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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

GOD AND CREATION SERIES, Part 9

Deliverance Promised

"The LORD said, . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

—Genesis 3:14,15

MAN, THE HIGHEST of all God's earthly creatures, was endowed with faculties reflecting the image of the Creator. However, he had failed to pass the simple test of obedience to which he had been subjected. He had transgressed the law of his Creator, and now must die—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:19) In the divine wisdom, all of Adam's progeny have inherited the death penalty; all are born imperfect and, unable to resist the ravages of disease, ultimately die, for the "wages of sin is death."—Rom. 6:23

But God still loved his erstwhile human children, and even while sentencing Adam and Eve to death gave an indication that an opportunity of deliverance from the penalty would be provided. It is not plainly stated, but this is clearly implied in the statement to the 'serpent' that the seed of the woman would bruise its head. Even this obscure assertion seemed to give our first parents some hope that the Creator would do something about their plight, for when Seth was born Eve said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."—Gen. 4:25

Eve, of course, did not understand that the seed mentioned by God was the great Deliverer, the Messiah of promise and prophecy, or that it would be more than six thousand years before the 'head' of the 'serpent' would be

'bruised' by this seed. As the Creator's plan unfolds throughout his Word, it becomes clear that the work of deliverance implied by God's statement to the serpent will be accomplished by a powerful government, or kingdom, under the control of the seed of promise.

In the 20th chapter of Revelation we are presented with considerable information concerning this kingdom and the deliverance it will bring to humanity. Even the dead are to be restored to life. Verses 1 and 2 read, "I saw an angel come down from heaven, . . . and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." This language recalls to our minds the serpent's activity in Eden and, together with the remaining verses of the chapter, assures us that the 'bruising' mentioned by the LORD implies a complete deliverance of mankind from the miasma of sin and death into which they were plunged when father Adam was induced by Satan to disobey God's law.

A more definite promise of deliverance was given to Abraham. To him God said, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen.22: 18) In Acts 3:21 there is the expression, "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Verse 25 reads, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Here the Apostle Peter revealed that the blessing which God promised would come to all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham is, in reality, their restoration—their deliverance from death—during the 'times of restitution of all things'.

Jacob's Prophecy

The promise which God made to Abraham was reiterated to his son, Isaac and to his grandson, Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons, and toward the end of his life he gathered them around him and pronounced individual

blessings upon them—this parental blessing taking the form of prophecies. To his son, Judah, he said, “Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”—Gen. 49:9,10

This prophecy was uttered by Jacob while he was living in Egypt, and the reference to the ‘couched lion’ reflects this. In Egypt at that time the claimed royal right of the pharaohs to rule was symbolized by a couched lion. By employing this symbol, Jacob was saying in his prophecy that the ‘sceptre’—the right to rule so far as the promises of God are concerned—belonged to his son, Judah, and his descendants, the tribe of Judah. In this prophecy Jacob undoubtedly had in mind the promise to his grandfather, Abraham, concerning his seed. And this seed, he explains, would be ‘Shiloh’, and that unto him ‘shall the gathering of the people be’.

The name Shiloh means ‘tranquil’, or ‘peaceful’. It is one of the Old Testament titles assigned to the seed of Abraham, and suggests that this promised Deliverer would be a peacemaker, not only among the people who would be gathered to him, but a peacemaker also between God and men, restoring the harmony that existed before man transgressed divine law. Another title assigned to this promised Deliverer is the “Prince of Peace.”—Isa. 9:6

In this same prophecy of Isaiah we are informed concerning the Prince of Peace that “the government shall be upon his shoulder.” This is the government over which Shiloh holds the sceptre, or the right to rule. It is the Messianic Kingdom, and in Micah 4:2 it is presented under the symbol of a mountain, “the mountain of the LORD.” We are assured that in this mountain, or kingdom, the people will learn the LORD’s ways, and as a result will beat their

“swords” into “plowshares” and their “spears” into “pruninghooks,” and will learn war no more.

In Isaiah 25:8 the LORD presents us with another promise descriptive of the blessings which will reach the people in his mountain—the Messianic Kingdom. One of these blessings will be the destruction of death. The LORD will “swallow up death in victory,” the promise reads, and will “wipe away tears from off all faces.” Another blessing to reach the people through the administration of this government is described as the destroying of the “face of the covering cast over all people.” This is a covering, or veil of superstition and misunderstanding pertaining to God and to his loving purposes in the creation of man, and his plan for restoring him to life.

Included in this covering, which hides God’s truth from the people, are all the God-dishonoring theories arising out of Satan’s lie, “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) The majority have been pleased to believe that there is no death. (Isa. 25:7) But we can thank God that this beclouding lie, together with all the other false notions which Satan has woven into a covering and thrown over the eyes of the people, will be removed. And since in this same kingdom, death is to be swallowed up in victory, it will become true for the first time since the transgression in Eden that there is no death. In Revelation 21:4 we read that “there shall be no more death.” If there is no death now, and never has been, as that old serpent has induced nearly all mankind to believe, how could it be said that then there shall be no more death?

The ‘Sour Grape’ of Sin

Another very interesting and reassuring promise of deliverance from the result of original sin is found in Jeremiah 31:29,30, and reads, “In those days [the days of Messiah’s rule] they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every man shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on

edge.” The lesson here is obvious. It was father Adam who ate the original ‘sour grape’ of sin. The result has been passed on to the entire human race; all have suffered from his act of disobedience, all have either died, or are dying.

But this, the LORD assures us, is to change. In those days when the promised seed of Abraham will rule as the Prince of Peace, he will also dispense blessings of health and life. This will be possible because Jesus took the sinner’s place in death, and during his reign will offer to every individual of the human race an opportunity to obey and live. No longer will the people die because of Adam’s sin. If they die at all, it will be because they have individually eaten the sour grape of sin. This will be during the times of restitution of all things, and Peter says that then it will be only those who individually disobey who will be “destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:23

Christ Is Born

The birth of Jesus attested the truthfulness of the prophetic testimony concerning a coming Deliverer, and deliverance for the sin-cursed race. The angel, in announcing Jesus’ birth, said, “Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”—Luke 2:10,11,13,14

The words, ‘Unto you is born this day’, mark the essential difference between this angelic announcement and the promises and prophecies which the Creator had previously given through his holy prophets. At that time these promises and prophecies began to be fulfilled! One of the prophecies identified the city in which the promised ruler would be born. It was to be in Bethlehem, the ancient “city of David.” (Micah 5:2) So, when the angel announced his birth he called special attention to this—“Unto you is born

this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

All of God's promises, beginning with his statement in Eden that the serpent's head would be 'bruised' by a seed, implied a coming deliverance from death. And now the angel confirmed this. The one who was born in Bethlehem was to be a Savior, and this Savior was Christ, the Messiah of promise.

It was a dramatic moment for the shepherds on the Judean hills to whom the angel announced the birth of the Savior. There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. This heavenly host of angels had served God faithfully throughout the millenia when he was making his promises of a coming seed who would bless the people. Even the angels did not understand all the implications of those promises, but they knew they were expressions of God's goodwill toward his fallen human creatures. Knowing this, we are not surprised at how enthusiastically they proclaimed the birth of Jesus to be a manifestation of this foretold goodwill, the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises!

Jesus entered upon his ministry at the age of thirty, which fully harmonized with the prophetic testimony. We read, "He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." (Luke 8:1) These glad tidings, the angel had said, were to be 'unto all people'—the good news that the Creator had sent a Savior, and had made provision for the establishment of a kingdom through which the blessings of salvation from sin, sickness, and death would reach the people.

It did not at once become apparent to the followers of Jesus that his kingdom would not be immediately established. They did not realize until later that it was first of all necessary for the Savior to die for those he had come to save, before they could be permanently released from sickness and death. True, he announced to them that he

would give his flesh for the life of the world, but they did not grasp the real import of what he was saying.

The Twelve were with him as he preached and showed the glad tidings of the kingdom. They witnessed his miracles of healing the sick, of cleansing lepers, of casting out devils, of raising the dead. They cannot be blamed for supposing that this was the actual beginning of the foretold work of deliverance, and that his kingdom would soon be fully established and its blessings of health and life extended to all the families of the earth as God promised would be done through the seed.

They did not at the time realize that the marvelous miracles performed by Jesus were intended merely as illustrations of the worldwide program of miracles which must wait for other aspects of the divine plan of deliverance to be accomplished. It is gloriously true that in God's **due time** all the blind eyes will be opened; all the deaf ears unstopped; all the halt and the lame made sound of limb; when the people will not say, "I am sick." And in that **due time** those who "sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Before this can happen, the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," must have been paid by the Savior, so the teeming millions who have died and are held in the great prison-house of death—the Bible hell—can be released. **In due time** Jesus will use the "keys of hell and of death" to set the captives free.—Rev. 1:18; 20:13

Witnesses of Jesus

After Jesus' death and resurrection, and just before returning to his Father in heaven, he commissioned his disciples to be his witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It was not then the **due time** for his kingdom to be established and its blessings to flow out to the people, but his followers were to continue telling the world about him as the Savior and coming Deliverer. They were to continue preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. And those first disciples were faithful to this commission.

How stirring is the sermon preached by Peter, and recorded in Acts 3:12-26! This sermon is in explanation of a miracle in which Peter was instrumental in healing a man who had been lame from the time of his birth. It was in this sermon that he spoke of the times of restitution of all things—the restoration to health of this one man being but an illustration of what would be accomplished for the whole world of mankind when Jesus came the second time. Not only was restitution to be a boon to the sick, but it would also mean the resurrection of all the dead.—Acts 4:1,2

Culmination of the Promise

In the last chapter of the Bible—Revelation 22—we have the hope of deliverance through Jesus and his kingdom presented to us in symbolic language. First we see “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (vs. 1) The throne symbolizes the kingdom. It was the glad tidings concerning the establishment of this kingdom that Jesus and his disciples so faithfully preached. It is the throne of God ‘and of the Lamb’. The Lamb is symbolic of Jesus and his sacrifice on behalf of mankind. Combined with the throne symbolism, the full thought presented is that the promised blessings of health and life will reach the people through the agencies of a divine government, these blessings being made available through the death of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”—John 1:29

These promised blessings were pictured by “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal” which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruit, . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” This language again takes our minds back to Eden, when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden to prevent them from partaking of the trees of life and living forever.—Gen 3:22

Revelation 22:3 declares, "There shall be no more curse." Ever since the fall in Eden, a terrible curse has rested upon humanity—the curse of sin and death. It has blighted the happiness and peace of all mankind. No one has been free from it. All "in Adam" die. (I Cor. 15:22) But God loved the race of lost and dying sinners and provided a Savior, the seed of promise, who as God's Lamb gave his life in sacrifice as the price of redemption. And now, in this last chapter of the Bible, we are comforted by the thought that from the throne of God and of the Lamb, water of life, clear as crystal, will flow out to mankind; and that there shall be no more curse. Then, as the Apostle Paul assures us, will be fulfilled the promise, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—I Cor. 15:55 ■

THE MORE WE come to appreciate divine justice and the righteousness of the sentence of death against our race, the more also we come to appreciate the love and mercy of God toward us, and to rejoice that he was not willing that any should perish, and hence made provision wide enough, high enough, deep enough, that all might turn unto him and live—have everlasting life. This provision of mercy cannot ignore the sin, nor can it permit the sinner to ignore it. It is necessary that the redeemed should know, should appreciate, their fallen condition, the justice of their sentence of death, and that their recovery is wholly a matter of divine mercy. Unless they learn this lesson, they could never appreciate the divine arrangements. ■

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Deception in the Family

KEY VERSE: *"He said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing."* — **Genesis 27:35**

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Genesis 27:6-8, 15-27*

BECAUSE ESAU WAS the firstborn of Isaac and Rebekah, the birthright belonged to him; however, as the Scriptures point out, "He despised his birthright" (34), and was willing to sell it to his brother, Jacob, for a paltry sum: a tangible meal of red pottage which he loved more than his birthright as the firstborn.

Isaac and Rebekah were both aware that the family birthright held the heirship to the wonderful promise God had made to Isaac's father, Abraham, regarding his seed. Rebekah remembered that the LORD had given her assurance that she would give birth to twins, and that the elder would serve the younger. Although this was contrary to the custom of the first-born being the heir, apparently she never ques-

tioned the propriety of the arrangement.

When Isaac "was old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see" (Gen. 27: 1), he called Esau, his older son, asking him to go out into the field to get some venison and prepare it for him, after which Isaac said he would bestow his blessing upon him. It seems Esau had not told his father he had sold his birthright to Jacob, otherwise Isaac would not have arranged to pronounce his special blessing upon him.

Meanwhile, Rebekah, hearing her husband's instructions to Esau and knowing whom the LORD had chosen, instructed Jacob to get "two good kids of the goats; and she said," having in mind the interests of Jacob, "I will make them savory meat for thy father,

such as he loveth." She then began to carry out her delusive plan. Esau was covered with hair, while Jacob had smooth skin, so his mother put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands and upon the smooth of his [Jacob's] neck." (vs. 16) When Jacob brought the meat to Isaac, there was some doubt on his part as to who stood before him. Jacob, however, insisted he was Esau; and after some hesitation, Isaac gave his blessing to Jacob.

Many have condemned Jacob and his mother for this obvious deception, but it worked out in harmony with God's purpose, since Jacob held God's promise in such high esteem, and Esau did not. The Apostle Paul quotes prophecy proving that God had chosen Jacob to inherit the promise made to his grandfather. Paul said, "This is what the promise said, 'About this time I will return and Sarah shall have a son'. Nor is that all; something similar happened to Rebecca when she had conceived children by

one husband, our ancestor Isaac. Even before they had been born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose of election might continue, not by works but by his call) she was told, 'The elder shall serve the younger'." (Rom. 9:9-12, **Revised Standard Version**) Paul continues quoting the Prophet Malachi, saying: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated [loved less]."—Mal. 1:2,3

It was God's plan that Jacob should be the heir, and there is no indication in the Bible that either Jacob or his mother were condemned in the course they took. It is well to remember that the promise made to Abraham, and passed on to Isaac and Jacob, embraces the development of the 'seed of Abraham'. The Apostle Paul declares in Galatians 3:16, that Christ is the true inheritor of this blessing: "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and thy thy seed, which is Christ." ■

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 14

Dealing with Disappointment

KEY VERSE: *"It came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?" – Genesis 29:25*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 29:15-30

DEALING WITH LIFE'S disappointments with courage and hope is a lesson we all must learn. Jacob's long struggle to obtain the hand of Rachel sets before us an encouraging example of perseverance and persistence derived from our faith in the goodness of God.

"Isaac called Jacob . . . and charged him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." (Gen. 28:1) He insisted that his son, Jacob, journey to Padan-aram, to take a wife from among the daughters of his Uncle Laban. This was a long journey by foot, of some five hundred miles.

When Jacob finally reached his destination, he first met a group of shepherds gathered at a covered well caring for their flocks of

sheep. The herdsmen were awaiting the arrival of Rachel with her father's flock, before the well could be uncovered. Finally she arrived and Jacob made himself known to her. As he greeted her with the customary kiss, it was love at first sight!

While Jacob uncovered the well and watered her sheep for her, Rachel ran to tell her father, Laban, who upon hearing of Jacob, his sister's son, ran to meet him and bring him home. After Jacob had helped for a month around the home, Laban said to him: "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."—vss. 14, 15, **New International Version**

Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel, who is described as beautiful and well favored. Jacob was in love with Rachel, and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." (vss. 17-19, **NIV**) So Jacob did serve seven years to have Rachel; which seemed to him like only a few days because of the deep love he felt for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife; for my time is completed." When evening came, he took his daughter, Leah, and gave her to Jacob. When morning came, there was Leah! Because women were veiled in the Near East, Laban was able to make the switch without Jacob realizing he had been tricked until he and Leah were alone. What a shock of disappointment to Jacob!

Jacob, challenging Laban, said, "What is this you

have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?" To which Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one." Jacob could not believe that Laban so greatly deceived him! What a huge disappointment! But Laban, unmoved, said, "Finish this daughter's bridal week, then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work." Jacob's faith, still unshaken, thought it best to accept the situation, even though it was a deep frustration to him. Eventually his patience was rewarded. He fulfilled his commitment to his uncle, and had both daughters as his wives.

The Apostle James catches the enduring essence of this lesson for us in his encouraging statement: "You know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."—James 1:3, **NIV** ■

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 21

Being Forgiveness

KEY VERSE: *"Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thy wast pleased with me." — Genesis 33:10*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 33:1-14

JACOB HAD SERVED Laban, his father-in-law, faithfully for about twenty years, (Gen. 31:38) when the LORD said unto him, "Return to the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." (vs. 3) Jacob was prospering in Padan-aram, but he considered the promises of God to be of much greater value than earthly riches. He discussed the move with his two wives, Rachel and Leah, and they indicated their willingness to return to Canaan with him.

Fearing to tell his father-in-law he was leaving, Jacob took his wives, his children, and all his earthly possessions and slipped quietly away. Laban pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him. He

said to Jacob, "You have done a foolish thing. I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me "not to say anything to Jacob either good or bad." — Gen. 31:17-29, **NIV**

After they separated on peaceful terms. "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host." (Gen. 32:1,2) Now encouraged but still fearful, Jacob sent couriers ahead to his brother, Esau, instructing them to say to him, "I have sent messengers to inform you of my coming." Returning to Jacob after delivering the message they reported that Esau was coming to meet him accompanied by four

hundred men. Jacob imagined the worst.

Prompted by fear, and thinking to save at least part of his possessions, he divided the people who were with him and his flocks into two companies, thinking that some might have a better chance for escape. All the intervening years of divine protection and blessing were not sufficient to assure Jacob that the LORD would be with him. Having done all he could do, he prayed earnestly to God.

When "Jacob looked up there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; . . . and Jacob went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept and . . . Jacob said, To see your face is like seeing the face of God now that you have received me favorably." (Gen. 33:1-10, **NIV**) Esau displayed no anger, nor did he so much as refer to what had occurred twenty years before.

All of this was in the LORD's providence. Surely Jacob's earnest prayer played a vital part in this kindly, forgiving reception. Quite possibly the 'angels of God' may have given him detailed instructions as to how to prepare Esau for this meeting. This might well have been the LORD's way of answering Jacob's prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau.

Esau inquired why the herds of cattle and sheep had been sent on ahead, and when Jacob explained that they were sent as gifts, he protested against accepting them, explaining that he already had all he needed. However, Jacob finally persuaded his brother that he should accept the gifts. Had Jacob not waited on the LORD in faith, he might well have met with quite a different reception from Esau. The two brothers had no mutual interests of sufficient importance to keep them together. So after their friendly meeting, Jacob continued on peacefully into Canaan. ■

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 28

The Ability to Bless

KEY VERSE: *"His father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations."* — Genesis 48:19

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Genesis 48:9-19

THIS SUBJECT BRINGS to mind the Almighty God, who has given to mankind the greatest of all blessings—his Son, Jesus Christ. Our lesson, centered around Joseph, reminds us of how in so many experiences of his life he pictured our Lord.

Jacob was about to die, and a messenger sent word to Joseph, who quickly went to the bedside of his aged father, bringing his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him. On this solemn occasion Jacob had the LORD uppermost in his mind and heart, and related to Joseph the covenant he had made with him at Luz, or Bethel. This was when he was favored with the inspiring vision of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with the LORD stand-

ing at the top, and angels ascending and descending upon it. (Gen. 28:10-13) This was a renewal of the covenant which God had made with Abraham to bless all the families of the earth.—Gen. 29:1

Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph and adopted them as his own sons, making them heads of tribes. Jacob indicates that these two sons of Joseph were to take the place of his own sons, Reuben and Simeon. Ephraim's chief blessing as the adopted son of Jacob seems to have been that his tribe received the largest and choicest portion of the land when Canaan was divided under the leadership of Joshua.

Joseph, realizing that his father's eyesight was failing, took precautions to place

the boys before him in the proper positions according to their ages. But Jacob purposefully ignored this in giving them his blessing.

When Joseph saw that Jacob blessed Ephraim as the firstborn instead of Manasseh, he endeavored to interfere, supposing it to be wrong. Jacob explained that although Manasseh would become the head of a great tribe, or people, the tribe of Ephraim would become much more numerous, and that in their relationship to each other the two would be known as Ephraim and Manasseh.

Even though Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, he forfeited his inheritance to the birthright, as the scripture explains: "Reuben was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn

belonged to Joseph."—I Chron. 5:1,2, **NIV**

Even as he lay dying, Jacob was certain that his people would be brought out of Egypt and into the Land of Promise. "Behold I die: but the LORD shall be with you," he reassured Joseph, "and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." —Gen. 48:21

Although the covenant with Abraham emphasized God's purpose to bless all the families of the earth through his 'seed,' it was the land that God promised in that covenant which often seemed to be the major consideration in the minds of the Israelites. But Jacob did not forget the much broader features of the covenant, made so clear in Galatians. Paul wrote: "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall **all nations** be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."—Gal. 3:8,9 ■

“O Give Thanks Unto the LORD”

*“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
for his mercy endureth forever.”*

—Psalm 136:1

WHEN DAVID OFFICIALLY became king over Israel, his first executive act was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The Ark had been separated from the Tabernacle for seventy years. This space of time covered all of King Saul's reign and Samuel's service as a judge in Israel.

The return of the Ark to Jerusalem from Abinadab's house in Baalah of Judah, represented the return of God's favor to Israel and the return of his presence among them after a long absence. The joy of the occasion was manifest in the magnificent procession of thirty thousand men, accompanied with music and song. The climax of the procession came when the Ark reached its destination, and David sang his song of thanksgiving to God.

The song began with the sentiments of our text, “Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.” (1 Chron. 16:8) It concludes with the similar words, “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.”—1 Chron. 16:34

This expression is found many times in the writings of David, and indicates his feelings toward the Creator. In the Book of Psalms it is repeated in several places. The 106th, 107th, 118th, and 136th Psalms open with these identical words. Although the **King James Translation** uses beautiful phraseology in these references to the great God of all

the universe—"For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever"—some of the force of David's description of God is lost in the translation. The **Revised Version** says, "O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his **steadfast love** endures forever." And **Rotherham**, in a similar way, says, "Give ye thanks to Jehovah. For he is good. For age-abiding is his lovingkindness."

It is particularly noteworthy that this last portion of David's expression of love and appreciation becomes a refrain that is repeated over and over in the 136th Psalm, as David relates the great and wonderful deeds of God. He concludes with thanks again, when he mentions last of all, "Who giveth food to all flesh, for his steadfast [eternal] love endures forever."—vs. 25

Those of us who have been privileged to know God in this present day should, like David, appreciate the goodness of God more and more. We should call to mind daily how he "loadeth us with benefits" (Ps. 68:19), and give thanks. We should pause each day to think of God's great deeds.

How evident it is that our Heavenly Father was especially mindful of his earthly creation when preparing this planet for their habitation. The temperature is just right. The barometric pressure varies within a limited range for human comfort. Materials for clothing and dwellings are available, as well as food and water enough for all. Billions of people are living on this earth who daily receive water, food, clothing, and shelter from his mighty and generous hand—not to mention the many other joys of living. But sad to say, much of mankind does not give a second thought to God to thank him for all of these benefits.

People today seem to have lost the disposition or attitude which was present in the pilgrim fathers who came to this land many years ago. The pilgrims had to eke out an existence from a hard and rocky soil. But they succeeded. With much effort and faith—and through God's help—they brought forth a rich harvest. The most beautiful part of this

story is that they remembered God, who was responsible for these blessings, and they set aside a feast of thanksgiving to honor him. The national holiday we in the United States will observe this month is most appropriate and thought-provoking. It reminds people that there is a God, and that he deserves our reverence and worship. It is true that Thanksgiving has become a day of feasting, and that sometimes people think more of food than of God. They forget that the day was designed as a national reminder of their wise, loving, just, and powerful Creator, and to give him thanks.

Why do not people today have the spirit of giving thanks, as did the pilgrim fathers? Perhaps they wonder why God does not do something to correct the poverty, starvation, sickness, and needs of people in countries all around the world. Or it might be that they are engrossed in the pursuit of their own lives, with all its attendant pressures. However, so that we do not expect too much of mankind today, and condemn rather than understand their attitudes, let us analyze an incident which took place during our Lord Jesus' ministry on earth.

This lesson forcefully brings to our attention the tendency for people to forget to be thankful. In Luke 17:11-19 we read: "It came to pass, as he [Jesus] went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he 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."

Only one leper—a Samaritan, to the shame of Israel—had enough gratitude to return to Jesus to give thanks, when all ten found themselves healed. We should not conclude that the other nine lepers did not have faith. Rather, they lacked appreciation. We know this because they did as Jesus bid them, and were on their way to the priests in an unclean condition, expecting a miracle to happen. And it did. As they went, they were cleansed. In the Mosaic Law, if a leper was healed, the priests had to verify their cure before they could be reinstated into society. Specific rituals had to be performed before this was possible. (See Leviticus 14.)

When Jesus began his ministry, speaking to the people of Nazareth he said: "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus [Elisha] the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." (Luke 4:27) Jesus was implying that, similarly, he would not be acceptable in his own country, by his own people; and that because of this, God would go outside the nation of Israel to select a "people for his name." (Acts 15:14) The cleansing of Naaman, and the cleansing of the Samaritan have this significance: both were outside Israel's circle of favor, and both were extremely grateful for their cleansing.

Leprosy pictures sin. Those cured of this dread disease well illustrate true Christians who have received the healing benefits of the ransom supplied by Jesus' death. And they repeat the words of the Apostle Paul, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" (II Cor. 9:15) "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. 6:23

In his letter to the church at Thessalonica, Paul wrote: "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." This scripture teaches that each experience of life is to be received with thankfulness. We are not only to be thankful for pleasant experiences,

but for the difficult ones as well. Both hold priceless lessons for us from our Father in Heaven.

When the Ark was brought to Jerusalem, and David sang his song of thanksgiving, it was a foregleam of the blessed Millennial Kingdom, when men will be fully reconciled to God through the Christ. David represented the Christ—Jesus and his church. Israel represented the world of mankind in the kingdom. The song of thanksgiving sung by David will be learned and sung by all people, expressing their gratitude to their Creator, and for his wise and wonderful plan of salvation. How blessed to realize that then the spirit of our thanksgiving holiday will be observed worldwide!

How men will praise their Creator when they see, as John saw: “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I [John] heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”—Rev. 21:1-5

“O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.” Praise ye the LORD! ■

GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR
ALL THINGS UNTO GOD AND
THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

—Ephesians 5:20

The Levites— Servants of God

THE CHILDREN OF Levi constituted one of the twelve tribes of Israel. They had a historical background in the nation which was not true of any of the other tribes, in that they were chosen by the LORD as substitutes for the firstborn of all Israel. The LORD claimed the firstborn of Israel as his, and instructed Moses that they were to be sanctified unto him. (Exod. 13:1,2) The LORD said further on this matter, "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD."—Num. 3:12,13

The Levites had been chosen to be the servants of the LORD because they proved their worthiness of this high honor in a time of great crisis. It was on the occasion when Moses came down from Mount Sinai bearing the tables of the Law, and found that the Israelites had built a golden calf, were worshipping it, and were partaking in a naked revelry of sin in voicing their rejection of Moses. "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." The Levites were ordered by Moses to put down the rebellion, which they did, and then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day."

Moses and Aaron themselves were Levites; and Aaron was chosen by the LORD, together with his four sons, to be the original priesthood in Israel. Thereafter all the priests were chosen from among the Levites. The priests, as we know, were committed to the work of offering sacrifices in connection with the services of the Tabernacle. The Levites, on the other hand, served the Tabernacle in less honorable positions; and this was true of both the priests and the non-priestly Levites in connection with the Temple when that magnificent building transcended the Tabernacle as representing the presence of God.

From God's standpoint, the tribe of Levi were the firstborn of Israel. This tribe was given no inheritance in the land when it was conquered and divided among the various tribes under Joshua. The people of this tribe depended upon the goodwill of the other tribes for their sustenance. All of this is, of course, an interesting story; but to us it is more than a story, because, without doubt, it was among those things of ancient Israel that Paul later referred to as being "shadows of good things to come."—Heb. 1:1

The Church of the Firstborn

In Hebrews 12:23 the Apostle Paul refers to the church of this Gospel Age as "the church of the firstborn," thus taking our minds back to that wonderful typical lesson of the Old Testament. In describing this church of the firstborn Paul added, "which are written in heaven." In other words, those who make up the church of the firstborn are chosen by the LORD ultimately to become his heavenly or spiritual group of servants.

Two Groups

Going back to the Old Testament pattern we observe again that there were two groups of God's servants among the Levites, some serving as priests, others as caretakers of the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Projecting that pattern into the Book of Revelation we find that there also are

two groups of God's servants in the spiritual phase of the kingdom—one group serving him as priests and kings (Rev. 20:6), and another group whose work is outlined as serving God day and night in his Temple.—Rev. 7:15

Both of these groups in the present life, even as the Levites of old, declared themselves to be on the LORD's side, and indeed they were. While there is an abundance of information given us concerning the priests of Israel, the Levites who served God in less honorable ways are only incidentally mentioned. The same is true with respect to the antitypical Levites, although we do have enough information concerning those who ultimately serve God in his Temple to identify them clearly.

In Revelation 7:9 this latter group of antitypical Levites is described as "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." The thought here is not that this great multitude is so enormous in size that it was impossible to know how many there were. It is simply God's way of stating that the number is, and would be, indefinite. This was true of the less-honored group of Levites in the type, for the LORD gave instructions to Moses, saying, "Thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel."—Num. 1:49

The identification of the 'great multitude' class in this text is very revealing, for it says that they are of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. If this phrase was intended to describe the whole world of mankind, it would simply say that these **are** all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. But it does not say that. It says that they are **of** all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. In other words, it is a group in which is represented the people of all nations. It is the same thought which we have in the text which informs us that God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. He did not intend to take all the Gentiles for his name, but only some of them. So the great multitude class

will not be the whole world of mankind, but a group made up of representatives of all nations.

This great multitude class is brought to our attention in Revelation following the account of the sealing of the 144,000, prior to the blowing of the four winds from the four corners of the earth. The great multitude are represented as crying with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."—Rev. 7:10-12

One of the elders, pictured so prominently in the Book of Revelation, inquired who these were which were arrayed in white robes, "and whence came they?" (vs. 13) It is almost as though the elder were saying that here was an unexpected development in the plan of God—a group of his servants ostensibly enjoying his favor, but not of the 144,000. The answer to this question was, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."—vss. 14,15

Many students of the Bible believe that this great multitude is a heavenly class which will be associated with the priests and kings who reign with Christ a thousand years, but serving in less honorable positions. However, attention has been called to the fact that verse 16 and 17 of Revelation 7 seem to be a quotation from Isaiah 49:8-10, which has always been considered by Bible Students as a restitution promise to the world of mankind.

First let us look at the promise, and then compare it with the alleged quotation. In verse 8 of the promise we read, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a

day of salvation have I helped thee." This was quoted by the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 6:2, and applied to the followers of Jesus. The promise shows that these, together with Jesus, accomplished that great phase of the divine plan which the Bible describes as the resurrection of the dead.

In the resurrection of the dead, in addition to "the first resurrection," (Rev. 20:6 there are three classes—the world of mankind, who are brought forth in the general resurrection; the Ancient Worthies, who are brought forth in the "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35); and the great multitude. The world of mankind are brought forth and caused to inherit the "desolate heritages." (Isa. 49:8) This is very descriptive of mankind to their restoration of human life, and to their inheritance here upon the earth before it has been returned to perfection.

But all the prisoners of death are affected by the fulfillment of this promise. They are all bidden to go forth, and those that are in darkness to "show themselves." (vs. 9) And then the promise is, "They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places." (vs. 10) This is symbolic language, but nonetheless descriptive of the method by which the restitution class is provided with life, and sustenance, and all their needs.

Now let us turn back to Revelation 7 where it says, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (vss. 16,17) We suggest that it is a far cry from enjoying pastures in all high places to the thought that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them." In other words, this is not a quotation at all, in so far as the food supply is concerned.

True, the great multitude are brought forth from the tomb by Christ and his church, but from then on, as Reve-

lation 7:16,17 indicates, they are separated from the others and given entirely different treatment. The Lamb feeds them. The thought that they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, simply reminds us that the great multitude, although exalted to a spiritual plane, will not be immortal beings and will need to have their lives sustained; and by a special dispensation, the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water.

It has been suggested that the last sentence in this chapter—"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17)—is exactly the same as in Rev. 21:4, where it promises to the restitution class that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. However, this is a very general expression, and is as true of the great multitude as of the world of mankind. We think, furthermore, that it is especially appropriate here, because the record concerning the great multitude reminds us that they passed through the great tribulation at the end of the age, while the church class was completed and had received their reward before this time. (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:9,14,15) This suggests that their suffering was beyond that of the church in some respects. Then too, since they did pass through the great tribulation they were aware that they had not attained the reward of being part of the bride class. And how comforting the thought would be to them that even under such circumstances God will be able to wipe away their tears!

Verse 16 of the chapter under discussion assures us that the sun will no longer light on the great multitude class, nor any heat. In Jesus' parable of the sower he says, concerning the seed that fell upon stony places, that while it sprang up and grew, when the sun was up they were scorched "and because they had no root they withered away." (Mark 4:6) We quote this merely to indicate that under certain circumstances the sun and its heat is used to represent persecution; and we think it may well be that the

great multitude class might have felt this heat, and the assurance that 'the sun would no more light on them, nor any heat', would be very comforting indeed. How this assurance would help to wipe away all tears from their eyes!

Servants of God

One of the definite proofs that the great multitude class is not composed of those who are restored to life on the earth during the times of restitution is the fact that they serve God day and night in his temple. A glance at the many restitution promises of the Bible will indicate that while the LORD surely has rich blessings in store for those who gain life on the earth in that final life-giving phase of the plan of God, nothing is said to indicate that mankind is given any special assignment of service—especially not in the LORD's temple.

One of the well-known restitution promises is contained in Isaiah, chapter 35. We quote, beginning with verse 3: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you." (vss. 3,4) Note that nothing is said here except that God will save those involved. They are not placed in any position of service.

We quote further: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." (vss. 5-7) Note again that there is no reference here to serving God in his temple, or anywhere else.

We continue the quote: "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way (Continued on page 37)

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Marshall KCGS 960 4:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

Claremont KTSJ 1220 9:45 a.m.
Lancaster KVOY 1340 8:15 a.m.
Los Angeles(Span) KALI 1430 5:45 a.m.
Monterey KNRV 1240 8:30 a.m.
San Francisco KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.
Tehachapi KTPI FM 103.1 8:15 a.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.
Orlando WGTO 540 9:00 a.m.
St. Augustine WSOE FM 94.5 7:15 a.m.
St. Petersburg WTIS 1110 5:00 p.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle WLFO 1220 9:45 a.m.
Rockford WRRR 1330 6:15 a.m.
West Frankfort WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.
Jeffersonville WXVW 1450 10:00 a.m.
LaPorte WCOE FM 96.7 10:00 a.m.
North Vernon WKRP 1460 8:00 a.m.

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Waterloo KXEL 1540 10:15 p.m.

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KENTUCKY

Bowling Green WBGN FM 107.1 8:15 a.m.
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LOUISIANA

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

MICHIGAN

Battle Creek WOLY 1500 1:45 p.m.
Detroit WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.
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MISSOURI

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

NEW JERSEY

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

NEW MEXICO

Los Alamos KRSN 1490 6:45 a.m.

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Buffalo WWKB 1520 11:00 p.m.
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PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
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Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Beaufort (Sat.) WVGB 1490 1:00 p.m.
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**NOTE CHANGES WHICH
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WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

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

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

Angola and Zambia

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

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

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

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

Chile (Spanish)

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

China

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

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

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

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

New Zealand

Whakalane IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

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

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

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

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

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

Novgorod FM 71.3	10:00 a.m.
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Sri Lanka

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

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

Montevideo Radio El Espectador 810	9:15 a.m.
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THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

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

Nostalgia Network—Programs are shown every Sunday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. E.T.

Pittsburgh, PA, WNEV TV 63—Programs are shown Sundays at 9:00 a.m. E.T.

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

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

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

Pacific Time—6:30 a.m.

Keystone Inspirational Network Every Sunday Morning

CALIFORNIA

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

DELAWARE

Wilmington TV 14

FLORIDA

Pensacola TV 12

GEORGIA

Rome TV 56
Tifton TV 5

IDAHO

Cottonwood TV 39

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge TV 52
Crawley TV 65
Lake Charles TV 63

MARYLAND

Leonardtown TV 52

OHIO

Bucyrus TV 54
Findlay TV 6
Marietta TV 26

PENNSYLVANIA

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

SOUTH CAROLINA

Monks Corner Cable 6

SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls TV 48

TENNESSEE

Union City TV 9

TEXAS

Corpus Christi TV 55
Falfurrias TV 7

NEWFOUNDLAND

Harbour Grace TV 25

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

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

of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—vss. 8-10

We rejoice that sorrow and suffering will flee away in the life-style of the restitution class. This is true also of the great multitude class. Indeed, it is true of those who will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. This is one of the universal blessings which comes to all the ransomed of the LORD. But in addition to this, the priestly segment of the antitypical Levites will reign with Christ as priests and kings, and in keeping with the type, the other antitypical Levites will serve God in his temple.

New Covenant Blessings

Another wonderful promise of restitution blessings for Israel and the whole world is given in Jeremiah 31:31-34. This is the promise of the New Covenant, by means of which the world will be reconciled to God and brought back into covenant relationship with him. We quote this promise:

"Behold, 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 brake, 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."

Note the fact that this promise distinctly does away with the need of the service of others. The LORD makes the covenant through his own agencies—Christ and the church—and when that covenant is made no one will have to teach his neighbor concerning the LORD, for all shall know him from the least even unto the greatest. There is no room in this promise to suppose that those who receive its blessings will be made special servants of the LORD in his temple.

Judgment Day Blessings

One of the New Testament promises of restitution is presented in the parable of the sheep and the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) The sheep of this parable are those who will be restored to life under the restitution phase of God's plan. Of these it is written, reading from verse 34-36: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Here was a group who had entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the work which was going on around them. This, of course, is symbolic language. And these righteous people inquired of the Lord, "When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"—vss. 44-46

These had, indeed, been serving—not because they had been assigned some special duties such as serving God in his temple, but because they caught the spirit of the occasion and wanted to be helpful. And the Lord explained

to them that because of this they had proved themselves worthy of receiving the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Certainly those who qualify for restitution blessings will not be a selfish class of people. They will be interested in the well-being and prosperity of others. Otherwise they could not have God's blessing at all. But there is a vast difference between this and the fact of being in a class that is given specially assigned service, as is true of the great multitude.

The Holy City

The Apostle John wrote, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first [former] heaven and the first [former] earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them."—Rev. 21:1-3

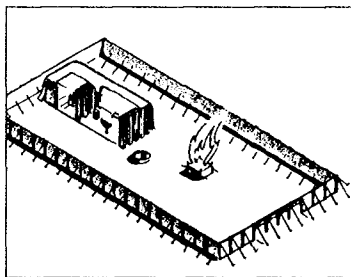
In typical Israel, the Tabernacle symbolized the presence of God; and this symbolism is utilized in this wonderful promise of restitution. Restitution blessings themselves will be a clear indication that God is with mankind and blessing them. But let us remember that in the type the non-priestly Levites served God in the Tabernacle. This was their assignment. So in the antitypical tabernacle, the same thing is true. In manifesting his presence to the people through this antitypical tabernacle, he will do so through the agencies of Christ and his church, and through those who are the antitype of those who also served God in the typical Tabernacle.

We continue to quote from Revelation 21: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.; And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words

are true and faithful." (vss. 4,5) They are not only true and faithful, but they are beautiful and reassuring! But notice that the class who receives these wonderful blessings of restitution is not assigned to serve God in his temple.

Later in this chapter (vs. 22), describing the details of the holy city that comes down from God out of heaven, John says, "I saw no temple therein: for the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." This is an important statement; and it emphasizes that so far as literal buildings such as tabernacles and temples are concerned, they will be a thing of the past when the kingdom is established. But that which is symbolized by the temple, nevertheless, is here shown to be "the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb."

And what an exalted position this will be for the great multitude class who are assigned to serve God in his temple! They will serve in close association with him and with the Lamb. Surely in this exalted position of glory and service they will be able to rejoice abundantly despite the fact that they did not attain to the highest position which they had been offered in the divine plan—that of the bride of Christ. ■



BEHOLD, I HAVE taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation.

—Numbers 18:6

“Give Me Thine Heart”

*“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine
eyes observe my ways.”*

—*Proverbs 23:26*

IN THE OLD Testament the word “consecration,” as generally used in the Books of Exodus and Leviticus in connection with the typical priesthood, is translated from a Hebrew word meaning ‘a filling of the hand’ (*Margin*, Exod. 28:41; Lev. 8:33), picturing the placing in their hands of the power and authority of the office of the priesthood. In translating this same Hebrew word, **Rotherham** and **Moffatt** refer to this transaction as the “installation” of the priesthood. Professor Strong adds the heart-warming thought that the same Hebrew word is also used to describe a setting of gems. The scholars and the context thus confirm that the Hebrew word translated consecration in these instances is used in connection with a setting apart for the office of priests of those selected for that service; and it is so used in the 8th chapter of Leviticus, which relates to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood.

In the same 8th chapter of Leviticus we find another significant word used in connection with the consecration of the members of the priesthood. It is the word “sanctified,” and is translated from a Hebrew word (*qadash*) the basic meaning of which, according to **Strong**, is ‘to make, pronounce or observe [i.e., recognize] as clean’. And so we find that all that was to be used in connection with the work of the priesthood was sanctified, or made clean—the Tabernacle and all that was therein, the altar and its vessels, the laver, and Aaron and his sons—all had to be made clean, to be suitable for so important a work. “I will

sanctify [make clean] the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the altar; I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office."—Exod. 29:44; Lev. 8:10-12

Deny Thyself

Oddly enough, when we come to the New Testament we discover that the word consecration is never used, and we find that the word consecrated is used but twice, and in neither case is it the best translation that could have been made from its Greek counterpart. Furthermore, in neither case does it refer directly to the consecration of the anti-typical priesthood. But although the word itself is not used in relation to the consecration of the LORD's people during the Gospel Age, there are numerous scriptures which definitely invite believers to give themselves wholly to the LORD.

After rebuking Peter for his attempt to dissuade him from exposing himself to death at Jerusalem, the Lord said to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24) If we would be his disciples, Jesus tells us, we must be willing to give our all, even unto death. That is a call to consecration.

On another occasion he gave the parable of the rich man who prepared a great supper and invited many to attend. But "they all with one consent began to make excuse." One had to examine a piece of ground that he had just purchased; another had to test out some newly-bought oxen, and still another had just taken a wife. So the Lord said unto his servant that "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Jesus then went on to make the point of his lesson. "And he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not [love less] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my

disciple." This, too, is an invitation to consecration; and our Lord at the same time presented the conditions of discipleship—forsaking all, and following after him.—Luke 14:16-27

And some of his hearers did just that! One day, on the shores of Lake Galilee, the multitude that "pressed upon him to hear the word of God" became so great that he stepped into a fisherman's boat that was nearby, and asked Simon Peter, whose boat it was, to put off a little from the land; and thus he taught the people. When he had finished, he suggested that Peter let down his net for fish. But Peter objected. "Master," he said, "we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." Nevertheless, he followed the Lord's instructions; and so great was their catch of fish that it caused their own boat and that of their partners to begin to sink.—Luke 5: 1-11

No doubt Peter had previously heard of this one who claimed to be the Son of God, but probably this was his first direct contact with him. And now Peter suddenly recognized Jesus for what he was; and filled with astonishment and fear, he fell at Jesus' feet. The Lord, reading Peter's heart and finding it good, could well have performed this miracle for the very purpose of calling Peter and his companions, James and John. Having set the stage, the Lord issued his invitation. "Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." And what a heart-warming response the Lord received! For we read that "when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him." That is consecration!

The Lord's call to Peter was simple and direct. And it was accompanied by a miraculous act in which he revealed himself to Peter as being the Son of God. And Peter's acceptance was similarly open and immediate. Today, the Lord's calling of his people may not appear to be so plainly indicated as was the case with Peter; for the loving providences of God are often too deep and his ways too

mysterious for our finite minds to discern or fathom. But it may well be that when we are beyond the veil we will marvel at what great things the Lord hath done to bring us to a knowledge of the truth, and to gently lead us to give our hearts and minds and lives to him; things done on our behalf no less miraculous in their way than what he did at the time of Peter's call and consecration.

But certain it is that we, like Peter, have heard the call; and we, like him, have made a similar commitment to leave all, and follow him. Those whom the LORD accepts, he justifies, and begets with the Holy Spirit. We become a part of the family of God; and henceforth all that we are, or have, or hope to be, are his. Thus we see that consecration is a once-for-all, a lifetime, irrevocable commitment to serve the LORD.

Purify Thyself

Sanctification is what takes place during our life after we consecrate. Sanctification is a process—a process of being made holy, of being made pure. In the New Testament the word “sanctification” is translated from the Greek word **hagiosmos**, meaning ‘holiness’; and it is translated holiness as often as it is translated sanctification.

In I Thessalonians 4:3 the Apostle Paul says, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification [**hagiosmos**].” Clearly, he is telling us that God did not call us to live evil, dissolute lives, but to purify ourselves, to live holy lives. We are to put off the deeds of the old man, which is corrupt, and “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-32) We are to strive daily to purify ourselves, and grow more and more in the perfect and glorious image of our Lord Jesus.

Writing to the Church at Rome, Paul says, “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have [in times past] yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity . . .; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness [**hagiosmos**].”—Rom. 6:19

The word “sanctified” is from the related Greek word **hagiazō**, meaning ‘to make holy’, or ‘to purify’. Exhorting the brethren at Miletus on his last missionary journey, Paul says, in the closing words of his farewell message, “Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified [**hagiazō**].” (Acts 20:32) In another translation, **Beck** refers to this as “an inheritance to be shared by all who are made holy.”

Called to Be Holy Ones

The Greek word **hagnizo**, also closely related, means ‘to make clean’, or to purify, as in I John 3:3: “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth [**hagnizo**] himself, even as he is pure.” James also wrote, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify [**hagnizo**] your hearts.”

The adjective of this family of Greek words is **hagios**, meaning ‘pure’, or holy. Throughout the New Testament **hagios** is fairly consistently translated “holy.” Thus we have holy child, holy ground, holy kiss, Holy Spirit, holy Scriptures, holy calling, holy faith, and other examples. But there is one notable exception, and that is in reference to the LORD’s people, where **hagios** is rendered “saints.”

One wonders, in view of its being consistently translated holy in every other instance, why **hagios** is not similarly translated in the case of the called ones, the holy ones, as the **Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott** indeed frequently renders it, e.g., “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, constituted Holy ones.” (Rom. 1:7, **Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott**) For we are indeed called to be holy ones, and such we are in God’s sight! And if we are to be used of the LORD in his glorious ministry we must purify ourselves, yielding ourselves daily to God’s purifying providences.

How are we sanctified, or made holy [**hagiazō**]? In the first instance, we are made holy by the sacrifice of Jesus. “We have been made holy [**hagiazō**] through the offering

of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb. 10:10, **Rotherham**) Also, we are made holy by faith in the Lord. In Acts 26:18 Paul quotes Jesus concerning those who turn from darkness to light, and receive “forgiveness of their sins and take their place with all those who are made holy [**haglazo**] by their faith in me.” (**Phillips**) We are made holy by the Spirit of God. “God hath chosen you to salvation through the purifying influence [**haglosmos**] of the Spirit (II Thess. 2:13, **Twentieth Century New Testament**) And we are made holy by the truth. “Make them holy [**haglazo**] by thy truth.”—John 17:17, **Phillips**

What all this comes to, of course, is what the Scriptures speak of as justification by faith. We became saints of the LORD, or holy ones, when he first accepted our consecration, by virtue of being justified, or made righteous, by faith in Jesus Christ.

But that was only a start in the process of our sanctification! That was laying the foundation upon which we must henceforth build, and from which point we are to strive daily to be made more and more in the likeness of Jesus; bending all our energies to rid ourselves of imperfections of the flesh, and put on the fruits and graces of the Spirit; a yielding ourselves wholly to the purifying power of the Holy Spirit as it instructs and guides us through his Word of truth, thus growing in love and faith and mercy, and in purity and holiness. And as this sanctifying process, this process of being made holy, or purified, proceeds, the depth and sincerity of our consecration will be fully tested and proved.

The Trial of Your Faith

Many of the testings of the persevering power of our consecration will come from the world, even as they did with the Early Church. Gathered around Paul in Rome, as fellow prisoners in bonds and fellow sufferers in Christ, sharing his trials and serving his needs, were a few faithful brethren—Timothy, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, and others. But there was one who fell—one for whom the stigma and

trials of association with the great apostle apparently were too great, in contrast with the allurements and creature comforts that beckoned to him from the world to which he returned.

This incident was the occasion of some of the saddest words to be found in Paul's writings, and we find them in his letter to the absent Timothy, imploring the comfort of his early return to Rome. He writes, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me; for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica. Only Luke is with me." (II Tim. 4:9-10) Apparently Demas' consecration was not sufficiently solid and tenacious to withstand the scorn, the persecutions and imprisonment that were so often the lot of the early faithful Christians. The fiery trials that accompanied the purifying process of sanctification were too great for him to bear.

At this end of the age few of the LORD's people are subjected to such severe forms of testing. But we do have, and must have, trials of other kinds; some of which are the result of the accelerating decline in the standards of human behavior which are so manifest about us. With such conditions pressing in from every side it is more urgent than ever before that the LORD's people hold fast to the exalted precepts of God's Word; that we remember that we are saints, holy ones; that we are in the process of being purified for a holy work in the next age.

"Follow Peace with All Men, and Holiness . . ."

But perhaps some of our greatest trials arise from our very midst; even the Early Church was prey to some of these distressing experiences. One such difficulty arose between two sincere stalwarts of the church at Antioch. When the brethren there chose Paul and Barnabas to go forth on Paul's first missionary journey they took John Mark along with them. But when they arrived at Perga, John Mark left them, and returned to Jerusalem, while Paul and Barnabas continued their journey.

Some years later Paul suggested to Barnabas that they visit the brethren in Asia where they had established churches, and Greece. Barnabas agreed, but wanted to include John in the company. But Paul thought it not good to take with them one who previously departed from them "and went not with them to the work." And we read that "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed." (Acts 15:36-41) One can visualize them angrily stalking off on their separate ways without so much as a Godspeed.

But Paul did not harbor in his heart any lasting resentment toward John, who had caused this strife between Paul and his former beloved traveling companion; nor did John toward the Apostle Paul. For when Paul was subsequently imprisoned at Rome we find that John had joined him there, and served him well. And Paul finds loving words to write of him to Timothy, saying that "Mark is profitable to me for the ministry."—II Tim. 4:11

Then there was the contention that arose between Paul and Peter in Antioch, when Peter withdrew himself from eating with the Gentiles, for fear of criticism from the Jews. Discerning Peter's weakness in the matter, Paul says he "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." How humiliating it must have been to Peter, to be taken to task by his fellow laborer in Christ before the entire assembly!—Gal. 2:11-14

But again, like Paul and John, Peter did not allow this unpleasantness to stumble him, and we later find Peter writing to the brethren of "our beloved brother Paul," and referring in glowing terms to Paul's deep knowledge of the truth. (II Peter. 3:15,16) For the process of sanctification was going grandly forward in the life of the Apostle Peter! Those wonderful brethren of the Early Church were able nobly and lovingly to rise above their occasional differ-

ences in the larger, overriding interest of the great cause to which they had dedicated their lives.

Paul wrote, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."—I Cor. 3:11-15

The Prophet Malachi writes in similar vein, "Behold, I will send my messenger, . . . But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."—Mal. 3:1-3

"Without Which No Man Shall See the LORD"

How well are we building? Is our consecration sufficiently deep and abiding to endure the purifying fires required to accomplish our sanctification—our being made holy? The Apostle Paul was never one to mince words; and in his letter to the Church at Ephesus he reminds them, and us, of the gravity and magnitude of our commitment. He writes, "We are to attain to full manhood, measured by nothing less than the stature of Christ." (Eph. 4:13, **NEB**) This is no small task! And the depth of our consecration will be fully tested and proved as the work of sanctification, the work of purification, the work of making us holy, proceeds in our mortal bodies.

In Hebrews 13:11-13, Paul refers to the typical Atonement-Day sacrifices which were offered for sin. He says, "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into

the sanctuary [*hagion*, holy place] by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify [*hagiazō*, 'make holy, purify'] the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

The apostle is telling us that we, who in this age are made holy by the blood of Jesus, will have the privilege, if faithful, of sharing in that thousand-year ministry of sanctifying, or making holy, the whole world of mankind in the next age, when the church is complete, when the marriage of the Lamb has taken place, and the kingdom of righteousness is established in the earth. What a time of joy and blessing that will be! "May God himself, the God of peace, make you holy in every part, and keep you sound in spirit, soul, and body, without fault, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is to be trusted: He will do it."—I Thess. 5:23, **NEB** ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 4—"He [Jesus] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant."—Philippians 2:7 (Z. '00-318 Hymn 195)

NOVEMBER 11—"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue. [fortitude]."—II Peter 1:5 (Z. '04-10 Hymn 71)

NOVEMBER 18—"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psalm 34:7 (Z. '97-120 Hymn 27)

NOVEMBER 25—"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."—James 1:13 (Z. '04-7 Hymn 89)

YOUNG ADULTS BIBLE STUDIES

THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES, Part 44

Paul on Mars' Hill

ASIDE FROM THE four precious Gospel accounts telling of the birth, life, and death of our Lord Jesus, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, one of the most valuable writers of the New Testament was the Apostle Paul. His wonderful letters to Christians at Rome, Corinth, and other cities give us an awareness of what life was like in the Early Church. But more importantly, Paul clearly outlines Christian beliefs and hopes through an explanation of the Old Testament Scriptures.

As soon as Paul (Saul was his former name) was called to serve God by the experience of the blinding light and the voice from heaven, he became so active in preaching about Christ that his life was in danger from his old friends. Just as he had been the hunter of Christians when he was a Pharisee, to locate them and kill them, he became the hunted.—Acts 9:22-25

Paul was sent by his Christian brethren back to his home city of Tarsus since his life was in such great danger. But Paul had been especially called to work among the Gentiles. (Romans 11:13) When the apostles were convinced that Cornelius and his friends and family had received the Holy Spirit, they finally realized that it was indeed God's plan to invite the Gentiles as well as Jews to become followers of Christ. (Acts 11:1-18) Later, a large number of Greeks believed and turned to the Lord, and so eventually the Apostle Paul went to Antioch to preach the Gospel to other Gentiles.—Acts 11:19-25

The Apostle Paul, who by God's design replaced Judas as the twelfth apostle, had many adventures and narrow escapes as he traveled on his missionary journeys throughout the civilized world of his day. His work continued until his death—in Greece, Cyprus, Asia minor, Rome, and



Judea. See ***“People of the Bible,”*** which has nine chapters devoted to the life of the Apostle Paul!

On one of his many trips, Paul arrived in Athens, the capital city of Greece. Athens is a mountainous city, and was the center of Grecian learning and civilization at that time. On the tops of several hills, grand and imposing buildings were erected. A magnificent temple, splendid arena, and huge fortress, were among the more prominent structures. Besides these, Athens was filled with many public buildings adorned with statues of heroes and exquisite sculptures of heathen gods, for this was a heathen city and its people worshiped many false gods. Athens had been named for the goddess Athena, whose huge statue towered above all others.

As the Apostle Paul wandered throughout Athens, he saw that the city was full of idols to heathen gods. His spirit was stirred within him! He wanted so much to tell the people about the true God, Jehovah, and his son, Jesus, and their great love for all mankind. But this was difficult, for the Athenians considered themselves superior in intelligence, and very knowledgeable concerning religious matters. So Paul went instead to the synagogue, and into the marketplace, to discuss God's Word with the Athenian Jews. Some philosophers overheard his discussions and became curious because he preached Jesus and the resurrection.

They invited him to speak to them in the large arena at Mars' Hill. He realized God had arranged in this way to give him the opportunity to talk with the Greeks, as he had so greatly desired to do. "May we know what this new doctrine is, whereof thou speakest?" they asked Paul. "For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."—Acts 17:16-21

Without question, Paul welcomed this opportunity to present the truth to the Gentiles of Athens. In doing so, he was at times very polite, but in other instances, however, he was very blunt! He began his remarks with a compliment, and immediately he had their complete attention! He said: "I perceive in every way . . . that you are most religious." (Acts 17:22, ***Amplified New Testament or New English Bible***) Paul himself was very religious, but he worshipped God according to the true religion—they worshipped heathen gods. He was so wholeheartedly devoted to the furthering of the Christian religion that he had given up every other interest in life. In his religious zeal he worshipped the one God and one Lord Jesus Christ, who had given his life for the sins of the world. In Paul's mind, there was nothing wrong with being very religious. His mission in life was to travel throughout the world preaching the true religion—the truth concerning the true and living God.

The error of the Athenians was they worshiped many gods, none of them real. Paul was reminded of this as he stood on Mars' Hill. Facing the area where the people sat, Paul could see just below him to his left the long row of idols, each one dedicated to a different god. He had passed close by these idols as he walked along the road leading to the hill.

High above the apostle, to his right, was a large marble temple—the remains of which are still there today. Here the false gods of the Greeks were worshiped. Yes, the Athenians were very religious. They knew the names of many gods, and had set up idols to represent them, but they worried there might be one which they had overlooked. So, they built and dedicated an altar to "THE UNKNOWN GOD."


Paul explained to the gathering that he would like to introduce them to the UNKNOWN GOD, whom they ignorantly worshiped. This was a wise approach; it held the attention of his listeners. Paul began to tell them about Jehovah, the God who was unknown to them. He was the great Creator, the God who made the world and all things in it. He had created the whole universe and it belongs to him: therefore he did not live in temples made by men.—Acts 17:23-25

When he made this statement, we can imagine Paul looking up toward the Acropolis, the great heathen temple above him, perhaps even pointing to it, indicating that the true and living God of the universe could not be expected to dwell in such a place! This was not very tactful for him to say, but it helped the sincere Athenians to realize that their idea of God was limited and small. Paul continued his discussion, saying, since we are the children of the true God and he is our Father, we should not think that God is sculpted or molded from gold, or silver, or stone, by the art of man. The educated men of Athens could not contradict this logical conclusion.

Paul held the attention of his audience as he told the Athenians about the UNKNOWN GOD, but when he mentioned the resurrection of the dead, this was too much for them! Some mocked him, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." (Acts 17:32) However, not all who heard Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill were doubters. We read that certain men and women believed Paul's message and became Christians. (Acts 17:34) This encouraged Paul to continue telling the good news to all who would listen, and to ignore the mockery of the unbelievers, for this was his mission in life.

Paul knew that God's promises are sure to come true and that "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness [the millennial kingdom] by that man whom he hath ordained [Christ Jesus]; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead!"—Acts 17:31

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are the writings of the Apostle Paul so valuable to us today? Can you name some of the books he wrote? Do you know why his books have been named after cities?
 2. What kinds of experiences did Paul have when he was converted? Why did his former friends seek to kill him?
 3. The Apostle Paul was called the apostle to whom?
 4. Describe the city of Athens in Paul's day. How did Paul feel about the idols that surrounded him there?
 5. How did he get an opportunity to preach to the Gentiles in Athens?
 6. What Athenian god did Paul tell his listeners was the true God?
 7. The majority of his hearers mocked him for believing in the resurrection of Jesus. Did this discourage Paul? Why not?
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TALKING THINGS OVER

A Letter Concerning a Mission to Southern Ukraine

Dear Brethren:

ON AUGUST 2ND, we departed from Kennedy Airport via Czechoslovakia Airlines for Prague, Czech Republic; then to Kocise, Slovakia; and to Ushgorod, Ukraine—the latter portion by bus. We had a travel agency handle all the details which included visas, baggage, custom declaration, language barriers, and all transportation. Once our group of 35 Americans arrived in Ushgorod all were free to travel anywhere in Ukraine. This proved a very adequate method of travel, for all problems were handled by the tour agent. Our only real difficulty was a long wait at the Ukraine border, but this is not unusual.

We are able to see the LORD's overruling of all aspects of our trip. We had previously written five letters to Sister Balko's cousin in the village of Veliki Luchki but were disappointed that we had never received any reply. Yet, after arriving five hours late at the hotel in Ukraine, there, in the midst of the crowd, was her cousin. The only letter they had received was the one advising them of the day and time of our arrival. This young man provided the much appreciated 'cup of cold water' throughout our stay in the village.

The desire to find brethren in the area 'burned' within us, for the very brother who had brought the truth to our parents in the 1920's had returned to his homeland—the village. His zeal and faith were so steadfast we felt he must have continued in telling the good news of salvation.

We were invited by three fellow Americans to go to the home of their relatives, and this proved to be the key to success in our search. The family we visited, and the one

next door, were relatives of that dear brother who brought the truth to our parents. We could hardly believe it! Hurriedly one of the family members left their home and returned bringing the oldest member of the family to meet us. He was a gracious gentleman—87 years of age—who, it turned out, was a cousin to the man who had lived in the States. We eagerly discussed the 'tie that binds', and were so encouraged to learn he was still holding fast to the truth.

He told of how their Bibles, volumes, mannas, and other Biblical helps were confiscated in the late 1940's and icons were given to them in their place. At that time many young men were taken at night to Siberia, never to return. We were urged to meet with them on Sunday, as they were planning a baptismal service. At first we declined because of plans to attend the two-day convention in Lvov. But because of his pleading and tears, we promised that we would return for Sunday, if at all possible.

After waiting 27 hours to complete a call to a brother in Lvov, we made plans to be there on Saturday. We could see the LORD's overruling in this experience. There are no busses or plane services to Lvov due to the lack of fuel, and therefore the only means of travel was a tedious 10^{1/2}-hour train ride for a distance of 162 miles. This would have meant a loss of two days for travel. But the young man and his brother-in-law volunteered to take us to Lvov by car. We left at 4:00 a.m., going through the lovely Carpathian Mountains. The roads were in terrible shape—full of large potholes, dirt and stones, and unpaved in some areas—but we arrived safely in just five hours.

We had a light snack with a brother and his mother, and then had some discussion about how the Dawn could be of service to the brethren there. Replies from the Russian program on the Novgorod station will go to the office address of one brother, because the Polish brethren cannot read all the requests. Any funds, clothes, food or medicines, and literature are sent to Poland, and then

arrangements are made to take them into Lvov. It is almost impossible to send them any other way. The brethren in Ukraine are in great need of such things as eyeglasses—so common to us. The value of their currency or ‘coupons’ is more inflated every day—5,000 was equal to \$1.00. The average person earns \$4.00 a month.

Our visit with the brethren was a joyous one, even though tinged with sadness. Where we stayed, the mother is very ill, and her 3 year-old grandson had recently been critically burned after falling into a hot tub of homemade soap and lye. We have learned that he has since died.

We departed for the convention hall after making arrangements to meet our cousin at the conclusion of the day’s meetings. Once again it was over extremely rough roads, even though Lvov is a very large city. When we arrived at the hall we found the sisters busily preparing a light lunch and promptly at noon the convention began. Prior to its start we had placed “*Thy Kingdom Come*” booklets, volumes, mannas, a large number of pens, and one Russian and one Ukranian Bible on the booktable. These all were gone quickly.

We would estimate that there were well over 400 brethren assembled there—mostly Ukranian and Polish—some of whom we had met on our previous visit in 1990. The convention was opened by one of the Lvov elders with hymn singing, reading of the manna, the 23rd Psalm and prayer. Three brethren shared the program that day, two speaking in Ukranian, and one brother spoke in Polish. The talks focused on our responsibility to the truth and to each other, and great emphasis was placed on the message of truth which each brother brought, and not on how intellectual he may be, or how perfect the grammar he used, nor his appearance! What they are interested in is, Does he know and speak the truth?

During the intermissions I again met with several brethren to clarify what their most urgent needs are, and the best way to send aid—which, as we stated earlier, should

come through the Polish brethren. At the close of the day's service we were taken back to the brother's home where we had been staying, in the van purchased by the American and Ukrainian Dawn brethren. The Lvov brethren expressed great thanks for the van which, we were assured, is very useful in providing service for the brethren.

Sunday found us back in the village and our young cousin took us to the riverbank where the brethren were holding the baptismal service. Following a beautiful discourse and hymn singing two brothers and one sister were immersed, in the same manner as we immerse. It was an emotional meeting! After extending the right hand of fellowship all left to go to the House of Prayer—a community building in which various faiths meet at different times. Some walk, others ride old bicycles and the fortunate ones have cars.

Well over 200 brethren were assembled in the hall, and while the singing was going on, Sister Marge and I were taken aside into a closed room where the elders inquired what our views of the truth were. Finding that we are in agreement, they requested that I give a discourse. I respectfully declined, for, although my conversational Slavic is good, I felt I did not know all the Biblical references well enough in their language to honor God's Word.

Three discourses were given on Baptism and all were uplifting. Afterward, we adjourned to one of the homes where dinner was served for about 40 brethren. When the meal was finished, hours were spent discussing the truth. The knowledge of the elders was wonderful, especially considering that they have not had the helps with which we have been blessed.

We had some truth literature with us and they eagerly received the gifts. The 87-year-old elder could not see well enough to read the volume. We gave him a pair of eyeglasses and he was overjoyed to be able to read. Sister Marge had another pair with her, and gave them to the brother who had been immersed as a remembrance of his

immersion. In the village respect is given to the brethren who are older and have proven their faith down through the years. As for the glasses, there are no optometrists in the area and, even if there were, no one has the money to buy glasses.

We departed so filled with joy. We had not only met so many brethren, but both Sister Balko and I found our very own relations among those we met and worshiped with. On Monday the younger sister came to see us and asked if by chance we had any more truth literature with us. Fortunately, at the bottom of one of our carry-on cases, we found a few more pieces, which she so joyfully accepted. We assured her that we will make every effort to get truth books or booklets to them.

The spirit of all the people in the village, of all faiths, really impressed us. They all seem grateful for the goodness of the LORD. They depend upon the land for their very existence; if they do not plant and God does not give the increase they will have nothing to eat.

Our cousin's brother-in-law, who accompanied us to Lvov, remembers the **"Photodrama of Creation"** that his grandfather had many years ago and he expressed a desire for another one, if at all possible. He asked for a **"First Volume of Studies in the Scriptures"**, **"Daily Heavenly Manna"**, and other booklets in the Ukrainian language, which we had with us. We leave the rest in the hands of the LORD. But such a beautiful Christ-like spirit touched our hearts so very much. There was nothing the brethren would not have done for us, and they asked nothing in return.

We thank our Heavenly Father for the two lovely young men who so eagerly and lovingly gave us that 'cup of cold water', at great cost to themselves and their young families. Surely, in the kingdom, they will be remembered for the goodness they displayed toward the brethren, and in their daily lives. There we found all faiths waiting for

either the kingdom of Christ, or for the Second Coming of the Lord.

We thank God for those who ministered unto us, for all those who prayed for us, and for all those who accepted us as 'family', whether it be from natural ties or spiritual. Truly we felt the overruling hand of the LORD each step of our journey into far-off Southern Ukraine. How wonderful are the mercies and ways of the LORD!

In the blessed hope, Mike and Marge Balko

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Delighted to Hear Message

Dear Sir: Please send me your booklets "*Plan*" and "*Judgment*." I learned about your religion at an early age and attended meetings with my grandmother and also with my music teacher. I am now retired and of course these two wonderful folks passed away years ago. Last Sunday I accidentally came across your broadcast on a York television station and enjoyed it. I had lost contact and was delighted to hear your message. I was raised in a Christian home, but with no religious affiliation. Thank you. Sincerely.—PA

Literature of Great Value

Dear Brethren: I greet you in the name of Jesus, with peace from God the Father. I was once again delighted to hear from you and more so to receive the books and booklets you sent me. I thank God for the opportunity of being exposed to this ministry, particularly at a period of time such as this. The literature you present is of great value for the development and preparation of those who read it.

Fifteen years ago I thought I was enlightened and was surprised after reading your books that that thought was confounded. Nevertheless, nothing happens before the time and I am so glad that God has

helped me and brought me into contact with this ministry. Its advent into my life is timely as I was growing tired of 'milk' and I needed a change of diet. I am also glad and grateful because of the kindness you've displayed by sending me all those books free of cost. I know that it is very costly producing so many books and pieces of literature without making demands on subscribers, yet by some strange miracle you do it. I am humbled to know that you have never solicited so much as an offering in any of your letters. How can I say thanks! In this country the U.S. dollar is like a 'pearl of great price' to the less fortunate, and to the wealthy and cruel it is a means of controlling the system and the people. However, my God is bigger than infinity and my desire is that before our change is effected I may be able to give an offering to this great work. I trust you will continue to send me those truths as God releases them. Stay sweet in Jesus. Sincerely.—
Guyana

Program Lifted Spirits

Dear "Frank and Ernest": I just praise and thank the LORD for you who are responsible for the broadcast of "Frank and Ernest" over DZAM Radio. While confined at a hospital I struck upon your program. It came to me during a time of dryness in prayer and at a time when I felt lukewarm in my love for the LORD. Your broadcast really helped me. It lifted my spirits up. From now on I will never fail to listen and will tell all my friends about it. More power to you! Sincerely.—*Philippines*

"A Profound Impact"

Dear Sir: A friend introduced me to your programme over Radio Africa about two months ago. I have been listening ever since and your message has made a profound impact upon my whole being. I changed my perspective towards life itself. Thanks to you and your wonderful programme. May God richly bless you. Faithfully yours.—
Zimbabwe ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

Ministering the Glorious Gospel of Christ

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

M. Balko

St. Petersburg, FL November 2
Orlando, FL 3
Raleigh, NC 5

E. Lamel

San Luis Obispo, CA November 14

L.B. Post

New Haven, CT November 7

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Emma Ratica, Brookline, PA—June 22.

Sister Amy Faith Pampling, England—September 1. Age, 95.

"FRANK & ERNEST"

Listen to these interesting topics discussed each Sunday on:

**KXUL - 1570
2:15 P.M.**

NOVEMBER:

- 7-The Birth of a Nation
- 14-Coming World Government
- 21-The River of Life
- 28-Kingdoms of this World

SEND FOR the free booklet offered
after each broadcast:

"FRANK & ERNEST"
Box 6, Dept. N
New York, NY 10116

FOR YOUR NEWSPAPER

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

NOVEMBER SPECIAL

On Sunday, November 21st, "**Frank and Ernest**" will discuss a Biblical topic of interest to many: "**The River of Life.**" Free circulars are available which announce this program, and you are invited to send for as many as you can use. Write to:

The Dawn

East Rutherford, NJ 07073

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed at the request of the classes who sponsor them. In order to ensure your convention being accurately placed in these columns, please make your request IN WRITING and mail it to this address at least two or three months before the date of the convention: The Dawn, Convention Listing, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

NEW HAVEN, CT, November 7

—Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact: Cindy Mason.

Phone: (203) 481-9935

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 20, 21

—Masonic Temple, 1912 Morris Ave., Union, NJ. Contact Mrs. Charlotte Teklinski, 84 Arthur St., Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660

Phone: (201) 440-0925

DETROIT, MI, November 21

—Redford YWCA 25940 Grand River, Redford Township. Contact: F. Nemesh, 2183 Babcock Dr, Troy 48084, for information.

Phone: (313) 649-6588

CINCINNATI, OH, November 21

—At the Harp's Home, 2609 Merrittview Lane.

Phone: (513) 825-4112

SAN DIEGO THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 25-28

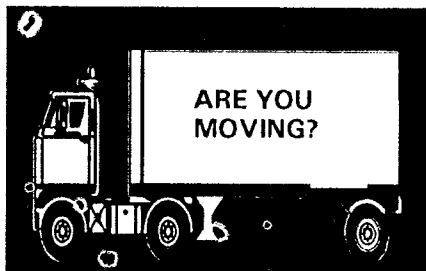
—Radisson Hotel, 3299 Holiday Court, LaJolla, CA. For information contact: Miss Kathleen Rice, 13931 Via Rimini, San Diego, CA 92129

Phone: (619) 672-1895

PHOENIX, AZ, December 31-January 3, 1994

—Wyndham Garden Hotel, 427 N. 44th St., Phoenix, 85018 (602) 220-4400. Contact the secretary for all requests: Mrs. Esther Bachorski, 13223 Palmwood Dr., Sun City West, 85375

Phone: (602) 546-0430



If you will notify the Dawn of your new address three weeks in advance of your move, it will save us considerable expense in mailing your magazine.

Thank You!