

The Dawn

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Italy: Aurora, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044, Napoli

New Zealand: P.O. Box 1358, C.P.O. Auckland

South America: El Alba, c/o Avel y Milo Lupsor, Calle Almirante Brown 674, Monte Grande, Buenos Aires, Argentina

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

ONE OF THE burning issues confronting the government of the United States and the American people, is the matter of the cost of health care having soared so high that it is prohibitive to a large percentage of our population.

Several universal health plans have been proposed over the last few years, but have never found enough agreement between the members of government and the medical community to come into being and benefit the people.

Currently the president's health insurance plan is under debate, and many are predicting its defeat because of the enormous cost it will entail—upon the government, business and industry, and taxpayers.

It boils down to a situation where we cannot afford to have it; but on the other hand we cannot afford to be without it. Like so many of the problems unique to our day, it seems not to have a workable solution.

Any solution, however, is like putting a patch on an old garment. Health care at best is a matter of adding a few more years to a dying process—in many cases making a person as comfortable as possible until the inevitable end arrives.

Man alone can offer no permanent answer to lasting health and life.

But there is an answer.

Permanent Health and Life Assurance

GOD IS REPRESENTED as a Great Physician who heals all the diseases of his people. (Ps. 103:3) The Prophet Isaiah foretold a time when "the inhabitant shall not say, I am

sick." (Isa. 33:24) The same sacred writer prophesied that all the blind eyes would be opened, and all the deaf ears unstopped. He also promised that the lame would leap, and the dumb sing.—Isa. 35:5,6

Disease and death are man's greatest enemies. We know this from observation and experience, for the germs of disease and decrepitude are working in all of us, leading gradually to disability, old age, and finally death. In spite of the best efforts of twentieth century medical science, millions are struck down by death while they are still young. Every aspect of life is made uncertain by the certainty of death. One of the things which stamps the Bible with the mark of authenticity is the fact that it proclaims the reality of death and explains its origin.

Diseases of all kinds are simply an evidence that the human race is dying. They are the concomitants of death, and the Apostle Paul informs us that Christ must reign until he has destroyed death. (I Cor. 15:25,26) The destruction of death will include the destruction of disease which leads to death. The Apostle John, describing the meaning of the vision given to him by Christ on the Isle of Patmos, said that a time was coming when there would be no more death, that God would wipe away tears from off all faces, that there would be no more pain, and that sorrow and sighing would end.—Rev. 21:4

Not only do the Scriptures promise that it is God's purpose to make an end of sin and death, but the prophecies also reveal that this would be done through Christ, that through him health and life would come to the people. The fact is emphasized by a message Jesus sent to John the Baptist. John had been imprisoned, and while previously he had announced Jesus as the foretold Messiah, and thoroughly believed that he was, he later wondered and sought reassurance. In this frame of mind he sent two of his disciples to Jesus asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"—Matt. 11:3

Jesus asked the messengers to return to John and tell him what they had seen—that the sick were being healed that

blind eyes were being opened, that the dead were being raised, and that the poor were having the Gospel preached to them. Jesus knew that John the Baptist would take these things as proof that the Messiah, the Christ, truly had come, for John knew that these were the works which God had promised the Messiah would accomplish on behalf of the people.

As we have already seen, the apostles, as well as Jesus, practiced divine healing. An example of this was the healing by Peter of the lame man who sat "at the Beautiful gate of the Temple" asking alms. (Acts 3:1-11) This man had been lame from the time of his birth; but when Peter gave the word of authority, he was restored to soundness of limb. When the people inquired by what authority and power this man had been healed, Peter explained that it was through Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified.

But Peter did not stop with this answer to their question. Instead, he explained that after Jesus Christ returned, there would be "times of restitution of all things." This time of general restitution, or restoration, Peter further explained, had been foretold by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:19-23

The lesson here is clear, and the conclusion unmistakable. Peter had healed a lame man. It was accomplished through his belief in Christ. Using this as the basis of his sermon, the apostle explained that there would be a time of general restoration following the second coming of Christ, and that it was this which all God's prophets had foretold. God's program of health and life for the people, therefore, was not due to be inaugurated until after the second coming of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom.

This feature of the divine plan has not failed, nor will it fail. When put into operation, it will result in a complete fulfillment of all the divine promises of health and life. All the blind eyes will be opened; all the deaf ears will be unstopped; all the lame will be healed. No one the wide world over who accepts the provision of God's grace through Christ will then need to say, "I am sick."

We see that the public mind in ancient times expected some outstanding demonstration of divine authority and power on the part of those whom they accepted as having been sent by God. Israel's God had fought for them in battle and destroyed their enemies. Some of his prophets had raised the dead. The Jews in Jesus' day would find it difficult to accept Jesus as the greatest of all their prophets, the one, indeed, whom all their prophets said would come, if his works were not greater than all the previous prophets.

This was one reason that Jesus' ministry was accompanied by miracles—the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead. And in doing this he was also giving object lessons of what he, as the promised Messiah, would do for the whole world, and upon a permanent basis, when God's due time would come for this feature of the divine plan to be inaugurated.

It is God's will that ultimately all who accept Christ and obey the laws of his kingdom will be restored to health and live forever as human beings. Each of the holy prophets, in one way or another, foretold a worldwide program of health and life. Jesus referred to it as a time of "regeneration." (Matt. 19:28) As already noted, the Apostle Peter described it as the "times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21) But Jesus did not initiate this program at his First Advent, nor did he promise any of his disciples that they could expect to be divinely cured of their physical ailments because of their faith in him.

The work of restoring the human race to life is to be accomplished during the thousand-year reign of Christ. The Scriptures clearly teach that Christ's kingdom is not established until after his return. (Acts 3:19-21) During the short period of Jesus' First Advent ministry, he preached the hope of the kingdom; and in connection with his oral message he gave many practical demonstrations of what kingdom blessings would mean for the people when the due time arrived for the promises of God to be fulfilled. Jesus' miracles, as we have already noted, were not designated to initiate a pro-

gram of miracles for this present age, but were intended to be illustrations of the divine program for the kingdom age.

Leprosy was prevalent in Jesus' day, and, even as now, it was considered incurable. Because of this it was a fitting symbol of sin, which, from the standpoint of human ability, is also incurable. Death came into the world as a result of sin; so when Jesus cleansed the lepers of his day, he was illustrating the divine intention ultimately to remove the blight of sin from the earth and to destroy death, the result of sin.

On this point the Lord had promised, through the Prophet Isaiah: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." (Isa. 1:18,19) Notice that the promise does not assure a home in heaven, but that the willing and obedient 'shall eat the good of the land', and this because their sins have been cleansed away.

Blind Eyes Shall Be Opened!

The Prophet Isaiah, in his forecast of the time when the human race would be restored to health and life, wrote that all the blind eyes would be opened. It was in keeping with this that Jesus, in order to show forth the glory of his coming kingdom work, restored sight to some of the blind in his day.—Isa. 35:5,6

Isaiah also prophesied that the time would come when "the lame man shall leap as an hart," and Jesus restored some of the cripples of his day and thus foreshadowed still further the coming 'times of restitution of all things'.

Even death itself will be destroyed by divine power. The LORD "will swallow up death in victory," we are assured in this same Old Testament prophecy, "and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. 25:8) Jesus illustrated this promised victory over death by awakening some from the sleep of death, thus demonstrating that death

does not stand in the way of the divine plan for restoring the people to health and life.

While Jesus awakened some who were asleep in death, they did not remain alive. But all who are awakened during the Millennium and who then obey the laws of that new kingdom will gain life everlasting. The purpose of their awakening will be to give them the opportunity to believe and obey and live forever. It will be only those who do not obey that will be "destroyed from among the people."—Acts 3:23

What a wonderful program of healing and restoration that will be! It is symbolically described in the prophecy of Malachi as the rising of the "Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) What a meaningful illustration! For 6,000 years the people have been enshrouded in the darkness of sin, sickness, and death. Satan, the god of this "present evil world" has blinded their minds concerning the true God of love. (II Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4) Not knowing God, they have stumbled on in darkness over the "broad road" that leads to destruction.—Matt. 7:13,14

But when the kingdom of Christ becomes operative for the blessing of the people, how different it will be! The 'Sun of righteousness' will then be shining. Associated with Jesus in this work of enlightening and blessing the world will be his church. Concerning these, Jesus himself said that they would "shine forth as the sun" in that glorious kingdom.—Matt. 13:43

Yes, they will share with him in these 'greater works' which Jesus promised. And how much better that will be than the healing efforts attempted today. God's ways and plans are always better than those of men. So let us continue to pray for his kingdom to come, and for his will to be done in earth, even as it is now done in heaven. When this prayer is answered, it will be true, as foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, that "the inhabitant [of that day] shall not say, I am sick."—Isa. 33:24

Of Jehovah, the Great Physician, the psalmist wrote: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crown-

eth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." (Ps. 103:3-5) How clearly is thus set forth the Creator's ultimate purpose concerning the human race. It was sin—disobedience to divine law—that brought sickness and death to the human race. But in this reassuring promise we are informed that, through the redeeming love of God, iniquity will be forgiven, resulting in the healing of all diseases.

And how wonderful is the promise that those who are thus blessed by the LORD shall renew their youth! This blessed experience will be literally true in the case of all who, during the thousand years of Christ's reign, accept the grace of God, as represented in the atoning blood of the Redeemer, and obey the righteous laws of the messianic kingdom.

No one then will need to grow old and die. No one then will need to die of disease. No one then will need to die at all; for, as so clearly stated by the Revelator regarding that time when the divine provision of health will be available, "God shall wipe away tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:4

Another comprehensive promise of the blessings of health and life that will be vouchsafed to all under the administration of Christ's kingdom is that of Revelation 22:1,2,17. Here the provisions of divine love are symbolized as a mighty "river"—"a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." The 'throne of God' is symbolic of the divine authority that will be exercised in the earth through Christ's kingdom. The association of the 'Lamb' with this picture reminds us that the blessings of life represented by the river will be available only because of the shed blood of the 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'.

And note the reference in verse 2 to the "tree of life," and that the leaves of this tree (or trees, as it is in the Greek text) are for "the healing of the nations." Yes, thank God, the

people of all nations are to be given an opportunity to be healed, to partake of the 'tree of life' from which the human race was once barred because of sin. (Gen. 3:24) In verse 17 we are informed that when the 'river of life' is flowing for the blessing of the people, the invitation to partake of its life-giving waters will be extended to 'whosoever will'. We read: Then "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. . . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—vs 17

The 'bride' who says 'Come' is the church of Christ, united with him in glory, having proved worthy of this high position by suffering and dying with him during this Gospel Age. In the divine plan these are rewarded with glory, honor, and immortality, to live and reign with (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 2:7) Christ for the purpose of sharing with him in healing all mankind of their diseases and extending everlasting human life to all who will accept the invitation, "Come, and take the water of life freely." ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS



MAY 5—"If ye through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—Romans 8:13 (Z. '03-172 Hymn 44)

MAY 12—"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the LORD."—II Corinthians 7:1 (Z. '03-408 Hymn Appendix K)

MAY 19—"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."—Romans 15:1 (Z. '97-75 Hymn 154)

MAY 26—"Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up."—I Corinthians 8:1 (Z. '97-277 Hymn 238)

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR MAY 1

Delivered from Bondage

KEY VERSE: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." – Galatians 2:20*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Galatians 1:6,7*

THOSE WHO HAVE consecrated themselves to the doing of God's will, and have received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, have a new outlook on life. The Scriptures reveal that the will of God for these is that they lay down their earthly lives in sacrifice. This, of course, is contrary to their human desires, so their new, Spirit-enlightened and Spirit-led minds have a constant struggle to keep their human desires under control, and, symbolically speaking, to keep their human bodies on the altar of sacrifice.

Paul wrote, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust [desire] of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:16,17) Every devoted

Christian has found, as Paul has stated, that it is impossible fully to keep the desires of the flesh under control, and that the struggle to do so is a continuing one. We all rejoice, however, that our unwilling imperfections are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness, and that under the covering of this robe our imperfect works are acceptable to our Heavenly Father.

Paul explains that we have been called unto liberty. His reference is to freedom from the Mosaic Law. Those who are wholeheartedly devoted to the doing of God's will do not need to be commanded not to commit any of the evil 'works of the flesh'. While not under the old Law, Christians are under a higher law, one which we might refer to as the law of love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself," James quotes, and those who do love their neighbors will not in any way injure them.—James 2:8

What the Apostle Paul describes as the works of the flesh are all evil, and the Christian should fight against these evil tendencies as resolutely as possible, looking to the LORD at all times for help in this struggle to crucify the flesh. The LORD's help reaches us through the power of his indwelling Spirit, holy power, or influence, in our hearts and lives which produces the fruitage of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such," Paul says, "there is no law."—Gal. 5:23

Our Key Verse states that we have been crucified with Christ. The apostle in his letter to the Romans also declares that we are crucified with Christ, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6:6) In the 10th verse Paul explains that Christ "died unto sin," and in the next verse we read, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is made plain that we are dead to sin in the same sense that Jesus was dead

to sin. Jesus did not possess sinful flesh—he was a perfect human being. He died unto sin in the sense that he gave up his human life as a sacrifice for sin. Through the merit of Christ our imperfect flesh is made acceptable to God as a sacrifice, so we can, as Paul explains, 'reckon' ourselves to be dead unto sin even as Jesus.

In other words, we, like Jesus, are laying down our lives in sacrifice as part of God's plan to completely destroy all the sin throughout the earth, and to restore fallen and dying humanity to life and atonement with the Creator. This is our calling. This is what is implied in being 'crucified with Christ'.

Since we are being crucified with Christ sacrificially, as part of what Paul describes as the 'better sacrifices' of the present age, and since this is part of God's plan to eradicate sin from the earth, it would be inconsistent for us, as individuals, to have any sympathy with, or association with, sin.—Heb. 9:22,23

There could be no greater motive for putting off the works of the flesh than this. May the indwelling Spirit of God enable us to do this ever more successfully as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus day by day! ■

LESSON FOR MAY 8

Adopted as God's Children

KEY VERSE: *"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* — Galatians 4:4,5

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Galatians 3:1-5,23

ADAM WAS CREATED a son of God—an earthly, a human son, in the image and likeness of God. Adam lost his sonship through disobedience. With it he lost communion with God. His children did not have the blessing of being sons of God, nor did they have the fellowship of communion with God.

We were born children of Adam's disobedience, children of God's wrath, of God's condemnation in Eden, born dead in trespasses and sins, or, as the Greek translation puts it, "Dead in the trespass"—dead in Adam's trespass. However, we find a ray of hope in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath [the condemnation] of God abideth on him." Until the Son here spoken of came into the world there was no hope of sonship for us.

Abraham was a great man, a consecrated man, but he was not a son of God. The record is that he was "a friend of God." Moses was a great man, a consecrated man, but he was not a son of God. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, . . . but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we." (Heb. 3:5,6) Here we are introduced to the house of sons. But how does one become a member of this household? How can someone change from being a child of disobedience, under divine condemnation, to become a son, or child, of God?

To appreciate this relationship of sonship, we must know how it is made possible. The ransom is the basis of it all. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is

passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) The apostle corroborates this in Romans 8:1,2: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

So that is the way we become sons of God—by coming through Christ Jesus and by exercising our faith in him as our Redeemer, we become his dedicated footstep followers. It is through the imputation of Christ's merit to his followers that they are covered by the robe of his righteousness, and presented to the Father. Being made acceptable in the Beloved, the Father then sees us as righteous. Only in this way are we justified and made acceptable to God. Having been released from Adamic condemnation, God then begets us by his almighty power, and we become his sons. No longer considered children of Adam's disobedience, we are now described by Peter as "obedient children."—1 Pet. 1:14

The Jewish followers of the Master were the first of the human race to become sons of God. This took place on the Day of Pentecost. John 1:11,12 reads: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as re-

ceived him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." From the days of Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, this privilege of sonship is without restriction, and those called are from all peoples and nations and kindred and tongues.

Romans 8:14,15 reads: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry [or pray], Abba, Father." This expression, "Abba, Father," is a beautiful expression of childlike affection: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son." (Gal. 4:6,7) The cry, or prayer, proceeds from our hearts through the vitalizing influence of the Holy Spirit.

The day will soon come when all the spiritual sons of God will have taken their place on the throne with Christ. Paul, enthused with the thought of what that glory would entail, tells us that the whole creation is waiting for the manifestation of these sons (Rom. 8:19), for then will come all mankind's day of opportunity to be restored as earthly sons. ■

Freed to Grow

KEY VERSE: *"After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" — Galatians 4:9*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Galatians 4:8-20

THE APOSTLE'S CONCERN for the Galatian brethren was that they were letting slip some of the aspects of truth which separated them from their former allegiance to the Jewish Law and its relationship to the carnal interests of this world. They were 'desiring again to be in their former bondage', not holding fast to the truth.

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

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard,

lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1) This text indicates that 'holding fast' consists in not letting slip the things which we have heard. It is the truth that is referred to, and the purpose of the truth is to guide us in the knowing and doing of God's will. Only through the Word of truth do we know what our Heavenly Father wants us to do and to be. Therefore, to let the truth 'slip', would be like a builder neglecting his blueprints. He might continue to build, but he could not be sure that the building erected would be in harmony with the architect's plans.

The things which we have 'heard' are of vital importance because of the source from which they have reached us. That source is mentioned in the very first word of the epistle to the Hebrews: "God." Paul reminds us that God had previously spoken to his people through his holy prophets, and

that now he had spoken through his Son.—Heb. 1:1,2

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

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

"Therefore," as Paul said, it is important that we take earnest heed to "the things which we have heard," for they have not reached us through any ordinary channel, but from the glorified Jesus, who has been exalted to the right hand of

God. This means that every aspect of the divine plan is of vital concern to each dedicated follower of the Master. To let any part of the truth slip through lack of interest or zeal would be as though we refused him who has spoken to us.—Heb. 12:25

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

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

LESSON FOR MAY 22

Enabled to Bear Fruit

KEY VERSE: *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* — Galatians 5:22,23

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5:1,13-26

IN THE PARABLE of the vine and the branches, Jesus referred to the Heavenly Father as the 'Husbandman' who cares for both the 'vine' and the 'branches.' (John 15:1,2) Jesus reflected his true spirit of humility, and emphasized that he came into the world not to do his own works, but his Father's.

Later in the parable Jesus explained that it was the Heavenly Father who would be glorified by the fruit-bearing of the branches. The branches cannot bear fruit of themselves. They must abide in the vine; and abiding in the vine they are cared for by the Heavenly Father, to whom properly goes the credit for the fruit produced.—See John 15:1-8.

The importance of fruit-bearing is stressed by Jesus, and we might think of the sap which flows through the vine and out into the branches as the energizing power of the Holy Spirit which enables the Christian to bear fruit. Jesus

promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. That promise was fulfilled at Pentecost, and all who have come into Christ from that time on, have received the Holy Spirit—that vitalizing energy which produces the fruits of righteousness. These righteous qualities are those possessed by our Heavenly Father, and by our Lord Jesus; and as we permit the Holy Spirit to flow through our lives, this 'fruit' should become evident in us.

If the Holy Spirit does not transform our lives, then, as Jesus declared in the parable, the Heavenly Father, as the husbandman, removes us from the vine. If we do bear a measure of fruit, then the Husbandman prunes, or purges us that we might bring forth more fruit. This pruning is accomplished by the various experiences which the Heavenly Father permits to come into our lives.

It may be the removal of certain earthly advantages: of

friendships, of comforts, of popularity, of wealth, or other things which might tend to keep our minds and hearts from being centered on the LORD as they should be. The LORD knows just what is needful and best. He knows what to trim away, and he knows what to leave that we may bring forth the most fruit possible.

The branches in a vine do not bear fruit for their own benefit, and this is true of the branches in the vine which is Christ. Jesus explained that the Heavenly Father is glorified by the fruit of the vine. To glorify God is the ultimate motive in all Christian endeavor. We can glorify God only by endeavoring to do his will. An important facet of the divine will was expressed by Jesus when he said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 5:16

Here Jesus declares that we glorify God by letting our light shine. Actually, of course, it is not our light, but the Father's. It is his truth, his light. He has shined into our hearts by the Gospel, and we have made this glorious truth our own—not to hold selfishly merely for our own enjoyment, but to tell it out for the blessing of others. And as we do this,

motivated by love, it brings glory to our Heavenly Father.

And this aspect of the Christian life is very closely associated with the matter of fruit-bearing. The Apostle Peter admonishes us to add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and love—the fruit of the Spirit, in other words—and then adds, "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren [*Margin*, Greek, "idle"] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 1:4-8

The Apostle Paul, in commending the brethren at Philippi for sending him gifts, added, "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Phil. 4:17) Here the good works of the Philippian brethren in ministering to the needs of Paul, are referred to by him as 'fruit'. So we see that while activity in the LORD's work is not in itself the fruit of the Spirit—the fruit that is produced on the branches in the true vine—it is very closely allied therewith, for the branches that bear fruit will inevitably be active in the LORD's service. They will be doing good unto all as they have opportunity, and "especially to the household of faith."—Gal. 6:10 ■

Challenged to Love

KEY VERSE: *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*—Galatians 6:10

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Galatians 6:1-10

MANY OF THE assurances of sonship depend upon our faithfulness in witnessing to the truth. This is the principal way we are privileged to do "good unto all men." What greater good could we bring to the world than a knowledge of God and his wonderful plan of salvation for them. Another of the assurances of sonship depends on our continued love of the brethren. This is stated in I John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." The first requisite in loving the brethren is the recognition that we are a family of God.

This truth was dramatically presented to the church by Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew we read of an instance where our Lord's mother and his brethren sought to speak with him. At the time, he was inside a home tightly packed with listeners, and this crowding prevented free access for his mother and brethren who

were outside. An observant one saw the problem and interrupted Jesus' speaking by an announcement: "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee."—Matt. 12:47

We can imagine Jesus' hearers waiting for the reply to this statement. Our Lord, always watching for the seasonable time to sow a seed of truth, observed the appropriateness of this occasion to speak a great truth. In preparing his hearers to receive the lesson, he asked what, at first, seemed a strange question: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" Imagine the first reaction of the disciples on hearing this unusual query! Even they knew his mother and brethren, and wondered why he asked the question.

After the pause which followed his question—the pause during which a variety of thoughts entered the minds of his listeners—came the wonderful statement of Jesus: "He stretched forth his hand

toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."—Matt. 12:46-50

Imagine the reaction of the disciples to this statement by Jesus! These simple folk who saw in Jesus such perfection and beauty of character realized that he tenderly considered them as his own family. They knew these words were not casually spoken for effect. No! They revealed the deep conviction of his heart. We can well imagine the special nearness and warmth his disciples felt for him that day.

We, as disciples, are the family of God, and the full meaning of this truth should be imbedded deeply in our hearts. The tie that binds our hearts transcends any earthly tie of family or affection. The realization of this truth should cause us to love the brethren; but love does not come merely because we are told such should be the case. Our love for one another comes from, and is strong in relation to, our love for the Father and Jesus.

As our appreciation and love of God grows, so does our concern and tenderness grow toward those whom he has named as our brethren. If

he has drawn and begotten a member of the family, led them daily, and heard their prayers, should not we too view them in a special way? We can measure our love for God by our love for the brethren. As we associate with the brethren, they and we must continually exercise patience. Our Father has called his children from varying backgrounds, greatly differing casts of mind. We all have dissimilar human frailties. The need of adjusting to each other will be ever present.

Our Father, as part of our development, has brought together those who are naturally diverse and then said, "Now, my children, live together in love, cherish and serve each other." If we maintain a strong love for God and our Lord Jesus, keeping in focus his plan and our relationship thereto, then the knitting of love between us and our brethren will be sure and firm.

If we can say that we discern and appreciate the family relationship of the brethren, then this witness of the Spirit is real and vital in our lives. If we find in our hearts a desire to be with and serve the interests of the brethren, then we have "passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."—I John 3:14 ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE "SEED" Series, Part 2, Genesis 12-22

A Miracle Child

WE READ IN Genesis 22:8: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." With these encouraging words, Abraham assured his son, Isaac, of his full confidence that the God of heaven would provide a way of escape from the heartbreaking ordeal which confronted him. At that time, Abraham himself did not know what God had in mind. But it was clear to Isaac from the circumstances, that his father was on his way to offer sacrifice although they were taking no lamb for this purpose, and Abraham had not yet told his son that he was to be offered as the sacrifice. It was three days since God had spoken to Abraham, saying,

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."—vs. 2

The record is that "God did tempt Abraham." (vs. 1) The word 'test' would be a more correct translation of the ancient Hebrew text. Surely it must have been a test upon Abraham's faith in, and loyalty to, God to be called upon to offer his own son in sacrifice, especially his beloved son, Isaac. He had waited many long years for this son, and now the thought of parting with him must have been a great shock to this aged father.

The Promise

Abraham, or Abram, as he was originally called, was living in Ur of the Chaldees when God first spoke to him concerning a special 'seed', saying:

"He [God] brought him [Abraham] forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars,

***if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him,
So shall thy seed be.” – Gen. 15:5***

***“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be
blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” – 22:18***

Abraham believed this promise which God had made to him, and without delay proceeded to comply with the condition attached to it, which was that he must leave his own people and his father's house and go into a strange land which the LORD would show him. In leaving Ur he first went to Haran, which was on the border of the land which God had promised, and he remained there until Terah, his father, died. Then he crossed the border into Canaan, the Promised Land.

Abraham's faith in God's promise must have been very strong to induce him to leave his home and friends in Ur, and, when his father died, to move on into the foreign land of Canaan. This becomes even more apparent when we recall, as the Scriptures reveal, that Sarah, his wife, was barren, and from the standpoint of human ability could never have a child. Evidently Abraham believed that God would intervene in connection with this weakness and give Sarah the ability to conceive.

There is good reason to believe that at that time Abraham had in his possession a series of baked clay or stone tablets on which were inscribed the early chapters of Genesis which reveal Eve's belief that she had "gotten a man from the LORD" in fulfillment of God's reference to a 'seed'. (Gen. 4:1) Now the LORD had again mentioned a seed. First it was the 'seed' of the woman, now it was Abraham's 'seed', and certainly this ancient servant of God must have pondered over the similarity of these two promises.

However, as the promise was stated to Abraham, it seemed much less vague. Instead of a seed that would bruise the serpent's head, Abraham's seed was to bless all the families of the earth. True, the full significance of the promise could not be grasped by Abraham, but he did know that it meant something far too wonderful to ignore, something that was worth home and friends, something for which he would

gladly spend the rest of his life living in tents in order to secure.

The Long Wait

Time went on. A famine swept over Canaan, and Abraham, with Sarah his wife, went south into Egypt. Returning from there, difficulties arose among the servants of Abraham and the servants of Lot, his nephew, concerning grazing land for their respective flocks. This was settled amicably upon the suggestion of Abraham that Lot make the first choice of land.

Still later than this, Lot, together with his family and goods, was captured by an alliance of heathen kings; and Abraham, with the help of an army he raised from among his own servants, rescued his nephew and his possessions. In this operation much spoil was seized, but Abraham refused to keep any of it for himself. Shortly after this the LORD spoke to him again, saying:

"Fear not, . . . I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." — Gen. 15:1

Abraham was puzzled by this. True, the LORD had been his 'shield', or protection. This had been demonstrated in his battle against the kings who had captured his nephew, Lot. The LORD had also been his 'exceeding great reward', for he had become extremely wealthy. However, the one thing which he desired above all else—the fulfillment of the promise concerning the 'seed' that was to bless all the families of the earth—had not yet been realized. So he replied to the LORD,

"What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? . . . Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." — Gen. 15:2,3

Abraham suggested to God that as there had been no fulfillment of his promise concerning the seed, his trusted servant, Eliezer, as one born in his house, could be his heir. Evidently Abraham expected the LORD to accept and approve this arrangement in lieu of what seemed to the patriarch as a failure on God's part to fulfill his promise

concerning the seed. But Jehovah did not do this. Instead he replied to Abraham:

***"This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."*— Gen. 15:4**

Another Effort

By now many years had passed since God first promised Abraham a seed. In addition to her barrenness, Sarah was much older, and as each year passed it seemed less likely that she would ever bear a child. Doubtless Abraham and Sarah discussed the problem more than once. Finally Sarah thought she had found a solution, which she presented to Abraham, saying,

***"Behold, now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her."*— Gen. 16:2**

According to the customs of that time this would not be considered improper, and it appealed to Abraham as being a good solution to their difficulty. When the LORD refused to accept his adopted servant, he explained that Abraham must be the actual father of the promised seed. Nothing was then said as to who the mother must be, so Abraham agreed with his wife's suggestion, with the result that Ishmael was born to Hagar, Sarah's maid. But there was a further lesson for Abraham to learn. Thirteen years later, when he was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him again, and after reaffirming his original promise, said, concerning Sarah,

***"I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."*— Gen. 17:1,16**

This was almost too much for Abraham to believe, and we read that he "fell upon his face and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. 17:17,18) It just seemed to this faithful patriarch that if the LORD would only accept Ishmael to be the seed the whole issue would be settled. After all, Ishmael

was Abraham's own son, and this met the requirement which the LORD previously had stipulated.

But understanding God's truth is a progressive process, and now God revealed not only that Abraham must be the father of the promised seed, but that Sarah must be the mother—and this would occur despite the fact that she was now ninety years old. So God said to him:

***"Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish [Hebrew, 'accomplish'] my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."* — Gen. 17:19**

The Angel's Visit

Not long after this, Abraham was visited by three angels who appeared to him in human form. At first he was not aware that they were messengers from the LORD, and that they had come to reassure him—and Sarah also—that she was to have a son. A meal was prepared for these distinguished visitors, and during the course of their stay one of them said to Abraham, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son."—Gen 18:1-10

When Sarah overheard this remark, she "laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my Lord being also old?" (Gen 18:12) Her question was soon answered. Apparently within the year, Sarah gave birth to a son. The boy was named Isaac, which means 'son of my laughter'. After Isaac was born, Sarah said,

***"God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me."* — Gen. 21:6**

God had performed a miracle—the miracle child, Isaac, had indeed been born!—which brought great joy to Sarah. By selecting the barren Sarah, and then waiting until she and Abraham were well past the age when ordinarily they would have children, God emphasized that the fulfillment of his promise concerning the 'seed' was not something to be accomplished by human wisdom and ability, but by divine power.

Today, approximately four thousand years later, we can have confidence that 'all the families of the earth' will yet be blessed, even though, as the Scriptures reveal, the fulfillment of the promise will require the resurrection of the dead. When Sarah questioned the possibility that she could, or would, bear a son in her old age, she was asked, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Gen. 18:14) The obvious answer is 'No!'—and this is also true with respect to the blessing of all the families of the earth by means of a resurrection! Surely he who created life in the first place is abundantly able to restore life.

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul made a revealing observation on Sarah's great faith, a faith which, of course, Abraham also possessed. We read,

***"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."*—Heb. 11:11,12**

Yes, a mighty company springs from one 'as good as dead'! So the promise of blessing through the seed will actually be fulfilled on behalf of all the countless millions of earth—both those living, and those who are in their graves. Nothing is too hard for the LORD!

The Test

Time went on, and when Isaac had grown to manhood's estate the LORD appeared to Abraham again. Under the circumstances, Abraham would be justified in believing that now he was about to receive an outline of procedure for the work of blessing all the families of the earth through his son, Isaac. After all, there were two aspects to the promise which God had made to him. Not only was he to have a seed, but this promised seed was to be a channel of blessing to all mankind.

As Abraham understood it, the first part of the promise had been fulfilled, and now that Isaac was a man it was logi-

cal to expect the fulfillment of the second part. But such was not God's purpose in again speaking to his friend, Abraham. The patriarch's faith was to be tested again, and much more severely than it had been by any of his previous experiences, including his long wait for the birth of Isaac. The LORD said to him:

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."— Gen. 22:2

What a strange, even frightening, turn of events this command of the LORD indicated! Realizing that God had performed a miracle to give him his son, Abraham might well have wondered whether or not the instruction to offer him as a sacrifice really came from the LORD. He could have wondered if this might not be a cruel deception that was being perpetrated by the great adversary of God, the Devil.

Apparently, however, no such question arose in Abraham's mind. Through the many years that God had been dealing with him, he had learned to know his "voice." (Gen. 26:5) No, there was no mistaking the voice of the LORD—but how strange that he should be asked to slay the miracle child whom he so greatly loved! However, Abraham was willing to trust the LORD even though he did not comprehend the significance of what he was now asked to do.

Turning again to the New Testament, we find a very enlightening comment on Abraham's attitude in this experience. The Apostle Paul observed that Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, "from whence also he received him in a figure." (Heb. 11:17-19) This was a great faith—a faith which we, too, must be able to exercise if the promises of God are to have the same vital meaning, and produce in our hearts the same confidence and joy experienced by Abraham and Sarah.

However, despite Abraham's great faith, the carrying out of God's command to offer Isaac in sacrifice must have been a harrowing experience for him. But he did not delay. He

arose early the next morning, and, as we read in the account,

He "saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." – Gen. 22:3,4

Three days is a long time for one to carry a heartbreaking burden of suspense and sorrow, yet this was Abraham's experience. And, so far as human consolation was concerned, he carried this burden alone. For three days he traveled together with Isaac, and with the two young men, knowing all the while that he was taking his boy into the land of Moriah to slay him. After sighting the place to which the LORD was directing him, Abraham said to the young men,

"Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." – Gen. 22:5,6

While Abraham referred to Isaac as a 'lad', actually he was a young man, at least in his twenties. One evidence of this was that Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering upon Isaac for him to carry up the mountain to the place where the altar for the burnt offering was to be built. A mere child could hardly carry a burden of this kind.

The Lamb for Burnt Offering

As Abraham and his son "went both of them together" toward the place where the sacrifice was to be offered, Isaac became puzzled. He spoke to Abraham, saying, "My father," to which Abraham replied, "Here am I, my son." This interchange seems to indicate that Abraham, burdened with sorrow, was also lost in thought until his son spoke to him. How strange it must have been to both of them as they walked on together!

But Isaac continued the conversation, saying to his father, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a

burnt offering?" (vss. 6,7) How this question must have pained Abraham's heart! Could he now avoid telling Isaac the full truth of what was to be done? Yes, he could, and did, for he did not want his beloved miracle child to suffer any longer than was necessary. His reply to Isaac was,

"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."—vs. 8

At the moment, Abraham did not know just what God would do. Perhaps he would provide a lamb. Or, even if he did not, and Isaac was actually sacrificed, Abraham knew that he had been given to him by the LORD, so he knew that in any case his reply to Isaac would be true.

With the altar prepared, the time had come when Isaac must be told what the LORD had commanded, although the record does not detail this conversation. We are informed that Abraham bound Isaac on the altar, and this is significant. (vs. 9) Isaac was a strong young man, while Abraham by now was well over a hundred years old, and would not have had the strength to bind his son on the altar had he resisted. Thus the evidence indicates that Isaac, when informed of the LORD's request, voluntarily gave himself up for sacrifice.

The Lamb of God

How illuminating this experience turns out to be! In the New Testament we are informed that when God made the promise to Abraham concerning a seed that would bless all the families of the earth, he was referring to his own Son, Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:8,16) But Abraham did not know this. The limitations of his finite mind prevented him from seeing into the future and realizing the grand scale upon which the promises of God were actually to be fulfilled!

But now it is different, for throughout the centuries one after another of the prophets of God, and later Jesus and his twelve apostles, all contributed to the unfolding of God's larger plan of blessing through a seed, which primarily is Jesus. The Word of God also reveals that before all the families of the earth could be blessed by the promised seed, a loving Father must give up in sacrifice his beloved Son. The Father who actually did this was none other than our loving

Heavenly Father, who gave his Son Christ Jesus to die for the sins of the whole world of mankind, making possible the future blessing of all the people of the world through a resurrection of the dead.

So in the experience of Abraham and Isaac we have this glorious truth beautifully illustrated. We see God's loving gift of his Son to die, illustrated by Abraham's willingness to give up his son in death, while Isaac's voluntary offering is a beautiful reminder of Jesus' willingness to die that the world might live. For all practical purposes this picture of the coming sacrifice of Jesus was made complete; for Abraham, after binding Isaac on the altar, raised his knife to slay the young man when, we read:

"The angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."—vs. 11, 12

Should we think that Abraham was surprised? No doubt he expected that the LORD would manifest himself in some way, although he did not know exactly how. Had he not assured Isaac that the LORD would provide a lamb? And now, as he looked around in response to the voice of the angel,

He saw a ram—a male lamb—"caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."—vs. 13

Yes, God had provided a lamb, just as Abraham had said! We are reminded that the Heavenly Father's beloved Son, who died that the world might live, is referred to as a 'Lamb', the Lamb which God provided. John the Baptist said concerning Jesus,

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29

The Oathbound Covenant

Abraham's faith in God and in his promises had conquered. Many long years had passed since God first spoke to

him while he lived in Ur of the Chaldees and promised him a seed. Now, so far as he was concerned, the seed had come, yet there was no other indication that the promised work of blessing through the seed was about to begin. But God did reassure Abraham that the promise would be fulfilled. Concerning this we read:

"The angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 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 heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; . . . because thou hast obeyed my voice."—Gen. 22:15-18

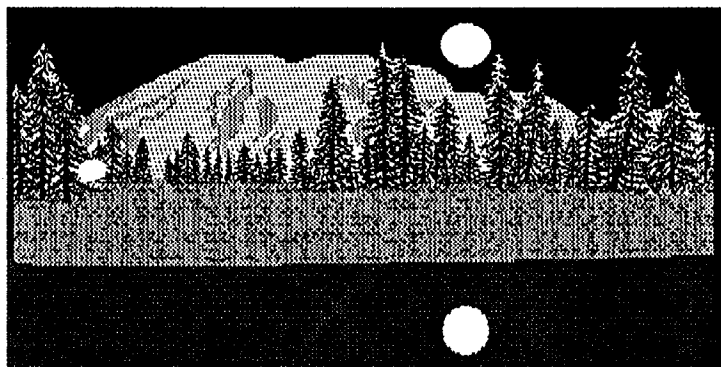
This must have been a wonderful assurance to Abraham that God surely would fulfill his promise concerning the word of the seed in its blessing of all the families of the earth. However, the patriarch lived many years after this, yet did not see the fulfillment of the promise. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, commenting on the faith of Abraham and other servants of the LORD in that ancient past, the Apostle Paul observed that "these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not [the fulfillment of] the promise."—Heb. 11:13,39

The Apostle Paul also explained that the Ancient Worthies, of whom Abraham was one, endured their trials of faith that they "might obtain a better resurrection." (Heb. 11:35,) It is because the Creator intends to restore the dead to life that his promises to Abraham and to all his faithful servants are so meaningful. It will be when Abraham is restored to life in the resurrection that he will understand the full scope of the promises made to him concerning his seed.

The Apostle Paul explained that the seed of Abraham who will bless all the families of the earth in reality is Jesus. (Gal. 3:16) But even Jesus could not be a channel of blessing to all mankind except for the fact that he was raised from the dead! Paul wrote, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."—I Cor. 15:14

The footstep followers of Jesus, because of their faith and devotion, will be associated with Jesus as part of the seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:27-29) But this aspect of the plan of God also can only come to fruition through a resurrection of the dead. These footstep followers of Jesus are referred to in the Scriptures as being 'in' Christ, and Paul wrote that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then those who have fallen asleep "in" Christ have "perished." To this he adds, "If in this life only[,] we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."—I Cor. 15:18,19

Thank God for his promises to restore the dead to life! It is the assurance of these promises that makes the Bible such a real source of hope and comfort. As we have seen, it was the **hope** of the resurrection that sustained Abraham and all the ancient servants of God. It was the **assurance** of the resurrection that enabled Jesus to endure the cross and despise the shame which was heaped upon him. It is the **hope** of the resurrection that today fills the hearts of God's people with joy as they face the uncertainties of a chaotic world. And it will be the **fact** of the resurrection that will translate into reality the promises of God to bless all the families of the earth! ■



Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep.
—Psalm 36:6

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North Vernon WKRP 1460 8:00 a.m.

IOWA

Waterloo KXEL 1540 10:15 p.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:30 a.m.
Coffeyville KGGF 690 9:05 p.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green WBGN FM 107.1 8:15 a.m.
Manchester WWXL 1450 7:45 a.m.
Winchester WHRS 10:30 a.m.

LOUISIANA

New Orleans(Sat.) WWL 870 9:00 p.m.

MICHIGAN

Battle Creek WOLY 1500 1:45 p.m.
Detroit WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.
Fremont WSHN 1500 9:15 a.m.
WSHN FM 100.1 9:15 a.m.

MISSOURI

Excelsior Springs KEXS 1090 7:30 a.m.
Osage Beach KRMS 1150 8:30 a.m.
St. Louis (Sat.) KSTL 690 8:30 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Camden WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.
Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.
WNNN FM 101.7 9:45 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos KRNS 1490 6:45 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo WWKB 1520 11:00 p.m.
Buffalo WHLD 1270 12:00 noon
New York WOR 710 9:15 p.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Wendell WETC 540 4:45 a.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WLWA 550 7:00 a.m.
Cleveland WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.
Fairfield WCNW 1560 6:00 p.m.

OKLAHOMA

Muskogee KHJM FM 100.3 5:00 p.m.

OREGON

Portland KKEY 1150 7:00 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WPLW 1590 8:00 a.m.
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Beaufort (Sat.) WVGB 1490 1:00 p.m.
Charleston WOKC 1340 7:06 p.m.
Lexington WLGO 1170 12:30 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bremerton KBRO 1490 7:15 a.m.
Spokane KAOQ 590 7:00 a.m.
Tacoma KAMT 1360 10:15 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:30 p.m.

WISCONSIN

Jackson WYLO 540 5:15 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES.

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

St. Thomas	CHLO 1570	10:45 a.m.
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SASKATCHEWAN

Rosetown	CJYM 1330	9:45 a.m.
Weyburn	CFSL 1190	8:45 a.m.
Estevan	CJSL 1280	8:45 a.m.

Angola and Zambia

Radio Africa #2 (Thurs.)	9:00 a.m.
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Argentina (Spanish)

Buenos Aires (Sat.) FM Malvinas	91.5 mHz	10:00 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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Brazil (Portuguese)

Curitiba Radio Capital	1270 kHz	8:45 a.m.
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British West Indies

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

Chile (Spanish)

Concepción	Unica FM 105.5	10:15 a.m.
Santiago (Sat.)	Radio Panamericana	CB 142 10:00 a.m.

China

Hong Kong Radio Villa Verde (Fri.)	6:00 p.m.
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Costa Rica (Spanish)

San José Radio Sonora	105.9 FM, 700 AM	6:15 a.m.
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Kenya and Uganda

Radio East Africa	4:00 p.m.
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Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera	XECQ	8:30 a.m.
Guadalajara	XEWK 1130	8:30 a.m.
Monterrey	XHSR FM	10:00 a.m.
Torreón	XETB 1350	8:15 a.m.
Tuxtla Gutierrez	XEON 720	7:30 a.m.

New Zealand

Whakatane	IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

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

Panama City (Fri.)	HOQ 1250	6:15 p.m.
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Peru (Spanish)

Trujillo	105.7 FM	9:30 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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Philippines

Manila (Sat.)	DZAM 1026 kHz	7:15 p.m.
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Portugal (Portuguese)

Vila Nova de Gaia Radio Minute	8:45 a.m.
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Russia (Russian)

Novgorod	FM 71.3	10:00 a.m.
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South Africa

Swaziland SWAZI Commercial Radio	1400 AM
Shortwave	49m 6155 kHz 8:15 p.m.

Sri Lanka

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

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

Montevideo Radio El Espectador	810	8:00 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

UNITED STATES: *New Jersey Cable TV—Programs are shown every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m. E.T.*

Nostalgia Network—Programs are shown every Sunday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. E.T.; 12:30 p.m. C.T.; 11:30 a.m. M.T.; 10:30 a.m. P.T.

Cincinnati, OH, TV 25—Programs are shown Sundays at 8:30 a.m. E.T.

CANADA: Programs are shown every Sunday morning. Consult your local newspaper for the station in your area.

Atlantic Time—10:30 a.m. Eastern Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—8:30 a.m. Mountain Time—7:30 a.m.

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.

Keystone Inspirational Network Every Sunday Morning

CALIFORNIA

Hemet TV 53
Palm Springs TV 20
Sacramento TV 62
Twenty-nine Palms TV 25

DELAWARE

Wilmington TV 14

FLORIDA

Pensacola TV 12

GEORGIA

Rome TV 56
Tifton TV 5

IDAHO

Cottonwood TV 39

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge TV 52
Crawley TV 65
Lake Charles TV 63

MARYLAND

Leonardtown TV 52

OHIO

Bucyrus TV 54
Findlay TV 6
Marietta TV 26

PENNSYLVANIA

Coudersport Cable 66
Lancaster TV 49
Williamsport TV 5
York TV 49

SOUTH CAROLINA

Monks Corner Cable 6

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls TV 48

TENNESSEE

Union City TV 9

TEXAS

Corpus Christi TV 55
Falfurrias TV 7

NEWFOUNDLAND

Harbour Grace TV 25

Eastern Time—11:30 a.m.
Mountain Time—9:30 a.m.

Central Time—10:30 a.m.
Pacific Time—8:30 a.m.

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Lessons from Kings of Israel

THERE IS A hymn extolling the wonders of God's Word, which begins, "Father of mercies, in thy Word, what endless glory shines! Forever be thy name adored for these celestial lines." Another poet describes Holy Scripture in this way, "'Tis a mine, aye deeper too, than can mortal ever go. Search we may for many years, still some new rich gem appears."

The LORD's Word is most often stated so beautifully and simply, with explanations provided along the way of its meaning, that it is quite easy to understand. One example of this is where the Apostle Peter set forth some important time features of the plan of God. He told us of three worlds—one, a 'world that was', another described as a 'world that now is', and finally, a third 'world to come'. (II Pet. 3:5-13) How graphically the apostle introduces the fact that in God's great plan there are ages and dispensations—periods of time—during which a progression of events would occur, in a gradual manner developing the plan God had in view for the benefit, not only of man, but for all his intelligent creatures.

In between these three larger dispensations are smaller ones. Throughout the record provided by his Word, the LORD tells us about men of old—faithful prophets—whose writings explain and describe these time features of his plan in more detail—what occurred from the time of Adam's fall until the great Flood cleansed the first dispensation of sin, and the saving of Noah and his family. God's dealings with the patriarchs and the lessons taught through his relationship with the nation of Israel are also presented—the types and the shadows of the Tabernacle sacrifices

Then, in its due time, came the central feature of the plan of God: the presence of our Lord in the flesh—the **Logos** who came down to this earth from his home in heaven to be the Redeemer, the Savior of mankind. The prophets of old had previously commended the glory of the plan of God as it was to be centered in this momentous event which so well exemplified the great love of God for the world—the gift of his dear Son. Then came the Gospel Age. Its purpose is explained in the New Testament, having previously been foretold so descriptively by the prophets of old. The writings of the Lord's apostles, comprising the New Testament, were expository works containing explanations of many formerly obscure Old Testament prophecies.

In many portions of the LORD's Word we find corresponding explanations of the same events—revealing, perhaps, slightly different aspects of them—so that the child of God in comparing them can better comprehend the purpose for them having been recorded and kept safely for benefit of the entire church throughout the age, as well as in our day.

But some portions of the Old Testament Scriptures have no stated lessons or explanations found in the New Testament. They are simply historical accounts of kings, or other less well-known individuals of long ago, with whom, and through whom, God dealt. The events of their lives are given to us in God's Word just as they happened, and include their good points and otherwise. No one—neither the Apostle Paul nor any other apostle—says to those of us who desire to learn the appropriate lessons, 'Now, this was the purpose of the life of this king and of his experiences. This is the lesson to be learned from what he did correctly and in harmony with God's principles, and this is the lesson also from what he overlooked, and when he followed unrighteousness'.

But within the lives of those men and women there were lessons to be drawn of which the LORD wants us to be aware. By studying and meditating upon these accounts, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we can benefit even from events set forth in wholly a historical fashion. The LORD seems to be saying to his people, 'Read them and let your mind meditate

upon these things, and see if you can glean their lessons for your benefit'.

King Uzziah

At the time of King Uzziah, approximately 800 years had passed in Israel's history since their deliverance from Egypt, and the LORD had dealt graciously with them during those centuries. Think of that miraculous deliverance from Egypt which is still celebrated today, in a measure, by those who believe and understand. Then there were God's ancient, faithful prophets, and the miracles performed through those men of God. There were the many deliverances which God brought to Israel through their judges, and through their good kings, saving Israel from their enemies. The LORD had foretold that this would be their portion when they kept the precepts of the Law to the best of their ability. This had been promised by God's mouthpiece, Moses. The declarations were plainly stated: If Israel, as a nation, obeyed God's commandments they would receive his blessings; if they disobeyed God's precepts they would not receive his blessings or protection.—Deut. 30:15-19

A faithful king who believed the promises of God and, armed with these promises, went forth with the determination to keep the Law to the best of his abilities, was blessed, and the LORD worked miracles through that king. Contrariwise, when a king forgot God, when he did not take heed to the words of the prophet whom the LORD sent to him at that time, the LORD's blessings were not with him. Prophets of God walked with these kings; their counsel was readily available to them. In some instances kings did humble themselves by and listening to their counsel; other kings absolutely disregarded the prophets; and some even persecuted them, and sought their very lives.

The life of King Uzziah is recorded in II Chronicles 26, and also in II Kings 14 and 15. Uzziah was sixteen years old when he was made king of Judah, and he reigned for 52 years. After the death of his father, Amaziah, who was king for only fifteen years, the young lad was made king by "all the

people." The Scriptures tell us that his mother's name was "Jecoliah of Jerusalem."—II Chron. 26:1,3

The life of King Uzziah is very interesting to us. Evidently as a young king, he had a fine spirit. It is said of him that "he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the [seeing of God, **Marginal Translation**]: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper." (II Chron. 26:4,5.) The Bible tells of his exploits in defeating the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem, how he built great towers, and fortified Jerusalem and other cities among the captured nations which fell before him, and of his great power that was demonstrated because God was with him. The record states that 'he did that which was pleasing in the eyes of God'.

We read in II Chronicles 26:6-15, about King Uzziah's wonderful achievements, and the blessings which attended him. He had a great army of 307,500 men (vs. 13) who were fit for war, and over them were 2,600 generals, lieutenants, captains, etc., who led this terrific force into battle. Is it any wonder that he was so successful in defeating his enemies!

This man leaned heavily upon his God, the God of Israel, who had promised that if they strove earnestly to live up to the Law he would cause them to be victorious over their enemies. In Joshua 23:10 it was said, "One man of you shall chase a thousand." How great a victory an army would gain that numbered over 300,000—one led by a man who was inspired by his love for God, and who could in some measure instill in the men under him that same faith and devotion to the God whom he served! We read that "his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly."—II Chron. 26:8

In the 15th verse we read of Uzziah's new weapons of warfare. Compared to the 'new weapons' that men have developed today they may seem rather tame, but in those long-ago years, they were new and threatening, and terrifying to the enemy. He had "made in Jerusalem engines, in-

vented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks [corners of the walls], to shoot arrows and great stones withal." Clever men of war had designed machines that could propel huge stones and arrows unassisted by the weight and the power of man. Because of these fearful 'engines' Uzziah became still more famous among his enemies which surrounded him. "His name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong."—II Chron. 26:15

What a reputation this man attained—both because of his skill in using "cunning men" (vs. 15) and "mighty power" (vs. 13), and also because of his faith in God. Look at the results of his competence as a leader: now there was a well fortified Israel—every city safe, with a strong army ready to defend it against any oncoming enemy. Here was a man who could utilize engines of warfare powerful enough to defeat any enemy that could come upon them, and who struck terror in the hearts of all the surrounding heathen nations!

From the beginning of his reign, Uzziah experienced an ascending career, and God was with Uzziah all the way. He was strengthened by his God who had marvelously befriended him until he was a great power to be reckoned with. Suddenly, seemingly, something happened to this king. "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the Temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense." (vs. 16) Evidently Uzziah thought, because he had great favor with the LORD, that he could do the work of the priesthood. After all, was not God with him, and acting through him marvelously? Now he decided that he would take over the office of the priests!

"He transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the Temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense." (vs. 16) Immediately Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him eighty underpriests that were valiant men, rushed madly into the Temple to prevent the king from completing the foolhardiness upon which he had embarked. We read in the 17th and 18th verses that "they withstood Uz-

ziah." They chided the king, saying 'You are not qualified to do the work of the priesthood; this is not your office and you are going contrary to the LORD's Word.' Notice the response of Uzziah to this censure of the chief priest. The 19th verse says, "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar."

He was marvelously helped by God until he became prominent, and then he began to credit himself for some of the accomplishments—some of the power—some of the glory. After all was he not responsible for many of the victories? Was the honor and stance of Israel among its neighbors not the result of **his** cunning, of **his** wisdom, **and his** power as a leader of men and soldiers? Ah yes, the weaknesses with which men in high places and low places, throughout the earth, and in all ages, are blighted because of sin, are selfishness and pride. These commonplace vices have a way of manifesting themselves if they are not completely checked, and double-checked, and overcome by the power of God.

And what happened to Uzziah? As a result of his foolishness in succumbing to pride, the LORD instantaneously sent a plague of leprosy upon this king. And when the priests saw his leprosy, they took him out of the Temple and he was separated from the people as, in accordance with the Law, all lepers had to be isolated. We read in the 21st verse, "Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several [a house set aside for lepers] house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land."

Yes, "He was marvellously helped, till he was strong" (vs. 15), and that became the point at which his departure from the LORD accelerated. Notice the end of that man who had such a wonderful beginning and progress as a king, who had done that which was pleasing in the sight of the LORD. When pride entered in, it destroyed all of the accomplishments of his former years.

The lesson is clear. We, too, must be "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10) before we will be deemed ready for the honor and glory bestowed upon us by our God. It is not ours to claim before we have heard the declaration of our Father, "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Matt. 25:23

King Hezekiah

King Hezekiah also began his reign as a young man. He was twenty-five years old when his father, "Ahaz slept with his fathers; . . . and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead." (II Chron. 28:27) Although Ahaz "provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers" (vs. 25), Hezekiah was a righteous king—so noted for his good works that his history is repeated in three different places in the Bible. We find it recorded in detail in Chronicles, in Kings, and a mention in the writings of the Prophet Isaiah, who lived contemporaneously with Hezekiah. We read how he instituted reforms in Judah. "He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done."—II Chron. 29:2

Hezekiah despaired the fact that the Temple and its worship had fallen into decay, and he took definitive steps to reestablish religious life in Judah. True worship of the LORD God had declined to such an extent that it was obvious even to the young king who had just ascended the throne of Judah that something radical must be done to restore reverence of Jehovah. He began to arouse the people. "Where are the Levites, and where are the priests?" he asked. "He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, and said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place."—vss. 3-5

Hezekiah continued, "Our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. .

. . . Our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.”—vss. 6,9

“Now,” said Hezekiah, “it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.”—vs. 11

So the Levites arose and gathered together, and sanctified themselves, and went, according to the commandment of the king, to cleanse the house of the LORD. The cleansing was completed in eight days, so diligent was their work. They cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of the burnt offering, with all the vessels and the shewbread table, and all its vessels. Hezekiah was very pleased at their energy and eagerness. He rose up early in the morning and gathered together the rulers of the city, and they all went up to the house of the LORD and offered a sacrifice to the LORD on the altar.

Hezekiah had arranged this great feast and many animals were sacrificed. Great joy prevailed, and the Levites were set in the house of the LORD with musical instruments: harps, cymbals, trumpets, and with the instruments which had been ordained by David so many years earlier. “All the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.”—vss. 28,29

Previously, as Hezekiah observed the scene, he realized that there were too few priests who had sanctified themselves to take care of all the offerings. So the Levites, who had consecrated themselves and were prepared for the service, were brought in to substitute for the priests in offering sacrifices on this great occasion, “for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.” (vs. 34) How the religious worship of that people had declined! The priests

had neglected their responsibilities, making it necessary for the Levites to come in to help them in their work.

King Hezekiah sent letters to all Israel and Judah, and to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel. But they could not keep it at that time, because, first, there were still not enough priests who had cleansed themselves sufficiently; and, secondly, the people had not gathered at Jerusalem. So he took counsel with his princes, and with the congregation in Jerusalem, and they decided to keep the Passover one month later. This pleased the king and all the congregation.

There is a lesson in Hezekiah's experience with the lackadaisical priests which teaches us that when God accepts our consecration to do his will and not our own—to give our lives and all which we possess to God and his service—and when we have accepted the responsibilities and the privileges that go with that consecration, it is expected of us that we should fulfill these to the best of our ability and carry out this covenant of self-sacrifice. The LORD has given every one of us certain talents and he expects us to use these talents. If we bury some of them and do not use them, what will happen? In one of his parables, Jesus said, "Take therefore the talent from him [who has not used it properly], and give it unto him that hath ten talents [and has used them well]."—Matt. 25:28

If we do not use our privileges and talents in service to God, they will be given to someone else who will appreciate and use them properly. The LORD can very easily raise someone up to replace us and continue the work of glorifying his name, carrying forth his Word which we were neglecting.

Yes, the sacrificing went forward and there was great rejoicing, despite the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the priests. The Levites had shown themselves worthy by sanctifying themselves, and thus were given the opportunity and privileges of service. Hezekiah and the people of Israel were greatly blessed by the LORD because of their desire to glorify his name even under these unusual circumstances.

Hezekiah had a peculiar experience involving King Sennacherib and his Assyrian army— now on the march— which had defeated enemy after enemy. They had all fallen before him as the chaff before the wind. See II Chronicles 32:1-23. Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem, sending his spokesmen to the city wall to carry on a conversation with Hezekiah's representative. This is the substance of the conversation: The Assyrians said to the emissaries of the king, 'Now look, why are you putting up a struggle? Do you think that you are going to stand in the way of this mighty army which has defeated enemy after enemy? Do you think that your God, Jehovah, is going to protect you? Look what happened to the gods of all these other peoples—they were all defeated by Sennacherib's army. Their gods did not help them to defeat Sennacherib. Do you really think that your God is going to be powerful enough to defeat us? You are going to fall like the rest of them, and your God will not be able to raise a finger to help you.'

When Hezekiah's emissaries returned to give him Sennacherib's message, Hezekiah was deeply hurt. His God's name was being blasphemed. He closeted himself in prayer, and unburdened his heart, asking the LORD God to glorify his name before this enemy. He pleaded that God would right the wrong of this arrogant boasting of the might of the Assyrian host, which bragged that they would sweep away Israel as they had done to their previous enemies.

How proper it was for King Hezekiah to turn to the LORD in his hour of need! Very soon the answer came from the LORD. What was the answer? Overnight the angel of the LORD swept through the camp of the Assyrians and nearly annihilated the whole army—only a few escaped to return to their land. The LORD rose up to meet the needs of his people, to provide an answer to the prayer of this righteous king who loved the LORD, and who prayed fervently to him, and who was a good influence among, and example to, the people of Judah and Israel.

Hezekiah became sick unto death, and he was told by Isaiah to put his house in order because he would soon pass

off the earthly scene. Again Hezekiah, with contrition of heart, poured his soul out to Jehovah. Must he be taken away because of this sickness which had afflicted him? Had he not endeavored to serve God to the best of his ability? Was he not endeavoring to glorify the name of Jehovah among his people? God was not unaware of these things of which Hezekiah 'reminded' him. But because the plea emanated from a heart, which was completely dedicated to God, the LORD hearkened to his prayer.

God sent the Prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah with a message. It was this: 'Now, the LORD has heard your prayer and he will extend your life fifteen more years; you will not die at this time, Hezekiah'. He sent some men with a lump of figs to put upon the pestiferous, poisonous boil that was sapping the strength of Hezekiah's life. It healed him and he became well again, and he enjoyed life for fifteen more years. What a blessing came to Hezekiah, God honored his faith and his zeal. See II Chronicles 32:24-33; Isaiah 38:21, and II Kings 20:5-7.

Toward the end of his reign something happened to Hezekiah. He became well and began to prosper again, the LORD blessed him with much cattle, much earthly goods, much treasure in his house. He built up his treasure in his own palace, in his own home. Some ambassadors from Babylon who heard of his illness sent a letter to Hezekiah, complimenting him, and telling him they were glad that he was well again. They also told him they would like to visit his land to see some of the great things they had heard about. And they sent him a present.—II Kings 20:12-19

What do you think Hezekiah did? Do you think he sensed that this was a trap of his enemies from the north to spy out the land—did he recognize their 'diplomatic attitude' as fraudulent? Did Hezekiah get down on his knees and ask Jehovah, 'Is it proper for me to invite these people into the land and show them around?' Did he go to Isaiah and ask, 'Isaiah, inquire for me of the LORD and see if this is permissible?'

He did none of these things. He invited the men into the land, showed them all of **his** works, showed them everything that **his** hands had brought forth—all the riches that were in **his** house and in all of **his** dominion! What happened to Hezekiah? All of a sudden the blessings from God were the result of **his**, Hezekiah's hand, **his** work and it was **his** dominion as he was delighted in showing them off to the emissaries of Babylon.

Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah with this message: "Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD."—vss. 16,17

A verse in the account gives a clue as to how the visit of the Babylonian ambassadors affected Hezekiah in the latter part of his kingly reign. It is found in II Chronicles 32:31, and reads: "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." Here is an explanation of why these events were included in the chronicles of the Bible. The LORD, as it were, withdrew himself from protecting Hezekiah to test his reaction to all the blessings and the favors which had been poured upon him—to see what truly was in his heart. And what did Jehovah find? Once again, Hezekiah showed symptoms of the deadly sin, pride. He had shown the foreigners the wealth of **his** riches, the treasures of **his** house, and the power of **his** dominion in all the land. To read that catastrophic pronoun when it is used in connection with a man who had served God so faithfully all his days until he fell, as Hezekiah had done.

The account of Hezekiah's experiences ends with this statement, and again it is reflective of the mind of this king toward the latter part of his reign. He said to Isaiah, "Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken." He accepted Isaiah's judgment as given in verses 16 and 17. But then he added, "Shall there not be peace and truth in my days?" (II Kings 20:19) Was Hezekiah concerned with the effects of his

wrongdoing upon the succeeding generations of Israel? No. He said, 'At least there will be peace in my day!' He was simply concerned with his own short lifetime—that it would be good in his day! Was he contrite before Isaiah the prophet for the sin which he had committed? Not a word is recorded. Did he regret it? Did he bemoan the fact that succeeding generations must pay the price of his sins? Not a single word. The recorded fact sits there for us to look into, to think about, and to find therein the lessons which God has hidden in the pages of history concerning this king of Israel.

Manasseh

We come to Manasseh who reigned fifty-five long years in Judah. Manasseh was one of the worst kings that ascended to the throne. We may wonder why God permitted this king to reign fifty-five years—the longest reign in all the history of the kings—yet he was one of the most evil kings who sat upon the throne of the LORD in Jerusalem. When we read the account and the offenses he committed we are appalled! He built treasures; he built heathen groves; he built statues to every god underneath the sun. Idol worship flourished rampantly in all Israel, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and King Manasseh was at the forefront leading his people into this idolatrous worship.

He shed more innocent blood in Jerusalem than had been shed in the life of any king, until he came on the throne. Yet the LORD permitted Manasseh to reign longer than any previous ruler in the history of the kings. Why? Why does the LORD permit these things? Why did not the LORD cut this man off, and end the evil to which he was subjecting God's people?

From the account it is clear that sometimes the LORD does not cut off evildoers. He permits them to have their way even in the midst of the LORD's people. Sometimes God allows those who are truly his to suffer under such a situation to see how they react. Do they rise up to the occasion and point out to the one involved his wicked ways? Was there even one priest who spoke a word against Manasseh?

When King Manasseh came into the very courts of the Temple and erected statues and images to Baal, and to every star and Zodiac sign in the sky, there was not one priest who rushed—as they had done in the days of Uzziah—to stop the madness of the king. Not one! Was there a Levite who spoke up? Not a one. The LORD permitted events to deteriorate to their lowest level.

But there was an interesting fact about King Manasseh. He was taken prisoner by the Assyrians and Babylonians—they defeated him in battle, and they treated him very roughly. They put him in chains, dragged him through thorns, humbled him to the lowest depths that a man could be humbled—one who had been a highly honored king previous to this. Then something strange happened. The LORD turned the tide of events so that Manasseh was released to go back to his throne in the kingdom.

Manasseh learned the lesson God desired to teach, and he was humbled by those terrible experiences. He gave the orders to the people to tear down the very gods that he had previously set up for worship in Judah—the heathen groves, the altars, and the statues. The people dragged the remnants of these shrines and altars and statues down the incline into the valley of Kidron, and there smashed them to pieces.

But Manasseh could not undo in the remaining short space of his lifetime all the evil he had done prior to this time of his reformation. He had committed much too much evil to purge it all away before he died. He tried very hard toward the end of his life to make amends, but he found that he could not expunge the evil he had done with the good he tried to accomplish at the end of his reign as a king.

You see here an example of the effects of a bad influence which had been begun earlier by a king in the lives of his subjects. Even though he later reformed and took an entirely different path away from his previous evil course by turning to the LORD with all his heart, still he could not completely erase the effects of the evil that he had perpetrated prior to his reformation.

Is it not odd that idolatrous worship of heathen gods so permeated the religious life of Judah—this people who were so greatly blessed by Jehovah, the one God whom they learned to love, and to understand, and know through the Law, through their prophets and through their experiences? They continually turned their backs on Jehovah, and degenerated time and time again into the worship of false gods. We must take heed that we do not do the same, although our idols would be different, more insidious types of idols. It seems that there was a constant parade of idols either coming or going during the period of Judah's decline during the reign of their kings. One king would use the resources of Judah to raise idols and plant groves for the worship of heathen gods, and the next one would come along and cast them down, shattering them, and sending their broken pieces down into the valleys below.

What does this ancient history of Israel have to do with us? We are not indulging in idol worship, are we? The Apostle John wrote in his day: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (I John 5:21) No, we do not set up metal, or wooden, or clay, or marble statues around our home or around the buildings where we worship. But we can indeed be guilty of idolatry in a different shape and form. We know the idols that can be raised up in our hearts which displace true reverence for our Heavenly Father, and we know how much time, energy, and means consecrated to God and his service can be sapped away and diverted into other channels —into whatever idolatrous worship we set up in our hearts and lives to replace him. On the surface, they are so innocent. We do not mean any harm by spending our time, efforts, and money on these 'gods'. But after a while that which was once devoted exclusively to God and his service is diverted to the service of something else. "Little children," the Apostle John says, "keep yourselves from idols."

King Josiah

King Amon succeeded Manasseh. He reigned only two years. He was so evil his own people cut him off! Then Josiah came upon the throne at the tender age of just eight

years old. He was just a young child, but he was given the heavy task of reigning over God's chosen people, Judah. He became an extraordinarily fine king. The marvelous fact about Josiah's reign was that his reformation in Judah, had been prophesied some 350 years before he came upon the scene. This had never happened in the life of any previous king who reigned upon the throne of Jerusalem. Centuries before, the work that Josiah would perform was spoken of by a man of God. See I Kings 13:2.

Josiah fulfilled this prophecy beautifully. What a reformer! Every grove, every image, down it came! He repaired the Temple which again had gone into decline. He rearranged the services of the priesthood so the worship of God could be carried on as before. A great king—a righteous king—what an influence he had on the people! But in the decline of this people of God from their inception to the time of their final dispersion there was nothing any prophet could have done, or any righteous king, for any sustained period of time, to stop this downward course completely. The people enjoyed periods of favor from God when they endeavored to keep his ways. But as soon as the good influences were removed through the death of the righteous prophets or kings, once again the evil tendencies to forget God, his goodness, and his Law, prevailed. Nothing could permanently stop their downward trend. God permitted it so that people would taste the bitter end of allowing themselves to follow their own evil courses in life.

It is baffling to read how good King Josiah lost his life in a battle in which he probably should not have become involved. (II Chron, 35:20-25) The king of Egypt had come up against the king of Assyria. Israel was in between these two huge powers—Egypt to the south, Assyria and Babylon to the north. Oftentimes, when these countries fought against each other their armies traveled through Judea, or bypassed that country by traveling along the neighboring coast. In these cases, Israel suffered greatly due to the invading armies use of their country for gaining entrance into their enemies' lands. On the occasion described, the army of Pharaoh-

Necho went up the coast to engage the Assyrian army north of Israel.

What happened? Josiah armed himself and led his men out to do battle against the Egyptian king. Pharaoh-Necho, the Egyptian king, said, 'Josiah, I am not fighting you. My enemy lies to the north. Why are you meddling?' "Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo." Then we read, "And the archers shot at King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded." His servants put him in a chariot and "took him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchers of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah."—II Chron. 35:23,24

What is the explanation for this strange and sudden end of Josiah's reign? What a man! What a history! What a reformer! But how did he end his career? Meddling in someone else's business. Did the LORD tell Josiah to fight against Pharaoh-Necho? No. Did the prophet of the LORD go to Josiah and say "Josiah, arm yourself and fight this Egyptian king?" No, there were not any such instructions from the LORD. What a sad end to a glorious career. Even "Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spoke of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to that which was written in the Law of the LORD, and his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah."—vss. 26,27

There are so many events that happened to the kings of Israel contained within the confines of the pages of history from which we can glean lessons. The LORD leaves these lessons up to us to receive the benefits. Some of these we may have passed by, considering them merely as scraps of history. ■

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin

ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI—JULY 16-21, 1994

	Age 0 to 4	5 to 11	12 and over
Breakfast/lunch/dinner	\$5.00	\$8.50	\$12.50
Lodging: double/night	\$10.75*	\$10.75*	\$10.75
single/night			\$19.00
Package double	\$105	\$126	\$150
(18 meals, 7 nights)single			\$208
* No charge for a child who does not occupy a bed (i.e., sleeps in a crib or in a sleeping bag on the floor) if all beds are occupied.			

Room rates have been discounted \$2 per night to make the convention more affordable. A \$2 per day "facilities fee" charged by the college for each person who attends the convention will also be paid by the convention treasury. Again this year an additional rebate of 50% of the cost of children under the age of 18 will be given if they attend at least 75% of the Bible classes while they are at the convention.

Those who do not want to take all three meals may pay cash for specific meals at the door of the cafeteria. Breakfast on Friday, July 22, will be available for cash at the door.

The college is 35 miles north of the Kansas City, Missouri, airport. If you would like transportation from the airport to the college, send us your airline name, flight number, arrival day, and arrival time. We will send you a transportation voucher and instructions about how to meet the college van. The cost for this service will be paid by the Convention Treasurer. You may pay in advance, or when you arrive.

The following pages contain the General Convention program for this year. Please come and join with us in the studies and the fellowship!

Saturday, July 16

Chairman: *Brother Stephen Jeuck*
Orlando FL

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Orientation by College
- 10:00 Welcome Address Brother Raymond J. Krupa
Portland OR
- 10:45 Intermission
- 11:15 Discourse Brother Paul Mali
New London CT
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Discourse Brother Byron Keith
Seattle WA
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Discourse Brother Mike Balko
West Newton PA
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse Brother J. Burton Brown
Los Angeles CA
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:00 Discourse: "The New Covenant" Brother Leo Post
New York NY
- 7:45 Vesper Service
- 8:15 India Report Brother Timothy Krupa
Brother Robert Goodman
- 8:45 Songs in the Night

Sunday, July 17

*Chairman: Brother Wade Austin
Los Angeles CA*

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Discourse Brother Fred Binns
Chesham England
- 10:30 Intermission
- 11:15 Theme Discourse Brother Homer Montague
(Matthew 5:14) *Highland Park NY*
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Praise and Testimony Brother Charles Martig
Pittsburgh PA
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Discourse Brother Michael J. Balko
Orlando FL
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse Brother George Jeuck
New York NY
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:00 Panel Discussion: "The Wheat and the Tares"
Moderator: Brother Tim Thomassen
Panelists: Brother Jonathan Freer
Brother George Passios
Brother Herb Snyder
- 8:00 Vesper Service
- 8:30 South American Report Brother Joseph Panucci
Groton, CT
- 9:00 Songs in the Night

Monday, July 18

Chairman: *Brother E. F. Lankford*
Sacramento CA

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Discourse *Brother Carl Hagensick*
Chicago IL
- 10:30 Intermission
- 11:00 Praise and Testimony *Brother Ray Rawson*
St. Petersburg FL
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Discourse *Brother Alex Gonczewski*
Agawam MA
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Discourse *Brother Ken Fernets*
Vernon B.C.
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse *Brother Richard Suraci*
New Haven CT
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:00 Witnessing Workshop *Brother Michael Nekora*
Brother Leonard Griehs
Brother Paul Lagno
- 8:00 Songs in the Night

Tuesday, July 19

*Chairman: Brother Stephen Suraci
New Haven CT*

- 9:30 Morning Devotions
- 9:45 Baptismal Discourse Brother Robert Gorecki
New York NY
- 10:45 Intermission
- 11:15 Immersion Service
- 12:00 Close of Morning Session
- 2:00 Praise and Testimony Brother Ernest Kuenzli
Orlando FL
- 2:45 Intermission
- 3:15 Discourse Brother Frank Nemesh
Detroit MI
- 4:00 Intermission
- 4:30 Discourse Brother George Eldridge
Delaware Valley PA
- 5:15 Close of Afternoon Session
- 7:00 Elders Meeting (in the New Dorm)
*(During this meeting, some new Dawn videos
will be projected in the main auditorium.)*

Wednesday, July 20

*Chairman: Brother Robert Goodman
Orlando FL*

9:30 Morning Devotions

9:45 Convention Business Reports

*Brother Walter Blicharz
Detroit MI*

10:30 Short Recess

10:45 Convention Business Meeting

12:00 Close of Morning Session

2:00 Discourse

*Brother Edmund Blicharz
Orlando FL*

2:45 Intermission

3:15 Praise and Testimony

*Brother William Harp
Cincinnati OH*

4:00 Intermission

4:30 Discourse

*Brother James Parkinson
San Gabriel Valley CA*

5:15 Close of Afternoon Session

7:00 Discourse

*Brother David Bruce
Seattle WA*

7:45 Vesper Service

8:15 Australian Report

*Brother Burton Brown
Brother George Jeuck*

European Report

Brother Robert Gorecki

8:45 Songs in the Night

Thursday, July 21

*Chairman: Brother George Tivador
Detroit MI*

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|---|
| 9:30 | Morning Devotions | |
| 9:45 | Discourse | Brother George Tabac
<i>Chicago IL</i> |
| 10:30 | Intermission | |
| 11:15 | Discourse | Brother David Rice
<i>San Diego CA</i> |
| 12:00 | Close of Morning Session | |
| 2:00 | Discourse | Brother Allan Allers
<i>Boise ID</i> |
| 2:45 | Intermission | |
| 3:15 | Discourse | Brother Emile Herrscher
<i>Phoenix AZ</i> |
| 4:00 | Intermission | |
| 4:30 | Praise and Testimony | Brother Stephen Mengos
<i>Los Angeles CA</i> |
| 5:15 | Close of Afternoon Session | |
| 7:00 | Closing Discourse | Brother Timothy Krupa
<i>Portland OR</i> |
| 7:45 | Melodies of Praise | |
| 8:30 | Love Feast | |

General Convention Registration Form

St. Joseph, Missouri July 16-21, 1994

	Breakf.	Lunch	Dinner	Dorm
Friday, July 15th				
Saturday, 16th				
Sunday, 17th				
Monday, 18th				
Tuesday, 19th				
Wednesday, 20th				
Thursday, 21st				

OR check here for package: 7 nights, 18 meals

First and last name (and Ecclesia)	Age

Address:

Telephone number [evenings]: area code ()

Are you able to walk up one flight of steps? Two flights?

Your dorm preference [check one]: Old dorm ☐ New Dorm ☐
Don't care ☐ Staying off-site ☐

If you're alone, would you like to share a room with someone?

Your arrival information in Kansas City if you want to be picked up:

Send to: General Convention Registration
1425 Lachman Lane Pac. Palisades, CA 90272

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

M. Balko

Indianapolis, IN	May 15
Milwaukee, WI	16
Minneapolis, MN	17
Morehead, ND	18
Winnipeg, Man.	19-22
Kansas City, MO	25
Camdenton, MO	26
St. Louis, MO	29

W. Blicharz

Buffalo, NY	May 14, 15
Asilomar, CA	27-30

D. Bruce

Grants Pass, OR	May 23
Clear Lake, CA	24
Asilomar, CA	27-30

R. Gorecki

Storington England Conv.	
	May 7-14
England	May 15-19
German Convention—	
Korbach	21-23
France	25-30

G.M. Jeuck

Buffalo, NY	May 14, 15
Asilomar, CA	27-30

T. Krupa

Romania:	May 3-9
Bucharest	

Cluj
Baia Mare
Sighet

R. Goodman and T. Krupa

India: May 16-29
Bangalore
Indian General Convention
Mysore
Coimbatore
Trichy
Coonoor
Erode
Manapparai
Kunnathur
Dalmiapuram
Madurai
Mettupalayam
Pollachi

E. Kuenzli

St. Petersburg, FL May 8

G. Passios

Claymont, DE May 8
West Newton, PA 22

L.B. Post

Agawam, MA May 15

G. Tivador

Gary, IN May 14, 15 ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother John Molnar, Glouster, OH—January 25. Age, 95.

Sister Olive Goodley, Venice, FL—February 13. Age, 82.

Brother Mitchell Stevens, Syracuse, NY—February 28
Age, 77.

Brother Frank Calhoun, Riverside, CA—March 2. Age, 98.

Sister J. Pulyk, Ringwood East, Australia—March 5. Age
85.

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

LISTEN each **Sunday**
to these interesting Bible
topics discussed on

WNOR-740
9:00 a.m.

MAY:

- 1-The Days of Creation
- 8-No More Death
- 15-One Government
- 22-The Holy Spirit
- 29-The Increase of
Christ's Government

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FOR YOUR NEWSPAPER

To the left is a suggestion
for an advertisement in your
local newspaper. This outline
is designed for about three
inches, in one column.

MAY SPECIAL

On Sunday, May 15th,
"Frank and Ernest" will dis-
cuss the topic, "One Govern-
ment." Free circulars are
available which announce
this program, and you are
invited to send for as many
as you can use. Address
your request to:

The Dawn
East Rutherford, NJ 07073

CONVENTIONS

HARTFORD, CT, May 1—Sage Park Middle School, 25 Sage Park Rd., Windsor, CT. For information, contact Mrs. Daniel Slivinsky, 42 Andrew Dr., East Hartford, CT 06108

Phone: (203) 289-0116

BUFFALO, NY, May 14,15—Holiday Inn, 5440 Camp Rd., Hamburg. Contact before April 30 for reservations: Mr. Eugene Buczkowski, 85 Rogers Dr., Cheektowaga 14225.

Phone: (716) 634-2163

AGAWAM, MA, May 15—Ramada Inn, 161 Bridge St., East Windsor, CT. For information, contact: Mrs. Sophie Zielinsky, 21 Silver St., Agawam, MA 01001

Phone: (413) 786-1216

GARY AREA CONVENTION, May 15—The Spa Banquet Center, 333 North Mineral Springs Road, Porter, IN. Contact: John Ulicni, 6703 Tyler St., Merrillville, IN 46410

Phone: (219) 769-5647

WEST NEWTON, PA, May 22—Sewickley Grange, Route 136, West Newton. Contact: John Krasonic, R.D. #4, Belle Vernon 15012

ASILOMAR CONVENTION, May 27-30—Pacific Grove, CA. For reservations contact: Mr. Tom Marshall, 1089 Bluebell Dr., #1108, Livermore, CA 94550

Phone: (510) 443-0567

WATERBURY, CT, June 4,5—A New Location: The Litchfield

Firehouse. For programs and directions, contact: Mrs. Anthony Tsimonis, Secretary, c/o Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 1494, Waterbury, CT 06721

ALLENTOWN, PA, June 10, 11,12—Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA. Contact: Allentown Bible Students, c/o Margaret Young, P.O. Box 1672, Allentown, 18105

Phone: (610) 867-5418

LOS ANGELES, CA, July 2,3,4—Holiday Inn, 7000 Beach Blvd., Buena Park. For information, contact: Los Angeles Convention, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pac. Palisades, CA 90272

Phone: (310) 454-5248

NAMBOUR, AUSTRALIA, July 8,9,10—Contact: Mr. Greg Tosh, Payters Creek Road, MS 1536, Nambour, Queensland, Australia 4560

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 16-21—St. Joseph MO. More information will be available in the June and July issues of The Dawn magazine. See pages 54-61 for information, convention program, and reservation form.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 7-12—Poitiers, France. For information, write to: International Convention, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Phone: (310) 454-5248 ■

"TRUST IN THE LORD AND DO GOOD." PS. 37:3