approximate what a great joy this will be. In the case of Jesus it is described as "fulness of joy," meaning that there could be no greater joy than that experienced by those whose inestimable privilege it is, or will be, to abide in the presence of our loving Heavenly Father as members of his immediate and divine family.

We are also looking forward to association with those described by Paul as "the spirits of just men made perfect." These are the ones mentioned in the 40th verse of chapter 11, where we read that God has "provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." These are the Ancient Worthies, some of whom are listed in that chapter, who will be restored to life to be the human representatives of the divine, invisible Christ.

True, the church will be on the divine plane of life, while the Ancient Worthies will be on the human plane, yet there will be, in ways now unknown to us, a close association. And it will be a great joy indeed to work together in the kingdom with these who were willing to suffer and to die in their loyalty to God and to his messianic cause. One of the superlative joys to which we look forward is to meet and forever be associated with Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. Throughout our walk in the narrow way Jesus has ministered to us as Advocate, Brother, and Friend. His example of faithfulness is a continuous inspiration as we endeavor to walk in his steps of sacrifice while we are being planted together in the likeness of his death. But 'over there' we will meet him

face to face, and as ministers of the New Covenant will be associated with him in bringing the world into at-oneness with our Heavenly Father.—II Cor. 3:6

This will be made possible through the merit of the blood which will then speak “better things than that of Abel.” (Heb. 12:24) Abel’s blood cried out (Gen. 4:10) to the LORD to accuse Cain of the sin of taking human life, and a curse was placed upon Cain. But the blood of Jesus will not cry out for punishment, but for the deliverance of the condemned world from sin and death. What a joyful experience it will be to participate in the work of extending life to the people which has been provided by “the blood of the Lamb.”—Rev. 5:6-14

Through the Truth

This glorious prospect of future joys in the kingdom is ours only because we know the truth—the things which we have heard—in these last days. If we let these doctrines slip from us for any reason whatsoever, the inspiration to patient continuance in the way of sacrifice and suffering will also be lost. The doctrines of the truth not only reveal God’s will for his people; they also are their inspiration to faithfulness.

The Hebrew brethren had, in a measure, let the doctrines of the truth slip away from them, and needed to be taught the principles of the divine plan again. (Heb. 5:12) The Greek word used by Paul in telling us about these principles literally means an ‘orderly arrangement’. It is the orderly arrangement of the doctrines of the truth that constitutes the divine plan of the ages, and how important it is that we hold fast to these doctrines.

Paul explains that we should not have to lay again “the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” (Heb. 6:1, 12) “And this we will do,” Paul observes, “if God permit. For it is impossible for those

who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” —Heb. 6:3-6

Thus we are reminded that letting the truth slip could lead to the loss of everything, even life itself. On the other hand, we should endeavor to “go on unto perfection.” (vs. 1) This does not mean that we *leave* the principles of the truth and progress into an indefinable state of emotionalism. Going on to perfection, rather, is to make the proper and intended use of the truth, and thus to become established in its fundamental doctrines. “For,” as Paul illustrates the point, “the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed receiveth blessing from God.”—vs. 7

So we will receive blessing from the LORD if, as the waters of truth come often upon us through fellowship and study, we bring forth the fruit of righteousness. But if we bear “thorns and briers” instead of “fruit,” we will not receive the blessing of the LORD. Instead, we will suffer loss, for our works will be burned, even though we ourselves may be saved “so as by fire.”—Heb. 6:8; I Cor. 3:15

Continuing his admonition to the Hebrews, Paul wrote, “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who

through faith and patience inherit the promises.”—Heb. 6:9-12

Faith and Patience

It is only through faith and patience that we can hope to inherit the fulfillment of God's promises—faith in the promises, and in the plan of God contained in them; and patient continuance in well-doing in the face of trials and discouragements. “He is faithful that promised,” Paul wrote. (Heb. 10:23) Now it remains only for us to be faithful.

To remind us of God's faithfulness, Paul takes us back to the promise made to Abraham, a promise which God confirmed by his oath. This promise to Abraham is a very comprehensive one, for it briefly expresses God's plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Abraham did not realize that this promise would not be fulfilled in his day, but he did patiently wait for it.

Besides, Abraham actively waited in the sense that he was alert and ready to do the LORD's will as it was revealed to him. His great act of obedience was the offering of his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God, or the demonstration of his willingness to do so. This required great faith and much fortitude. But his faith was victorious, and his fortitude enabled him to endure the great strain that such an ordeal placed upon him.

Having passed this test, God did for Abraham all that could be done at that time. The promise to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham's seed could not then be fulfilled because the seed of promise was yet to be produced, but God confirmed the promise by his oath. And since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself. Thus the Abrahamic promise became the oath-bound covenant.

And this means as much or more to us now than it did to Abraham. Paul explains that by an oath to Abraham (Heb. 6:13), and his oath to Jesus as the fulfillment of the

Melchisedec High Priest (Heb. 7:21), by these "two immutable things [God's two oaths—one to Abraham, and one to Jesus], in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil: whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."—Heb. 6:18-20

Are the links in our chain of faith strong, and well forged together? Is our faith securely anchored to that glorious hope within the veil? If, for any reason, we are letting slip the things which we have heard from our Heavenly Father's spokesman—our present Lord Jesus Christ—our rejoicing in hope will be diminishing, and suffering with and for Christ will become a burden to slacken our pace along the narrow way.—Rom. 12:12

There is no reason now why our faith in the LORD and in his promises should not be strong and active. Conditions all around us in the world testify to the presence of our Lord Jesus, and that Satan's world is being weakened, in preparation for its overthrow and the establishment of Christ's kingdom. We still have the privilege of bearing witness to the Gospel of the kingdom, and the LORD is richly blessing this testimony as his faithful people endeavor to tell the whole world the blessed tidings of the kingdom.

To the Hebrew brethren Paul wrote that they had need of patience, and that it would be only a "little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:36, 37) Today we know that he who was to come has come, and while to our finite minds the fruition of our hopes may seem to tarry, this is not actually so, for every detail of God's loving plan is being carried out exactly in accordance with his "due time." (Rom. 5:6; Eph. 1:10; I Tim. 2:6) The vision of truth which we have seen writ-

ten upon "tables" may seem long drawn out, but it does not tarry.—Hab. 2:2, 3

Let us, then, "hold fast the profession of our hope, that it waver not." (Heb. 10:23, **RSV**) We know that God has been faithful to his people in every age, and that now he will give us strength for our every time of need. Through his beloved Son he has fed us with "meat in due season" (Matt. 24:45), and in this glorious feast of truth we have rejoiced and will continue to be glad. This is particularly true as the 'sign' (vs. 30) of the Master's presence becomes more and more apparent with each passing day.

We see the signs of the *parousia* of our Lord, and Jesus said that when all these things begin to come to pass, we can lift up our heads with confidence, knowing that our deliverance draws near. (Luke 21:26-28, 31) This is not time for lukewarmness, but it is the time for energy and zeal in learning and doing the LORD's will. Can we say with Paul that "we are not of them that draw back?"—Heb. 10:39 □

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 4—"Who hath beleived our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"—Isaiah 53:1 (Z. '99-10, 11 Hymn 293)

JULY 11—"Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, . . . but keepeth himself, and the Wicked One toucheth him not."—I John 5:18 (Z. '99-58 Hymn 150)

JULY 18—"In the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be traiters, heady, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."—II Timothy 3:1,4 (Z. '99-102 Hymn 351)

JULY 25—"There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?"—James 4:12 (Z. '99-139 Hymn 333)

VOICES FROM THE PAST

Brother John Hull, Los Angeles, CA

Part 2

How Excellent Is Thy Name!

DAVID TAKES AN ultimate view of the completed earth at the close of the Millennial Age, and says this: "O LORD our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

Then he continues in this attitude, saying, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hath thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." These words bring to mind Jesus' prayer, when he saw that of all the people in Israel there were just a few who were hungering and thirsting for the Word of God. He said, "I thank thee, O Father, LORD of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

The entire work of salvation is the work of God, and the application of his great wisdom. Paul argued this point with the Corinthians, as recorded in I Corinthians, 1:21-25. There it is stated in a very interesting way: "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

We, as footstep followers of the Lord Jesus, realize the wisdom and the power of God which he has caused to operate in our lives. But to the world, the life of sacrifice in preaching Christ is foolishness. We have no trouble

understanding their viewpoint. Which one of us, if we were attempting to form a government which would be designed to vanquish some very formidable enemies, would not choose the most capable men we could find to run its various departments? Who, in putting together a government, would not select men who were schooled for that work? Which one of us, attempting to build a solid new government, would not try to find those with exceptional talents in political sciences?

God did not do this. Paul wrote that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (vs. 25) God showed his great power by taking the foolish things of this world, and transforming them into mighty instruments of righteousness through the power of his Holy Spirit. Continuing his lesson, the Apostle Paul wrote: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty: and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are." Why did God work in this manner? So "that no flesh should glory in his presence."—vs. 29

God has given to us something priceless, something that we should appreciate every day of our lives. Jesus had much to say on this subject the night that he was arrested and tried, knowing that he would be crucified the following day. He told his disciples that he was going to send them the Holy Spirit after he was resurrected and returned to his Father in Heaven. He called it the Comforter, and the Spirit of Truth. (John 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:13) We, as well as the apostles in Jesus' day, realize that the Holy Spirit is the power and influence of God in our lives, which leads and guides us into all truth.

James said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5) God gives us this wisdom for one purpose only—that he might lift us up to the point that he can confound the wisdom of this world in the age to come.

A little further along in the 8th Psalm David explored the immensity of the power of God. He wrote: "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained." We realize, of course, that David spoke primarily of the literal heavens. But he was, no doubt, speaking prophetically, as well. There are the 'heavens' which God has hidden from men's eyes during the long centuries since Jesus left this earth. One instance in the Scriptures where these 'spiritual heavens' are spoken of, is in Isaiah 51:16: "I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may **plant the heavens**, and lay the foundations of the earth, and to say unto Zion, Thou art my people."

Yes, God is 'planting' the new heavens (II Pet. 3:13) at the present time, and he is planting them through the development of the babes and sucklings whom he has called out of this world, and endowed with his Holy Spirit.

There is a picture of this given in Zechariah. In the 5th chapter, Zerubbabel seems to be a type of the Christ, head and body. Zechariah used these words: "Then he answered and spake unto me saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by **my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts." (Zech. 4:6) This is the power that is able to transform our minds. This Holy Spirit will build us up and give us an everlasting inheritance among the saints. This Holy Spirit works upon our minds and hearts through the Word of God.

Jesus quoted the statement of the Prophet Isaiah, who said that we would all be "taught of God." (John 6:45;

Isa. 54:13) The Apostle Paul wrote, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Tim. 1:6,7) This is the great and valuable gift which God has given to us. And this Holy Spirit is imparted to us to enable us to understand God's Word, his will, and his plan. When any Christian is afraid to study the Word of God, he most assuredly is not acting according to the will of God; he is neglecting the source which God gave us as a means of extending more of his Holy Spirit to us. Our goal is to be *filled* with the Holy Spirit of God.

On one occasion, Peter, James, and John stood in the marketplace, and they were speaking **boldly** the Word of God. (Acts 4:13) That word translated 'boldly' means 'free utterance, unrestricted'. This is what the Holy Spirit will do for us. It will allow us to speak boldly the Word of God. It means that we will have confidence in God, through his Holy Spirit, and in all the promises and instructions that God has given to us in his Word to guide and lead us into all truth.

If someone tells you that there is something more important to study than the Word of God, they are not telling you the truth. The Word of God, and the Word of God only, is able to bring to you salvation. Many good men have given us keys to the understanding of the Scriptures. One man in particular had a wonderful overview of God's plan of the ages, and he gave us keys to unlock the mysteries of present truth. We respect him and regard him very highly for his faithful service to the church at this end of the age. Nevertheless, it was that same man who told us that salvation would come only through the study and application of God's Word in our lives. Because we have 'free utterance' we can freely discuss the Word of truth with one another, and can preach it freely according to our opportunities.

Paul tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." (I Cor 2:14,15) The **Amplified Version** states it a little differently: "The spiritual man tries all things—he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things; yet is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one." Why? Because he is obeying the Spirit of God! The Spirit of God working within him guides him in all that he says, and all that he does, and all that he thinks.

There is an interesting statement in II Thessalonians 3:1. "Finally brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the LORD may have a free course." That is very interesting, is it not? Certainly the Word of the LORD should have a free course in everyone. Man is the only one who restricts the Word of God; God does not. Therefore, because God has given to us, not a spirit of fear, but the spirit of love and of a sound mind, we ought to examine his Word; why else has God given unto us the spirit of truth if we are not to use it to discern the teachings of his Word? This is the very purpose of God—to take babes and sucklings—and to ordain, or establish them, in the truth by means of his Holy Spirit.

These, in due time, when they have been exalted to the high station promised in God's Word, will be used in order that God might tread down the 'mighty'. This includes all who are out of harmony with God and his principles. Some of these are exceedingly powerful—Satan and the fallen angels—even Death itself! But this is the method chosen by our God—the weak will confound the mighty. And where it is possible to accomplish, the most favored way of treading down one's enemies is, of course, to transform them into friends! We know, however, that Satan has no intention of changing his heart.

The Word of God is the mighty instrument which will perform the transformation in our minds through the power of the Holy Spirit. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Some might complain, "I am not capable of understanding this point or that point in the Word of God. It is too deep for my poor brain." This is the wrong attitude. They must ask God for help. They must get down on their knees and pray to God that he give them wisdom. No one can understand even the most simple texts in the Word of God except by the Spirit of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Therefore, it is the Spirit of God which activates our discerning powers in order that we might comprehend spiritual things. There is no other way.

The Prophet Daniel went before King Nebuchadnezzar, and was given a very difficult task—in fact from the human standpoint it was an impossible task. (Dan. 2:1-49) The king asked him to interpret a dream which troubled him, without even telling Daniel what the dream had been, for the king had forgotten his dream.

Daniel went to God in prayer asking for help—he needed to know what the dream was, and he also needed the wisdom to discern its meaning. When he went back to the king, he said: "There is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets." (vs. 28) Daniel could not have known the dream or its interpretation without God's help. And this is true of us, also; we know nothing by our own wisdom, but only by the grace and assistance of God—by his power, by his spirit. And if at any time we come to feel that it is no longer necessary for us to call upon the power of the Holy Spirit of God, then we are not demonstrating the wisdom of God, but rather the wisdom of men—which is foolishness with God.

In the 8th Psalm, David spoke of the wonders of the heavens. Not only was he in awe of the majesty of the material heavens, but also David saw the finished picture

of the **new heavens** and the new earth. He could look ahead and picture the time when men would realize how excellent God was, and when his glory would be appreciated. He saw that their knowledge had come about through God's plan, which included the using of 'babes and sucklings' to vanquish his enemies. Paul threw some light on this thought when he stated, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under **your feet** shortly." This is the very purpose for which the church of God—the new heavens, the work of God's hands—is being called.

We have considered the spiritual heavens as being the work of God's hands. God has been 'planting the heavens'. As we continue reading in the 8th Psalm, we find that David added a thought concerning "the moon and the stars which thou [God] hast ordained." These elements, the moon and the stars, are specific components of the new heavens. The righteous law of God is aptly symbolized by the moon. It has been used in this way in other places in the Bible. The stars could well represent those faithful members of the church class in glory. Both of these factors will have significant places in carrying out God's purposes, not only during the Millennial Age, but during the ages to follow, everlastingly.

Jesus spoke a parable about the faithful ones who in the time of harvest will "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43) The sun is a very bright star! Also, we are told that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."—Dan. 12:3

David, in this psalm, is looking out upon a world where the work of restitution has been completed. He sees all the planning, struggling, suffering, and sacrifice that went into God's work down through the ages. He sees that God endured much longsuffering to bring about the successful conclusion of his purposes. David questions whether or not mankind was worth all the effort that God put into bringing about a world full of perfected human beings. He asks, "What is man that thou art mindful of


him?" God was so mindful of man's needs that he gave his only begotten Son in death by crucifixion in order to bring about salvation. He inquires: "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour, thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."—Ps. 8:4-8

In Hebrews 2:6-9, Paul comments on the 8th Psalm, quoting the verses we have just cited. Then he adds, "But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

This is a wonderful clarification of Psalm 8. Paul's words in Hebrews put the psalmist's words into clear perspective. We realize that even though man has not as yet reached the ultimate goal when God will have put all things under him, we have this hope that it will eventually be so, in the not too distant future. God has given us this hope, and made it a certainty when Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. (Heb. 2:9) Therefore, the promise that man some day will be king over all the earth, is sure.

By the eye of faith we have seen Jesus, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, resurrected and crowned with glory and honor. By faith we know that he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, thereby assuring the resurrection of all men, and making sure the opportunity for everlasting life—including dominion over all the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and every creature that walks upon the face of the earth. By his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has as-


sured that the earthly glory God intended for every man to enjoy, shall indeed be theirs!

The 8th Psalm concludes with the same wonderful words with which it began: "O LORD our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" 

DISINTERESTED LOVE

THIS IS THE kind of love exemplified by our Heavenly Father.

While we were yet sinners, he loved us. So also the love of Jesus is unselfish, pure, benevolent—a love that undertakes to do good for us for our own sakes, not from a hope of getting anything from us. We, too, should have this disinterested love, so warm, so intense, that we are willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."—1 Pet. 1:22

The apostle proceeds to say that we should not only have this love, but that we should have it with fervency, warmth, ardor; not with a semi-indifference, but with a real interest in one another's welfare—the rich as well as the poor—the educated as well as the ignorant. Our love should go out to our brethren as we see in them any lack we could supply—rendering assistance of any kind, using discretion always, of course; for love learns to be wise and to take into consideration our motives while we endeavor to do good to others. 

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Interested In Israel

Dear Brother in Christ: I have listened with interest to your programme with regard to the future of Israel and the world. It was truly enlightening. Most churches teach that there are no more Jews nor Gentiles—but we are dealing with Spiritual Israel—not modern day Israel. Kindly send me a copy of your booklet of the same title. Thanking you in advance. I am, yours respectfully.—
Trinidad, W.I.

Rejoicing in Newly Received Truth

Glory be to God, our Father, Jehovah, and to our Lord Jesus Christ! Dear Brethren and Sisters in the LORD: Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. My name is Alexei and my wife, Valentina. Now both we are in the truth, and we want you to know who we are. My wife joined a religious organization about 20 years ago, but I joined only a few

years ago. Yet not long ago, our attitude regarding their teachings greatly changed. We believe that because of our sincere relationship with our God, and by his providence, we met a Bible Student brother, and because we always search the Scriptures, our conversation was very fruitful. This other organization had the attitude: "only we have the truth," or "only we are saved," and so on. Such a narrow understanding is far from our Heavenly Father, nor is it in harmony with his divine plan of the ages. It is enough to look at Romans, chapter 11, to see the beautiful narration of St. Paul regarding the "mystery" of such a great salvation. We feel sorry that this simple truth is not understood by many. As I said, recently we became acquainted with the teachings of Pastor Russell. Although our knowledge is limited, it is sufficient to change our at-

titude. It is too bad that we do not have his writings in the Russian language. One brother sent me the first volume [of Studies in the Scriptures]. This is a wonderful book of high value, containing the truth, and it is incomparable to all other books known to me. In the congregation where I had formerly studied there are many who are interested about the truth that I have just discovered—both brothers and sisters—who I told about it. To some I gave the first volume to read, and they were surprised the great light this book shone upon the truth. [This new knowledge] made us reconsider our standing before God, and evidently it will make many others reconsider their standing also, making a positive step in favor of the truth. Dear brethren and sisters, if you have opportunity, please help us with the Russian truth literature. We are in expectation of your labor of love. May Jehovah keep you and bless you! Amen. Your brother.—Russia

God Bless Your 'Company'!

Dawn Publications: Just a note to say how much I enjoy reading **The Dawn**. So much so that I am having it sent to two more of my friends. I hope they will enjoy it as much as I have. When my subscription draws near to its end, please send me a notice. May God richly bless your company to continue sending out these great books!—GA

Rejoicing in the Truth

Dear Brothers and Sisters: Greetings in our dear Saviour's name! I am advising you of my change of address. We would both like to thank you all for the interesting Bible study articles in **The Dawn**. Both my wife and I appreciate **The Dawn** very much. Rejoicing in the truth.—New Zealand

Needs Our Fellowship

Peace be unto you dear brethren and sisters in Christ. A brother is writing to you who has been in the truth since 1943. First, please accept the greetings

from me, my family, and also from our congregation, which is made up of 90 persons. All of us pray for the LORD'S blessings upon you in his service. I got your address from the **"Hope"** booklet, and I decided to write a few words of appreciation for your work. I learned from the brethren in Moldavia about the brother who translated the **"Hope"** booklet. Last year we had a meeting in a city which had been part of Romania before World War II. There we rented a bus, and 21 of us, the whole chorus of our singers, traveled down to Moldavia. There we had such warm fellowship—with the LORD's people. We discussed together the truth of our faith, and activities concerning the aspect of witnessing among different sects, and activity in preaching to the public in general. I heard that some of you are planning to visit our country. That is nice. . . Come visit us to see our manner of truth activity, and to get to know each other. I am corresponding with brethren in Canada. I

received from them the 6th volume in Studies in the Scriptures entitled, **"The New Creation,"** in the Ukrainian language. In Polish I have all the volumes, and because I speak Polish fluently, I serve our congregation on a regular basis with discourses. I would like to be in contact with you also, to work together in the LORD's service, to bring the message of salvation to all mankind, and to speak of the thousand-years of the presence of the LORD to all people, and that he came in 1874. Ps. 145:11-13. (In the Russian Bible it is Ps. 144:11-13.) We send our love to all brothers and sisters who love the truth. Goodbye, and the LORD be with you. Your humble brother.—Russia

A Word of Thanks

Thanks! Your magazine is great!—NY

A Winner!

Please renew my subscription to **The Dawn** magazine. Your booklet, **"Archeology Proves the Bible,"** is a winner!—GA ☐

Registration Form

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION

Hope College • Holland, Michigan

July 27–August 1, 1991

☐ Number staying for the whole week, attending all meals.

(If you have filled in above box, you need not complete the form below.)

Fr	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Lodging
Sa				
Su				
Mo				
Tu				
We				
Th				

Please indicate above which meals you wish to attend, and how many for each meal, if you are not staying the entire week, or do not wish to eat certain meals at the convention.

...

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

...

Please list names of all + ages of children, included in this reservation:

NAME

AGE of CHILD

(SEE OVER)

**SEND RESERVATIONS TO: Conference Service Director,
Hope College, Holland, MI 49423**
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Hope College

Please indicate *how many* in each category:

WEEKLY RATES (SUBSIDY HAS BEEN APPLIED)

<u>Dormitory:</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Ages 12, up (double occupancy)	\$129.10	_____
Ages 12, up (single occupancy)	\$159.50	_____
Ages 5-11 (own room)	\$ 80.30	_____
(in parents room in sleeping bags)	\$ 29.00	_____
Ages 0-4	FREE	<u>FREE</u>
Cots or Cribs—\$5.00	_____	_____

Apartments: (2 bedrms., double occupancy only)

Non-air-conditioned (per room)	\$195.00	_____
Air-conditioned (per room)	\$209.00	_____
(plus \$69.00 per adult; \$29.00 per child 5-11)	_____	_____

DAILY RATES (SUBSIDY HAS BEEN APPLIED) (Lodging for partial

Dormitory: week as indicated on reverse side)

Ages 5, up	\$ 11.20 double per person	_____
	\$ 17.50 single per person	_____
Ages 5-11: Parents' room in sleeping bags	FREE	<u>FREE</u>
Ages 0-4	FREE	<u>FREE</u>
(Cots or Cribs—\$2.50 per day)	_____	_____

<u>MEALS:</u>	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Dinner</u>		
Ages 12, up	\$3.65	\$4.75	\$6.65	_____	_____
Ages 5-11	\$1.35	\$2.35	\$3.30	_____	_____
Ages 0-4	FREE	FREE	FREE	<u>FREE</u>	<u>FREE</u>

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: _____

Please send minimum deposit check for 1/2 Total Amount Due.

AIRPORT PICKUP INFORMATION:

Airline Date Time of Arrival Flight Number No. of Persons

YOUNG ADULT'S BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES—Part 17A

God Gives Laws to Israel—Part 2

THERE WERE FOUR principal events which took place while the children of Israel were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai for approximately one year. These were:

1. The giving of God's Law—Exodus 19-31
2. Their worship of the golden calf, and punishment for this idolatry; and the special selection of the tribe of Levi for the service of the LORD—Exodus 32
3. The building and consecration of the Tabernacle and its priesthood—Exodus 35-40
4. The numbering and organization of the people—Numbers 1,2

The story of the first two incidents was told in last month's lesson. But we remember how, in his great anger with the Israelites because of their idolatry and worship of the golden calf, Moses smashed the two tables of the Law, written by the very finger of God. (Exodus 31:18; 32:19) So, again, Moses climbed up into the mountain to commune with God, and to receive the tables of the Law once more.

The LORD said to Moses, "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. And come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount." And so Moses did this exactly.

The next morning he carved out two tablets of stone, and took them up into the mountain. And the LORD de-

scended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD, saying, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth." This is what God wanted Moses to know about him, and Moses recorded these words in the Holy Writ so that we also will know what God is like. Certainly God had just demonstrated his longsuffering nature, and his mercy, by forgiving the nation of Israel for their idolatrous actions just at the time he was favoring them specially by giving them his Law, and entering into a Covenant with them.

Moses stayed on Mount Sinai for forty days and nights. (Exodus 34:28), just as he had done before. But this time the children of Israel were eagerly awaiting his return. And when Moses came down from the mountain carrying the new tablets of the ten commandments, they were amazed to see the face of Moses. The skin of Moses' face shone, and Moses had to put a veil on his face because it glowed so brilliantly! (verses 33,35) They knew he had been with the true God of Israel.

Immediately Moses began the work of building the Tabernacle. God had given him all the details for constructing this unique building where services could be held, and offerings could be made to God. The details included the size, material, decoration, etc., to be used, as well as how the sacrifices were to be offered. The instructions are recorded in Exodus 25-31 and 35-40, and also in the Book of Leviticus. One reason for the careful attention to detail was that everything about this Tabernacle was to have symbolic meanings important to Christians—far down in the distant future from those days. And so in order for the meaning of the symbols to be clear, care would have to be taken to make each feature exactly in accordance with God's directions.—Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:2-5,11,12

In order to build a Tabernacle which had such expensive and elaborate furnishings, intricately designed, Moses

needed the cooperation of all the people of Israel. Some of these furnishings included a gold altar, gold candlestick, gold table; copper furnishings such as an outside altar and laver; silver rings; embroidered hangings; and many other beautiful pieces of artwork. We are told that "they came, everyone whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments." (Exodus 35:21-29) This spirit of enthusiasm delighted Moses. It, no doubt, was a unique period when the entire camp of Israel worked together to honor and glorify their great God.

How did these unskilled men and women learn to make delicate, decorated furniture and utensils worked in gold, copper and silver? They had never done this sort of work before. In fact, their days had been spent as slaves in Egypt doing manual labor such as making bricks, and constructing buildings with them. They had not learned the skilled workmanship needed to carry out God's instructions for completing and furnishing the Tabernacle.

We discover that "the LORD put wisdom and understanding [in their hearts] to know how to work all manner of work for the service of his sanctuary." (Exodus 36:1) Miraculously, he filled certain chosen men "with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. . . . To work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work."—Exodus 35:31-35

What a miraculous treasure trove of beautiful, delicate, elaborate workmanship we can picture being created at the base of Mount Sinai, rising majestically out of the

surrounding desert. There beneath its shadow, men and women, given special abilities by God, busily brought forth their artifacts. How we would love to have been there to watch the creation of those beautiful furnishings!

The Tabernacle, although it was designed to be easily portable, was a beautiful sanctuary—suitable for the worship and praise of Jehovah in every detail. The sparkling white sand of the floor, the white curtains with their scarlet, blue, and purple designs; the high gold columns—all were striking in their simple beauty—setting off the intricate gold furniture in the Holy and the Most Holy—very becoming to the glory of God.

When everything was complete, “they brought [all the various furnishings of] the Tabernacle unto Moses, . . . and Moses did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.”—Exodus 39:32-43

QUESTIONS

1. What were the four most important events that took place at Mount Sinai?
2. Since Moses smashed the Tables of the Law which he received from God, how did Israel get God's Law?
3. What happened to Moses' face? Why?
4. How did God show his longsuffering and merciful nature?
5. What other information did Moses receive beside the Law, when he was on the Mount?
6. What was the purpose of the Tabernacle?
7. How did these unskilled former slaves know how to make the beautiful articles necessary for the Tabernacle?
8. What are some of the lessons you learned from this chapter?



OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the families and friends in the loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Brother Michael Fiorello, New Haven, CT—May 8.

Sister Judy Bratner, Chicago, IL—May 12. Age, 45.

Victor Gray, Toms River, NJ—May 23. Age, 78.

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

M. Balko, Sr.		D. Holliday	
Vernon, B.C.	July 13,14	Portland, OR	July 1
W. Blicharz		Sacramento, CA	2
Los Angeles, CA	July 5-7	Fresno, CA	3
R. Gorecki		Los Angeles, CA	4-8
Los Angeles, CA	July 5-7	San Diego, CA	9
F. Nemesh		Los Angeles, CA	10
Cincinnati, OH	July 14		
Chatham, Ont.	21		

BOUND VOLUMES OF *THE DAWN* MAGAZINE

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*Dawn Publishers,
199 Railroad Avenue,
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The price per copy is \$2.50.

CONVENTIONS

AUSTRALIAN Convention, July 12-14—State School Staff Room, Coronation Dr. Write: Mr. Greig Tosh, MS 1536 Paynters Clm. Rd., Nambour 4560 Queensland, Australia.

LOS ANGELES, CA, July 5-7—Holiday Inn, 7000 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, Phone: (714) 522-7000. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades 90272
Phone: (213) 454-5248

BIBLE STUDENTS' GENERAL CONVENTION, July 27-August 1, Hope College, Holland, MI.

INDIANA/OHIO CONVENTION, August 8-11—Hurstbourne Conference Center, 9700 Bluegrass Parkway, Louisville, KY. Contact Secretary: R. Chastain, 10004 E. 550 N, Columbus, IN 47203 before July 25 to register.
Phone: (812) 546-5466

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 31, September 1,2—American Legion Post, 3200 Lansing Ave. Contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Rd. Jack-

son, MI 49203
Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 30, 31, September 1—Holiday Inn, 334 Route 46, East, Wayne, NJ Phone: (201) 256-7000. Contact: Mrs. A. Lange, 76 Longview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605
Phone: (914) 948-5428

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, August 30-September 2—Holiday Inn of Bellevue, WA. Contact: Ginger Brann, 20 1/2 East Intercity Avenue, Everett, WA 98208
Phone: (206) 353-8983

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA, October 5,6,7—Pensioners Clubrooms, Barry Drive & Marcus Clark St. Contact: Graeme Smith, 4 Cataract St., Kaleen, ACT 2617
Phone: (06) 241-4863

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, October 11, 12, 13—For information, contact: Joseph Panucci, Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073



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