

The Dawn

Volume LVII, Number 1
(USPS 149-380), January 1989

Second-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073 \$1.00 a year; Great Britain 80p. Write to foreign addresses for other prices.

Canada: P.O. Box 175, Postal Station F, Winnipeg, Man. R2L 2A5

British Isles: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 136, Chesham, Bucks. HP 5 3EB

Australia: Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, Victoria 3101

France: Association des Etudiants de la Bible-Publications Aurora, B.P. 3066, 68062 Mulhouse CEDEX

Germany: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Postfach 4 D8567, Neunkirchen am Sand

Greece: He Haravgi (The Dawn), Odos K. Eslin 4, Ampeloklopi T.T. 602, Athens

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

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

Spain: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044 Napoli, Italy

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Highlights of Dawn

Learning God's Laws

—II Samuel 23:1-5

*"I will put my law in their inward parts,
and write it in their hearts."*

—*Jeremiah 31:33*

"NO HONEYMOON FOR PRESIDENT" This was the headline on November 9, 1988, the day after Vice President George Bush was elected to serve as President of the United States for 1989–1992. "George Bush faces a *treacherous path* due to America's shaky mountain of debt and its gaping trade deficit. If Bush fails to deal quickly and effectively with the twin deficits, he will draw the ire of world financial markets, Canadian, European, and Japanese economists said. 'The patience of financial markets may be ended after the election', said Jacques Mistral, an economic adviser to the French government. . .

"During the campaign, both Bush and Michael Dukakis, playing for votes, sidestepped the issue of whether—or more accurately how—to raise taxes to cut the budget deficit. 'On the key issue, budget deficit reduction, *the Bush . . . plan is not credible or workable*', said Boston Co. chief economist, Allen Sinai.

"Some economists *have been alarmed* by Bush's insistence that he will not raise taxes to close the budget shortfall. . . . Bush promised voters that, regardless of deficit-cutting pressures, he would tell Congress: 'Read my lips—no new taxes'."

Another headline on the same page of the newspaper reads: **"FEAR OF LBO LOAN DEBT"** "In a leveraged buyout, or LBO, an investment group borrows heavily in order to buy out stockholders and take over a company. . . . The popularity of such deals and the resulting proliferation of debt *has led to growing concern* about the prospects of heavily burdened companies in an

economic downturn. Critics . . . *warn* that a highly leveraged company suffering through a recession may not be able to meet its debt payments on time and *could be forced into bankruptcy* to pay creditors.”

These very serious financial problems comprise only one facet of complicated woes which loom over the next four years of Mr. Bush’s presidency.

There continues to be unrest in many portions of the globe, especially in the third world countries, South Africa, Nicaragua, etc., described by Jesus in this way: “Wars and rumors of wars. . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes [symbolic of upheavals in governments and institutions], in divers places. These are the beginning of sorrows.”—Matt. 24:6,7

The upset in the international balance of economy continues to be an unstable influence as far as the United States and the Common Market countries of Europe are concerned, as we find more and more small countries entering the world market scene: Taiwan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Korea, and more recently, communistic countries such as China, Poland, Roumania, Yugoslavia, etc. have made their economic power felt. Even Russia has turned from its hands-off incentive production to engage in limited free enterprise with its Glasnost and Perestroika policies.

Hunger rears its skeletal head in many countries. Diseases which defy curing continue to oppress mankind, just as predicted by our Lord Jesus in his great prophecy. (Matthew 24) And over all is the continuing threat of complete destruction of all life on earth from nuclear holocaust, despite the arms-reduction agreements. Annihilation could come from the use of bombs already strategically aimed throughout the world. Jesus said, “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake *those days shall be shortened.*”—vss. 21,22

And in the religious sector there is the disintegration of time-honored religious organizations prophesied by Jesus using the symbolic expression 'heavens' to represent powerful religious institutions: The sun shall "be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and *the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*" (vs. 29) Here is another woe whose arrival affects all mankind, removing security and replacing it with fear. There is very little any man, even the president of our powerful country, can do about this unsettling situation.

Therefore it seems unlikely that Mr. Bush will be able to make any progress in removing the fears and finding remedies for the problems facing this country (and the whole world) in the next four years. How did the race of mankind get into such perplexing and, yes, terrifying, circumstances? Will man ever find the solutions necessary for world peace and individual peace? Let us search the pages of the Bible for its answer.

Following the transgression of our first parents, God said that the "seed" of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15) This highly figurative statement really meant the stamping out of all unrighteousness in the earth, and ultimately the destruction of Satan himself. Later the LORD promised that the seed of Abraham would bless all the families of the earth, and in the light of the divine plan it becomes plain that this blessing involves the reconciliation of the human race to God, and all the willing and obedient being blessed with health, happiness, and everlasting life.—Gen. 12:3; 22:16-18

In the outworking of his plan for the accomplishment of this grand design God furnished an opportunity to the nation of Israel to attain righteousness and life by their own efforts to keep his perfect Law. Because of inherited sin and imperfections the people failed, demonstrating the necessity of a Redeemer from sin, and of the provisions God had made for the reconciliation and restoration of the people during the thousand years of the messianic kingdom.

One of these provisions is the New Covenant, concerning which the LORD said, "The days come saith the LORD, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. 31:31-34

In this prophecy the LORD foretells that the law of the New Covenant, instead of being written on tables of stone, is to be written in the hearts of the people, and in their inward parts. This is one of the ways by which the Bible describes the restoration of mankind to the original perfection and godlikeness in which Adam was created. This promised writing of the law in the hearts of the people is not an instantaneous work, but the work of an entire age, the Millennial Age, "the times of restitution of all things."—Acts 3:21

How is this great work to be accomplished? Will it be by the efforts of puny man, or of governments he elects? Although our finite minds cannot understand the details, the Scriptures inform us that God has already elected *his* agencies and laid out the methods he will use. Basically, it will be accomplished by the Holy Spirit, for the LORD will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. (Joel 2:28) To help us grasp in some manner how the Spirit, or power of God will manifest itself in the lives of the people during the Millennium, the Bible reveals that the thousand years of Christ's kingdom, will also be a time of judgment.

Thus we have the Millennial Age presented to us at a time when Christ will reign, when he will judge, and when he will write the divine law in the hearts of the people. These are not three separate works, but cooperative methods by which man is to be restored to the image of God, and qualified to have his lost dominion restored to him. It is not that Christ will be King part of the time, Judge part of the time, and Mediator of the New Covenant part of the time. It is the ideas suggested by these various terms that are important, for they help us to understand how the great objective of the new age will be accomplished.

First let us consider what is implied by a kingdom. This word denotes rulership, control. The basic thought is contained in The Lord's Prayer—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." The thousand-year rulership of the messianic kingdom will put down all insubordination to the Creator's law so that, at the end, there will be no opposition to his will.—Matt. 6:10

Paul wrote that Christ will reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:25,26) During Christ's reign, no insurrection against divine law will be tolerated. His rulership will be absolute. Thus the people will be restrained from following their sinful propensities, and any attempt to do so will result in disciplines, while willing obedience to the kingdom laws will result in rich rewards of peace and happiness, which mankind seeks.

What this will mean in changing the viewpoints and motives of the people can be seen more clearly by noting the fact that, hand in hand with the strict imposition of divine law to control the lives of the people, there will also be the work of judging, for the new age is also to be the "Judgment Day." The word judgment, as used with respect to the work of the Millennial Age, implies enlightenment, disciplines, rewards for faithfulness, and punishment for willful sin.

Isaiah 26:9,10 reads, "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for

when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favor be showed to the [willfully] wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.”

Another prophecy of the great Judgment Day reads, “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”—Rev. 20:12

Paul, in his sermon on Mars’ hill, in a reference to the idolatry of the people said, “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained [Jesus Christ the righteous]; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”—Acts 17:30,31

1989 Memorial Supper Date

THE proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after 6:00 p.m., on Tuesday, April 18th.

We have a complete Memorial Service available for isolated brethren, or for any who care to have it, on both audio and video cassette. The audio cassette service can be purchased for \$3.00, or is available on loan from The Dawn, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

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And then we have the promise of the coming work of judgment, which was given by Jesus. We quote, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28,29, RSV) No one seeking office has ever promised such blessings as a result of his election!

Isaiah, John, and Paul all indicate that enlightenment will be an important aspect of the work of judgment in Messiah's government. Isaiah wrote that "the people will learn righteousness." John states that the "books" of divine revelation will be opened; and Paul contrasts the "times of this ignorance" with the day the LORD has appointed in which to judge the world. Isaiah speaks of the time of judgment as one in which favor will be shown, although the willfully wicked will not benefit from it, for they will refuse to behold the majesty of the LORD. John reveals that with the opening of the books of divine revelation, a "book of life" will also be opened, that the names of those who conform to the things "written in the books" might have their names enrolled therein.—Rev. 20:12,15

The knowledge of the LORD will then fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. (Isa.11:9) The rule of righteousness will be rigid and unyielding, but the people will be taught the advantages of obedience and righteousness. A blind obedience will not be required. Those who obey the kingdom laws understandingly and willingly will recognize the LORD's blessings upon them. Those who knowingly and willfully oppose, will be punished. If their disobedience continues, they will be punished with "second death."—Rev. 20:14,15

How unerring his judgments will be! There will be no opportunity to feign obedience. Referring to Jesus Isaiah wrote, "The Spirit of the LORD shall be upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of

quick understanding in the fear of the LORD; and he shall not judge after the sight of the eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." (Isa. 11:3,4) How we seek in vain to find these qualities in our earthly leaders!

What remarkable changes will be brought about by the rulership and judgments of Christ and his church! When men transgressed God's law he "gave them up" or permitted the people to follow their own sinful ways. (Rom. 1:24) Throughout all of the six thousand years of human experience, selfishness has been in the main, the motive for all that has been said and done. Over and above this is the fact that Satan has exercised his influence in the hearts, and over the lives, of the people. The result of this has been a drifting farther and farther away from God, and a sinking deeper and deeper into degradation and sin.

But, with the rulership of the messianic kingdom, all this will be reversed. Satan will be bound. (Rev. 20:2) Instead of his evil spirit of sin and selfishness dominating the minds of men, the Spirit of the LORD will make itself felt through the agencies of the kingdom. The people will be instructed in the ways and will of the LORD. Evil will be restrained and willful transgression punished, while righteousness will be rewarded by that strong government. Justice, which has all but disappeared, will triumph! It will be under this hallowed influence and judgment work of the kingdom that the law of God will be written in the hearts of the people.

They will learn the rightness of God's ways, and will want to do his will, and with this wholehearted desire for righteousness becoming the motivating principle of life, divine power will assist in removing inherited imperfections, and thus the law of God will not only reign supreme in the hearts of those thus restored, but will find expression in their every thought, word, and act, to the great joy and blessing of all with whom they come in contact.

It will require the entire Millennial Age to complete this work on behalf of the entire human race. The work of "making"

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the New Covenant will begin, as the prophecy states, "with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." This indicates, that geographically, the messianic kingdom authority will first manifest itself in the land of Israel, the Promised Land. This is why so many of the natural descendants of Abraham are now being settled in that land. But it will quickly spread, for "all the families of the earth" are thus to be blessed. When God changed Abram's name to Abraham, he revealed that the "seed" to be blessed would not be merely one nation, but "many nations."—Gen. 17:5

The ancient servants of God, who received the testimony that they pleased him, and thus proved worthy of a "better resurrection," will be perfect when awakened from the sleep of death. Since at heart they loved God and his law more than life itself, they will, from the first, be in the New Covenant relationship, and in their perfection and righteousness of heart and body, will exemplify it before all over whom they rule as "princes."—Heb. 11:13,35,39,40; Ps.45:16

When the dead are awakened from the sleep of death they will be, at heart, and in their general outlook and demeanor, essentially the same as when they died, so the work of writing the law in the hearts of the people will need to continue throughout the age until all have been awakened from death, and taught to obey and respond heartily to the law of God.

Throughout the Millennial Age Christ will serve as Mediator of the New Covenant, and his glorified church will be associ-

ated with him. At the close of the age, when all the willingly obedient of mankind will have been restored to human perfection, with the law of God written in their inward parts, a mediator will no longer be needed, for all will have the ability to live in complete harmony with every divine requirement.

The Creator does not coerce the minds of his intelligent creatures. He permitted our first parents to sin, and has allowed all to continue in their evil ways from one generation to the next throughout the ages knowing that this experience with evil would serve his human creatures well after they had received the opportunity to experience the ways of true righteousness.

Thus mankind will have experienced both good and evil, and will be given a free choice between the two. Those who choose to be willing, wholehearted, and loyal subjects of the kingdom will reap the rich rewards of righteousness. At the close of the thousand years they will be fully reconciled to God, and restored to absolute human perfection, mentally, morally, and physically. They will be at peace with God, and with one another, and all tears will be wiped away.—Isa. 25:8; Rev. 21:1-5

Those who then choose to continue in their evil path of opposition to divine law will be destroyed from among the people. (Acts 3:23) These are the ones who, in “the land of uprightness,” or when laws of that righteous government prevail throughout the earth, will attempt to “deal unjustly,” and refuse to behold the “majesty of the LORD,” and to bow to his holy will. (Isa. 26:10) These will not be permitted to live and mar the happiness of those who turn to righteousness and are restored to perfection.—Isa. 11:9; Mic. 4:3,4

Our original questions have but one answer—No! Mankind will not find their own solutions to the bewildering problems facing them today. No earthly president or premier, king or dictator can remedy world problems. But God has already selected and prepared his ruler—the Messiah—who stands ready, when the due time comes, to handle any problem with ease!—Isa. 9:6,7

International Bible Study Lessons

LESSON FOR JANUARY 1

Anointed to Preach the Good News

KEY VERSE: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor."*—**Luke 4:18**

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: **Luke 4:16-21, 40-43**

AFTER his baptism, and after his temptation in the wilderness, Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about." (Luke 4:14) Then he went to Nazareth, his home city, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue. It was there that he read the outline of his commission from the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3, saying to his hearers, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."—Luke 4:21

There are various aspects of the Holy Spirit's commission to proclaim the Gospel. First, the Gospel is to be preached to the "poor." In his sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To be 'poor in spirit' means to realize one's need of God and the riches he alone can provide. From the standpoint of worldly values a person may be wealthy, yet realize his need

of that which money cannot buy, which is the favor and blessing of God. On the other hand, one may be poverty-stricken from a material standpoint, yet be proud, haughty, and self-sufficient. No one in this attitude can receive and appreciate the blessings of the Lord.

The truly 'poor in spirit' of this world realize that regardless of worldly treasure they are impoverished through the fall and its resulting separation from God's favor. They are the ones who are ready to hear that a gracious opportunity has been given to be lifted out of poverty and to become unspeakably rich. It is stated concerning Christ that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Cor. 8:9) Paul also speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3:8) This has been described as "riches beyond the discovery of human enterprise."

The riches the Christian enters into by faith are riches which cannot be searched out by his own efforts, human energy, or hard work—but come as a gift. Through justification, and consecration to God, we have been inducted into the body of Christ, and Paul says that in Christ are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”—Col. 2:3

These treasures of wisdom and knowledge show us that through Christ we may become heirs of a grand and eternal inheritance: “Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:17) Nevertheless, we are also shown that the future riches of heavenly glory depend upon our proving faithful stewards of what the LORD has entrusted to us during the present life. As the Master said, “If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Luke 16:11) The true riches now imparted to the faithful include a knowledge of the truth—the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge”—or, as Paul expressed it elsewhere, “the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.”—Rom. 11:33

The eternal riches beyond the veil are also “unsearchable,” in that they cannot be secured by human enterprise, but by a faithful conformity to the will of God, allowing

him to work in us to will and to do his good pleasure. “The gift of God is eternal life.” So also the heavenly inheritance—yet from one standpoint a reward of faithfulness—it is the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 6:23) The poet said, “Thou hast called us to a station we could never by merit win.”

Seeing that the Father and our Redeemer have arranged to bestow upon the called ones of this Gospel Age such boundless riches of his grace, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? (II Pet. 3:11) As Paul exhorted the church, so let us pray for one another, that we may walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called (Eph. 4:1); seeking to become “rich in faith” (James 2:5); rich in grace, rich in wisdom and the knowledge of God; and to abound in love through the power of the Holy Spirit; setting our affections on the things which are above, for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.—Matt. 6:21

It was Jesus who proclaimed and opened up this feature of the Gospel to us. He invited us to follow him. This same anointing of the Holy Spirit is upon his followers, the poor of this age, who hear and heed his call. They, too, are commissioned to proclaim the kingdom of heaven to others who are “poor in spirit.”

Accepting Our Mission

KEY VERSE: "When they had brought their ship to land, they forsook all, and followed him."—Luke 5:11

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:1-11

IT MIGHT seem that Peter, James, and John were acting on a sudden impulse when they forsook all and followed Jesus. Other Gospel accounts, however, seem to indicate that they were formerly somewhat familiar with Jesus, and that their decision to become his disciples was not a spur of the moment thing.

Even this brief account by Luke indicates that it was more than just the miracle of the full net of fish which influenced them. On this occasion they had listened to Jesus speaking for quite some time, he having requested the use of Simon Peter's boat from which to address the people. No doubt his subject was, "The Kingdom of Heaven Is At Hand."

When he was finished he turned to Peter, who was in the boat, and spoke, asking him to go into deeper water and cast in his net. Peter, calling him Master even then, told Jesus how fruitless this would be. But he nevertheless consented. The miracle occurred and

Peter and the other two who were with him were convinced that it was indeed the power of God which was made manifest in Jesus and now at his request they were ready to close out their fishing business and go to work for the Lord. What a wonderful example of following Jesus their lives became. Later the Master referred to their discipleship as 'cross bearing'.

He made it plain that the only ones who could be his true followers were those willing to deny themselves and bear the cross. Jesus explained that those who did not love him even more than they loved this life were not worthy of him. These terms of discipleship laid down by the Master are very exacting. They are not the terms upon which mankind in general will eventually receive life through Christ, but are the conditions upon which, at the present time, one can be a true follower of Jesus.

Self-denial as taught by Jesus is not merely the giving up of cer-

tain good things to eat, or the foregoing of other pleasures of life. Rather it is the denial of self, a dedication to the LORD that is so complete and wholehearted that self is denied all rights to govern one's life. It is the giving up completely of one's own will and ways, and accepting the will of the LORD as the rule of life. It means a complete change of outlook in life, a transforming of the mind to conform to the will of God.

Cross-bearing signifies more than enduring unpleasant experiences. For one to take up his cross and follow Jesus signifies his willingness to suffer and to die with the Master. Those condemned to death under the Roman law carried their own cross to the place of crucifixion. For one to carry a cross, therefore, meant that he was on his way to death, and this is the symbolic meaning of Christian cross-bearing. As Jesus' disciples we suffer and die with him.

Being a disciple of Christ, therefore, implies much more than living a moral and upright life. It means the dedication of one's life to the cause of God as it is being carried out through Christ. It means a dedication to this cause that leads to the sacrifice of self and to all self interests. This is the Christian life.

But the life of sacrifice in the Christian cause has its compensations of peace and joy in the LORD which result from the assurance of having divine approval. This is a peace and joy which is based upon the knowledge that our loving Heavenly Father knows what is best for us, and causes all things to work together for our good.

There are also future compensations for those who faithfully lay down their lives walking in the footsteps of Jesus. The promise to these is that if they faithfully suffer and die with Jesus they will live and reign with him. The purpose of living and reigning with Christ is to share with him in extending the blessings of health and life to the remainder of the world of mankind, the blessings which he provided by his own death as the Redeemer and Savior of the world. The invitation to share in Jesus' exaltation is described by Paul as "the prize of the high calling."—Phil. 3:14

For over nineteen centuries, starting with the three disciples on the shore of Gennesaret, the call to follow Jesus and be prepared for future service in his kingdom has continued and will continue until the full number of a little flock has been selected for this glorious and blessed purpose.

Healing and Forgiving

KEY VERSE: *"They were all amazed and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying we have seen strange things today."*—Luke 5:26

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-26

JESUS was at the center of a great throng of people who had come to hear him speak, and more particularly to be healed of sicknesses and infirmities. In order to reach Jesus, one man, taken with a palsy, was brought up to a rooftop and let down on a couch in front of him. Jesus, recognizing this as an expression of faith, said to the man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."—Luke 5:23

On that particular day there were many Pharisees and doctors of the Law sitting by in the crowd waiting for a chance to somehow discredit Jesus. And this statement supplied them their opportunity. They began to reason, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"—vs. 21

They greatly resented and criticized the authority with which Jesus spoke and conducted his ministry. As the religious leaders of their day, they questioned the right of any and all who presumed to

teach without first of all being sanctioned by them. To a degree Jesus recognized the authority of these men, acknowledging that they "sat in Moses' seat." (Matt. 23:2) On occasion he instructed those whom he healed to report to the rulers. Jesus knew, nevertheless, that his authority did not stem from the leaders of Israel, but rather that he had been anointed, or authorized, to preach and heal by the Spirit of God.—Isa. 61:1-3

In the beginning of his ministry Jesus called attention to this. In the synagogue at Nazareth he read what we might call his ordination papers from the prophecy of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD." Then Jesus added, "This

day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."—Luke 4:18-21

The ordination, or anointing, of the Holy Spirit which Jesus received from God not only gave him the authority to speak in the name of his Heavenly Father, but it also gave him enlightenment of mind which qualified him to present the glad tidings of the kingdom. He understood the Gospel of the kingdom, and could, therefore, present it as one having authority.

Historically the tribe of Levi was selected by the Lord to serve the nation in all religious matters. From the Levites the priests were chosen. From this standpoint the religious leaders of Jesus' day were not altogether wrong in questioning the right of others to teach the people. Indeed, as we have seen, Jesus recognized their position. What they failed to understand was that a new age was beginning, when a greater than Moses was to be the Head over a new house, a house of sons, and that Jesus was the one to occupy this position.

Jesus knew it was not his own power that healed the people on that day, but as the scripture says, "The power of the Lord was present to heal them." (vs. 17) Jesus also knew that it was by God's authority that he extended forgive-

ness to those who were repentent. But the option as to whom this power would be exercised upon was his, and his good judgment was honored by the Heavenly Father. Jesus also knew that his mission was far reaching, and his very purpose for being on earth was to act as the agency of God through which all the world ransomed from death could eventually receive the forgiveness of God through his kingdom.

To demonstrate this fact, Jesus turned to the sick man and said, "That ye might know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins . . . I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch and go into thine house" (vs. 24), and this the man did, glorifying God.

While the Pharisees were critical, the common people knew from whence the miracle came and glorified God with reverence, as our text declares. The authorization to speak for God which comes through the Holy Spirit's anointing has continued with the church throughout the Gospel Age. While the gifts of healing ceased early on in the age, the Gospel has not changed. It is still a message which speaks of God's abundant power to forgive sin through Christ, and to heal the people in his kingdom to come. □

Forgiveness—A Measure of Love

KEY VERSE: "He said to the woman, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—*Luke 7:50*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 7:36-50*

THESE words were spoken by Jesus to a woman who was called a sinner by those who knew her, but who undoubtedly had been greatly influenced by Jesus and his teachings. She had a repentant heart concerning her life and saw in Jesus a man of great compassion, and believed he had the authority from God to forgive her sin.

In the gift of ointment, with which she so gently anointed his feet, he saw a wonderful expression of faith, and in the tears which flowed so freely a repentant and contrite heart. Such is the basic heart attitude upon which salvation is possible. When our Lord declared that her faith had saved her, he was aware that his death as a ransoming requirement for salvation had not yet been accomplished; but it was soon to happen, and looking beyond he saw in her a candidate for the great salvation—the call of this age.

Like this remorseful woman,

all who have shared in the Gospel Age call to salvation have first come to sadly realize that they are sinners, condemned under a sentence of death. By God's grace we were enabled to see our condition. He pointed us to the only way of escape—Christ Jesus—and, as we accepted him, we passed figuratively from death unto life. We were called of God with a heavenly calling. Responding, we were begotten of the Holy Spirit and were given exceeding great and precious promises involving our hope of salvation.

In Romans 10:17 we have the statement that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This implies that a certain kind of faith is the result of knowledge. That is true so far as a faith which is a natural quality is concerned, but it is not strictly true of the faith which is a fruit of the Spirit. Someone may ask, What is the difference? The former is a

natural, inherent quality; while the latter is an acquired quality, a grace that is put on—a fruit which is developed. Does all Biblical knowledge result in a living, active faith? By no means. If it did, it would prove that those who have the largest amount of knowledge would also have the greatest degree of faith. This does not necessarily follow.

Knowledge alone is not the faith which is the victory that overcometh the world. From the standpoint of the Apostle Peter, true knowledge of God is an outgrowth of faith. This is shown in his statement in II Peter 1:5, where he said, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." If all faith were the result of knowledge, the apostle could have said, Add to your knowledge virtue, and to virtue faith; but we notice he did not put it that way. He said: "Add to your faith virtue, . . . knowledge, . . . temperance, . . . patience, . . . godliness, . . . brotherly kindness, . . . love."

We read in Ephesians, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by *faith*; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowl-

edge."—Eph. 3:14 Also, in Romans we read, "Being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God. . . By whom [Jesus] also we have access by *faith* into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."—Rom. 5:1,2

These scriptures and many more express how vital our faith is to the hope of salvation we rightfully entertain through the authority of God's Word. The heavenly salvation can only dimly be grasped by our finite minds. We are told that it "doth not yet appear what we shall be." (John 3:1) But we have assurance of the validity of this hope because we have evidence that our faith in it is tested by God, as he told us it would be—that the trial of our faith . . . "though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—I Pet. 1:7

And so, in the end, it will be our faith that will see us through to victory in the obtaining of our salvation. If our faith is sure and steadfast in his promised salvation, and is more firmly established with each trial, then we too can walk in peace—peace with God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."—I John 5:4

Touch: A Step Toward Life

KEY VERSE: "He . . . took her by the hand, and called saying, *Maid arise.*"—*Luke 8:54*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 8:41-55*

THE death of a twelve-year-old child is a very sad occasion. As Jesus and three of his disciples entered the house of Jarius, whose young daughter had just died, they were deeply touched with the mourning and weeping of the family and friends gathered there. Death is indeed a great enemy.

But it is not an unconquerable one, as our Lord took occasion to demonstrate that day. Speaking to the people, he said, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth." That death should be likened to sleep is such an encouraging and hopeful symbolism, but yet one which is very difficult for unenlightened people to grasp. And it was so then. They knew she was dead, and scorned Jesus for his words.

The Bible in its use of words goes to great lengths to express this fact about death. David wrote concerning "the sleep of death," and some of the Old Testament promises liken the resurrection to an awakening from sleep. (Ps. 13:3) The Lord promised Daniel, "Many

of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." The word *many* is not used here to imply that only a part of those in death will be awakened, but rather to emphasize the *great* number—actually it is referring to the *multitude* who are dead and are to be awakened from the sleep of death.—Dan. 12:2

They are "sleeping" in the "dust of the earth." This expression is used to remind us that the ones to be awakened from death are those upon whom fell the penalty, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:19) It is in keeping with Paul's explanation, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Cor. 15:22

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Thy dead men shall live. . . . Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." (Isa. 26:19) Here we have the assurance that the awakening of the dead will bring rejoicing, for they are bidden to "awake and sing."

A similar thought is expressed

through the use of the word 'prisoner'. The Old Testament refers to the dead as being held captive in death, and their awakening as a release from captivity. (Ps. 102:20; Isa. 49:9; 61:1) Job, after mentioning the dead state of the young, the old, the rich, the poor, the rulers, the wicked—in fact essentially all the varied categories into which the human race is divided—adds, "There [in death] the prisoners rest together."—Job 3:18

In a promise to Christ, and those who will be associated with him in the future work of restoring the world to life, the Father said, "Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." (Isa. 49:9) In verse 8 of this chapter we are informed that the purpose in calling these prisoners forth from death is that they might "inherit the desolate heritages." This is a reference to man's original heritage of the earth—a heritage which was lost and which was left desolate because of original sin.

The Prophet David wrote concerning Jesus, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD might dwell among them." (Ps. 68:18) This prophecy is quoted by the Apostle Paul and

applied to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. (Eph. 4:8) In the marginal translation of Paul's quotation we are given the thought that Jesus, in his resurrection, became the leader from death of "a multitude of captives."

Thus in the New Testament Jesus is portrayed to us as the one who leads forth all the prisoners of death from their captivity. When Martha said to Jesus that she knew Lazarus would live again in the resurrection at the "last day," Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11:23-25) Martha may well have had in mind the prophecies of the Old Testament stating that the prisoners of death would be released from their captivity in the "latter days," and Jesus simply explained that he will be the one to release, or lead forth the captives.

These Old Testament thoughts were probably uppermost in Jesus' mind at the time of the occurrence of our text, and so to demonstrate their validity through himself, he took the dead girl by the hand and said, "Maid arise!" and her life returned. The three disciples who were there must have recalled this event later, when Jesus declared that the hour would come when all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and come forth.—John 5:28,29

Christian Life and Doctrine

PSALM 23 SERIES, Part 1

“The LORD Is My Shepherd”

“I shall not want.”—Psalm 23:1

HOW true are the words of the LORD, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”! (Isa. 55:9) It is only because Jehovah, our Heavenly Father, in his wisdom has illustrated his thoughts for us that we are able to comprehend them. For this reason his Word abounds with pictures, symbols, illustrations, similes, and metaphors which, when we apply their meanings to the thoughts expressed, enable even our limited finite minds to comprehend to some extent the high thoughts of the Creator—his plans for the church and the world, as well as his loving watch-care over us, his people, the sheep of his pasture.

In educational circles the value of illustrations has long been recognized, especially in the instruction of children. How much more readily a child can grasp the thoughts of its teacher if they are illustrated. An adult advanced in education might give an elaborate and very scholarly definition of the word ‘round’, yet the child would not understand it. But the expression, ‘round like an orange’ instantly conveys the idea which it is desired the child should grasp.

And how like children are we all, when we compare ourselves with the God of our salvation! We are glad, therefore, that he not only has assured us of his love and care, but also has helped us to grasp the reality of his nearness and ability to provide for our every need by the use of so many simple, yet meaningful illustrations.



God is our Heavenly Father, and we are his children. What thoughts of parental solicitude and care this conjures up in our minds! He is our refuge, and our fortress, and because of this we rejoice even though we are surrounded by enemies. Under his wings we find shelter and protection. Each of these expressions is an illustration, and there are so many of them employed in God's Word, and they are so varied in nature, that when we put together the intent of them all, we have a complete picture of his abounding love for us.

"The LORD is my Shepherd"—here is another illustration of divine care; and how wonderfully it helps us to grasp the reality of the Heavenly Father's love! David, the one used by God to pen these words, had himself been a shepherd, and in the twenty-third psalm we find a beautiful expression of his own confidence in Jehovah, and his realization that God had been caring for him and would continue to do so all the days of his life. David, the man after God's own heart, drew from his own background of experience as a shepherd a lesson of divine interest and care which perhaps could not have been made so understandable and practical in any other manner.

But the reassuring lesson of the shepherd set forth in this psalm is more than merely the heart expression of the sweet singer of Israel. (II Sam. 23:1) Holy men of old wrote as they were moved by God's Spirit, and this is true of David in writing the twenty-third psalm. It is one of God's inspired messages to his people of this age. It is one of the many assurances he has given us of his loving care, a care that is manifested in providing all our needs, of whatever nature they may be.

When David wrote, "The LORD is my Shepherd," he used the Hebrew word Jehovah, which applies exclusively to the Creator, our Heavenly Father. In the New Testament Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd, and Peter refers to him as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. (John 10:11; I Pet. 2:25) This does not present any conflict of thought, however, for as the

apostle explains, "All things are *of* the Father and *by* the Son." (I Cor. 8:6) Jehovah is our Shepherd, and one of the manifestations of his interest in us as his sheep is the gift of his beloved Son to be our Redeemer, advocate, and caretaker.

In the parable of the sheepfold, Jesus refers to himself as the Good Shepherd, and we are told that the proof of his goodness is that he gave his life for the sheep. Jehovah's care for us is no less than that of Jesus, for he too has manifested his love by sacrifice: "God so loved . . . that he gave." (John 3:16) He loved the entire human race, but his special concern, first of all, has been in the sheep of this Gospel Age. They are very dear to him, and no good thing will he withhold from them.

Whatever of love and sympathy toward the sheep we find manifested in Jesus we are also to attribute to our Heavenly Father, for Jesus came to manifest the Father, and to speak and act for him. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," the Master said. Probably we are able to grasp more fully the thought of Jehovah's care over us as a Shepherd by considering Jesus and the many assurances he has given us of his love for the sheep. (John 14:9) One of the chief evidences of Jehovah's care for us is the provision of Jesus as our Shepherd.

As suggested, Jesus is our Shepherd, and how untiring was his devotion to the sheep of his day, many of whom were prone to stray from the fold, not appreciating his interest in them. The whole nation of Israel were the LORD's sheep at the time of Jesus' first advent. True, only a remnant of them recognized the voice of the Good Shepherd when he spoke to them, preferring to follow the leadership of the false shepherds of that time—the scribes and Pharisees. Nevertheless, Jesus did not spare himself in doing all he could for the people of Israel; and in this we see manifested the characteristics of a true and faithful shepherd.

Matthew 9:35 reads, "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease

among the people." Here is the description of a life of intense activity, a continuous service which must have sapped the strength of the Master. And he did this despite the claims of the false shepherds of his time that he was a servant of the devil.

Why was Jesus so interested in the rank and file of the Israelites? The next verse of this chapter explains that it was because he was moved with compassion for the multitude seeing that they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. (vs. 36) Ah yes, Jesus had come to be the Good Shepherd of this people, and gladly he was laying down his life for them. The expression, 'as sheep having no Shepherd', was first used by Moses concerning Israel when he asked God to appoint someone to take his place as leader. (Num. 27:17) Joshua was appointed to be Moses' successor, and Jesus, the antitypical Joshua, had now come to be the true Shepherd of Israel.

But even though the Israelites did not recognize the voice of their Shepherd, he was faithful to them and continued to sacrifice his time and strength in their interests. Another notable example of this is found in connection with his feeding of the five thousand, the account of which is recorded in Mark 6:31-52. John the Baptist had just been beheaded, and as we can well imagine, there was great excitement among the people. Naturally at such a time, Jesus and his disciples would attract more attention than ever, and the account indicates that there were so many people milling about them that there was no opportunity for needed relaxation and rest. In view of the situation Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."—Mark 6:31

Jesus was fully justified in seeking rest for himself and for his disciples, and they attempted to evade the throngs of people and get away but were not successful in doing so. They entered a boat and crossed to the opposite side of the lake where they hoped to be alone, but a multitude of people hurried around the shore of the lake and were waiting for the boat when it arrived.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and those whom he was training to be Shepherds of the flock later, were weary. (I Pet. 5:1-4) He probably knew that very few, if any, of this throng of people who had come out into the desert to meet him, would ever become his true disciples. For this reason he might well have sent them away; but he did not.

We read that, instead, his heart was filled with compassion and that he taught them many things because he saw that they were as "sheep not having a Shepherd." (Mark 6:34) They needed him, and although they did not appreciate the chief bless-

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ings he had for them at that time, nevertheless he loved them. In this we see the qualities of a true shepherd beautifully manifested in the Master. These sheep of Israel were scattered. They needed guidance and care, and the Good Shepherd was ready and willing to serve them even though he was tired and in dire need of rest. He taught them many things, and before the day was over he performed a miracle to feed them with material food—the loaves and the fishes.

Judging from what he accomplished, this must have been a long and tiring day of service for the Master. Evening had come by the time the five thousand were fed, and then Jesus sent his disciples back across the lake, while he went up into a nearby mountain to pray. A storm arose on the lake, and noticing that his disciples were in peril, Jesus came down from the mountain, walked out onto the lake, and rescued them by calming the storm. (Mark 6:46-51) He loved all Israel, but these disciples were his peculiar care, and even though he still had had no rest, he was glad to use the little remaining vitality he had to save them. What a wonderful Shepherd!

Another loving arrangement of Jehovah, the Chief Shepherd, is the provision he has made for additional shepherds besides Jesus. The apostles were some of these. All true pastors and teachers and evangelists in the church have been shepherds over the LORD'S flock. This is also true of those elected elders by their local ecclesias. And just as we see in Jesus a perfect example of the Chief Shepherd's interest in and care for the sheep, so all the shepherds should endeavor to pattern themselves after Jesus by seeking to serve the sheep as patiently, lovingly, and untiringly as he did.

One of the chief characteristics of a good shepherd is his genuine interest in and concern for the sheep. Those whom the LORD can use as shepherds over his flock must have this qualification. They must be willing, like Jesus, to lay down their lives for the sheep. One of the characteristics of a false shepherd is his

desire to make profit from the sheep. Frequently the exploitations of such cause the LORD's true sheep to be scattered and fearful.

A faithful shepherd will do all he can to gather the scattered sheep. Nowhere in the Scriptures does the LORD indicate that he would ever want his sheep to be scattered. There are prophecies to show that on certain occasions they would be scattered by false shepherds, but the divine commission to true shepherds is always one of gathering—never of scattering. When Jesus, our Shepherd, was smitten, the true sheep which he had gathered were temporarily scattered. When that "faithful and wise Shepherd" (Matt. 24:45) whom the LORD raised up at the end of the age was smitten in death, the true sheep again were scattered (Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31); and now once more the LORD would have his true shepherds gather his sheep that they may be together and rejoice together in the abundance of his love.

When we think of the LORD's sheep being brought together, it is well to keep in mind that to which they are gathered. Every true gathering of the LORD's sheep is around *him* as the Supreme Shepherd. This means that the sheep will recognize the arrangements made for them by the Shepherd. Of first importance in this arrangement is Jesus. He is *the* appointed Shepherd of the LORD. Jesus is the Head over his church, and each local congregation of the LORD's people is representative of the church as a whole; therefore each such group is, in a sense, a sheepfold, and the elders of the congregation are also shepherds in these folds, and they cooperate with Jesus in caring for the best interests of the sheep.

If these have the true shepherd qualities, they will do all in their power to protect the sheep against the encroachments of false shepherds. Individuals who prey upon the local groups of the LORD's people, seeking to interest them in new ideas, and at the same time speaking disparagingly of the shepherds the LORD has put over his sheep in the various local churches, are false shepherds. Their influence is one of scattering, not of gathering. They are often more interested in what they can get out of the

sheep than they are in the welfare of the sheep. True shepherds of the LORD's people everywhere should be on guard against those who thus stir up strife and ill-will among the sheep, and should advise the sheep to be on guard against them.

A faithful shepherd will never invite another shepherd to serve the flock unless he feels sure that the one invited will serve wholesome food, and does not have selfish designs on the sheep. This is very important now, for there are many would-be shepherds abroad in the land seeking flocks to follow them. Their voices are smooth, wistful, pleading. They offer "liberty" to the sheep. They tell the sheep that the food being provided for them—the food of present truth—is not what it ought to be, and for them to exercise their liberty to go in search of other food. Thus, in the name of liberty, the false shepherds scatter the flock of God.

Liberty is a beautiful philosophy, but its application must be with reason and moderation. Genuine shepherds have liberty only to care for the LORD's sheep as the Chief Shepherd has directed. The sheep have liberty only to hearken to the voice of the Good Shepherd, to be led by him, and to feed upon the spiritual food which he has provided. False shepherds and wolves in sheep's clothing should not be given liberty to devour the sheep; although in the name of liberty some may attempt to do this.

While we have been making a distinction between the shepherds in the ecclesias, and the sheep, these shepherds are also sheep, and every sheep in the LORD's little flock has a certain measure of responsibility toward the other sheep. They should all endeavor as well as they can to care for one another. We can all do much along this line by remaining together. When we separate ourselves from the other sheep, and thus become more or less isolated, we become exposed to danger. It is the Chief Shepherd's will that we remain together, so let us not tempt his providence by expecting him to care for us in a self-imposed separation from his flock.

The LORD's true sheep can say from the heart, "I shall not want," only if they heed the voice of the Good Shepherd. And when they do hearken to him, how bountifully all of their needs are supplied. No good thing will the Shepherd withhold from those who walk uprightly. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," he has promised. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness," is another blessed assurance of the Chief Shepherd, which gives even the weakest of sheep the comfort and encouragement they need for every difficulty of the way.

In the parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus explained that there were other sheep which also were to be gathered into the fold of God's favor. The sheep of this particular parable are evidently the Israelites who were in line for joint-heirship with Jesus in the spiritual phase of his kingdom. Some have thought that the other sheep were the Gentiles, but actually the Gentiles who are called into the fold during the Gospel Age merely take the place of the natural descendants of Abraham. They are the "wild" branches grafted into the olive tree of promise, to take the place of the natural branches which were broken off because of unbelief.—Rom 11:17

The "other sheep," then, are those of the restitution class who will receive blessings of life on the earth during the thousand-year reign of Christ. These are depicted in the parable of the sheep and the goats, and here the sheep are bidden to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. (Matt. 25:34) While the sheep of this parable represent the restored world of mankind rather than the little flock class of this age, the parable indicates that they possess characteristics pleasing to the Good Shepherd which we should emulate; namely, their interest in the welfare of one another. All the true sheep of the LORD, whether in this age or the next, must possess this quality of mutual interest and helpfulness.

(Continued on Page 37)

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Yellowknife CJCD-1240 9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO
Hamilton CKOC-1150 7:00 a.m.
Leamington CHYR-710 5:00 p.m.
St. Thomas CHLO-1570 10:45 a.m.

QUEBEC
Montreal CFMB-1410 5:15 p.m.

SASKATCHEWAN
Rosetown CJYM 1330 10:00 a.m.
Waybum-Estevan CFSL-1190 8:45 a.m.

YUKON
Whitehorse CKRW-610 9:30 a.m.

OVERSEAS BROADCASTS

BRITISH ISLES
Dublin Christian Broadcasting 9:00 p.m.
Radio Caroline-Tues. KHZ 962 8:45 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES
Grand Cayman Radio Cayman 9:30 a.m.

CEYLON
Columbo-Sat. Radio Sri Lanka 7:15 p.m.

HONG KONG
Radio Villa Verde-Fri. 6:00 p.m.

ITALY (Italian)
Europa Radio Milano 83.3-FM 11:30 a.m.
Euro Tele Radio Calabria-Fri. 5:30 p.m.
MHZ 102

Radio Corleone Centrale
FM-88-500 FM-92 11:00 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)
Culiacán Ranchera XECO 8:30 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND
Dunedin 4XD 11:15 a.m.
Whakatane IXX 6:45 a.m.

NIGERIA
Radio Africa-Wed. 8:00 p.m.

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

PERU
Lima-Sat. Radio Unión 880 AM 2:00 p.m.

PHILIPPINES
Manila-Sat. DZAM 1026 KHZ 7:15 p.m.

SOUTH AFRICA
Joubert Park-Thurs. SWAZI Music
Radio 1400 & shortwave 49 & 60 9:00 p.m.

SPAIN (Spanish)
Radio Gerona-Mon. 9:45 p.m.

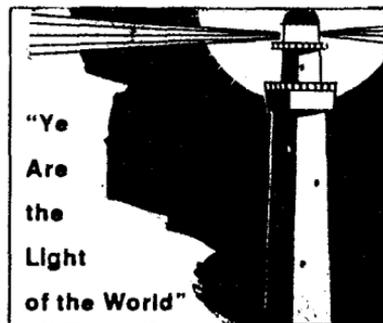
TONGA
Nuku' Alofa-Mon. 10:15 a.m.

URUGUAY (Spanish)
Montevideo Radio El Espectador 810 9:15 a.m.

VIRGIN ISLANDS
St. Croix WSTX 970 9:00 a.m.

SHORTWAVE BROADCASTS

(Beamed to Africa, Europe, U.S.)
Eastern U.S. (Sat.) WRNO 15.20 12:45 p.m.



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If you subscribe to cable TV, consult the listing in your local newspaper or guide, for the station in your area which shows these fine educational programs. In some cases, stations tape the programs and show them at a different time than that mentioned above. You may have to check the complete listings to locate **The Bible Answers** programs in your city. We are sure you and your family will find these programs inspiring and faith-strengthening—well worth watching. If you own a satellite dish, these programs can be seen on SATCOM F-3, TRANSPONDER-6, at the times listed above.

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7:00 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

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Channel 12

The parable of the lost sheep illustrates still further the loving interest of the Good Shepherd. In this parable there are a hundred sheep, ninety-nine of which remain in the fold. These ninety-nine represent all the various orders of God's creatures which were created in his image, and over which he maintains a Shepherdly care. Seraphim, cherubim, and all the holy angels are among these; and there may be still others. The human race is represented by the one sheep which strayed from the fold and was in danger of death.

Here again the Good Shepherd is shown in a role of self-sacrifice on behalf of the one sheep which needs his help. The Shepherd which leaves the ninety and nine is Jesus. He left the heavenly courts and came to earth as a man to seek and "to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) When the lost sheep is found and restored to the fold of divine favor and protection there is great rejoicing in heaven; and surely all of God's creatures will indeed rejoice when the work of ransom and restitution is complete, and the human race is back in the fold of the Chief Shepherd.

The lesson of this parable should also bring home to us the great love of the Good Shepherd, and the self-sacrificing qualities all shepherds should possess. It is not enough that a shepherd be content to serve sheep which already are in the fold. Often there is a task for him to perform outside the fold, where conditions are far from favorable. The true shepherd will not wait for wayward sheep to come to him, but will seek them out and do all in his power to restore them to the fold.

Such should be the attitude of every true child of God, for as we have seen, all the sheep should possess mutual interest in one another, cooperating with the Good Shepherd in caring for the flock. In this role, each one, to a limited degree, is a shepherd as well as a sheep. No true sheep of God will be indifferent to the needs of other sheep, especially those of his own flock. Paul expressed this thought when he wrote, "As we have opportunity, let

us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10

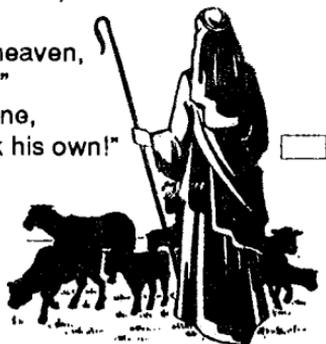
Yes, “the LORD [Jehovah] is my Shepherd.” He is the Chief Shepherd of all who will become his people and who will listen to his voice to guide them in the paths of righteousness. He has appointed Jesus to be the Good Shepherd under him, and this Good Shepherd has already manifested his love for all the sheep by laying down his life for them. The sheep of this Gospel Age are still dependent upon the Good Shepherd’s care, for false shepherds, and wolves in sheep’s clothing are ever seeking to scatter and destroy the flock. We have the assurance, however, that no harm can come to them if they follow the voice of the Good Shepherd.

The sheep of the next age are as yet outside the fold. Jesus came to seek and find them also, and they are still to be brought back into the fold. This task awaits the establishment of the kingdom, when the sheep of this age, having demonstrated their shepherd-like qualities of self-sacrifice for others, even unto death, will be with the Good Shepherd in glory, sharing with him in the blessed work of restoring the lost race.



There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But one was out on the hills away
Far off from the gates of gold—
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd’s care.
“LORD, thou hast here thy ninety and nine:
Are they not enough for thee?”
But the Shepherd made answer: “This of mine
Has wandered away from me,
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep.”

But none of the ransomed ever knew
 How deep were the waters crossed;
 Nor how dark was the night that the LORD passed through
 Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
 Out in the desert he heard its cry—
 Sick and helpless, and ready to die.
 But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
 And up from the rocky steep,
 There arose a glad cry to the gates of heaven,
 "Rejoice! I have found my sheep!"
 And the angels echoed around the throne,
 "Rejoice, for the LORD brings back his own!"



Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts

January 5—"The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."—Romans 15:3 (Z. '96-83 Hymn 38)

January 12—"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."—Galatians 6:1 (Z. '01-150 Hymn 3)

January 19—"O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day."—Psalm 119:97 (Z. '99-156 Hymn 205)

January 26—"When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance."—Matthew 6:16 (Z. '98-45 Hymn 151)

Christian Life and Doctrine

“I Appoint Unto You a Kingdom”

“I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may . . . sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

—*Luke 22:28,29*

THESE words were spoken by Jesus to his apostles on the night of the Last Supper, after commemoration of the Passover had ended. They are not found in any of the other three Gospel accounts; but we do find in the Gospels of Luke and John, that our Lord spoke quite at length with the twelve after the conclusion of supper.

The words of our theme scripture assure us that Jesus had the authority to promise his disciples appointment to positions of rulership in his kingdom. His authorization came from God; and the Old Testament confirmed this fact over and over again. We will take a look at some of the scriptures which supported Jesus in this conviction, and which he then imparted to his apostles as reinforcement of their faith in him, his coming kingdom, and their share in it.

Jesus was aware of the fact that when he would be taken from them, a matter of only a few hours away, they would be very perplexed as to whether there was actually to be a kingdom, after all, or whether they had followed “cunningly devised fables.” (II Pet. 1:16) And so, in the last few hours of his earthly time with them, Jesus spoke comforting words which they would remember after his departure and would comprehend when they had received the Holy Spirit. They would constitute just the comfort and strength which they would need to reaffirm their faith.

Jesus emphasized what had been the focus of his ministry during his entire lifetime of service on earth—"The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He knew his faithful disciples had a firm hold on the hope of the long-promised Messianic kingdom, and he knew they were certain that they would be associated with Jesus as rulers in his kingdom. (Matt. 20:21) Yet he also recognized that their very limited knowledge of what that hope actually embodied could be damaged or diminished when he suddenly left them under such trying circumstances. How could there be a kingdom when the king was gone—arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced, crucified until dead, and buried in a tomb? Jesus' concern was that they should continue to be completely convinced that their hope was indeed a valid one. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me."

Two thousand years later, this hope is still valid! Each passing year we should remember the words of our Master, and recall how this hope must be uppermost in our minds. The whole purpose of the Lord having called us, revealing unto us the truth—the knowledge of his plan, is that we might share with him in a kingdom which he has appointed unto us. Jesus' ministry did not end with his death; it has continued to effectively reach each one he desires to call to be his disciple. His ministry has continued right down to our day. As we study the record of our Master's teaching in God's Word, we find it means as much to us today as it did to his followers when he spoke the words directly to them so long ago: "I appoint unto you a kingdom."

Jesus was moved to assert in this statement the authority which he had received from the Scriptures themselves, confirming the fact that he was indeed a king, and would indeed have a kingdom, and would indeed share that kingship with his faithful followers. He was fully aware, however, as he began his ministry, that his kingdom would not actually be established on earth until nearly two thousand years down the course of history.

Jesus had learned something about this from the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who wrote: "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."—Isa. 9:1,2

As recorded in Matthew the fourth chapter, verses 12-17, Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. "Jesus . . . departed into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

Jesus went to Capernaum, near Zebulun and Naphtali, upon the commencement of his ministry. After finding no hearing ears in that place, our Lord's words concerning this city were, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." "Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke 10:15,11) This was only a small beginning of "light" shed abroad on those unresponding cities so long ago, which was largely ignored by those upon whom it shone.

But this very same light will eventually become so great that it will even reach down into the grave, touching those who sit "in the shadow of death!" When the light reaches its full magnitude, it will not be ignored or overlooked! Jesus knew that this insignificant beginning of his work would one day eventuate in

enlightening every man who entered the world—it would result in the establishment of the kingdom here on earth.

There has never been a light shining so brightly in the world until this time! But this prophecy assures us that it is ‘yea and amen’ in Christ Jesus! “They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath light shined!” So certain was the prophet of this, that he spoke in the present tense, as if it were actually an accomplished fact! The resurrection of the dead, mentioned in these symbolic terms, has its very foundation in the fact that Jesus did accomplish the beginning of the work of reconciliation between God and man at the time of his first advent, by offering his life as a ransom for all.

Isaiah goes on to tell of the sweeping changes that will take place in the world as a result of that very tiny, dim light which first shone in Naphtali and in the land of Zebulun, when it has grown into a powerful sun with “healing in its wings.” (Mal. 5:2): “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and [not—this word is spurious] increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.”—Isa. 9:3,4

In Genesis, God told his new, earthly creation to “multiply, and replenish the earth.” (Gen. 1:28) Throughout the centuries of man’s history, he has indeed multiplied, until today the world’s population stands at approximately four billion, and mankind is greatly concerned about the ‘population explosion’! But, when the resurrection of the dead occurs, the nations will be even more greatly multiplied, many times over! Today, our rapidly expanding population is at the root of many of the insolvable problems facing the world. But, Isaiah assures us that the resurrection of billions more will *not* present a problem. The LORD will be able to turn this miraculous happening into a blessing—he will “increase the joy!” It will be as the “joy of harvest!” Harvesttime is when

the husbandman reaps the rewards of his toil during the planting season! The kingdom will be a harvesttime of joy, to the world of mankind, as well as to the LORD! These words are a beautiful expression of the abundance of the kingdom: abundance of all the good things which the earth can produce; abundance of peace and happiness; abundance of health and life! The earth will yield her increase along all lines, to maintain its population with joy.

The prophecy continues: "Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the days of Midian." (vs. 4) The reference to 'the oppressor' is an allusion to the great Adversary; whose influence over the world has kept mankind yoked in his miserable harness, directing the minds of men in his evil ways for the entire period of the permission of evil. This reign of terror will be ended—destroyed forever by Christ, who will break his "burden."—Rev. 20:1-3

The allusion to Midian is very significant when we remember how Gideon broke the yoke of the Midianites. Not a single sword was raised against the enemy. Gideon used peaceful means to route the foe, as directed by the Lord. His small band of 300 men, surrounding the camp of their enemy at night, had lights hidden under pitchers which they held in their left hands; the pitchers were to be broken at Gideon's command, revealing the lights; trumpets, held in their right hands, sounded simultaneously with the breaking of the pitchers; and, at the same time, a loud shout was to go up, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon!" "And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled!" (Judg. 7:20,21) How simply the LORD will, with light and truth, destroy the yoke of the great oppressor, Satan!

When the rod of the oppressor is destroyed, sweeping changes will take place in the world! And it is interesting how Isaiah explains that all this will take place because of the small beginning of Jesus' ministry at the first advent. It will expand and grow, and explode into the final great result which God purposes!

Isaiah's words are: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: [the work of the first advent, followed by the work of the second advent] and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this!"—Isa. 9:6,7

Yes, our Lord Jesus had the assurance that God had appointed unto him a kingdom! He had God's sure word of prophecy that he would be a wonderful counsellor to the nations. No longer would he be simply another voice in the wind, a powerless man among a dying race! But when his kingdom is established in power and great glory all the world will hear him and heed him; they will listen to his counsel as if he were an honored father, and by following it they will receive everlasting life.

What a great impetus this prophetic knowledge must have been to Jesus as he began his ministry! Immediately the Adversary tried to shake our Lord's faith in God's plan. In one of his temptations, Satan offered another route by which Jesus could avoid the pain, suffering and death he knew was connected with the path that lay before him. "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."—Matt. 4:8,9

Jesus stood head and shoulders, mentally and physically, above any other man in the world of his day. He was far superior to all the dying human beings around him. Satan tempted him with the idea that all he would have to do is to exert himself a little, use some of the wonderful capabilities which he possessed, and the world would fall down at his feet. He could have given

the world electric lights 2,000 years ago! He could have given them automobiles. His mind understood all the intricacies of the universal laws of matter—all the scientific, medical, and mechanical progress we have in the world now, he could have brought to the people of his day if he had so desired. Satan offered him an alternative means of blessing the world!

But the Lord was not interested in bowing down to the Adversary, or in bettering the Adversary's world. He knew God's plan was the best way, a way to life, and in the eternal interest of

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all. Satan's offer to appoint Jesus *his* kingdom, was of no interest to Jesus.

Another prophecy we would like to consider concerning the kingdom which Jesus *was* interested in, is recorded in the Book of Daniel. Here was additional strong authority by which Jesus could assure his disciples that he would one day appoint unto them a kingdom. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man [our Lord Jesus] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—Dan. 7:12,13

Jesus knew from these prophetic words of Daniel, that he would not occupy this position of rulership in the promised kingdom alone. Verses 21 and 22, in explanation of the foregoing text, verify this: "I beheld . . . until the Ancient of days came [Jehovah], and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." One of the foremost of Jesus' missions in coming to earth was for the specific purpose of preparing the saints, to whom he would appoint a kingdom! "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him!"

However, his faithful disciples and apostles were unaware then that the kingdom in which Jesus promised them positions as associate rulers was to be a spiritual kingdom! After Pentecost, when their eyes were opened more fully to God's great plan of the ages, and how they fitted into it, these truths were revealed to them. But now, just a few hours before the one they had fixed their hopes upon was to be murderously slain, Jesus wanted to lay

up for them as much encouragement and reassurance as they would need to carry them through the dark days ahead. Instead of thinking of himself, and his needs at that hour, he was concerned about his dear followers—how to comfort them in their deep loss of himself.

And so, Jesus, knowing how difficult the next few days would be, spoke these words: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:1-3

In this chapter Jesus was speaking principally of his sending the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and disciples at Pentecost. This becomes evident in the sixteenth verse through the twenty-seventh verse. He said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter [during his lifetime on earth, *he* was their Comforter], that he [it] may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom [which] the world cannot receive, because it seeth him [it] not, neither knoweth him [it]: but ye know him [it]; for he [it] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you!*" The Greek word translated comforter is *paracletus*, which means 'intercessor' or 'one who speaks for another'.

This is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the followers of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel Age, the Holy Spirit has guided, directed, and comforted Christians in the stead of our Lord Jesus, who cannot be with them personally in the flesh. Since this work is paramount in the Gospel Age—the calling out of those to whom Jesus would one day appoint a kingdom—it is imperative that they would have the Comforter with them as Jesus' representative, working out his purpose in their lives.

The Book of Revelation also gives us a substantiating picture of how involved our Lord is with his church during the long

period of the Gospel Age, and how the Holy Spirit is his representative or *paracletus*. In the first chapter the church is likened unto "seven golden candlesticks," and, we are told that "in the midst of the seven candlesticks [stands] one like unto the Son of man. . . . His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire: and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."—vss. 13-16)

A few verses later we are given interpretations of several of the otherwise hard-to-understand symbolic expressions. We realize that our resurrected Lord Jesus is pictured here as the one in the midst of the candlesticks because of the descriptive words: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen." (vs 18) A candlestick is an instrument for dispensing light. It is not a large, powerful illuminator such as the sun. And so it well pictures the church's role in this age, and its insignificant effect upon the world. Despite the feeble light it sheds, it is of utmost interest and importance to the Son of man, who walks in its midst and tends it. As he was the light of the dark world, so are we, his followers.—John 1:7-12; Matt. 5:14

Again, in verse 20, we are told: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." Jesus is our great high priest, walking in our midst, responsible for seeing that the candlesticks (representing the complete history of the church throughout the age) were maintained, and that the holy oil (picturing the Holy Spirit) was replenished in the lamps.

Beginning in Revelation 2, we find records of Jesus' personal letters to each of the seven churches. In the opening verse of each letter he identifies himself in a unique manner as the one who is powerfully able to accomplish his work in his people: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things

saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." (vs 1) "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive." (vs. 8) "To the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." (vs. 12) "Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." (vs. 18) "Unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." (Rev. 3:1) "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." (vs. 7) "To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.—vs. 14

And at the close of each message Jesus said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (vs. 7; 11, 17, 29, etc.) The Holy Spirit is the agency of our Lord by which the church during the Gospel Age is kept safely through the multitude of portentous, faith-trying experiences outlined in the Book of Revelation. Some of these testings involved weaknesses of the flesh, as they erupt into problems within the church. The world intruded itself into the church, causing troubles. And certainly the Adversary had a hand in the history of the church and growth of the great Antichrist system which persecuted the true members of Christ's body.

The three enemies of the Christian—the world, the flesh, and the Devil—have been actively at work during the past two thousand years beginning with the first advent of our Lord, just as was predicted. But our great High Priest has been tenderly caring for all the needs of the candlesticks—keeping them trimmed and burning.

It is also the Holy Spirit of truth which leads us into *all truth*. (John 14:17,26) The Holy Spirit is the means by which the wonderful promises are held out to the faithful disciples of Jesus, those who “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” (Rev. 14: 4) Some of the most precious and inspiring promises are given to us in and through the workings of the Holy Spirit on the mind of John the Revelator. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2:7) “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—vs. 10

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” (vs. 17) “To him that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: [I appoint unto you a kingdom!] and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: [All unrighteousness and evil will be completely destroyed *during* that Messianic kingdom of our Lord.] *even as I received of my Father*. I will give him the morning star.”—vss. 26-28

The now obscure hope of the millennial morning will then be grandly realized. The small, shimmering flicker from the candlesticks will become a bright sun which will shine for the healing of the nations. And when the thousand years are ended “there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle [the light of the Gospel Age], neither light of the sun [the greater light of the Millennial Age]; for the LORD God giveth them light [when all is restored]: and they shall reign forever and ever.”—Rev. 22:2-5

Let us lay hold on the wonderful promises which our Lord, through the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our hearts to claim: “I appoint unto you a kingdom!” □

Christian Life and Doctrine

Naaman, the Leper

***"Take heed therefore that the light which
is in thee be not darkness."***

—Luke 11:35

LEPROSY is a disfiguring disease. Until recent times, to those who contracted leprosy it was a death sentence—similar in this respect to the modern day disease, AIDS. In fact, many who have fallen victim to AIDS are treated as though they had leprosy since many in our society want to treat the disease by isolating those who have it, as they did for centuries with those who had leprosy.

Today we say "*someone who has AIDS.*" But the Bible does not say "*someone who has leprosy.*" It says someone IS a leper. Notice how language changes the situation. We might think we are the same person even when we are sick. But our language implies we are not the same when we become a leper. Lepers in Israel were cut off from the fellowship of their friends and family—they were without hope, living the best way they could by begging. In a few instances, lepers were healed. In Leviticus, chapter 14, the High Priest is told how to be sure someone has been healed of leprosy, and the rituals to be performed if the claim was accurate.

One of the more interesting accounts of the healing of a leper is contained in I Kings, chapter 5. This leper was a Syrian general whose name was Naaman. We read: "At this time the armies of the king of Syria were commanded by a certain Naaman; a great captain, high in his master's favor; brave, too, and a man of wealth, but a leper. Naaman's wife had a servant, a young Israelite maid that had been captured by Syrian freebooters; and this maid said to her mistress, If only my lord would betake himself

to the prophet in Samaria! He would have cured him soon enough of his leprosy. Upon this, Naaman went to this master, and told him what the Israelite maid had said; and the king of Syria promised to send him with a letter to the king of Israel. So he set out with thirty talents of silver and 6,000 gold pieces, and ten suits of clothing. And the letter he carried to the king of Israel ran thus, Know by these presents that I am sending my servant Naaman to thee to be cured of his leprosy.”—II Kings 5:1-6, **Knox Translation**

Naaman must have been an outstanding general to hold such a high position despite his handicapping disease. If he had been an Israelite, he would not have been allowed to command an army. He would have been quarantined, and considered unclean. Our conclusions are that Naaman had faith that the Israelitish prophet could cure him; that he was quite willing to pay a great deal of money to regain his health; and he was also quite willing to go to the king of Israel for help in this matter. He assumed that the royal court would be the home of such a great prophet in Israel.

Consider this situation from the viewpoint of the king of Israel. He read the letter from the king of Syria and reasoned that it might be some sort of plot to provoke a war. The king reasoned, “Am I God that he should send a leper to me to be cured?” Everyone was aware that if God did not heal the leper, leprosy was not a curable disease. He wondered why the king did not send Naaman to the Prophet Elisha? Did the king fear that Elisha did not have the power to cure leprosy; or if he had the power, perhaps he would not use it on behalf of a Syrian?

But Elisha did learn of this affair, and told the king to send Naaman to him. “So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the door of Elisha’s house. Elisha sent word out to him, Go and bathe seven times in the Jordan, if thou wouldst have health restored to thy flesh and be clean. At this, Naaman was for going back home; Why, he said angrily, I thought he

would come out to meet me and stand here invoking the name of his God; that he would touch the sore with his hand and cure me. Has not Damascus its rivers, such water as is not to be found in Israel? Why may I not bathe and find healing there? But as he turned indignantly to go away, his servants came and pleaded with him [to do what the prophet had prescribed].”—II Kings 5:9-13, KT

Naaman was a powerful personage, not used to being treated with such indifference. This “great” prophet did not even come out to see how great Naaman was, and how much can be earned by treating him. No wonder Naaman was angry! Yet we become more familiar with his character when we realize that his servants were not afraid to offer him their advice, even contrary to his own expressed wishes. They could have said, “How terrible! We have all been insulted by this so-called Israelitish prophet!” But Naaman did not become a great general by surrounding himself with “yes” men. He listened to their good counsel, and although it might prove him quite foolish, he did as the Prophet Elisha had directed and went down to the Jordan River. He dipped himself once—no change! He dipped himself a second time—still no change! A third, and a fourth time! It may have seemed as if he was making a big mistake. A fifth and sixth dipping, and still no change. But, after washing in the Jordan’s waters a seventh time—Naaman was healed! His faith had made him whole!

Returning to Elisha’s home, he graciously thanked the prophet, saying, “Now pray accept a gift from thy servant to prove his gratitude! As the LORD I serve is a living God, Elisha answered, I will accept nothing from thee.” Here we receive more insight into Naaman’s character. He could have been delighted about being freed from the dread disease, especially since it was so simple—not even involving an audience with the prophet, and devoid of any charges of any kind! But Naaman felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for this miracle, compelling him to

return and to offer Elisha a gift. His heart was enlarged because of the wonderful salvation God had given to him!

Jesus used Naaman as an example of faith when teaching the people of Nazareth. (Luke 4:25-27) At the time that Jesus returned to Nazareth, the townspeople were amazed at how different Joseph's 'son' had become. They expected him to perform miracles such as those he did in Capernaum. But, because familiarity breeds indifference, if not contempt, Jesus showed them that God's special people do not always receive the blessing: "I tell you of a truth many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them were cleansed save Naaman the Syrian."

Were there many lepers in Israel at that time? Two chapters after the story of Naaman (II Kings 7) we read about Elisha and four lepers. Why didn't Elisha heal those lepers? Obviously, it was not that he lacked the power to do so. But *they lacked faith* that God would heal them through the prophet, and so they remained lepers. The *profession* of faith is not what is important—it is easy to say, "LORD, LORD!" But the exercise of an active, living faith brings the blessing. Naaman demonstrated his faith by repeatedly—seven times—washing himself in the Jordan. The number seven is used in the Bible as a representation of completeness. A half-hearted, incomplete faith would not have brought about his cleansing from the leprous, sinful condition.

The widow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian, both illustrate Jesus' point, that God dispenses his benefits when, where, and to whom he pleases. He was instructing those in Nazareth that they could receive God's blessings only if they had the right heart attitude, if they exercised real faith. But they did not: "All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled

with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.”—vss. 28,29

Of course they did not succeed in killing Jesus. He left their area, never to return, because they showed that they were unworthy of God’s grace. Likewise the entire nation of Israel, with the exception of a remnant, proved unworthy. And so, a few years after Jesus had been crucified, the Gospel was sent to the Gentiles—again illustrating that God’s favors go to those who appreciate them, who have faith in Him.

We read about ten lepers whom Jesus cleansed: As Jesus “entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: *and he was a Samaritan*. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”—Luke 17:12-19

Perhaps the cleansed Samaritan became a footstep follower of the Master when the Gentiles were accepted into God’s favor, for this miracle affected his heart and life. Perhaps the nine never were moved to call Jesus, Master. Although he had touched their lives dramatically, it apparently had no effect upon their hearts.

The Scriptures often use symbols to convey specific meanings. Some symbols are explained—others are not, having been left for us to determine their meaning by their use. Leprosy is of the latter category, and we have determined that it represents sin, because:

1.) Leprosy has loathsome characteristics—it grossly disfigures those who suffer from it;

2.) Leprosy is progressive in nature. It begins in a small way, but eventually infects the entire body. Another symbol of sin—leaven—is similar in this respect: “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” (Gal. 5:9);

3.) Leprosy can be highly infectious, which is the reason for the isolation of the victims;

4.) Leprosy is incurable by human means.

In each of these respects, leprosy is a very apropos picture of sin. Sin has disfigured the human race, marring the beauty of perfection in God’s original creation. Sin cannot be eradicated by anyone except God. Sin is infectious in the sense that when it is nearby it becomes familiar—we can become no longer outraged by it, and, in fact, begin to think of it as natural and normal, therefore allowing it to affect our lives also. Sin starts out in a small measure, but eventually infects whatever it touches.

In a dialog between the priests and Jehovah, we read “Ask now the priests to decide this question of Law: If one carries in the skirt of his garment flesh that is holy and with his skirt touches bread or oil or any kind of food, does what he touch become holy? And the priests answered, No! [*Holiness is not infectious.*] Then said Haggai, If one who is unclean because he has come in contact with a dead body should touch any of these articles of food, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered, It shall be unclean. [*Unholiness is infectious.*] Then answered Haggai, So is this people before Me, says the LORD: and what they offer is unclean [because they who offer it are themselves unclean].”—Hag. 2:11-14, **Amplified Bible**

There are additional lessons to learn from the story of Elisha and Naaman, as we discover in II Kings 5:20-25: “To Gehazi, the prophet’s servant, the thought came, Here is this Syrian, this Naaman, with all his gifts, and my master has sent him away

no poorer than he came. As the LORD is a living God, I mean to run after him and bring back some trifle with me. So after Naaman Gehazi went; and Naaman, when he saw him running up, dismounted from his chariot and went to meet him; Is all well? he asked. All is well, said the other, but my master has sent me with a message to thee: Here are two young prophets but now come to visit me, from the hill country of Ephraim; to these thou mayest well give a talent of silver and two suits of clothing. Better two talents, Naaman said, and would take no denial. So two of his servants must shoulder a sack that held a talent of silver and a suit of clothes each of them, and carry these in front of Gehazi. Evening had fallen when he reached home, took their load from them to lay it up in the house, and sent them away on their journey; then he went in to wait on his master."—KT

Gehazi had long been associated with the Prophet Elisha as his servant, but apparently he learned nothing from him. Familiarity, once again, appears to have bred indifference. Gehazi reasoned that since the Syrian general was so eager to pay Elisha for his services, and Elisha would not hear of it, there would be nothing wrong with getting a little profit out of this occasion himself. Because he coveted wealth, and things that wealth can buy, he, first, lied to Naaman by telling him that his master sent him; second, lied by indicating that the money and clothes were for other young prophets, and not for himself; third, he hid the wealth in his home so he would not have to explain it to Elisha, or share it with anyone; and fourth, he lied to Elisha when asked where he has been, replying to Elisha's question that he had not gone anywhere.

The result of these deceptions was predictable. Elisha was very displeased with his servant and said, "To thee, and to thy race forever, Naaman's leprosy shall cling. And Gehazi went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."—vs. 27

The Apostle Paul implores the Early Christians, "We beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (II Cor.

6:1) Gehazi had surely received the grace of Elisha in vain. He forfeited whatever cleansing he had, and became unclean. Jesus said, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26) Gehazi dreamed of money, garments, olive groves, vineyards, sheep, oxen, menservants, and maidservants. He thought he had gained the whole world, but instead he lost his soul—his life.

We have noted how God bestows his favor upon whomever he please, generally in proportion to the active faith possessed. Naaman was healed; others in Israel were not. We have seen how leprosy pictures sin. Since we have been cleansed of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, and his ransom sacrifice on our behalf, we should be grateful and give the glory to God.

Another lesson to learn is to never allow familiarity to breed indifference. Remember Gehazi who received in vain the grace of God in the privilege of serving Elisha the prophet. He seemed for a long period of time to serve his master faithfully, but later became unfaithful. He was tempted with worldly wealth, and lost everything to the terrible disease of leprosy which eventually took his life. We will not attain salvation because we have been walking in the right way for many years. We must continue serving God and righteousness until God says, It is enough. May the words of the psalmist, David, be our constant prayer: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—Ps. 51:7

RENEWED DEVOTEDNESS

*Come, let us anew our journey pursue, roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will let us gladly fulfill, and our talents improve
By the patience of hope, and the labor of love.*

Talking Things Over

Statistical Report

for the year ended September 30, 1988

	Receipts	Expenditures
General Fund	\$186,594.59	
Radio (Domestic Only)	15,991.56	\$119,323.01
Television	6,501.92	43,540.00
Traveling Speakers (U.S.A. and Overseas)	1,190.00	32,341.54
Overseas (Incl. Radio)	4,600.00	98,613.89
Recorded Lecture Service	3,285.24	3,558.31
Free Literature	172.50	172.50
Free Subscriptions	243.00	243.00
Sales of Dawn Publications	45,668.71	385,544.23
Advertising (Magazines & Newspapers)	56,317.00	113,876.07
Film Service	37,800.00	61,460.89
Other (Interest, Securities, etc.)	<u>89,352.31</u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL before bequests	\$447,717.84	\$858,673.44
Bequests Received	<u>\$1,301,259.51</u>	<u> </u>
	<u>\$1,748,977.35</u>	<u>\$858,673.44</u>

For the fiscal year reported, the Dawn had an operating loss, before bequests, of \$410,955.60. Bequests in the amount of \$1,301,259.51 adjusted this balance to a total net gain of \$890,303.91.

Income from contributions and earnings other than bequests was up 8.0% from the prior year, while expenses showed a decrease of 1.0%.

During the past year we were able to maintain a continuing high level of activity in the use of various media available for promulgating the Word of truth. Radio, television, printing of books and booklets, distribution of films, audio and video tapes, study courses, and direct mail and magazine advertising have all been used. Many classes around the United States; Canada; England, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Greece in Europe; India; Australia; New Zealand; and Brazil, Peru, Guyana and Argentina in South America; and Nigeria in Africa, have cooperated and shared with the Dawn in these vital witness activities.

The many responses received daily indicate that our message is indeed giving hope to people in these days of world despair, helping to inspire a renewed interest and credibility in the Bible, where it is found that the future is as bright as the promises of God. Some of these encouraging letters are printed in each issue of the monthly Dawn magazine to serve as an impetus for all to carry on in this work.

The monthly Dawn magazine was first published in 1932 at an annual subscription price of \$1.00. This cost has never been increased, and remains still \$1.00 for twelve issues in this, our fifty-sixth year of publication. This must be some kind of a record!

The many brethren who have served at the Dawn over the past years, and those of us who are here today, rejoice in sharing with all of you the privileges of telling the glad tidings, especially in these closing days of the Gospel Age, as the mounting evidences of prophetic fulfillment tell us that the fruition of our hope—the kingdom time—is very near.

May the LORD continue to guide and direct us all into his blessed kingdom. And in the meantime let us do with our might what our hands find to do.

It is good to sing praises to our God; for He is gracious and a song of praise is most fitting and right.” —Psalm 147:1

Encouraging Letters

Gentle and Touching

Dear Brethren: Greetings in the name of our present King. I would like to keep the video tape, "The World's Only Hope—Divine Healing." We continue to enjoy these gentle and touching messages. What a hope and comfort they are as a witness to our friends and neighbors. They are such a lovely way to glorify our wonderful Heavenly Father's name and plans. It is a joy to receive and show them. May the Lord continue to bless and prosper this worthy work. Sincerely in his service.—*MI*

Enriches School Curriculum

Dear Sirs: Thank you for your cooperation in assisting us to enrich our school curriculum through your videotape library. Sincerely.—*ME*

Must Preach the Gospel

Dear Friends: I am sending you \$5.00 for the Dawn Mis-

sionary work. I am glad to see the Dawn work going out over radio and TV. Like Paul said, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," the Good News! I was interested in the letter in the Dawn of the minister of 35 years who accepted the truth. The great masses remain almost in total darkness. Nevertheless we rejoice that the LORD has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Let us continue to carry the light in this world of darkness. With best wishes. Sincerely.—*VA*

Not Finding Hearing Ears

Dear Dawn Bible Students: Thank you for your letter and offer of the "Book of Books," but it was included in my first order. I found it absolutely a joy and I would gladly make a gift of it to friends but they are all brain-washed by the religion they are involved with, and will not read anything but their own books, which I find very sad. I wish I could get your program on the radio, but

will keep on trying. Keep up the good work. Sincerely yours.—*NY*

Happy Subscriber!

Dear Dawn: Please renew my subscription to your monthly magazine, The Dawn. I have been a subscriber for nearly a year, after acquiring your address from the Sunday, Parade. At that time I asked for several other publications, all of which I have enjoyed thoroughly. Thank you for the tremendous service you render, and for the quality of your publications. They are a pleasure to read and very informative as an aid to Bible study. In these days of high costs, I would not have believed it possible to receive so much for such a small sum.

I am indeed a happy and grateful subscriber. Aside from my renewal to The Dawn, please send the following (13) booklets. Thank you.—*TN*

Book Shelves 30 Years

The Dawn Publishers: In 1956 I was in Memphis and met a lady who mailed me a book when I had gone back to San Francisco. This book, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," was lost among my books and I never read it until now! It has meant so much to me. I would love to have the complete set of Studies in the Scriptures. Please send the remaining five books to me. I am 86 years old but I still teach a Bible class. Please let me know if they are in print.—*TN*

• • • Obituaries

Sister Eleanor Young, Waverly, PA—October.

Sister Mary Zerod, Bay City, MI—October.

Sister Anna Weaver, Fresno, CA—October 25. Age, 89.

Sister Louise Lunda, Jackson, MI—October 27.

Sister Julia Ryba, Detroit, MI—November 1. Age, 93.

Sister Ruth New, San Antonio, TX—November 6. Age, 77.

Sister Genowefa Ratanski, New Jersey—November 7. Age, 101.

Brother David Dinwoodie, Jersey Cy., NJ—Nov. 12. Age, 100.

Brother Ray Carter, New Haven, CT—December. Age, 67.

Speakers' Appointments

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

M. Balko, Sr.
Seattle, WA January 8-31
Joseph Panucci
Phoenix, AZ January 1,2
Tucson, AZ 3,4

T. Passios
Phoenix, AZ January 1

L.B. Post
Middletown, NY January 15

Conventions

CHICAGO, IL, December 31, January 1,2—Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, 60007 For information & programs write to: Mr. T. Ruggirello, 720 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Roselle, 60172 For accommodations, call: Mr. A. Cook: (312) 498-4124

ST. PETERSBURG, FL, January 8—Majestic Park Homes, Inc., 8300 Seminole Blvd. (Alt. 19) Contact: Stella Slavich, 3401 Rochelle Ct., Clearwater 34621
Phone: (813) 786-3795

LOS ANGELES, CA, January 15—Masonic Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Ave., Burbank. Contact: Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
Phone: (213) 454-5248

PALO ALTO, CA, January 21,22—San Jose Masonic Temple, 2500 Masonic Drive, San Jose. Contact: Irene Altuvilla, 1201 Sycamore Ter., Sp. 67, Sunnyvale, CA 94086
Phone: (408) 296-1913

DETROIT, MI, January 29—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Detroit. Contact Frank Nemesh: Phone: (313) 649-6588.

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 17-19—Sierra Inn, 2600 Auburn Blvd. Contact: Mrs. E.F. Lankford, 6000 19th Ave. 95820
Phone: (916) 457-0569

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 4,5,6—Plaza Inn, 603 Lee Road, Orlando 32810. Contact: Edmund Blicharz, 320 Raven Rock, Longwood, FL 32750 for information. Room reservations must be turned in by February 15 in order to guarantee special group rates. Address all requests for reservations to Plaza Inn.

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL, April 7-9—Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Road, Warren, MI Contact Frank Nemesh: Phone: (313) 649-6588

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, CHATTANOOGA, TN—July 21-27.