

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

When referring to speech, the Biblical meaning of the word tongue is 'language'.

The dictionary meaning of language is: 'the expression of ideas by words or significant articulate sounds for the communication of thoughts'.

'Gibberish' has been used to describe the language used by those who claim to speak in tongues. They do not use words of any known language today. Those who speak in tongues have no idea of the meaning of the words they utter, much less to whom they are spoken. It is this that helps to reveal the unscriptural basis of modern 'speaking with tongues'.

—1 Corinthians 14:6

Tongues?

"When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

—Acts 2:1-4

FOR MANY YEARS members of various churches have claimed the ability to speak with tongues even as did those at Pentecost and after in the Early Church. Their claim has been that speaking with tongues is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to believers, and that this gift, together with the gift of healing, is just as available today as it was in Apostolic times.

This viewpoint and practice has spread to some of the larger denominational churches such as Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Baptist, and is now one of the fastest growing fads in the churches of the United States.

Praying in unknown tongues has been given the name *glossolalia*. Many in the 'more sophisticated' churches refer to this as 'praying in gibberish', and a national association of glossolalists has been established, known as the Blessed Trinity Society.

A few years ago a committee investigating glossolalia found that it had led to divisions in many congregations. They learned that the advocates of speaking with tongues often tended to slight regular church services, forcing their practices on doubters, and had developed into an 'ecstatic elite'. Many leaders have little hope that this development in their midst will ever be effectively silenced, as they believe that it is a



reaction against the tendency to over-intellectualize the Christian faith. Speaking with tongues seems to fill a spiritual need for simplicity and emotional attachment.

The ability of those in the Early Church to speak languages other than their own native tongues filled a very real need at that time. Take, for example, the situation which existed at Pentecost when this gift of the Holy Spirit was first given to, and effectively employed by, those upon whom the Holy Spirit then came. Each year at Pentecost thousands of Jews made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to participate in this religious rite. They came from all parts of the then-known world and most of them spoke only the language of their new country.

Those who heard the disciples testify that day concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the Gospel centered in him, "were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylis, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful work of God."—Acts 2:2-11

From this it is clear that the original speaking in tongues through the power of the Holy Spirit was not the uttering of a lot of gibberish having no meaning to the speaker or the hearer, but a speaking of real languages, and for the benefit of those to whom the witness of the Gospel could not have otherwise been given in such an effective manner. Under the circumstances an emergency existed. Here were Israelites, born in foreign countries who did not know the language of their home country. The LORD desired that a testimony concerning the Gospel of Christ be presented to these while gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The most effective way of reaching many different cultures was through the miracle of speaking with tongues. Thus a real purpose was accomplished.

This Pentecostal experience of the disciples of speaking in tongues was an outstanding one in the Early Church. This gift of the Spirit remained with many for a considerable time for the reason that the need which existed at Pentecost continued with the apostles and others, although not on such a large scale. Nor did all in the Early Church have this gift. Referring to the gift of tongues together with other special gifts enjoyed by various of the brethren at that time, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way."—I Cor. 12:27-31

Here the thought clearly is, that just as not all in the Early Church were apostles, or prophets, so all had not been given the gift of speaking with tongues. In Acts 19:6 we are informed that the Apostle Paul laid his hands on certain ones, and they received the Holy Spirit and began to speak with tongues, and prophesied. This seems to imply that this gift was one which could be secured only through one of the apostles. Inferentially, then, it would follow that when the LORD's special apostles fell asleep in death, and when those upon whom they had conferred the ability to speak in tongues had passed away, this gift would cease.—I Cor. 13:8

Without using the word gibberish, Paul emphasized that speaking in an unknown tongue is of no profit to the hearer unless what is said is interpreted. (I Cor. 14:18-33) Often, in the modern frenzy of speaking with tongues, little thought is given to interpreting what is spoken. But the interpretation of tongues was very important in the Early Church. Paul, contrasted the value of speaking with tongues with speaking plainly in the language of the audience—which he refers to as prophesying—when he wrote, "He that speaketh in an un-

known tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spoke with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."—I Cor. 14:4,5

In this statement Paul reveals an interesting fact concerning speaking with tongues as it was practiced by certain believers in his day; namely, that those who spoke in this way also could interpret what they said if they wished. In other words, those who were then blessed with this gift were able to know the meaning of what they were saying, even though many in the church did not. Again this emphasizes the fact that the unknown tongues of that time were *real* languages, and unknown only to those who did not speak them, and who had not received the gift of tongues, or the interpretation of such tongues.

As we have noted, the greatest need for the use of this gift was at Pentecost. But we can well understand that as the disciples of that period carried the Gospel to as many places as they could, they would often come in contact with those who could not understand their native tongue. Under such circumstances the special gift they had received would be a great help in their witness work. By the same token, new believers would be reached who spoke a different language than that spoken by the majority in a given congregation. When these would come to the meetings they could be edified through one of their number who spoke with tongues, in much the same way that we use interpreters today. But as Paul explained, a message delivered in tongues would not be understood by the congregation as a whole, unless it was interpreted.

As time went on, and the faithful ones in the Early Church carried the Gospel of Christ into one country after another, believers arose in all the various countries who were able to continue the work of proclaiming the message among their people in their own native language. In this way the need for speaking with tongues diminished. Besides this, while at Pentecost and for a period thereafter there would be no oppor-

tunity to interpret the message from one language to another in written form, this possibility did develop later, doing away with the need for speaking with tongues.

It is rather interesting to realize how little really has been said in the Bible about speaking with tongues, even during the period when it was one of the authentic gifts of the Holy Spirit. We are informed of what occurred along this line at Pentecost. When the first Gentiles, Cornelius and his family, accepted the Gospel, they enjoyed a similar experience to those at Pentecost. (Acts 10:45,46) Then there was the time when Paul laid his hands on certain believers and they received the gift of tongues.—Acts 19:6

Nothing else is said in the New Testament concerning speaking with tongues except Paul's observations in I Corinthians 12, 13, 14. In these chapters, as we have seen, Paul revealed that, in any event, only certain ones had been given the gift of tongues, and that this gift would "fail," or cease. (I Cor. 13:8) And, as we have noted, Paul minimized the importance of this gift unless it could be used for the edification of those who heard. Summing up, he said, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air."—I Cor. 14:9

Paul further wrote, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (vs. 19) Notice also Paul's implication that speaking with tongues was for the benefit of unbelievers, not for the benefit of the church: "Wherefore," he said, "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." (vs. 22) For this sign to mean anything to an unbeliever he would, of course, need to understand what was being said. We realize from this statement that an unbeliever, hearing the message in his own language from one whom he knew could not ordinarily speak that language, would be tremendously impressed. Truly the LORD's signs are powerful!

Paul confirmed this, saying, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" (vs. 23) We gather from these various observations by the Apostle Paul that some even in his day were beginning to lose sight of the real purpose of the gift of tongues, even as those do today who think that speaking with tongues consists of the uttering of gibberish which no one, not even they themselves, can understand.

Those who speak with tongues usually claim the ability also to heal the sick through the use of miracle-working power. Jesus performed miracles of healing, and the apostles were given the ability to perform the miracle of healing. Jesus raised the dead, as did Peter and Paul. (Acts 9:39-42; 20:8-10) This special gift also passed away after it had served its purpose. It is well to remember that neither in the case of Jesus nor of the apostles were all the sick healed, and all the dead raised, as the plan of God calls for ultimately in the period described by Peter as the "times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21) And those who were healed from their illnesses, or were raised to life, eventually grew old and died in the same way as the rest of mankind were doomed to death. Jesus' miracles, and the miracles performed by the apostles in the days of the Early Church were intended as signs to help convince the unbelieving world of the authenticity of the cause which was being presented.

This was a very timely method to use in connection with the Jewish people. Throughout Old Testament times, the LORD's people had been accustomed to God performing miracles on their behalf. There were miracles in conjunction with the Exodus from Egypt, and under the leadership of Moses in the wilderness. There were miraculous demonstrations of God's power throughout the years when Joshua was the leader of God's people. We remember the crossing of the Jordan River by the Israelites, the overthrow of the wicked city of Jericho, and many, many other wonderful miracles.

Miracles had been performed in connection with David's rulership, and later, when other faithful kings ruled over God's people. Think of the outstanding miracle in Elijah's day when fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice which he had offered to Jehovah! There was the awakening of the widow's son from death, and also the son of the Shunammite woman. (I Kings 17:17-24; II Kings 4) There was the deliverance of the three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace, and of Daniel from the mouths of the lions.

Throughout this era of miracles, God's prophets foretold the coming of Israel's Messiah, one who would establish a world government in which the faithful Israelites would have a prominent part. It was but natural for the people of this nation to expect that such a great one would be able to perform miracles, even as the lesser servants of God did in the past. Besides, had not the prophets foretold that the Messiah, in addition to establishing a world government, would heal the sick and raise the dead?

While Jesus did not exercise his power to begin establishing a new government in the earth, he did heal the sick and raise the dead. These miracles, together with his wonderful teachings, were sufficient to convince the honest-hearted of the nation of Israel that he was indeed the promised Messiah, that their God was with him, and was blessing his ministry. John wrote of Jesus' miracles, saying concerning the turning of water into wine, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory." (John 2:11) We understand that Jesus' kingdom glory is referred to in this text, and that his miracles at his First Advent foreshadowed the greater and worldwide program of miracles which will be performed through the agencies of the messianic kingdom.

The position of the disciples among the unbelieving Israelites, as well as throughout the world in general, was a difficult one. True, they were convinced that Jesus had been raised from the dead; that he had returned to heaven; and that he would come again to take them unto himself; and that he would establish his long-promised messianic kingdom. But

this was not true of unbelievers. To these the claim that Jesus had been raised from the dead must have seemed ridiculous, especially since he was nowhere to be seen. To the Jewish religious leaders, and those under their influence, who had been responsible for Jesus' death, the claim of his resurrection stirred much opposition and bitterness.

*. . . Speaking with tongues
was for the benefit of unbelievers,
not for the benefit
of the church . . .*

Under these circumstances, for the apostles in the Early Church to have the gift of performing miracles on appropriate occasions would do much to help establish Christianity in the hearts of the sincere. And they made good use of their gift to this end. We think of the time when Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate of the temple called Beautiful. (Acts 3:1-11) We read that "as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."

Then, after stating that the miracle had been accomplished based on the man's faith in Jesus of Nazareth, Peter explained that Jesus would come again, and that when he did there would be a general time of restitution, or restoration. We quote: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

With the death of the apostles and those upon whom they conferred miraculous powers, these miracles ceased, for they

were no longer needed. True, throughout the age since, there have been those who claimed that they could perform miracles of healing. As we have noted, there are many in the world today who claim this ability. Indeed, these claims are not limited to the professed Christian world. Throughout the heathen world, as well, there are many 'healers'. In the Christian world those who practice what they call 'divine healing' claim to be following the example of Jesus and his apostles. What they seem to overlook is that Jesus and the apostles additionally raised the dead. So far as we know, no one since the days of the apostles has ever claimed to have had the ability to restore the dead to life.

We rejoice, however, that in the times of restitution of all things, the dead will be awakened, and given an opportunity to live forever on condition of their obedience to the righteous laws of the messianic kingdom which will then be ruling in the affairs of men. Those who have suffered and died while following in the footsteps of Jesus are brought forth in the 'first resurrection' to live and reign with him. (Rev. 20:6) These will be exalted to heavenly glory to be forever with their Lord. Mankind in general will be restored to life on the earth as human beings. It will be then that the ransomed of the Lord, all mankind, redeemed by the blood of Christ, shall return "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 people will then be enlightened, for the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:9) Instead of the gibberish heard today when people attempt to speak in tongues, the LORD will turn to the people a pure language, or message, which can be clearly understood. (Zeph. 3:8,9) The result will be that they will all learn to know the true God, and unitedly to serve him. How thankful we should be that our great Heavenly Father has such a wonderful plan for the enlightenment and salvation of the fallen and dying race! Let us be faithful in telling the whole world these blessed tidings. □

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDY LESSONS

LESSON FOR AUGUST 5

God's Acts Endure

KEY VERSE: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."—*Ecclesiastes 3:14*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Ecclesiastes 3:1-15*

THE MORE WE learn and understand the works of God, the more we are amazed. Wisdom, power and planning are manifested everywhere. We are filled with reverential adoration at the glory of the LORD.

But, this is not all. The universe teaches us still another lesson. All activities of the universe are in accordance with certain fundamental laws and rules, some of which man has discovered, and are applied by him daily in solving his problems, and in doing his work. For instance, we have learned that electricity travels at the rate of about 186,000 miles a second—never faster, never slower. It always follows certain well-defined rules, and without exception, these rules are never broken.

The same order may be observed in the movement of the planets and the stars. The enormous distances in space, the im-

mense size of many of the stars, and the tremendous speeds at which they travel, stagger the imagination. The accuracy of their movements through the heavens proves that they are governed by certain laws, and that their movements are orderly and controlled.

Man has learned that a bar of steel of a certain quality and thickness will support a definite weight and each similar piece of steel will support exactly the same amount of weight. Man, then, can build accordingly, without fear that a building or a bridge will collapse; for he will know exactly how much stress he may safely place upon it, and how much weight it will stand.

Man can plan profitably because of the dependability and constancy of these laws and the material with which he works. He cannot change the natural laws according to his fancy, but

can accomplish things only by complying with and taking advantage of these laws. It is quite evident that if man wishes to accomplish anything, he must learn these laws and use them as his guides. They govern the whole universe, and happy are we, if, under divine guidance, we endeavor to cooperate in the purpose of the Great Creator of all these marvelous works.

Just as the Creator's natural laws are constant and sure, so are his moral laws. These are simply stated by the Prophet Micah: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."—Micah 6:8

Yes, the LORD, through his Law and through his Word, has revealed what he requires of man. First we are to do justly—to have justice underlie all that we say and do. This is the Golden Rule as expressed by Jesus: doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us. It is a very exacting requirement, but very rewarding when practiced from the heart.

We are to love mercy. A more correct translation of this would be to love loving-kindness. God is love, and we are to be like him. "God so loved . . . that he gave." (John 3:16) Giving for the joy and blessing of others is one of the manifestations of love. In I Corinthians 13,

Paul explained that no matter what else we may do or be, if we have not love, it avails nothing. If our service is to be acceptable to the LORD, it must be offered in love. We must love loving-kindness!

In addition to this we are to walk humbly with our God. To walk humbly before God is to hearken diligently to his Word, and with a ready mind and heart obey his every precept. Obedience to law is necessary among any people in order to enjoy peace and happiness. Complete freedom to do as one pleases is a workable formula only with those who are so wholeheartedly in harmony with God's will that they desire to do only those things which please him. With such the revealed will of God becomes the law by which they are governed and in which they delight.

When all the willing and obedient of the fallen race are restored to perfection, then there will be a full liberty of the sons of God. All will then know the divine requirements, and be so enthusiastically in harmony with them that obedience will be their constant delight.

When man thus comes to fear before God, they will realize that these divine principles for life are constant throughout the ages, and that "whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." □

Choosing the Way of Life

KEY VERSE: *"The people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."* — Matthew 7:28,29

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:13-29

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS were very popular with the people, perhaps, in part, due to the personal charisma of our Lord. But they were also struck with the authority with which he taught, and the judgment which he seemed empowered to exercise as to their acceptance into the kingdom. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (vs. 21) And again, "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man." (vs. 26) Such directness of doctrine astonished his hearers.

Ordinarily Jesus did not concern himself with the wrong practices of the people of Israel, except to call attention to them when fitting opportunities were presented for so doing. Jesus was not a reformer in the sense that we think of that term today. He realized that Israel, under the influence of selfish and corrupt religious leaders, had drifted too far away from God to be turned

back by anything short of his coming kingdom of authority and power.

Jesus, of course, loved Israel, his people according to the flesh. Even when saying to them that their house was left unto them desolate, he explained that he would have liked to have gathered them together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not be gathered. Aside from cleansing the Temple by driving out the money changers, Jesus had used no other method for gathering the Israelites back into the fold of God than to proclaim to them the Gospel of the kingdom, and to call upon them to repent. His was not a ministry of force or coercion, but of persuasion based upon love.

"The chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority." (Matt. 21:23) The question of authority, or of ordination, as it would

be called today, is an important one. Jesus could easily have explained to his opponents by what authority he taught and preached, but apparently he felt that their hearts were not in the right attitude to receive the truth on the subject. In a synagogue in Nazareth, soon after he began his ministry, Jesus called attention to his divine authorization by explaining that the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1,2 was being fulfilled by him.

The opening statement in this prophecy reads, "The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Luke 4:18,19) This is a statement of the true ordination by God, the ordination or authority of the Holy Spirit. Jesus received this directly from his Heavenly Father, and without the benefit of a college degree! Nor did he need the approval of the religious leaders of his day. His ordination by God needed no confirmation from them.

The authority of God through his Spirit to preach the Gospel is described as an 'anointing'. (1 John 2:27) The use of this word stems from the divine laws for installing the priests of Israel into office. A special oil was poured

upon their heads, and this was described as an anointing. The anointing oil was symbolic of the Holy Spirit which was to come upon Jesus, designating him to be the great antitypical High Priest, the anointed of God.

The Apostle Peter explained that all the true followers of Jesus constitute a holy priesthood, and these likewise receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and are thereby authorized or ordained to preach the Gospel. (1 Pet. 2:5,9) The Apostle John wrote, "The anointing which ye have received of him [God] abideth in you." (1 John 2:27) This anointing, John further explains, "teacheth you of all things," meaning, of course, all things which a minister of Christ needs to know in order to preach the Gospel of Christ.

Thus, just as Jesus received his authority to preach directly from God through the Holy Spirit, so do all his faithful followers. Theological schools and human ordination are not prerequisites for the ministry of the Gospel. All consecrated Christians are authorized to be ministers of the Gospel, according to their talents and opportunities.

All who are faithful in carrying out their responsibilities as bearers of the good tidings of the Gospel, Jesus likens to those who build their house upon 'a rock', the sure foundation of the doctrines that he taught.

Searching for Wisdom

KEY VERSE: *"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."*

—James 3:13

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *James 1:1-18*

THERE ARE CERTAIN things we must do in order to be acceptable servants of God. One of these is to study his Word in order that we might become increasingly familiar with the glorious simplicities of the truth. Others cannot study for us, nor can we do their studying for them. We can help one another, and this is the purpose of class studies; but it is essential to prove all things individually, for this is one of the ways in which we work out our own salvation.

However, even in our study of the Bible it is essential to have the right viewpoint, to be governed by the proper motive. Why do we spend time to study the Bible? Is it merely for the personal satisfaction we obtain by knowing the truth? Is it in order that we might show others how we can dispute? Our chief motive in Bible study should be to know God better through a clearer understanding of his plan. And if this motive is uppermost in our minds, our first

thought will be to impart our increasing knowledge of God to others. The better we know God the more we will want to show forth his praises. And the more of his spirit that rules in our lives, the closer we will be following in the footsteps of Jesus.

The present objective of the Christian life is to be made ready for joint-heirship with Jesus in his millennial kingdom. This objective can be realized only through faithfulness in being co-workers in the divine plan. The principal result, therefore, of all that we do in the service of the LORD is the making of our own calling and election sure. That will be a glorious result, for it will mean glory, honor, and immortality for every individual who thus is victorious in running for the prize.

But there are other results also. The Revelator uses the expression, "His wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7) No individual Christian will be the bride of Christ. This is a term

that applies to the church as a whole. The expression that the wife, or bride has made herself ready suggests the collective service all the members of the little flock render for one another. (Luke 12:32) This recalls many scriptures which admonish us to faithfulness in laying down our lives for the brethren. We are to bear one another's burdens, wrote the apostle, "and so fulfill the law of Christ."—Gal. 6:2

We are to serve one another in various ways—by encouraging others through reminding them of the promises of God; by helping them to a better understanding of the truth; by provoking them to love and to good works; by comforting them in their afflictions; and by our own example of faithfulness in sacrifice. Many of our brethren we do not even know, nor will we ever see them in the flesh, but we can serve these also by our prayers, and by our cooperation in the general ministry of the truth. Indeed, some of our brethren are still in the category described by the apostle in his telling of Christ's love for the church, when he said that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8) We, too, have the privilege of laying down our lives for such as these—as many of them as the LORD God may see fit to offer the prize of the high calling.

Yes, the most stupendous work ever to be accomplished in

the whole universe is brought to completion during the Gospel Age, and it is our honored privilege to participate in it. It is the bringing into being of the New Creation, the church of Christ, Head and body. This work is not accomplished by any one individual alone, not even by Jesus; but every Christian who eventually will be an element of the New Creation will have had a part in it, a part that was rendered faithfully and self-sacrificially even unto death. With most of us it is difficult to recognize anything that is being accomplished directly as a result of our feeble efforts, but as God views the work as a whole, he sees the need for the faithful performance of our part.

The grace of God to all his people of the Gospel Age is represented principally in the loving provision of justification he has made through Christ. It is this that makes us acceptable co-workers with the LORD. Indeed, the purpose of it is that we might be workers together with him. It is marvelous grace. It means that imperfect, dying creatures such as we were before God called us, are being qualified to be partners with the God of the universe in the great work of bringing forth a New Creation, and also in reconciling the lost world and giving all an opportunity to enjoy everlasting life. Such grace is beyond our comprehension!

Hear and Do

KEY VERSE: "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

—James 1:22

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: James 1:22-27, 2:1-8

AN IMPORTANT WARNING to the Christian is contained in the latter phrase of this text, "deceiving your own selves." No one likes to be deceived, and least of all by one's own self. But the Apostle James said that it is possible to do this if we are not careful to understand God's purpose for giving us the truth.

It is very important to hear his Word; but through the Prophet Isaiah, God informs us that he has not only opened our ears to his Word, but that he has also put his words in our mouth: "I have put my words in thy mouth . . . that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."—Isa. 51:16

The reference here is to the 'new heavens' and the 'new earth', the spiritual and earthly phases of the messianic kingdom. And the LORD tells us that it is through the power of his words that the personnel for these two phases of the kingdom are developed.

Paul said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12,13) God works in us by the Holy Spirit, through the Word, and our part is in yielding to the influences of his Word.

The Word of God, Paul wrote to Timothy, is good for "correction," and for "discipline in righteousness." This emphasizes that the Bible is not given to us merely to reveal the plan of God in which we are invited to cooperate, but also to instruct us individually in how to serve the LORD, and to teach us the true ways of righteousness.—II Tim. 3:16

Paul explained that God's purpose in providing us with his wonderful Word is that we "may be perfect [complete], thoroughly fitted for every good work." (vs. 17) And, indeed, we are thoroughly fitted by this loving provision. Our faith in the truth is an armor of protection against all the fiery darts of the Adver-

sary. The inspired Word provides encouragement in times of trial, and, as in the case of Jesus, it sets before us a joy which gives strength to endure the cross and to despise the shame, as we are suffering and dying with him.—Eph. 6:16; Heb. 12:2,3

Yes, we are thoroughly fitted by the inspired Word. This means that everything is in the Bible which we need to know in order to make our calling and election sure. Our responsibility is to make proper use of the Bible. We can help each other in doing this by admonishing those with whom we fellowship to become better acquainted with the Word that they might the more effectively appeal to its inspired pages as proof for everything they accept as truth.

We rejoice in the helps which the LORD has especially provided during this harvest end of the age in order that we might "rightly divide the Word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) A great value of these helps is the repeated emphasis they give to the fact that only the Bible is inspired. As early as page 12 in "**The Divine Plan of the Ages**," we read, "No religious teaching should have weight except as it guides the truth-seeker to that fountain"—the Word of God.

The harvest work calls for a general and enthusiastic proclamation of the truth, the Gos-

pel of the kingdom, and by this proclamation a witness is given to the world. But we should not expect a large ingathering of believers to the truth. Many hear and in varying degrees rejoice in the message. For this reason they will be ready to welcome the kingdom and its blessings, but we could not speak of these as a 'class' which the LORD is now developing. Nor should we lower the standard of full consecration in order to appeal to a non-sacrificing group who may be waiting for restitution blessings.

One of the important fundamentals of the truth is the heavenly calling of the Gospel Age as distinct from the hope of restitution to human perfection for the world of mankind during the Millennial Age. The "high calling" (Phil 3:14) has associated with it the privilege of sacrificing all earthly hopes and ambitions, and the setting of our affections on things above. This involves also the invitation to suffer and to die with Christ, and thus to share in the "better sacrifices" (Heb. 9:23) as participants in the sin offering.

Failure to understand these truths would mean that we do not see clearly what is involved in following in the footsteps of Jesus.

So let us be doers of the words our ears have heard!

Abide with Us

*“Abide with us: for it is toward evening,
and the day is far spent.”*

—Luke 24:29

The words quoted above from Luke 24:29 were uttered nearly two thousand years ago by two of our Lord's faithful disciples. The account of the event begins in the 13th verse of the chapter, and continues until the end of the chapter. The conversation took place on the afternoon of the day on which Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

These two disciples decided to return home to Emmaus, a distance of about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they were going along the way they expressed to each other their sore disappointment concerning Jesus' recent death. At this particular time they were not yet thoroughly convinced that his resurrection had taken place. Although they had received the message of the women at the tomb that he had been raised from the dead, they said, "But him [we] saw not." They were both disappointed and discouraged because, instead of Jesus having become a king, he had been cruelly and unjustly crucified; it seemed as though he had been powerless against the devil, who used evil rulers and their agencies to destroy him. The disciples' hopes of associating with him in his glorious kingdom, of which he had so often spoken, had been dashed to pieces within a few short hours.

As they journeyed along the road, a stranger joined them and began talking with them. In reality he was the resurrected Jesus, but he bore no resemblance to anyone they had ever met before. He spoke to them very sympathetically, asking, "What are you discussing that has made you look so sad?" They stared at him in astonishment and replied, "You surely

must be a stranger in Jerusalem not to know of all the things that have happened there in the last few days!"

Jesus asked them, "What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." (vs. 19) They assured the stranger that the world had never seen a man or a prophet like him. Then they explained how the chief priests had wrongly accused him, and brought forth false witnesses against him, which had eventuated in his death upon the cross. This had meant to them not only the loss of a very dear friend, but his death had also signified the loss of their hopes and trust that he had been the Messiah, the one who would redeem Israel.

Still not revealing his identity to them, Jesus began to speak to them, reminding them of everything that the prophets had said concerning the Messiah. He began at Moses, and quoting from the words of the LORD's faithful prophets of old, he opened the Scriptures to them, disclosing the fact that Christ must **first** suffer and **then** enter into his glory. Without suffering, he explained, the Messiah could never be the king of glory with power to bless and restore Israel, and all mankind, in God's due time.

The record in Genesis 22, was no doubt one of the first pictures brought to their attention. There the account is given of the time when Abraham offered up his dearly beloved son in sacrifice. In this allegory, Abraham typified the Heavenly Father, and Isaac pictured Jesus—the Messiah. The ram, actually offered in place of Isaac, represented the sacrificial death of Jesus, as it had so recently taken place. The fact that Isaac, subsequent to this sacrifice, had life, pictured the resurrection of Jesus, who had returned safely to his Father.

Our Lord must have spoken to his two disciples concerning the great covenant God had made with Abraham at that time. (Gen. 22:16-18) "By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the hea-

ven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Another reminder he no doubt brought to their attention was the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. (Exod. 14) He would have illustrated how this history of the beginning of the nation of Israel pictured the deliverance of the whole world of mankind into the kingdom of Messiah, when, in due time, it would be set up upon the earth.

This would have brought to their minds the Passover lamb, slain the night before their safe passage through the Red Sea, leaving their enemies behind them at the bottom of the waters. Their thoughts were directed to the fact that the death angel slew every firstborn among the Egyptians. But the Israelites' firstborn were protected by the blood which had been sprinkled on the lintel and on the doorposts of their homes that fateful night. Jesus must have opened up their understanding to the fact



that he had been typically represented by that lamb—that his blood poured out a few days ago upon the cross would eventually effect their release from the bondage of sin and death.

Next he no doubt reminded them of the words of John the Baptist. When he had seen Jesus approaching him desiring to

be baptized of him in the river Jordan, John said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) When Andrew heard John make this profound statement, he ran quickly to find his brother, Simon Peter, to tell him, "We have found the Messiah [the Anointed of God]!"

Jesus surely must have reminded them of the incident recorded in Exodus: 17, which occurred during the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness for forty years before entering the Promised Land. As they went upon their journey, following the leading of the pillar of fire by night, and the cloud of smoke by day, which rose from out of the Tabernacle, they found themselves in an extremely arid and desolate land. They were very thirsty because there was no water to drink. "You brought us out of Egypt into this desert, and there is no water to drink," they complained to their leader, Moses. But, they were, in fact, murmuring against God.

Moses cried to the LORD for help when the people began to gather into an angry mob, picking up stones and surrounding him with the intention of stoning him to death and then choosing a new leader. The LORD saved him from this frightening situation, and told Moses to take his rod and to go to a particular rock in Horeb, and there to smite the rock, and water would come forth abundantly for the people to drink! What a remarkable miracle! Jesus would explain to his disciples as they traveled along the road to Emmaus, that he was indeed the rock pictured so long ago, who had been smitten in order that the water of life might gush out in abundance for the refreshment and revival of the dying world of mankind.

Then the sacrifices of the Atonement Day must have come into the discussion. In Leviticus 16, these sacrifices are described. The bullock was sacrificed for the sins of the people, making it possible for them to remain in covenant relationship with God. Jesus was represented by that bullock. The High Priest who had entered into the Most Holy to sprinkle the blood of the bullock upon the Mercy Seat for the forgiveness

of the sins of the people, also represented Jesus' presentation of his shed blood to his Father in heaven after his resurrection, in full atonement for the sins of the whole world—which would become effective at the time of his Second Advent to bless all the peoples of the earth.

Again, another picture given during this same period of time was most probably explained by our Lord to have illustrated how he, the Messiah, must suffer and die for sin first, before he could bless the world. This was the type of the copper serpent raised in the wilderness upon a pole. The Israelites had again engaged in murmurings against their God, Jehovah. The LORD sent fiery serpents among them which bit them and caused many of them to die. When they came to Moses confessing their sins, they asked him to pray to Jehovah that he take away the serpents. As a result, and at the LORD's instruction, the copper serpent was made, and it is recorded that "it [came] to pass that every one that [was] bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." (Num. 21:8) Jesus must have explained that the copper serpent represented sin, and that he, himself, at the time of his crucifixion took the place of the sinner in order that all sinners might be made righteous through faith in him who took the sinners' place in death.

The account says, "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. . . . And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:27, 32) And so he must have proceeded to bring to their attention the Psalms, Isaiah, and all the other prophets, which had foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

When they finally reached Emmaus, the wonderfully knowledgeable stranger indicated to them that he meant to travel further. But the disciples urged him to stay with them, for, as they said, evening was drawing on. Jesus did not force his company or his lessons upon the disciples, as likewise he

waits for us to invite him to abide with us as our teacher and leader. He encourages us to recognize our need for him; to ask that we might “learn of him, that our joy might be full.” (I John 1:4) This same thought is brought out in Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I [Jesus] stand at the door [of our hearts], and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

It is vital that Christ ‘abide’ with us, and in us, and for us to abide in him. This implies that we must first have come to him in faith and trust, knowing that he is our Redeemer and Savior, and dedicating our lives to his service. When our consecration has been accepted by God, we become members of Christ’s body, he being the Head, and we being lesser members. This illustration of the body is given several times in the Scriptures, and Paul tells us that God “hath put all things under his [Jesus’] feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body.”—Eph. 1:22,23

During the nearly 2,000 years of the Gospel Age, a selective invitation has been issued by God to become part of the body of Christ. There is only one door through which any may enter into this ‘body’ arrangement. It is the door of sacrifice, or baptism into Christ’s death. We are accepted by God only if we completely give up our own will and take, instead, his will, pledging ourselves to walk in Jesus’ steps as his followers, his disciples. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”—Rom. 6:4

Even this is not sufficient. Even after having received the witness of the Spirit that we have been accepted by God through the receiving of his Holy Spirit, we must be constantly alert to continue to **abide** in Christ. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”—I John 2:6

Whoever has a portion of the Holy Spirit and is controlled by it, is a member of the body of Christ and will seek to walk in the footsteps of the Master, doing the will of God in every

avenue of his life. We will not trust our own impressions, or our own concepts of what is right. The Word of the LORD is to abide in us and to give us direction by which we can govern our lives. This was the way in which our Master lived. He said, I come not to do my own will, "but the will of the Father which hath sent me." And so it is to be with us. To abide in him, we must walk as he walked, following the precepts taught to us by God's Word, the Bible. It is also important that we do these things joyfully. As David prophetically spoke concerning Jesus, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy Law is written in my heart."—Ps. 40:7,8

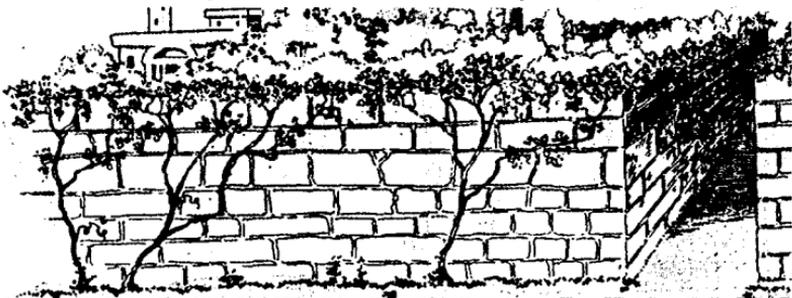
Paul told us, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." (I Cor. 12:13,14) Paul used this simple illustration of the human body to show us the unity and oneness that must exist in the body of Christ. There can be only one Head, which is Christ. When we gave up our own will, we agreed to look to our new Head for direction. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) Jesus prayed to his Heavenly Father that "they all [the members of his body] may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21) This is the spirit, the oneness, that must exist in the body, as well as in another illustration—in that of the 'true vine'. This is what it means for Jesus to abide in us!

In John 15, our Lord Jesus' parable of the vine and the branches is recorded, which concerned our relationship with him. As he so often did, he used a familiar, natural example to illustrate this lesson. In the first twelve verses of the chapter, the word 'abide' was used nine times! It comes from the Greek verb *meno*, which is translated 'abide', 'continue', 'dwell', 'endure', 'remain', or 'tarry'. In this lesson all the words translated abide in the **King James Version** are from the same Greek word, *meno*.

We read: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."—John 15:1-12

In the first verse, Jesus identified himself as the true vine, which implies that there is also a false vine. We are intensely interested in making certain that we have nothing to do with the false vine; we are anxious to remain within the true vine, which represents the true church of God. Suffice it to say, that the false vine represents a false church system, or the "vine of



the earth," with which God eventually will deal, as described in Revelation 14:18-20.

In this illustration of the vineyard, our Heavenly Father is the husbandman who plants, owns, and cares for the vine, and it is because of his wisdom and effort that it yields fruit. Our Master said that he is the root of this vine, and we are the branches. If we abide in him the result will be that we will bring forth much fruit. Jesus clearly taught us that without abiding in him we cannot grow into a healthy, vigorous vine, nor can we bear any fruit. This is very easy to understand when we look at a natural vine. Separate a branch from the root, and it dies almost immediately, and if there is any fruit upon the branch, it becomes withered and worthless.

When the Holy Spirit is received into a good and honest heart, the immediate result will be a sprouting forth of new growth. At first the tender new branches have only tiny buds, but these truly indicate that there is life in the plant—that it is healthy and growing. The husbandman is very happy to see this evidence of life and growth. But if the vine is allowed to follow its own course, when it has grown to its full size, ripe fruit in abundance would not occur. In order to produce a strong vine which produces a lush and plentiful harvest, pruning must take place. And so the husbandman pinches off the ends of the new shoots. This is done carefully in order not to do injury to the vine, but simply to make it branch out in various directions, thereby causing a thicker growth, and more possibilities for fruit to develop. This is a painful process, but it is necessary.

And so, sometimes the Great Husbandman 'prunes' us by taking away earthly prosperity, lands, houses, wealth, or by permitting persecution, loss of earthly friendships, or loss of health. The tendrils of our hearts may extend too far afield and cling too closely to the earth, hindering us from bearing the fruit which he seeks. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word," the psalmist wrote.—Ps. 119:67

What are the fruits which the husbandman desires to cultivate in his vine? Paul, that faithful apostle, enumerates them as being: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And the Apostle Peter said, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:8

In his list, Paul selected love as the first quality identified as a fruit of the Spirit. And he confirmed this when he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not [love], I am nothing."—I Cor. 13:1,2

Our Lord Jesus also confirmed this thought by saying, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:35; 15) How can we love each other with the same love that the Lord Jesus had for his disciples? As we become more and more filled with the Holy Spirit, we will come closer to the standard of perfect love which he set.

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." (John 13:9) Consider the close relationship, the oneness that existed between Jesus and his Heavenly Father. Jesus was the apple of his eye, and "he received from God the Father honor and glory," when he said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (II Pet. 1:17) Jesus said that as the Heavenly Father "hath loved me, so have I loved you." What words of comfort, hope and joy!

"These things have I spoken unto you," our Lord assured us, "that my joy might remain [abide] with you, and that your joy might be full." His joy was to do the will of God. If this is our joy, he will abide in us!

“Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall [abide] with you.”—Phil. 4:9 □

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 2—“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”—Psalm 95:6 (Z. '99-184 Hymn 283)

AUGUST 9—“If the light that is in thee be[come] darkness, how great is that darkness!”—Matthew 6:23 (Z. '04-297 Hymn 178)

AUGUST 16—“In everything give thanks.”—I Thessalonians 5:18 (Z. '03-25 Hymn 219)

AUGUST 23—“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”—I Corinthians 13:13 (Z. '03-58 Hymn 165)

AUGUST 30—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matthew 5:16 (Z. '03-206 Hymn 116)



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The stranger was Eliezer, Abraham's faithful and trusted steward, or chief servant. He introduced himself to Rebekah and presented her with two golden bracelets and a golden earring from his trappings, as thanks for her willing and eager kindness and helpfulness. Eliezer, having reached the end of his long trek of about 450 miles, now was concerned with completing successfully the business Abraham had sent him to do. His important mission was to find a suitable bride for Isaac among the young ladies who lived in the family city of his master Abraham—Nahor in Mesopotamia—and which he had left many years earlier, after he had buried his father there.

(Continued on Page 37)

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Grand Forks	CKGF 1340	9:00 a.m.
Nanaimo	CHUB 1570	8:30 a.m.
Quesnel	CHPQ 1370	8:30 a.m.
Prickville		

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-Estevan	CFSL 1190	8:45 a.m.

Overseas Broadcasts

BRITISH ISLES

Radio Caroline (Tues.)	KHZ 819-AM	8:45 p.m.
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BRITISH WEST INDIES

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

ECUADOR

Quito	Radio Anoranza 99.7-FM	8:45 a.m.
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HONG KONG

Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)		6:00 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

Dunedin	4XD	11:15 a.m.
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NIGERIA

Radio Africa (Thurs.)		7:45 p.m.
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PANAMA

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		9:15 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS – TV Programs

“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.

CALIFORNIA

Arroyo Grande Channel 66

FLORIDA

Daytona Beach Channel 42

Fort Myers Channel 7

Ocala Channel 7

Orlando Channel 4

St. Petersburg Channel 35

Tampa Channel 57

GEORGIA

Atlanta Channel 4

Cordele Channel 55

Savannah Channel 55

IOWA

Cedar Rapids Channel 13

*Des Moines Channel 33

LOUISIANA

Jenninigs Channel 13

New Orleans Channel 61

MAINE

Portland Channel 57

MASSACHUSETTS

Hyannis Channel 41

MICHIGAN

Detroit Channel 26

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis Channel 13

MISSISSIPPI

Philadelphia Channel 20

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St. Louis Channel 7

NEBRASKA

Lincoln Channel 67

NEW YORK

Buffalo Channel 67

Glens Falls Channel 8

Oneonta Channel 15

Rochester Channel 40

Syracuse Channels 14, 18

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh Channel 68

Reidsville Channel 14

OHIO

Cleveland Channel 29

Columbus Channel 62

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa Channel 33

PENNSYLVANIA

Harrisburg Channel 40

TENNESSEE

Helkskell Channel 12

VIRGINIA

Norfolk Channel 68

WEST VIRGINIA

Huntington Channel 55

*Logan (Mqn.) Channel 12

PUERTO RICO

Arecibo Channel 28

Eliezer had been willing to undertake this assignment, but he was quite concerned as to what he would do if the girl he chose for Isaac would not return with him. But Abraham assured him that the LORD would bless his service, and that he would effectively carry out his mission. Abraham said to his servant, "The LORD God of heaven, he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."—Genesis 24:7

And now, after meeting Rebekah at the well, Eliezer realized that he had made a good beginning! As soon as he arrived at Nahor he had stopped the caravan near the well to offer a prayer asking for God's guidance, and while he was still kneeling, this lovely young girl arrived on the scene! "Whose daughter art thou?" he asked Rebekah, and "Tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?" Rebekah answered both of his questions. She told him the wonderful news he had hoped to hear—that she was related to his master, Abraham—indeed, Abraham was her father's uncle! She welcomed Eliezer and his traveling companions and invited them to come and stay with her family.

Eliezer was certain that God had indeed blessed his journey, and he bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD. Meanwhile, Rebekah ran to tell her family that she had met Eliezer at the well, and that he was going to stay overnight with them. She showed them the beautiful golden bracelets and earring he had given her. Her brother, Laban, ran out to greet Eliezer, saying, "Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

Next, Laban graciously took the harness off the camels, fixed beds for them with straw, and fed them. Then he brought water for Eliezer and the men who were with them, to wash their feet. In those days it was the custom for the host to provide water for washing his guest's feet, since the roads were dusty and hot. Nice, cool water at the end of a long

journey was refreshing. Meat was set before them to eat; Eliezer must have felt like an honored guest!—Genesis 24:32

But Eliezer wanted Rebekah's family to understand why he had come to their home. Before he could relax and enjoy all the pleasures of their hospitality he needed to know whether or not they would help him accomplish his goal of finding a bride for Isaac. "I will not eat," he said, "until I have told mine errand." Then he related his story, leaving out nothing. Read Genesis 24:34-49.

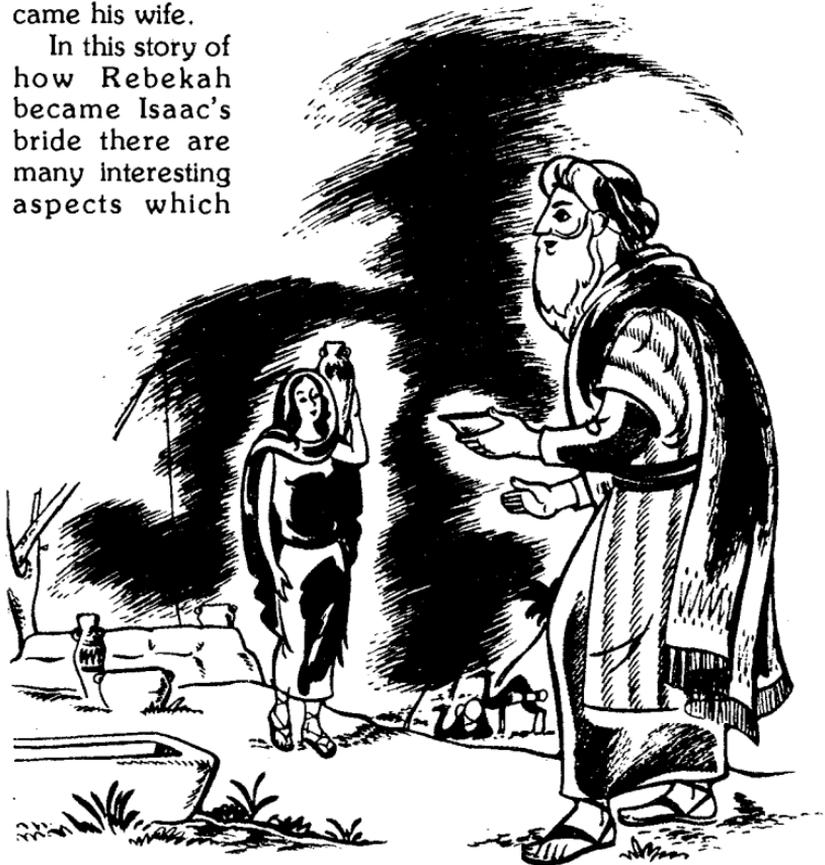
Both Laban—Rebekah's brother, and Bethuel—Rebekah's father, agreed that God had arranged for Rebekah and Isaac to marry. They said, "Take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken." (verses 50 and 51) Once more Abraham's faithful servant had reason to worship God! He bowed down to the earth and thanked him for their words. After this, his servants brought jewels of silver and gold, and beautiful clothes, and gave them to Rebekah to pledge the proposal. He also gave many precious gifts to her mother and her brother. It was such a happy occasion that they ate and drank, and remained all night at the celebration!

Early the next morning Eliezer told Rebekah's family that since God had prospered his journey so quickly, he was eager to take Rebekah and begin their pilgrimage back to Canaan. They were surprised that he wanted to leave so soon, suggesting that he allow her to remain with them at least a little while so they could get used to the idea of her leaving, and could bid her a proper farewell. "Let the damsel abide with us for a few days, at least ten; after that she shall go," they requested. But Eliezer insisted, "Hinder me not. Send me away that I may go to my master." Finally, the choice was left to Rebekah, and she said, very simply, "I will go."—verse 58

That very day, Rebekah, with her servants, started off on their camels, across the desert-land, over the high, rough mountains, with Eliezer, to become Isaac's bride! It was a long and arduous way they must travel to Canaan and her new home, but she was excited and happy to go.

Isaac was just as interested and excited about meeting his new bride, as she was to meet him! He must have had his eye on the road for many days as he worked in the fields, watching for a sign of the arriving camel caravan. In the twilight he would go into the fields to pray and to meditate, thinking about his bride-to-be. Finally, one evening "he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming!" And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she quickly jumped off her camel to go to him. This was their first meeting, but Isaac loved her immediately, and soon she became his wife.

In this story of how Rebekah became Isaac's bride there are many interesting aspects which



picture the way in which Christ selects his bride, his wife. The Bible contains many illustrations of Christ and his church, and the bridegroom and bride picture is one of the most beautiful of them all. "The marriage of the Lamb [Jesus] is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."—Revelation 19:7

Marriage customs during the Jewish Age were different from the customs of our day. Instead of Isaac finding a bride for himself, his father, Abraham found a bride for him through Eliezer. This pictures how God (Abraham) uses the Holy Spirit (represented by Eliezer) to find a bride (Rebekah) or the church class, for our Lord Jesus (pictured by Isaac). Doesn't that make the story of how Abraham sought a bride for Isaac much more interesting and meaningful?

The family blessing upon Rebekah by her mother, father, and brother, seems a very strange one unless we understand the picture being shown here. The blessing was: "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions!" (Genesis 24:60) Perhaps we can think of this as another promise of God that together, Isaac and Rebekah (picturing Christ and his bride), will be the life-givers of the millions—even billions!—of people during the kingdom age, when life will be restored to them. This wonderful promise of God will eventually come true!

So we see that this beautiful love story was included in the Bible to help us understand God's plans and promises more clearly. It will be after the "marriage" of Christ and his bride, the church, that the blessings promised by God will go out to all people.—Revelation 19:7; 22:17

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Eliezer, and what was his important mission?
2. Why did Eliezer think Rebekah was indicated by God to be his choice for Isaac's bride?
3. Was Rebekah reluctant to go so far away to marry someone she had never met?
4. What was the blessing Rebekah's family gave her as she left? What does it mean?

5. In the lesson of this story, who do the following represent:
Isaac, Rebekah, Eliezer, Abraham?
6. What lesson did you learn from this story which will help you to be more pleasing to God?

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Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.—Luke 6:35,36

The Heavenly Vision

"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

—Acts 26:19

DURING THE TIME when the Bible was in course of preparation, much of God's instruction and warning to his people, as well as the revelation of his plans and purposes, was imparted by means of 'visions'. These were frequently, if not always, of a miraculous nature, and so impressive that they left no doubt in the minds of those to whom they were given that the LORD had spoken to them. Visions were not given to satisfy curiosity, but in order that those receiving them might be equipped to cooperate with the LORD in the outworking of his plans, either for themselves, or for others, or both.

In many instances visions are referred to in the Scriptures as 'the voice of God' speaking to his people, and a glance through a concordance is sufficient to make us realize the importance the LORD places upon obedience to his voice, and the dire consequences resulting from disobedience. God spoke to Noah, not merely that he might know about the coming Flood, but in order that he might warn the people of the momentous event about to occur, and so that he would have time to take action by making preparations for the salvation of himself and his family.

The LORD also spoke to Abram in Ur, telling him of his purpose to bless all the families of the earth, and giving him instructions to leave his own people and his father's house and to go to a land which he would show him. The blessings to be derived from this contract with the LORD depended entirely upon Abram's obedience to God's instructions.

God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush, commissioning him to be the great deliverer of the then newly founded nation of Israel. Even the ground Moses stood upon when this vision was given became holy or sanctified, for God there imparted information to his servant about what he wanted him to do. If Moses was to enjoy the continued favor of his Creator, he had no alternative—he must obey the heavenly vision.

When Joshua entered the Promised Land confronted with the monumental task of dispersing the Canaanites, an angel appeared to him as “the captain of the LORD’s host.” (Josh. 5:14) It was from this angelic commander of God’s army that Joshua received instructions concerning how he should proceed to overthrow Jericho. Had he gone contrary to those instructions, the city would not have been captured.

A vision was given to the Prophet Isaiah in which he saw the LORD “high and lifted up.” (Isa. 6:1) During this revelation Isaiah heard God asking, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And he responded, “Here am I; send me.”

New Testament Visions

The most notable vision mentioned in the New Testament was given to Jesus at the time of his baptism, when the heavens were ‘opened’ to him. Here at the age of thirty Jesus began his earthly ministry. He had come to carry out the will of his Heavenly Father, written in the volume of the Book concerning him. (Ps. 40:6-8; Heb. 10:5-9) All the information recorded in the Old Testament for the guidance of the Master was given under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but no one could interpret their meaning. Even the perfect mind of Jesus



needed the special insight—a vision imparted through the Holy Spirit—and it was this with which he was blessed when the heavens were ‘opened’ to him.

Jesus had come to fulfill the prophecies which had been written concerning him, and when their meanings were revealed he unhesitatingly entered upon the task of carrying them out. At what great cost did Jesus obey the heavenly vision! The period of his ministry was short, but every day was a tiring one. He was rebuffed by his enemies, misunderstood by his friends, and the great “contradiction of sinners” finally resulted in his arrest, mock trial, and cruel crucifixion. (Heb. 12:3) But this was the meaning of the vision. He was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. He was to give his flesh for the life of the world. He was to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and he was obedient throughout it all. Yes, he learned the cost of obedience through suffering under the permission of evil.—Heb. 2:10; 5:8

But to offset the cost of obedience, the Master also experienced a rich reward even while he was laying down his life. His heritage of peace and joy more than compensated for the sacrifice he was making. Indeed, his serenity and hope enabled him to obey the Father’s commands despite the suffering his obedience brought upon him; it was because of the “joy that was set before him,” that he “endured the cross, despising the shame.” (Heb. 12:2) True, this was to be a future delight, but the anticipation of it and his complete confidence that it would be his, gave him a present tranquility and pleasure which the world could neither give nor take away. So while he was indeed a “man of sorrows,” he was undoubtedly also the happiest man on earth; and the joy of the LORD was his strength.

Paul’s Vision

Saul of Tarsus had been a zealous servant of God throughout his entire lifetime, although, until his conversion, he had been incorrect in his understanding of what the LORD wanted him to do. It was while he was on an errand of misdirected

service that he was favored with the revealing vision quoted in our theme text, and to which, he later testified, he had not been disobedient. It was this vision which halted Saul from continuing in the wrong course he had been following, and which revealed to him that he had been called to occupy the position of a fellow-sufferer with Christ. The revelation explained the task he would perform as the apostle to the Gentiles. Ananias was asked to tell Saul right at the beginning of his call "what great things he was to suffer for his [Christ's] name's sake."

Yes, obedience to the heavenly vision did mean much tribulation to Paul during his lifetime, and in this he rejoiced. It had been revealed to him that his trials would involve the privilege of 'filling up that which was behind' of the afflictions of Christ.—Col. 1:24

After declaring to King Agrippa that he had not been disobedient to the vision, Paul added, "But [I] showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26:20) It was for "these causes," Paul explained to the king, that he was accused by his fellow Jews, and it was for "these causes" that he continued to be persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles until finally he finished his course with joy, being executed at Rome.

Because he had implicit confidence in his Heavenly Father, and knew that nothing would be permitted to come into his life that was not for his highest spiritual welfare, Paul enjoyed rest of heart and mind; but he had no rest from the impelling urgency of laying down his life in obedience to the heavenly vision. Whether in Jewish synagogues, in heathen temples, on shipboard, or in prison, the one consuming passion of his life was to impart to others the meaning of that heavenly vision—that Jesus was the Christ and that the hope of both the church and the world centered in him as the Redeemer, the one who was to reign until all enemies were put under his feet, even the great enemy death.

Paul's faithfulness to the heavenly vision involved a great deal more than bearing witness to the Gospel of Christ. On one occasion he said that he had not shunned to declare "all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:27) In doing this he encouraged, comforted, warned, and corrected the brethren, helping to build them up in the most holy faith that they might grow to the full stature of manhood in Christ Jesus.

A Falling Away

Paul also prophesied that there would come a great falling away from the faith, that "grievous wolves" would enter in among the sheep not sparing the flock, that a great antichrist system would develop and flourish throughout much of the age, continuing until destroyed by the brightshining of the Master's second presence at the end of the age. (II Thess. 2:3-8; Acts 20:29) He foretold that in the Day of the LORD at the end of the age, sudden and unexpected destruction would come upon them, while the brethren would not be in darkness that "that day should overtake you as a thief."—I Thess. 5:1-4

The Apostle Peter also prophesied that at the end of the age—in the "last days"—that those who scoffed saying, "Where is the promise of his coming [Greek, *parousia*—presence]?" would fail to understand the significance of the time in which they were living, being "willingly ignorant."—II Pet. 3:3-5

The Book of Revelation reveals unmistakably in detail the facts of the great falling away from the precious doctrines of truth treasured by the Early Church. This ultimately became the 'apostasy' which gradually developed subsequent to the death of the apostles. The prophetic vision given to John on the Isle of Patmos makes it clear that at the end of the age, God's own people, his faithful followers, the ones who would be taking heed to the "sure word of prophecy," would be blessed with increased light on the Word appropriate and needful for their time. (II Pet. 1:19) Indeed, we are assured that this light would come at the time that the "mystery of God" would be "finished."—Rev. 1:1; 10:7

Prophecies recorded by the Apostles Paul, Peter, and John, all assure us that the LORD's people at the end of the Gospel Age were to be blessed with an effulgence of light with respect to the plans and purposes of God. The Master's own testimony is to this effect, when he described the manner of his return and second presence, by saying that it was to be as a 'brightshining' coming out of the east, shining even unto the west. While this is a promise that eventually, and as a result of his presence, the knowledge of the glory of God shall indeed fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, the Master's own disciples are the first to be illuminated by the light of his presence.—Luke 21:31

Using a different illustration of truth which would be given to the household of faith in the harvest of the Gospel Age, Jesus explained that when he returned he would 'sit down' with them and 'serve them' "meat in due season." (Matt. 24:45-47; Luke 12:37) Outlining the manner in which this would be done, he said that he would appoint a steward or servant, whom he would use to dispense this 'meat', or spiritual food—the truth—which would be given to his followers.

The combined testimony of Jesus and the apostles, with many confirmations in the Old Testament, leaves no doubt that the LORD's people living at this time of his Second Advent should expect to be blessed with a still further, outstanding 'vision' of truth. Nothing in the Scriptures, however, indicates that this latter day vision would be given by God in a miraculous manner as in the past when he illuminated the minds of his holy prophets, and apostles, and our Lord Jesus. Miraculous methods are no longer necessary since the plans and purposes of God have already been clearly revealed and recorded in his Word to the extent that it is his will to divulge his mysteries.

Do we, then, really have reason to believe that a special understanding of the Word of God will be given to his people at this end of the age in the manner indicated by the prophecies—particularly by the prophecy of Jesus concerning the

'meat in due season'—and the method which would be used to serve this food to the household of faith? We believe we do!

We will discover that what we call 'present truth' is, in fact, the original plan of God, greatly treasured by the Early Church, which had been lost sight of during the hundreds of years of the rule of the apostasy. We learn, also, that 'present truth' is in harmony with, and **is** the sum total of the promises and prophecies of the Word of God. If this is so, then there will be no alternative but to recognize the fact of our Lord's second presence.

The Revealed Plan of God

When it comes to the matter of understanding the entire revealed plan of God for human redemption and salvation, we cannot properly judge truth from error simply by examining one, or even several, individual points of doctrine. What we must first of all identify is the central theme of the divine plan, and the great objective to which every detail of the plan is leading. What is it that comes to light on this matter as we look into the promises and prophecies of the Word of God? It is the fact that God purposes to establish a kingdom here on earth which will quell the rebellion of fallen man against God's sovereign will. It is further enhanced by the fact that God has offered man his provision for life accomplished through the costly sacrifice of his Son, Christ Jesus, whereby all in due time may be restored to perfection and everlasting life.

Jesus succinctly summed up this dominant thread of the Bible when he taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) Through the writings of the Prophet Isaiah, it has been revealed to us that the accomplishment of God's divine purpose is not dependent upon the frail arm of flesh, but rather that "the government shall be upon his [Christ's] shoulder," and that the "zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this"—Isa. 9:6,7

When we speak of the primary theme pervading the Word of God we simply mean the outline of what **God** will do for man, and **not** what man will try to do for God. It was from

this fundamental truth of the divine plan of the ages that the apostate church fell away. Instead of praying for, and waiting for, the kingdom of Christ to rule and bless the world, there was gradually set up a counterfeit kingdom through the uniting of church and state. This was called Christendom, and

. . . God purposes to establish a kingdom here on earth which will quell the rebellion of fallen man against God's sovereign will . . .

while the failure and corruption of that apostate system is now generally recognized by the majority of Christians, the underlying principle upon which it was based still governs the thinking and actions of all who are not enlightened by present truth. The incorrect principle is that unless we do God's work for him, it will not be accomplished. The result of this false thinking is that the so-called Christian world is as blind today as they were during the blackest days of the Dark Ages to the fact that **God** has a plan for the blessing of all the nations and he will certainly carry out that plan regardless of human help.

Because of this blindness to the truth, many church members today are confused, having no anchor of assurance to which they can tie their hopes for the future in this fearful time when angry nations continue to be hostile to one another despite outward appearances of coming to more conciliation. Often in the past they have dragged down religious beliefs and institutions with them in their mighty struggles for control. In more recent years, serious efforts have been made for churchianity to unite to achieve strength through a stronger voice in the world. Eloquent sermons have been preached with the intent of rallying church members to action designed to increase the influence of religion in the world; and attempts

are repeatedly made to sway governments toward a more righteous course.

But in all the confusion of voices and claims, in all the warnings and urgings, never is there heard a hint that God has the situation in hand, or that the downfall of Christendom means the near establishment of the true kingdom of Christ which will bring its peace and joy and life to all mankind. The vision of present truth has been hidden, and hence mankind gropes on in darkness, staggering like drunken men under the influence of the "wine of the wrath of her fornication [or the improper union, or marriage, of church and state]."—Isa. 24:20; Rev. 18:3

As the falling away from truth developed in the early centuries after the apostles died, the professed people of God began to lose sight of the blessed hope that Jesus had promised to return to establish his long-awaited kingdom. Other false and misleading concepts of truth soon developed, following quickly one upon another. Catering to the heathen view that there is a multiplicity of gods, the false church adopted the theory of a triune god. In this way they could offer a compromise to those who still held to the Scriptural doctrine that there is only "one true God," by claiming that the three gods of the trinity were in reality but one god.

The pagan idea of the soul being an entity separate from the body, which cannot die, was also adopted into the body of faith taught by the apostate church. As impetus to effectively bring all the world under the canopy of the false church, it was proclaimed that immortal souls would be tortured forever if they did not join their ranks!

Thus, one false doctrine led to another, until, in addition to losing sight of the main objective of the plan of God centered in Christ, the Redeemer, nearly every precious teaching of the Bible was supplanted by heathen philosophies which were made to appear Christian by attaching to them the name of Christ and the language of the Bible. This blindness continued to become blacker, with only a faint glimmer of light breaking through the gross darkness during the period of Protestant

reformation movements. This was true until the very end of the age approached.

The Vision of Present Truth

Then came the vision! This momentous event occurred over one hundred years ago! Students of the Bible previously had discovered that the signs of the times and prophetic measurements revealed that the end of the Gospel Age and the return of their Master was imminent. They had long been disappointed because of a failure to understand the manner of his return. Many had supposed that he would come again as a human being, with the nail prints in his hands and feet. The fact that his flesh had been given for the life of the world was disregarded. The fact that he had been raised from the dead a glorious, divine being, invisible to human eyes was overlooked. The fact was forgotten that when he returned he would be present as a 'thief in the night', unrecognized and unseen to all except those who discovered his presence through their study of prophetic writings, and the recognition of their fulfillment.

Groups of earnest Bible students were thrilled over discoveries made while studying the prophecies! One of the great truths which came to light toward the end of the 19th century was the **object** of the Lord's return. They rediscovered the fact that his purpose was to restore mankind to life in the fullest sense—not to destroy the earth. They realized through the leadings of the Holy Spirit that the prophetic 'end of the world' did not indicate the destruction of the earth, but rather that it was God's due time for the present **evil social order** to come to an end.

In Acts 3:19-23, the Apostle Peter revealed that the Second Advent of Christ was to accomplish the "restitution of all things." He emphasized the fact that this period of time had been testified to by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began! Yes, the voice of the LORD had been relayed to us through the writings of the prophets of old!

This, as much as any other feature of present truth, was the 'meat in due season' which Jesus promised to serve to the household of faith when he returned. It was the due time for the truth concerning God's purpose to **restore the earth** to be understood, because the return of the Lord marked the near approach of that wonderful age—the Millennial Age—when the restitution of all things would be accomplished. It is certainly true that individuals throughout the Gospel Age had held dear the doctrine of restitution, but the harvesttime of the age was the proper period in church history for the followers of Christ in general to have restored to them one of the most precious doctrines of our most holy faith.

Just as foretold by Jesus, this vision of truth, together with all the related phases of the divine plan, was not impressed upon the minds of all his true followers at once, but first of all was given to a very small, select company. And it was from this company that one was selected by God to serve the household of faith to spread the glorious Gospel of the kingdom far and wide. Eventually it became known in every land by those who had ears to hear, and hearts to appreciate it.

The Vision Complete

The vision of truth which has reached us in God's appointed way, and in which so many of us today are rejoicing, is complete and all-comprehensive. It embraces the meaning of all the great visions God gave to his people in ancient times. It was a blessed thing for Noah to be informed about the coming Flood and the privilege of service which was to be his in connection with it. But Noah did not know as we do today that his experiences and the ending of that world prefigured the "days of the Son of Man" in which we are now living, and the end of "this present evil world."

How Abraham must have rejoiced when God informed him of his purpose to bless all the families of the earth through his 'seed'! But even he did not know that the true 'seed' of promise was to be a faith 'seed' composed of Jesus and his

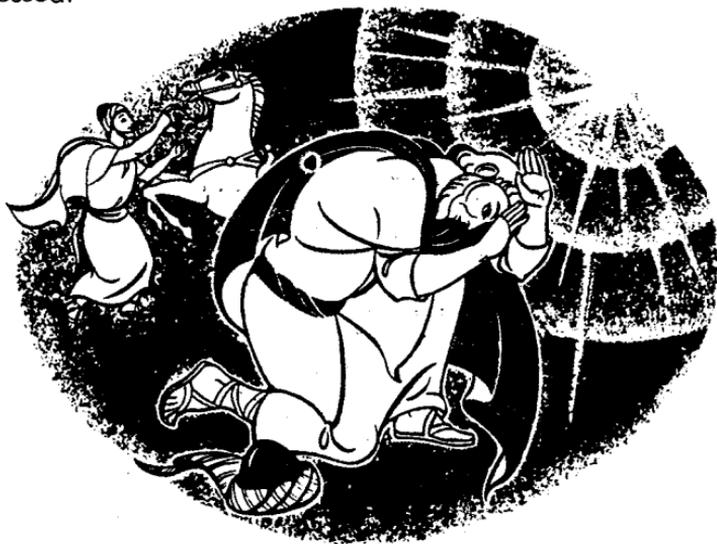
body members, who suffer and die with him that they might live and reign with him.

Moses was awe-inspired when he saw the burning bush and heard the voice of God instructing him to take off his shoes for the place on which he stood was holy ground. He was told there that he was to be the deliverer of God's people from Egypt, and to be the instrument used by God to give his Law to Israel. But he received only a tiny glimpse of what the 'greater deliverance' would involve, and what it would mean to all mankind in terms of reconciliation to God of both Jew and Gentile under the law of the New Covenant. True, he prophesied that one greater than he was to come, but like other prophets of the Old Testament it is doubtful if he understood very clearly the implication of this or others of the prophecies he was permitted to utter.

Isaiah saw 'the LORD high and lifted up', and he became so inspired by the sight that he was determined to do the bidding of such an exalted and holy one. His vision of God, however, did not reveal the glories of his divine character, as we have been permitted to view them today. We are privileged to see through the revelation of his Word the marvelous harmony of Jehovah's attributes—his wisdom, justice, his love and power.

When the heavens were opened to Jesus, he had revealed to him the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the purpose of his earthly ministry—that he was to suffer and to die for the world. It was not possible then for him to impart that knowledge to his disciples even though he often tried to do so, for they were not able to bear it yet. When later he opened up the Scriptures to them concerning the meaning of his death, their hearts burned within them. (Luke 24:32) Even so, it was not until after Pentecost when their eyes were opened by the Holy Spirit to the meaning of the vision, and that the 'seed' was enlarged to include the church, that they learned of their privilege to suffer and die with the Master. They understood then that they could share in the better sacrifices of this age—the sin-offering feature of

the divine plan. (Heb. 9:23) This precious truth was another point which had been lost sight of as the apostasy developed, but it is now part of the 'vision' with which we have been blessed.



The vision Paul saw was glorious in all its implications. In it could be seen the inclusion of the Gentiles as well as Jews in the offer of the opportunity to become fellow-heirs with Christ in the kingdom promises. Later, Paul was given other visions. He was caught up to the third heavens, and to paradise, and he saw things he was not permitted to utter because it was not then the due time for them to be known. (II Cor. 12:1-7) Today we, too, can see the third heaven, and understand what Paul saw in his glimpse of paradise—that he saw God's purpose of restitution accomplished, and the entire human race living in a worldwide Eden in perfection of life and peace. Instead of our being forbidden to declare what we see, we are bidden to tell the whole world the blessed tidings of our vision!

Yes, brethren, because we are living in the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet when the time has come for the mystery of God to be finished, it is our privilege to rejoice in a vision of truth which encompasses the whole plan of God. In Daniel 12:12, a reference was made to the 'blessedness' of those people of God who would live at this end of the age when the meaning of the vision would be unfolded to them. And indeed, how blessed we have been!

Truth Brings Responsibility

When, in ancient times, God gave a vision to one of his servants, it was in the nature of a commission to service. On the Damascus road, when Saul saw that light which shone above the brightness of the sun, he instantly recognized its significance and inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 26:13; 9:6) And so it is in connection with the vision of truth with which God has favored us. There is something for us to do about it. In giving us the vision, the LORD expects us to appreciate the privilege of being obedient to its every requirement. It is to us a commission of service, and a commission, moreover, which is hedged about with conditions and qualifications which must be met in order for our service to be "holy, acceptable unto God."—Rom. 12:1

The divine credentials for service have been the same throughout all of the Gospel Age. Paul knew that his heavenly vision meant more than merely telling others about the Gospel of Christ. He wrote, for example, that although he might speak the truth with the tongues of men or of angels, and had not love he would be as nothing in the sight of the LORD. (I Cor. 13:1) Nevertheless, the **effect** of the vision in Paul's case was to fill him with the love of God. The glorious hope of becoming a partaker of that unspeakable privilege of having part in the kingdom, caused the love of God to be shed abroad in his heart. Like the Prophet Jeremiah, he could not withhold from proclaiming the glad tidings!—Jer. 20:9

Paul did not want to hold back the truth from others. "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" he wrote on another

occasion, because it was too wonderful not to share! (I Cor. 9:16) The love of God impelled Paul to lay down his life in the service of the truth and the brethren. And because love was the motivating power of his life, he could write, finally, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."—II Tim. 4:7,8

Paul also said that he kept his 'body under', and brought it into subjection to God's laws, lest, after having preached to others, he might himself become a castaway. (I Cor. 9:27) This was another one of the requirements of the heavenly vision of truth. So it has been with all the LORD's disciples since the vision shone upon Paul, and so it is with us now. The Apostle Peter reminds us that the members of the Early Church had purified their souls and their lives by **obeying the truth**. (I Pet. 1:22) No matter how faithful we might be in proclaiming the Gospel message to others, unless we, too, allow the truth to purify our lives, we have not truly obeyed the heavenly vision.

Again Peter wrote: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts [unprofitable desires] in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." (I Pet. 1:14,15) When we were in ignorance of the truth—before we saw the heavenly vision—our desires were, in general, selfish. We wanted our own way, and sometimes were not very particular how the getting of our own way affected others. But now this must not be the case. We have seen a vision of God. We have learned of his love. We want to be like him and to do his will. As he loves the world and plans to bless the people, so we will want love to dominate our lives. As God was willing to make an awesome sacrifice to propel his plan forward to completion, so we will be delighted to spend and be spent daily in order that a knowledge of this wonderful plan may reach and cheer the lives of others, and glorify the author of that plan.

The truth is too wonderful not to share!

There is no doubt about the meaning of the vision insofar as divine service for his people is concerned. It has been revealed to us that we are in the harvest, which is the end of the age, and that it is the time when the Lord, the Chief Reaper, is saying to his reapers that they should thrust in the sickle of truth and reap.—Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:14-16

The vision also reveals that we are nearing the sounding of the Jubilee trumpet, when it will announce loudly and clearly to all ears that the time has come for the fallen race to have its lost inheritance restored. Oh how blessed will be the glad tidings when mankind can sing together,

“Blow ye the trumpet, blow, the gladly solemn sound;
Let **all the nations know** to earth’s remotest bound:
The year of Jubilee is come,
Returning ransomed sinners home!”

How privileged we are now to proclaim the near approach of this time! Inasmuch as we have not yet reached the end of the Gospel Age, we are to continue preaching the “acceptable year of the LORD”; and since we are now living in the beginning of the great ‘time of trouble’ which will ultimately completely destroy the present evil world, we are also to proclaim “the day of vengeance of our God.” (Isa. 61:12; II Cor. 6:2) The proclamation of these various components of the present-day Gospel message do not require a separate or different message for each one. In the LORD’s providences, and because he is directing the results of our labors, all his purposes are being accomplished through the publishing of the complete Gospel of salvation, including the message of the

coming kingdom as well as the harvest truths now understood. What a privilege this is!

The Prophet Isaiah wrote that at this end of the Gospel Age the LORD's people would see 'eye to eye', and that 'together they would lift up their voices' and sing the praises of our God. (Isa. 52:7,8) This does not mean that they will understand every single text of Scripture exactly alike. But rather that their joint emphasis will be upon the great truth, "Thy God reigneth." Those who have been blessed with the heavenly vision of present truth rejoice in the knowledge of the unrefutable fact that they are living in the days of the presence of the Son of man!

Nor do they keep their rejoicing to themselves! They are glad to use all their talents and time and resources, to herald near and far this voice of the LORD—the vision of present truth. They feel, just as did the Apostle Paul, that it would be a 'woe', a sorrow to them if they refrained from telling these good tidings to others, or ceased publishing the Gospel of peace in a fear-filled world.

As an additional impelling urgency to proclaim the glad tidings revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, we have the encouragement of the example of 'that servant' (Matt. 24:45-47), who, when the vision was first given to him, gave up all he had, including his life, that we might share the joys of the vision with him. Are we doing the same? Are we obedient to the heavenly vision?

When we have come to appreciate all the implications of the vision of present truth, the only logical response of our hearts can be, "Here am I; send me." And this response should be so unreserved that regardless of what the cost may be, we will hold nothing back from the altar of sacrifice on which we are being consumed by the zeal of God's house in proclaiming the glory of our Heavenly Father by trumpeting forth the glad tidings of his promised kingdom.

We will want our hands to be used in God's service. We will want our feet to be swift in carrying messages of divine

love to comfort all who mourn. We will use our lips and our tongues to tell of his love. Yes, as the poet wrote, we will wish that we had a thousand tongues to sing our great Redeemer's praise!

And if we catch the true spirit of the vision we will say, "Nothing LORD, would I withhold." All of this is included in what is implied by our full obedience to the vision. Paul wrote that we should bring every thought into obedience to Christ. (II Cor. 10:5) Nothing short of this will be wholly pleasing to our Heavenly Father. Our Lord, Christ Jesus said we should let our light shine; and he also outlined how our manner of light-bearing might be acceptable to the Heavenly Father—we must proclaim it in love.

Let us, then, yield ourselves fully to the power of the truth, and in our obedience to the vision, rejoice in whatever experiences may result. The time is short! Let us be faithful while the opportunity is still ours! □

The Humble Exalted

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

—Mark 10:45

THE LORD DID NOT have one standard for his followers and another for himself. Consequently, when they heard him say, "Whosoever of you will be chief, shall be servant of all," they could promptly recognize that this was the course he had pursued—that he had been servant to them all. And it was on account of the services he was continually rendering them that they delighted to serve him, to acknowledge him their Master, and to walk in his steps. Indeed, they had seen only a small fragment of the Lord's sacrificing, and of its far-reaching influence as a service to others.

No other lesson requires to be so carefully learned by the LORD's people as this lesson of humility. □

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

From Russia

Translated from the Russian language: "Jesus. . . said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?'"—Luke 17:17

Peace be unto you my dearly beloved in the LORD, and all your church! I greet you all in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and wish you the greatest blessings and growth in the knowledge of God's Word! I am sincerely grateful to the LORD and you brethren for the package [of books]. I have read the book, ***"The Divine Plan of the Ages."*** Many things have been uncovered to me through this book, although it is essential for me to study more because some interpretations are not totally clear to me. But I perceive the mistake some Christians make when, after receiving the forgiveness of sins and cleansing through the blood of Jesus, they try to save others, not considering the will of God. What Jesus said to his disciples and apostles, and what Paul wrote, does

not seem to be a command meant for every Christian. The best response of every child of God to the Father's love is, "What do you ask or command me to do?" Later on, the LORD helps us to grow strong enough to bear the difficulties. The very first assignment for the children of God is to grow and acquire strength. When we consider the goal of the Gospel Age, we realize that it is indeed not to convert all people [now]; but his goal is really to choose and prepare the church for his Son. Regarding the rest of mankind, the LORD will deal with them mercifully and justly [in the future]. There must be a time for everything.

Since the LORD revealed this to me, the purpose of my service has changed. Before, I could not pass a man by without witnessing to him, and I felt depressed when for some reason my witnessing did not bring [positive] results. Now I pay special attention to my own walk with God, and to our ecclesia life, and to those who have

received Christ as their personal Savior. How important is the next step then, while being cleansed and justified to bring all earthly [possessions] and leave them at the Father's feet, as did Jesus such a long time ago.—Rev. 2:7,11,17,26-29

We receive salvation as the gift of God, but the reward will only be received by the overcomers. Please send me other booklets, and please write and tell me who is the author of these works, if you know. Why is no author given in this book? I will close my letter here, and will write you in more detail later. May you remain faithful in Him, and we with Him. Christian love is sent to you from our ecclesia.—USSR

A Neighbor's Gift!

Dear brethren: Loving greetings in the name of our dear Lord and Savior! Enclosed is a check for a subscription to **The Dawn** magazine for my aunt in Milwaukee. She is a widow, and has always been devout. I discovered when she visited with us in February that she has been reading **The Dawn** and loving it. It

seems that someone who lives in her apartment complex has been leaving copies of them on a table by their mailboxes, and she has been reading them. She doesn't know who has been placing them there, as the label has been removed. I am thrilled how it all came about. She was becoming dissatisfied with some of the aspects of her church, and the behavior of the ministers. Love to all the Dawn brethren.—CA

Leaflet on Street

Dear Bible Students: Found your leaflet on the street today. As a Bible student, I am interested in receiving a copy of "**The Divine Plan of the Ages.**" If you also have other books available, please advise costs. Thank you. Sincerely.—WA

Comprehensive Book

Friends: I am in the process of reading your book titled, "**The Atonement between God and Man,**" and I am tremendously impressed with your explanation of the subject matter and your presen-

tation of Scriptural corroboration. I think I have never encountered such a comprehensive study of any particular topic of Bible study dealing with God's plan of salvation being offered to mankind. At age 77 I think it strange that I have not been privileged to learn of your erudite work long before my finding a copy of your book concerning the atonement. I bought a copy of it in an old used bookstore for 29 cents! I would like to know more about your ministry, whether you are a Bible School or a church organization? Do you have meetings in the Riverside-San Bernardino, CA, area I could engage in? Thank you very much.—CA

From Lithuania

[A translation] The Dawn: Wholeheartedly we thank you for sending us these wonderful books. [Volume 1 Studies in the Scriptures.] We understand that you also have the 2nd volume. If possible, we would appreciate having the 2nd volume in Lithuanian. If not, send us one in English, and also any other volumes you may

have. We would also like to know if you have any other literature such as Brother Russell's **Photodrama of Creation**. There are very few old-time Bible Students here. . . . We would like to receive more truth literature to [use in witnessing.] Perhaps God will give them [those to whom they will witness] an understanding. . . . In so doing, God's Word will do its work. Once again our heartfelt thanks. Wishing you the blessing of our beloved God. Your brother in Christ.—Lithuania

A Lonely Man

Dear Sir: I love the Dawn magazine. I'm 82 years old and I try to keep busy so I don't worry about the time we are living in. I love the Bible, and I love the Dawn articles. Without them I don't know what I would do. I have a very lonely life, and I suffer from arthritis. Please keep me in your prayers. A friend in Jesus.—NY

Polish Dawn Invaluable

Dear Brethren working in the LORD's vineyard. Grace and peace to you from God and

our Lord Jesus Christ. I sincerely want to express my appreciation to you for sending me the **Poranek** [Polish language **Dawn** magazine]. I am so glad to read it because the contents are so uplifting and invaluable for the times we are living in. I share it with my friends at work and they in turn share it with

others. Though they have not come into the truth, it is at least a witness of God's kingdom, and the signs of the times. Praying the LORD's blessing on your work that you will have the strength to fulfill his will in preaching God's kingdom.—
Poland

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

These speakers are routed through the Pilgrim Department of the Dawn, or by classes associated with the Pilgrim Service. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: Dawn Bible Students Association, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

M. Balko		G.M. Jeuck	
Germany	August 19-24	Denver, CO	August 10-12
France	25-31	New London, CT	19
W. Blicharz		G. Passios	
Willingen, Germany	August 11-17	Allentown, PA	August 26

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 William Smyth, Chatham, Ont.—March 23. Age, 62.

Sister Mae Pikula, Chicago, IL—May 22. Age, 81.

Sister Louise Croucher, Chatham, Ont.—June 22. Age, 90.

CONVENTIONS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN AREA CONVENTION, August 10-12—Travelodge Hotel (formerly Viscount), 200 W. 48th Avenue, Denver, CO 80216. Contact: Linda Veach, 2870 Hartwick Circle, Longmont, CO 80503
Phone: (303) 776-3845

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 11-17—Willingen, Germany. Write Int'l. Conv. of Bible Students, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pac. Palisades, CA 90272
Phone: (213) 454-5248

JACKSON, MI, September 1,2,3—Fa-Ho-Lo Park, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240
Contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson 49203
Phone (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK, NY, August 31, September 1,2—Holiday Inn, Route 46, Wayne, NJ. Contact: Mrs. Ann-Truth Lange, 76 Longview Ave., White Plains, NY 10605.
Phone: (914) 948-5428

SEATTLE, WA, August 31-September 3—Convention held in Bellevue. Contact: Convention Chairman, Michael Brann, 20 1/2 E. Intercity Ave., Everett 98208 for information.
Phone: [206] 353-8983

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA, September 29,30, October 1—Canberra Pensioners' Clubroom, Barry Drive & Marcus Clarke St., Limited motel rooms available. Make reser-

ventions early. Write: Graeme Smith, Kaleen ACT, Australia
Phone: (062) 4-4863

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, September 15,16—West Newton, Sewickley Grange. Contact: Mr. Charles Martig, 730 Dunster St., Pittsburgh 15226
Phone: [412] 563-6110

KALISPELL, MT, September 21-24—Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Lakeside, MT. Write Secretary: Mrs. Joy Thompson, P.O. Box 716, Columbia Falls 59912
Phone: [406] 892-2574

RICHMOND, VA, October 12-14—Roslyn Conference Center, 8727 River Road. Contact Miss Katharine R. Warren, 2805 Stonewall Ave., Richmond. 23225

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, October 13,14—Kenowa Hills Jr. H.S., 4252 Three Mile Road, NW, 49504. Contact: Ruth Kowalski, 141 S. Park Lane Dr., NE, Grand Rapids 49505-3588

CINCINNATI, OH, October 27,28—Ramada Inn Sharonville, 11029 Dowlin Dr., Cincinnati 45241. [513] 771-0300. Baptismal Service to be held. *Make reservations no later than October 1.* Contact Secretary: Mrs. Edith Harp, 2609 Merrittview Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45231
Phone: [513] 825-4112 or [513] 825-0183