

# The Dawn

*A Herald of Christ's Presence*



# The DAWN

VOLUME No. XCIV, Number 6  
(USPS 149-380), June 2026

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167. \$12.00 a year.*

**ARGENTINA:** estudiantesda  
bibliargentina@gmail.com

**AUSTRALIA:** Berean Bible  
Institute, P.O. Box 402, Rosanna,  
Victoria 3084

**BRAZIL:** A Aurora, Caixa Postal  
50088, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, CEP  
20050-971

**BRITISH ISLES:** Associated Bible  
Students, Brook House, Whitchurch  
Road, Prees, Whitchurch Shropshire,  
SY13 3JZ UK

**CANADA:** P.O. Box 1565, Vernon,  
British Columbia, V1T 8C2

**FRANCE:** L'Aurore, 39A rue des Bois,  
68540 Feldkirch

**GERMANY:** Tagesanbruch Bibel-  
studien-Vereinigung e. V., Postfach  
3, 64396 Modautal

**GREECE:** He Haravgi (The Dawn),  
PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL  
32752-1167 USA

**INDIA:** P. Kumar/E. Rashmi Manu  
Residency, #1-N-32-2717/8(2),  
Near Vigneshwara wood Industries  
Ashoknagar, Mangalore: 575006

**SPAIN/ITALY:** El Alba/Aurora,  
Associazione Studenti Biblici, Via  
Ferrara 42, 59100 Prato—Italia

### HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

The Day of Pentecost 2

### INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

Deborah and Barak 16

Hannah's Prayer Answered 18

Jonathan and David—Faithful

Friends 20

Amos, a Courageous Prophet 22

### CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

The Promise Affirmed 24

The Holy Spirit in the Life of  
a Christian 38

Do Not Give Up 48

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 62

### ENCOURAGING LETTERS 61

### OBITUARIES 59

### SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

### CONVENTIONS 63

# The Day of Pentecost

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

*—Acts 2:1-4, The Emphatic Diaglott*

**The Christian world commonly** recognizes three outstanding events as the basis of their religious beliefs: The miraculous birth of Jesus by his mother Mary; the death of Jesus upon the cross of Calvary; and the resurrection of Jesus on the “third day” to the divine spirit nature. There is a fourth event of vital importance to the Christian—one which, however, does not generally enjoy the same depth of appreciation as it should be given. It is the Day of Pentecost, which took place fifty days following Jesus’ resurrection. It is our purpose in this present consideration to examine the origin, background, and most importantly,

the meaning of this special day in the history of the Christian faith.

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

## **The Old Testament Feast**

What became known in New Testament times as Pentecost was one of the three annual feasts of Israel. In the Old Testament, it went by two names—the “Feast of Harvest” and the “Feast of Weeks.” We read of it by its name, Feast of Harvest, in Exodus 23:14-16: “Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: ... And the feast of harvest [Pentecost], the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.”

Another reference to this feast is in Deuteronomy 16:9,10,16, where it is called the Feast of Weeks.

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

Leviticus chapter 23 explains in detail exactly when Pentecost occurred, its purpose, and why it was described by two names—Feast of Harvest and Feast of Weeks. Verses 5-7 read, “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S pass-over. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread. ... In the first day [the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the fifteenth day of the first month] ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.” This first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be a “holy convocation,” that is, a special Sabbath day. Sabbath days were those in which the Israelites did no servile work. In this case, it was not the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, but a special Sabbath—a holy convocation to the Lord.

Continuing with verses 10 and 11: “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and

shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” This “waving” of the sheaf, or handful, of the firstfruits of Israel’s grain harvest, was to be done on the sixteenth day of the first month, the “morrow after” the special Sabbath, which was on the fifteenth, as previously noted.

Verses 15 and 16 read: “Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering [the sixteenth day of the first month]; seven sabbaths [49 days] shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” This fiftieth day was the Feast of Weeks—or the Feast of Harvest. It is referred to as the Feast of Weeks because the date on which the feast occurred was determined by the counting of seven weeks, plus one day, from the time that the sheaf of the firstfruits was offered. Additionally, the Greek word *pentecost* means “the fiftieth day.” Depending on the Jewish reckoning each calendar year, the Pentecost date can fluctuate between the latter half of May and the first half of June. Based on the Leviticus 23 calculation, the corresponding date for Pentecost this year was May 23, 2026.

## **Purpose of Israel’s Feast**

This feast of Israel was to be a celebration of thanksgiving to God for the firstfruits of their harvest, hence the second name, Feast of Harvest. This was a special harvest. It was not the harvest

of vegetables or fruit, but was the harvest of grain—specifically barley and wheat. The firstfruits of this harvest were dedicated to God. During this feast, many offerings were given. There were burnt offerings, meat offerings, drink offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings—all given as a celebration of thanksgiving to God for their grain harvest.—Lev. 23:16-20

A special offering of this feast was to be a “new meat offering,” as noted in verse 16. This offering is described in verse 17: “Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.” The Israelites were to offer two loaves of bread made from the firstfruits of their grain harvest. The loaves were to be waved before the Lord as a thanksgiving and a dedication to him for the bounties of their harvest.

### **Correspondence to the New Testament**

The reason for going into detail regarding Israel’s Feast of Harvest, or Feast of Weeks, is that it connects specifically to the New Testament Day of Pentecost. First, we note the correspondence of the timing of this feast. As earlier quoted from Leviticus 23:5, the 14th day of the first month was Israel’s Passover. In the New Testament, this corresponds to the death of Jesus as the greater Passover lamb—“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Jesus’ death occurred exactly on this same date. Referring again to Leviticus 23:10,11, two days later, on the 16th day of the first month, the sheaf, or handful, of the firstfruits

was waved before the Lord. This corresponds to the resurrection of Jesus, which likewise occurred two days after his death as the Passover lamb. Just as he had foretold, Jesus was in the grave for parts of three days—part of the 14th, all of the 15th, and part of the 16th day of the first month, Jewish reckoning.—Matt. 16:21; Luke 9:22

The Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 15:20 that Jesus was “the firstfruits of them that slept.” He was the sheaf, the handful, of firstfruits—the very first one raised from the dead to eternal life by the mighty power of God. (Col. 1:18) This symbolic “waving” of the sheaf of the firstfruits showed God’s acceptance of Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice, the result of which was his resurrection from the dead by divine power. Finally, counting seven Sabbaths plus one, or fifty days, from the resurrection of Jesus, the sheaf of the firstfruits, brings us to the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts chapter 2.

Just as Israel’s feast was the dedication of the firstfruits of their grain harvest, the Day of Pentecost encompassed the dedication of the greater firstfruits—the “wheat”—to God. The church, made up of faithful Christians, was to be included as part of the firstfruits class. Jesus was the “first” of the firstfruits class, but the church also, as stated in James 1:18, is a “kind of firstfruits.” John the Revelator speaks also of faithful Christians as the “firstfruits” in Revelation 14:4, where he describes these as being “redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” This dedication of the church began at Pentecost, in which it was symbolically waved, or shown, before the Heavenly Father as dedicated to him.

In viewing the Day of Pentecost, it was a culmination of three very important and vital events in God's plan. The first was the ransom price, which Jesus provided when he died as a corresponding price for Adam on the cross. (I Tim. 2:5,6) The second of these outstanding events was Jesus' resurrection by the mighty power of God. (Eph. 1:19-21) The third was the Day of Pentecost—the day of dedication of the prospective church to the Heavenly Father.

### **The Day of Pentecost**

The events that encompassed the Day of Pentecost are numerous. It was not merely the day that the Holy Spirit came upon the church. This did indeed happen, and the benefits were not only to those that were present then, but have extended throughout the entire period since, to those who have made an acceptable dedication of their lives to God.

For those one hundred and twenty followers of Jesus gathered in the upper room who had dedicated their lives to him, the Day of Pentecost signified many things. (Acts 1:15) It meant that God had accepted their consecration to him. It meant that they were now justified in his sight. It meant that now their life of sacrifice would begin, and it meant that begetting of the Holy Spirit had taken place. As a result, they would now be New Creatures in Christ Jesus.—Rom. 5:1; 12:1; I Pet. 1:3; II Cor. 5:17

The Day of Pentecost has also been of great significance to all true Christians down to the present time. It signified the opening of the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14) Pentecost also denoted the anointing, or the dedication, of the church as a class, to be God's "royal priesthood."

(I Pet. 2:9) It showed that the opportunity was now open for each individual prospective member of that priesthood to receive the things that those in the upper room were receiving—God’s acceptance of their consecration, justification, the beginning of their sacrifice, and the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Since Pentecost, each prospective member of the royal priesthood has come into that same relationship because of the events that took place then.

## **The Holy Spirit**

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

There is a deeper meaning, however, to the Holy Spirit as it applies to dedicated Christians. For these, the Holy Spirit can be defined as the holy and righteous influence and power of God that gives the spark of life to, nourishes, and governs their new life “in Christ.” (II Cor. 5:17) The word “spirit” is from the Greek word *pneuma*, and means “breath.” To simplify the definition of the Holy Spirit to the Christian, it can be likened to what the breath of life is to the natural body. The body must have the physical breath of life. If the breath is taken away from the natural body, it dies within minutes. Likewise, without the Holy Spirit—God’s holy and righteous influence—the Christian’s new life in Christ cannot live, develop, and grow to maturity.

## **The Holy Spirit at Pentecost**

Acts chapter 2 describes what happened on the Day of Pentecost relative to the giving of the Holy Spirit. Verses 2-4 read: “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues [Greek: languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Why did God provide such an outward demonstration of the giving of the Holy Spirit as a “sound from heaven,” a “rushing mighty wind,” “cloven tongues” like fire, and speaking in other languages? There were two reasons why this was done.

First, it was a witness to those present. The account states, “There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Many Jews had traveled to Jerusalem because this was one of their feast days. When the giving of the Holy Spirit activated the apostles, and they began speaking [or perhaps being understood] in other languages, it was a witness to all those gathered there. (vss. 5,6) Many were amazed and wondered what these things meant. Others accused the apostles of being drunk. (vss. 12,13) This caused Peter to stand up and speak to the multitude. He quoted from the Prophet Joel, and from the Psalms, giving a beautiful witness of God’s plan, centered in Jesus. (vss. 14-40) The result of that witness is stated in verse 41: “The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

Second, the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was a demonstration of God's power and influence as never before seen in his human creation. This power rested in a special way upon the apostles in that they were given various "gifts." The Apostle Paul identified some of these gifts in I Corinthians 12:28-30 as: "gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues ... workers of miracles." These were all part of the outward gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to help establish the Early Church and the authority of the apostles. They were a tremendous demonstration of God's power and influence upon them, manifesting his authority on their behalf.

### **Greater Significance**

As extraordinary as these demonstrations were, as exciting as the gifts were, and although they added three thousand prospective members to their numbers in one day, none of this was the most important significance of Pentecost. The greater meaning of Pentecost concerned the principal work of the Holy Spirit, which was to be inward. This work was not to be seen by man. It was, in fact, to be the work of developing the New Creature life of each individual member of "the body of Christ."  
—I Cor. 12:27

The most significant event associated with the Day of Pentecost was the personal begetting of each of the disciples by the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 12, Paul discusses this very matter. After recounting the various gifts of the spirit in previous verses, he states in verse 31, "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent

way.” The “more excellent way” was the subject of the very next chapter—I Corinthians 13—in which the apostle focused exclusively on the character quality of love. Love is the sum total of the fruits of the spirit, in which is described the development of the new life in Christ. (Gal. 5:22,23) This was the more excellent way, the more excellent work of the Holy Spirit, and the greatest significance of Pentecost.

## **Works of the Holy Spirit**

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

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

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

mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

3. The begetting of the Holy Spirit embodies the thought of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) Romans 8:9,10 allude to this, saying, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” This Holy Spirit of God or, as Paul additionally refers to it, the “Spirit of Christ,” has to be “in” his followers. Christ is not literally in us. It is his spirit of begettal, his influence, which is in our heart, and which motivates us. —I John 2:27

4. The fourth work of the Holy Spirit is described in Romans 8:11, which says, “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” The Holy Spirit “quickeneth”—it gives life. It gives one the opportunity to serve God, to understand his Truth, to be an acceptable sacrifice, and will eventually give the “crown of life” to those who are faithful even unto death.—Rev. 2:10

5. The action of the Holy Spirit upon our minds assists us in mortifying, or putting to death, the deeds of our fallen flesh. Romans 8:13 says, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

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

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

8. Verse 16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This is an assertion that our spirit, our heart, our motives, which have been given to the Lord in consecration, are on the same "wavelength," as it were, with God—that is, they "bear witness" with the Holy Spirit. When these bear witness together, it is a declaration that we have the same objectives which God, through the Holy Spirit, purposes in us.

9. The Holy Spirit does not prevent us from sharing in the trials and the "groanings" of the present life while in the flesh. It is true that God's power can accomplish anything, and he perhaps could use his Holy Spirit to prevent us from going through the trials and the groanings of the flesh.

However, this is not in our best interest. This aspect of the Holy Spirit is shown in verse 23: “Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

10. Verses 26 and 27 say, “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind [Greek: inclination] of the Spirit, because [it] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The Holy Spirit, as it bears witness with our spirit, helps us in those times when we have difficulty praying to the Father as we would desire, or do not know what we should pray for. As the verse states, the spirit intercedes “according to the will of God.”

### **Filled with the Spirit**

We are warned by the Apostle Paul not to “quench” the Spirit—willfully renounce the New Creature’s life-giving power. (I Thess. 5:19) We must be on guard for even partial willfulness in this regard. “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,” Paul says in Ephesians 4:30. Rather, let us strive to obtain the fullest measure possible of God’s influence and power—to “be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph. 5:18) Thus, by being faithful even “unto death,” we may truly appreciate the significance of Pentecost and its resulting blessings to Christians who have dedicated their lives to follow in Jesus’ footsteps of sacrifice, suffering, and service to the Heavenly Father. ■

# Deborah and Barak

**Key Verses:** *“And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.”*  
—Judges 4:4,5

**Selected Scriptures:**  
*Judges 4:1-24; 5:1-3*

out the warrior Barak. She said to him, “Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee ... Sisera, the captain of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.”—Judg. 4:6,7

Barak had heard this message before but had failed to do anything about it. Now, with the encouragement of Deborah, it was time to act. Barak still hesitated,

**After enjoying an eighty-year period of peace and blessing, persecution by the Canaanites at the hands of King Jabin and his captain Sisera came upon Israel due to their unfaithfulness. In God’s providence, however, a godly woman was raised to a position of leadership. She was Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel.**

Deborah’s counsel was sought as she sat “under the palm tree,” as noted in our Key Verses. She was a woman of tremendous wisdom, integrity, and courage. Having taken stock of Israel’s deplorable state, Deborah sought

though the word of the Lord should have been sufficient to stimulate his faith and embolden his leadership. He said to Deborah, “If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.” (vs. 8) Barak’s hesitation demonstrated a weakness in his faith. Deborah declared that she would go with Barak, but the resulting victory and honor would not be fully his. She said, “I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”—vs. 9

The battle against Sisera, his army and nine hundred chariots was a complete rout. God gave them into the hands of Barak just as he had promised. Sisera abandoned his chariot and tried to escape on foot. The Lord arranged for another courageous woman of Israel to be waiting for him. Jael, the wife of Heber, invited Sisera, now a fugitive, to take shelter in her tent. She gave him milk to drink and then covered him up.—vss. 13-19

Weary from the battle, Sisera fell into a deep sleep. Jael resolutely grabbed a tent stake in one hand and a hammer in the other. She went into the tent where Israel’s enemy and oppressor slept and drove the stake through his temple and into the ground. (vss. 21,22) Israel’s victory was now complete, and as Deborah had prophesied, Sisera fell at “the hand of a woman.”

Deborah and Barak teach us great lessons from two different perspectives. When God commands us, we should be swift to render obedience. Deborah was faithful and firmly resolved to do God’s will. She received a great blessing, being made an example of faith in God’s Word. Barak’s experience teaches us that God can give us the victory, even when we are weak in faith. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—I Cor. 15:57 ■

# Hannah's Prayer Answered

**Key Verse:**  
*“Wherefore it came  
to pass, when the  
time was come  
about after  
Hannah had  
conceived, that she  
bare a son, and  
called his name  
Samuel, saying,  
Because I have  
asked him of  
the LORD.”*  
—I Samuel 1:20

**Selected Scriptures:**  
*I Samuel 1:1-28;  
2:1-11*

**Before the time when Israel** had kings, there was a man named Elkanah who had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had children, while Hannah had none. Every year Elkanah took his family to Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifice to the Lord, giving a portion of the sacrifice to each member of his family. Elkanah gave a double portion to Hannah because of his great love for her.

Peninnah, however, mocked Hannah because she had no children, and this cruelty went on year after year, causing Hannah to weep and not eat. Finally one year, Hannah silently prayed to God and vowed saying, “O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”—I Sam. 1:1-11, *New International Version*

God heard Hannah’s prayer. The following year she had a son and named him Samuel. (vss. 19,20) The vow

she had made to God, not allowing a razor to come upon her son's head, was the Nazarite vow. This was "a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD." As part of this vow, in addition to not cutting the hair, no wine was to be drunk, nor was anything from the grapevine eaten. One taking this vow was to have no contact with any dead body, including immediate family members. (Num. 6:1-21) Throughout the entire time a person placed themselves under the Nazarite vow, that individual was "holy unto the LORD."—vs. 8

The name Hannah means "favor" or "grace." The Lord's followers are told, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8,9) Hannah lived a life of prayer. She prayed when she was troubled. She also prayed when she was thankful, such as when she presented her child Samuel to Eli the high priest.—I Sam. 2:1-11

Paul's exhortation is, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6,7, *NIV*) We are to fully place our hope and trust in God, have the spirit of rejoicing, and pray continually, asking in harmony with his promises. Thus, we will have the peace of God and be able to "give thanks in all circumstances," whatever his providences may permit.—I Thess. 5:16-18, *NIV*

Hannah made a great sacrifice to God. She dedicated her son Samuel to live the Nazarite vow of complete dedication to the Lord all the days of his life. Today, consecrated followers of Christ have also made a life-long vow of complete consecration to God, including separation from the "dead things" of this present evil world. These, instead, "put on Christ," developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit.—Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10-17 ■

# Jonathan and David —Faithful Friends

**Key Verse:** *“And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.”*  
—I Samuel 20:42

**Selected Scriptures:**  
*I Samuel 18:1-9;  
19:1-7; 20:1-42*

**After being governed for** several centuries by judges, Israel desired a king so that it could be like all the other nations around them. God had told Moses this day would come and set forth the requirements of such a king. (Deut. 17:14-20) Samuel was a key figure in the institution of a kingdom under Saul. It was Samuel who later told Saul that his kingdom was to be taken from him because of disobedience to God, and that he would be succeeded by a man after God’s own heart. (I Sam. 13:13,14) It was also Samuel who anointed David, when God commanded him, “Arise, anoint him: for this is he.”—I Sam. 16:12,13

As a result of this anointing, the spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David while at the same time departing from Saul. Noticing the king’s melancholy condition, his servants sent for David to play his lyre and bring musical relief to the ailing leader. Saul came

to value David's service and made him his armorbearer.  
—vss. 14-23

A significant result of these events was the reaction of Saul's son, Jonathan, to the great service David was rendering to his father and to the nation of Israel. "Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ... Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." (I Sam. 18:1,3) Thus we see the formulation of a friendship which was based upon a mutual love of the service of God, as also shown in the words of our Key Verse.

This friendship would soon be put to the test. After David's defeat of the Philistine army, the people proclaimed, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (vs. 7) Saul was furious and thought to conspire against David. However, as David won battle after battle against Israel's enemies, Saul settled on a more direct way to remove him. He instructed his son Jonathan and his servants to kill David.—I Sam. 19:1

Jonathan loved his father, and as the eldest of four sons stood to be the next king of Israel. His highest allegiance, however, was to the God of Israel. As recorded in I Samuel 19:4, Jonathan told Saul he was committing a great sin to plot against the life of a man who had rendered invaluable services to his country, and whose loyalty had been uniformly steady and devoted. Jonathan's words produced a positive effect on the impulsive mind of his father. Saul bound himself by an oath to relinquish his hostile purpose. (vss. 6,7) Thus, through the intervention of Jonathan, a temporary reconciliation was effected, and David returned to service of the king and the people of Israel.

In the foregoing experiences we find an invaluable lesson in laying a foundation of love for our brethren. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John 15:13 ■

# Amos, a Courageous Prophet

**Key Verse:** “*And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.*”  
—Amos 7:15

**Selected Scriptures:**  
**Amos 1:1; 2:6-16;**  
**3:1-15; 7:10-17;**  
**9:11-15**

**Amos was a native of Tekoa,** which was about six miles south of Bethlehem. Evidently, however, he traveled north into the territory of the ten-tribe kingdom and there undertook the majority of his ministry. Amos foretold the dire calamities that would come upon Israel because of its sin, and he suffered persecution because of his faithfulness.—Amos 2:6-16; 7:10-17

Through Amos the Lord said to Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Then the question is posed, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:2,3) Here the point is that, since the Lord had made Israel his people exclusively, he expected undivided loyalty from them. If they would not worship and serve him in this manner, they would be punished severely.

In verses 11-15 of the ninth and final chapter of Amos, God, through the prophet, forecasts the restoration of Israel and the building again of the “tabernacle of David that is fallen.” In Acts 15:13-18, this prophecy is quoted by Apostle James, to which he adds, “Known

unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” God has a due time for every feature of his plan. All creation is his charge, and all his purposes for Israel and all nations shall be accomplished.—Isa. 55:11

The Lord’s people today, as Amos, are not to be deterred into silence, but are to speak the truth in love, especially the hope of the kingdom of righteousness and peace. The conclusion of Amos’ prophecy, as well as James’ reference to it, will have its complete fulfillment with the establishment of God’s kingdom, under the reign of Christ, when the “residue of men” will be given the opportunity to call upon the Lord and be blessed.—Acts 15:16,17

Concerning this promised time soon to come, we read these words: “And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. 8:11,12) These promises will be first extended to Israel, and then will flow to every nation. All mankind will have the assistance of Christ and of his glorified church, together, the “royal priesthood.” (I Pet. 2:9) At this time, too, “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD.” We also have the assurance that the knowledge of God will be made so plain that “the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”—Isa. 11:9; 35:8

What a glorious prospect is laid before us for which we are to be ever thankful, and which was made possible by the Heavenly Father’s giving of his beloved son. (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23) Think for a moment what our world will be like with no more sin, killing, hatred, or “wars and rumours of wars.” (Matt. 24:6-7) Amos required courage to speak concerning Israel’s lack of faithfulness. Nevertheless, he also had joy, we can be assured, for the future hope of both Israel and the entire world of mankind. ■

# The Promise Affirmed

*“Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”*  
—Genesis 17:3-5

**The record of the Book of Genesis** is of great importance to the sincere student of the Bible. In its pages is laid the groundwork of God’s plan for man’s salvation and the eventual blessing of all the families of the earth. Therefore, we do well to examine its record closely, and its harmony with the entire scriptural record found in the Bible. For our present consideration, our focus will center on Genesis, chapters sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen.

In these three chapters, as we study God’s dealings with Abram, later called Abraham, it is important to keep in mind the divine promise concerning a “seed.” Abram was to have an offspring, a seed, which would occupy an important

place in the plan of God. When this promise was first made to the patriarch, his wife Sarai, later called Sarah, was childless. Nevertheless, they both believed God's promise, and waited patiently for a child to be born. However, no child came.—Gen. 16:1

It was a long wait. To begin with, there was the time that elapsed from the making of the promise until the death of Abram's father Terah, just before they entered into the land of Canaan. Now another ten years had passed, and still no child had come. Sarai, in addition to being barren, was well along in years, and her faith that she would become the mother of the promised seed began to wane. Apparently, she still believed God's plan concerning a seed but began to wonder if it were his will that she should be the mother.

Meditating along this line, and desiring to cooperate with the Lord, if possible, she suggested to Abram that Hagar, her handmaid, serve as the mother of a child for him. According to Christian standards today this might be deemed an unethical procedure, but apparently it was not considered improper at that time. In any event, neither Sarai nor Abram were rebuked for it by the Lord, although he did not acknowledge the child of this union as being the promised seed.—vss. 2,3

From a natural standpoint, however, Sarai's suggestion did not turn out to be a satisfactory solution to the matter. Quite unexpectedly to Sarai, as soon as Hagar learned that she would bear a child, she began to despise her mistress. In those days, the ability to have children was prized very highly, and evidently Hagar began to feel that she was quite superior to Sarai, and she acted accordingly.—vs. 4

Sarai reported the situation to Abram, exclaiming, “My wrong be upon thee,” thus trying to blame Abram for this turn of events. (Gen. 16:5) It is quite possible that Sarai at first expected that in the event Hagar had a child, she would in some way become its foster mother, and Hagar would step aside, not claiming the rights of motherhood. Now, however, Sarai realized from Hagar’s attitude that there was no hope for an arrangement of this sort, so she came to realize that it had been unwise to suggest this method to obtain a seed for Abram.

Abram also realized that matters were not working out as they had hoped, so in loyalty to Sarai, he permitted her to deal with Hagar in any way she saw fit. According to verse 6, Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar, probably by increasing her duties and tasks. Some historical scholars claim that under the laws in effect at that time, it would have been illegal to sell Hagar and thus get her out of the way. Thus, perhaps, was the reason her burdens were increased, with the hope that she might desert the household and run away, which is exactly what she did.

### **God Intervenes**

At this juncture, the Lord took a hand in the matter. His angel, or messenger, found Hagar “by the fountain in the way to Shur.” Shur was the name of the great fortified wall shutting Egypt off from Canaan. Evidently, Hagar was endeavoring to make her way back to her own people in Egypt; but the Lord intervened, and through his angel instructed her to return and be subject unto her mistress.—vss. 7-9

Then the angel uttered a remarkable prophecy. “The angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. ... Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.” (vss. 10,11) Historians seem quite agreed that a large segment of the population of the Arabian countries of the Middle East are the descendants of Ishmael.

Hagar was greatly impressed by the visit of the angel of the Lord. The well where the angel found her was called Beerlahairoi, which in the Hebrew language means, “Well of the Living One seeing me.” Hagar seemed to realize that the Lord had been watching over her, and that although she had escaped from Abram and Sarai, she had not been able to escape from the God of Abram. She returned to her mistress, and in due course Ishmael was born.—vss. 13-16

There was also a lesson in this experience for Sarai, and indeed for all who are endeavoring to serve the Lord. It is the lesson that nothing is accomplished by endeavoring to run away from our trials, or to force them away from us. Sarai’s lack of faith had brought a severe trial into her life, and she thought of getting rid of it by forcing Hagar to run away. However, the Lord brought the experience right back to her. Probably the experience softened Hagar’s attitude also. In any event, the scriptural record indicates that the two women lived together after this for 15-17 years.

## **God’s Covenant Reaffirmed**

Thirteen years had now passed, and in Genesis 17:1, we read, “When Abram was ninety years old

and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." God's statement that Abram should be "perfect" should more properly read, "complete, or upright." Abram was a member of the fallen and dying race, and perfection of conduct was quite beyond his ability. Nevertheless, he could be upright before the Lord. This is possible for all of God's people, and nothing short of this is acceptable to the Lord.

In verses 2-8, God reiterated to Abram the covenant he had previously made and enlarged upon some of its features. In keeping with the importance of meanings attached to names in connection with the unfolding of the divine arrangement, the Lord changed the name of Abram, meaning "exalted father," to Abraham, meaning "father of a multitude." The original statement of the covenant assured blessings to all nations through the promised seed, but in these verses the Lord amplifies that thought by promising that Abraham would be "a father of many nations" who thus would be blessed. The term father means life-giver, and this was God's way of explaining that the blessing the nations would receive through Abraham's seed was to be that of life.

The Apostle Paul quotes this promise and indicates that all who exercise "the faith of Abraham" in the promises God made to him, thereby qualify to be his "seed." (Rom. 4:16-18) Some of this seed will be earthly, and some heavenly, but the important truth which Paul stresses is that one does not have to be a natural descendant of Abraham in order to be a part of his seed.

“Kings shall come out of thee,” God promised Abraham. (Gen. 17:6) Centuries later, the kings of the nation of Israel came through the lineage of Abraham. However, the principal fulfillment of this promise is in connection with the spiritual seed of Abraham—Jesus the Head and the church, his body. (Gal. 3:16,27-29; Col. 1:18) Jesus will be the King of kings, and his church will reign with him for a thousand years.—Rev. 5:10; 20:6

Genesis 17:8 states that although Abraham was living in Canaan at this time, he was a “stranger,” or sojourner, in the land. Abraham died without possessing the land which God promised to him; neither did Isaac nor Jacob possess the land. (Heb. 11:8-10,13) Abraham’s earthly seed will, nevertheless, possess the land when they are restored to life in the resurrection. It is most important to keep God’s eternal perspective in mind in our study of his Word, lest we fall into confusion and error in our endeavors to determine how some of his promises are fulfilled.

### **Circumcision—a Token of God’s Covenant**

In Genesis 17:10-14, God’s instructions to Abraham concerning circumcision were given as a “token of the covenant” between them. Paul speaks of circumcision as a “sign” of the faith which Abraham had already exercised toward God and his promises, and for all those who walk in the same steps of faith.—Rom. 4:11,12

In the New Testament, circumcision is used to symbolize singleness of heart and purity of purpose. It is much the same thought as is contained in the Lord’s statement to Abraham that he should be

“upright.” While the spiritual seed of Abraham are not called upon to practice the literal rite of circumcision, they are admonished to circumcise their hearts, and to put away all impurities of the flesh. Paul wrote: “Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” “Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”—Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11

It is appropriate that the token of the all-comprehensive Abrahamic Covenant should be circumcision. When we take into consideration the New Testament explanation of what circumcision signifies, it means that no one will receive the blessings promised under the Abrahamic Covenant except upon the basis of purity of heart and motive before the Lord and an abiding faith in his promises and the righteousness of his laws.

### **Sarai’s Name Changed**

Returning to Genesis 17, in verses 15 and 16 the Lord reveals to Abraham that Sarai’s name was to be changed to Sarah—signifying “noblewoman”—inasmuch as she was to be the mother of kings. Apostle Paul explains the manner in which Sarah is considered by the Lord as being the mother of kings, stating that it is because she symbolizes the covenant by which the spiritual seed of Abraham is developed. Thus, Sarah is the mother of the same kings of whom Abraham is the symbolic father. These are the kings that Paul says are “the children of promise,” who are to reign for a thousand years for the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Gal. 4:22-31

## Isaac Promised

Abraham had great faith in the promises of God, but it was not a perfect faith. At times it wavered, and one of those times is recorded in Genesis 17:17,18. Despite Sarah's barrenness, Abraham had faith to believe, when God first made the promise to him, that she would bear him a son, because she was then much younger. Now, however, in addition to her barrenness, she was ninety years old. When the Lord told him this time that Sarah would bear a son, Abraham "fell upon his face, and laughed."—vs. 17

In his heart, the passage indicates, Abraham doubted that such a thing could come to pass, and arising from the ground, he pleaded before the Lord, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"—to be the seed of promise, seems to be the thought of this petition. God assured Abraham that Ishmael would live and would become the father of a great nation; but as far as the promised seed was concerned, Sarah was to have a child, his name was to be Isaac, and he would be heir to the covenant of promise.—vss. 18-21

Isaac was to be born "at this set time in the next year," verse 21 says. Here was a time prophecy of considerable importance to Abraham. He had waited many long years for God to fulfill his promise of a seed, yet during all that time no indication had been given, until now, as to how long that wait would need to continue. God has likewise tested the faith of most of his people along this same line of waiting. The disciples asked Jesus after his resurrection, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know

the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”—Acts 1:6,7

Often when the time nears for expected events to occur, the Lord reveals the secret to his servants. Noah labored long years in building the ark, with probably no definite idea of when the flood would come, but finally the Lord said, “Yet seven days.” (Gen. 7:4) So now with Abraham the Lord said, “At this set time in the next year.” In view of what Abraham was thinking in his heart concerning the unlikelihood of Sarah bearing him a son, perhaps the Lord gave him this definite information as a means of strengthening his faith.

In the concluding verses of Genesis chapter 17, it is recorded that Abraham was quick to obey the instructions of the Lord regarding circumcision, the “token of the covenant.” “In that selfsame day,” the account reads, he proceeded to have all the males in his household circumcised, including himself and his son Ishmael. (vss. 23-27) There is much evidence in the Scriptures that the Lord appreciates prompt obedience. In this case of Abraham, his promptness would indicate also that his faith in God’s promise concerning Sarah had been restored and that he desired to carry out every detail pertaining to his part in the covenant.

## **God Appears to Abraham**

Mamre was an Amorite who had earlier joined with Abraham on the occasion when he rescued his nephew Lot. (Gen. 14:13) In Genesis 18:1, the expression, “plains of Mamre” evidently means the plains which belonged to Mamre, for Abraham was merely a sojourner in the land. Apparently, however,

he was on friendly terms with many Canaanites, such as Mamre and others.

“The Lord appeared” unto Abraham, the text states, yet later this appearance turns out to be the visit of “three men” who served as messengers of the Lord. (vs. 2) This manner of expression is employed quite frequently in the Bible when it speaks of the Lord’s dealings with members of the human race. No human being could actually see God and live. (Exod. 33:20) However, when he sends his messengers, he expects those whom they visit to treat them with dignity, and to give consideration to the message they deliver.

These “three men” who visited Abraham were actually angels—that is, spirit beings—who had materialized in order to be able to converse freely with the patriarch. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul refers to them as such and by implication cites Abraham’s hospitality as an example worthy of emulation. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,” he writes, “for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”—Heb. 13:2

### **Abraham’s Hospitality**

It is necessary to put ourselves in Abraham’s position in order to understand his great desire to make his unexpected visitors feel at home. It was not as though he lived on a busy city thoroughfare where thousands of people would be passing every day. Instead, he was living on the “plains,” and in a tent. It is quite possible that days might pass when not a single stranger would pass his tent. Here were three of them, and they gave every indication that they were men of considerable importance.

As Abraham saw it, this was to be a special event, and he was desirous of making as much as possible out of it. Abraham himself was an important man in that part of the world and was accustomed to giving instructions when he wanted things done. He gave directions to Sarah to help prepare a meal for these exceptional visitors. The same is true with respect to the young man whom he directed to dress a young calf and prepare it for a meal.—Gen. 18:6,7

Abraham revealed a measure of excitement over the visit of the three men, for the account says that he “ran unto the herd” and made a personal selection of a calf which he knew would be tender for eating. Visits from the Lord through his accredited messengers were not new to Abraham. While the Apostle Paul explains that he “entertained angels unawares,” it is quite possible that he perceived these three men as something more than they were disclosing. In any event, he proved himself to be a kind and gracious host, and Sarah seems to have cooperated willingly with him.

### **The Message to Sarah**

Abraham stood while his guests ate, thus assuming the role of a servant. (Gen. 18:8) As they ate the three men inquired concerning the whereabouts of Sarah. While Sarah had helped with the preparation of the meal, up to this point she had evidently kept herself out of sight. Then the spokesman for these visitors said to Abraham, “I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.”—vs. 10

Evidently the tent was not far from where the men was eating, for Sarah heard this announcement

and “laughed within herself,” or, as we would say, “laughed to herself.” However, the angel knew she had laughed, and when he referred to it later Sarah denied it, but the angel said, “Nay; but thou didst laugh.”—vss. 12-15

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” This is the practical lesson in the account for us. This is of great importance with respect to the outworking of the plan of God. Perhaps one reason the Lord permitted Abraham and Sarah to get so old before Isaac was born was for the very purpose of demonstrating that it was he, not them, who was responsible for the fulfillment of all his promises.

Churchianity today, and for centuries past, has erroneously imagined that the success of God’s purposes in the earth depends upon the efforts of man. We should all be glad that this is not so, and that his plan to bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham is sure to be accomplished. It is sure, despite all the circumstances that seem to be to the contrary. It is a “hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.”—Heb. 6:19

## **God Tests Abraham**

The Lord takes his servants into his confidence in matters which pertain to them and to those in whom they are particularly interested. Broadly speaking, the truth-enlightened people of God should be interested in all mankind. They should have the spirit of Abraham and manifest enthusiasm for the plan of God—the plan that, through the seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

The Lord had decided to destroy Sodom because of the gross wickedness of the city. However, he used the occasion to test Abraham's interest in the people of the city, and particularly his concern for his own kinsmen—Lot and his family, who dwelt there. "Shall I hide from Abraham," the Lord inquired, "that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"—Gen. 18:17,18

In this passage we are furnished with an interesting example of how God makes allowance for the mental limitations of his servants in order that they might understand his viewpoint. To paraphrase God's statement to Abraham, it implies that he had heard a report that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were very wicked, so he had come down to investigate. If they were as wicked as the report indicated, he would surely destroy them. Actually, of course, the Creator of the universe and God of heaven and earth did not need to visit the earth personally in order to obtain the information he needed. This was simply his way of speaking on Abraham's level of understanding.

### **Abraham Intercedes**

Abraham evidently perceived that the Lord had in mind the possible destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He petitioned the Lord earnestly to save the city, especially if there proved to be a few righteous souls therein. Abraham at first asked whether the city would be spared if there were fifty souls found to be righteous. When he continued

to lower the number, it is possible that he had Lot and his family in mind.—Gen. 18:23-32

The Lord displayed both his patience with Abraham and his willingness to show mercy by complying with his entreaty even as he kept lowering the number. As it turned out, there were not even the required ten who were righteous, so the cities were destroyed.—Gen. 19:24,25

This raises an important point in view of God's promise to bless all the nations of the earth. Jesus indicates that no particular effort was made to bring about the repentance of Sodom and Gomorrah. If there had been, Jesus explained, they would have remained and not been destroyed. (Matt. 11:23,24) Most importantly, however, Jesus also explained that in the kingdom judgment day period, they will be given an opportunity to repent, change their ways, and gain life. Thus, we see a clear example of the fact that, along with the rest of the world, they will be remembered, in harmony with the promise made to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. How we look forward to the soon fulfillment of this and all of God's promises for his human creation! ■

---

## ***Strength and Wisdom***

*Why do we long for an easier road*

*When greater strength comes from bearing the load?*

*Why wish we to be spared when storms arise*

*When it's such things that make us strong and wise?*

—*While Marching to Zion*

# The Holy Spirit in the Life of a Christian

*“If you then, with  
all your human  
frailty, know how  
to give your  
children gifts that  
are good for them,  
how much more  
certainly will your  
Father who is in  
Heaven give the  
Holy Spirit to those  
who ask Him!”*

*—Luke 11:13,  
Weymouth New  
Testament*

**Earlier in this issue of** *The Dawn* magazine, the events surrounding the Day of Pentecost were considered. It was on this day that the Holy Spirit was conferred upon Jesus' chosen Apostles as well as other believers gathered together in Jerusalem. Our present discussion will examine in more detail how the Holy Spirit operates in the lives of all the footstep followers of the Master.

The Holy Spirit can best be defined as the invisible power and influence of God. It is manifested in a great variety of ways. Speaking of God's creative power, we read that his Spirit “moved upon the

face of the waters.” (Gen. 1:2) That was life-giving power. The influence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian is primarily that of God’s mind and the power of his expressed will for his people.

It helps with an understanding of what constitutes the Holy Spirit to note how the Scriptures refer to its many facets. Various manifestations of the Holy Spirit are referred to as “the Spirit of Christ,” the “spirit of holiness,” the “spirit of truth,” “the holy Spirit of promise,” the “spirit of meekness,” the “Spirit of grace.”—Rom. 8:9; 1:4; I John 4:6; Eph.1:13; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 10:29

### **Anointed by the Spirit**

There are a number of expressions used in the Scriptures that further describe the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a follower of Christ. One of these is “anointed.” The Bible testifies clearly that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 4:27; 10:38) We are also informed by the Apostles Paul and John that the followers of Jesus are anointed by the Holy Spirit. (II Cor. 1:21; I John 2:27) This is a function of the power of God on behalf of Jesus and his disciples.

The scriptural background of the word anointing was the divinely instituted ceremony by which Israel’s kings and priests were installed in office, the principal part of which was the pouring of anointing oil upon the head. It was the official designation to office, signifying that the one thus anointed was authorized to serve.—Exod. 28:40,41; 29:5-7; I Sam. 16:1,7-13

Jesus and his followers also constitute a priesthood. These, however, are not anointed with oil,

but by the Holy Spirit. This anointing came upon Jesus at the time of his baptism, constituting him the Anointed One, the one sent and authorized of God. (Matt. 3:16,17) The meaning of the word Christ is "anointed." Jesus recognized the meaning of his anointing. (Luke 4:14-21; Isa. 61:1-3) The anointing of the Holy Spirit also empowered Jesus to perform miracles, such as healing the sick and raising the dead.—Matt. 11:4,5

The psalmist suggests that the anointing oil ran down from the head of the high priest upon his body, and that this pointed forward to a oneness of an anointed class. (Ps. 133:1-3) It is evident that the anointing of the Spirit reached the body members of the Christ class at Pentecost, when it was "shed forth," symbolically speaking, upon the waiting disciples by their glorified Head. (Acts 2:1-4,33) Thus the followers of Jesus receive their anointing of the Spirit through him and as a result of having been accepted into the Christ company, the true church.—I John 2:27

Each consecrated follower of the Master since Pentecost, when accepted into the body of Christ, has come under this anointing. All in this position have the authority of God to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom. One of the functions of the Holy Spirit in this age is to instruct the Lord's people, through the Word, to be witnesses for Jesus by proclaiming the Gospel. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19,20; Acts 1:8) The anointing constitutes them the "light of the world."—Matt. 5:14-16

As we have noted, the anointing of the Spirit empowered Jesus to heal the sick and raise the dead, which he did on a small scale at his First Advent.

This aspect of the anointing will become manifested world-wide when Jesus and his church, as authorized of God, are dispensing the blessings of the Messianic kingdom. Then all the sick will be healed and all the dead awakened.—John 5:28,29; 14:12; Rev. 21:4

## **Born of the Spirit**

Beginning with Jesus, and continuing since Pentecost, one of the accomplishments of the Holy Spirit has been the producing of an anointed class, a “new creation.” (II Cor. 5:17, *English Standard Version*) The Bible likens this to the begetting, development, and birth of a child. This function of the holy power of God has been somewhat obscured by a failure of the translators in some instances to note the distinction between the thought of begetting and birth.

This has been due in part to the fact that, in the Greek language from which the New Testament is translated, there is only one word for both begetting and birth. One has to determine from the association in which it is used, as to what is meant. The Greek word is *gennao*. It is this word that is used in the genealogy of Jesus and properly translated “begat.” (Matt. 1:1-16) Clearly the word “born” would be quite improper in this instance.

It is this same Greek word *gennao* that is used in the account of Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus. He told this ruler in Israel that he would need to “be born [*gennao*] again” in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:1-8) Here the word born is the proper translation.

In the natural realm, begetting—that is, conception—must precede birth, but many students of the

Bible have overlooked this in applying the illustration to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of consecrated believers. Failure properly to apply the illustration has led to that incongruous and much overworked expression, “born again Christians.”

Nicodemus failed to understand what Jesus meant by being born again, so Jesus gave another illustration, explaining that those who attain this new birth —“born of the Spirit”—are like the wind, in the sense that they can come and go unobserved, and are very powerful. (vs. 8) Manifestly this is not true of those who now claim to be “born again,” yet are still fleshly beings.

Simply stated, spirit birth takes place at the resurrection of each faithful Christian. When Jesus was raised from the dead he was able to move about invisibly, and he possessed great power. (John 20:26; Matt. 28:18) Birth of the Spirit in the resurrection is brought about by God’s power, his Holy Spirit, as the Scriptures bring to our attention in connection with Jesus.—Eph. 1:19,20

When Jesus said to Nicodemus as recorded in John 3:7, “Ye must be born again,” he was referring to the complete change of nature to which the followers of the Master are called. It is to this that they must attain in order to live and reign with him in his kingdom, through the agency of which human life will be restored to mankind in general. Before this birth to the spirit nature can take place, there must be a begetting of the Holy Spirit, through the “word of truth.” (James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23, *Young’s Literal Translation*) To be begotten by the Word of Truth is the same as being begotten by the Holy Spirit, for the Word of Truth is the

product of the Holy Spirit, the source of which is God.

After spirit begetting there must be spiritual growth, in order that the New Creature be ready for spirit birth. (Eph. 4:23,24; II Pet. 3:18) Much of this spiritual growth is accomplished through the development of the “fruit of the spirit,” represented in the character qualities of “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” (Gal. 5:22,23) It is thus that the “inward man” is renewed while, during the span of human life, the “outward man” “is decaying.”—II Cor. 4:16, *American Standard Version*

Those who are faithful unto death and finally receive spirit birth will be like Jesus and “see him as he is.” They will experience the “power of his resurrection.”—I John 3:1-3; Phil. 3:10,11

## **The Witness of the Spirit**

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God’s people at the present time is to testify to them that they are truly the “children of God.” (Rom. 8:16; I John 3:1) This “witness” of the Spirit comes to us through the written Word of God, by virtue of its explanations of what is involved in following in the footsteps of the Master and what experiences we should expect to have. This is the Holy Spirit’s witness because it was that same spirit which inspired and directed the writing of the Bible for our admonition.—Rom. 15:4; I Pet. 1:12; II Pet. 1:21; II Tim. 3:15-17

The fact that we have been drawn to the Father through Christ is in itself one of the witnesses of the Spirit that we have been accepted into his family.

(John 6:44) We also have the testimony of Jesus, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that all who are accepted by him will be first drawn by the Father. (John 6:37,45) If then, we have repented of our sins, and through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ have presented ourselves in full consecration to do God's will, we can be assured of our acceptance as children of God.

Another witness of the Spirit, and an especially important one, is the privilege we have of suffering with Christ. (Rom. 8:16,17; Acts 14:22) The reason this is so directly a witness of the Spirit is that the prophets, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, foretold that the Christ class would all suffer for righteousness' sake. (I Pet. 1:10-12; 4:12,13) If we are in this position, then we may know that we are children of God.

This does not necessarily imply imprisonment, or beheading, or other physical torture. Jesus was opposed by the religious rulers of his day, but no physical suffering came upon him until the very end of his ministry. If we are loyal to the Lord and the Truth, we will experience the general ridicule and ostracism of the world. If we are faithful in the service of the Lord, we will bring upon ourselves a degree of weariness and consequent pain, in which we should rejoice.

If we are being "led by the Spirit of God," in this we have another of its witnesses that we are the children of God. (Rom. 8:14) In Jesus we have a perfect example of what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of the Bible is that he was led in a way of sacrifice even unto death. (Isa. 53:7) If we are following the Spirit's leadings

in the same way of sacrifice, then we can be assured that the Father's name is being written on our forehead.—Rev. 14:1,4

Not all of the ways in which the Holy Spirit witnesses to us are associated with sacrifice and suffering. Much joy should be experienced by those who walk in the narrow way. (John 15:10,11; 16:24) Here, also, faithfulness on our part is essential if we are to experience these joys of the Christian life, which come through fellowship with the Father, with his Son, and with one another.

We should also enjoy the peace of God that results from full assurance of faith in his promises. (John 14:27; Phil. 4:6,7) This stabilizing peace through all the experiences of life is one of the blessed witnesses of the Spirit that we are the children of God. May we continue to enjoy it!

## **The Seal of the Spirit**

When the Bible refers to the “seal” of the Spirit, the Greek word used means “to stamp with a signet or private mark for security or preservation.” (II Cor. 1:21,22) In olden times a signet ring, or a stamp, was used to seal and preserve important documents. The custom is similar today. A letter is sealed to secure secrecy for its contents. Contracts are sealed, or attested, to show their genuineness and guarantee their fulfillment.

This custom is used by the Lord in the Bible to illustrate a very blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of dedicated followers of the Master. The Apostle Paul refers to this seal of the Spirit as “an earnest of our inheritance.” (Eph. 1:13,14; II Cor. 5:5) Here the Greek word translated “earnest”

means “a pledge, ... part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest.”

Paul’s reference to the “holy Spirit of promise” in Ephesians 1:13 suggests one of the ways by which the Heavenly Father pledges, or attests, that we will receive a full reward, if faithful. This pledge is provided to us by the many promises which the Holy Spirit has caused to be recorded in God’s Word. These promises cover every situation in life that might otherwise hinder us from entering fully into our inheritance. Indeed, all of the blessings of the Holy Spirit are in fulfillment of divine promises.

The seal, or attestation of the Holy Spirit through the Word of truth, that we are the Sons of God is provided in the diversified promises of God relating to our needs, in order that we may be victorious and receive the crown of life. In this regard, we are promised wisdom to guide us in doing our Heavenly Father’s will. (James 1:5,6) Our foes as children of God are many and powerful. (Eph. 6:12) If we had to fight against these in our own wisdom and strength we would be defeated and would fail to attain the “great salvation.” (Heb. 2:3) However, the Lord has promised to help and protect his people. (Ps. 91:1-15; Eph 6:13-18) How precious are these promises!

Being sealed by the Spirit does not imply perfection of character or full control over the weaknesses of the flesh. Despite our imperfections, however, we have the assurance that, through Christ, God justifies us. Because of this we know that no one can properly condemn us, and that nothing can separate us from the love of God if our hearts

remain loyal to him. (Rom. 8:33-35) This is surely a blessed assurance of sonship.

One of the promises by which a continuance of this blessed relationship is attested to us, is that God, “who has begun a good work in you will complete it.” (Phil. 1:6, *New King James Version*) We know that our Heavenly Father will fulfill all his good promises toward us, for we are assured that it is his “good pleasure” to give us the kingdom, if we are faithful to our relationship to him as his children.—Luke 12:32

We expect that trials will continue to the end of our life, but we know that God is faithful. He will not permit us to be tested beyond our ability and, with his help, will enable us to endure.—I Cor. 10:13

Concerning God’s faithfulness there can be no doubt. (I Cor. 1:8,9) What more could the Lord say to “seal,” or secure, our inheritance? By having the Holy Spirit’s anointing, its witness, its sealing, and by continuing faithfully to the end of our earthly walk, we will receive spirit birth in the resurrection. Let us rejoice in these promises of victory, giving all glory to God our Father.—Phil. 4:20 ■

### ***“What Is That in Thine Hand?”***

*Though it be small and insignificant,  
it can be powerful when committed to the Lord.*

*David had only a sling shot,  
but with it he killed a giant  
and Israel won a victory.*

*—Pebbles and Poesies*

# Do Not Give Up

*“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.”*

*—Luke 18:1, New American Standard Bible*

**There is a natural tendency** among people to become discouraged at times for various reasons. These might include, though are not limited to: difficult life events such as health problems or the death of a loved one; perceived lack of personal progress despite

effort; disappointment; dwelling on past mistakes; receiving negative feedback. The Lord’s followers are not immune from having such experiences, nor from becoming discouraged, while engaged in “the good fight of faith.”—I Tim. 6:12

## **Discouragement—a Tool of the Adversary**

There are times during a Christian’s life when all seems joyful to us, when we are thoroughly stimulated by God’s Word and encouraged by it. Whereas there are other times when the clouds of difficulties hang low and are dark, making us feel discouraged while walking in the narrow way.

This is when the Adversary finds discouragement to be such a powerful weapon against the Lord’s

people. He suggests that we stop walking in the narrow way; stop fighting the good fight of faith and instead, lay down and rest. There is a famous quote which says, "On the plains of hesitation lie the blackened bones of countless millions who at the dawn of victory lay down to rest, and in resting died." This is an apt description of weariness and discouragement.

Many Christians believe resting is okay, because if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, then you are saved. They think they need not be too concerned about doing anything further because, after all, it is merely faith that counts and not works. A commonly heard expression is, "once in grace, always in grace."

However, the words of the Apostle Paul do not support this concept. Rather he wrote, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—I Cor. 9:26,27

If the great Apostle Paul said he must continue to run and to fight, to bring himself "into subjection;" so as to not be a castaway, then we must conclude that salvation consists of more than just saying the right words at the right point in our life. If Paul would not allow himself to become discouraged, nor to give up the good fight of faith, then we must not do so either.

## **Parable of the Importunate Widow**

Jesus gave a wonderful parable which teaches the lesson to not become discouraged. It is the

parable of the persistent widow who refused to give up. The parable reads: "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Give me justice against my opponent. For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out. And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly."—Luke 18:2-8, *NASB*

The law which God had given to the Jewish nation was clear. "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow." (Deut. 27:19) In other words, the rights of those who had no power, such as widows and orphans, were to be protected. However, in this parable the judge did not care about what God commanded. Yet despite this, the widow did get justice, because she never gave up nor became discouraged. She kept coming back. Thus, finally, the judge settled the case and did so in her favor.

The lesson of Jesus' parable can be applied to the consecrated followers of the Lord during the present Gospel Age. Consider the favor which God has shown to those who hear and accept the heavenly calling. The favor which God has given to them is so much more than that which was shown by this corrupt judge in the parable. Consequently, let us not give up, nor become discouraged.

Jesus gave a similar thought to his disciples, when he said, “If you then, imperfect as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matt. 7:11, *Weymouth New Testament*) In other words, referring back to the parable, if the evil, corrupt judge dispensed justice and favor toward the widow, how much more will our Father in heaven do for us.

### **Habakkuk Asks God**

At times it might seem as if God is tolerating the wrongs taking place around us or others. We might get the impression that our circumstances are becoming more unfavorable, and nothing is going to change.

Such feelings occurred many times throughout the history of Israel. For example, the prophet Habakkuk exclaimed, “How long, LORD, must I cry out for help, but you won’t listen? I’m crying out to you, Oppression! but you aren’t providing deliverance. Why are you forcing me to look at iniquity and to stare at wickedness? Social havoc and oppression are all around me; there are legal conflicts, and disputes abound. Therefore, the Law has become paralyzed, and justice never comes about. Because criminals outnumber the righteous, whenever judgments are issued, they come out crooked. ... Your eyes are too pure to gaze upon evil; and you cannot tolerate wickedness. So why do you tolerate the treacherous? And why do you stay silent while the wicked devour those who are more righteous than they are?” (Hab. 1:2-4,13, *International Standard Version*) Habakkuk is asking

God why he was not immediately doing something about all the corruption in Israel.

God answered the prophet saying, “Write out the revelation, ... For the revelation pertains to an appointed time—it speaks truthfully about the end. Though it delays, wait for it, because it will surely come about—it will not be late!” (Hab. 2:2,3, *ISV*) God’s answer is, I am going to do something at my “appointed time.” God cares very much, and we are assured of this because of the many promises he has provided in the Bible. Therefore, let us not allow ourselves to become discouraged, despite all the corruption we see in the world around us.

### **Prayer—an Antidote**

At the beginning of the parable in Luke chapter 18, verse one states, “at all times” we “ought to pray and not to lose heart.” Thus, we see that one antidote to discouragement is prayer. We should continually realize that our prayers go up to the most righteous, just, and powerful being in the entire universe!—I Pet. 3:12

The closing words of the parable are, “However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8, *NASB*) This is a rhetorical question. It implies that despite the faithfulness of God and of the positive assurances that he will execute judgment on behalf of his elect, the great danger is that his people will grow weary, they will lose faith, and they will stop sending their prayers to God.

There is a wonderful proverb which reads, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.” (Prov. 13:12, *New International Version*) However, we should always

remember the remainder of the verse, “but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.” If we are “faithful unto death,” we will certainly see the day when our longing is fulfilled and receive the “crown of life.” —Rev. 2:10; James 1:12

A lesson we can glean from the parable of the persistent widow is that, although our prayers might appear to go unanswered, we must persevere. We must not grow weary or discouraged in making supplication to God. May each of us at the end of our earthly course be able to say, as the Apostle Paul said, “I have fought a good fight, ... I have kept the faith.”—II Tim. 4:7

### **For What Should We Pray?**

A proper condition of heart to have when we pray is to feel the need for the Lord’s blessing and assistance. We should go to him with a trustful attitude, present our petitions, and then watch and wait for his time and way to answer our prayers.

We can pray for strength to overcome our flesh, for heavenly wisdom to know how to deal with problems, for strength of character and assistance in developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. (James 3:17; Gal. 5:22,23; Eph. 5:9) We can pray for grace and wisdom to keep ourselves unspotted from the world and to put on the whole armor of God. (Heb. 4:16; Eph. 5:27; II Pet. 3:14; Eph. 6:11-18) We can ask for wisdom as to how to understand the Word of God and how to develop the proper spirit of the Truth. (Ps. 111:10; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9-11) All these things would be proper subjects of prayer, because they are all part of what goes into the transformation of our heart and mind as a follower of the Lord.

While prayer is indispensable to the Christian, yet it is the Word of God which teaches us his will and plan, and which points out the way for us to go. No amount of praying will make up for a neglect of the study of the Lord's Word, which "is a Lamp" to our feet, "and a light" to help guide us in this long, dark night in which sin has reigned in the world. (Ps. 119:105) "Everything that was written long ago was written to instruct us, so that we might have hope through the endurance and encouragement that the Scriptures give us."—Rom. 15:4, *ISV*

We should "pray without ceasing" and not become discouraged if the good things promised to us and asked for, do not come quickly. (I Thess. 5:17) We must remember that God's Word of promise "is sure," to rest in these promises, and wait patiently and hopefully for their fulfilment.—Ps. 19:7; 111:7; II Pet. 1:19

## **Consider Jesus**

In addition to utilizing prayer as an antidote for discouragement, the Apostle Paul states, "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12:3) Jesus endured much, yet he did not become spiritually weary or disheartened. The "contradiction of sinners" that he experienced is the kind the footstep followers of Christ will also feel as they seek to do the Father's will.

Earlier in the Book of Hebrews the apostle wrote, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." (Heb. 4:15, *NIV*) Surely

Jesus, at times, must have been tempted to grow weary or be discouraged. At the start of the narrow way Satan came to Jesus, suggesting an easier way to obtain his objectives without any sacrifice whatsoever. However, without hesitation, Jesus answered, "Get thee behind me, Satan." (Luke 4:8) Though we find ourselves striving to walk in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus, we will never endure as much as he did.

One of the Lord's dedicated followers once expressed it this way: "There is a danger of growing weary in well-doing. Well-doing costs something. It means sacrifice. If you are serving the Lord's cause, you are denying yourself in some way. The world, the flesh, and the Adversary are pressing hard to draw us, not exactly from the prize, but from the narrow way that leads to the prize. That would make us faint. That would cause us to say, Oh, I am so tired. I just cannot do any more. Doubtless, we all have had such experiences. If we get faint in body, we can rest. If we get faint in mind, it is much more difficult to become refreshed."

Let us remember, however, that God is faithful. He has promised to never leave nor forsake us. (Heb. 13:5) God raised Jesus from the dead as a divine spirit being, even though he had been put to death as an "evil-doer." (John 18:30, *Revised Version*) God will also do the same for us, if we remain faithful unto death, because he has promised "eternal life to those who strive for glory, honor, and immortality by patiently doing good." (Rom. 2:7, *ISV*) The Scriptures are clear. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." If "we suffer with him," we will "be also glorified together."—II Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17

## **Live in the Future—Not the Past**

To avoid becoming discouraged we should live with a view towards our future goals and prospects and not dwell on the past. If we live in the past, we are likely to brood on past mistakes and shortcomings and will surely become discouraged. If we contemplate the future and meditate upon the part we are going to have in bringing blessings to the whole world of mankind, then we will become enthusiastic and renewed in spirit.

Paul wrote, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13,14) He also admonished, “Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”—II Cor. 4:17,18, *NIV*

## **We Shall Reap**

In both the Old and New Testaments there are many illustrations and lessons given which use the example of farming. Indeed, farming has been an integral part of life for people throughout history, and there is much we can learn from it.

For example, we are instructed, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” (Gal. 6:9) The word “reap” is associated with farming, and it means “to harvest.” Farmers know that if they are going to have a successful harvest, they must do more than just

plow the land and sow seed. They dare not grow weary with the constant need to cultivate, feed, and tend to the growing crop. They look forward with joy to the prospect of reaping the fruitage of their efforts, though reaping, too, requires much work. Yet harvesting a crop is the whole point of farming.

Along these lines there is a wonderful proverb, which says, “I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.”—Prov. 24:30-34, *NIV*

The lesson is, if we allow discouragement or weariness to gradually overtake us, they will surely promote the loss of everything which we once thought really mattered. Instead, like a resourceful farmer, let us apply ourselves each day, striving to make our “calling and election sure.”—II Pet. 1:10

## **Parable of the Sower**

The parable of the sower emphasizes that hearing the Gospel and accepting it is only a first step. In the parable, a sower went out and sowed seed. The seed fell in different types of soils, producing different results. Jesus explained, “The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers

to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.”—Matt. 13:20-22, *NIV*

This parable teaches us that receiving the good news of the Gospel and accepting it does not, by itself, guarantee spiritual success, nor fruitage. If we allow troubles, persecutions, the worries of this life, or other wearisome experiences to discourage us, then we will be unfruitful and not pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

### **Hesitation—a Friend of Weariness**

Although the word “hesitate” does not appear in the *King James Version* of the Bible, the thought is alluded to in the book of Ecclesiastes, using again the farming metaphor. The wise man wrote, “He that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.”—Eccles. 11:4

In ancient times, when someone wanted to sow seed, it was necessary to throw the seed. However, if there is wind, it could catch the seed and take it away from the spot where the sower had wanted it to go. Some would be tempted to think, “I will wait until tomorrow, maybe the wind will die down.” Likewise, if there are clouds there is a chance it could rain. Similarly, some would think, “Maybe I will wait for a better day.” Thus, we see the idea of hesitancy contained in this lesson.

We can almost visualize a hesitant farmer out in their field, saying, “No, it does not look good today. I think I will go in and rest.” The result of such thinking is the possibility that no crop at all will be produced. In contrast to this, two verses later we read these encouraging words: “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper,

either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”—vs. 6

Hesitation is the friend of weariness. Even if we do not have the strength to get involved with the sowing or reaping that others are doing in the Lord’s vineyard, we are able to support those who are doing such work. We can offer encouraging words, our prayers, or other assistance if the Lord has made it possible for us to do so.

In concluding our thoughts, we quote these words: “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:12, *NIV*) “Every trial, every persecution, every difficulty of life, permitted to come upon those who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to prove them, to test their love, to see whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness. ... It puts all these trials, difficulties, and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assists us in fighting a good fight and overcoming.”—Excerpt from *Daily Heavenly Manna* comment, December 9 ■

## OBITUARIES

*The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.*

Brother Don Thomas, Los Angeles, CA—May 16.  
Age, 70

Sister Ewa Maria Czuba, Jaslo, Poland—May 17.  
Age, 78

## ***His Presence***

*Whenever I am lonely,  
or anxious or distressed;  
Whenever earth seems only,  
a battlefield at best,  
I hear a voice I know—  
The words are sweet and low:  
“My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest.” (Exod. 33:14)*

*When heavy cares encumber  
Temptations come to test;  
When questions without number,  
assail my troubled breast,  
The voice rebukes my fears—  
And oh, the message cheers!  
“My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest.”*

*Whenever I am weary,  
And life hath little zest;  
Whenever skies are dreary,  
And I am sore oppressed,  
Again the voice is heard—  
What comfort in each word:  
“My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest.”*

*The clouds hang huge and leaden,  
Above the mountain's crest;  
The troops of Armageddon,  
Must soon be manifest.  
I tremble at their tread,  
But I am comforted—  
“My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest.”*

# ENCOURAGING LETTERS

## How My Life Was Changed

Dear Dawn: I'm writing you to tell you how the books of the Dawn magazine have changed my life.

I was always afraid of going to hell as that was what our church taught. I always believed in God & Jesus, my mother sent me to Bible school.

I just turned 87. 35 or 40 years ago my husband's mother had a booklet called God and Reason laying on the table. I picked it up and read it. My life changed that day forever. God opened my eyes of understanding that day and I have never looked back.

I have read most of Pastor Russell's books, especially The Divine Plan of the Ages. Also I got my Dad to read it and then he learned the Truth. Now I am helping my grandson learn the Truth. Its the most wonderful things that every happened to me. Sincerely—WV

## Inspiring Message

Dear Frank and Ernest: What a fantastic program on Radio Africa which continues to give us light to follow Christ. The message is so inspiring and brings us closer to Christ. God bless you and thanks. Faithful in Christ—Ghana

## Message from Hungary

Dear Dawn: Thank you for your selfless service to Hungary, for publishing the newspaper (*The Dawn*) and literature in Hungarian. We read the Bible, Pastor Russell's books, and your magazine every week.—Hungary

## Faith and Love

Dear Dawn: *The Dawn* magazine (Feb. 2026) had some great writings: "A New Covenant," and "The Epistles of John and Jude" mentions Paul and Peter, also the subject of love explained. Keep writing about the Apostles, what they said and meant - all coming back to faith and love.—WI

## SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

*The speakers listed below are routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Their visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.*

### **R. Goodman**

#### **Germany**

Ludwigshafen May 30-June 3

#### **Austria**

Vienna June 4-6

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

### **T. Malinowski**

Portland, OR June 26-28



## WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

**JUNE 4**—“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—I Peter 1:7 (Z. '95-135 Hymn 197)

**JUNE 11**—“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.”—Philippians 3:13 (Z. '95-250 Hymn 196)

**JUNE 18**—“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”—Psalm 16:11 (Z. '96-54 Hymn 337)

**JUNE 25**—“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”—Colossians 4:2 (Z. '96-163 Hymn 241)

## CONVENTIONS

*These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167*

**VANCOUVER, BC CONVENTION, June 13,14—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Centre, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC V4W 3B8. Contact B. A. Smith. Phone: (604) 250-2900 or Email: bas@telus.net

**PORTLAND CONVENTION, June 26-28—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Bible Students Retirement Center, 1801 NE 201st Avenue, Fairview, OR 97024. Contact N. Austin. Phone: (306) 907-4243 or Email: ntaustin@gmail.com

**PRINCE ALBERT & SASKATOON CONVENTION, July 4,5—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Siwak Farm, R.R. #1, Prince Albert, SK S6V 5P8 Contact B. Siwak. Phone (306) 960-5526 or Email: bswk77@gmail.com

**BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 11-16—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Evergreen State College, 2700 Evergreen Parkway NW, Olympia, WA 98505. Contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

**NEW ALBANY-LOUISVILLE CONVENTION, July 25,26—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Indiana University Southeast, 4201 Grant Line Road, New Albany, IN 47150. Contact M. Moody. Phone: (502) 802-9966 or Email: marthaemoody@gmail.com

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 4-9—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Folkwark Zalesie Conference Center, Wieliczka, Poland. Contact M. Davis. Email: lmkdavis@earthlink.net

**ALBERTA CONVENTION, September 5,6—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Four Points by

Sheraton, Calgary Airport, 2875 Sunridge Way NE, Calgary, AB, Canada T1Y 7K7. Contact A. Fabian. Phone: +1 (778) 871-1913 or Email: fabianana38@yahoo.ca

**NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5,6—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY**—Contact G. Passios. Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

**COLUMBUS, IN HARVEST CONVENTION, September 19,20—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Henry Breeding Farm, 13730 N 100 W, Edinburgh, IN 46124. More information to follow.

**GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, September 26, 27—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Indian Trails Camp/IKUS Camp, O-1859 Lake Michigan Drive NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534. Contact T. Malinowski. Phone: (616) 304-7691 or Email: malinowski.TJM@gmail.com

**LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, October 3,4—IN PERSON ONLY**—Norman P. Murray Community and Senior Center, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, CA. Contact M. Davis. Email: lmkdavis@earthlink.net

**MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, October 10,11—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE**—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (414) 324-9667 or Email: DebFarchione@aol.com



## **Moving?**

If you are moving, please let us know six weeks before you move so that we can change the address on your Dawn subscription.